

Oxon LNP Board Paper for Approval

Title:	OLNP approach to influencing policy
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Summary:

OLNP has agreed to “influence planning to ensure better outcomes for people and nature”. This paper considers the best methods to utilise in order to achieve that goal. It suggests strongly that we steer clear of campaigning, but that we work in a supportive and encouraging capacity, providing evidence, case studies and experience to influence local and strategic plans in Oxfordshire via a Policy working group (as previously agreed).

The Board is asked to:

Discuss the approach that OLNP should take to influencing policy, and approve the recommendations made in this paper.

The Board at its last meeting agreed that OLNP would work to influence policy to ensure better outcomes for people and nature. The Board also supported the establishment of a sub-group that would bring together expertise to fulfil this mission. It is considered useful at this stage for the Board to discuss the methods that OLNP should use in order to exert that influence most effectively.

What policies and plans should LNP try to influence?

OLNP needs to balance considerations of impact, value, capacity and scale when deciding at the level of plan over which we should attempt to exert influence. This paper recommends NOT commenting on individual planning applications, but focussing on more strategic documents, such as Local Plans. There may be specific developments that, due to their scale, location or type warrant consideration by OLNP. An example for consideration here might be the Botley West Solar Park.

This paper recommends that OLNP exerts influence over national policy via its contributions to the South East Nature Partnership (SENP).

What methods should OLNP employ?

OLNP should feel able to speak confidently with an objective voice, but also needs to ensure that through its policy work it does not alienate any of its partners. In order to achieve this aim it is considered useful to establish the means via which OLNP will exert influence.

This paper recommends OLNP does NOT engage in public mobilisation, use of media tools for attempting to influence specific policies, or ‘on the ground’ actions. This paper

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recommends OLNP establish the Policy sub-group we discussed at the last meeting as soon as possible, pending appointment of a chairperson, with the LNP Manager Chairing the first meeting.

This Policy sub-group may decide to develop position papers which spell out the views and policy position of OLNP on various key topics, for instance around supporting a policy of 20% Biodiversity Net Gain across the county. These position statements could be used to inform the ad hoc policy work that the LNP Manager and others conduct with Local Authority officers in the development of various plans and strategies, as well as to inform the responses to the consultations on these plans and strategies. They may be displayed on our forthcoming website for ease of access by all.