

Key Points of CPRE Oxon Position Statement on the OxCam Arc (February 2022)

CPRE's primary aim is the protection and enhancement of rural England.

CPRE believes the current OxCam Arc proposals represent an existential threat to the countryside and rural communities within the area, and risk undermining the economic prosperity that is being sought. CPRE supports appropriate development across the region but such development should be within the area's environmental capacity and any plan should avoid, minimise and mitigate harm to our countryside and rural character while prioritising the needs of existing local residents. CPRE will work to:

- Oppose the exaggerated damaging top-down plans and targets promoted by the National Infrastructure Commission and endorsed by the Government, and any attempted railroading of inflated growth ambitions by the proposed OxCam Arc Growth Body
- Engage constructively with local authorities and Government to ensure environmental constraints are fully recognised and for development to protect and enhance our rural county
- Support local decision-making regarding housing growth, based on the needs/aspirations of existing local communities.

Specific Actions

1. Ensure spatial planning is guided by broader social and environmental constraints, prioritising local needs and strengths rather than arbitrary or imposed growth targets
2. Ensure designated areas and undesignated areas of value are identified as constraints in spatial planning; with rigorous "exceptional circumstances" tests; and brownfield sites prioritised
3. Ensure plans work within the area's environmental capacity and avoid, minimise and mitigate harm to our countryside and rural character
4. Ensure any plan is accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment which meets the full rigour of the SEA Directive including public consultation on options
5. Ensure emerging approaches to net environmental gain, net biodiversity gain and natural capital accounting, accurately represent the potential harm of any proposed development
6. Housing projections should be grounded on the latest Office for National Statistics forecasts not the unsustainable 1 million figure touted by the NIC and developers
7. Ensure plans are not developed behind closed doors or by unelected bodies, are presented for genuine public consultation at all stages at County/district level giving local political responsibility
8. Ensure priority provision of truly affordable and social housing needed by existing residents
9. Ensure housing densities are optimised. Increased density is key for affordability, sustainability and vital for the efficient use of scarce land and creating more sustainable communities. Density targets should be ambitious
10. Ensure East West Rail is fit for purpose with a high frequency service, capacity to carry freight and built ready to use an alternative energy source
11. Ensure any new roads or upgrading of existing roads are really necessary, will not cause new travel and are subject to public consultation
12. Ensure housing development is supported by the timely and appropriate provision of infrastructure and services, e.g. schools, hospitals.