

## Supplementary Papers

### Oxfordshire Growth Board

held in the Virtual meeting viewable by weblink  
on Tuesday, 26 January 2021 at 2.00 pm

3. **Public participation** (Pages 63 - 66)

To consider two public questions

4. **Growth Board Scrutiny Panel update** (Pages 67 - 70)

To receive feedback and recommendation from the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 19 January 2021.

## Public speakers

26 January 2021



### Question

#### 1. Councillor Debby Hallett, Deputy Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council

On 26 April 2018, as the Chair of Vale's Scrutiny Committee, I submitted a statement to this Board about Vale's concerns regarding the affordability of housing in Oxfordshire. I provided to Growth Board members a report produced by Vale officers about affordability issues in Vale of White Horse, and urged you to *"do all you can under these new rules of working and within upcoming new planning policies to make some measurable headway into solving Oxfordshire's housing problem. Explore the options, be courageous and creative, and find sustainable solutions that improve people's lives here in the county."*

That statement is attached, (**Appendix 1**), and within it is the link to the report I referred to. I asked Growth Board to consider this report in its work on affordable housing in the Growth Deal.

The meeting minute says my points were considered in the debate that followed under minute 85. However, that minute lacks any mention of what the Growth Board decided to do as a result of the information I presented. In fact, it has to do with planning flexibilities and not affordable housing at all. There remains a serious issue of housing affordability in Oxfordshire, which the OxPlan50 is well-placed to address.

Since that time, the Affordable Housing subgroup has contributed to the Growth Deal's work. But I haven't seen any reports on evidence gathering to begin to answer the question of, 'Just how unaffordable IS housing throughout Oxfordshire?'. Any proposed means of solving this problem must come after defining the problem.

It's been nearly three years since I asked about this.

Please can you report on what has been done to gather evidence that establishes the accurate scope and nature of Oxfordshire's housing affordability issues, and what decisions have been taken by the OxPlan50 team or the wider Growth Deal team to consider the particular problems here in Oxfordshire and to provide housing that people who work here can afford?

#### 2. Michael Tyce, on behalf of CPRE Oxfordshire

The National Infrastructure Commission originally proposed one million homes, and an associated population increase for the OxCam corridor, of which 250,000 were targeted at Oxfordshire. Everyone rushed to disown the figure, saying it had no validity. That now appears to be the case as Bidwells report that it is now 1.5 million, which is 50% higher, and implying 375,000 houses for Oxfordshire, close on four times as high as the current Growth Deal, which is itself about double the number of houses long term population growth

suggests are needed. Your Chairman has said that the Growth Board's objective is to "moderate" the Government's plans for the Arc.

What is the figure for Oxfordshire the Growth Board seeks to moderate towards?

## Appendix 1 to Question 1 – Oxfordshire Growth Board 26 January 2021

### Speech to Growth Board on affordable housing or houses that people can afford. 26 April 2018

I'm Cllr Debby Hallett, Chairman of the Vale Scrutiny committee, and co-chairman of the joint SODC and Vale Scrutiny Committee.

Today, we're creating an opportunity for the Oxfordshire Growth Board to collaborate across boundaries to help solve the most intractable problems we face: 1) our main highways are regularly operating over their capacity, and 2) houses here are too expensive for the people who work here to be able to afford them.

I recently asked for a report to come to Vale Scrutiny on the state of housing affordability locally. It came in Feb 2018; it's called 'Houses that People Can Afford'.

Vale's report confirms what's previously been anecdotal evidence. Here are some main points:

1. The affordability level as defined by SHMA, is higher than as defined by Institute for Public Policy; SHMA uses gross income, IPP uses net income, so income is considered after tax. We need a consistent definition of 'affordability'. Basically, a useful heuristic might be this: housing is unaffordable if a household spends more than 35% of its net income on housing.
2. There was no data available for Vale or Oxfordshire housing specifically, so we used data from all of Western England, as the closest comparable area. Housing in Vale is more expensive though, so the affordability is likely even lower than what's quoted in the report.
3. We looked at house prices and rents in quartiles. In order to buy a lower quartile property costing £255,000 in Vale, an income of £57,000 is needed, which is an upper quartile income. So only the highest income levels can afford to buy the lowest priced properties.
4. Only 18% of ownership options are comfortably affordable at all, and then only to the highest incomes. (Ownership options are shared ownerships, first time buyers, help to buy, starter homes etc.) So four out of five ownership options are basically unaffordable to everyone.
5. Help to buy schemes make houses affordable only to top earners (over \$56,000).
6. Private rentals and any sort of ownership tenure are unaffordable to lower quartile income households. Only social rent is affordable to them, and we don't have enough social housing. (Social rents are approximately 50% of market rents.)

The whole report is available here:

<http://democratic.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/documents/s43516/Housing%20that%20is%20truly%20affordable%20FINAL.pdf>

Last month (March 2018) Parliament published a useful report:

<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7747>

I urge the leaders of Oxfordshire's councils to do all you can under these new rules of working and within upcoming new planning policies to make some measurable headway into solving Oxfordshire's housing problem. Explore the options, be courageous and creative, and find sustainable solutions that improve people's lives here in the county.

**To:** Oxfordshire Growth Board  
**Date:** 26 January 2021  
**Report of:** Growth Board Scrutiny Panel  
**Title of Report:** Recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 19 January 2021

<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present recommendations from the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 19 January 2021 to the Growth Board.
<b>Scrutiny Lead:</b>	Councillor Sean Woodcock, Vice-Chair of the Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	That the Oxfordshire Growth Board states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.

### Introduction and overview

1. The Scrutiny Panel would like to thank Andrew Down (Growth Board Executive Officer Group Chair), Rosie Rowe (Lead Officer for Healthy Place Shaping, Cherwell District Council), Paul Staines (Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, Interim Head of Programme), and Martin Tugwell, (Programme Director, England's Economic Heartland) for presenting and attending the meeting to answer questions.
2. The Panel received a presentation by Martin Tugwell on the work done on England's Economic Heartland Draft Transport Strategy. The Panel discussed at length the need for improved accessibility to rural areas and not just major roads and highways connecting cities. The Panel also noted the need for more emphasis on autonomous electric vehicles and electric charging infrastructure in future plans.
3. The Panel also reviewed the Growth Board's response to its recommendations made on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Concerning recommendation 3 where the panel recommended the Growth Board in its letter to Secretary of State that there be a national standard for Zero-Carbon Housing as per the UK Green Building Council's Net Zero-Carbon Buildings framework. The Panel wished to reiterate to

the Growth Board the Scrutiny Panel's support for the definition of Zero Carbon homes as prescribed by the UK Green Building Council.

4. On recommendation 1, with regards to more information on rural flood prevention plans of the Environment Agency in Oxfordshire, The Panel discussed at length the socio-economic impact in rural areas such as Chalgrove airfield, Cropredy, Watlington and parts of West Oxfordshire where flooding is prevalent and that local planning authorities have not taken this into account during planning considerations. The Panel emphasised on the urgent need for greater focus and investment in flood prevention measures especially in rural areas of Oxfordshire. The Panel concluded that representations needed to be made to HM Government in this regard.

**Recommendation 1: That the Growth Board write to the Department for Food and Rural Affairs requesting greater focus and investment in preventative measures to address flooding in Oxfordshire.**

5. The Panel received a report from Rosie Rowe (Lead Officer for Healthy Place Shaping) setting out an update on activities that had been undertaken to embed healthy place shaping into the workstreams of the Growth Board and the strategies that underpinned them. The Panel also discussed the need to amend the proposed Health Impact Assessment Toolkit and supporting text to clarify that it could also be applied to existing developments as well as new and upcoming developments with regards to healthy place shaping initiatives.

**Recommendation 2: That the Health Impact Assessment Toolkit and supporting text be amended to greater emphasise that it can also apply to existing developments as part of ongoing and new place shaping initiatives.**

6. The Panel also received a report from Paul Staines (Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, Interim Head of Programme) which asked the Growth Board to endorse a draft letter to the Secretary of State asking for the continuation of the Community Housing Fund. The Panel also received the summary notes of the Infrastructure Subgroup from its meeting on 14 December 2020 and the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Subgroup from 18 December 2020.

## **Future Work**

4. As well as reviewing the Growth Board's response to these recommendations at its next meeting on 16 March 2021, the Panel will also be considering in detail:
  - Feedback received through Oxfordshire Strategic Vision engagement exercise.
  - Regional development updates within the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.
  - Oxfordshire Rail Connectivity Study: Stage 2 Outcome.
  - Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Update (Provisional).

- Joint Statement of Intent on Climate Change.
- Q3 (2020/2021) Housing and Growth Deal Progress and Financial Report.

**Report authors**

Councillor Sean Woodcock  
Vice-Chair of the Growth Board Scrutiny  
Panel  
[Sean.Woodcock@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk](mailto:Sean.Woodcock@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk)

**Officer contact**

Amit Alva  
Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Officer  
[amit.alva@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:amit.alva@southandvale.gov.uk)

## Growth Board Draft response to recommendations of the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel Recommendations made on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021

The Growth Board is requested to provide a response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel for decision at its meeting on 26 January 2021.

Recommendation	Agree ?	Comment
Recommendation 1. That the Growth Board write to the Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs requesting greater focus & investment in preventative measures to address flooding in Oxfordshire.		
Recommendation 2. That the Health Impact Assessment Toolkit and supporting text be amended to greater emphasise that it can also apply to existing developments as part of ongoing and new place shaping initiatives.		