

Growth Board Scrutiny Panel 22 November Public speaking – 3 speakers

1. Adrian Townsend – address (max 5min)

2. Sue Haywood on behalf of Planning for Real **NEED not Speculator **GREED** in Oxfordshire - Question**

May I start with an apology that I am not present to ask this question in person, but I am attending a WODC Scrutiny meeting which is scheduled at the same time as this meeting; illustrating a challenge and frustration in the opportunity for local authorities to meaningfully input to the Scrutiny and governance process in this strategy.

Need Not Greed Oxfordshire (NNGO) is a coalition of 35 groups from across the county, together representing thousands of community members. As a collective we have agreed a number of principles that we believe must be meaningfully delivered in the JSSP strategy if it is to produce an outcome that is both sustainable and beneficial for communities in Oxfordshire. One of these is the protection of local democracy, with planning control in the hands of locally elected and accountable representatives. We therefore read with some concern a recent NIC statement suggesting that "there are plans....for new governance structures across the Arc to be in place by Spring 2019". Further, that these will "take account of", rather than protect, "existing democratic accountabilities including.....district and county councils". There has already been a significant level of abstraction introduced into governance structures and local accountability by the revised Terms of Reference given to the Growth Board in order to deliver the Growth Deal and JSSP. Other strategies such as the LIS have further influence that is not represented by locally elected voice.

NNGO would therefore ask Scrutiny:

- what further impact they feel that this recent NIC statement will now have on the governance structures and local accountability,
- what opportunity is there to protect local accountability,
- whether the key documents in which any mandate and process for the JSSP is currently defined - including the Statement of Common Ground and Terms of Reference for the Growth Board, and the LDS, Scoping Document and Statement of Community Involvement - will require revision in light of any "new governance structures" that might be introduced, and
- by what process (and with what opportunity for local consultation) will this be done if this is to happen?

Thank you for your time on this question.

3. Dr Peter Collins on behalf of CPRE

CPRE is glad to see the formation of a Scrutiny Panel and considers it an essential adjunct to proper governance of the Growth Board.

Our question is in two parts, giving first a general comment about the necessity of visible and proper involvement of the Board's activities through detailed engagement with the public, in particular consultees like ourselves, and secondly providing an example where timely consideration of the issue recorded could ensure such proper action.

Generality

CPRE considers that issues of environment, heritage and social issues should always be considered alongside any and all proposals for action taken by the Board - and not just at a lower level of importance, perhaps just nodded at politely at the end of discussions.

To do this, proper engagement with the public, and particular consultees such as CPRE, through the process of coming to recommendations put before the Board is essential - co-optation to committees which have relevance to engagement is therefore important.

Timely consideration of all important matters, so that there are no slips in the best intentions have to be assured. Such duties should be ensured through the activities of the proposed Engagement Officer.

It is important that these matters are enshrined in working practice at the start of putting together a balanced and appropriate Growth Board.

Reference Agenda Item 7 - Oxfordshire Growth Board papers – Item 7, Feedback from the Sub-groups – no.8 JSSP Advisory Sub-group Forward Work Plan

CPRE is most surprised to note that an outline version of the JSSP Regulation 18 consultation document was due to be brought to the subsequent meeting of the Advisory Sub-Group on 15 November, which we assume has now taken place.

At the October meeting, this is described as a 'skeletal document, however what the document would say is broadly known'.

However CPRE and, we assume, other stakeholders have not yet been involved in any detailed discussions to inform this document. As Scrutiny Panel members are hopefully aware, CPRE has sought from the start to respond to the JSSP process in a positive and constructive way. It would therefore be disappointing, to say the least, if meaningful engagement should be failing at such an early stage.

We ask the Scrutiny Panel to:

- a. Confirm that this draft document exists and was considered at last week's Advisory Sub-panel
- b. If so, to consider how this sits alongside the Growth Board's commitment in the draft Statement of Community Involvement to 'early, proportionate and meaningful engagement between plan makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and statutory consultees' and the 'initial scoping of key issues and options with stakeholders'.