

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

**PRESS RELEASE**

**13 March 2017**

**OxLEP ignores public to push ahead with growth targets**

On Friday, the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) launches its revised Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for the county [1]. Despite strong public demands for the overall growth targets in the Plan to be reconsidered, OxLEP has not compromised; the refreshed Plan contains the same housing and jobs targets outlined in the original SEP of 2014.

The targets for the county include 100,000 houses (the equivalent of two new cities the size of Oxford) and more than 85,000 jobs (in a county of almost full employment) by 2031, based on 2011 figures.

Helena Whall, Campaign Manager for Need not Greed Oxfordshire [2] said: “OxLEP has consistently refused to consult on these growth targets despite, or perhaps because of, clear public opposition.”

“The vast majority of responses to the public consultation were critical of the ‘unrealistic and unachievable’ housing and jobs figures contained in the refreshed SEP, which will result in new development that ‘will destroy Oxfordshire’s environment and communities’ [3].”

Helena Whall said: “However, thanks to our campaigning, the revised Plan is much improved and includes reference to some of the concerns flagged up by the coalition and others, particularly regarding the natural environment, affordable housing and infrastructure pressures.”

“Critically the Plan recognises the ‘need to balance the opportunities for economic development with the possible compromise to the natural environment.’ The coalition will be monitoring the implementation of the Plan over the coming months and years to ensure OxLEP honours this promise.”

Helena Whall continued:

“Of particular note is the acknowledgement in the Plan that the rate of house completions ‘is still well adrift of the rate implied by the headline target that has been agreed by the local authorities (informed by the SHMA).’ We will continue to urge our local authorities to re-think the high housing targets in light of what it is possible to build.”

“Significantly the Plan also says there has been ‘little or no progress made’ in providing ‘accessible housing that is affordable for the people who work in Oxfordshire’ or in increasing the capacity and improving the efficiency and resilience of our local transport network ‘by reducing congestion on key highway links’.”

“The Need not Greed Oxfordshire coalition will continue to put pressure on our local authorities to ensure that we build the right kind of houses in the right place, for the right people (those in real need) and at the right price, with the right infrastructure.”

**ENDS**

[1] The Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan will be officially launched on Friday 17 March at the opening of the Innovation Centre at the Begbroke Science Centre. See the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan, December 2016: <http://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/Oxfordshire%20SEP%202016%20-%20Dec%202016_0.pdf>

[2] Need not Greed Oxfordshire is a coalition of 31 local organisations and individuals from around the county campaigning for a future for Oxfordshire which meets the real needs of local people not speculator greed. See: [www.neednotgreedoxon.org.uk](http://www.neednotgreedoxon.org.uk)

[3] In June 2016, OxLEP held an online public consultation on the revised SEP. The public consultation led to strong demands for the overall growth targets to be re-considered, which were duly reflected in the LEP’s Consultation Responses Document, which stated:

***‘****Of the 262 responses, 36 were made by organisations (see annex 1), with the remainder from individuals, the vast majority of whom support the stance offered by the CPRE and Need Not Greed Oxfordshire,* *namely that the LEP is:*

*• an unaccountable non-elected body*

*• aggressively driving growth*

*• responsible for unrealistic and unachievable housing and jobs figures contained in the SHMA*

*• heavily influencing the Local Plan process which will result in new development that will destroy Oxfordshire’s environment and communities.’* (p.1).

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