

To: Oxfordshire Growth Board
Title of Report: Oxford to Cambridge Arc – Update
Date: 22 September 2020
Report of Bev Hindle, Growth Board Director
Status: Open

Executive Summary and Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to update the Growth Board on the current work being undertaken relating to the Oxford to Cambridge Arc. There are currently three main areas of priority collaboration: Arc Recovery Strategy, Arc Economic Prospectus and the Arc Spatial Framework. This report updates on progress across these three priority areas.

Recommendations:

1. That the Growth Board notes the report for information.

Recent Arc Leadership Group Meetings

1. At its meeting of 31 July, the Arc Leadership Group:
 - Agreed Councillor Barry Wood should continue as Chair of the Arc Leadership Group and Executive (Yvonne Rees will now be the Chair of the Arc Chief Executives Group)
 - Considered an update on the joint LEP work across the Arc looking at Economic Recovery
 - Noted the progress made to date on the Arc Economic Prospectus
 - Received a presentation and update on the Arc Local Natural Capital Plan work led by DEFRA (on the Growth Board's agenda for 22 September)
 - Heard an update from MHCLG on Arc-related Government work and specifically on the progress being made to initiating a spatial framework for the Arc
 - Agreed to seek the recruitment of a full-time Director to develop and lead the work programme of the Arc Leadership Groups – appointment to be made by end of September
2. At an extraordinary meeting on 07 August, the Arc Leadership Group Executive:
 - Heard an update on the Arc Economic Prospectus
3. At its meeting of 07 September, the Arc Leadership Group Executive will:
 - consider a first initial draft of the Arc Economic Prospectus

- receive an update on Government's progress and timeline for the Arc Spatial Framework (this will be updated following the meeting to summarise what Arc Executive meeting included)
4. There is a further extraordinary meeting of the Arc Leadership Group Executive on 25 September where they will be asked to agree the submission of the Arc Economic Prospectus for Government consideration as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review.
 5. More specific update information is highlighted on the Prospectus and the Spatial Framework below.

Arc Economic Prospectus

6. Hatch Regeneris have been retained to help a lead officer group develop the Arc Economic Prospectus. Initial work has included:
 - identifying key documents and source material to call on and reference in the prospectus
 - review of, and update to, our economic vision (particularly in light of the progress we have made on Green Arc principles) and to develop a structure and format for the Prospectus
 - development of a structure and format for the prospectus
7. Building on the initial feedback from the Arc Executive on 07 August, the current work is focussing on firming up a structure for the submission and developing:
 - our key sector strengths narrative building on work done in developing the joint Arc Local Industrial Strategy approach
 - bringing the voices of academia and business to help us tell the story of success in the Arc, also outlining what they need for success to continue
 - refining specific proposals, investment opportunities and ideas that we want Government to invest in including:
 - i. critical connectivity infrastructure to support our communities
 - ii. skills, innovation and research
 - iii. providing certainty and confidence through committed and distinct Arc investment pots
 - iv. capacity of our local stakeholder teams to help to deliver the shared sustainable development outcomes we are insisting on.

Arc Spatial Framework

8. Government announced in the Spring budget that it intended to complete a spatial framework for the Arc. We have yet to see the detail or brief for this work, but believe it will provide a high-level spatial strategy (non-statutory) for the Arc, identifying:
 - The shared objectives and outcomes we seek for the Arc
 - A clear evidence base to justify the level of strategic growth that needs to be planned for the Arc and how that gets delivered most sustainably
 - A strategy for where the growth and investment to support that growth is best placed across the Arc
9. The Government has also committed to a full public engagement exercise to run in parallel with the development of the Framework. We anticipate this to begin in the autumn, October at the earliest. We do expect Government to engage with Local Authorities on the nature of the Framework, how it will be developed and the relationship it will have with Local Plans – we have been advised this may start as early as September.

Financial Implications

1. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Legal Implications

2. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers

3. None.

Report Author:	Bev Hindle, Oxfordshire Growth Board Director
Contact information:	bev.hindle@oxfordshire.gov.uk