

The Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel Public speakers

18 July 2023



Question

1. George Curtis on behalf of Bioabundance

Bioabundance campaigns for:

1. A Zero Carbon Oxfordshire,
2. Nature Restored,
3. Homes for Need, not Greed!

You will no doubt have seen the News that temperatures in the North Atlantic are this month at record levels. This climate emergency cannot be ignored.

You are today considering the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan - to finalise the Strategy and Action Plan to be presented to the FOP. I have had the privilege of attending one of the LEP workshops and been party to discussions amongst the members of Bioabundance and Need not Greed concerning the other LEP workshops. We note in the Links to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Vision (ii) that the first principle is GP1: We will reverse the impacts of climate change. Unfortunately, this is not reflected in the scenarios postulated by the LEP team.

This work is not ready to be considered by the FOP. At least one of the scenarios must recognise the impact of the scope three carbon emissions of building numerous market value houses and new roads on the County's plans to meet net zero. We are also surprised that the scenarios focus on market value housing to boost the GDP score when the greatest need in Oxfordshire is for more social housing and genuine affordable housing for first time buyers. I use the word genuine because the word 'affordable' has been misconstrued to mean '80% of market value'.

Questions to the Scrutiny Panel:

1. Do you consider that the scenarios put forward by the LEP Team are ready to be considered by the FOP without the impact of the consequent scope three carbon emissions being made available to the decision makers in the County?
2. Do you consider that the scenarios put forward by the LEP Team adequately addresses the shortage of social housing and housing genuinely affordable by first time buyers?

2. Suzanne McIvor on behalf of Need Not Greed

With regards to Agenda Item 6, the Strategic Economic Plan, Need not Greed Oxfordshire asks the Scrutiny Panel to put forward the following recommendation to the FOP:

The Scrutiny Panel welcomes the update on progress with the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan but believes that there are still fundamental gaps in the work and asks the FOP to ensure these are addressed prior to any endorsement of the Plan.

In particular, the Scrutiny Panel would wish to see a detailed justification behind the prioritisation of particular outcomes (ref Slide 13 of the Ag Item 6 PowerPoint presentation) which relegates to “2nd tier” critical issues such as achieving carbon neutrality, improving the natural environment and having a happier and healthier population.

In addition, the Scrutiny Panel asks the FOP to secure:

- Immediate publication of the supporting evidence base which has so far not been made available for broader stakeholder or public comment.
- An assessment of the degree to which stakeholder engagement has achieved an appropriately broad social reach, including currently disadvantaged communities that should stand to gain most benefit from a robust SEP.
- A report which highlights clearly what changes, if any, have been made to the emerging SEP as a result of any stakeholder input.
- Clarity on the situation with regards to the brief/outcome for the proposed (or already undertaken?) Independent Economic Review.
- Clarity on the timetable which, as currently outlined, suggests that the OxLEP Board will sign off the SEP in September but it will not come to the FOP for consideration until November, which the Scrutiny Panel would consider to be inappropriate in terms of democracy and transparency.