

Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday 22 July 2020

Item 3: Public Participation

The following member of the public requested to make a statement:

Dr Peter Collins on behalf of the CPRE Oxfordshire:

1.As the Scrutiny Panel is aware, CPRE Oxfordshire considers the work of the Panel as of utmost importance in checking on the activities and advising the Oxfordshire Growth Board. It therefore has great interest in encouraging those procedures that give the Panel the opportunity for its views to have the greatest impact.

We realise that the Panel gave considerable thought in determining the timing of its meetings, in particular in relation to those of the Growth Board itself. However, with now some experience as to how the Panel and Board have meshed, it might be a good time, in face of a review of the Terms of Reference of the Board (Item 6 to-day), to reconsider the matter of timings and Panel organisation to meet the challenge of rising to what we see it could achieve.

Members of the Panel will each have their own views about how matters have gone. From outside, a crucial necessary change would seem to be to hold your main meetings earlier (perhaps much earlier) in relation to the Board meetings that next follow it. We have seen that some matters have in effect already been decided 'out of committee' by the time the Panel's proposals reach the Board, or there is not the time to put together a considered document, based on a Panel discussion of an important item, or consult Board members, or there is not the time for members of different districts to make their own researches or consult colleagues, etc., etc.

We want to make it clear that we realise that informal discussions are going on by electronic and telephonic means all the time, that some Board papers arrive rather late (but not so many), and that there have to be procedures to take care of important matters than come up just before a Growth Board meeting, etc.

So, would the Panel allow us to be so presumptuous as to suggest some possibilities the Panel may care to consider?

One part of this must surely be that the Growth Board enshrines in its own Terms of Reference the need to provide the Panel with documents in timely fashion – and to have 'emergency' arrangements for matters of any urgency. The Panel may care to make appropriate recommendations on the Board's draft Terms of Reference on that now.

Concerning the Panel's own Terms of Reference, having an earlier meeting (two, or even three weeks before the next Board meeting) would of course give a need perhaps for a small committee to consider matters that come up between the Panel and Growth Board

meetings – perhaps the Chair plus two, or even five, meeting virtually – with the possibility of consulting the rest of the Panel, as necessary. Currently, I assume the Chairman is given some authority between Panel and Board meetings, and this would be an extension of that.

Panel members may have better suggestions. What we hope will come out of such a discussion will be greater impact of the Panel's views.

2. The Panel may also like to engage with the Board in (a) trying to make District Leaders more answerable to their District Councils and Councillors, and (b) what oversight it should have/require of the proposed Ox-Cam Arc 'prospectus'.

The following member of the public asked a question:

Charlie Hicks:

To each Growth Board member, ask yourself: How old am I? How old will I be in 2050?

My name is Charlie, I'm 25. Born in the JR in May 1995. I grew up here, did my undergrad here, spent a few years in London and now I'm back living here. At university I was lucky enough to visit Silicon Valley and learn the best way to think like a designer - just like Apple, Google, Uber and the like. If Oxford - Cambridge and Oxfordshire within that is to become the 'Silicon Arc', it would probably be wise to adopt some thinking from California.

The context of the question is this:

What is the purpose of this group of people? What power do you hold between you? What will be impacted by the decisions you make? *Who* will be impacted by the decisions you make?

Good design principles fit for the 21st century - used by all the best tech companies in the world - always start with one thing: the user. The user is the person or people who use the product or service that is being created. Good design *obsesses* over the user: the every last detail of their journey, their need, their context, their background, their hopes, their dreams, their desires.

Good design has core to it an overwhelming empathy for the user. An empathy that can only happen through one thing: *listening* to the user.

So, the purpose of this group is to design an Oxfordshire for 2050.

So ask yourself this:

- How old am I today?
- How old will I be in 2050?
- Who are the working-age users of Oxfordshire in 2050?
- Where are their voices in any of the work that we are doing?
- Where are their voices in any of the decisions we make?

If they - people born after 1990 - are not central to everything you do, including as a part of

this group, how can you even begin to have a hope of designing a future that will work for people in 2050?

So ... how old am I? Who is this group for? How are we designing for the future?