



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Thursday 27 February 2020
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 6
Subject	Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP) Update
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Cllr Jeff Haine Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning Email: jeff.haine@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager Tel: 01993 861686 Email: chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To provide the committee with a brief update on the progress of the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP).
Annexes	None
Recommendation	That the content of the report, and the proposed next steps in relation to the progression of the Area Action Plan, be noted.
Corporate priorities	
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	The AAP has been the subject of widespread public consultation.

I. BACKGROUND

- I.1. Members will be aware that land to the north of the A40 near Eynsham is allocated in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 to deliver a new garden village of around 2,200 homes, together with around 40 hectares of business land in the form of a science park along with a range of other supporting services and facilities.
- I.2. The proposal is one of a number of garden communities being supported by Government to help meeting the nationally identified need for new homes.
- I.3. The Local Plan requires the garden village to be comprehensively developed and led by an 'Area Action Plan' (AAP).
- I.4. Initial consultation on the AAP took place from June – August 2018 with views sought on a number of key issues and opportunities including housing mix and affordability, job creation, skills and training, transport, biodiversity, health and well-being, design, the natural and historic environment and climate change.
- I.5. A good level of response was received with a number of clear, recurring themes including the importance of addressing congestion on the A40, the relationship of the garden village to nearby Eynsham including points of connectivity and available services and facilities, the importance of wildlife and plants within and near the site, the importance of addressing climate change, the need for a balanced and affordable mix of new homes and the need to robustly address issues such as flood risk, biodiversity, design standards, landscape and visual impact and future maintenance and stewardship arrangements.
- I.6. Following the initial issues paper consultation, the District Council commissioned a range of supporting technical evidence on various matters including landscape, green infrastructure, heritage, ecology, transport, employment and infrastructure provision. These reports are all available online at www.westoxon.gov.uk/gardenvillage
- I.7. A 3-day design event was held in May 2019 to discuss the broad potential 'layout' of different land uses across the garden village site.
- I.8. Subsequently, a further 'Preferred Options' consultation took place from August – October 2019. The consultation paper set out a potential draft 'vision' for the garden village, supported by a number of core objectives and proposed policy approaches based around 7 core themes:
 - Building a strong, vibrant and sustainable community
 - Healthy place shaping
 - Protecting and enhancing environmental assets
 - Meeting current and future housing needs
 - Enterprise, innovation and productivity
 - Transport, movement and connectivity
 - Climate change and resilience
- I.9. As part of the consultation, views were sought on three layout options or 'spatial frameworks'; one based on a single village centre and two based around three distinct neighbourhood centres.
- I.10. Public exhibitions were held in Eynsham on 6 September and at Long Hanborough on 20 September. These events were both well-attended.
- I.11. Around 80 written responses were received during the consultation period from individuals and organisations raising a range of different issues. These are available to view online: https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/2078858/Schedule-of-Responses_to-publish.pdf

- I.12. Pleasingly, the overall approach set out in the preferred options paper was generally supported with a number of respondents welcoming the fact that the paper had taken on board a large number of the issues raised during the initial consultation in 2018.
- I.13. The vision and objectives were largely supported 'in principle' with many comments intended to strengthen rather than completely rework them. Importantly, the general concept of basing the AAP around seven core themes was well supported and as such, provides a strong basis for taking the final draft AAP forward.
- I.14. Many responses endorsed the aims and objectives of the AAP on issues such as climate change and biodiversity net gain, but emphasised the importance of the final draft AAP being able to back these up through robust and enforceable policies.
- I.15. Other specific comments raised included
- Concern about the impact of development on the A40 and other surrounding routes;
 - The importance of providing safe and effective connections to Eynsham, Hanborough Station and other key destinations;
 - The nature and function of the A40 and how this could be altered to better encourage integration between the new community and existing Eynsham;
 - Support for the concept of a 'green loop' linking around the northern edge of the garden village site and across to the West Eynsham SDA;
 - General support for the suggested approach of 25% net gain in biodiversity;
 - Questions regarding the 'effectiveness' of the proposed park and ride site next to Cuckoo Lane;
 - Housing affordability and the need to ensure new homes are 'genuinely affordable';
 - Support for the provision of self/custom build opportunities across the site;
 - The need for a suitably ambitious approach in respect of climate change including building efficiency and renewable/low-carbon energy solutions;
 - The importance of high-quality design, led by a suitable mechanism such as an agreed design code;
 - The need to ensure the development is future-proofed in respect of digital connectivity and changing patterns of work and travel; and
 - The need for a co-ordinated approach to delivery alongside the West Eynsham SDA, particularly in respect of the provision of key supporting infrastructure including education.
- I.16. Mixed views were received on the three spatial framework options with some respondents favouring a single village centre and others favouring the concept of three smaller neighbourhood centres across the site.

2. CURRENT PROGRESS AND NEXT STEPS

- 2.1. The consultation responses received are continuing to be analysed by Officers with a view to informing the final submission draft version of the Area Action Plan. Various supporting evidence on transport, infrastructure and energy also remains ongoing.
- 2.2. Officers had hoped to be able to report the final draft AAP to Cabinet and Council in March, however in light of various workstreams remaining ongoing it is now the intention to report to Cabinet and Council in April 2020 with a view to a 6-week statutory period of consultation thereafter.

- 2.3. Submission for independent examination would then follow sometime around June/July 2020 with hearings expected to take place in late summer/autumn.
- 2.4. Officers are also continuing to work with the site promoter Grosvenor Developments Ltd. who are intending to submit an outline planning application for the garden village site in spring 2020.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The report raises no direct financial implications.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The report raises no specific legal implications.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. No specific risks have been identified in respect of this report.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1. The report raises no specific implications for any particular group or individual.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. No direct implications.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1. None.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1. None.