

Oxfordshire Open Thought Consultation

Consultation response, by Planning Oxfordshire's
Environment and Transport Sustainably (POETS)

July 2020

POETS (Planning Oxfordshire's Environment and Transport Sustainably) is a small group of senior planning, environment and transport professionals and academics focussed primarily on planning and transport in Oxfordshire. (For more information go to www.poetsplanningoxon.uk).

Response to Oxfordshire Open Thought

1. POETS have set out our vision for Oxfordshire's future. See <https://www.poetsplanningoxon.uk/poets-a-vision-for-oxfordshire-050420.pdf>. We believe that this sets out some key principles that should be followed in preparing the Oxfordshire 2050 plan. More detailed views on issues such as affordable housing https://www.poetsplanningoxon.uk/poets_affordable_housing_final_nov2019.pdf, land value capture <https://www.poetsplanningoxon.uk/poets-land-value-capture-300420.pdf>, and transport <https://www.poetsplanningoxon.uk/poets-local-transport-and-connectivity-plan-consultation-response-170520.pdf> are all set out on our website.
2. We welcome the attempt in this exercise to consider some of the wider issues involved in planning Oxfordshire's future. We note the division of the consultation into the three themes of living and working, connectivity, and climate change, with further sub-themes within these.
3. However, there is a danger that this approach could underplay the interdependence of these and other themes. To give examples:
 - a) More active travel would
 - Reduce carbon emissions and help mitigate climate change
 - Reduce air pollution and thus the incidence of respiratory illness
 - Reduce the incidence of obesity and diabetes
 - These last two improvements in health (which perhaps surprisingly is not highlighted within the consultation) would in turn lead to very significant reductions in cost to the NHS, as well as improvements in individuals' health and quality of life, and thus have significant economic benefits
 - b) Ensuring that all new homes are highly energy efficient, and embarking on a large scale programme to insulate existing homes to a high standard would:
 - Reduce carbon emissions and help mitigate climate change
 - Reduce fuel bills and help to eradicate fuel poverty
 - Improve health and thus reduce costs to the NHS (see for example the BRE report on the costs to the NHS of poor housing <https://www.bre.co.uk/filelibrary/pdf/87741-Cost-of-Poor-Housing-Briefing-Paper-v3.pdf>)
 - Provide a good source of employment in an environmentally sustainable way