

Thames Valley Branch

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5th October 2020

Dear Sirs,

SALT CROSS GARDEN VILLAGE AT EYNSHAM - AREA ACTION PLAN CONSULTATION

I am writing on behalf of Railfuture* Thames Valley and thank you for the opportunity 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 and an opportunity for more sustainable transport.

We welcome the Plan overall as it is built around the importance of climate change and environmental policies (e.g. electric charging points), reducing the need for travel by car, improvements to air quality (policy 11) and opportunities for active travel.

As an organisation we are particularly interested in proposals for improving public transport and facilities for walking and cycling. We are therefore limiting our comments to Section 8.

We are pleased that, compared with the first draft AAP in 2018, importance is now given to Hanborough Station and links thereto. We welcome that financial contributions will be required for improvements to the station and access and to the North Cotswold Line Transformation. However, it will be vital that these improvements are in place before new houses and businesses are occupied so that new occupiers make their travel decisions knowing about the actual rail services. Borrowing should therefore be put in place for these contributions to achieve up front delivery, paid back from the s.106 contributions over time. This would follow a similar approach to that set out in the first paragraph on page 148 for the delivery of the A40 Corridor infrastructure schemes.

Whilst the AAP in Fig 8.1 states that it should be possible for buses to penetrate all areas of the Village, it could be helpful to stress the design standards required (road widths, radii, absence of on street parking, etc). We are concerned that bus stops could be more than 400m from dwellings if there is a high frequency service. Passengers are less likely to walk such a distance in inclement weather, thereby going against the

basic principle of the AAP to reduce the use of the private car. It will also be important to future proof connections to Hanborough Station, for example by making infrastructure provision for autonomous “pods” or similar.

It will be vitally important that the proposals and policies set out in the AAP are supported by the independent examiner and are not watered down as a result of submissions from potential developers. To that end it will be important that WODC has a very strong team at the Examination able to rebut developers’ concerns about the required standards and the viability of the necessary financial contributions. The scheme has the potential to be an exemplar development, future proofed to deal with climate change and other environmental and health issues.

We should be pleased if you would take our comments into account but come back to us if you need further clarification on the points we have raised.

This response has been researched and prepared by our committee member, Nigel Rose.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Stow

Richard Stow,

Chairman

Railfuture Thames Valley Branch

** 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.*

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