

Notes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Oxfordshire Growth Board Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Sub-Group

HELD ON THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 10.00 AM
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA MS TEAMS

Present:

Members: Councillors James Mills (Chair), Jeff Haine, Debby Hallett, Alex Hollingsworth, Jeannette Matelot and Anne-Marie Simpson

Officers: Alison Bailey (Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Team), Giles Hughes (West Oxfordshire District Council Chief Executive), Kevin Jacob, (Oxfordshire Growth Board), Peter Truman (Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Team) and Rachel Williams (Oxfordshire Plan 2050)

11 Apologies for absence and notifications of substitutes; declarations of interest; Chair's announcements

Apologies were received from Councillor Colin Clarke, (Cherwell District Council) and Councillor Catherine Webber, (Vale of White Horse District Council) who was substituted by Councillor Debby Hallett.

Councillor Sue Cooper, (South Oxfordshire District Council) was present as an observer.

The Chair announced that he would be stepping down as Leader of WODC from 28 October and therefore would no longer be the Chair or a member of the subgroup from that date. Members of the subgroup paid tribute to his chairmanship and wished him well for the future. It was noted that a new Chair would be appointed by the Growth Board in due course.

12 Notes of the previous meeting

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed subject to the following amendment to minute 9, final paragraph to:

'Officers explained that the current draft guiding principles tried to provide a balance to the weight of all principles, and that there was already a strong direction on climate change in the existing guiding principles. They explained that guiding principles would likely form part of the Strategic Vision and there would an opportunity to consider them in that context, including next steps. *Members acknowledged this, but emphasised that they wished to strongly recommend that the guiding principles form part of the Strategic Vision*'

13 Presentation on the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy project - James Gagg (Oxfordshire County Council)

The subgroup received a presentation from James Gagg, Infrastructure Strategy Team Leader, (Interim) on the latest progress of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy Update, (OxIS). This provided:

- a recap of the background to the original OxIS which had the purpose of prioritising Oxfordshire's infrastructure requirements to 2040 and beyond,
- the importance of OxIS, links and relationship between OxIS and the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 with both project teams working together,
- the updated objectives of the update with increased focus on environmental, climate change and wellbeing matters; and
- the anticipated timeline of the update over two stages including the anticipated appointment of consultants by end of September.

The subgroup discussed the presentation and the importance of carefully planning and coordinating the timings and interactions between OxIS and the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 was emphasised. It was noted that OxIS would form part of the evidence base for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and that it needed to reflect the Plan appropriately, even though the OxIS update process was running ahead of the equivalent stage of the Plan timeline.

The importance of the OxIS update considering and where appropriate responding to the need to renew existing key strategic infrastructure, (such as hospitals) required to support future populations was also stressed. Officers commented that they were comfortable with the timelines between the projects adding that some flexibility was built into both timelines. In respect of renewal of existing strategic infrastructure, Officers agreed to consider this and where appropriate to further engage with external stakeholders to seek to establish where existing strategic infrastructure might need to be renewed to meet the objectives of the Plan and OxIS.

Members also referred to the continued uncertainty around the future of the proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, acknowledging that currently development of the proposal had been paused by HM Government, but not definitively withdrawn. It was felt that regional transport factors influencing Oxfordshire did need to be reflected within the updated OxIS. The subgroup was informed that the Plan's risk register did refer to the Expressway, but that it was necessary to continue to progress the Plan.

Members welcomed and supported the refocussing of the OxIS objectives towards supporting sustainable growth and discussed how this related and linked into opportunities for bidding for central government funding. Officers commented that the indications were that there was a shift in focus by HM Government towards supporting lower carbon transport strategies, the Active Travel initiative being one such example of this. The strong evidence base provided by an updated OxIS would provide a good position to bid for funding.

The subgroup noted the presentation.

14 Feedback from the Oxfordshire Open Thought exercise - Peter Truman (Oxfordshire Plan Team)

The subgroup received a presentation providing an update on the Oxfordshire Open Thought exercise which had been an informal public engagement exercise building upon the initial Oxfordshire Plan 2050 consultation.

The website which had been launched on 1 June had asked individuals, organisations and businesses to consider future challenges and opportunities around the topics of:

- Living and working
- Connectivity
- Climate change.

It was felt that the initiative had been successful, and the subgroup was updated on some of the headline website analytics which had included some 2,300 unique users. In addition, engagement had been evenly split across age groups, but with the highest percentage of users within the 23-34 age range. This was encouraging as a key objective of the initiative had been to broaden the reach of engagement with the public and widen the demographic when compared to more traditional methods.

Some 300 submissions had been received from a range of individuals, organisations, academics, developers and consultants. These responses were currently being processed with the help of students from Oxford Brookes University, prior to a summary report of the submissions being produced. It was anticipated to move beyond the initial phase by considering some of the wider issues outside of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 by continuing to preserve the innovative approach to engagement used in Phase 1. Some responses would be spotlighted on the website for public comment as a mechanism for promoting wider debate amongst the community, but this did not imply agreement or tacit endorsement of a particular policy position. Officers were working with a number of individuals and organisations to achieve this.

The subgroup noted the update.

15 Oxfordshire Strategic Vision update - Alison Bailey (Oxfordshire Plan Team)

The subgroup received a verbal update on work to draft an Oxfordshire Strategic vision following the workshop and discussions held at the previous meetings.

Alison Bailey, Oxfordshire Plan Team updated the subgroup that detailed work on the draft was continuing, picking up and taking into account the comments made by the subgroup. Bev Hindle, the Growth Board Director was developing a programme for the Vision and it was expected to be able to undertake wider officer engagement with partners and stakeholders on a draft in due course prior to future consideration by the Growth Board. It was intended that following Growth Board consideration; an informal non-statutory consultation would take place before Christmas with the results being feedback to the Growth Board in spring 2021.

The subgroup suggested the use of the Open Thought website and approach to the potential consultation on the Vision and noted that discussions would take place around the practicalities of this.

The subgroup noted the update.

16 Future meetings

The subgroup noted the dates of its future meetings, as presented in the agenda.

The meeting closed at 12.00 pm