

**EPIC/GreenTEA/Peace Oak/City Farm Management/TCPA member
Priorities for Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village**

The Eynsham Planning Improvement Campaign draft priorities for the Garden Village (GV) are set out below for joint discussion with Grosvenor, Eynsham Parish Council, City Farm Management Company, GreenTEA and the Eynsham Society. Overall, we propose a GV built in accordance with the Garden City principles set out by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA). We want a GV to be proud of in 100 years with the best of country and town. The 4Cs – **Character, Connectivity, Community, Climate** as set out in Grosvenor’s GV Study Tours material - are in harmony with our priorities.

NB: These priorities are in no particular order of importance. Neither is each priority refined yet into aims objectives and criteria. They will be refined subsequently and their various levels of detail balanced. They are in fact reflected in policies set out in the Local Plan, if fully implemented.

1. Successful place-making which respects the site’s special qualities, complements Eynsham and considers the enlarged Eynsham as a whole

Place-making, not house building: balanced community, innovative design, quality build, social facilities, mixed-tenure, landscaping and countryside access.

- a. Spirit of place: protect the rich biodiversity and historical assets such as the listed buildings and their setting, medieval plague village and old routes, views, biodiversity, organic agriculture that make this place unique as well as the rural nature of West Oxfordshire generally and in particular of the site and Eynsham as a whole. Enough land around for organic agriculture and horticulture, including smallholdings, to flourish – embedded in biodiverse land and habitats that ensure sustainable cohabitation with other species.
- b. Connectivity and the high value of walkability. Strong linkages with 'old Eynsham' and West Eynsham and access by Eynsham people to facilities without damaging existing village facilities. Integrated design with green corridors and vistas. Resolve physical connection: eg, sink part of the A40 to allow pedestrian bike access/green tunnel under A40/ a green 'highline' bridge.
- c. Infrastructure first:
 - i. Co-ordinated communication networks, schools, health access, etc. provided first, to benefit whole Eynsham area .
 - ii. On the subject of health, ensure that pollution from the A40 and other surrounding roads is kept away from the garden village (and the rest of Eynsham) by suitably dense vegetation screening, bunds, etc.
 - iii. No GV before all infrastructure is in place: transport (preferably a light railway, at the very least a shuttle to Long Hanborough station), school(s), medical services, nurseries, old people's accommodation.
 - iv. Necessary infrastructure to be defined.
- d. A distinctive, well-designed place to foster community life: eg, central village public park along the lines of Letchworth or Welwyn as a focus for community

interaction and creative, interactive play to encourage an active community where people know each other:

- i. Design to facilitate outdoor fun pursuits for children and adults, eg, paddling pools, fountains, outdoor theatre/film/dance/music, festivals .Artistic expression and general enjoyment of life for people of our communities from all backgrounds and ages.
 - ii. Contributions from the people in Eynsham who are good at creating community festivities.
- e. Plenty of small-scale and independent local meeting places – open spaces, seating, cafes, etc – to engender community creation, resilience and social integration; avoid restrictions that come with large supermarkets.

2. Excellent, creative design

High quality, high density, generally low-rise homes and infrastructure designed by named architects through open competition and with design review.

- a. Built for a real diversity of purpose and tenure, eg, shared ownership, self-build, shared living, co-housing, warden or similar for elderly and other special needs.
- b. Strong, co-ordinated design aesthetic.
- c. Avoid dominance of detached houses in favour of terraces, courtyards with communal green space, communal blocks and gardens, including sheltered flats, with terraces (so all dwellings have a space open to the sky) and use of orientation for light and sun.
- d. Avoid dominance of car parking – restrict parking, communal parking areas, integrated provision, eg, car parks under communal apartment blocks.
- e. Continuity in masterplanning and design delivery with design review/inspiration panel and effective, independent system of site inspection.

3. Genuinely affordable

A range of new and established approaches to delivering genuinely affordable housing in a range of tenures.

- a. Open Book accounting.
- b. Mix of affordable housing types and tenures making a balanced community suitable to West Oxfordshire close to the city of Oxford (Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan (Housing Policy, ENP1, p.9; West Oxfordshire Local Plan, p.20; 21).
- c. Affordable for renting, buying, shared equity, commonhold, self-building including shared group schemes, sheltered and co-housing and life/work provision
- d. ‘Tenure blind’ design.
- e. A high percentage of rented social housing, alongside affordable terraced housing and apartment blocks and a smaller number of expensive ‘market’ homes.
- f. Smaller/denser/partly shared homes are more affordable and less carbon-intensive.

- g. Use Section 106 money to support community energy generation.
- h. A statutory process to prevent backsliding.

4. Low impact on the planet

An internationally recognised example of innovative, low carbon, low impact development as a response to the planetary Climate Emergency declared by the UK government. Demonstration that funding climate change measures makes money.

- a. **Lord Deben: ‘Stop building crap houses’, 2.5.19. Low carbon materials: wooden house frame, some wood cladding as well (using wood in new houses locks up carbon); no metal or concrete – use limecrete instead. Fly-ash alternative for cement. Lime-based paints. Green rooves.**
- b. Low, embodied energy, zero carbon energy use, energy positive, climate proof and low running and maintenance costs for all buildings (dwellings, work places and service buildings). Demonstrate that Zero Carbon housing is cheaper when savings on energy use accrue.
- c. No oil or gas should be provided in dwellings or community buildings. All homes shall have an average of 3KW PV generation capacity (ENP5, p23).
- d. Net energy gain as well as net biodiversity gain (Local Plan, 8.34; Policy EH6).
- e. Use Section 106 funding for community energy generation, including solar panels/tiles on rooves of dwellings and infrastructure.
- f. Allotments/communal growing spaces/community farm near homes to encourage home grown food, to foster food resilience, and to reduce the food’s carbon footprint.
- g. Strategic landscaping with retention of existing trees and early tree planting along roads and in green space (see point 5). Vistas and green corridors into the village. Planting trees stores carbon.
- h. Renewable energy generation with a local grid and a Community Renewable Energy Scheme (see Local Plan), enabling self-sufficiency, with some for export to Eynsham and existing residents via a smart local grid. No fossil fuels. Opportunity from project Leo. Involve community in innovation and demonstration projects (Local Plan, 8.36).
- i. Network of free electric car charging points for residents to encourage zero carbon travel.
- j. Buildings to the Code for Sustainable Housing Level 5/6 or preferably Passivhaus. Integrated Photovoltaic tiles on all suitable roofs. Consider new finance models to spread costs. Local Plan says GV to be built ‘to highest standards’.
- k. Plan for occasional, but significant, flooding to the north and east of the site with sustainable drainage throughout.
- l. Sustainable movement, through active travel networks and public transport, which encourages healthy travel and living and discourages car travel. Strong sustainable transport links with a network of wide car-free pathways with many small fruit/nut trees and shrubs, to encourage walking and cycling.
- m. Encourage small businesses to transfer from Oxford to GV to reduce need to commute along the A40. Some homes should be built with workspace for home working and small business provision.

- n. Dwellings built around large, shared gardens for growing, socialising and playing, and allotments, orchards, guerrilla gardening spaces and food-sharing schemes: a community self-sufficient in food. Small private gardens or beds for food growing near the kitchen.
- o. Integrated waste management systems to minimise vehicle movements and landfill.
- p. Water conservation: eg, grey water for WC flushing, watering.
- q. **A Garden Village layout of land uses, building types, density, networks and parking that discourages car use and encourages sustainable low impact mobility.**

5. Supporting biodiversity

Conserve and wherever possible enhance the existing very rich variety of habitats and their accompanying biodiversity, providing robust protection for rare and endangered species which are a significant feature of the site.

- a. Concentrate first on connectivity for wildlife into and beyond the site and construct no barriers to freedom of movement for nature. That will automatically enable connectivity for humans as well.
- b. Protect sensitive areas and species from human and animal interference (eg, ground nesting birds, amphibians, and rare arable and meadow plants). Swift boxes in all houses.
- c. Create a natural progression from built-up areas in the south to a mix of buildings and public open space, to the wilder and non-intensively farmed land to the north.
- d. Introduce as much rewilding as possible to areas that are unsuitable for housing, such as former landfill sites, strips beside surrounding roads, flood-prone zones.
- e. Retain as much agricultural land in its present form as possible.
- f. Design high-density layout to leave as much of the existing countryside as possible.
- g. Keep the best soil for continuing agricultural use, a community orchard or farm, allotments, horticulture, etc.
- h. Keep all existing hedgerows and trees in wide green corridors and ponds and consider creating new ones. When planting new trees, plant scrub around them as well to protect saplings from deer damage.
- i. Ensure ongoing monitoring is carried out.
- j. Enough land around for organic agriculture and horticulture, including smallholdings, to flourish – embedded in biodiverse land and habitats that ensure sustainable cohabitation with other species.
- k. Protection of the rich biodiversity and historical assets that make this place unique as well as the rural nature of West Oxfordshire and the site in particular.

6. Democratic ownership and governance

Meaningful community involvement and control in governance with an element of shared ownership and co-ordinated site management.

- a. Residents' group control based on an element of shared (co-operative) 'ownership' of the GV and its land assets.
- b. Land value capture for community benefit.
- c. Community spaces for parkland, recreation and growing food.
- d. Land and dwellings owned by the community through community Cooperative Land Trusts and shared ownership schemes (see Local Plan).
- e. Explore possibility of Commonhold – a new type of property ownership, an alternative to the long leasehold system. It allows freehold ownership of individual flats, houses and non-residential units within a building or an estate. The rest of the building or estate forming the Commonhold is owned and managed jointly by the flat or unit holders, through a Commonhold association. (<https://www.lease-advice.org/adviceguide/commonhold/>)
- f. Single system of co-ordinated land management and maintenance.
- g. Long-term protection of open space from development.
- h. Transparency in all matters of finance and resources, at all stages of the project – planning, construction and the ongoing running of the Garden Village – based on **'Open Book Accountability'**.
- i. The direct involvement of EPIC and other Community organisations with WODC, masterplanners and developers in negotiations to plan facilities at the Garden Village. These should assume the highest standards, not limited simply to assessing basic need. Garden Villages embody aspirational place-making which centres on the health, well-being and happiness of individuals, families and the whole community, especially the most vulnerable: in Garden City language, love, life and liberty for all the village's inhabitants.
- j. Long term inspiration panel or board: a group of experts in planning, energy, design, ecology, etc (and community representatives) to challenge the design and delivery process to achieve the highest standards, hold designers to account and to ensure the principles and priorities are delivered in the long term. This needs to be built into the AAP, and could lead later into the governance body.

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