

Oxfordshire Plan 2050

Policy Options Consultation

Regulation 18 Part 2 – Consultation response form

Please Return to the Oxfordshire Plan Team by Friday 8th October 2021

By Post: Oxfordshire Plan Team,
 Speedwell House,
 Speedwell Street,
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Or by Email: info@oxfordshireplan.org

This form has two parts-

PART A – Personal Details

PART B – Your Representation(s).

PART A

	Personal details	Agent's details (if applicable)
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To which part of the consultation does this representation relate?

General Comment Yes Paragraph no Policy Option Yes Spatial Option Yes

What is the nature of your comment?

Support yes Object yes Observation yes

Please provide details of your response as necessary:

Ashbury Parish Council response to consultation of Oxfordshire 2050 plan

1. Introduction

This is the response from Ashbury Parish Council (APC) and Ashbury Neighbourhood Plan Group (ANPG) as part of the consultation process for the Oxfordshire 2050 plan.

We are a small rural parish made up of Ashbury and the smaller long-standing settlements of Kingstone Winslow and Idstone.

We make 3 new recommendations as part of our response and identify a number of requirements for both content and process to be addressed in the next phases of the plan for the Oxfordshire 2050 planning group to take on.

The content in this response includes comments generated by:

- Input from members of our parish residents. We used a variety of methods to inform them of the plan and provided opportunities for them to explore the plan with members of APC/ANPG and raise support or concerns about the content or process so far
- Our Ashbury Church of England Primary School. Via the Headmistress we invited the school to vision what living in Ashbury and what life would be like in 2050 against the 5 themes

We start then with the input from those children in Ridgeway class, Ashbury Church of England Primary School. The class produced a video of their ideas and requirements. For confidentiality purposes, parts of the verbal content is extracted as follows:

Theme 1: Addressing climate change

- We won't be using fossil fuels
 - Reduce use of fossil fuels
- Use solar panelled cars
- Cycle and walk
- Careful, controlled use of water
- Using natural resources – leaf powered cars in autumn and snow in the winter
- Use trains with solar panels on the roof

(Key theme: using other forms of power, may vary with the seasons)

Theme 2: Improving Environmental quality

- Cars running on left-over food as their power source
- Cars pick up rubbish and make into fuel
- Robots will be run-on left-over food
- Rubbish and potatoes used for fuel purposes
- No plastic so that ending up in our seas STOPS

(Key themes: recycling and reducing wastage, especially plastic)

Theme 3: Creating strong and healthy communities

- More settings for people with mental health concerns and these should have green spaces, grass and plant growth on the buildings
- Plastic generated powered cars
- Plant more trees and use to bring more young people into ‘gardening’ practice (keep areas green and wilded)
- Use design for parks, leisure areas and all green spaces for people with disability to access and use

Theme 4: Planning for sustainable travel and connectivity

- All of those requirements generated in theme 1 +
- Working will be from home to reduce use of cars and fuel where possible
- Motorbikes to run on compost
- Face to face connectivity
- 4 day working week

Theme 5: Creating jobs and providing homes

- Build bigger homes for multigenerational living – a number of benefits
- Making jobs to fit the requirements in context of themes
- More coaching jobs

Ashbury in 2050 will be green

We think starting with the children’s input vital, as they are our future and from 2030-50, as adults, will be very affected in many aspects of their lives by this plan.

Equally several strands stand out in their content:

- they already have an awareness of the importance of seriously addressing the changes required to move towards a net zero carbon state and provide examples of how they expect this to be achieved
- seeking to achieve equality in and for all community members – providing mental health services in equal part to physical health services – body and mind, providing access to leisure and green spaces for those with a disability
- they have demonstrated an integrated and interconnected way of thinking of the 5 themes

RECOMMENDATION 1: For the Oxfordshire 2050 plan group members to intentionally involve children and young adults in the ongoing development AND implementation process for this plan

2. Overall comments for plan

We fully support the more systems approach to and involvement of the range of council departments in the planning process. This is and will be key and essential to delivering the vision and meeting the outcomes of the plan.

We recognise this is a new way of working and unfamiliar for many of the departments in our District and County councils and therefore we propose some actions in section 5 of this response to ensure that an integrated, interconnected and more whole systems approach to planning, delivery, monitoring and enforcement will be put in place.

It is important for us to note that while much of the options and delivery will direct all new build, that there is equally action required to address how:

- individuals/communities/settings/buildings will need to change to meet the expected outcomes for the county, particularly the need to reach net zero carbon levels. In section 4 we identify some of the issues rural settings will and are already facing to achieve some of these outcomes

The remainder of our comments highlight where content in the plan needs to be strengthened, added to, or adjusted, particularly for actions to meet the themes and spatial option in rural settings. This especially so for maintaining historical heritage within the county

An example of areas missing in the plan:

- our farming community has raised the need for a section on food production and the whole food sourcing agenda against meeting or not the outcomes of the 5 themes. This agenda needs mapping out against future needs aligned to expected population growth by 2050 across Oxfordshire, identified in your other documents.

Equally at content detail level, we fully support the comments on the plan for consultation made by Oxfordshire Campaign for Protection of Rural England (OCPRE). These include those made by Helen Marshall at the Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plan group (ONPA) meeting in August 2021

- More attention needs to be given to achieving water quality and sewage management
- The content as is fails to assess the constraints to growth. There is need for a clearer assessment, risk assessment process for any 'growth' option
- More on how to keep and maintain tranquillity and dark skies
- How will farmland be used (if they cease food production) and how will plans link this to addressing environmental concerns and need to increase biodiversity?
- To focus on compact and high density build for land that is already identified as available = better use of that land so as not to 'encroach' rural locations
- To set some biodiversity metrics
- To specify green belt enhancement actions (hence focus on high density in urban areas) and how this will be achieved

Key points in the plan we support

- Use of a circular versus linear economy
- Restrictions to use of water
- Focus on increasing density in urban areas
- Changing the nature of town centres

- Mixing affordable housing amongst all build and not separate, so indistinguishable

3. Specific comments relating to:

3.1 Spatial option

There needs to be a mix of the strategic options – rural option as stated is NOT best for rural

The use of the ‘standard method’ for defining number of house build versus the other 2 options is preferable, though we note this is still significantly higher than the ONS figure of 53,000 houses for Oxfordshire

3.2 Themes

Theme 1: Addressing climate change

Theme 2: improving environmental quality

The essence of both these themes is the feeder for the other themes

Theme 3: Creating strong and healthy communities

This is the most problematically named and formatted of the themes for the following reasons:

- The title of the theme – there is nothing in the content that defines what is meant by either strong or healthy. A better title would be: ‘*ensuring wellbeing in our communities*’ with some outlining of what is meant by wellbeing, especially as this word is used several times in the plan for what it hopes the plan will achieve
- It reads as though there is a real disconnect of this theme to the other themes, even though elements of the other themes will need to be part of how this theme, particularly policy options 15 and 16 will be achieved and especially if integration and connectedness between all parts is to be a reality
- There is NO definition of healthy place shaping – most likely input from Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group OCCG with no discussion with the say the Environment and recreation departments in the County Council.
 - The OCCG have just put out a draft Community Health care strategy, focussing on 12 principles to follow in services to be provided to older people, but this makes no reference to the ‘healthy place shaping work’ which another part of the CCG would be leading on nor any of the themes in the 2050 plan.

So disconnected from the need for housing needs of older people to meet their health and care needs and disconnections within the CCG. These disconnections need addressing

RECOMMENDATION 2: If the plan is to espouse wellbeing and sustainability then Oxfordshire Public Health team need to input into this theme

And there needs to be a solid connection between all the policy options in this theme and across all the themes.

To meet the needs of wellbeing we would expect to see:

- Better quality amenities and not just more of them

- More effort to encourage multigenerational living, harmonious communities made up of people from all walks of life supporting a shared responsibility for the welfare of all
- Explorations and changes to take the place of less used religious buildings as the key place of community hubs, with funding focussed less on maintaining previous buildings to that which will support collective events and activities
 - Explore what will be community in 2050
- Access to the countryside requires an overhaul, with the move away from historical footpaths to the development of more ‘circular and connected between places’ routes

These last suggestions also link to the theme 5 content

Theme 4 Planning for sustainable travel and connectivity

More needs to be said about the need for much less traffic by 2030 onwards and more use of drones or connecting hubs for delivery (see section 4)

- There should be more use of tramways (as above for hub connections) which have cycle lanes either side

Theme 5 Creating Jobs and Providing homes

- Policy option 28: to use the ‘standard method and option’ for house build number projections
- Think about the use of house cellars or collective cellars for communal car parking and storage areas
- Use of individual solar panel tiles for roofing with unification of standard and settings between providers for spare parts and repair requirements
- The use of redundant buildings to be repurposed as ‘working hubs’, especially in rural settings, so as to reduce use of fuel and roads (to be used for single track tramways and cycle paths either side) and for work at home/near home to be the norm where possible
- There are some planning policies that need massive revision to totally be in line with sustainability, climate change and biodiversity requirements, especially for builds involving renovation and repurposing of old farm buildings.
 - For example, the use of photovoltaic panels has recently been refused to current builders of an old farm building, yet old style soakaway septic tank was allowed
- Subsidies should be the norm for brown field development

4. Specific needs of rural locations and issues to be addressed if this community and buildings are to meet elements of the 5 themes and outcomes of the plan

Many of our current residents are already attempting to address elements of the climate change agenda and for all 5 themes in this plan.

- Many houses have already installed electric charging points for their cars, have solar panels on their roofs and many of the houses in the most recent house build development were built with and use air sourced heat pumps.

However, there are equally those households, very committed to moving to more sustainable options, which are facing at present, problems to securing the ways forward required for changes to fuel and energy sources.

This especially and more markedly so for those living in an older build where they front onto the pavement or because the parish sewage and wastage and water systems have limited capacity and or because house heating fuel is via oil in a tanker (we have no gas) that are having difficulty in the following:

- Installing electric car charging points because there are no street lampposts (we have a dark skies policy and no street lighting) and even if there were lampposts the cable would be overground and so a health and safety concern
- Attempting to change heating source from oil to air or ground source power because of both internal pipe work and build not meeting criteria for ground source pump installation

To achieve the suggested 20-minute connection, our rural setting would need to have Shrivenham, 4 miles away as one of our key connection points. We would therefore expect to be able to access and use all their ‘amenities’ with ease.

This will require a change to the current ‘road’ and transport system with suggestions raised in 3.2 theme 5

We propose the following is considered (perhaps tested as a pilot, see section 5 for need for pilots)

Currently, we have numerous delivery vans from a range of suppliers and providers entering and leaving the community each day and this is an increasing activity.

This is not fuel efficient, provides an excess of carbon production and not travel efficient. A new method for delivery is required to meet all 5 themes.

The proposal is based on a core hub and spoke model with Shrivenham as the core hub – where all deliveries are unloaded and 1 vehicle and driver manage delivery across the community. (we will be happy to specify a project development and testing plan for this)

RECOMMENDATION 3: That a separate workstream with funding support is identified to address how housing and transport needs are facilitated to meet the specific needs for those in rural settings

5. What we expect to see in revised plan

We think it would be of value for Councillors, who are really working hard to set out what they believe to be sound and good, where they don’t have strategy development, change management and implementation expertise to include monitoring and enforcement practice, to be skilled up (variety of methods) and or for a planning Tsar to be identified to support this process by all councillor and others input

National and International contexts to inform the plan

- An overarching section on the national context, on how elements of the 5 themes are to be addressed, so that the Oxfordshire 2050 planners

- identify their role in influencing areas and agendas at national levels that need to be more innovative and sustainable and that if they were in place, the advantages to Oxfordshire and the impact on the options raised in the plan
- draw from what is national where costs and delivery are met by various sources

So, what needs to be national, what 2050 group set and what at District levels identified in detail for coherence of the plan. (*it is usual for a planning document of this size to have a 'context setting' and 'where now' section that in this situation would include both international and national examples to draw from, guide, steer any content for the themes*) For example, we think at national level, given that the UK is an island, there should be inclusion and emphasis given to the use of tidal power

- a section on what could be learnt from successfully managing areas in the 5 themes from an *international perspective* that would inform a more productive and different route to addressing the issues – such as in Norway, where properties are built-in high-density situations, with excellent insulation because of the design of the buildings and the settings/community. Developers really should be required by the plan implementation process to get beyond profit, to use functional design and sustainability features as the norm
- Evidence of joined up working across the 5 themes so action is truly joined up, inter-related and interconnected across all council disciplines, sections. A flow diagram of working whole open system could illustrate this and provide an easy tool for progressing and monitoring purposes. (open versus closed system working)

Sections on

- Implementation, - there needs to be an implementation plan and this will include the monitoring process which we believe should be held by the Oxfordshire 2050 planning group governance process and not delegated to each district. There needs to be one direction of travel
- The metrics to be used for implementation and monitoring. For example, we propose the metric *achieving and not exceeding 'water neutral state' as part of the build programme*
- There needs to be a high-level Oxfordshire wide plan process as above, to set enforcement processes to ensure consistency of delivery – even if there are a range of these dependant on rural or urban settings
- The plan would benefit from having a range of practical examples to illustrate the CHANGES required. We provide some suggested example areas:
 - Shift in relationship with developer – more cooperative and aligned to plan outcomes.
 - There must be a stronger governance process to ensure developers build for future sustainability
 - Energy sources input to include details of funding packages for upgrade of boilers (using the same pipework) to hydrogen/green fuel sources and with the associated infrastructure

Sections that need to say more on the following:

- how expected redundant farmland will be used (not for building houses) but for rewilding, wind farms and solar panels and more etc
- More projections required for industry and technology re jobs and where people will be working, science parks (learning from covid, digital, Brexit)
- Transport links have already been well raised, but we disagree with the 20-minute commute parameters for rural spaces and think up to 45 minutes may be more realistic
 - a. To acknowledge that not one size fits all
- A clearer assessment of the impacts, risks and benefits for the chosen options
- A robust process devised and tested to scrutinise net gain for achieving ‘biodiversity’

Setting up Development and testing pilots

- Given that the plan highlights the importance and opportunity for the County because of the presence of active research, industry and innovation, we think it key that the planning group could easily commission or set up some development and testing pieces of work across the 5 theme areas to contribute to a robust implementation plan and sustainable outcomes:
 - Draw on and use a mix of National and local co-funding sources
 - **Subject areas for example:** *use of technology, any recycling for fuel options, testing the use of cycle tracks on disused railway lines, how ‘hubs’ for delivery will work, how to maximise the changing technology for car charging and car charging sites, how to use of planning as a tool to improve lives, could be community based, use of drones*

It may also be useful to consider what will happen if the actions laid out in the 5 themes, to achieve the outcomes above are not addressed: for example,

- increasingly scarce water for all
- houses/homes not switching from use of oil and gas to hydrogen energy sources and or electricity
- insufficient attention paid to increasing biodiversity – so no pollinators means no food!
- Rural villages will be encroached and no longer rural as land between hamlets is used for house build versus rewilding and high density build not used

Conclusion

The plan for consultation provides a starting point to really grasp how we address the very necessary agendas as a collective. We look forward to the amendments, revisions, unfolding implementation plan that takes account of ours and others’ responses and input.

We most look forward to being part of a constructive and sustainable route forward for our community and its setting