



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	Cabinet: Wednesday 22 July 2020
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 9
Subject	Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)
Wards affected	Eynsham and Cassington, Freeland and Hanborough
Accountable member	Councillor 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 consider and approve the pre-submission draft Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP) for the purposes of a six-week statutory period of public consultation in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
Annex	Annex A – Pre-Submission Draft Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP).
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) That the Council be recommended to approve the pre-submission draft Area Action Plan (AAP) attached at Annex A for the purposes of formal publication for a statutory period of 6-weeks in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;b) That the Council be recommended to authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, to make any minor factual/typographical/formatting amendments to the pre-submission draft AAP in conjunction with Officers, prior to formal publication; andc) That the Council be recommended to agree that subject to there being no significant issues raised during the statutory 6-week period, the pre-submission draft Area Action Plan (AAP) be formally submitted to the Secretary of State in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 including any minor modifications.
Corporate priorities	The submission draft AAP is consistent with a number of the priorities set out in the Council Plan including climate action, healthy towns and villages, strong local communities, a vibrant economy and meeting housing needs.
Key Decision	N/A
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	Extensive consultation has taken place since 2018 including an 'Issues and Options' consultation from 22 June – 3 August 2018 and a 'Preferred Options' consultation from 16 August – 11 October 2019. This has been augmented with ongoing community engagement.

I. BACKGROUND

- I.1. Members will be aware that as part of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, land to the north of the A40 near Eynsham is allocated under Policy EW1 for the provision of a new, free-standing exemplar Garden Village, the comprehensive development of which will be led by an Area Action Plan (AAP).
- I.2. As a first step in preparing an AAP for the Garden Village, the Council undertook an initial 'Issues and Options' consultation from June – August 2018. The issues paper sought views on a broad range of issues and opportunities for the site and generated over 200 responses from a variety of individuals and organisations.
- I.3. Following on from this, a range of technical evidence and analysis was commissioned on various subjects including housing need, employment, infrastructure, landscape, ecology, flood risk, drainage, heritage and transport.
- I.4. This was supplemented by ongoing community engagement through the garden village community forum, including a number of 'study tours' held in early 2019 and a 3-day design event held in May 2019.
- I.5. To further develop the AAP, a 'Preferred Options' consultation was held from August – October 2020.
- I.6. A good level of response was received from around 80 respondents with generally positive feedback. The main issues raised included:
 - The importance of robustly addressing the climate change emergency;
 - Housing affordability;
 - Supporting new homes with jobs to reduce out-commuting;
 - Traffic impact on the A40 and surrounding routes;
 - The importance of 'active travel' including walking and cycling to move away from reliance on the private car;
 - The timely provision of supporting infrastructure in particular community facilities early in the development;
 - The relationship of the garden village with Eynsham including 'connectivity' between the two;
 - The importance of place-making, not just house building – using the character of the site and its surroundings to create a distinct sense of place;
 - Biodiversity including the need to achieve a positive 'net gain';
 - The need to provide extensive green space;
 - Importance of high quality and innovative design and materials;
 - Flood risk and water quality;
 - Conservation and enhancement of the historic environment including Listed Buildings at City Farm;
 - Inclusivity – the need to make the garden village a place for all; and
 - The importance of putting in place robust arrangements for long-term stewardship and maintenance of key assets including green infrastructure and community buildings.
- I.7. Following the preferred option consultation, further technical evidence and analysis has been prepared on a number of subjects including zero-carbon, underground waste collection systems, transport, infrastructure and options for the creation of a community land trust.
- I.8. These, along with ongoing stakeholder feedback, have fed into the final, pre-submission draft version of the AAP which is attached at Annex A.

2. PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT AREA ACTION PLAN (AAP)

- 2.1. The pre-submission draft AAP is split into four main parts:
 - Part 1 – Introduction and Background
 - Part 2 – Vision and Core Themes
 - Part 3 – The Strategy
 - Part 4 – Measuring Progress
- 2.2. The main part of the AAP (Part 3 – The Strategy) is broken down into seven themes including:
 - Climate action
 - Healthy place shaping
 - Protecting and enhancing environmental assets
 - Movement and connectivity
 - Enterprise, innovation and productivity
 - Meeting current and future housing needs
 - Building a strong, vibrant and sustainable community
- 2.3. Climate action is intentionally the first of these seven themes and forms a ‘golden thread’ running through the whole of the AAP.
- 2.4. The seven themes align closely with the Council Plan and were well-supported at the preferred option stage. They are also consistent with established garden village principles and Officers are confident that they are a solid foundation upon which to base the AAP.
- 2.5. Each theme includes a series of core objectives and policies which will be used to guide future development proposals at the garden village as they come forward.
- 2.6. There are 31 policies in total, covering a range of topics such as net zero carbon development, green infrastructure, biodiversity net gain, active and healthy travel, design, housing mix and stewardship.
- 2.7. Importantly, the AAP includes an illustrative Framework Plan setting out in broad terms the anticipated spatial arrangement of different land uses within the garden village as well as the key points of access.
- 2.8. The framework plan is based on the concept of a centrally located village centre, supported by three neighbourhood centres in the east, north and west of the site and all interspersed with extensive green and blue infrastructure including a new, multi-functional, biodiverse Country Park. The emphasis is on compact ‘walkability’ with key facilities intended to be less than 10 minutes walking distance from new homes.
- 2.9. The framework plan is based on supporting technical evidence and stakeholder engagement and establishes an overall framework for development against which any subsequent masterplan will be considered.
- 2.10. The AAP also includes a delivery and monitoring framework setting out the mechanisms through which proposals at the Garden Village will be delivered as well as the indicators which will be used to monitor progress as the scheme comes forward. This will be included in Section 12 of the AAP, and that Section will be completed and circulated in advance of the Cabinet meeting.
- 2.11. Subject to the agreement of Members, the pre-submission draft AAP will be published for a statutory 6-week period of public consultation. It is anticipated that this will take place from August – September 2020.
- 2.12. Provided no significant issues are raised during the statutory 6-week period, the pre-submission draft AAP will be formally submitted to the Secretary of State in accordance

with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 including any minor modifications.

- 2.13. At that point, a timetable for the independent examination of the AAP will be agreed.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. There will be a cost associated with the formal consultation process and examination but this is able to be met from existing budgets.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The report raises no specific legal implications. Preparation of the pre-submission draft AAP accords with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. The main risks to the pre-submission draft AAP are that it is found to be 'unsound' when considered at independent examination; that the Council has failed to comply with the relevant legislative requirements in preparing the AAP and/or; that the Council has not fulfilled its obligations under the Duty to Co-Operate.
- 5.2. Officers are confident that the AAP is robust and based on extensive technical evidence and stakeholder feedback and that all legislative requirements have been met along with the Council's obligations under the Duty to Co-Operate.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1. The pre-submission draft AAP is not anticipated to raise any specific implications for any particular equality strand.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS (IF REQUIRED)

- 7.1. The pre-submission draft AAP includes climate action as the central aspect of seven core themes, acting as a 'golden thread' running through the whole document and reflected in policies on various subjects including climate resilience, zero-carbon development, the water environment, movement and connectivity, biodiversity and design.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1. None.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1. Please see www.westoxon.gov.uk/gardenvillage for background papers and evidence.