

Eynsham Parish Council's objections to the Housing Policies of the Revised Deposit Draft of the Local Plan can be summarised relatively briefly: the Council does not believe that Policies H1, H7, H11 and H12 taken together will achieve the type of small-scale housing development which the village needs and the majority of its residents want.

- 1 Eynsham grew up originally around one of the most important abbeys in southern England. Although having a historic market, its development over the last two centuries has been typical of a large village rather than a small town: it does not have the commercial or service facilities associated with a market town, and the layout of its central core is particularly restricted. (Details of its history, setting, buildings and architecture can be found in the Eynsham Village Design Statement at www.eynsham.org/vds.html).
- 2 Notwithstanding these drawbacks, Eynsham grew steadily during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s with a series of new housing developments especially on the northern side of the village. A new primary school and medical centre were built during this time and a Conservation Area was designated, but it is fair to say that very few other benefits accompanied these developments. As a result, Eynsham has a very compact shape and a 'built-up' feel. There are few open spaces within the village and the increase in car ownership over the ensuing years has exacerbated the difficulties associated with its layout. These factors help to explain the particular importance attached by many villagers to the need to preserve its playing fields from development and the difficulties of absorbing any further traffic.
- 3 In recognition of these characteristics and its recent history, West Oxfordshire District Council has resisted pressures for any further significant development in the village. The existing Local Plan, for example, recognises that
"further significant housing development would be extremely difficult to accommodate without diluting the character of this settlement and its setting in the countryside." (15.32)
The Parish Council firmly believes that assessment still stands and would not wish to see any large-scale development on the fringes of the village.
- 4 That view is supported by an extremely well-supported survey of Eynsham electors undertaken by the Parish Council during May 2004, details of which appear in Annex 1. Asked "how many new houses in total would it be acceptable to be built in Eynsham between 2004 and 2011", only 14% of respondents chose a hundred or more. It is clear that the larger scale developments proposed elsewhere in the district would not be welcomed by the residents of Eynsham. There is a degree of agreement, however, that *some* new development would be acceptable. The commonest choice for an acceptable range was 20-49 houses over the seven-year period, with 37% favouring a higher number and 25% wanting fewer or none.
- 5 Not only does the survey support the Parish Council's wish to see only smaller-scale development within the village, but it also confirms a strong preference for the type of development. Asked "to what extent would you support or oppose new housing

development in Eynsham over the next seven years to provide affordable housing", the majority of respondents (67%) supported such development. On the other hand a similar question asking for respondents' views on "other mixed housing development" found a far lower level of support (25%). There may well have been a degree of uncertainty as to the precise definition of "affordable" and "other mixed housing development", but the priority seems clear enough.

- 6 What is also clear, however, is that general support for or opposition to a *type* of housing is only part of the story. Just as important is the *location* of the development. This is well illustrated by the answers to two other questions asked in the survey. Asked "to what extent would you support or oppose a development to provide affordable housing" on a particular site on the south-western fringe of the village, just 45% of respondents expressed support, significantly less than the 67% who supported affordable housing development in general. Similarly, asked "to what extent would you support or oppose mixed housing development" on each of three identified sites, levels of support ranged between 21% and 44%.
- 7 A considerable amount of supporting evidence can be found in the correspondence received by the Parish Council over the past few weeks. This has come not only as a result of the targeted questionnaire, but also in response to an article placed in the parish newsletter, *The Eynsham Echo*, which encouraged residents to submit their views. All relevant correspondence received by Tuesday 15th June has been included as Annex 2 (not included herewith but lodged with the Programme Officer for reference).
- 8 It is hoped that this evidence will help to inform the course of the Local Plan Inquiry in its consideration of Eynsham. The Parish Council believes that *small-scale* development, particularly any which includes a high proportion of affordable housing, would best meet the preferences of the village's residents. It also believes that the location of such development is crucial and must not lead to further pressures for development on the fringes of the village.
- 9 These considerations hopefully help to explain the Council's concerns with the Revised Deposit Draft in its present form:
 - The Council welcomes the fact that Policy H1 does not identify any large sites for development in Eynsham, but is concerned that no smaller sites, such as that proposed in Milton-under-Wychwood (15-20 dwellings), have been identified.
 - The Council welcomes the definition of rounding off in Policy H7, but is concerned that the supply of sites meeting the criteria is limited.
 - The Council welcomes the proposals for a significant element of affordable housing in Policy H11, but is concerned that any attempt to require too high a proportion of affordable housing could result in too many cases in which a developer is able to argue for a financial contribution (7.16) rather than the building of an affordable dwelling.
 - The Council welcomes the principle of affordable housing for local people embodied in Policy H12, but is concerned at the scale of proposals which could come forward under this Policy and the precedent such development could set for neighbouring land.

- 10 With the appropriate type and scale of development through to 2011, Eynsham can continue as a real community, one which accepts the need to change but which maintains its essential village identity. Starved of new housing, the village will age and its younger generations will be denied the chance to stay and contribute to the village in which they were born. Encircled by new development, that essential identity would be fatally weakened and its physical setting irreparably damaged. It is the sincere hope of the Parish Council that developers and planners alike recognise the need to strike the appropriate balance and that the Local Plan Inquiry helps towards that end.

Eynsham Parish Council Environment Policy NE5

P/983/3395

Eynsham Parish Council welcomes the text of Policy NE5, but has concerns regarding the accompanying text in Paragraph 9.25. This states:

A small part of the Green Belt in West Oxfordshire has consent for sand and gravel extraction in accordance with the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. (The Oxfordshire Structure Plan accepts the principle of sharp sand and gravel working in the Eynsham-Cassington-Yarnton area).

The text in parentheses was added at the Revised Deposit stage and was presumably intended to clarify the preceding sentence. However while there is a reference to Eynsham in the Structure Plan, there is no reference to Eynsham in the adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan, 1996. As it is that Plan which defines the geographical boundaries of areas to be worked, not the Structure Plan, the Parish Council believes that the added text confuses rather than clarifies, and should therefore be removed.

Eynsham Parish Council Transport Policy T3

P/983/3397

Again, Eynsham Parish Council welcomes the text of the Policy itself, but has concerns about the accompanying text in Paragraph 3.9. This states:

In the longer term, the Oxford Guided Transit Express may be extended to Witney and Carterton, possibly along the route of the disused railway, as suggested in the feasibility study into the reopening of the railway.

Recent announcements cast serious doubts about the future of GTE which may well have been abandoned by the time of the Local Plan Inquiry. In any case, the Parish Council does not believe that the reference to the route of the disused railway is helpful as significant parts of that route within the parish have now been built upon. The Parish Council therefore recommends removal of the text relating to GTE and the disused railway route.

Annex 1 Survey background, method and results P/983/3398-3400

- Questionnaires were sent by post on 7th May 2004 to a random interval sample of people living in the village. In addition to the questionnaire, the mailing included a letter from the Chairman of the Parish Council outlining the objectives of the survey and an information sheet giving an outline of the planning process and the issues which may have an impact on Eynsham (reproduced below as pp.6-8)
- The electoral register was used as the sample universe and respondents were identified by selecting every tenth name. A total of 359 records was selected – 11 of these were subsequently found to be void (moved/ deceased). The total sample was therefore 348.
- Those who had not returned their questionnaire by 18th May were contacted again with a reminder to send back the questionnaire. A final total of 295 questionnaires were returned – a response rate of 85%.

Q1. To what extent would you support or oppose new housing development in Eynsham over the next seven years to provide:

a) affordable housing?

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer	Overall balance of support/ opposition
Number	84	106	37	24	31	13	
% of total (excluding no reply)	29.8%	37.6%	13.1%	8.5%	11.0%		+47.9%

b) other mixed housing development?

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer	Overall balance of support/ opposition
Number	14	50	68	61	60	42	
% of total (excluding no reply)	5.5%	19.8%	26.9%	24.1%	23.7%		-22.5%

Q2. In your opinion how many new houses in total would it be acceptable to be built in Eynsham between 2004 and 2011?

	None	1 to 19	20 to 49	50 to 99	100 to 199	200 or more	No answer
Number	26	46	109	67	25	14	8
% of total (excluding no reply)	9.1%	16.0%	38.0%	23.3%	8.7%	4.9%	

Q3. Thinking now in terms of location rather than number of houses, to what extent would you support or oppose mixed housing development on each of the three sites which will be considered as part of the Local Plan Inquiry?

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer	Overall balance of support/opposition
Site 1 (off eastern bypass)							
Number	35	81	45	43	62	29	
% of total (excluding no reply)	13.2%	30.4%	16.9%	16.2%	23.3%		+4.1%
Site 2 (off Station Road)							
Number	11	66	49	63	75	31	
% of total (excluding no reply)	4.2%	25.0%	18.6%	23.9%	28.4%		-23.1%
Site 3 (western fringe)							
Number	9	47	43	54	109	33	
% of total (excluding no reply)	3.4%	18.0%	16.4%	20.6%	41.6%		-40.8%

Q4. Should the Local Plan Inquiry conclude that one of these sites should be recommended for development, which do you think should be chosen?

	Site 1 (off eastern bypass)	Site 2 (Station Road)	Site 3 (western fringe)	No answer
Number	147	71	49	28
% of total (excluding no reply)	55.1%	26.6%	18.3%	

Q5. To what extent would you support or oppose a development to provide affordable housing on Site 4 (off Chilbridge Road / Merton Close)?

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer	Overall balance of support/opposition
Number	54	77	48	42	68	6	
% of total (excluding no reply)	18.7%	26.6%	16.6%	14.5%	23.5%		7.3%

EYNESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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7th May 2004

Dear

Over the next few months an inquiry will take place which could have a major effect on the future of Eynsham. This inquiry – the West Oxfordshire Local Plan Inquiry to give it its full title – will consider proposals from three sets of developers who would like to see new houses built on the edge of the village. At around the same time the Parish Council will also have to consider proposals under which a development of low-cost houses for people with local connections could be built on another site.

The Parish Council will be represented at the inquiry and needs to submit its evidence at the beginning of June. **To help it do that, the Council needs to know what the people of Eynsham think about these proposals.** The Parish Council is anxious to hear the views of as broad a cross-section of individuals and organisations as possible. To help it do that, the Council has decided to send this questionnaire survey to every tenth person on the electoral register. Your name is one of those chosen and the Council would be extremely grateful if you would take the time to read the background information, complete the questionnaire, and return it in the stamped addressed envelope provided.

By contacting a representative sample of the village in this way, we hope to produce results which will meet the standards of evidence necessary for a public inquiry but at minimal cost to the council taxpayer. With the unpaid contributions of Parish Councillors it should cost us under 10p for every adult in the village to distribute, collect and analyse. All replies will be treated in the strictest confidence.

We are hoping for as full a response as possible and we will therefore be contacting those people whose replies have not been received by May 22nd. To keep down costs it would therefore be extremely helpful if you could reply well before that date, and if possible within the next week.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for helping us with this survey. Your contribution is much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Beach

Chairman, Eynsham Parish Council

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) produces a Local Plan for the district.

- The role of the Local Plan is to set out the council's policies and proposals for the use of land – including identifying parcels of land where new housing development can take place.
- The Local Plan is drafted and reviewed on a regular cycle and the current plan will determine where in West Oxfordshire development can take place up until 2011.
- As well as the major development areas of Witney and Carterton, WODC has a target (set by the County Council) to find sites for around 400 new homes by 2011.
- In the current draft of the local plan, sites for this development are identified in Chipping Norton, Milton-under-Wychwood and Woodstock.
- The draft plan also suggests that no new development would be permitted in Eynsham but this could change as a result of the Inquiry.

Over the next few months an Inquiry will take place into the Local Plan.

- The Inquiry will consider applications from developers who would like to see changes to the proposals in the Draft Plan.
- For Eynsham this includes separate proposals from three different landowners who are asking the Inquiry to consider three sites on the edge of the village – the locations of these sites are shown as 1, 2 and 3 on the map below.
- There is no specific information on the type and extent of development which would be permitted on any of these sites, but it would have to provide a mix of housing types and developers would have to pay for some offsite improvements.



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Site 1 – the two fields to the west of the eastern bypass (immediately north of the Oxford Road playing field) with access probably from the eastern bypass.

Site 2 – the first field on the right leaving the village down Station Road (immediately south of Blankstone Close) with access probably from Station Road.

Site 3 – the first field on the right leaving the village along Chilbridge Road (immediately west of Thornbury Road) together with some or all of Bartholomew School's detached playing field (immediately west of Bartholomew Close) with access probably from Old Witney Road.

Site 4 – the first field on the left leaving the village along Chilbridge Road (immediately west of Merton Close) with access probably from Merton Close.

There is a separate proposal for 40-50 affordable houses to be built in Eynsham

- A Housing Needs Survey conducted in 2002 found a shortage of affordable houses in the district – houses to rent or to buy under shared / discounted ownership schemes.
- WODC has a responsibility to deal with this shortage and its strategy is to provide at least 770 new 'affordable homes' between now and 2011.
- Figures from WODC show that around 4% of the demand for affordable homes is in Eynsham – equivalent to 30+ new affordable homes in Eynsham over that period.
- WODC has encouraged discussions between Oxfordshire County Council (as landowner) and West Oxfordshire Housing (as housing provider) in relation to a possible affordable housing development in Eynsham. This is shown as site 4 on the map above.
- The housing would be available only to people with a family/work connection with Eynsham or a neighbouring parish or for key workers (especially those employed in health, social services, teaching or emergency services).
- This specific proposal will not be discussed at the Local Plan inquiry but may affect the thinking of WODC in considering the other sites.

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE AND RETURN IT
IN THE PRE-PAID ENVELOPE AS SOON AS CONVENIENT**



Currently Eynsham has just over 1,800 houses, including approximately 200 houses provided by West Oxfordshire Housing and Oxford Citizens' Housing Association.

- Q1.** To what extent would you support or oppose new housing development in Eynsham over the next seven years to provide:
- affordable housing?
 - other mixed housing development?

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
a) affordable housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) other mixed housing development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Q2.** In your opinion how many new houses in total would it be acceptable to be built in Eynsham between 2004 and 2011?

None	1 to 19	20 to 49	50 to 99	100 to 199	200 or more
<input type="checkbox"/>					

- Q3.** Thinking now in terms of location rather than number of houses, to what extent would you support or oppose mixed housing development on each of the three sites which will be considered as part of the Local Plan Inquiry?

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
Site 1 (off eastern bypass)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site 2 (off Station Road)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site 3 (western fringe)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Q4.** Should the Local Plan Inquiry conclude that one of these sites should be recommended for development, which do you think should be chosen?

Site 1 (off eastern bypass)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site 2 (off Station Road)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site 3 (western fringe)	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Q5.** To what extent would you support or oppose a development to provide affordable housing on Site 4 (off Chilbridge Road / Merton Close)?

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
Site 4 (off Chilbridge Rd / Merton Close)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>