

Future Oxfordshire Partnership response to recommendations of the Partnership Scrutiny Panel made on 20 September 2022

The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is requested to provide a response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel for decision at its meeting on 27 September 2022.

Recommendation	Comment
<p><u>Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Update</u></p> <p>Whilst acknowledging the concerted efforts to reach consensus on the issue of future housing need, the Panel noted the ending of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 programme with deep regret and disappointment and regards this as a regressive step. In the Panel's view the ending of the Programme will negatively impact on the delivery of sustainable development in Oxfordshire The Panel noted the good work already achieved as part of the programme and expressed concern that this is at risk of being lost unless councils across Oxfordshire go beyond their legal obligations under the Duty to Cooperate.</p> <p>The Panel therefore strongly supports the recommendations 2,3, and 4 set out in Update on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Programme report to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and in the spirit of those proposals recommends to the Partnership that it:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree the principle that the district, City and County Councils should continue to cooperate and collaborate on county wide future spatial planning matters related to the former 	<p><i>The Scrutiny Panel's support for the recommendations in the report is noted and welcomed.</i></p> <p><i>It is important that the District, City and County Councils continue to cooperate and collaborate on County wide spatial planning matters, and the proposed Planning Advisory Group would be a useful forum to help facilitate that.</i></p>

Oxfordshire Plan 2050 work programme, with the support of a planning advisory group. In doing so, they should aspire to achieve policy coherence and coordination in respective local plans. These topics for collaboration should include, but are not limited to, the Green Belt, carbon reduction, nature recovery, housing density and proximity of housing to employment sites, and active travel infrastructure connecting housing to urban centres.

The specific topics for collaboration mentioned by the Scrutiny Panel are relevant to the work of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership as well of that of the Councils, and we agree that they should be considered in developing the work programmes of the revised Planning Advisory Group and of the Environment, Infrastructure and Housing Advisory Groups.

Review of Homes from Infrastructure Programme

The Panel understands and acknowledges the complex challenges in bringing the item forward and need for appropriate sign off. However, the Panel was very disappointed to receive the slides regarding the item on the afternoon of its meeting. It regards this as unacceptable and incompatible with the Panel’s role to review and scrutinise plans, proposals and decisions related to the discharge of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership’s functions and the delivery of the agreed Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. It is also not conducive with general principles applicable to the relationship between scrutiny and executives.

The Panel has also requested that further information be provided to it on the methodology and criteria used in determining the revised Hfl programme. This to include how the criteria has been applied to specific schemes, in particular a breakdown of the estimate of housing units that would be accelerated, (unlocked) by each scheme now recommended to be part of the revised programme versus schemes recommended to be removed or scaled back from the programme. In the absence of this information, whilst a number of members had grave individual concerns regarding the prioritisation of particular schemes over others, the Panel did not feel there was sufficient information and time for it and the Partnership to come to an overall judgement on the proposals. In terms of process, the Panel also requested

This was a joint proposal from Districts, City and County Councils which necessitated a very thorough sign-off process.

Nevertheless, we acknowledge the lateness of what was presented for discussion at Scrutiny and we echo the Scrutiny Panel’s disappointment.

information on who signed off the proposed revised list and who will agree and make the final decision on the list.

Recommendations to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership:

2. That the Partnership respond to the concerns of the Panel and requests for further information as set out above.
3. That in addition to the consideration of the housing units accelerated by a particular scheme within the period of the Housing and Growth deal, the Partnership give higher priority to consideration of Active Travel factors, as a theme to determine the revised Hfl programme. This is to ensure in the absence of existing infrastructure, there is the creation of new safe walking and cycling infrastructure linking developments to nearby settlements.
4. That where a scheme is proposed to be removed from the Hfl programme and linked development has already taken place (e.g., Milton Heights), the Partnership reconsider its prioritisation weighting to include it in the Hfl programme or else do all it can to encourage and facilitate the identification of replacement funding.

2. The estimated housing numbers were provided by the City and District Councils and can be shared with the Scrutiny Panel.

The proposed programme was agreed by senior officers and shared with the FOP's Infrastructure Advisory Group. Now the proposals have been through the FOP they go finally to the OCC Cabinet.

3. This has been factored into the consideration and many of the schemes on the programme are either exclusively Active Travel schemes or those with significant Active Travel / modal shift objectives.

However, the key criterion, particularly as we are in year 5 of the original programme, is the acceleration of housing units, as agreed with national government at the start of the housing and growth deal.

4. Where any scheme is removed from the Hfl programme the identification of replacement funding becomes a key priority for all Councils. All schemes which have been within the programme over the past 5 years are infrastructure projects which are needed to support housing delivery. The need to amend funding allocations to maintain a balanced programme does not alter that.