

## **A Vision for Oxfordshire's future**

Future plans for Oxfordshire should be founded on tackling the climate emergency, and focus on addressing health and other inequalities.

These are some of the recommendations in a new report produced by POETS, a group of senior planning, environment and transport professionals and academics.

In a letter to all Oxfordshire MPs and county and district councillors the group acknowledges the current inevitable preoccupation with addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it also considers that the crisis provides an opportunity to consider the sort of society and environment we want in the future, drawing parallels with the actions of the wartime government in the 1940s.

The POETS letter notes that during the second world war the government laid the foundations for much of what we now accept as essentials of our society: the NHS, secondary education for all, and many measures to protect the countryside.

Chris Cousins, one of the report's authors, said "One lesson from the COVID-19 pandemic is that early action in response to the scientific evidence provides the best basis for bringing the crisis under control. There are parallels here with the climate emergency. Now is the time to be doing such things as preparing for a massive programme to insulate our existing housing stock, something that would not only cut carbon dioxide emissions dramatically but also reduce household fuel bills and improve health.

"Similarly, one of the unlooked for benefits of the current crisis is the dramatic reduction in air pollution as traffic levels have fallen. It gives a glimpse of the future that could be achieved with sustained investment in public transport, walking and cycling. The last thing we should be doing when this crisis is over is embarking on major new road construction, reducing biodiversity, or planning new development which can only be served by car.

"We hope that our paper will prompt discussion and debate."

## Press Release

Issued on 5 April 2020

The POETS paper can be accessed at  
[www.poetsplanningoxon.uk/poets-a-vision-for-oxfordshire-050420.pdf](http://www.poetsplanningoxon.uk/poets-a-vision-for-oxfordshire-050420.pdf)  
[www.poetsplanningoxon.uk/downloads.html](http://www.poetsplanningoxon.uk/downloads.html)

Comments can be sent to [contact.poets@gmail.com](mailto:contact.poets@gmail.com)

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5 April 2020

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