

Appendix A

Text for WODC Full Council Meeting, 27 February 2019

I am speaking on behalf of EPIC, the Eynsham Planning Improvement Campaign, and other residents and interests in Eynsham.

We were pleased to see that Homes England have given the Council a further £150,000 to [quote] “help support additional community engagement and expert advice into the future planning for the Garden Village, which is being taken forward through an Area Action Plan”.

We also understand that the Council has wisely accumulated significant financial reserves, some of which could be allocated to the employment of genuinely independent experts acting as an entirely impartial third party.

We would request that the Council give a full public account of how it intends to spend the extra £150,000 and any reserves it may intend to allocate. We ask this because, despite our concerns (expressed in a number of emails, many of them as yet unanswered), and despite some small improvements, the community engagement and, specifically, the community forums, leave a great deal to be desired. We have made several constructive suggestions to achieve meaningful community participation and wait to hear how these ideas will be developed further with the extra funds available.

The forums to date remain too tightly controlled and without expert independent facilitation. We are not given enough information before each one, or given updates on all the technical surveys being carried out, or given written feedback after the forums of what was said and how our opinions, knowledge and expertise have been

taken on board and will be written into the Area Action Plan. Our discussions remain at a theoretical level. Without better feedback and assurance that the process is leading to concrete outcomes, disillusionment will grow and community participation will fall below the already low levels.

In short, we are not at all confident that our considerable input is having any influence on WODC's, and Grosvenor's, plans as they take this project forward.

We would also like to be given a very clear explanation of how WODC and Grosvenor are working together, who is doing what and when, and how this all dovetails into coordinated planning. Our concern about this applies particularly to the Master Planning, Design Code and Design Guidance, the extent of community participation and independent advice in their development and how these documents relate to, and will be accommodated in, the Area Action Plan.

We also maintain that the work by WODC and the community should be used to shape development in west Eynsham as well; we feel very strongly that the whole Eynsham area, its facilities, infrastructure and connections, should be planned together as a co-ordinated masterplan and to the same high standards of design and construction. For example, at the recent forum, maps were supplied which indicated the garden village but omitted the West Eynsham SDA, the park and ride and associated changes to the road network. We have heard nothing recently from WODC on the development in west Eynsham nor on the safe connection between old Eynsham and the garden village site which will be used daily by school students and other residents.

Finally, we remain to be convinced that the garden city principles will be achieved in this development, the first principle being 'Land value capture for the benefit of the community' (TCPA).