

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Oxfordshire Growth Board Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Group



HELD ON THURSDAY 17 JUNE 2021 AT 10.00 AM
VIRTUAL VIA MS TEAMS

Present:

Councillors: Emily Smith (Chair), Duncan Enright, Jeff Haine, Debby Hallett, Alex Hollingsworth, Anne-Marie Simpson and Barry Wood

Officers: Adrian Colwell (Oxfordshire Plan 2050), Giles Hughes (West Oxfordshire District Council), Kevin Jacob (Oxfordshire Growth Board) and Paul Staines, (Interim Head of Programme) and Peter Truman, (Oxfordshire Plan 2050)

8 Introductions & welcome; Apologies for absence and notifications of substitutions; declarations of interest; Chair's announcements

Apologies were received from Councillor Colin Clarke, Cherwell District Council, (substituted by Councillor Barry Wood).

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chair welcomed all present to the first meeting of the advisory group since her appointment as Chair and introductions were made.

9 Notes of the previous meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 3 June 2021 were agreed as a correct summary subject to the amendment of reference in Minute 5 to the importance of addressing inequality within the discussion of Theme Three: Creating strong and healthy communities as set out in v14 of the draft Oxfordshire Local Plan document. Amendment as set out below:

'In discussion, the importance of addressing inclusivity and tackling inequalities including *but not limited to health, opportunity and income* as part of the Plan was highlighted and it was felt that the draft needed to be developed further and more explicitly in this area. Officers indicated they would investigate this'.

10 Update on Oxfordshire Plan 2050 progress

The advisory group received and discussed a written update setting out the detail of key changes made to v14 of the draft Oxfordshire Plan 2050 document following the feedback

from the advisory group itself at the previous meeting and other professional stakeholder groups. A summary of the changes included:

- Merger of some proposed policies to streamline the document.
- Deletion of a couple of proposals as not strategic enough or which could potentially conflict with Local Plans.
- Review of policy language to focus on ease of reading whilst retaining necessary levels of technical detail and language.
- Revised text to make it clearer in each policy area to make sure that there are policy options for each area, whilst still identifying a preferred option.
- Justifications for inclusion of policy areas made clearer with explanations not pursued.
- Social inclusion addressed throughout the document
- Policy proposals supported by significant evidence base including the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment (OGNA).
- The Spatial Options part of the Consultation Document set out five options for considering the distribution of future growth and how proposed sites might be assessed

The advisory group was informed that the finalising of the Plan document to incorporate these changes was continuing and that a further iteration of the Plan would be circulated to the group alongside officers from the partner councils, although it was acknowledged that the window to gather further feedback was short. Formal consideration of the Plan consultation document through the individual overview & scrutiny and cabinet processes of each council would then take place in July. If approval to consult was given by each individual council, the formal Regulation 18 Stage 2 public consultation would begin. It was stressed that at this stage of the Plan approval process, the Plan remained draft and there was still the flexibility to make further improvements and adjustments in light of comments, notwithstanding that the overall project timelines remained tight. At Regulation 19 stage, the plan would essentially need to be more formalised and fixed.

In discussion, members of the advisory group highlighted the importance of proper co-ordination of the presentation of the Plan documents for the overview & scrutiny process so that the issues were as clear as possible for the committees to focus on the draft Plan document given that it was acknowledged that the full suite of supporting documents would be quite lengthy.

It was agreed that it would be useful to reiterate the critical project timelines for the adoption of the Plan and that a central repository of related Plan information and documents would further assist members of the group. Officers agreed to investigate this.

The advisory group was also referred to a paper setting out key dates in the Regulation 18 Part 2 public consultation which was expected would commence on 30 July 2021. It was noted that there was some discretion open to plan makers in respect of the length of Regulation 18 Part 2 consultations and this had been set at ten weeks, but at Regulation 19 stage the public consultation stage was set at exactly six weeks by HM Government. It was expected that the majority of public engagement and consultation during the Regulation 18 consultation would be undertaken online via a website, taking into consideration the continuing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The website would contain a suite of key plan related downloadable documentation including a summary leaflet, the full draft Plan document, evidence base, appropriate reference to other key strategic plans, (such as OxIS), site proposal form and a consultation response form. A number of online

events including webinars were planned during the consultation period and meetings with a number of stakeholder groups scheduled both before and during the consultation.

In discussion, members of the advisory group highlighted the importance of engagement with young people; a key part of which was presenting the consultation information and questions in a format and language accessible to them. However, it remained important to do everything possible to draw the consultation to the attention of non-digital users and it was suggested that voluntary, community and faith groups might provide avenues for this as well as local social media groups. Officers responded that every effort was being made to undertake engagement with young people and planning for this had been informed by the presence of a college placement within the Plan team.

In respect of engagement with local groups, there was with a focus towards engaging with groups with an Oxfordshire wide presence to achieve the most benefit and reach. The invitation for members of the group to suggest key points of contact within their communities, (over and above Parish Councils which would be contacted via a different route) was reiterated. Communications across the partner councils was also being coordinated. Commercial radio advertisement had been considered but was not felt to offer sufficient value for money for this application.

The update was noted.

11 Review of draft invite list for environment webinar

The advisory group considered an initial list of potential invitees for an Oxfordshire wide Oxfordshire Plan 2050 webinar with a focus on the environment. The webinar was provisionally expected to take place in September 2021, and it was stressed that the rationale behind the initial invite list was to concentrate on those organisations which were Oxfordshire wide in their representation. A number of suggestions were made, and it was stressed that further suggestions could be made outside to the meeting to the Plan team.

12 Future meetings and work programme

The advisory group noted the dates of its future meetings as set out in the Agenda, noting that a judgement would be made on whether a meeting in August was necessary at a later stage.

The meeting closed at 12.00 pm