

MINUTES OF THE PARISH MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 29TH NOVEMBER 2005

AT 8 PM IN ST LEONARD'S CHURCH HALL, EYNHAM

Present: Mr G Beach (Chairman)

One hundred and thirty-eight (138) local government electors, Cllr. H Wyatt (OCC/WODC), D Rossiter (WODC/EPC), Cllr. Mrs M Stevens (WODC), seven (7) EPC Councillors and Mrs J Heath (Clerk).

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all those present to the Parish Meeting and thanked them for their attendance. The meeting had been called at the request of the Eynsham Society in order to discuss the Local Plan, the Inspector's report and the options open to the residents to object to any residential building on the eastern side of the village. A plan of the area under discussion was displayed on the wall.

1 Apologies: for Absence

Apologies had been received from Mr T Green (EPC); Mrs D M Futter, Greta Rye

2 Public Discussion

The following matters were discussed:

- i. Statement from representative of the Eynsham Society outlined concerns in respect of the number of units proposed, the amount of "affordable" housing allocated and erosion of the conservation area. The society would like it noted that there was no representation permitted and therefore no opportunity to respond to the developers at the enquiry in 2004. The new category of settlement – namely "key service centre", into which Eynsham falls is disturbing. The decision by the Inspector to remove the large development in Woodstock and insert the proposed site by the eastern by-pass to compensate was the reason for this meeting. West Oxfordshire District Council Development Control committee had rejected this decision but the Cabinet and Full council both overturned the decision of the Development Control.

Specific objections of the Eynsham Society are that

- (a) Two previous local plan enquiries (1981 and 1997) have already thrown out further development in Eynsham on the grounds that "further development would dilute the character of the settlement" What has changed since then?
 - (b) 100+ properties in a conservation area is excessive
 - (c) the 50% allocation of affordable housing gives no guarantee that these would be allocated to Eynsham people
 - (d) there is no connection to the village
 - (e) exit onto the by-pass would have poor sight lines
 - (f) pedestrian access would be via the Bitterell and not Tanners Lane (as suggested)
 - (g) the view from Wytham Hill would be spoiled. The suggestion that there was not access to Wytham Hill is incorrect.
 - (h) The present infrastructure could not cope with the increased traffic.
- ii. Other views expressed included:
 - (a) Disappointment that West Oxfordshire District Council had not accepted the Development control decision but had done a complete U turn.
 - (b) Letters written to District Councillors not raised at full council meeting
 - (c) Government policy apparently overturned in respect of green field sites which should only have enhanced development.
 - (d) Potential flooding risk if development of this size goes ahead. Footpath does not permit cycles and is privately owned by Corpus Christie
 - (e) Commercial interests have over-ridden the needs of the village.
 - (f) Affordable housing would be for Oxford City people
 - (g) Argument regarding falling school number is a national problem not just local
 - (h) Traffic survey should be done. Traffic at present almost at a standstill during peak hours. Highways Authority should be lobbied as the site entrance would be dangerous.
 - (i) Social housing and density not in keeping with the village.
 - (j) Conservation area to be equated to Eynsham's Green Belt
 - (k) Concern expressed about the way WODC officers defended Eynsham at the enquiry and that no representation was allowed at the recent Development Control meeting.
 - (l) Concern that the views of the village were not represented by the District Councillors but only their personal views were put forward.

- iii. District Councillors responses to questions:

- (a) It is standard procedure for there to be more than one committee discussing issues.
- (b) The Council is duty bound to heed the advice of the County Council on highway matters. The officers' defence of the Draft Plan in respect of Eynsham had not been half-hearted.
- (c) The Inspector's report is a tool to be used by the Council to decide on matters and his recommendation was very clear.
- (d) The Cabinet and Full Council agreed with the Inspector and the advice of the professionals.
- (e) The Inspector required that no development to take place until a Planning Brief is put forward by West Oxfordshire District Council.
- (f) The Inspector's report in respect of the inclusion of Eynsham was on the agenda for the Full Council meeting but there was no debate as the Council was content with the decision of the Cabinet.
- (g) Affordable housing would not be for people on Oxford City's housing waiting list but may be done in partnership with the Oxford Citizens' Housing Association which is a national housing association as is Cottsway.
- (h) The concerns of Cllrs. Rossiter and Stevens are that there are two ways the land can be built on. (i) That WODC may disagree with the inspector in which case it is open for anyone to take legal action for unreason ability. (ii) That the land is not allocated in the plan, leaving the way open for any developer to go to appeal using the Inspector's report and planning officers' recommendations. Should this happen and the appeal be lost there would be no control over any conditions to be set.
- (i) Cllr. Wyatt confirmed that he was against the project. Cllrs. Rossiter and Stevens felt that they were elected to represent the whole of the community (i.e. West Oxfordshire) and that Eynsham needs more housing.
- (j) Cllr Stevens stated that the letters sent by the Eynsham Society to the three district councillors had been posted without stamps and hence were not delivered to councillors in time for the meeting.

The Chairman urged everyone who wished to object to write to West Oxfordshire District Council before the 16th December. Individual letters would have more of an impact than a petition.

A resolution was put forward by the Chairman of Eynsham Society and seconded by Dr Wright that "this meeting opposes the Planning Inspector's report and urges the District Council to reconsider the decision it arrived at on the 9th November 2005 relating to land east of Eynsham (Inspector's Report ref: 5.31)".

Following a vote the resolution was passed by one hundred and thirty-three for with nine abstentions.

The meeting finished at 9.20 pm – the Chairman thanked everyone present for their attendance.