

# NEED *not* GREED OXON

Planning for Real **NEED** not Speculator **GREED** in Oxfordshire

PRESS RELEASE

13 September 2016

## **‘Councillors should be given the right to debate the future growth of Oxfordshire’ says Need Not Greed**

The Need Not Greed Oxfordshire coalition [1] is calling for all District and County Councillors to have the opportunity to speak out on the overly aggressive growth figures that will damage our County.

The coalition has learnt that the main Economic Plan for Oxfordshire, which outlines plans for 85,000 new jobs and 100,000 new houses, is in most cases only likely to be considered by local authority Cabinet meetings, not at Full Council meetings.

Helena Whall, Campaign Manager for the coalition said: “This Plan sets very damaging and unrealistic growth targets which would radically change the way Oxfordshire looks. It has been drawn up by an unelected body and now surely *all* our elected representatives ought to be having their say?”

The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for Oxfordshire is being promoted by OxLEP - the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. However, OxLEP says it is local authorities that are driving the figures. An OxLEP public consultation earlier this year led to strong demands for the targets to be re-considered, but there has been no fundamental shift in position. The latest draft is due to be considered by Local Authorities before it is signed off by OxLEP towards the end of the year. [2]

Helena Whall said: “We were originally under the impression that *all* councillors would have the chance to debate the scale of the future growth of the County. Now it appears only Oxford City Council is prepared to take the debate to a Full Council meeting, with others limiting discussion to Cabinet meetings.

*“The public is angry with OxLEP and our local authorities for continually passing the buck on who is responsible for these growth targets, despite many of those involved privately admitting that the figures are unrealistic.*

*“We believe our District and County Councillors should be given the opportunity to debate the SEP at Full Council. We think they should have the right to re-consider the inflated and unrealistic growth targets for Oxfordshire that make no allowances for Brexit and take little account of social and environmental impacts.*

*“We are calling on our elected Councillors to speak out against OxLEP’s Strategic Economic Plan as currently drafted.”*

### **An Alternative Approach**

**Need Not Greed Oxfordshire is calling for a review of the economic growth figures, and by association the housing figures, for Oxfordshire in the light of:**

- a) The implications of Brexit.
- b) The social and environmental constraints - ie not just ‘how much growth can we get’ but also ‘how much growth can we cope with’.
- c) A re-consideration of the priorities for action - ie how to provide affordable housing for existing local residents, rather than seeking to attract ever more people into the area making the jobs v housing balance worse.
- d) Genuine public consultation on the future vision for Oxfordshire.

**We believe our local Councillors have the right to be heard on this issue. We urge Councillors to ask for a reconsideration of the growth targets in response to recent events and a proper assessment of the cumulative impacts.**

**We want to ensure that Oxfordshire continues to be both a vibrant county and a pleasant place to live for future generations.**

**ENDS**

### **NOTES FOR EDITORS:**

1. The Need Not Greed Oxon coalition is made up of 29 local action groups from across the county. For more information see: [www.neednotgreedoxon.org.uk](http://www.neednotgreedoxon.org.uk)
2. Following the public consultation on the Strategic Economic Plan Refresh earlier this year, OxLEP has published a revised SEP. See the OxLEP website: <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/content/sep-refresh-consultation>  
The revised SEP is still a work in progress - it will be considered at the following over the autumn months:
  - The six Local Authority Executive and Cabinet meetings
  - The OxLEP Board

- The Oxfordshire Growth Board
- The Oxfordshire Skills Board

OxLEP will further revise the SEP in light of the comments received from the Local Authorities and the Oxfordshire Growth and Skills Boards and a final SEP 2016 will be published in November 2016.

3. The Consultation Responses document can be found on the OxLEP website:  
<http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/content/sep-refresh-consultation>

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