

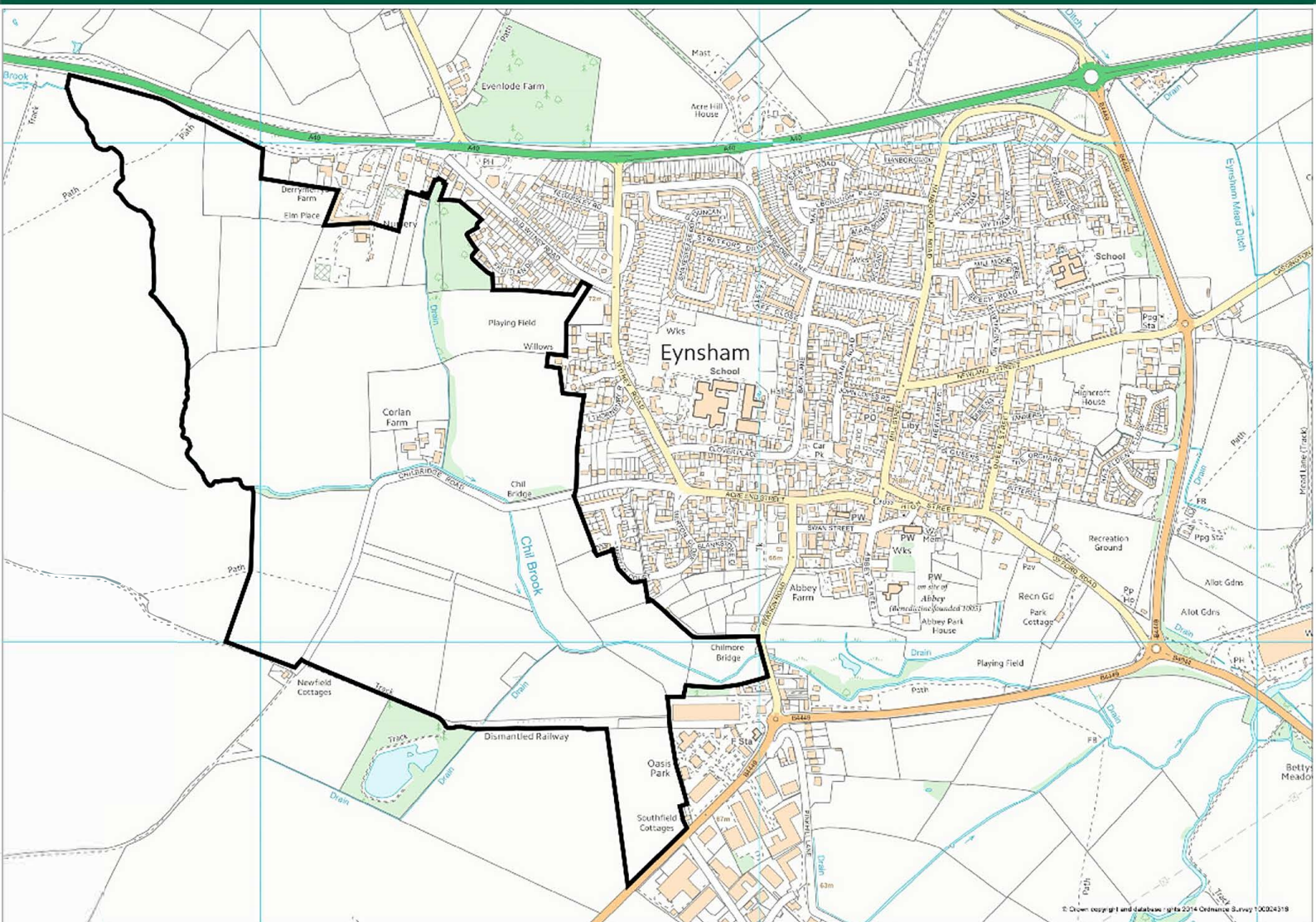


WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

West Eynsham Strategic Development Area

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Issues Paper

July 2018



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Appendix 1 – Excerpt from Local Plan including proposed further main modifications (February 2018)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Land to the west of Eynsham is allocated in the draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 for a new urban extension of around 1,000 homes together with supporting services and facilities including a new primary school and western spine road.
- 1.2 The development has the potential to offer a number of benefits including the provision of a range of new housing opportunities, publicly accessible open space, new community facilities and improved access to the surrounding countryside.
- 1.3 To help guide the future comprehensive development of the site, the Council intends to prepare a supplementary planning document (SPD) in the form of a 'Development Framework' setting out the key objectives and principles that will need to be addressed as the site is taken forward.
- 1.4 Once adopted, the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of any future planning applications for the site.
- 1.5 This initial 'issues paper' is the first step in preparing the Development Framework SPD and its purpose is to:
 - Briefly explain the background to the proposal and how we have arrived at this point;
 - Provide an overview of the West Eynsham site;
 - Highlight the physical and policy constraints affecting the site; and
 - Seek initial views on the key issues and priorities to be addressed through the SPD as the site is taken forward
- 1.6 Responses to this initial 'issues paper' consultation will be taken into account as the draft SPD is worked up ahead of consultation later in the year.
- 1.7 The issues paper consultation runs for 8 weeks from **27 July until 21 September 2018**. You can respond in the following ways:
 - Email: planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk
 - Write to: Planning Policy, West Oxfordshire District Council, New Yatt Road, Witney, OX28 1PB
- 1.8 If you require any further information or assistance regarding the consultation please telephone the Council's Planning Policy Team on 01993 861667.

2. Background context

2.1 In this section we provide some background information on the following:

- What a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is and why we are preparing one for West Eynsham;
- What the draft Local Plan says about West Eynsham;
- How and why the West Eynsham site was identified;
- The anticipated benefits of the proposal;
- What the draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan says about West Eynsham; and
- How the West Eynsham site relates to the proposed Garden Village north of Eynsham

What is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and why prepare one for West Eynsham?

2.2 A supplementary planning document (SPD) essentially builds upon and adds more detailed guidance or advice on the policies set out in the Local Plan. They are often used to provide guidance on specific sites or on particular issues such as design and affordable housing.

2.3 In particular, SPDs should be used where they can help applicants make successful applications or assist with the delivery of infrastructure. They are a material consideration in planning decisions but do not form part of the statutory development plan.

2.4 The proposed West Eynsham site is a suitable candidate for SPD as it involves a large number of new homes, the provision of important supporting infrastructure including education and transport and has a number of specific issues that need to be carefully addressed including heritage, landscape and flood risk. The site is also in several land ownerships which necessitates a co-ordinated approach to masterplanning, delivery and implementation.

What does the draft Local Plan say about West Eynsham?

2.5 The West Eynsham site is allocated for development under Policy EW1b of the draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. A copy of the policy and relevant supporting text¹ is attached in full at Appendix 1.

2.6 In summary, the site has been identified as a 'Strategic Development Area' (SDA) which is intended to accommodate a new sustainable and integrated community that forms a positive addition to Eynsham. The allocation envisages the provision of around 1,000 homes together with supporting infrastructure including a new primary school and a new western spine road connecting the A40 with the B4449 to the south of Eynsham.

¹ Incorporating the further main modifications (FMMs) published in February 2018

- 2.7 Importantly, the policy states that development must be taken forward in a comprehensive manner and led by an agreed masterplan. It also stipulates a number of other requirements in terms of supporting transport infrastructure, landscaping, biodiversity and green infrastructure as well as heritage, drainage and sustainability.
- 2.8 At the time of writing, the final report of the Local Plan Inspector is awaited. Once it has been received the Council hopes to be in a position to adopt the Local Plan in late summer 2018.

How and why was the West Eynsham site identified?

- 2.9 Various parcels of land to the west of Eynsham have been submitted to the Council for consideration in terms of development potential over a number of years.
- 2.10 As far back as 2007/2008, three parcels of land (Fruitlands, land off Old Witney Road and land to the west of Thornbury Road) were submitted for assessment through the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).² A further parcel of land at Corlan Farm was submitted in 2015.³
- 2.11 None of these sites were allocated in the Council's original pre-submission draft Local Plan published in March 2015; however following hearing sessions in November 2015 the Local Plan examination was suspended to allow the Council to undertake additional work on its own housing requirement and to address the issue of 'unmet' housing need from Oxford City.
- 2.12 As a result of the suspension, the Council instigated a review of its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) with a 'call for sites' taking place in January – February 2016.
- 2.13 In response, three further large parcels of land to the west of Eynsham were put forward for consideration on behalf of the landowners⁴. The Council subsequently concluded through the update of the SHLAA in 2016 that the land to the west of Eynsham was suitable in principle for housing development as part of a comprehensive scheme having regard to a number of criteria including accessibility, landscape, heritage, ecology and physical constraints.
- 2.14 In parallel with the Council's SHLAA update, part of the site (the area to the north of Chilbridge Road) was assessed independently as part of collective work on unmet housing need in Oxfordshire. This comprised a series of different studies including a 'spatial options assessment' undertaken by consultants LUC.⁵

² SHLAA sites 179, 180 and 223

³ SHLAA site 347

⁴ SHLAA sites 411, 435 and 437

⁵ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/1572227/SD14-Oxford-Spatial-Options-Assessment-LUC-September-2016-.pdf>

- 2.15 Their report looked at 36 different options across Oxfordshire and considered various issues including whether or not they are in the Green Belt, their sustainability including how well related they are to Oxford, social and economic considerations (e.g. access to schools and jobs) environmental issues (such as flood risk, biodiversity, landscape and heritage) and deliverability and viability.
- 2.16 In September 2016, having regard to the LUC report and a number of other studies (e.g. Green Belt, transport, education) the overall conclusion reached as part of the collective process between the Oxfordshire authorities was that the land west of Eynsham should be identified as one of a number of shortlisted options. An option north of the A40 near Eynsham was also shortlisted and is now being taken forward as the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village.
- 2.17 Other options considered in West Oxfordshire including sites at Witney and Barnard Gate were not taken forward as they performed less well when assessed against the agreed criteria.
- 2.18 Subsequently, the land to the west of Eynsham was included in the Council's main modifications to the Local Plan which were published in November 2016⁶. As part of this, the site was subject to Sustainability Appraisal⁷ (SA) assessment alongside a number of other reasonable alternatives and found to have mostly positive or neutral effects against the agreed SA objectives.

The anticipated benefits of the West Eynsham SDA

- 2.19 The West Eynsham SDA has the potential to deliver a number of positive benefits. It will provide a large number of new homes in a highly sustainable location including affordable housing to meet the needs of those who cannot buy or rent on the open market.
- 2.20 The development has the potential to deliver a new road connection from the A40 to the B4449 Stanton Harcourt Road around the west of Eynsham, thereby providing additional journey choice and potentially helping to reduce some unnecessary through traffic.
- 2.21 It will provide a new primary school together with the provision of new publicly accessible open space and good quality connections from Eynsham into the open countryside to the west.
- 2.22 These and other potential benefits are explored in more detail in Section 5.

What does the draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan say about the land to the west of Eynsham?

- 2.23 After conducting research and consulting with the community, Eynsham Parish Council produced a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the parish which was submitted for examination in September 2017.

⁶ <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/1572550/CD5-Local-Plan-including-Proposed-Modifications.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/1572188/CD10-Sustainability-Appraisal-Addendum-Report.pdf>

2.24 Unfortunately, the examiner's report of May 2018⁸ concluded that the plan should not proceed to referendum and it is currently being re-drafted. However, the previously submitted draft plan does include a number of aims and objectives of direct relevance to the land west of Eynsham and these are summarised below:

- Protect and enhance the perception of Eynsham as a village in a rural setting through ensuring a sensitive transition from human habitation to open countryside;
- The need for a comprehensive masterplan;
- Development on the western side of Eynsham to have one vehicular access point from the A40 and should not cause extra delay to A40 traffic;
- Vehicular access through the village from the west to be strictly limited, although access for pedestrians, cyclists and mobility vehicles should be provided;
- Chilbridge Road and Thornbury Road should provide emergency access with the latter open to buses and local traffic;
- Use of Chilbridge Road (public bridleway) by walkers, cyclists and mobility vehicles from and through the development should be encouraged;
- The new development should be integrated to both the existing village and its services and facilities and to the countryside, including providing specific designated routes;
- Residential streets should be designed to ensure a 20mph speed limit and/or on Home Zone principles;
- Development should sustain or better reveal the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets and harm to them and their setting avoided. A heritage statement will be required;
- Existing trees and hedgerows should be safeguarded, including in particular the hedge along the north side of Chilbridge Road. New street and appropriate planting will be encouraged;
- Ensure that the rural setting of the village is retained in terms of the quality and stability of the urban-countryside boundary;
- Pay particular attention to the views from Chilbridge Road to the village centre and Wytham Hill beyond and from the south and western road approaches;
- The Chil Brook is environmentally sensitive, will need careful landscaping and protection and enhancement for biodiversity. This area provides an excellent opportunity for a linear park (running from the A40 to Station Road and beyond to the Fishponds), incorporating flood attenuation ponds/swales, with appropriate public access;
- Land south of Chilbridge Road is a significant area of green space close to the village with ready public footpath access. Development here, including the proposed link road and any embankments, will dominate the scene;
- Adequate education capacity and recreational, cultural, social and health facilities shall be provided;
- A new small convenience store would serve the local area – ideally within a 800m walking distance;
- Consider provision of a new well-landscaped burial ground;

⁸ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/1829661/Final-Examiner-Report-Eynsham-Neighbourhood-Plan.pdf>

- Provision of a wide choice of house type/size and tenure, ideally within 1000m of the village centre;
- Generally 50% affordable housing will be required;
- At least 15% of new homes to be constructed to Lifetime Homes standard or equivalent to meet the needs of older and less able residents;
- High quality modern design is to be encouraged, especially low or zero net energy buildings;
- Make use of a design standard such as Building for Life;
- Introduce well-designed green infrastructure to create an attractive setting for development, making use of Sustainable Urban Drainage;
- Provision of a multi-functional community building; and
- New development designed and built using sustainable construction techniques as part of the transition to a low-carbon future and incorporating such features as safe bike storage and electricity charging points.

2.25 Notwithstanding the Neighbourhood Plan examiner's decision, it is evident that a considerable amount of time and effort has gone into the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and those responsible must be given a great deal of credit.

2.26 In taking forward the SPD we will therefore look to draw on the extensive range of information and analysis that has been undertaken to ensure the key issues and concerns raised by local residents and businesses through the neighbourhood plan process are taken into account as far as possible.

How does the West Eynsham site relate to the proposed Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village?

2.27 In addition to West Eynsham, the draft Local Plan 2031 allocates land to the north of Eynsham for the creation of a new garden village of around 2,200 homes. The two sites are in different land ownerships and are being promoted by different parties. They are also separated by the A40 which forms a well-defined, physical barrier.

2.28 However, there are a number of clear inter-relationships which will need to be taken into account as both sites are taken forward. These are explored in more detail later in this paper and include transport and access arrangements, education and other supporting infrastructure.

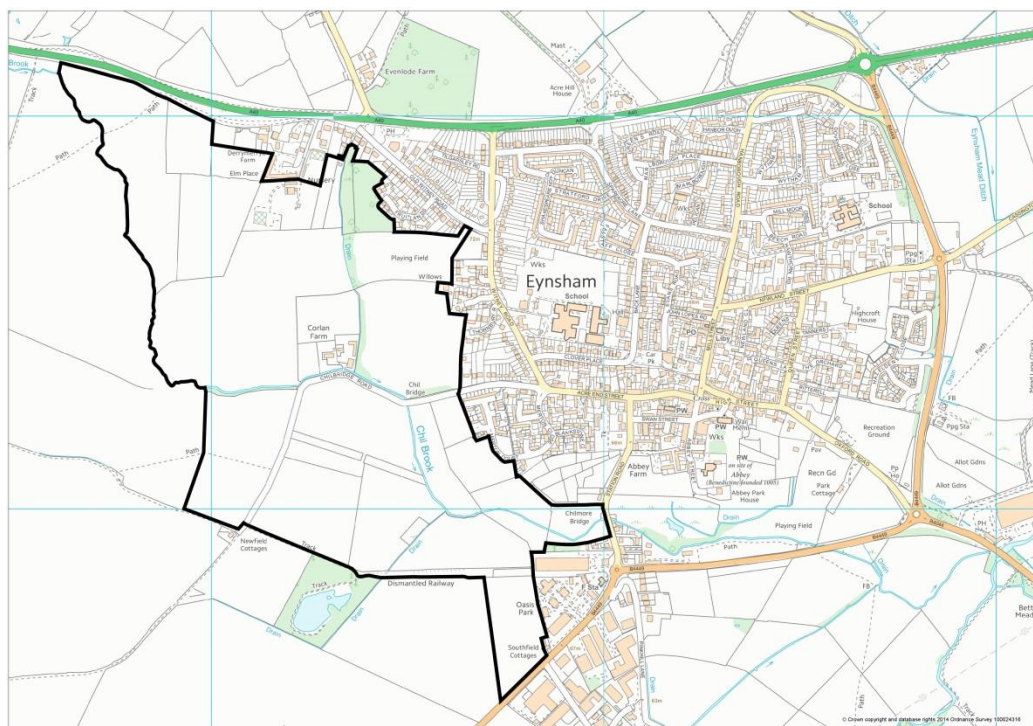
2.29 For example the size of any new primary school provided within the West Eynsham SDA could influence the number and size of any new primary schools provided within the garden village. Similarly, a new roundabout on the A40 to facilitate access into the West Eynsham SDA could also facilitate access into the garden village to the north.

2.30 It is therefore essential that the two sites are not considered in isolation but are instead treated in a comprehensive manner to ensure the most effective outcomes. It is for this reason that the Council intends to commission a separate Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) for the Eynsham area that will sit alongside and underpin the Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP) and the West Eynsham SPD.

3. The West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA)

- 3.1 The village of Eynsham lies just to the south of the A40, around half way between Witney and Oxford. Nearby settlements include Barnard Gate, Cassington, Stanton Harcourt, South Leigh, Freeland and Church Hanborough.
- 3.2 Eynsham functions as an important local service centre offering a wide range of facilities and employment, located just beyond the western edge of the Oxford Green Belt. With a population of just over 5,000, Eynsham is West Oxfordshire's fourth largest settlement and has a very good range of services and facilities, ranking 3rd in the Council's matrix of sustainability⁹ above Carterton despite having a much smaller population.
- 3.3 The West Eynsham SDA lies immediately to the west of the existing built-up area of Eynsham, south of the A40. As Eynsham is a relatively small, compact settlement, this close proximity means the West Eynsham site is very well-related to the main services and facilities within the village, especially Bartholomew Secondary School which is less than 300m from the eastern edge of the site.

Figure 1 – West Eynsham SDA Site Boundary



- 3.4 The site is in several different land ownerships with the main parties promoting development including Berkeley Strategic, Oxfordshire County Council Property and Facilities, Jansons and Vanderbilt Homes.

⁹ <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/1572218/OTH15-West-Oxfordshire-Local-Development-Framework-Settlement-Sustainability-Report-November-2016-.pdf>

- 3.5 The northern boundary of the site follows a combination of the A40 and the existing areas of development at Elm Place and Old Witney Road/Fruitlands. The eastern boundary of the site follows the existing edge of the built-up area of the village and generally abuts the rear gardens of residential properties along Witney Road including Bartholomew Close, Willows Edge, Thornbury Road and Merton Close.
- 3.6 The western boundary of the site is in open countryside following the route of the Chil Brook and an existing field boundary. The southern boundary of the site follows the vehicular access to Twelve Acre Farm and then along the public right of way which runs east-west along the route of the dismantled railway, before incorporating an area of proposed employment land (associated with adjoining company Polar Technology) and a small part of the B4449 Stanton Harcourt Road. The total site area is around 88 hectares (217 acres).
- 3.7 The landform is relatively flat, especially in the southern part of the site off the Stanton Harcourt Road. The land generally lies between 65m to 70m AOD¹⁰ but gradually falls from a high point on the A40, in the vicinity of The Evenlode, to the Chil Brook valley which runs north-west to south-east through the centre of the site.
- 3.8 The majority of the site comprises general countryside, most of which is farmland with a strong structure of hedgerows and trees around mostly large fields under arable but with some smaller-scale pattern and pasture, particularly associated with the Chil Brook floodplain. The farmstead complex associated with Twelve Acre Farm lies to the west, Derrymerrye Farm is to the north and Corlan Farm lies in the centre of the site next to Chilbridge Road.

View North from Chilbridge Road



¹⁰ Above ordnance datum

View west along Chilbridge Road



View east from Chilbridge Road towards Merton Court



- 3.9 Within the northern part of the site is the former Eynsham Nursery and Plant Centre (which now has planning permission for 77 dwellings), pockets of woodland and orchard and a playing field associated with Bartholomew School.

- 3.10 The Chil Brook flows through the site from Eynsham Hall Park in the north-west, south-eastwards to join the River Thames at Swinford. Much of the adjoining land is identified as Flood Zone 2 and 3 (i.e. medium and high risk). The stretch of the Brook immediately to the east of the site passes through an extensive area of land and water bodies - Abbey Fishponds – managed by Eynsham Parish Council for local informal recreation and biodiversity.
- 3.11 The wider site context is one of open rolling vale farmland with well-drained, productive land off the floodplain floor, and semi-enclosed rolling farmland with occasional blocks and belts of woodland. This part of West Oxfordshire was once within the Royal Hunting Forest of Wychwood, and there are various patches of ancient woodland in the vicinity.
- 3.12 The area now lies within the Wychwood Project Area (a project that aims to restore the Royal Hunting Forest’s landscape character and mix of habitats). Some of most significant change in the local landscape has largely been associated with the expansion of villages during the 20th century, the demise of the railway and the upgrading and realignment of local highways.

4. Site constraints

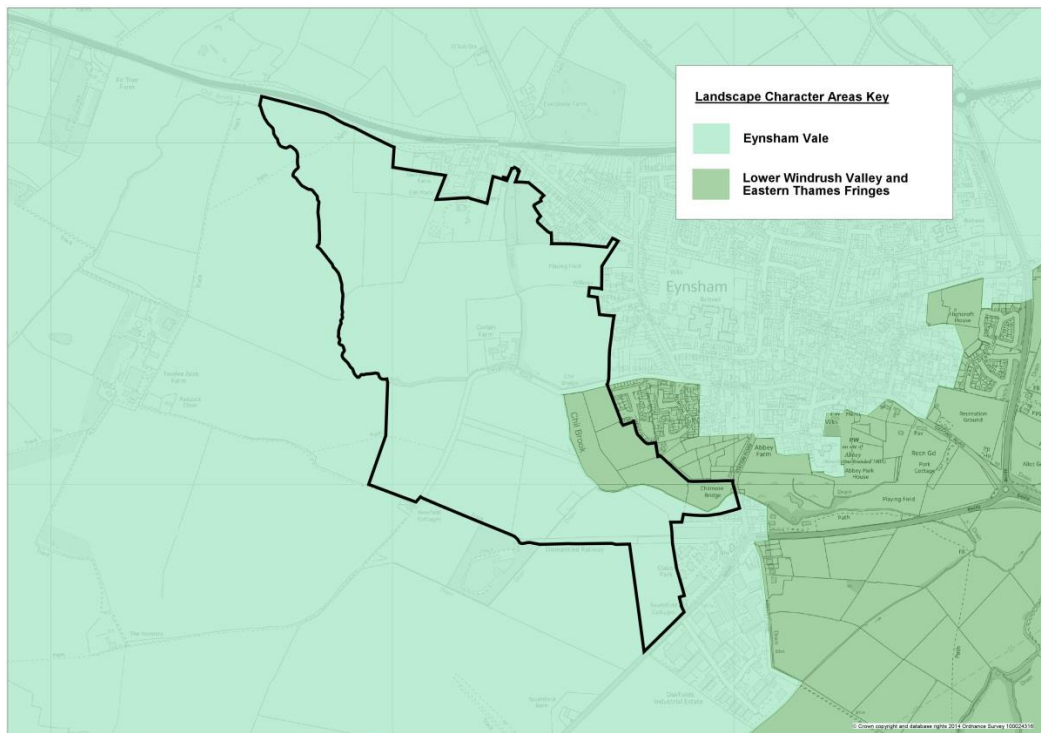
- 4.1 In this section of the paper we outline the main physical and policy constraints that will need to be considered in taking the West Eynsham site forward in a comprehensive and co-ordinated manner.
- 4.2 It should be noted that these are not set out in any particular order of importance and we would also welcome views on whether any key considerations have been omitted.

Landscape

- 4.3 There are no specific landscape protection designations although as a rural, greenfield location, the site has its own intrinsic landscape value. The site falls into two different landscape character areas¹¹ – the Eynsham Vale and the Lower Windrush Valley and Eastern Thames Fringes.

¹¹ As defined in the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment 1998

Figure 2 – Landscape Character Areas



- 4.4 The Eynsham Vale is a low lying area characterised by large scale, subtly rolling farmland with a strong landscape structure and many trees. There is some variation in ground levels between about 70m and 90m AOD but these changes are very subtle and are barely perceptible across much of the area. Overall, the Eynsham Vale has an attractive and largely unspoilt rural character with some localised variations in quality and condition which demand different strategies for management and enhancement.
- 4.5 The land south of Chilbridge Road is classified as 'open rolling vale farmland'. Characteristics of this landscape type include large-scale, cultivated fields (predominantly arable) with regular field boundaries, a weak structure of tightly clipped hedges and few hedgerow trees, an open, denuded character and high intervisibility.
- 4.6 The draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan highlights the importance of this part of the site in terms of contributing towards the 'rural feel' of the village and also in terms of the provision of key views into open countryside to the west and east back towards the Parish Church and Wytham Hill.
- 4.7 The south eastern part of the site falls within the Lower Windrush Valley and Eastern Thames Fringes character area and is classified as floodplain pasture associated with the Chil Brook. Characteristics of this landscape type include distinctively flat, low lying land, predominantly under permanent pasture, riparian, intimate, semi-enclosed and pastoral character with limited intrusion by people or buildings and moderate to low-intervisibility.

- 4.8 The land north of Chilbridge Road is classified as ‘semi-enclosed rolling vale farmland’. Characteristics of this landscape type include a stronger structure of hedgerows, trees and occasional belts or blocks of woodland, a semi-enclosed character and moderate inter-visibility.
- 4.9 The LUC spatial options assessment carried out in 2016 as part of the collective work on unmet housing need concluded that this area is of ‘medium’ landscape sensitivity due to the contribution it makes to the rural setting of Eynsham, the naturalistic features including mature hedgerows/trees and Chil Brook and the rural character with good levels of tranquillity. It also noted that this part of the site is not prominent within the wider landscape.

Key Views

- 4.10 Throughout the area, but particularly in the southern half of the site, there are a number of important views to the south-east of Wytham Hill and Wood which reach 165m AOD. Also in the southern part of the site are views over the Chil Brook floodplain to the built-up area of Eynsham and St. Peter and Paul’s church tower. There are also extensive views westwards and southwards across semi-enclosed, rolling farmland and the Thames Valley.



- 4.11 The importance of safeguarding key views as part of any development west of Eynsham is recognised in the previous submission draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan which states that; ‘The form of any development alongside Chilbridge Road should have particular regard to its impact on the view from the bridleway over open fields towards the historic village centre and Wytham Hill beyond and from the south & western road approaches’.

Heritage

- 4.12 The present character and features of the site have been influenced by historic and archaeological processes. A preliminary desk-top study of the historic designation, and archaeological and cultural heritage information, shows that there are existing known assets within and adjoining the site, as well as likely unknown resources of potential significance.

- 4.13 Of particular significance is a scheduled monument to the south of the site near Foxley Farm,¹² a small proportion of which falls within the SDA boundary. It comprises a large and important group of cropmarks, the majority of which are interpreted as Bronze Age ring ditches and Iron Age and Romano-British enclosures and settlements. It is of particular relevance to the proposed western spine road which is intended to connect to the B4449.
- 4.14 There is a further scheduled monument to the east, close to the Abbey Fishponds area. This is associated with a former Benedictine Abbey, founded in 1005 although is not considered to be of direct relevance to the development of the West Eynsham site given its distance.
- 4.15 The West Eynsham SDA is not within the Eynsham Conservation Area although a small part of the south eastern boundary (adjoining Station Road) is in close proximity and, as such, its 'setting' will need to be considered in accordance with national and local policy.
- 4.16 There are numerous listed buildings within the Eynsham Conservation Area and at Bartholomew School and Twelve Acre Farm. Within the site, the Chil Bridge (see image below) is Grade II listed dating from the late 18th/early 19th century.

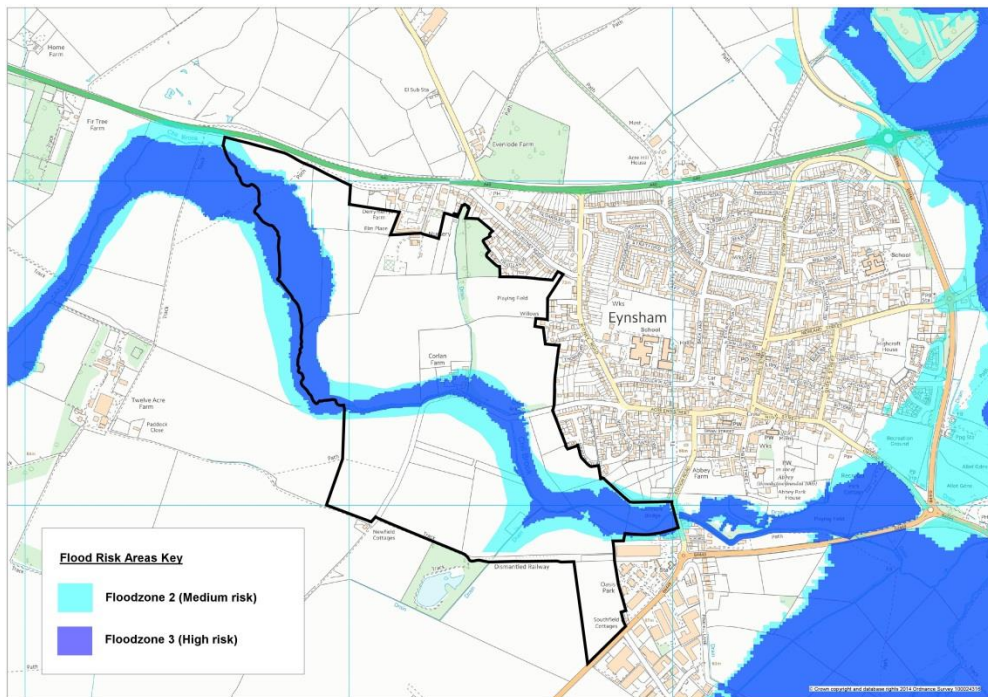


Flood Risk

- 4.17 Environment Agency maps indicate risks from river flooding, primarily focused in the north-western boundary of the SDA and through the centre of the site, with areas of Flood Zone 2 (medium risk) and Flood Zone 3 (high risk).

¹² List entry Number: 1006333 - Sites discovered by aerial photography, near Foxley Farm

Figure 3 – Flood Zones

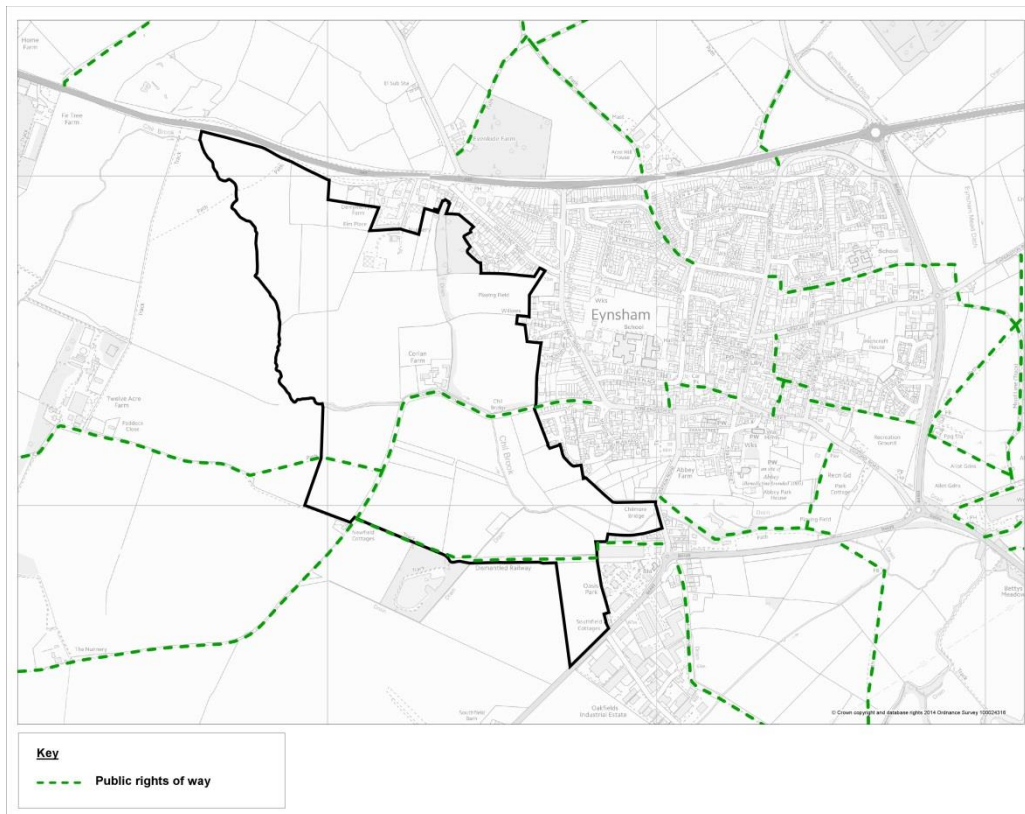


- 4.18 In accordance with national and local policy, the development of the West Eynsham site will need to ensure that more sensitive uses including new housing is steered away from those parts of the site that are at greatest risk of flooding and that any development which does take place on the site does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- 4.19 Although most of the area is classified as Flood Zone 1 (low risk) due to the absence of river channels over the rest of the area, risk from surface water flooding arising from the underlying geology is an important consideration. As a greenfield site it will also be important to consider potential change in run-off rates, directions of overland flow and the impacts that this may have on river dynamics.
- 4.20 Any development will therefore need to be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).

Public Rights of Way

- 4.21 There is relatively limited official public access to the site. A public footpath runs east-west along the route of the dismantled railway in the southern part of the site and Chilbridge Road is a public bridleway.

Figure 4 – Public Rights of Way



4.22 There is, however, considerable informal recreational use and unofficial access to much of the area, particularly the land adjoining Chilbridge Road and the school playing field. Chilbridge Road allows vehicular access through the site but use is restricted by 'No-through road' and 'Private - access only' signs. It is therefore a popular point of access for walking and cycling into open countryside for Eynsham residents as noted in the draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan.

Biodiversity

4.23 While there are no specific nationally designated sites of importance for biodiversity within West Eynsham, as the area is predominantly greenfield with farmland, woodland, orchard, trees, mature hedgerows, ditches and the Chil Brook, there are valuable habitats and wildlife corridors.

4.24 There are records of protected and notable species within and adjoining the site, including farmland birds, bats, badgers, grass snakes and water vole. The former orchard, west of Fruitlands in the north of the site, is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

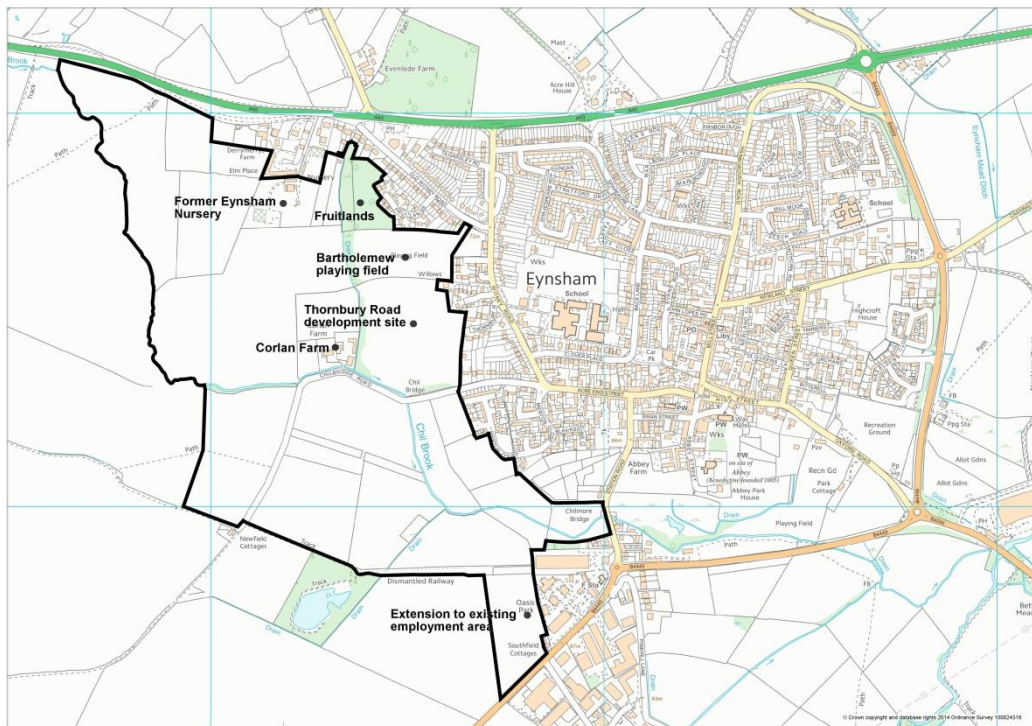
4.25 In accordance with national and local policy, development of the site will be required to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity where possible. This is also reflected in the previous submission draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan (Policy ENP4a).

- 4.26 A further consideration for the West Eynsham site is the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is relatively nearby on the edge of Oxford. It comprises a lowland hay meadow and includes vegetation communities that are unique, reflecting the influence of long-term grazing and hay-cutting on lowland hay meadows. The site has benefited from traditional management which has been undertaken for several centuries, and so exhibits good conservation of structure and function.
- 4.27 SACs such as Oxford Meadows are strictly protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive. They may be put at risk by deterioration of water quality and availability, air pollution and increases in recreational use. It is therefore important to consider the impacts of local development as well as the cumulative impact of other developments nearby.

Existing Uses

- 4.28 The majority of the West Eynsham SDA is undeveloped, greenfield land but there are some existing uses within the site boundary which will need to be taken into account as well as several parcels of land that already have planning permission for housing and commercial development.
- 4.29 These sites are shown on the plan below and include land west of Thornbury Road which has outline planning permission for the development of up to 160 dwellings and land at the former Eynsham Nursery and Plant Centre on Old Witney Road which has full planning permission for the development of 77 dwellings.
- 4.30 In the southern part of the site, land off the B4449 Stanton Harcourt Road has planning permission for additional business use associated with adjoining occupants Polar Technology Group. This permission is of particular relevance to the western spine road proposed as a key aspect of the West Eynsham SDA because as part of it, a corridor of land has effectively been safeguarded to facilitate a vehicular connection to the B4449 Stanton Harcourt Road.
- 4.31 Other existing uses within the SDA boundary include Corlan Farm in the centre of the site, a playing field used by the Bartholomew School in the north east corner together with a small area of woodland (and former Orchard) known as Fruitlands which is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and a current planning application for 6 dwellings.

Figure 5 – Existing Uses



Noise

- 4.32 A proportion of the northern part of the SDA adjoins the A40. Traffic noise is therefore an important consideration for development in the northern part of the site although much of it is screened by existing development at Derrymerrye Farm, Elm Place, Fruitlands and Old Witney Road.
- 4.33 As the West Eynsham SDA is intended to incorporate a new western spine road, appropriate consideration will also need to be given to reducing the potential for noise disturbance along this new route, with appropriate consideration given to the width and type of road and the use of noise reducing materials and construction techniques.

Transport and Movement

- 4.34 The site is in close proximity to the A40. Congestion along this key corridor is a key consideration as is the displacement of traffic onto adjoining routes including Witney Road and Acre End Street/High Street but also further afield including the A4095 and the B4090.
- 4.35 The provision of 1,000 new homes in this location will clearly generate additional vehicular movements. Effectively managing the demand for vehicular travel will be a key requirement of the development for example through travel planning and excellent provision for active travel including walking, cycling and riding as well as any necessary improvements to the highway network and available public transport routes.
- 4.36 A number of improvements have already been made to the A40 (e.g. Wolvercote roundabout in 2016) and there are plans for further improvements including a proposed park and ride and bus priority scheme due to open in 2020.

- 4.37 It will be essential for the West Eynsham SDA to integrate with these as effectively as possible including for example the provision of appropriate connections to the park and ride as well as the rest of the garden village site.
- 4.38 A key benefit of the West Eynsham SDA is the provision of a new spine road connecting the A40 to the B4449 and thereby effectively providing a new route to the west of Eynsham. This has the potential to provide additional journey choice to facilitate east – west travel and subject to appropriate design and traffic management/signage, could potentially help to remove some unnecessary through-traffic in Eynsham.
- 4.39 Further evidence and analysis is needed to determine the most appropriate alignment for the road, its size, type and specification, appropriate traffic speeds and how these factors will help to integrate it within the new residential environment.

Sand and Gravel

- 4.40 A very small proportion of the site is located within a Mineral Consultation Area associated with sand and gravel to the south and south east of the site. Oxfordshire County Council are the mineral planning authority and have raised no concerns to date regarding any potential issues of mineral sterilisation or similar.

Constraints – summary

- 4.41 The table below summarises the constraints relating to the site and the potential implications for the SPD.

Physical/policy constraint	Implication for SPD
Relatively sensitive landscape – particularly the southern part of the site which is more open with higher intervisibility.	The need to consider the most appropriate form and distribution of land uses within the SDA and the scope for effective mitigation of landscape and visual impact – particularly in relation to development south of Chilbridge Road.
A number of important views particularly in the southern part of the site towards Wytham Hill and Wood and St. Peter and Paul’s church tower.	The need to identify key views and ensure that these are safeguarded and enhanced as appropriate through development.
Heritage assets - in particular the Grade II listed Chil Bridge and the scheduled monument to the south of the site near Foxley Farm.	Ensure that in accordance with national and local policy that great weight is given to the conservation of these designated heritage assets and that any harm or loss is supported by clear and convincing justification. Of particular relevance to the proposed western spine road.

Physical/policy constraint	Implication for SPD
Flood risk - including from the Chil Brook but also surface water considerations.	Ensure that in accordance with national and local policy, more sensitive uses including new housing are steered away from those parts of the site that are at greatest risk of flooding and that any development which does take place on the site does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
Relatively limited official public access although Chilbridge Road plays a key role in facilitating access to the wider countryside. Also considerable informal recreational use and unofficial access to much of the area.	To safeguard key public rights of way and to identify opportunities for new and enhanced provision as appropriate.
Biodiversity – no specific designations but valuable habitats and wildlife corridors associated with farmland, woodland, orchard, trees, hedgerows, ditches and the Chil Brook. Also records of protected and notable species within and adjoining the site.	To try and secure a net gain in biodiversity and ensure that consideration is given to the potential impact of development on the Oxford Meadows SAC through habitat regulations assessment.
Existing uses – including two permitted housing schemes within the SDA as well as existing and proposed employment development and other agricultural and recreational uses.	To ensure a comprehensive approach to development that effectively integrates with existing and proposed uses including in relation to transport and movement.
Noise – potential disturbance from the A40 as well as the proposed western spine road.	To consider the most appropriate distribution of land uses within the SDA and the need for any avoidance/mitigation of excessive noise where this could harm amenity.
Transport and movement – in particular the constrained capacity of the A40.	Effectively integrate the development with proposed improvements to the A40 and the proposed garden village. Consider how best to achieve strong ‘modal shift’ towards more active travel and less use of the car. Also to determine the most appropriate alignment, specification and traffic speed for a western spine road connecting the A40 to the B4449 with a design that is appropriate to the new residential environment.
Sand and gravel – with a small part of the site falling within a Mineral Consultation Area.	No significant implication. Only affects a small proportion of the site and Oxfordshire County Council has raised no concerns in this regard.

5. Key Issues and Priorities for the West Eynsham SDA

5.1 To help take the West Eynsham site forward, we would welcome your views on a number of key issues which will help to inform the SPD as it is worked up later in the year.

5.2 These issues are as follows:

- The need for a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to development
- The character and form of development
- Achieving effective integration with Eynsham
- Potential provision of a new 'linear park'
- The retention of key views
- School provision
- Potential creation of a new local centre
- The nature of the western spine road
- Other supporting infrastructure
- Meeting identified housing needs

5.3 These issues are in no particular order of importance but are based on a number of considerations including:

- The requirements set out in Policy EW1b of the draft Local Plan (see Appendix 1);
- The site description and constraints analysis set out in Sections 3 and 4 of this paper;
- Early discussions with key stakeholders including Oxfordshire County Council in relation to the likely infrastructure requirements for the site; and
- The aims and aspirations of the previous submission draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan (2017).

5.4 In addition to the issues discussed below we would also welcome any other general comments you wish to make about the West Eynsham site to help inform our approach moving forward.

The need for a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to development

5.5 The West Eynsham SDA is a large site in a number of different land ownerships and its successful delivery requires the provision of a range of supporting infrastructure including a new primary school and western spine road.

5.6 A comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to the development of the site is therefore needed and the proposed SPD has a key role to play in this regard. In the absence of such an approach there is a risk of 'piecemeal' development with different parts of the site coming forward at different times which can give rise to potential problems with the delivery of key infrastructure. This is also likely to lead to a generally less satisfactory outcome for the local community – both new and existing residents.

- 5.7 To help inform the SPD and also the garden village area action plan (AAP) the Council intends to commission a separate infrastructure delivery plan (IDP) for the Eynsham area. This will identify the key infrastructure that is needed to support development at West Eynsham and the garden village and how and when it will be delivered. The preparation of the IDP will help to ensure a co-ordinated approach as well as providing more certainty for the local community.
- 5.8 This infrastructure-led approach will be further reinforced by the preparation of an overarching masterplan for the site as required by the draft Local Plan – Policy EW1b. This is likely to be incorporated into the SPD prior to adoption.
- 5.9 The Council will also encourage the individual parties involved in the West Eynsham SDA to work in a collaborative and constructive manner alongside other key stakeholders such as Oxfordshire County Council and Eynsham Parish Council.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 1: Comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to development

1a) Do you agree that a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to development is needed to bring forward the West Eynsham SDA and achieve the best outcomes for the local community? If not, why not?

1b) Do you think that the development of the West Eynsham SDA should be infrastructure-led?

1c) Aside from the preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) a site-wide masterplan and constructive and ongoing engagement of key parties, are there any other ways in which the Council can ensure the West Eynsham SDA is brought forward in a comprehensive and co-ordinated manner?

1d) Do you have any other general comments or observations on this issue?

Character and Form of Development

- 5.10 A fundamental issue for the West Eynsham SDA is the character and form of development – what it looks like, how it feels and functions and how it responds to its local and wider surroundings. We would welcome early views on this.
- 5.11 In terms of settlement type, the West Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016) identifies Eynsham as one of a number of ‘nucleated settlements’ within the District, which are characterised by a compact form with less dense development on the periphery of a central core, often formed around a church or manor house. The tight-knit form of such nucleated settlements is potentially vulnerable to loss of character from peripheral development and therefore requires careful consideration.

- 5.12 With regard to new development, the design guide sets out a step by step process beginning with a thorough understanding of the site and the context within which it sits. It emphasises that whatever the scale or nature of proposed development, particular care should be taken to ensure that local character is respected or strengthened.
- 5.13 This need not entail the slavish replication of surrounding housing layouts or house types, for example; however, it could involve drawing on locally distinctive aspects of design – for example, architectural details or materials – and should involve the preservation or enhancement of local character, and the avoidance of ‘dropped-in’ design solutions with little or no relevance to the unique context of the site.
- 5.14 Where no positive or meaningful precedents exist in terms of local settlement character or design upon which to draw, it is important that new development is nonetheless made as distinctive as possible – in order to create a clear, strong and locally resonant sense of place and identity, and in order to avoid the sense of an ‘anywhere’ design solution.
- 5.15 In terms of character, the guide emphasises that for any development to be successful, it is fundamentally important that it has a strong and distinctive character.
- 5.16 In the case of a site within or immediately adjoining a settlement with a distinctive established character, it may be most appropriate to develop a scheme that echoes and builds sympathetically upon distinctive aspects and features of that settlement, in order to create a place whose character meaningfully relates to that of its context.
- 5.17 In the case of locally inspired schemes, character should not merely be understood in terms of local house types and materials; but also, for example, in terms of locally distinctive settlement and street patterns, public and private open space, landscape, surface and boundary treatments.
- 5.18 In the case of edge-of-settlement or more removed sites, or where the adjoining settlement does not have a distinctive established character, there may be greater scope for the creation of a place with a new and strongly defined character and identity of its own.
- 5.19 The design guide emphasises that larger developments such as West Eynsham fundamentally differ from smaller schemes in that they offer far greater potential for the creation of distinctive and characterful new places.
- 5.20 It also suggests that in some instances it may be appropriate to subdivide larger sites into a number of distinctive character areas, differentiated for example by changes in house and street type, and scale and density. As well as introducing variety and avoiding unrelieved expanses of identical development over a large area, this can also greatly enhance the scheme’s legibility and ease of navigation.
- 5.21 For all larger development schemes, the overarching ambition should be for high quality, distinctive and meaningful place-making for the creation of highly desirable places to live, with all levels of design - from masterplan through parking and bin provision to building detail - attended to with equal care.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 2: Character and Form of Development

2a) Do you think the West Eynsham SDA should aim to be 'locally inspired' seeking to draw upon the distinctive aspects and features of Eynsham?

2b) Or, should the emphasis be on creating a place with a new and strongly defined character and identity of its own?

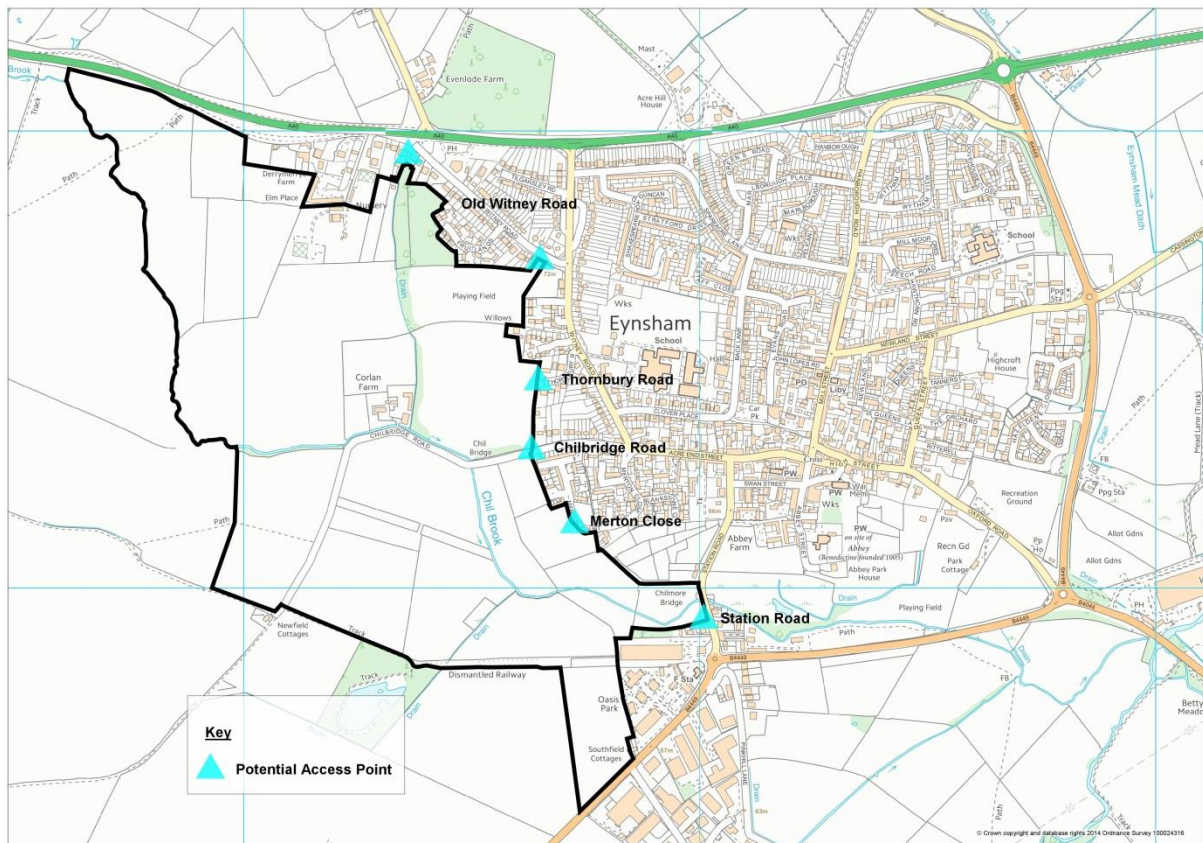
2c) Do you support the idea of the West Eynsham site being sub-divided into a number of different character areas to help ensure variety and enhance legibility and ease of navigation?

2d) Do you have any other general comments or observations on this issue?

Achieving effective integration with Eynsham

- 5.22 Unlike the proposed garden village to the north which will be a separate, self-contained new settlement, the West Eynsham SDA is intended to be a well-integrated extension of Eynsham that forms a positive addition to the village.
- 5.23 We have already talked above about the character and form of development and whether the West Eynsham SDA should draw upon the distinctive aspects and features of Eynsham or have a new character and identity of its own.
- 5.24 Irrespective of the chosen approach it will be essential for any new development to the west of Eynsham to be effectively integrated with the existing village so that it is not seen as a 'bolt-on', but instead forms a seamless and logical extension of the current built form.
- 5.25 There are a number of ways in which this can be achieved and we welcome your thoughts on these.
- 5.26 A key consideration for achieving effective integration will be the main connections into the site including by car but in particular for walking and cycling. Further work is needed to determine the most appropriate points and types of linkages but we welcome your thoughts on this matter.
- 5.27 The plan below illustrates some of the key existing and potential connection points into the West Eynsham SDA including:
- Chilbridge Road (existing)
 - Thornbury Road (potential)
 - Station Road (existing)
 - Merton Close (potential)
 - Old Witney Road (potential)

Figure 6 – Key Connections



Chilbridge Road

- 5.28 We know from the submission draft Neighbourhood Plan that local residents value the land to the west of the village as it provides access to the open countryside, while Chilbridge Road plays a particularly important role as the main route out to this area from the village.
- 5.29 This is clearly a key point of connection for the West Eynsham SDA but further work is required to determine what role it plays i.e. vehicular and pedestrian/cycle or just pedestrian/cycle. For example, the submission draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan suggests that this road should be restricted to emergency vehicular access only but this is likely to depend on the overall road layout within the SDA including the role played by the proposed western spine road.

Thornbury Road

- 5.30 As part of the residential scheme already permitted to the west of Thornbury Road (160 new homes) a new vehicular and pedestrian/cycle access will be created from Thornbury Road. The proposed layout of the scheme allows for subsequent connections into the wider SDA.
- 5.31 However, Thornbury Road is in close proximity to Bartholomew School and further work will be needed to determine the level of access for vehicular traffic through this already permitted development.

Station Road

- 5.32 A public right of way comes into the West Eynsham SDA from Station Road just to the north of the roundabout with the B4449. This is a well-used route that provides a good connection to the west along the dismantled railway and onto Chilbridge Road. This connection into the site could play a particularly important role if the draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan concept of a linear park is taken forward (see discussion below).
- 5.33 The relatively narrow nature of Station Road, the attractive approach it provides to Eynsham from the south and the prevalence of on-street parking present difficulties in terms of creating a vehicular access into the SDA from this point. This will need to be given further consideration as it may, for example, be appropriate and possible to provide some sort of secondary/emergency access at this point.

Merton Close/Merton Court

- 5.34 Merton Close and Merton Court are accessed by road from Acre End Street with a pedestrian/cycle connection onto Chilbridge Road. Subject to further assessment of traffic impact and highway capacity the potential exists to create a new vehicular access into the SDA together with pedestrian and cycle connections at this point.

Old Witney Road

- 5.35 Pedestrian access already exists into play area at the southern end of Old Witney Road. It may be possible to create an effective link into the SDA at this point depending on any future proposals for this part of the site (see discussion about potential re-location of the playing fields below).
- 5.36 In addition, the permitted scheme for 77 dwellings at the former nursery and plant centre is intended to create a new access point at the northern end of Old Witney Road. The layout of the proposed scheme is such that it enables a subsequent connection into the wider SDA.
- 5.37 As well as the provision of key connections to and from Eynsham, the effective integration of the West Eynsham SDA with the existing village can be achieved in a number of other ways. For example, effective integration can be achieved if people have reasons to move between each area.
- 5.38 Eynsham has a vibrant active community that sustains a good range of shops and retail businesses as well as many societies, clubs and sports teams. It will be essential for new development to the west of Eynsham to be taken forward with a strong emphasis on integration and community cohesion that the new development is seen as an integral part of the village and not just a poorly connected, recent addition.
- 5.39 In the remainder of this paper we discuss a number of early ideas for the SDA including the potential creation of a linear park and new local centre, as well as new school provision. These all have the potential to help integrate the SDA with the existing village by encouraging movement between the two.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 3: Effective Integration with Eynsham

3a) Do you agree that the following locations are important in terms of providing effective connections between the West Eynsham SDA and Eynsham?

- Chilbridge Road
- Thornbury Road
- Station Road
- Merton Court/Merton Close
- Old Witney Road

3b) Should these connections be for walking, cycling and motor vehicles?

3c) Are there any other key points at which effective connections could be provided between the West Eynsham SDA and Eynsham?

3d) Do you have any other general comments or observations on this issue?

Potential provision of a new 'linear park'

- 5.40 The previous submission draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan identifies a distinct lack of green space within Eynsham that is to some extent compensated for by quick and easy access to open countryside. Chilbridge Road is highlighted as playing a particularly important role in this regard.
- 5.41 In the interests of increasing public amenity and achieving a net gain in biodiversity, the draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan identifies the concept of a 'linear park' running along the length of the Chil Brook from the A40 to Station Road and through the Fishponds area to the east.
- 5.42 As we explained earlier, much of this area is classified as Flood Zone 2/3 and would need to be kept free from sensitive development such as new housing. Thus, the provision of a linear area of greenspace would be a potentially suitable use. The images below give some examples of linear parks from elsewhere.



- 5.43 Careful consideration would need to be given to the relationship of any such greenspace with the development as a whole including the proposed western spine road, drainage measures and the other main uses within the site.
- 5.44 However, we would welcome your initial thoughts on whether the general concept of a 'linear park' running through parts of, or the entire West Eynsham site is something that should be further explored through the proposed SPD.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 4: Linear Park

4a) Do you support the submission draft Neighbourhood Plan concept of a linear park being provided as part of the proposed development of the land west of Eynsham?

4b) If a linear park were to be brought forward what sort of uses or activities would be suitable within the park (e.g. natural/informal space, formal space, walking, cycling routes etc)?

4c) Are there any additional or alternative ways in which additional greenspace should be provided as part of the West Eynsham SDA?

4d) Do you have any other general comments or observations on this issue?

The retention of key views

- 5.45 As we outlined earlier on, there are a number of key views from the West Eynsham area which will need to be safeguarded and where possible enhanced through the development of the site.
- 5.46 The submission draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan emphasises that the availability of views on the rural fringes of the village are particularly important to local residents along with the ability to enjoy local walks and wildlife.
- 5.47 In relation to the land west of Eynsham, the draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan identifies views west into the open countryside and east back towards the Parish Church and Wytham Hill as being particularly important and highly valued by residents.
- 5.48 Clearly the provision of 1,000 new homes together with a new primary school and other supporting services and facilities will have an effect on the current views of the countryside and other assets enjoyed by residents.
- 5.49 However, provided the development is taken forward properly through context-sensitive masterplanning, the most important views should be retained and in some instances enhanced for example by drawing the eye towards a particular location through the layout and form of development.
- 5.50 Additional work is needed to determine the key views of most significance and how these can most appropriately and effectively be taken into account through the masterplanning process. We would welcome your early thoughts on this matter to help inform our thinking as the site moves forward.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 5: Retention of key views

5a) Do you agree that the key views mentioned in the draft Eynsham neighbourhood plan (i.e. to the west into open countryside and to the east towards the Parish Church and Wytham Hill) are of significant importance and should be retained and enhanced as far possible through the West Eynsham development?

5b) Are there any other key views not mentioned in the draft neighbourhood plan that should be taken into account?

5c) Do you have any other general comments or observations on this issue?

School Provision

Primary Education

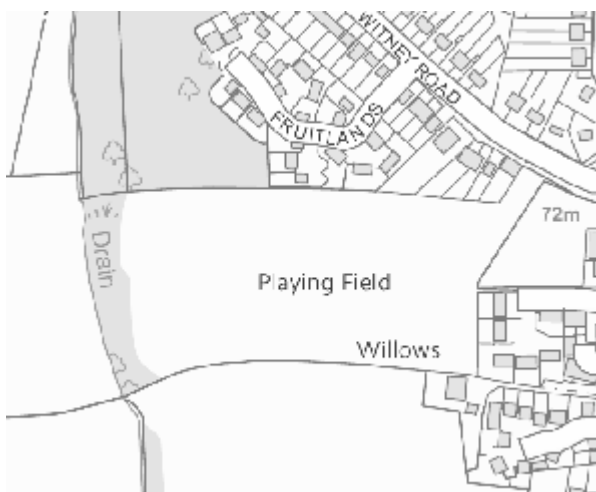
- 5.51 In terms of primary education, we know from early discussions with Oxfordshire County Council that the nearest existing primary school in Eynsham is essentially 'at capacity' taking into account already permitted housing. The increase in children associated with the West Eynsham SDA and also the proposed garden village means that additional primary spaces will need to be made available.
- 5.52 The mix of housing will influence the resulting pupil generation from the developments, a number of other factors, such as the need for pupil places generated from other smaller developments in the Eynsham area will also influence how education is provided.
- 5.53 The County Council's initial view is that the West Eynsham SDA will need to provide a new primary school large enough to accommodate 1.5 forms of entry (including nursery provision). This size of school would be likely to be complemented by the provision of two separate primary schools, each with up to 2 forms of entry within the nearby Garden Village.
- 5.54 Potentially, if any new primary school within the West Eynsham SDA was increased in size, say to 2 forms of entry it could then be appropriate to have one larger three-form entry primary school within the garden village. Views on this issue have been sought as part of a separate consultation on the garden village but would also be welcome in response to this issues paper.
- 5.55 In addition to the most appropriate size of any new primary school provided within the West Eynsham SDA we need to consider where within the site it should be located. We know from discussions with OCC that the minimum size of site needed is 2.22ha (which would be large enough to allow for future expansion of a 1.5FE school).
- 5.56 Further work is needed to determine the most appropriate location for any new primary school within the West Eynsham SDA (e.g. in relation to transport and landscape) but we would welcome early views on some initial options.
- 5.57 The first potential option could be to provide the new primary school at Corlan Farm (see plan below).

Figure 7 – Land at Corlan Farm



- 5.58 The site is centrally located within the SDA and is around 3.15 ha in size. The southern part of the site is located within Flood Zone 2/3 which would require careful consideration and reduces the extent of the 'developable' area. Nevertheless, it could be possible to include less sensitive uses (e.g. parking, open space) here to take account of the potential flood risk.
- 5.59 The adjoining land immediately to the east of Corlan Farm already has planning permission for 160 homes and could potentially facilitate vehicular and pedestrian/cycle access, thus allowing for relatively early delivery of the new school (although further work would be needed to determine whether this is acceptable in highway terms).
- 5.60 A second option might be to provide the new primary school on the site of the existing Bartholomew School Playing field located just off Old Witney Road.

Figure 8 – School Playing Field



- 5.61 The site is just over 3 ha in size, relatively flat and is well-screened by mature vegetation along the western and southern boundaries. It would also mean the school would be well-

located in relation to the existing built up area of Eynsham. However, vehicular access would require careful consideration as Old Witney Road is relatively narrow and a suitable site would also need to be found to re-provide the playing field for use by Bartholomew School.

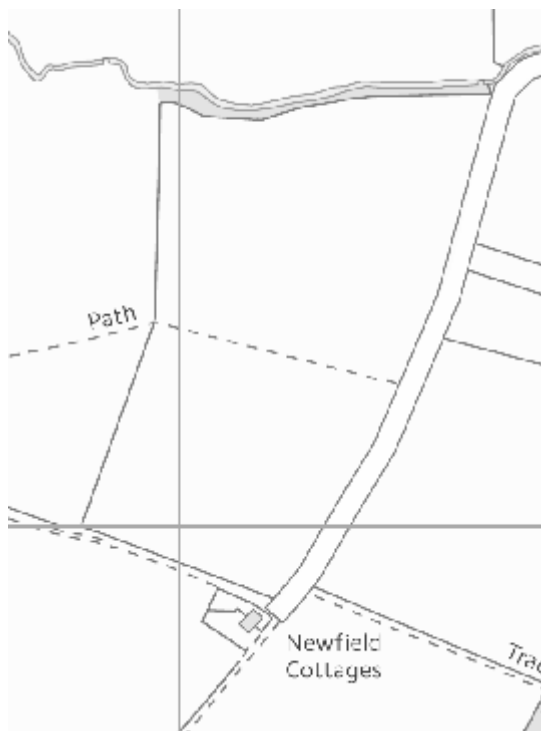
- 5.62 It could be possible for example to re-provide the playing field in the part of the SDA which lies to the south of Chilbridge Road given the acknowledged sensitivities in landscape terms and more open character compared to the northern part of the site. Convenient and safe access to the main school site would however need to be carefully considered.
- 5.63 A third option could be to provide the new primary school on the land south of Chilbridge Road.

Figure 9 – Land South of Chilbridge Road



- 5.64 Depending on their size, design and layout, school sites are, in general relatively unobtrusive and it may be that provision should be made in this southern part of the SDA which is acknowledged to be more sensitive in landscape terms compared to the northern part of the site which is more enclosed.
- 5.65 The previous submission draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan identified a potential site for a new school to the west of Chilbridge Road as shown on the plan below, the logic being that this location would allow good access to the natural environment.

Figure 10 – Land West of Chilbridge Road



Secondary Education

- 5.66 In terms of secondary education, again we know from early discussions with the County Council that the level of planned growth at Eynsham will exceed available capacity at the nearest secondary school - Bartholomew School.
- 5.67 In a separate consultation on the garden village, we have suggested that an additional site for the secondary school could be provided there – perhaps in the form of a separate sixth form facility which would release additional capacity/space at the existing school site to expand from 7 forms of entry (around 210 pupils per year) to 9 forms of entry (around 270 pupils per year).
- 5.68 A key consideration for this option is however accessibility and the ability of pupils and staff to conveniently and safely access a separate satellite facility, potentially some distance away from the school.
- 5.69 Although there is less physical land available within the West Eynsham SDA and viability would need to be carefully considered, the provision of a separate secondary facility here would be closer to the main Bartholomew School site which is only a short distance away. As per the primary school options outlined above there are likely to be different alternatives for how and where any such facility could be delivered within the West Eynsham SDA.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 6: School Provision

6a) Do you support the emerging policy approach set out in the draft Local Plan which is to provide one 1.5 form entry primary school at West Eynsham and up to two 2 form entry primary schools at the garden village? If not, why not?

6b) In terms of potential locations for a new primary school within the West Eynsham SDA, do you have any views on the merits/disadvantages of the possible locations identified above including:

- Corlan Farm
- The existing Bartholomew School Playing Fields (subject to their relocation)
- Land south of Chilbridge Road
- Land west of Chilbridge Road

6c) Do you have any comments regarding existing primary school provision in Eynsham?

6d) Subject to further consideration of site size requirements, suitability and viability, do you think further consideration should be given to the potential provision of a secondary facility for Bartholomew School at West Eynsham or should this be located at the garden village?

6e) Do you have any other general comments or observations on this issue?

Potential creation of a new local centre

- 5.70 Typically, developments of the scale proposed at West Eynsham are accompanied by the provision of a small local or neighbourhood centre which often include a community use together with a limited number of small-scale retail and commercial uses. Examples include the local centres at Madley Park in Witney and Shilton Park in Carterton.
- 5.71 The previous submission draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan whilst not supporting or allocating the land west of Eynsham identified that if it did come forward, a small convenience store within the site would ensure good accessibility for new residents provided the size of any such store is in keeping with its function (i.e. to serve the immediate population). The draft plan highlighted a concern that a larger convenience store provided on the edge of the village, with better access by car, could adversely affect the existing centre of Eynsham.
- 5.72 Further work will be required to determine the most appropriate location, scale and form of any such local centre, but we would welcome early thoughts on whether the broad concept should be taken forward as a key part of the overall framework for the West Eynsham SDA.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 7: Potential Provision of a 'Local Centre'

7a) Do you support the concept of a small 'local centre' being provided as part of the West Eynsham SDA? Or, if not what are the concerns it raises for you?

7b) If a small local centre were to be provided within the development are there any specific uses you would like to see included e.g. convenience retail, public house, other forms of small-scale commercial development?

7c) Do you think there is a need for additional community space as part of the development or should it rely on existing facilities in Eynsham?

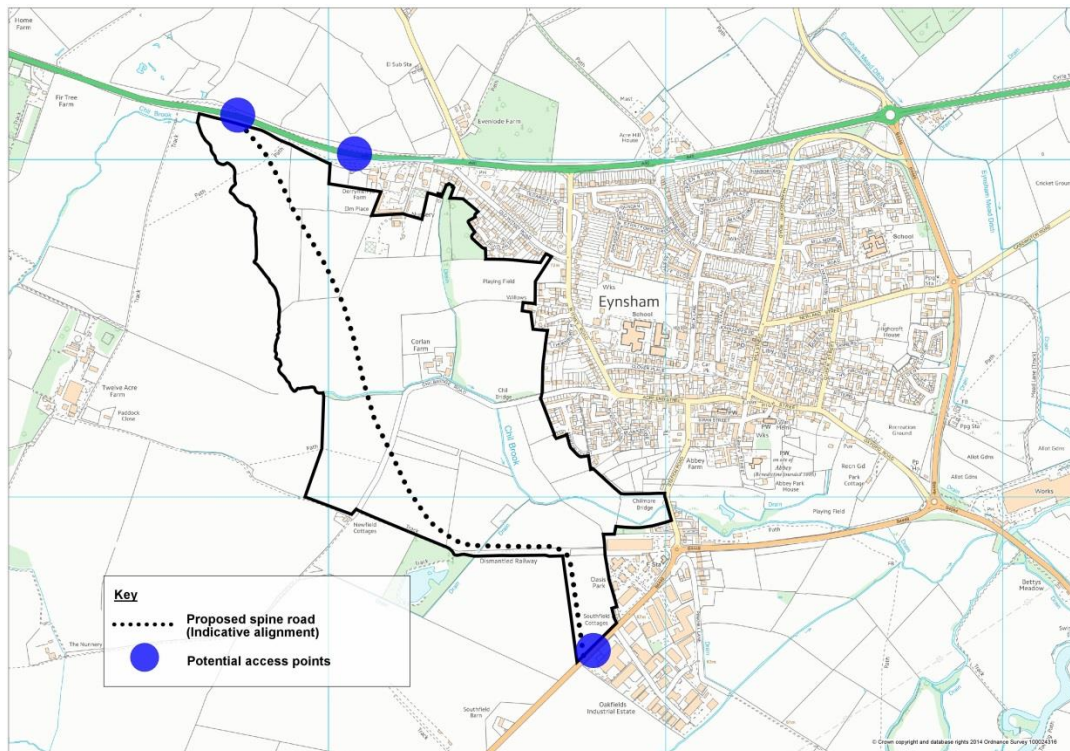
7d) Do you have any other general comments or observations on this issue?

The nature of the western spine road

- 5.73 The draft Local Plan policy for the West Eynsham SDA envisages the provision of a new western 'spine road' connecting the A40 at the north of the site to the B4449 Stanton Harcourt Road in the south.
- 5.74 The submission draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan recognises that although this could help reduce through traffic on Witney Road, Acre End Street and Station Road, it does not support the concept because of the potential loss of a significant area of green space close to the village.¹³ The plan therefore suggests that any housing within the West Eynsham SDA should be restricted to the land north of Chilbridge Road with a single point of access onto the A40.
- 5.75 However, Oxfordshire County Council as highway authority have confirmed that they would not support this approach and that any more than 300 – 400 new homes would need to be served from two points of access. Subject to more detailed assessment they are therefore supportive of the principle of a western spine road as set out in the draft Local Plan.
- 5.76 At the northern end of the spine road, connection to the A40 is likely to be provided through a new roundabout which could also enable access into the garden village to the north. A second roundabout to the east would allow access to the proposed park and ride site, the garden village and potentially into the West Eynsham SDA via the land west of Derrymerrye Farm (subject to the operational requirements of the park and ride and the roundabout design and traffic modelling).

¹³ Recommendation 17c page 49 submission draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan.

Figure 11 – Western Spine Road indicative alignment



- 5.77 As the new park and ride is scheduled to be operational by 2020 this could potentially facilitate some early development in this northern part of the SDA. However, it would be essential for any such development to take account of the operational requirements of the park and ride and to come forward in accordance with an agreed masterplan and infrastructure funding package. We know from previous consultation responses that there is often concern about parts of larger developments coming forward without the key infrastructure being provided.
- 5.78 At the southern end of the spine road, further work is needed to determine the most appropriate arrangements for connecting onto the B4449 Stanton Harcourt Road, having particular regard to the proximity of the adjoining scheduled monument. Land has however been safeguarded as part of the permitted expansion of Polar Technology to allow a connection to be made.
- 5.79 The provision of a new spine road is considered to have a number of potential benefits. Subject to appropriate design and traffic/management/signage it could potentially help to remove unnecessary through-traffic in Eynsham including traffic currently using Witney Road and Acre End Street/High Street.
- 5.80 Most importantly, a new spine road would provide the main point of vehicular access into the SDA for those who are living, working or visiting there. It would act as a primary route from which a series of secondary routes would allow vehicular access to the wider site. Thus the potential impact of development on the existing road network in Eynsham would be kept to a minimum.

- 5.81 As the spine road is intended to run through the SDA rather than around the edge of it (like a bypass or distributor road would) the nature of the road and how it integrates with the buildings, edges and spaces that sit alongside it will need careful consideration as will other important issues such as permitted speed and types of vehicle, relationship with pedestrians and cyclists and types of material, surface treatments and signage.
- 5.82 Further work is needed to consider these issues in more detail and this will feed into the masterplan process, but we would welcome any early thoughts on this issue.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 8: Western Spine Road

8a) Do you have any comments on the indicative alignment of the proposed spine road shown in the plan above?

8b) Do you support in principle the provision of two new roundabouts on the A40? What, if any concerns would you have about this?

8c) Should each roundabout facilitate access to both the garden village and the West Eynsham SDA?

8d) What do you think are the key considerations to be taken into account in working up the design of the West Eynsham spine road in more detail? (e.g. speed restrictions, signage, provision for pedestrians and cyclists, relationship with adjoining buildings and spaces, landscaping/tree planting etc.)

8e) Do you have any other general comments or observations on this issue?

Other Supporting Infrastructure

- 5.83 We have already mentioned some of the supporting infrastructure that will be needed to support delivery of the West Eynsham SDA including a new primary school (with nursery provision) green infrastructure, possibly in the form of a new linear park, a potential small local centre and new vehicular, pedestrian and cycle connections.
- 5.84 Further work will be undertaken in the form of an 'Infrastructure Delivery Plan' (IDP) to more fully understand the infrastructure requirements of the West Eynsham site together with the proposed garden village to the north.
- 5.85 However, to feed into this process we would welcome your early thoughts on any particular services and facilities you feel are needed to support the West Eynsham site.
- 5.86 Policy ENP3 of the submission draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan identifies a number of potential requirements including a new cemetery and allotments, community building, sports facilities and play areas. These are however identified as requirements of any large development, not specifically the West Eynsham site.
- 5.87 We would therefore welcome your thoughts on whether these potential requirements should be further considered as part of the West Eynsham development and/or whether there are additional requirements that should also be taken into account.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 9: Supporting Infrastructure

9a) Do you agree with the draft Eynsham neighbourhood plan that further consideration should be given to the potential provision of a cemetery, allotments, sports facilities and play areas as part of the West Eynsham SDA?

9b) Is there any other supporting infrastructure that you consider should be provided within or by the West Eynsham SDA?

9c) Do you have any other general comments or observations on this issue?

Meeting Identified Housing Needs

- 5.88 The draft Local Plan envisages the provision of around 1,000 homes at West Eynsham. Planning permission is already in place for 237 of these new homes, including 160 west of Thornbury Road and 77 on the former nursery and plant centre site.
- 5.89 The majority of the allocation is however yet to come forward and we would welcome your views on a number of important issues including the type and size of new homes that should be provided, the provision of affordable housing and how the development could help to meet any specific housing needs.

Type and Size of New Homes

- 5.90 With regard to property type, the Eynsham area is characterised by a predominance of semi-detached and terraced properties in contrast to the overall position in West Oxfordshire which is characterised by a higher proportion of detached properties. There are notably few flats in the Eynsham area compared to the county and national average.
- 5.91 The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) does not provide specific guidance on the type of new homes that should be built. Similarly, the draft Local Plan takes a general approach in seeking to achieve a broad, balanced mix of property types. The submission draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan doesn't specify any particular types of new housing but does acknowledge that the 'achievement of a high density using the terraced form may be acceptable'.
- 5.92 In light of the above, our initial view is that the West Eynsham SPD should not be overly specific about the type of new homes to be built but should instead ensure a good, overall balanced mix with the precise mix left to any subsequent planning applications. We would however welcome your thoughts on this matter.
- 5.93 In terms of the size of new homes needed, some indication can be taken from the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014). The following tables summarise the SHMA conclusions on the appropriate mix of dwelling sizes for West Oxfordshire, Oxford City and Oxfordshire as a whole. It is relevant to consider the figures for Oxford given that the West Eynsham SDA is in part being brought forward in response to unmet housing need.

West Oxfordshire

Property size	Market	Affordable
1-bed	4.8%	23.0%
2-bed	27.9%	43.7%
3-bed	43.4%	30.4%
4-bed	23.9%	2.6%

Oxford

Property size	Market	Affordable
1-bed	10.7%	29%
2-bed	24.9%	32.7%
3-bed	38.9%	32.2%
4-bed	25.5%	6.1%

Oxfordshire

Property size	Market	Affordable	All dwellings
1-bed	5%	25 – 30%	15%
2-bed	25%	30 – 35%	30%
3-bed	45%	30 – 35%	40%
4-bed	25%	5 – 10%	15%

- 5.94 The SHMA emphasises that these figures should not be used prescriptively and that there are a number of factors which will influence demand for different sizes of homes. It also emphasises that regard should be had to the nature of the development site and character of the area, up-to-date evidence of need as well as the existing mix and turnover of properties at the local level. The submission draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan highlights a particular need for smaller homes, typically 2 bedrooms.

5.95 In light of the above, our initial thoughts are that the SPD could provide an indicative range of preferred dwelling which could be something along the following lines:

Beds	Market housing	Affordable housing
1-bed	5 - 10%	20 - 30%
2-bed	25 - 30%	30 - 40%
3-bed	35 - 45%	30 - 35%
4-bed+	20 - 25%	5 - 10%

Affordable Housing Provision

5.96 Housing affordability is a major problem in Oxfordshire and the Eynsham area is no exception. Increasing the availability of affordable housing will help to meet the needs of those who cannot afford market priced housing locally to rent or purchase including for example essential local workers such as NHS staff, teachers, police, firefighters and military personnel, social care and childcare workers.

5.97 There are a number of different forms of affordable housing. The revised draft NPPF identifies the following:

- Affordable housing for rent (i.e. rent set in accordance with Government’s rent policy or at least 20% below local market rents)
- Starter homes (offered to people who have not previously been a home buyer and who are below the age of 40 at the time of purchase capped at no more than £250,000 outside London and £450,000 in London)
- Discounted market sales housing (i.e. sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value)
- Other affordable routes to home ownership (i.e. housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale and rent to buy).

5.98 The draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan seeks 50% affordable housing in the Eynsham area, which, based on 1,000 homes would mean 500 affordable properties. An initial viability assessment carried out in support of the Local Plan suggests this should be possible from a financial perspective but further assessment will be needed as the development costs and infrastructure requirements are more fully understood.

- 5.99 In terms of the type of affordable housing provided, the draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan identifies a significantly greater need for rented accommodation than for the various forms of intermediate housing (shared ownership, other low cost homes, rent to buy etc). As such a ratio of 2:1 in favour of affordable rented homes will be generally sought however this is a general guide only and the precise mix will be determined on a case by case basis. Oxford City's approach is different and places a much greater emphasis on social-rented housing (at least 80%) with the remainder to be provided as intermediate housing.
- 5.100 We will through the SPD seek to establish an appropriate mix of affordable housing tenures for the West Eynsham SDA. To help inform this we would welcome your initial views on the type of affordable homes that should be provided.

Meeting Specific Housing Needs

- 5.101 The West Eynsham SDA provides the opportunity to meet the housing needs of a number of different groups. This is consistent with the NPPF and Core Objective 6 of the draft Local Plan.
- 5.102 Policy H5 of the draft Local Plan for example requires all larger housing schemes such as West Eynsham to provide 5% of the residential plots for the purposes of custom/self-build housing. Policy H4 requires larger housing schemes such as West Eynsham to provide 25% of new homes (market and affordable) as accessible and adaptable housing (formerly lifetime homes) and at least 5% as wheelchair adaptable dwellings.
- 5.103 The West Eynsham SDA also presents an opportunity to consider the provision of specialist accommodation for the elderly and disabled including extra-care and sheltered housing. This is consistent with Policy H4 of the draft Local Plan which supports the provision of specialist housing in accessible, sustainable locations and the Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan which seeks to ensure that any housing for disabled people is prioritised close to local facilities.
- 5.104 The development also provides an opportunity for families and younger people - a key priority of the submission draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan. In accordance with the draft Local Plan consideration will also be given to the potential needs of travelling communities.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 10: Meeting identified housing needs

10a) Do you agree that the SPD should provide an indicative range of dwelling sizes (market and affordable) to avoid being overly prescriptive?

10b) Do you think we should be looking to focus on any particular size of property in particular? If so, why?

10c) Do you agree that the SPD should be flexible in seeking a good, overall balanced mix of dwelling types rather than setting a specific requirement for certain dwelling types?

10d) Do you have any other views on the type of new homes that should be built at West Eynsham?

10e) Do you have a view on the type of affordable homes that should be provided? Should there be a particular focus or should there be a more balanced mix of different affordable housing types?

10f) Do you support the requirement to provide 5% of housing for the purposes of custom/self-build housing?

10g) Do you support the requirement to provide 25% of new homes as accessible and adaptable properties which could also include 5% wheelchair adaptable homes?

10h) Do you think we should be looking to provide specialist accommodation for the elderly and/or those with a disability as part of the overall housing mix at West Eynsham?

10i) How can the type of new homes provided best meet the needs of young people and households with children?

10j) Should there be a particular emphasis on meeting the needs of essential local workers (i.e. those who provide frontline services in areas including health, education and community safety)? How can this best be achieved?

10k) Do you think West Eynsham is a good opportunity to address the needs of the travelling community?

10l) Do you have any other general comments or observations on this matter?

Summary

5.105 We have in this paper sought to identify a number of key issues which require careful consideration in taking the West Eynsham SDA forward.

5.106 These include:

- The need for a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to development to ensure the delivery of key infrastructure in accordance with an agreed masterplan and to avoid less satisfactory, piecemeal development;
- The character and form of development and whether it should draw on distinctive aspects and features of Eynsham or should seek to create a place with a new strong character and identity of its own;
- How the development can be most effectively integrated with the existing village of Eynsham including key points of connection and the movement of people between the two areas;
- The potential provision of a new linear park, providing a logical continuation of the existing green space that already exists to the south of Eynsham;
- The retention of key views within the development including those to the west into open countryside and to the east towards the church and Wytham Hill;
- School provision including the size and potential location of the new primary school and whether consideration should be given to the provision of a potential secondary facility;
- Whether the SDA should be supported by a small local centre including for example small-scale retail and commercial uses and community space;
- The provision of the western spine road including the indicative alignment, points of access onto the A40 and to the B4449 and the key considerations to be taken into account in working up the design of the road;
- Other supporting infrastructure that may be needed to support the West Eynsham SDA, for example a new cemetery, allotments, community building, sports facilities and play areas.
- How to best meet identified housing needs in terms of the type and size of new homes to be provided, the ability to access affordable housing and opportunities for self-build as well as potentially meeting the needs of specific groups including older people.

5.107 We would welcome your thoughts on these matters as well as any other issues you wish to raise in relation to the West Eynsham SDA and how you think it should be taken forward.

6. How to respond to the consultation

6.1 The deadline for responding to the consultation is **5pm on Friday 21 September 2018**.

6.2 Comments may be submitted in writing either electronically via email or by post:

Email: planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk

Write to: Planning Policy, West Oxfordshire District Council, New Yatt Road, Witney, OX28 1PB

6.3 Please note that in responding to the consultation you do not have to answer all or even any of the consultation questions set out throughout the issues paper. These are merely intended to stimulate thought and discussion - you do not have to respond to them unless you think it would be useful to do so in giving us your views.

7. Next steps

7.1 Following the close of the issues paper consultation, the responses received will be reviewed and analysed and taken into account along with additional evidence commissioned over the summer months in further developing the SPD.

7.2 The Council's intention is to publish a draft SPD for the West Eynsham SDA later in the year.

West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA) – 1,000 homes (Eynsham Parish)

- 9.5.40s Land to the west of Eynsham is allocated for the delivery of 1,000 homes. A proportion of these new homes (550) will contribute towards the unmet housing need of Oxford City, with the remaining balance (450) contributing towards West Oxfordshire's own identified housing needs. The site is well-related to the main services and facilities of Eynsham including in particular Bartholomew Secondary School, Eynsham Village Hall and the Eynsham Medical Centre. It has no major physical or policy constraints to development although flood risk is an important consideration due to the presence of the Chil Brook which runs across parts of the site. The majority of the site is actively being promoted for development.
- 9.5.40t The former Eynsham Nursery and Garden Centre to the west of Eynsham has already secured planning permission for residential development of 77 new homes. There is also a current planning application pending determination. A resolution to grant outline planning permission has also been secured for a further 160 homes on land immediately west of Willows Edge/Thornbury Road. Both sites fall within the SDA boundary, demonstrating clear developer interest.
- 9.5.40u The suitability of the site for strategic development has been assessed in broad terms as part of countywide joint working carried out to determine the apportionment of unmet need from Oxford City. The site was considered against a number of alternative site options in West Oxfordshire and shown to be the most appropriate option (together with land to the north of Eynsham, the site of the Garden Village expression of interest) for providing additional housing to meet the housing needs of Oxford City. The suitability of the site has also been tested through the Council's Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) and as part of the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process alongside other reasonable alternatives.
- 9.5.40v The potential for a western expansion of Eynsham has also been considered as part of the extensive work and consultation on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Eynsham. The proposed allocation is shown below.
- 9.5.40w The site is in multiple land ownerships and the majority has been promoted for development through the Council's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). Having regard to the size of the site, the constraints that exist in terms of flood risk and the requirement for other on-site uses including a new primary school, local centre and green infrastructure it is reasonable to expect delivery of around 1,000 new homes in this area.
- 9.5.40x A key consideration for this site is traffic impact not only in terms of the traffic impact of the proposed development but also the potential to deliver strategic transport improvements that would be of wider benefit to other residents and employees. In particular, a major urban extension such as this presents the opportunity to provide a new western link-spine road for Eynsham serving the new development and also providing a strategic road connection from the A40 to the B4449 to the south, thereby providing additional journey choice and subject to appropriate design and traffic management/signage, potentially also helping to remove unnecessary through-traffic in Eynsham including traffic currently using Witney Road and Acre End Street/High Street.

FMM I -
Paragraphs
9.5.40x and
9.5.40y

- 9.5.40y The provision of this link-spine road will be sought as an integral part of comprehensive development to the west of Eynsham. ~~Appropriate~~ A key consideration will also need to be given to is the relationship between proposed access arrangements onto the A40 from this site, as well as the park and ride and from the proposed Garden Village to the north and wider improvements to the A40 more generally. There is a need for an integrated approach to ensure the most appropriate and effective solution is achieved. Another key consideration for the spine road is the potential impact on the scheduled monument that adjoins the southern boundary of the SDA. Development will therefore be required to take full account of this designated heritage asset in accordance with national policy.
- 9.5.40z A further key consideration for the site is the provision of effective pedestrian and cycle links to encourage sustainable travel into Eynsham and beyond including the ~~West-Oxfordshire~~ Cotswolds Garden Village to the north of the A40. Any development in this area will need to be supported by a detailed Transport Assessment (TA) and Travel Plan.
- 9.5.41a As a major urban extension into open countryside, landscape impact is a key consideration but compared to other alternative site options, this area is not overtly sensitive and if planned and designed properly, the impact of development is capable of being effectively mitigated. A detailed landscape and visual impact assessment would be required in support of any future application to determine the most appropriate form and layout of development which would ultimately influence final housing numbers.
- 9.5.41b In terms of deliverability, whilst the site is in multiple ownerships, the majority is being actively promoted for development and can therefore be considered to be available. In terms of viability, the Council's evidence suggests that a scheme of 1,000 homes in this area would be viable taking account of the likely infrastructure costs including those associated with the western link-spine road and a new on-site primary school.

Policy EW1b – West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (1,000 homes)

Land to the west of Eynsham to accommodate a sustainable integrated community that forms a positive addition to Eynsham, including:

- a) about 1,000 homes with a balanced and appropriate mix of house types and tenures to meet identified needs including affordable housing.**
- b) comprehensive development to be led by an agreed masterplan.**
- c) provision of a new western link-spine road funded by and provided as an integral part of the development and taking the opportunity to link effectively with the existing road network on the western edge of the village.**
- d) the provision of a new primary school on-site (1.5FE including nursery) on a 2.22 ha site to enable future expansion together with financial contributions towards secondary school capacity as appropriate.**
- ~~**e) the provision of other supporting transport infrastructure, including proposals to mitigate the impact of traffic associated with the development in particular the impact on the existing village, and**~~

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EW1b – West
Eynsham
Strategic
Development
Area**

~~incorporating a comprehensive network for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport with links to adjoining areas, including a particular emphasis on improving linkages into Eynsham, to the West Oxfordshire Garden Village and into the surrounding countryside.~~

e) the provision of other supporting transport infrastructure, including mitigating the impact of traffic associated with the development; appropriate consideration of the proposed park and ride, wider A40 improvements and the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village SLG; the provision of appropriate financial contributions towards LTP4 transport schemes such as the A40 Strategy; provision of appropriate public transport (services and infrastructure) serving the site; and provision of a comprehensive network for pedestrians and cyclists with good connectivity provided to adjoining areas, including the Proposed Park and Ride, Eynsham Village, the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village, Hanborough Station and into the surrounding countryside.

f) development to be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of essential supporting infrastructure and facilities.

g) the provision of appropriate landscaping measures to mitigate the potential impact of development and associated infrastructure.

h) biodiversity enhancements including arrangements for future maintenance.

i) provision of appropriate green infrastructure including allotments, masterplanning that takes adequate account of open space and green infrastructure networks and needs, and maximises opportunities to create and strengthen green infrastructure in accordance with the Council's Green Infrastructure Plan (to be prepared).

j) the investigation, recording and safeguarding of the known and potential archaeological significance of the Area prior to any development taking place. The results of the investigation and recording should inform the final layout of the development and be deposited in a public archive. Particular consideration will need to be given to the scheduled monument adjacent to the B4449 including when determining the most appropriate alignment/access arrangements for the western spine road. All feasible route options and junction arrangements must be explored to ensure that any unavoidable harm or loss is minimised, as far as possible mitigated and justified in accordance with Policy EH13.

k) appropriate measures to mitigate flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods to ensure that post-development surface water run-off rates are attenuated to achieve a reduction in greenfield run-off rates. The sustainable drainage systems should be designed to provide a biodiversity enhancement.

l) connection to the mains sewerage network which includes infrastructure upgrades where required including any necessary phasing arrangements.

m) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings.

n) the developer will be required to set aside 5% of the developable plots for those wishing to undertake custom/self-build.