

Ms Tina Rowley, Planning Policy Manager, West Oxfordshire District Council

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Dear Ms Rowley

### **DRAFT CORE STRATEGY JANUARY 2011**

This is the response of Eynsham Parish Council to the consultation on the Draft Core Strategy January 2011 and by reference to the Draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment January 2010.

1. The Parish Council broadly concurs with the Core Strategy, with the following comments and exceptions.

2. It is noted with some regret that the following reference in the previous version, Core Strategy: Preferred Approach February 2010 has been dropped in the January 2011 version.

“4.14...Any further substantial development to the west of Eynsham (the fourth largest settlement) is unacceptable primarily because of traffic impact upon the internal mediaeval streets and surrounding congested road network (A40 in particular) as well as impact upon rural character; expansion in other directions is not a sustainable option (Green Belt, flood risk, mineral sterilisation etc.)....”

3. The Parish Council supports Policies CS1 (Overall Spatial Strategy) and CS4 (Amount and distribution of housing) to concentrate the majority of new housing to 2026 in Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton.

4. The Parish Council supports Policies CS9 (Types of New Homes) and CS10 (Affordable Housing) with regard to apportionment for housing for the elderly (see Planning Brief, Appendix 1) and affordable housing - the Merton Close rural exception site of 40 dwellings was fully subscribed as soon as applications were open.

5. The Parish Council supports Policies CS13 (Re-use of Existing Buildings) and CS14 (Existing housing). Eynsham's houses span several centuries. Approximately 90 of them are listed buildings. A concentration on sympathetic renovation and upgrading of the existing housing stock, as well as suitable conversions, not only avoids the need for new build (CS para 6.1) but would also help to preserve the unique village character of Eynsham.

5. The Parish Council supports Policy CS15 (Existing employment sites) but would like to see an emphasis on supporting employment sites outside the designated town centres and as opposed to the creation of new development sites. The West Oxfordshire Economic Study June 2007 identified Eynsham as being second only to Witney in having employment floorspace for offices, factories, workshop/vehicle repair and warehouses with 130,160 square metres (1,401,030 square feet). However, the West Oxfordshire Commercial Property Register February 2011 lists 24 premises totalling over 12,273 square metres (132,105 square feet) as being available. The Parish Council would wish to see the promotion of local jobs for local people to increase the sustainability of the village, reduce commuting (CS para 7.4), and to prevent Eynsham from becoming more of a bedroom community for Oxford, Witney and London than it already is.

6. Eynsham is classed as a rural service centre in Policy CS2 (Settlement Hierarchy). The Parish Council has some concern about the generality of the planning guidelines for service centres contained in CS2, as compared with the more specific guidelines contained in the policies of the existing Local Plan 2011. The proposed CS2, as far as it goes, places considerable emphasis on specific site allocations for any new development. As this currently only exists in the draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment January 2010, the Parish Council would also wish to incorporate this in its response.

### **SHLAA January 2010**

7. The Parish Council broadly concurs with the survey comments concerning Eynsham, with the following comments and exceptions regarding the sites identified and included on Map 9 which are still undeveloped.

8. Site 206 (Spareacre Lane Works). The Parish Council supports extra care housing on this site and has adopted a planning brief which is included herein at [Appendix 1](#).

9. Site 180 (Land adjoining Fruitlands). This site has recently been proposed for development. A narrative of events and the Parish Council's reasons for not supporting this proposal are included herein at [Appendix 2](#).

10. Sites 150 and 205 (North of the A40). The Parish Council agrees that any development here would be poorly related to the village, and would only add to the existing problems caused by the A40.

11. Sites 140 and 227 (East of Eynsham). The Parish Council objects to any development in the Oxford Green Belt, or on any sites with significant flood risk.

12. Sites 209 (Off Station Road). The Parish Council shares the concern that any development on Site 209 could have an adverse impact on the aspect of the southern approach to the village. There is also concern about the proximity of this site to the Chil Brook flood zone.

13. Site 187 (Eynsham Nursery and Plant Centre). While a previous application for housing on this site was rejected on appeal in 2008, the Parish Council had no objection to the more recent application for redevelopment of the site as a garden centre, with reservations as to traffic access. It is noted that this application was rejected on this ground and on the ground of overdevelopment.

14. Sites 223 and 179 (Off Old Witney Road). The Parish Council does not support any development on the Bartholomew School playing fields (Site 223), which is suggested as a proposed site (SHLAA paras 1.24-1.28) and reiterated in the SHLAA Interim Report January 2011. Presently, students must cross the busy Witney Road to access their playing fields. Even if the playing fields were relocated, as is suggested, this would necessarily be further away from the school and involve a longer journey, causing a loss of amenity to one of the most successful and desirable schools in West Oxfordshire. This would be contrary to the spirit of CS 8.35-8.37 concerning sport, recreation and children's play. The Public Open Space Audit said in 2008 there is a "real scarcity" of public open space in Eynsham with most already situated around the perimeter of the village.

**APPENDIX 1** Planning Brief – [Site 16](#): Spareacre Lane, Eynsham

**APPENDIX 2** Consultation – [Site 180](#): Land adjacent to Fruitlands