Media Release

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Oxford Local Plan 2040

Local Oxfordshire group POETS (Planning Oxfordshire's Environment and Planning Sustainably) have added their voice to the growing tide of criticism of the latest draft of the Oxford Local Plan.

POETS say that the city council aims for a level of housing not far from double that required by the standard government calculation yet insists there is not room in the city to accommodate most of it. This inevitably puts the burden to provide for the 'overspill' on to the surrounding districts.

POETS' Katie Barrett explains, "The consultants used by the city council are precisely the people whose exaggerated forecasts of growth led to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership having to abandon its recent attempt to get strategic planning back into the Oxfordshire region. At the same time, that council has not looked seriously at brownfield sites within its urban area, preferring to concentrate yet more jobs in the city, which simply makes the problem worse. It is clear that its vision for Oxfordshire is to concentrate employment growth in Oxford, develop housing elsewhere and force people to travel to work in the city."

Colleague Julie Martin adds "This would perpetuate the failed approach of the last few years which has seen large swathes of green belt land (often in university and college ownership) turned into car-dependent private housing estates. This increases commuting of all kinds and does not get anywhere near securing truly affordable and sustainably built dwellings. It raises huge questions about whether the new plan can be considered properly justified and effective"

POETS have also raised serious concerns about the way in which the plan has been prepared, including that the city council has not taken seriously other councils' and the public's responses to previous consultations.

Katie concludes "There is a statutory duty that councils must cooperate on Local Plans. Continuing strong objections to the way the Oxford plan has been progressed – for instance from Vale and South Oxfordshire - suggest that this duty has not been met and that the plan should be withdrawn and reconsidered by the city council."

ENDS

POETS (Planning Oxfordshire's Environment and Transport Sustainably) are local professionals and academics with long experience in planning, environment and transport. For more information about POETS, see our website www.poetsplanningoxon.uk

Further comment can be obtained from:

Katie Barrett (07799 295495) or **Julie Martin** (07764 200696**)** or if neither is available **David Young** on (01865 806524)

You will shortly be able to find POETS full response to the Local Plan consultation at www.poetsplanningoxon.uk