

Garden Village Design Review Summary



EPIC has been represented at two full day meetings of Grosvenor's Design Review Panel since May. The panel is made up of independent architects/urban designers/masterplanners, a landscape architect, conservation specialist and a transport planner.

Most of the other attendees are from the Grosvenor team, with some WODC officers. We were glad that the Eynsham community was represented by a member who has relevant experience; it is quite unusual to have members of the community present, and the panel said they found it useful. This is why we have had a preview of what Grosvenor are proposing.

Some of our ideas have been taken on board- for example the importance of the ancient Salt Way and Saxon path and the sensitivity of land around City Farm- but overall we are very concerned that many of the issues raised at the first panel meeting had not been addressed satisfactorily by the second: the masterplan is not obviously driven by garden village principles or the climate emergency and the result is not innovative or inspirational. Much work has been carried out, but the panel felt that the masterplan still had a way to go.

We are giving you this summary of the points and concerns and suggested questions so that you can raise them at the consultation event on 29th/ 30th November at the Baptist Hall, Lombard Street:

Friday 29th November 16:00 – 20:00 and **Saturday 30th November 11:00 – 15:00**

The panel of experts has echoed many of the issues and concerns raised by local residents. Questions *in italics* are related to the Garden Village Principles on which the design should be based, and listed below.*

- *Principle 7: How does the masterplan respond meaningfully to the Climate Emergency and achieve zero-carbon and energy positive development?* The panel has repeatedly stated that the plan does not respond to the climate emergency. The panel said the whole design and layout must be driven by the imperative to achieve zero carbon- it cannot be added on later.
- *How can this development benefit Eynsham when the masterplan and AAP only deal with the Garden Village?*
- *How does the development answer the Garden Village Principles?*
Many of the government's own principles for a Garden Village have been ignored.
- *Principles 1-3: How will the community benefit from land value capture and have the funds and power to deliver long term management?* The Plan needs a clear management strategy to reflect community interests community eg via a Land Trust. The managing body needs to be controlled by the community and have the assets to provide long term sustainability.
- *Principle 4: Will the masterplan ensure that housing is tenure blind (no visible difference between different tenures), with different ownerships mixed throughout the site? Will the masterplan and Design Code allow the full range of housing types- including social rent, 'affordable' rent and sale, self build etc?*
- *Principle 5: Will the masterplan include non traditional and dispersed employment opportunities outside the employment zone?*
- *Principle 6: What steps will you take to ensure that the design is innovative and inspirational, an exemplar for others to follow? What will make this development stand out? How will it be memorable ? What is the big idea? Will you commit to design competitions? Will you adopt community ideas such as small local growing spaces, shared, safe community spaces surrounded by housing?* The panel found that the layouts were a standard developer response (albeit with more undeveloped land) and draw little from other contemporary exemplar sites. We have

suggested higher densities in order to protect land to retain the rural character and benefits for our community, but this is not reflected in parts of the masterplan. The only landmark is a belvedere, the layout lacks a coherent design, filling the spaces between hedges but not creating interesting neighbourhoods that reflect the landscape. The public realm needs more structure and place making. The entry points are uninteresting and risk being dominated by the Park and Ride.

- *Principle 7: How can there be a net gain in biodiversity when a new arable plant survey has identified 7 fields of national importance in the site, some of which will be built over? How will the gain be demonstrated and monitored? How will you protect precious ground nesting birds from people and their pets?* It is not clear how they plan to balance the retention of agricultural land with open space and areas protected for wildlife space. They are also building on the best agricultural land. Interconnected wildlife areas and endangered species need more protection.
- *Principle 7: Will you facilitate a Community Renewable Energy Group?* EPIC and GreenTEA are also attending meetings to develop an Energy Plan, but planning for sustainability is behind other garden villages.
- *Principle 8: What facilities will the Garden Village offer to Eynsham residents? Where will the buzz be?*
- *Principle 9: How will you resolve the connections between the Garden Village and Eynsham? Who will pay for a bridge? How will you ensure that walking, cycling and public transport are safe and more attractive than driving for school students, health centre visits, and recreation? Have you prepared a travel plan?* The transport problems and the A40 congestion have not been addressed and there is no agreed position on the links between Eynsham and the Garden Village. There needs to be a clear travel plan at the outset.
- *Principle 9: How will you review the road structure, movement strategy and approach to parking as suggested by the panel?* The challenges of transport to and within the site are complex but the panel found that road design and car parking are conventional and unimaginative; there is likely to be too much tarmac.
- *Will there be further meetings of the Design Review Panel to answer the panel's concerns?* We are disappointed that many of the imaginative ideas from the Charette have not been pursued, and some of the views from the local community are not reflected in the masterplan. Further work is needed and this crucial stage should not be rushed.
The panel said that the masterplan was only half way there, but much detail is being developed as if the design is complete.

***TCPA Garden City Principles on which garden village principles are based**

1. Land value capture for the benefit of the community.
2. Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.
3. Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.
4. Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable.
5. A wide range of local jobs in the Garden City within easy commuting distance of homes.
6. Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food.
7. Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and that uses zero-carbon and energy positive technology to ensure climate resilience.
8. Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods.
9. Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.

EPIC