



# EYNSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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David Shetcliffe  
Curtin & Co

Sent by email – [davidshetcliffe@curtinandco.com](mailto:davidshetcliffe@curtinandco.com)

14 January 2022

Dear David

## **Eynsham Parish Council and EPIC/GreenTEA joint response re Consultation Draft West Eynsham Masterplan**

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us yesterday. As promised, please find detailed below feedback from the Parish Council and community groups.

### **1. Planning Application Process**

- 1.1. The Parish Council and community groups remain concerned about the fragility of the successful build out of the SDA. Specifically, the reliance on one developer to undertake its part according to specifications, timescales and the Masterplan in general. We note that Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) particularly commented on their non-support of 'step-in rights' which could otherwise potentially leave the SDA without a local centre (based on the current phasing in the draft Masterplan) should it decide not to proceed after all. This stance therefore supports the point made at 2.4 whereby the local centre should be located near the school, it being in a more central location and therefore more likely to be built in terms of phasing.
- 1.2. We regret that neither WODC nor the developers have defined what a watertight and enforceable Masterplan should comprise. We hope that the revised WOLP will address this.
- 1.3. We welcome the attention to issues such as green infrastructure, biodiversity and active travel, but have some suggestions for improvement as well as some concerns summarised below.
- 1.4. In our view the current draft does not comply with ENP policy 14a (A).

*Continued*

- 1.5. We would particularly like further time to consider this once Appendix 1 detailing the infrastructure plans has been completed. This is a vital concern and Eynsham residents need to see this before commenting or agreeing to anything.
- 1.6. We fully anticipate that the developers will formally consult residents on the final Masterplan document before it is considered by WODC. Or, failing this, that WODC will hold a consultation.

## 2. Phasing

- 2.1. We covered a lot of ground on this subject at the meeting. While we note the objective of the Masterplan appears to be relatively high level with limited detail, there are areas where more detail is needed; phasing is such an area. We ask for the number of houses that will be built (730 units?), per phase with an indication of density and timescales is included. This should include the number of affordable homes and the self-build opportunities. We expect that these will be evenly shared across all phases.
- 2.2. Thank you for explaining why the phasing is in the order that it is. However, from the negative experience of the Thornbury Green construction, we must request that this is reconsidered and that no construction traffic use existing residential roads. The Thornbury Green build-out problems included:-
  - 2.2.1. Existing residents having their properties damaged by construction vehicles and being unable to access their properties due to waiting construction vehicles.
  - 2.2.2. Construction traffic vs the safety of Bartholomew School pupils/ parents at drop off and collection times - a Safety Officer was located throughout the day on the corner of Witney Road and Thornbury Road.
  - 2.2.3. Construction traffic used incorrect roads such as Spareacre Lane and Station Road to access the site causing complaints from residents.
  - 2.2.4. Mud on the highway, street furniture and homes through the village.
  - 2.2.5. No enforcement of the Construction Traffic Management Plan by OCC or WODC.
- 2.3. The above can be avoided if phases 2 and 3 are brought forward together thereby avoiding the need to use Thornbury Green as access and keeping all construction traffic within the SDA.
- 2.4. The local centre should be more closely located to the primary school to ensure it is built when it is needed to act as centre for place making and community building and be more centrally located within the development. It seems common sense that this should be in an early phase and located conveniently to the largest number of people and other facilities e.g. the primary school.

A location here would also be convenient for residents on other current development sites (Nursery site and Thornbury) and would avoid unnecessary car trips into congested central Eynsham or from the northern end of the site to the south before phase 5 is completed. It would also support the ENP principle of a walkable neighbourhood which we strongly support and comply with policy 14a (d).

- 2.5. The phasing doesn't address the provision of specialist housing/tenures. Could an indication be provided for these please. There is an active community self build group in Eynsham looking for plots at an early stage. Housing must be tenure blind and affordable units must be provided in each phase of development.
- 2.6. Appendix 1 Infrastructure Phasing is missing. Could you please forward this as soon as it is completed.
- 2.7. Since development is starting in the north of the SDA (Page 100), will Phase 1, including the A40 access junction (Page 102) come before, during or after the A40 'improvements'?

### **3. Spine Road, footpaths and highways**

- 3.1. Design detail demonstrating that vehicles would want to avoid using the Spine Road to/from the A40 as a rat-run would be appreciated. We fully support it being designed to 20mph standards as the Council is working to make the existing village a 20mph zone.
- 3.2. The piecemeal nature of the construction of the "relief road" (surely a misnomer) concerns us. We appreciate that this is, like all the infrastructure, driven by the phasing and hence each phases contribution to S106 funds but whilst we have never supported the "spine road" if it is to be built why not get it done in one phase (phase 2/3). This would help with our issue with phase 2.
- 3.3. We remain concerned about the southern arm of the Salt Cross roundabout and potential for a western bypass that would enable further development. We would request this be removed from the document.
- 3.4. Boulevard option 3 of Figure 31 is preferred.
- 3.5. Active travel routes should take priority over vehicles, ie Figure 38 should be pursued - these aspects will support the Vision Statement for West Eynsham.
- 3.6. The Linear Park footpaths at the eastern boundary need to be connected as shown in the yellow solid line below. Early phasing of all footpaths would no doubt be appreciated by existing and new residents.



- 3.7. Parking (Page 81) should be more definite about reducing parking provision and future uses, not "where possible". Page 82: the "parking typologies" involve a significant amount of hard surface and look like business as usual, not the sustainable future of active travel.
- 3.8. Thomas Homes site access needs to be resolved.

#### 4. Connected greenspace and biodiversity

- 4.1. Biodiversity net gain is required for the SDA in line with national and local policy and we would welcome the removal of 'if possible' from paragraph 5 on page 28.
- 4.2. We generally welcome the green spaces as shown in the draft, but would want to ensure their protection going forward. We would be happy to include them as Local Green Spaces in the next edition of the ENP or can the developers propose another suitable model? This would also support the development of the Eynsham Green Wheel (circular village walk using existing Rights of Way and linking with new development green spaces) and would comply with ENP policy 4 (F).
- 4.3. Little awareness of local opportunities: [Nature Recovery Network \(NRN\)](#) meadow project; local apples, swift project (swifts now red listed), Eynsham Green Wheel, local NRN bird and hedgerow surveys, etc. NRN should be involved from planning to creation and maintenance. Eynsham has a very active community doing high-profile, innovative work – you are missing an opportunity to build on positive action. NRN should be involved from planning, to creation and maintenance.

- 4.4. Issue of protection of green space is unresolved. A landscape buffer is needed to protect the area from further greenfield development. We would welcome consideration of the Chilbrook Linear Park being registered as a Local Green Space or Local Nature Reserve to prevent its erosion by development over time.
- 4.5. Some areas of 'green infrastructure' will need protecting from people and their pets to protect sensitive habitat and species, such as ground-nesting birds, waterfowl, amphibians, wildflowers and insects- eg skylarks and owls use these fields.



- 4.6. Classification of the old railway line as 'low ecological value (page 29) is at odds with evidence. The thin, poor soil on the line has supported flora not otherwise present elsewhere on the SDA site (see photos above) and fauna, for example, Six Spot Burnet Moth, snakes and lizards.
- 4.7. We understand now that consideration of the exact location of the primary route at this point will be undertaken after full heritage and ecological surveys have been undertaken, and a balanced decision made between these two aspects, but this needs to be clear in the Masterplan.
- 4.8. While there may not be protected/rare species, the ecology that is there is valued and is flourishing – it should be afforded protection. This aspect, linked to preserving Eynsham's heritage, should require the Spine Road to be repositioned and the proposed "Revised PROW Route" removed from the Masterplan. Developers are recommended to read WODC's [Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee: 16 May 2012: Minutes \(westoxon.gov.uk\)](http://westoxon.gov.uk) report that refers to a previous proposal to divert footpath 206/30. We appreciate the need to avoid potential archaeological structures but believe there must be a way to both protect these and avoid the railway line.
- 4.9. Reference to the railway line should be included at page 32 – Heritage and assess/minimise the impact (Page 79).
- 4.10. What plans are there to investigate the moderate to high potential of archaeological evidence from the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods?

- 4.11. The Linear Park should represent Eynsham's (limited) countryside and should be left as natural as possible. Play equipment should be sympathetic to its surroundings. We note with concern the 'equipped play area' to the north-west, is in the flood zone making it usable for only part of the year. Could this please be repositioned further east.

## 5. Views



- 5.1. Much valued views from within the site have not been assessed or illustrated.
- 5.2. Pages 10-11 Why do photos of the site not include the best of its rural features that will be spoiled if great care is not taken?
- 5.3. Page 4 How can the vision for 'capturing and reflecting the attributes of the site and its surrounding area' be achieved when well-loved views are likely to be obliterated, looking, e.g., east across from Chilbridge Road over the fields to St Leonard's church tower and Wytham Woods beyond (top left).
- 5.4. Or looking north at the vista of rising land through mature trees as Chilbridge Road turns sharply south from Eynsham towards the Twelve Acre farm gates. This wonderful gap beside the Chil (top right) would look over the Primary Street.

## 6. Climate Change and Zero Carbon

- 6.1. It is felt the Sustainability Charter (page 94) is the last and weakest section and responds the least to the high priority expressed in consultation (Page 42-44 Summary of amendments after consultation). There is no mention of climate emergency. It offers no more than the minimum required by Building Regulations- only 75% homes will be "zero carbon ready" and off gas; houses pre 2025 not even that. A bit more ambition would seize the advantage of local initiatives in the transition to net zero rather than hinder them. We would not want the SDA to be the 'poorer cousin' of the Garden Village.
- 6.2. Infrastructure section is simply procedural; no detail and does not deal with SDA site wide issues such as energy provision. Does not rule out gas.
- 6.3. Little awareness of local opportunities: No reference to Project LEO/Smart and Fair Futures. We would appreciate a meeting with you on these aspects. There is no response to WODC's Net Zero Toolkit, no reference to ENP intentions eg 3kW pv. All of these could add value to the masterplan.
- 6.4. Page 4 How can the masterplan Vision to provide 'a sustainable and healthy neighbourhood' 'high quality new homes' be achieved in the light of these omissions and weaknesses? How will people and the Planet be healthy if all developers take this line and refuse to deliver essential infrastructure and zero carbon for the 21st Century?

## 7. Flood risk

- 7.1. The Flood Risk section is improved but concerns remain; the cumulative impact assessment of all local development and a study of groundwater are needed. Page 65-66 mentions SUDS filtering out pollutants but no mention of sewage levels which is a major concern. How does masterplan satisfy WOLP Policy EW2: Connection to the mains sewerage network which includes infrastructure upgrades where required including any necessary phasing arrangements? What is the impact on phasing? We now understand that Thames Water is doing a study of the impact of West Eynsham and Salt Cross; this is needed before phasing delivery is set.
- 7.2. Cllr Rylett queried the 1 in 100 years flood risk calculation. Perhaps guidance from Defra or the EA could be forwarded.
- 7.3. We remain sceptical about the waste water strategy as we were told that discussions with Thames Water had only just commenced. A clear and agreed plan for this should be included in the Masterplan as required by ENP policy 3(b).

- 7.4. The group was disturbed to hear Aaron Wadhams say, in relation to flood risk, that Eynsham had been moved from the Thames to the Cotswolds (presumably in Environment Agency categorisation?), because this lowered the climate change allowances from (if I remember correctly) 35% and 70% to 40% and 60%. We may have misheard – could this point and its implications please be clarified.

## 8. Existing Village

- 8.1. We note that there will be no sports facilities in the draft plan. We assume that a contribution to local facilities will be made via S106 and would welcome the opportunity to input to the selection of options in this regard.
- 8.2. We see little of benefit to the existing community nor any assessment of impact on health and other key facilities. Currently we do not believe the draft meets the requirements of ENP 14a (B). No such assessment of impact has been made available.
- 8.3. A high level assessment of traffic flows by phase is needed including the impact on the Swinford Toll Bridge (as required by ENP 14a (E and F)).
- 8.4. We are concerned about the lack of community facilities in the draft and would hope that the community centre could be brought forward into phase 2/3 and located as discussed above.
- 8.5. We will suffer massive disruption and loss of access to open countryside, with any benefits (eg the Linear Park) coming in the last phase. Could this part of the park access be earlier to accelerate completion of Eynsham’s planned Green Wheel? We doubt that existing residents would be drawn to a convenience store in the Local Centre. A shared workspace could be of interest, but again this is in the last phase.
- 8.6. One point of contact is needed for the SDA: such as Project Manager. As there is ‘no guarantee’ that all phases will be completed, a more robust framework for co-ordination is needed.
- 8.7. Co-ordination between phases is a major concern; joining up foot and cycle routes etc.
- 8.8. The masterplan does not deal with some SDA site-wide issues such as energy provision, specialist housing including self build.

## 9. Errors

<u>You’ve Said</u>	<u>Correction Required</u>
St Bartholomew School	Remove ‘St’
Spareacre Road	Spareacre Lane
Thornbury Avenue	Thornbury Green

**10. Omissions**

- 10.1. Some keys missing e.g. Fig 11 land ownership plan, Fig 14 Planning application history.

We look forward to your tabulated response with reference to any technical studies.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Doughty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'D' at the end.

Mrs Katherine Doughty  
Clerk to the Council