

The Oxford City Committee of the CPRE is concerned that the Sites and Housing DPD is being prepared before a Green Infrastructure Strategy and a Development Management DPD have been published. These are key documents that should be in place before sites are allocated, so that both the City Council and the general public have a holistic view of the impact that any development would have on the city as a whole and can make informed decisions as a result.

The pitfalls of such a piecemeal approach to planning are illustrated by the Sites and Housing DPD, which fails to demonstrate how the City Council intends to provide a balanced green space provision for the anticipated population growth within the city boundaries.

In terms of the quantity of accessible green space, the city currently falls short of the Council's own green space standard set out in the Core Strategy. The green space standard is set at 5.75 hectares per 1000 population, yet based on the 2010 population estimate the provision of accessible green space is currently only 5 hectares per 1000 population. If one accepts the Office for National Statistics' population projection of 159,100 for 2026, the provision of green space will be further reduced to 4.8 hectares per 1000 population, and an additional 144 hectares of green space will be needed in order to meet the city green space standard. This deficit will clearly be exacerbated by the City Council's intention to develop a number of green spaces, despite local sentiment expressed in the two rounds of consultation that they should be retained because they provide much needed recreation space, sports facilities, food-growing areas or access to nature.

The Sites and Housing DPD represents a missed opportunity to redress this balance and to create green spaces in parts of the city, such as Littlemore and Blackbird Leys, which suffer from chronic under-provision.

Green spaces are fundamental to social inclusion, community cohesion and well-being, and they provide the essential green infrastructure that enables us to deal with floods, and mitigate or adapt to climate change. PPS1 states that in selecting land for development, 'planning authorities should take into account the contribution to be made from existing and new opportunities for open and green infrastructure to urban cooling, sustainable drainage systems, and conserving and enhancing biodiversity'. The Sites and Housing DPD fails to demonstrate that any such consideration has been made.

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