

Public speakers

30 January 2024

1. Ian Green on behalf Oxford Civic Society

The Planning Advisory Group

The Oxford Civic Society notes that, in discussion, a number of members of the Scrutiny Panel expressed significant concerns and scepticism around the role and additional value that the Planning Advisory Group could bring by seeking to look at matters at Future Oxfordshire Partnership level, over and above existing informal and formal arrangements around planning cooperation which it was felt would still happen whether the advisory group existed or not.

This was felt to be particularly important within the overall context of the general pressures on council budgets and resources and that the case for Future Oxfordshire Partnership level work on planning related matters needed to be compelling.

May we suggest that the most obvious compelling need is the establishment of a spatial development plan for the county which provides a foundation for good growth in the county to 2050 and beyond. This would require the PAG to consider ways in which the reasons for the failure of the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan can be overcome.

It could also assess the value of a spatial development plan oriented to 2050 and beyond, in terms of how it would enable integrated infrastructure development planning linked to the distribution of employment and housing growth across the county. This, surely, is highly compelling.

The PAG would not need to address this compelling need alone – there are many potential private sector, academic and third sector collaborators who would be willing and eager to work with the PAG on this. The Oxford Civic Society has a Group called the Oxfordshire Futures Group which is dedicated to this and we will be more than happy to meet the PAG to discuss it further.

Response

Thank you for your comments on this issue.

The work programme for the Planning Advisory Group is still under development, as this is a relatively new group. The focus will be on covering issues where this group can add value to the work of individual Councils.

Local Plans are the key vehicle for spatial planning in Oxfordshire. I would encourage the Oxford Civic Society to engage in the Local Plan processes of the various Councils.

A key future piece of work for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership is an update to the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OXIS). This will look at future strategic infrastructure across the County and is informed by proposals in Local Plans.”