

**To:** Oxfordshire Growth Board  
**Date:** 8 June 2021  
**Report of:** Growth Board Scrutiny Panel  
**Title of Report:** Recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 1 June 2021

<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present recommendations from the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 1 June 2021 to the Growth Board.
<b>Scrutiny Lead:</b>	Councillor Andrew Gant, Chair of the Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	That the Oxfordshire Growth Board states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.
<b>Appendix:</b>	1. Growth Board response template to Scrutiny recommendations.

## Introduction and overview

1. The Scrutiny Panel would like to thank Sarah Haywood (Managing Director, Advanced Oxford), Ahmed Goga (Director of Strategy & Programmes, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership), Richard Byard (Director of Business Development, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership), Andrew Down (Oxfordshire Growth Board Director), Stefan Robinson (Oxfordshire Growth Board Manager) for presenting and attending the meeting to answer questions.
2. The Panel discussed the Growth Board's to response to Scrutiny Panel Recommendation 1 at its previous meeting on the 22 March 2021 which asked the Growth Board to ensure the Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment (OGNA) work is published as soon as that work is completed; or clarify the reasons and timescale for publishing it as part of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Regulation 18 Part 2 public consultation. The Board's response to that recommendation was that OGNA was not yet complete due to changes being incorporated in light of the ever-changing circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. The Panel also noted at its meeting on 1 June that the OGNA was due to be published in approximately 4 weeks' time, however it deemed that it was

important to allow a maximum amount of time for the consultees to review this assessment and all supporting evidence based documents before responding to the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 regulation 18 Part 2 public consultation. The Panel then decided to repeat the above-mentioned recommendation and reiterate its importance which was also emphasised by a public address to the Scrutiny Panel.

**Recommendation 1: That the Growth Board ensures that the Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment work is published earlier than scheduled along with all supporting evidence based documents which would allow the maximum amount of time for consultees to review the document and also ensuring there is a genuine choice of all realistic options rather than presenting a fait accompli to the consultees responding to the Regulation 18 Part 2 public consultation.**

4. The Panel received a presentation on 'Powering up the Green Recovery' from Sarah Haywood and Ahmed Goga. The Panel noted that the presentation suggested there was a lack of larger office spaces and labs space in Oxford City centre for start-ups. The Panel voiced its concern that increases in total office space in the centre of Oxford would encourage increased car journeys and would be incompatible with the Growth Board's ambitions to reduce carbon emissions as outlined in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision and the commitments of individual councils.
5. The Panel also discussed that one of the alternatives would be to focus on areas with good rail links in areas such as Bicester and Banbury to Oxford city to promote the creation and development of employment space which is in line with local aims for development countywide. Furthermore, the Panel also discussed that it is important for places of Science and Innovation such as Culham and Oxford's Universities are connected to the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) companies such as the ones based at Howbery Park by sustainable means of transport such as cycle lanes and routes, light passenger railways and autonomous vehicles.

**Recommendation 2: That the Growth Board, in its consideration of Advanced Oxford's report on Powering Up for the Green Recovery, considers the Scrutiny Panel's feedback set out below. The Board is encouraged to reflect how these views can inform key future plans and strategies:**

- i. **Future Growth Board work and strategies should consider how any increase in total office space can remain compatible with the long-term carbon reduction ambitions of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision, and the wider need to design any future Oxford city employment spaces to be car-free and include facilities for sustainable travel**
- ii. **There needs to be a balance of focus on areas outside Oxford City along the knowledge spine within the Oxford- Cambridge Arc to promote the creation and development of employment space in areas with good rail links to Oxford such as Bicester and Banbury.**

- iii. **There needs to be a focus on sustainable means of transport such as cycle lanes and routes, light passenger railways and autonomous vehicles when designing new spin-out and high-tech spaces. In addition revisiting recommendation 3 made on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 that the Growth Board undertake further work to understand the impact that changes in local rail services do and may have on modal shift with regards to personal car use, consideration should be given to the building of new trains stations on existing lines in areas such as Kidlington- Begbroke-Yarnton.**
  - iv. **In placemaking, consider designing communities, employment spaces, housing, and transport options holistically, especially in light of changes to working practices in a post-pandemic world and how it is likely to reduce levels of commuting in the long term.**
6. The Panel also received a report from Richard Byard presenting an Overview of the local Skills Landscape. The Panel noted Oxfordshire's key skills needs and shortages, and that there is a demand for higher technical skills which is not being satisfied by the existing education and skills system. The Panel also discussed continuous or lifelong learning and upskilling which is crucial to people with gaps in their employment and also the need attract young people to Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) fields and other wealth creating industries. The Panel also briefly discussed barriers in learning and the lack of diversity, especially gender-diversity in top jobs, in STEM sectors.

**Recommendation 3: That the Growth Board in noting the Overview of Local Skills Landscape report undertakes to actively consider diversity of leadership, responsible business practices, attracting youth to Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) fields, and addressing traditional imbalances such as the under-representation of women in STEM based businesses.**

### **Future Work**

7. As well as reviewing the Growth Board's response to these recommendations at its next meeting on 12 July 2021, the Panel will also be considering in detail:
  - Report on Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire
  - Regional development updates within the Oxford to Cambridge Arc
  - Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation
  - Quarter 4 Year 3 (2020/21) Housing and Growth Deal Progress and Financial report

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