



Please reply to:

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Dear Sirs

**OXFORDSHIRE COTSWOLDS GARDEN VILLAGE AT EYNSHAM
AREA ACTION PLAN (AAP) – PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION**

I am writing on behalf of Railfuture* Thames Valley and wish to comment on the Preferred Options relating to the Garden Village proposals. These comments build on those we made to the original consultation in our letter of 20th July 2018.

As our area of expertise is in transport we will limit our comments to section 10 (Policy Approaches 25-30).

However, we would like to start with a general comment about the Spatial Strategy in section 5. We believe that the Garden Village will develop best as a new community if it is not allowed to rely on Eynsham Village. It will also reduce the impact on the A40 if its transport focus relates to Hanborough Railway Station with more secondary links to the P&R. Option 1 – a single centre – fulfils this purpose, creating opportunities for more financially robust public transport services within the Village and to the station. Also it will allow for the development of new local transport technologies like self-guiding “pods”.

Policy Approach 25 – Reducing the Overall Need to Travel:

We generally welcome this approach.

Policy Approach 26 – Reducing Dependency on the Private Car :

Although the aim of reducing the use of the private car must be the basis of transport policy in the AAP, experience has shown that trying to achieve this by reducing parking does not work for all the reasons set out in 10.17. The best way to achieve modal shift is to have the attractive public transport services and active travel infrastructure in place by the time the first house and/or business premise is occupied. This enables new residents, employers and employees to make informed choices about travel options.

Policy Approach 27 – Active and Healthy Travel:

We welcome the mention of segregated provision for cyclists and pedestrians along Lower Road to Hanborough Station. However, this must be built before any of the houses, as part of the initial access infrastructure works, for the reasons in the previous paragraph. If necessary the Council should borrow the money for these works, to be paid back by the eventual CIL or s.106 monies from the developers.

Policy Approach 28 – Public Transport:

We are concerned that the references in 10.52-54 to the potential benefits from the use of Hanborough

Station are rather negative but we welcome the references to the work of the North Cotswold Line Task Force. Hanborough Station needs to be at the core of transport planning for the Village. We urge that the Council works on the assumption that the proposals for improvements to 3 trains per hour are actually delivered by the time occupation of the Village commences and makes the necessary financial contributions up front to deliver these, by using borrowing if necessary as has been done elsewhere in the country. If the Village is to be properly sustainable the Council has to be ambitious, particularly in view of the Climate Change Emergency.

Bus services should also be provided to link all parts of the Village to the station and to the P&R along with the longer term development of new technology like electric pods. The bus routes can be extensions of services to and from Witney and Oxford, particularly parts of Oxford which cannot be served by rail, although it must also be assumed that East West Rail and the Cowley branch line will have been opened within the timescales of the development.

Policy Approaches 29 – Making Effective use of the Transport Network:

We generally welcome this Policy Approach.

Policy Approach 30 – Changing Transport Trends and Technologies:

We generally welcome this Policy Approach. However, although outside the auspices of the Garden Village development, we would urge the Council to consider insisting on electric car charging points being installed on the P&R and at Hanborough Station as part of its Climate Change initiatives.

In conclusion we should like to take this opportunity to repeat our concerns about an associated topic which we raised in our letter of July 2018. In the medium term, despite welcome developments for bus services along the A40, there will inevitably be a need for a new fixed public transport link to Witney and Carterton. Although at this stage it is not clear whether this would be train, tram-train, tram or guided bus, it is vital that the route of the old railway line to Witney is safeguarded from development. We are concerned that part of the proposed development of 1000 houses at west Eynsham (to which reference is made in §§3.59-61), at its southern end, crosses over the old trackbed. We must request that the trackbed and sufficient land on both sides for a possible boarding point are fully safeguarded. It must be appropriate that such a large housing development should have a high quality public transport link to employment and other provisions in Oxford and Witney.

We should be pleased if you would take on board our comments and make the necessary changes to the Garden Village AAP (and the scheme for west Eynsham) to deliver the important improvements to rail and bus services and other aspects of transport connectivity to create the Village as a truly sustainable and carbon neutral location for the long term.

Please come back to us if you need further clarification on the points we have raised.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Stow, Chairman

** Railfuture is a national voluntary organisation, campaigning for improved rail services and promotion of the contribution rail can make to sustainable transport. In the Thames Valley we have several hundred members, including the affiliation of most local Rail User Groups. We are independent of the industry, political parties and trades unions, and always seek to put rail users first, be they freight or passengers.*