



Please reply to:

Andrew McCallum  
TV Branch Secretary  
38 Lapsley Drive, Banbury,  
OX16 1EW Tel: 01295 272606  
[thamesvalley@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:thamesvalley@railfuture.org.uk)

Planning Policy Team  
West Oxfordshire District Council  
Elmfield  
New Yatt Road  
Witney  
Oxfordshire OX28 1PB

20<sup>th</sup> July 2018

Dear Sirs

#### **OXFORDSHIRE COTSWOLDS GARDEN VILLAGE AT EYNSHAM**

I am writing on behalf of Railfuture\* Thames Valley and wish to comment on the WODC Area Action Plan relating to the Garden Village proposals.

In general we support the proposal as, compared with Witney and Chipping Norton, it will locate new housing closer to much of the employment in the County as well as providing employment within its own boundaries.

However, we are concerned that there is insufficient emphasis in the AAP about the benefits of rail services from Hanborough station and the proposals for developments there. Bus services along the A40 will always suffer from congestion within Oxford and the obstacles of Wolvercote Roundabout. By comparison, the train only takes 9 minutes.

Great Western Railway have proposals in their strategy for the North Cotswold Line of three trains per hour (three times as many as the hourly service mentioned in §6.87 of the AAP) achieved by reinstating the original three platforms at the station, one of which would be used as a turnback. There are operational benefits of running fast Paddington-Oxford trains through to Hanborough. It is possible to run up to Hanborough and back in the time currently used as a layover at Oxford north sidings and removes the congestion at Oxford station having to cross over from down to up lines. The other extra trains will be achieved by a 2 per hour service to Worcester.

Although, of course, we welcome the proposed improved pedestrian and cycling provision along Lower Road, we believe that there need to be bus or minibus services from all parts of the Garden Village to and from the station along an improved Lower Road, preferably with a link in directly along the south side of the railway. These bus services could include extensions back from Eynsham, the new development at west Eynsham, the P&R and other areas east of Witney.

A major scheme like the Garden Village requires a future-proofed public transport strategy but in line with government thinking the necessary funding has to come from housing and other developments. We therefore urge that the Area Action Plan includes a requirement for developer contributions for the additional platforms and other developments at Hanborough station to create the additional services, support for linking bus services and necessary improvements to Lower Road.

We should like to take this opportunity to raise an associated topic. 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, 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 make the necessary changes to the AAP and the scheme for west Eynsham to deliver these important improvements to rail and bus services and other aspects of transport connectivity.

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.*