

Planning and Sustainable Communities

Reply to : Chris Hargraves
Tel : 01993 861686
Fax : 01993 861450
Email : chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk

Elmfield

New Yatt Road,
WITNEY,
Oxfordshire,
OX28 1PB,
Tel: 01993 861000
www.westoxon.gov.uk



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Lynn Little
Carterton Town Council
Town Hall
19 Alvescot Road
Carterton
OX18 3JL

Your Ref :
Our Ref :
Date : 3 July 2015

Dear Lynn

Carterton Masterplan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Carterton Masterplan (April 2015). As you are aware, the District Council is keen to work pro-actively with Carterton Town Council to enable the town to fulfil its social, economic and environmental potential.

As such, we hope you find our comments of use in finalising the masterplan and taking forward any further initiatives that flow from it.

I should emphasise that the comments are made at Officer-level only and should not be taken as the formal view of the District Council although in preparing the comments we have engaged with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Housing.

For ease of reference our comments are set out below in the same order as the masterplan itself.

2. Introduction

In the opening paragraph (201) the masterplan states that it 'helps to inform the preparation of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan' as well as providing the foundation for a future neighbourhood plan for Carterton.

In terms of the Local Plan it should be noted that because the masterplan was still at a relatively early stage in its development at the time the final pre-submission draft Local Plan was being prepared, it was unable to exert a great deal of influence.

Indeed, there are some significant differences between the masterplan and the Local Plan regarding for example the prospect of development to the north and west of the town. These issues are further explored below.

It would be useful if the status of the masterplan were to be clarified in the introductory section. Reference is made to the masterplan being used in the planning application process but it would only carry any significant weight in decision making terms if it were to be formally endorsed or adopted by WODC for the purposes of development management. Given the significant differences between the content of the masterplan and the Local Plan, this is unlikely to happen.

The key issues outlined at paragraph 205 are acknowledged and provide a good overview of local priorities for the town. A number of the issues have previously been identified through consultation on the local plan including for example the need for additional open space and business land and improving the quality and range of town centre shops, pubs and restaurants.

Elmfield
New Yatt Road,
WITNEY,
Oxfordshire,
OX28 1PB,
Tel: 01993 861000
www.westoxon.gov.uk



3. Wider Context

We have no specific comments to make on this section other than to suggest that in relation to the various development proposals referred to on the edge of Carterton it should be made more explicit that a number of these schemes are being promoted by landowners and developers rather than the District Council.

Only land to the east and north-west of the town has District Council support with alternative options to the north at Kilkenny Farm and to the west of the town being rejected through the Local Plan process (and in the case of land to the west refusal of an outline planning permission also).

4. Strategic Issues

The plan refers to a desire to extend the Kilkenny Lane Country Park which is supported in principle. The committed urban extension scheme to the east of the town will provide for an extension of the country park to eastwards.

Investment in Conservation Target Areas is also consistent with the Local Plan and supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The principle of extended green infrastructure in and around the town is supported, particularly those that would improve connections to the town centre from peripheral locations.

It would be useful however to more clearly illustrate potential routes for enhancement on the 'growth options' plan set out at Page 18.

It should also be made clearer that the growth options plan illustrates a range of potential opportunities that do not wholly reflect the emerging Local Plan.

In relation to highway improvements (paragraph 404) it should be noted that the proposed improvements to the B4477 are included in the County Council's Local Transport Plan 4. It is therefore a firm policy proposal that is also reflected in the pre-submission draft Local Plan.

Paragraph 406 refers to the requirements for growth emerging from the MoD's Programme GATEWAY including additional employment land requirements. No explanation is provided however as to what those requirements are or the quantum of land that is considered to be required by the MoD outside of the base. Further explanation could usefully be provided.

Paragraphs 407 and 408 refer to the need for additional employment land at Carterton which is supported. As highlighted in the masterplan, there is an imbalance of jobs and workers with the Carterton sub-area having the greatest excess of workers over jobs of all of the District's five sub-areas. There is a clear need to provide additional business floorspace for the town and this is correctly reflected in the masterplan.

However, there is an issue of timing and the priority that should be given to the provision of additional employment land close to RAF Brize Norton and existing business sites within the town. It would seem more sensible for the phasing plan (to 2025) to show the sports pitch land at Monahan Way in employment use (subject to relocation of the existing pitches) with the longer term plan (to 2031) then showing the potential for additional business land further afield.

Elmfield
New Yatt Road,
WITNEY,
Oxfordshire,
OX28 1PB,
Tel: 01993 861000
www.westoxon.gov.uk



Paragraph 409 refers to a number of housing growth areas and explains that various options have been considered including the Local Plan, the Local Plan plus the remaining SHMA requirement and also taking account of the unmet needs of Oxford City. It is unclear however what assumptions were made about the quantum of development to be provided. The pre-submission draft Local Plan proposes 2,600 new homes in the period 2011 – 2031 including 700 to the east of the town.

It is not clear therefore what assumptions about additional levels of growth were made to arrive at the potential growth options that have been identified to the north and west of the town.

There is an agreed process currently underway to determine the apportionment of 'unmet' housing need from Oxford City across the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area (HMA). At present it is not known how much additional housing, if any, West Oxfordshire will be expected to accommodate. As such, it is difficult to see how an unmet need scenario can have been properly considered. It is also relevant to note that Carterton may not be the most appropriate location to provide for Oxford's housing needs given its relative distance compared to other settlements.

5. Vision

The key principles set out at paragraph 502 are supported in principle and considered to be consistent with the emerging Local Plan.

The plan on page 24 identifies a number of potential locations for growth in the period up to 2025 including the committed schemes to the east and north west of Carterton but also land to the north east of Monahan Way and to the north at Kilkenny Farm.

It is not clear what analysis has been undertaken to determine the suitability of these locations for accommodating future housing and/or employment growth.

Land to the north at Kilkenny Farm has been rejected as an option through the local plan process for a number of reasons including the relative distance of the site from the town centre, poor public transport access, the need for significant improvements to the Burford Road and the physical segregation created by the Country Park.

There is no indication of how these and other relevant issues have been considered in making the recommendations on future potential areas of growth.

6. Carterton Masterplan

Paragraph 601 refers to the masterplan including an assessment of the 'likely volume' of new homes. As per the comments outlined above, it is unclear how this has been quantified given that the emerging Local Plan has yet to be adopted and the issue of unmet need from Oxford City yet to be resolved. The plan at page 26 shows potential development to the west of the town in the period up to 2031.

As is the case with land to the north at Kilkenny Farm, this option has been previously rejected through the Local Plan process (and also in this case through refusal of an outline planning application). It is not clear how the District Council's concerns in relation to the site including landscape impact and poor integration with the town have been considered in identifying this as a preferred option.

Elmfield
New Yatt Road,
WITNEY,
Oxfordshire,
OX28 1PB,
Tel: 01993 861000
www.westoxon.gov.uk



The plan also illustrates the potential for further growth to the north of the town beyond Kilkenny Farm. Again, it is not clear what analysis and evidence this recommendation is based on.

Development to the extent shown on the plan is likely to have a significant landscape impact that does not appear to have been considered at this stage. Whilst, it is appreciated that the masterplan is an aspirational document, the preferred options should be deliverable and acceptable in planning terms.

The Town Centre proposals set out on pages 28 and 29 are supported in principle and reflect the content of the emerging Local Plan. The District Council is keen to work with Carterton Town Council to take these various ideas forward in a practical sense.

7. Action Plan

The reference to the potential development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Carterton is noted. Clearly if this were to take place it would need to involve neighbouring parishes who would be directly affected by development on the edge of the town.

The 12 month timescale for developing such a plan is perhaps rather ambitious given the likely complexity and number of partners that would need to be involved.

I hope you find the comments set out above of use in finalising the masterplan. Please let me know if you require any additional information or clarification over any of the points raised.

Yours sincerely

Chris Hargraves
Planning Policy Manager