

West Eynsham Masterplan March 2022

This paper sets out Oxfordshire County Council Officer views of the submission version of the West Eynsham Masterplan. This paper has been prepared for consideration by West Oxfordshire District Council ahead of the Joint Climate & Environment and Economic & Social Overview & Scrutiny Committee 14th March and Cabinet 16th March 2022.

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) welcomes the preparation of a comprehensive masterplan for West Eynsham Strategic Development Area, as required by West Oxfordshire Local Plan Policy EW2. OCC have been actively engaged in the preparation of the West Eynsham Masterplan, providing comment in January 2022 and October 2021. We appreciate that some of our comments have been addressed in the preparation of the submission version of the West Eynsham masterplan.

There are some outstanding matters however, which OCC is seeking to be addressed to enable appropriate provision and funding of necessary infrastructure for the development. These matters are detailed below.

Transport

In the submission draft of the Masterplan the parcels that were previously identified as Phase 2 (Vanderbilt) and Phase 3 (Berkeley) have been combined to a Phase 2/3, potentially in response to previous comments that this was not considered suitable. The supporting text however states that the intention is for the Vanderbilt land to remain as Phase 2 and as a result recognises that a vehicle access will be required from Thornbury Road.

The Highway Authority have previously indicated that access for construction vehicles via Thornbury Road would not be supported for highway safety reasons. The size of vehicle required to service the construction site cannot easily utilise Thornbury Road without encroaching upon the footways which presents the possibility of conflict with pedestrians. The likelihood of this occurring increases both with the number of pedestrians and the number of non-construction related vehicles using the route. With the Thornbury Green development having been constructed Thornbury Road now serves an additional approximately 160 dwellings that will need to retain access via foot, cycle and vehicle during construction and it is not clear how this could be adequately controlled.

Alternatively, once the A40 access junction is completed and Phase 1 has commenced then it may be possible for construction traffic to reach the site internally within the SDA via a temporary 'haul road' type arrangement. If the SDA spine road is not sufficiently progressed to serve residential occupations at the time they occur then it would be possible to connect the new dwellings to Thornbury Road. It should be noted however that this arrangement would still be contrary to Policy ENP7 of the Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031 and could potentially make the longer

term objectives of the Masterplan to make this a walking and cycling access only (whilst providing for emergency vehicle access) unlikely.

It is the view of the Highway Authority that the Masterplan should be clarified/amended to be clear that the development (and its phasing) requires all construction traffic serving the site to do so via vehicle access points from the A40 and B4449.

Regarding the Thomas Homes site, access will need to be co-ordinated and we appreciate there is reference in the masterplan to integration. It is OCCs preference that there is no direct vehicular access from Abbey Green/West Eynsham and Old Witney Road, and it should be walking/cycling link only (with provision for emergency access).

Property (Schools)

The masterplan is inconsistent in reference to the school requirements. The development will need to provide a 2.22ha site and the building for a minimum 1.5FE school to enable future expansion to 2FE as required.

At page 88 of the submission draft of the masterplan, revisions are required as below.

~~'The development will fund the delivery of a new school on this site of a scale proportionate to the development's impact; a minimum of One Form Entry (1FE)-1.5FE primary school and provide 2.22ha of land.'~~

The location of the school site and layout cannot be agreed until it has been demonstrated to meet OCC requirements and criteria as set out in the checklists provided to the developers (information and process required to assess the suitability of a school site, the design criteria for primary school sites, and the education site checklist).

We also note that the supporting committee report at paragraph 5.12 states that the development needs to provide a site for the provision of a new primary school. The report should read that the site needs to provide a 2.22ha site **and** provide the building of a 1.5FE primary school.

Infrastructure Delivery

OCC is seeking further clarity as to whether the Berkeley site intend to fund and direct deliver the primary school.

OCC considers an appropriate approach to delivery can be achieved but recognises there are challenges and working this through the s106 agreement process will need to be done with care recognising the need to permit individual developments while ensuring infrastructure is funded and delivered in a timely manner.

On the apportionment of infrastructure costs between sites – it is not clear how what is proposed will work in practice. Infrastructure that is to be apportioned must be fully funded by the time it is required even though not all sites have come forward to

provide the full cost of the infrastructure. It must therefore be recognised that some sites may have to forward fund the infrastructure and the forward funding recouped when the remaining site(s) come forward. The primary school is an example if it is not to be direct delivered.

We will continue to work in collaboration with West Oxfordshire District Council and seek that these changes are made to the West Eynsham masterplan prior to agreement.

Amrik Manku
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