A dirt path leads through a dense forest of green trees. The path is light-colored and runs straight into the distance, flanked by tall grasses and various trees. Sunlight filters through the leaves, creating dappled shadows on the path. The overall scene is bright and lush.

A simple start to sustainable planning in 1, 2, 3 steps

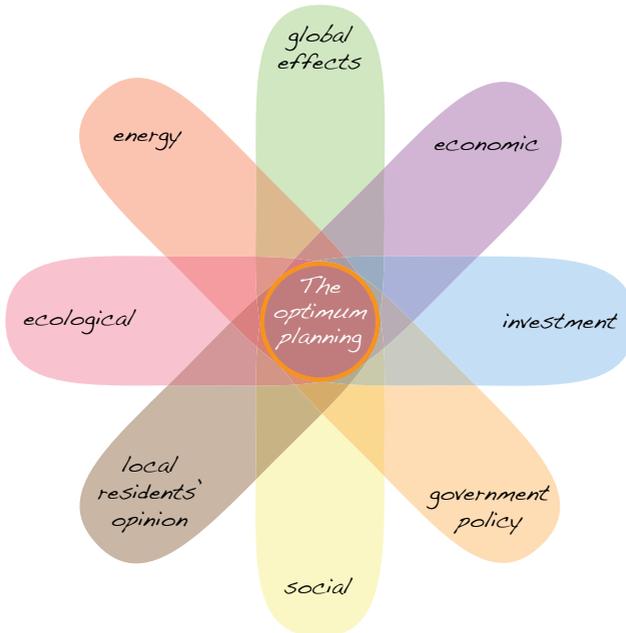
OXFORD
PARK

In the article below, we include 3 simple steps which allow you to start thinking about sustainable planning and the Oxford approach.

I. Planning has to be holistic.

This can be obtained if you imagine a diagram, built of circles like a Venn diagram, which shows all the (Oxford 360 degree) Sustainability criteria overlapping (economic, social, investment, ecological, government policy, local residents' opinion, transport, energy, global effects, inter alia). The optimum planning is at the overlap of all the circles.

Holistic planning can be very well adapted into PMI since the methodology allows project phases to overlap and knowledge areas to interact. Actually it does not only allow it, but even has set up a separate knowledge area for that: integration management. This is why we have adapted PMI into our Oxford 360 approach.



2. Planning has to be more open to change, especially in the fast-changing world of today.

One of the good ways to achieve this is following Oxford: big developments which take years to realise can be planned and implemented in a series of self-sufficient stages. This will ensure that the community that will be created will get the most appropriate development and the course will be dynamic enough to allow for market changes. Of course this requires flexibility in the planning and therefore considerable discussions with local and national authorities to enable this optimum solution to be implemented since it is often something new.

One small example, if it turns out that most of the people who have bought (or are planning to buy) houses in a development are young families with kids, then we have to make sure that their needs are mostly covered. We need to make sure that there is a sufficient amount of kindergarten places, playgrounds, walking tracks, local schooling is improved, transport and entertainment is sufficient and so on.



At the same time, we consider the investment and development profit. Generating a solid investment return means more finance is allocated for our activities, which in turn generates more positive benefit in a virtuous circle.

In PMI you have contingency plans, you have risk management and constant monitoring and controlling. Via change requests that have a certain procedure you can make sure that all changes that will be made are made considering these Oxford 360 Sustainability factors. So in this way you can manage the changes effectively and ensure full compliance with requirements.

3. Many different parties have to be involved in the planning process.

That means local people as well as professionals. The more opinions you get, the wider context the planning gets. For Oxford it means generally: meetings with local people, local government, reading strategic studies about the area made by state institutions; meeting with professionals, getting their opinions. At the same time you must limit choices and go for the greater good in solutions chosen.

In PMI these people/organizations are called stakeholders and one of actions in PMI is to create a stakeholder list with requirements, so you can see, the various approaches can be made to effectively connect with a little thinking. Our approach to holistic planning itself is holistic.



Summary

As part of the Oxford Corporate Social Responsibility mandate, after our professionals create various studies, as above and we present these to the local community, government, authorities and other partners. This is educational material for them, and so the knowledge of sustainable development rises throughout the country and the quality level of developments also improves.

This gives you a first idea about how to undertake sustainable planning.

Hadley Barrett



Notes:

Oxford 360 Sustainability Index – The bespoke methodology used by Oxford to develop projects in a sustainable manner. It adapts PMI in a sustainable way.

PMI – The international project management methodology used by Oxford in its projects, www.PMI.org

