

## **Matter 8 – Sustainable Economic Growth**

### Answer to 8.1

The proposed WODC Local Plan does not present convincing and up-to-date evidence to justify its stated assumptions (please read answer to 7.1).

Paragraph 6.16 of the Local Plan suggests a need for 60 hectares of business development over the plan period, focused on the main towns where it can be best served by transport and communication infrastructure.

The transport infrastructure in Eynsham and the A40 corridor is currently a great obstacle to any commercial development. The current Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) A40 enhancements proposal (under consultation) only partially addresses this issue by creating incomplete bus lanes on the A40 corridor congestion zone. Neither the WODC Local Plan nor the OCC A40 enhancements proposal appears to have presented scenarios for modelling traffic patterns resulting from the population increase on the A40 corridor.

### Answer to 8.2

As stated in the answer to 7.1, the identified objectively assessed need (OAN) does not present convincing and up-to-date evidence to justify 660 homes per year (mid-point figure) for the plan period. Furthermore, the agreement by WODC to build 2750 new dwellings at the Cotswold Garden Village in the Eynsham parish, in order to satisfy Oxford's unmet housing needs, together with the congestion issues of the A40 corridor, seem to be in conflict with the development of a 60-hectare business park. Is the idea that the business park will be populated by commuting workers from Oxford (thus worsening the A40 congestion issue)? Or is it that employees are anticipated to be from the local area (raising questions about how viable this is and whether the right types of skill are present)? How is this expected to work given the A40 congestion issues? Neither the WODC nor the OCC give any concrete and reliable information about this matter. Indeed, the proposed WODC Local Plan only goes as far as to commit to seek contributions from 'appropriate new developments' towards a solution to the A40 congestion problem.

### Answer to 8.3

As addressed in the answer to 7.1, it is clear that there is a high risk that the proposed employment requirements and the attributed 60 hectares of land are incorrect.

### Answer to 8.7

Policy E5 states support for the development and retention of local services. However, there is almost no detailed definition in the WODC Local Plan about how that will be guaranteed.

Although it is acknowledged that there is an issue regarding synchronicity between plans to provide housing (i.e. WODC) and plans to provide infrastructure (i.e. OCC and central government), it should be expected that at least some degree of evidence and plan detail should be provided in the proposals:

- (i) impact of housing volume on infrastructure (health, transport, education, utilities);
- (ii) long-term plans providing funding and implementation detail; and

(iii) strategies to mitigate impact on the existing Eynsham community.

For example, the ‘Eynsham Park & Ride and A40 Bus Lane Consultation Report’ published by the OCC in February 2017 states that four strategic development sites identified in the A40 corridor in the WODC Local Plan could be at risk due to the current congestion status on the A40. Those sites are:

- (i) north Witney (1400 homes);
- (ii) east Witney (350 homes);
- (iii) west Eynsham (1000 homes); and
- (iv) Cotswold Garden Village to the north of Eynsham (2200 homes).

OCC also has proposals under consultation to enhance the A40 corridor between the proposed Eynsham Park and Ride and the Duke’s Cut canal bridge near Wolvercote to attempt to fix congestion issues.

However, WODC has agreed that 2750 homes of the 3200 to be built in Eynsham will be designed to supply Oxford’s unmet housing needs (i.e. most residents of those houses would be commuting to Oxford). The WODC Local Plan provides no detail on how to guarantee that the proposed enhancements are fit for purpose. For example:

- (i) how many buses at peak hours would be required?
- (ii) how many commuters from the 2750 houses would be expected to commute on a daily basis?
- (iii) what is the impact of not resolving Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts capacity issues?
- (iv) is the proposed partial enhancement on the A40 enough to avoid congestion?
- (v) should enhancements to the A40 and the proposed Park and Ride be planned from Witney rather than from Eynsham?
- (vi) should rail service enhancements also be expected?
- (vii) what are the project implementation timescales/phases and where is the funding going to come from?

Eynsham’s education, health and transport services are already under great pressure. The WODC Local Plan must provide some degree of well-founded evidence that the proposed goals are feasible, and that the planned housing and infrastructure provision is balanced and fit for purpose. If they fail to do this, the plans are likely to end in failure and require corrective patches in the long term and to the detriment of the Eynsham community.

*Submitted on behalf of EPIC (Eynsham Planning Improvement Campaign), including Sandy Hellig and Nigel Pearce*