

Public speakers

19 July 2021

OXFORDSHIRE

G R O W T H B O A R D

1. Helen Marshall, CPRE Oxfordshire:

We were promised an Oxfordshire 2050 Plan that would put the needs and wishes of Oxfordshire's people first. To ensure an effective consultation, we need documents that are fit for purpose. Would the Growth Board therefore support the addition of a paper to the OP2050 consultation documents that clearly compares and contrasts the impacts, risks and benefits of the different growth options presented?

Answer: This has been undertaken, through the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulation Assessment, both of which are being published alongside the Consultation Document.

Undertaking a Sustainability Appraisal is an integral part of the plan preparation process. It looks at the environmental, social and economic effects of a plan to make sure that the plan promotes sustainable development and takes the most appropriate approach given reasonable alternatives. The Sustainability Appraisal has played – and will continue to play – an important ongoing role in strategy and option development. The Habitat Regulations Assessment will also have a role in scoping the risk and benefits whilst a vast evidence base provides extensive information for residents to provide an informed view.

This analysis will continue through the next stage of Plan making Regulation 19.

2. David Young, on behalf of Need not Greed Oxfordshire:

The Sustainability Appraisal report for the Oxon 2050 Plan consultation states, Para 4.147, that even with the lowest growth option outlined 'negative effects are expected on all environmental factors: water, flooding, soils, biodiversity, landscape and heritage. Car traffic is also likely to increase with associated climate change and air pollution impacts'. However, instead of an open conversation with local residents about the impacts and benefits of the various growth options, the consultation document promises 'good growth' in 'ways that fully align and integrate sustainability objectives'. Need not Greed Oxfordshire seeks to know a) How the Growth Board reconciles these statements? b) How the Growth Board feels that the public should respond to a consultation on growth options that does not clearly set out the impacts of those options?

Answer: The Sustainability Appraisal sets out, as part of our consultation, to model the impacts of growth. It looks at three scenarios for growth and offers a generic assessment of the possible impacts. It does not intend or establish the detail of what those impacts will be as it does not look at specific growth options, but generic policy options. The Board sees this as consistent with its commitment to good growth and as a useful starting point for our considerations. The Sustainability Appraisal advises in broad terms that without good growth that these impacts are possible, and the role of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 will be to minimise these impacts through the promotion of sustainable good growth in line with the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. We would emphasise that no decisions have been taken at this stage, and that this second wide ranging consultation represents a continued conversation with local residents.