

Supplementary Papers

The Future Oxfordshire Partnership

held in the Council Chamber, Cherwell District Council, Bodicote House,
Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA
on Monday, 20 March 2023 at 2.00 pm

3. **Public participation** (Pages 147 - 150)
Four public questions have been submitted as attached.
4. **Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel update** (Pages 151 - 156)
For action: To consider the recommendations from the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 13 March 2023.



Public speakers

20 March 2023

1. Councillor Sue Roberts, South Oxfordshire District Council.

Refused Water Bathing Status - sewage - a drag on Wallingford's Economy

My husband's birthday treat: sampling along the River Thames to apply for Bathing Water Status for Wallingford Beach. It was remarkably hard work and we finished exhausted, finally delivering samples to Thames Water in Reading to analyse faecal contamination of our river. This citizen science project involved fifty Wallingford citizens.

Water Bathing Status has been refused by DEFRA with no explanation given.

We are confounded that no protections will be put in for the hundreds of children and old folk swimming here. The whole town was behind South Oxfordshire District Council's investment of over £40,000 for experts Thames 21 to lead on this, with their proven-track record of achieving Water Bathing Status at Port Meadow, Oxford.

We were confident of success. Our beach is jam-packed with young kids ducking their heads under the water, families paddle-boarding, old folks (like me) swimming.

The River Thames is the lifeblood of our market town. Oxford University and Oxford Brookes elite rowing teams train here; hosts of visitors and locals play at our beach. The town is thriving economically, with this new-found love of wild-water. Bars and restaurants are opening up and Wallingford has a real buzz.

Who is putting their foot on the neck of Wallingford's future? Is it DEFRA or Thames Water? It was a body-blow to discover that we are not to be protected from swimming in sewage.

Please would FOP write to the Secretary of States for DEFRA and DCMS, to deplore this retrograde decision to keep Wallingford mired in excrement?

Would you kindly consider this under your agenda item on Oxfordshire's Visitor Economy.

2. Professor Richard Harding on behalf of CPRE Oxfordshire

CPRE Oxfordshire welcomes the Pathways to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Joint Action Plan (Agenda Item 5).

As councillors and officers will know, CPRE has been calling for a county-wide strategy for renewables to ensure we get what is needed as soon as possible, but in a way that protects our countryside and respects the views of local communities. (An as yet largely unpublicised petition on this matter has already drawn nearly 500 signatories from members of the public who share our views.)

We are therefore delighted to see the proposal for a Local Area Energy Plan for Oxfordshire and this commitment to strategic planning of energy generation.

We are also pleased to note that, despite the ambitious solar renewable energy targets for the county, these would only require a small portion of Oxfordshire's land and that, as CPRE has always said, priority should be given to rooftops and brownfield locations.

In our view, this confirms our position that our local authorities can and must be selective about any greenfield allocations of solar, particularly avoiding Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Green Belt, wildlife sites and nature recovery areas, and good agricultural land. In welcoming the Local Area Energy Plan proposal, we would like to ask the Future Oxfordshire Partnership:

- Which 'stakeholders' (p48, Action 4, 1) will be involved in the formulation of the Plan?
- Will the Plan be, rightly, subject to full public consultation?
- How will the Plan take into account other potentially competing uses for land, such as biodiversity and food production, possibly moving towards a broader comprehensive land use plan for Oxfordshire?
- And when will local authorities be in a position to turn down any building applications (domestic or commercial) that do not make adequate provision for renewable energy, especially solar?

3. Suzanne McIvor on behalf of Need Not Greed Oxfordshire

There seem to be three phases to the preparation of the Strategic Economic Plan. Firstly "scoping", secondly "evidence gathering analysis, future thinking through an Independent Economic Review" (which will include a call for evidence), and thirdly an Action Plan which will include the final outputs. All done and dusted by the end of June!

The headlines on the SEP suggest it is supposed to be a "new, constructive and creative county-wide conversation about Oxfordshire's economic future" but we don't see any evidence to suggest that the residents of Oxfordshire or groups such as ourselves are going to be involved in this conversation. Where in the timetable is the public consultation to allow everyone a say, rather than just including those whose focus is purely economic and business-based?

And is the SEP going to be adopted by each of the Oxfordshire Local Authorities or are we going to wake up one day to an announcement that it has been approved by the government?

We assume that as the Future Oxfordshire Partnership is not a decision-making body, the sign up to the SEP will need to be approved by each Local Authority.

We ask the Future Oxfordshire Partnership to:

1. Carry out a full public consultation on the SEP, and
2. Ensure that the SEP goes through an appropriate scrutiny and approval process by each Local Authority

4. George Curtis on behalf of Bioabundance

Thank you for the opportunity to question the FOP about the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan 2023 and Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map & Action Plan Final Report on behalf of Bioabundance whose objective is to protect, extend, grow and restore nature in Oxfordshire.

I had the privilege of asking two questions to the FOP Scrutiny Panel on 13th March:

- Could the Net Zero Plan be reworked to include the Scope 3 emissions before it can be accepted?
- Could the Economic Strategy include the use of Doughnut Economics to measure and present plans for enabling wellbeing whilst minimising environmental harm?

I quote from the Net Zero Report.

The size of the challenge to achieve net zero carbon by 2050 at latest will require a considerable step change in activity. We need to embed climate change into decision making across Oxfordshire's local authorities.

We understand from the responses to the Scrutiny Panel that the Net Zero plan will still be put forward to the FOP despite the fact that Scope 3 emissions are not included in this iteration of the plan. From other points made in the Scrutiny Panel meeting, the net zero imperative is to be considered in many of the FOP sponsored workstreams. The net zero imperative applies to all FOP activities. It is our contention that the Scope 3 emission information from the housing and road developments are crucial elements in FOP decision-making to embrace the net zero strategy. Houses are estimated at between 50 and 150 tons of carbon each. The present Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map & Action Plan is not fit for purpose until it is extended to include Scope 3 emissions.

We understand that the Scrutiny Panel will recommend that the FOP ask Kate Raworth to present the Doughnut Economics approach to manage sustainable growth within ecological targets whilst ensuring wellbeing. We would ask the FOP to follow this recommendation so that they can see the benefits of weaving the principles and measurement schemes in this economic model into the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan 2023.

In other parts of the country, for instance the WFG (Wales) Act, the well-being of future generations is acquiring greater significance than in the now outdated quest for GDP growth at any cost. The number of houses in the Oxford city Housing & Economic Needs Assessment, produced by Cambridge Economics, seems to be based on the 1930s economic concept of GDP driven growth without regard to the environment. Net Zero calls for a considerable step change in this thinking.

Could the opportunity be taken to use Oxford developed Doughnut Economics to guide the Oxfordshire economy to enable wellbeing and prosperity whilst minimising environmental harm? Doughnut Economics is a globally recognised framework which is used to avoid the problem of pursuing GDP alone.

Our questions:

1. Could the Net Zero Plan be reworked to include the Scope 3 emissions before it can be accepted?

2. Could the Economic Strategy include the use of Doughnut Economics to measure and present plans for enabling wellbeing whilst minimising environmental harm?

Future Oxfordshire Partnership response to recommendations of the Partnership Scrutiny Panel made on 20 March 2023

The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is requested to provide a response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel for decision at its meeting on 13 March 2023.

Recommendation	Comment
<p><u>Pathways to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Joint Action Plan (agenda Item: 5)</u></p> <p>The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to consider the Net Zero Route Map and Joint Action Plan, which it felt, represented a significant step forward towards the delivery of a zero carbon Oxfordshire. Members were very appreciative of the considerable amount of complex work undertaken by officers and City Science in developing this important plan. Nevertheless, there were a number of areas where the Panel felt that the Route Map and Joint Action Plan could be strengthened further to address both what it felt were a number of omissions, and areas where clarifications were required within the City Science report.</p> <p>The Panel recommended to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The report and Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan be noted. 2. The proposed joint actions and recommended prioritisations as set out in the report be endorsed to form a programme of work reporting to the Partnership subject to: 	

- a. The addition of a workstream to examine and establish the evidence base for additional measures to reduce private car use. This should include development of an approach to making decisions on capital infrastructure, road building and traffic demand management policies that in addition to the encouragement of behavioural change include potential fiscal measures. (It is suggested that [The Future of Road Investment in Wales](#) report commissioned by the Welsh Government advising it on current road projects and how to consider future projects could provide a possible example for elements of this).
- b. Increased consideration and inclusion of Scope 3 emissions within the route map and action plan to ensure indirect emissions are managed. Given the urgent nature of the climate emergency and need to consider all possible ways to the reduce carbon emissions.
- c. Re-examination of the potential contributions of wind and hydro forms of carbon free energy generation. This is so as to not place an over reliance on solar energy generation. The use of previously developed land for solar generation, (for example through solar canopies above carparks) to be encouraged over previously undeveloped land.
- d. There be a re-examination of the benefits of e-cargo bikes in addition to the focus on electric vans in order to support efforts to reduce emissions generated from 'last mile' deliveries.

- e. The development of a transport hierarchy that gives greater priority to delivery of EV infrastructure that can be used to support the expansion of shared EV use, for example through a network of car clubs, over private EV infrastructure, and that public EV charging infrastructure also includes provision for e-bikes.

- f. Greater recognition that:
 - i. trips undertaken by motorcycle tend to be lower total mileage with a proportionally smaller level of emissions. Motorcycles are part of the solution, not the problem.
 - ii. emissions from motorcycles should be regarded as a separate heading from cars. Motorcycles are not two wheeled cars.

- g. That as part of the development of a Strategic Active Travel Network, specific KPIs around the total length of new cycleways and other measures to encourage Active Travel be introduced in addition to a KPI relating to the total length of footpaths delivered.

- h. That City Science be asked to recheck and clarify the wording of paragraphs and tables relating to the alignment of Transport Route Map targets with the most recent version of the Local Transport and the Connectivity Plan, (para 3.3.2) in light of concerns by the Panel that there were inconsistencies in the figures given.

- i. That the report acknowledges the opportunity of removing HGV traffic by encouraging more rail freight, and passenger rail transportation (e.g. East / West Rail).

3. The governance and reporting proposals set out in the report be endorsed subject to the implementation of a quarterly reporting cycle, rather than a six monthly reporting cycle.
4. The Partnership endorse the development of a briefing open to members of the Partnership, members of the Scrutiny Panel, members of the advisory group and supporting officers around the potential contribution of Doughnut Economics to the delivery of reduced emissions and a sustainable economy in support of the objectives of PaZCO and the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision.

Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Financial Report: Update at the end of Quarter 3 2022/23 (agenda Item 7)

The Panel noted the advice of officers that sufficient contingency provision had been made for inflation within the Housing from Infrastructure Programme as endorsed by the Partnership in September 2022 but requested that officers confirm the date of inflation indexes used so as to provide reassurance to the Partnership that the level of contingency remained sufficient in light of current circumstances and rising capital costs.

5. That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership in noting the financial update as of quarter three satisfy itself on the level of contingency within the Hfl programme.

OXLEP – Oxfordshire’s Visitor Economy (agenda Item 8)

The panel noted the update on progress related to the Visitor Economy Renaissance Programme (VERP) and the future landscape of the Visitor Economy.

6. That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership in noting the forthcoming VERP Vision and Destination Management Plan for Oxfordshire request that the vision and plan includes a focus on:

- a. approaches to managing the flow of tourist coaches into and out of key tourist destinations, and the provision of appropriate layover parking for coaches.
- b. approaches to communicate to tourists about transportation options to and from destinations including the use of park and rides; and
- c. an explicit focus to facilitate an active travel-based visitor economy through the promotion and creation of a network of bike repair stations, e-bike charging points, and bike parking at key tourist destinations for leisure cyclists.

On Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (agenda item 9)

The panel noted the update on the emerging Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire and acknowledged calls for public consultation by the public speakers.

7. That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership in noting the update, recommend that in its development, there is acknowledgment of the cross-cutting contribution of ecosystems services and biodiversity to the economy within Oxfordshire. The economic plan needs to be driven by climate change considerations and the loss of biodiversity.

On the Infrastructure Advisory Group (IAG) Update (agenda item 10a)

The panel supported the recommendations from the IAG to the FOP. In addition, the group noted a recent development related to the FOP Scrutiny panel's earlier recommendation to co-opt an active travel representative on the group, that is Active Travel England has just published its capability rating for active travel and Oxfordshire ranked of 2 out of a total of 4.

8. That the FOP recommends that the IAG take up the offer of support by Active Travel England to help Oxfordshire to improve this rating.