

Supplementary Papers

Oxfordshire Growth Board

Virtual meeting viewable by weblink
on Tuesday, 24 November 2020 at 2.00 pm

4. **Public participation** (Pages 115 - 116)

To consider the attached public speaking requests.

5. **Growth Board Scrutiny Panel update** (Pages 117 - 121)

To receive the report of Growth Board Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 17 November 2020 and consider the Panel's recommendations to the Growth Board.

Public speakers

24 November 2020



Question

1. Ian Ashley on behalf of Need not Greed Oxfordshire

NNGO notes that work is ongoing to refine policy options for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. The description (Para 12) makes it sound as if there are a wide range of partners involved, but as far as we can see this is all related to different internal groupings within the local authorities. Given the long-term strategic importance of the Plan to the future of Oxfordshire, we are sure that all involved would wish to avoid the usual confrontational process where critical decisions are made behind the scenes and the public only get to tick a box (or not) at the end. At the start of the Plan preparation, there was considerable discussion about the comprehensive involvement of external informed stakeholders, such as NNGO and CPRE, at early stages in the process. How does the Growth Board therefore intend to test its internal assumptions and draft policy options with such stakeholders / critical friends prior to formal consultation?

2. Charlie Maynard on behalf of the Witney to Oxford Transport Group

Thank you all for allowing me to present to you today. I am the newly elected Chair of the Witney Oxford Transport Group ("WOT Group") and am speaking to you in that capacity. WOT Group is a not-for-profit, non-political, voluntary organisation. We have been busy over the last few months. Please see the link [here](#) for a Google Earth presentation outlining a rail route from a junction with the Cotswold Line at Yarnton, through Eynsham and Witney, to Carterton and RAF Brize Norton. We believe the presentation clearly demonstrates that there is indeed a feasible route for the railway line which would generate very large economic, social and environmental benefits for West Oxfordshire. Importantly, this route closely follows the A40 and therefore minimises the impact both to people's homes and to our countryside. Prior studies have looked at reinstating the old route, which is not a viable option.

We are now working hard on quantifying the costs of such a line and would like to report back to you shortly on this point. We will soon be applying for a grant from the Department for Transport's Restoring your Railway [Ideas Fund](#). The application requires the sponsorship of one MP. The line runs through two constituencies. We have the support of Layla Moran; Robert Courts is considering. At Oxfordshire County Council's November 3rd meeting, every single councillor present, save one abstention, voted in support of a motion committing to "undertake a feasibility study, should funding be confirmed, in the next financial year, to look at a rail link from Carterton, Witney and Eynsham to Oxford".

We have recently received letters of support from Carterton Town Council and the Lord Mayor of Oxford and we are hopeful that we will soon have similar letters to Witney Town Council and Eynsham Parish Council. We will be seeking to submit a cross-party motion similar to that submitted to OCC to WODC's next full council meeting on January 20th. We will also be conducting a community outreach and consultation programme in the first quarter of 2021.

The proposed work to increase rail capacity at Oxford Station and the dual tracking to Hanborough are both critical enabling steps for this next step of building a railway to Carterton and we fully support both plans.

We all know how troubled West Oxfordshire's transport situation is and we are trying our best to contribute to the solution. We have two requests to each of you today:

- 1) Please have a look through our presentation. If you have questions or comments, we are very keen to hear them.
- 2) We ask for your support in exploring this opportunity further, including giving your support for a Feasibility Study. Importantly, we recognise that giving your support to a Feasibility Study is not the same as giving your support to rebuild the railway line. We stress that we are only looking now for your support on the former, not the latter.

3. Cllr Liz Leffman, Oxfordshire County Council

I am addressing the Growth Board as County Councillor for Charlbury and Wychwood. I would first of all like to say how pleased I am to see this paper and the draft letter that accompanies it. I strongly support the plans outlined in this paper and look forward to a successful outcome to the funding bid for Phase 2.

The North Cotswold line runs through the ward that I represent, and there are five stations in it: Finstock, Charlbury, Ascott under Wychwood, Shipton under Wychwood and Kingham. Only two of these stations, Charlbury and Kingham, have an hourly service and all trains currently stop at these stations. The other stations have just one train per day in either direction. Traffic on this line is limited because some sections of the line are still single track: the sections between Hanborough and Oxford, Hanborough and Charlbury, and Evesham and Pershore. The plan is that the sections between Hanborough and Oxford and Evesham and Pershore are doubled as part of the upgrade referred to in this paper – a total of nine miles. But as far as I can ascertain, there are currently no plans to double the section between Hanborough and Charlbury. This will severely limit the overall capacity of the line.

The upgrade of the section between Hanborough and Oxford means there will be four trains per hour from Hanborough to London as compared with one per hour at present. But because of the restriction on capacity caused by single track elsewhere on the line, and in order to improve the service from further up, under present plans Kingham and Charlbury stations would no longer form part of the core daily service and a limited number of trains will stop at these stations once the Hanborough upgrade is completed. Both Charlbury and Kingham are well-used: Charlbury served around 300,000 passengers per year prior to the pandemic. It should be noted that passenger numbers dropped slightly following the opening of Oxford Parkway station in 2016. The number of passengers using that station have grown steadily since its opening and that is because it offers two trains per hour to London as compared with just one on the Cotswold Line. This serves to demonstrate that if the frequency of trains stopping at Kingham and Charlbury is reduced, it is likely that people will drive to Oxford Parkway or Hanborough to catch a train to London. This undermines the intention of this strategy which is to provide county-wide rail connectivity which will encourage people to use their cars less.

I am therefore asking the Chair of the Growth Board to consider revising her letter to the Government to include reference to the North Cotswold Line, to emphasise the importance of doubling this line and to request confirmation that the doubling of the line along its entire length will be included in plans for Phase 3.

To: Oxfordshire Growth Board
Date: 24 November 2020
Report of: Growth Board Scrutiny Panel
Title of Report: Recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 17 November 2020

Purpose of report:	To present recommendations from the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 17 November 2020 to the Growth Board.
Scrutiny Lead:	Councillor Andrew Gant, Chair of the Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel.
Recommendation:	That the Oxfordshire Growth Board states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.

Introduction and overview

1. The Scrutiny Panel would like to thank Ahmed Goga (OxLEP, Director of Strategy and Programmes), Caroline Green (Oxford City Council, Assistant Chief Executive), Andrew Down (South Oxfordshire and Vale Of White Horse District Councils, Acting Deputy Chief Executive), Paul Staines (Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, Interim Head of Programme), Gordon Mitchell (Oxford City Council, Chief Executive) and Hannah Doney (Oxfordshire County Council, Head of Corporate Finance) for presenting reports and attending the meeting to answer questions.
2. The Panel reviewed the Growth Boards response to Scrutiny Panel Recommendations made on 15th September 2020 and 21st October 2020 at its meetings. Within the 15th September 2020 recommendations, recommendation 2, VIII, the Panel discussed the need for further clarification from the Growth Board on plans made with Environment Agency with regards to flood risk assessment in rural areas of Oxfordshire under Local Natural Capital Plan

Recommendation 1: That the Growth Board clarify what plans have been made with the Environment Agency to assess the flood risk in rural areas such as Chalgrove, as a part of the Local Natural Capital Plan.

3. The Panel received a presentation by Ahmed Goga (OxLEP, Director of Strategy and Programmes) on the Oxfordshire Economic Recovery Plan. The panel discussed at length the need to have a new and inclusive approach to building back the economy whilst being cautious not to go back to more traditional methods in the areas of manufacturing, international tourism and matters affecting climate change.

Recommendation 2: That the Growth Board ensure the Economic Recovery Plan does not seek to build back in the same way and instead looks to build back in a way that is inclusive of all areas such as climate change, manufacturing and international tourism.

4. The Panel also received a presentation from Paul Staines (Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, Interim Head of Programme) on the promotion of Low/Zero Carbon Housing in Oxfordshire. The Panel discussed that it is unclear on what is the exact definition of Low/Zero Carbon housing. The Panel concluded that there is a need to establish a national standard for Zero Carbon housing.

Recommendation 3: That the Growth Board in the letter to the Secretary of State recommend that there be a national standard for Zero-Carbon housing which reflects the Net Zero-Carbon Buildings Framework Definition as outlined by the UK Green Building Council

5. The Panel also received a report from Caroline Green (Oxford City Council, Assistant Chief Executive) on the findings from the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Seminars. The Panel supports the recommendations in this report and discussed the need to clarify what are the Early Years Education initiatives? mentioned on page 5, paragraph 3 of the report. The Panel also discussed the need for initiatives to be taken in the matters of eliminating child poverty in all the districts of Oxfordshire. The Panel also discussed world famous industries located in Oxfordshire such as motorsport that have been overlooked and underutilised in the past and the need for such industries to be a part of Oxfordshire Inclusive Economies.

Recommendation 4: That the Growth Board endorse and support Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy summary report findings but also

- i. clarifies what are the Early Years Education initiatives (pg.5, para 3 of summary report) in order to boost education in Oxfordshire?
 - ii. recommend it looks into matters of eliminating child poverty in Oxfordshire.
 - iii. recommend it looks into building local industries in certain economies around Oxfordshire that have been overlooked and underutilised such as Motorsport.
6. The Panel also received a report from Gordon Mitchell (Oxford City Council, Chief Executive) on investment in improved rail connectivity for Oxfordshire and supports the plans mentioned in the report. The Panel also received a verbal update from Andrew Down (South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils, Acting Deputy Chief Executive) on the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

7. **Scrutiny Panel Task & Finish Group – Private investment in infrastructure**
The Panel received a Task and Finish Group Suggestion Form from Councillor Alex Postan (West Oxfordshire District Council, Growth Board Scrutiny Panel Member) on Private Investment in Public Infrastructure Projects. After discussion on this topic the panel voted in favour of endorsing this Task and Finish Group with Councillor Alex Postan as lead member joined by Councillor John Tanner (Oxford City Council), Councillor Craig Simmons (Oxford City Council) and Councillor Peter Dragonetti (South Oxfordshire District Council) on this review group with meetings to be convened by Amit Alva (Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Officer) with recommendation coming back to the Panel at its 22 March 2021 meeting.

Future Work

8. As well as reviewing the Growth Board's response to these recommendations at its next meeting on 19 January 2021, the Panel will also be considering in detail:
- Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy update
 - Oxford-Cambridge Arc Update
 - Growth Board and Health and Wellbeing Board joint work

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Growth Board Draft response to recommendations of the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel Recommendations made on 17th November 2020

The Growth Board is requested to provide a draft response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel, to be published as a supplement collectively with the Scrutiny Panel's report, for decision at its meeting on 24 November 2020.

Recommendation	Agree ?	Comment
Recommendation 1. That the Growth Board clarify what plans have been made with the Environment Agency to assess the flood risk in rural areas such as Chalgrove, as a part of the Local Natural Capital Plan.		
Recommendation 2. That the Growth Board ensure the Economic Recovery Plan does not seek to build back in the same way and instead looks to build back in a way that is inclusive of all areas such as climate change, manufacturing and international tourism.		
Recommendation 3. That the Growth Board in the letter to the Secretary of State recommend that there be a national standard for Zero-Carbon housing which reflects the Net Zero-Carbon Buildings Framework Definition as outlined by the UK Green Building Council.		
Recommendation 4. That the Growth Board endorse and support Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy summary report findings but also		

Appendix 1

<p>i. clarifies what are the Early Years Education initiatives (pg.5, para 3 of summary report) in order to boost education in Oxfordshire?</p> <p>ii. recommend it looks into matters of eliminating child poverty in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>iii. recommend it looks into building local industries in certain economies around Oxfordshire that have been overlooked and underutilised such as Motorsport.</p>		
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