

The Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel Public speakers

14 September 2023



1. TBC on behalf of Oxfordshire Doughnut Economic Collective

Statement to FOP Scrutiny Panel from the Oxfordshire Doughnut Economics Collective

The latest version of the Strategic Economic Plan (Summary of Draft V1) August 2023 fails to take into account the multiple concerns about its process and content as raised by the FOP Scrutiny Committee Panel in their discussion and recommendations to the FOP on (Scrutiny Panel 18th July 2023 and reported to FOP on 25th July 2023).

The FOP vision, to which all six councils have committed states *'We want Oxfordshire to thrive so that the lives of current and future generations are improved. To achieve this will require bold, collaborative, and inclusive thinking to deliver real and lasting change in ways that build resilience and enhance environmental, social, and economic wellbeing'*

The SEP, as it stands, whilst using the language of the vision, continues to sideline social and environmental issues. Instead, the focus of the draft SEP remains the delivery of economic growth with the wider themes of the FOP vision included only for 'contextual purposes'.

The strategy makes no attempt to quantify or address the worsening social and environmental crises. Measurement is only of items relating to the labour supply, with a vague reference to 'track progress to a broader basket of indicators' relating to the FOP vision.

There is no robust framework or delivery plan.

No evidence base has been produced for the 'independent economic review' and no details have been provided for the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement.

This strategy is not fit for purpose and we are asking the FOP scrutiny committee to request a pause in the process to consider our proposal for a new Strategic Economic Partnership for Oxfordshire.

Proposal for a Strategic Economic Partnership for Oxfordshire

The Strategic Economic Partnership for Oxfordshire (StEP) is a proposal for a new multi-sector, multi-stakeholder community partnership, connecting the existing activity and networks in Oxfordshire into a partnership, with the purpose of generating an economic strategy that meets everyone's needs within the means of our living planet.

The Oxfordshire StEP would be:

An inclusive partnership made up of individuals and organisations who truly understand the key social and environmental challenges in Oxfordshire and global impacts, and is representative of all Oxfordshire's diverse communities,

A partnership that embraces the latest 21st Century economic thinking and places the economy within society and within the living world,

A partnership that can unite organisations around common purpose to solve local problems for local people whilst meeting our global responsibilities.

What we are proposing is not just another networking group but brings the existing activity and networks in Oxfordshire into a partnership with an overarching strategic aim: to drive and deliver tangible change toward a thriving future in which everyone's needs are met within the limits of the planet.

The Oxfordshire **StEP** challenges the narrative and process of the currently proposed Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for Oxfordshire, in the context of the urgent and worsening social and environmental crises we all face, and aims to bring about a step change by:

Generating a Strategic Economic Plan as an iterative process explored in partnership across sectors and topics with comprehensive engagement from groups representing all sectors of our community.

Applying Doughnut Economics as a holistic framework to balance the multiple complex issues in a way that is regenerative, redistributive and collaborative.

Spotlighting economic issues and finding integrated solutions using the 4 lenses tool of Doughnut Economics according to their Local Environmental and Social Aspirations, and Global Environmental and Social Responsibilities (LESA GESR).

Amplifying and extending the existing mandate as set out in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for long term sustainable development endorsed by all Oxfordshire's Local Authorities

Connecting with other regions in the UK (eg Leeds, Birmingham, Cornwall) and worldwide (eg Amsterdam, Brussels, Barcelona, Copenhagen) adopting similar approaches, to link into the growing global momentum for transitioning to environmentally safe and socially just economies.

In this way the Oxfordshire StEP can provide the 'bold, collaborative, and inclusive thinking to deliver real and lasting change in ways that build resilience and enhance environmental, social, and economic wellbeing'.

Please refer to the [evidence for a different approach to Oxfordshire Economic Strategy](#) provided by attendees and invitees to the ODEC workshop: A better future for Oxfordshire, held on 8th September in the pre-workshop survey.

Further evidence will be made available in time for the FOP Scrutiny Committee Discussion on 14th September.

2. Ian Green on behalf of Oxford Civic Society

Comments on the proposed refreshed Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan

- We make the following comments on the proposed refreshed SEP update although the full document and a covering report will not be available until the day after the deadline for making these comments to the Committee!
- OCS agrees fully with the Scrutiny Committee previous requests that that OxLEP ensure that: the policy framework underpinning the SEP include all the outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for Long Term Sustainable Development; and that equal focus is applied to them including wellbeing and the environment.
- In addition, even though this SEP refreshment seems to be something of a horizon scanning exercise to inform the shaping of a future Oxfordshire economy, it still needs at least a commentary on the spatial implications of the refreshed SEP.
- Oxfordshire's plethora of strategic plans and strategic planning processes continues to be constrained by the lack of an overall spatial plan for the distribution of employment and housing towards 2050 – which would be based on and bring along with it, clear visions of strategic transport arrangements, inclusivity imperatives, environmental management, climate change adaptation and mitigation and all the rest.
- The refreshed SEP should not recommend a particular spatial strategy, but it needs to clearly indicate the spatial implications of the refreshed SEP, which may then need to be revised to accommodate social and/or environmental spatial requirements.
- Overall, of course the capacity and development potential of existing infrastructure, and the strategic planning of county-wide or regional infrastructure is crucial to county-wide sustainable spatial planning. Not to mention infrastructure funding. Does the refreshed SEP discuss infrastructure investment requirements and funding availability for the refreshed SEP?
- Hopefully the new Planning Advisory Group will include these topics in their forthcoming Work Plan for the Group (to be available at the next FOP meeting, but not, apparently, at this Scrutiny Committee meeting).
- One final point – before its preparation collapsed, the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan was being shaped with public engagement. The public's response is set out in the Regulation 18 Part 1 consultation report. Taken together, the responses gave a very clear overall steer that there is an appetite for an approach that: is ambitious, radical, innovative and creative; is Oxfordshire-specific and reflective of local people's views; prioritises climate change, and focusses on social, economic and environmental wellbeing, and not solely on a narrow definition of growth.
- The public have not gone away – the public is still interested in this topic. In our view public participation in the refreshment of the SEP has been inadequate. We recommend much greater attention to continued public discussion on county-wide integrated sustainable strategic planning. Perhaps the Planning Advisory Group can consider this?

- It's good that to date the Scrutiny Committee has made bold recommendations on these matters and we hope that you will continue to be bold.