

To: **Oxfordshire Growth Board**

Title of Report: **Oxfordshire Plan 2050- Endorsement of Regulation 18 Part two Plan for consultation**

Date: **19 July 2021**

Report of **Giles Hughes CEO West Oxfordshire DC and Senior Responsible Officer for Oxfordshire Plan 2050**

Status: **Open**

Executive Summary and Purpose:

To consider the approval of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation Document (the consultation document), which sets out both a range of planning policy options and a series of spatial strategy options for Oxfordshire.

When complete the Oxfordshire Plan will provide a high-level spatial planning framework for Oxfordshire up to 2050 and will be a statutory planning document supplementing Local Plans. The Oxfordshire Plan aims to be transformational and occupies new policy areas, such as on climate change, environmental betterment, health impacts and zero carbon transport. It has now reached the Regulation 18 Part 2 stage where approval from district councils is needed for consultation.

How this report contributes to the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision Outcomes:

The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 plays a key part of the delivery of the Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire by setting out key policies for Oxfordshire that support the outcomes set out in the Vision.

Recommendation:

That the Growth Board note and endorse the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation Document and ask partner district councils to approve the draft plan for consultation

Appendices: None

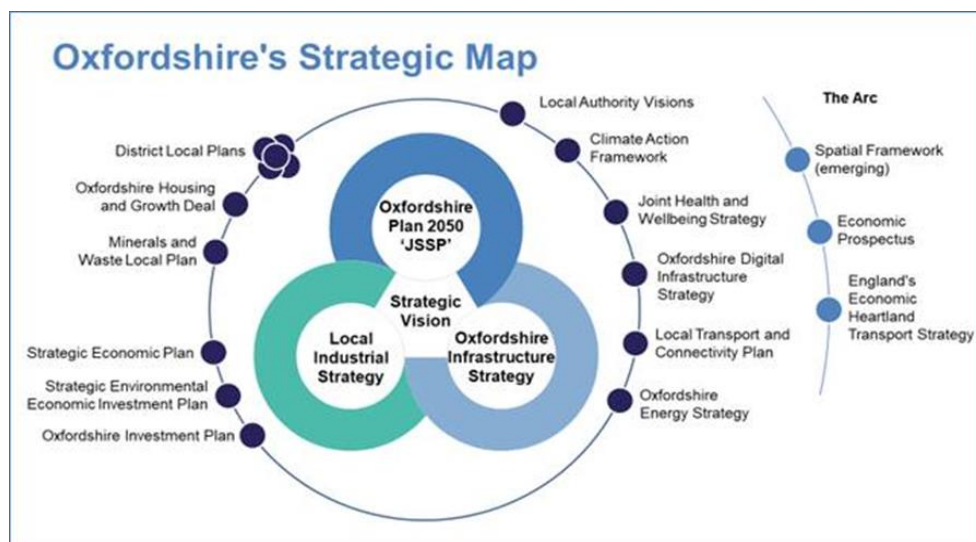
Background

The Partnership

- 1) The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (Oxfordshire Plan) is being produced by the five local planning authorities (city and district councils) in Oxfordshire, working in close partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and OxLEP. The city and district councils formally approve each key stage.
- 2) A core Oxfordshire Plan Team (the Plan Team) team was established to co-ordinate the production of the Oxfordshire Plan, working closely with officers at the councils.
- 3) Development of the consultation document and evidence base has also involved the Growth Board's Oxfordshire Plan Members Advisory Group, the Oxfordshire Heads of Planning Group, a technical Liaison Group, and specialist officer input throughout the plan-making process.

Progress to date

- 4) The 2018 Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal included a commitment by the Oxfordshire Councils to prepare a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (The Oxfordshire Plan) alongside Government investment of £215m for affordable housing and infrastructure improvements.
- 5) The first major consultation on the Oxfordshire Plan (covering Plan vision, objectives, aspirations and possible spatial typologies) took place in February and March 2019 (Regulation 18 Part 1), and then a Vision for the Oxfordshire Plan was developed in response to the consultation responses.
- 6) An extensive evidence base was also commissioned, and Sustainability Appraisal scoping and ongoing testing has been undertaken
- 7) The Plan Team undertook a number of further consultation steps including initiating a 'Call for Ideas' (promoted development sites and other project proposals), stakeholder events and engagement with young people.
- 8) The Plan Team also considered the relationship with other plans, strategies, and strategic influencers. For example, the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), Oxfordshire's Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS), Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS).
- 9) The Plan Team also developed Oxfordshire's Strategic Vision, intended to provide a strategic framework for a number of Oxfordshire wide documents, to enable the closer coordination of planning, transport, infrastructure, and economic development, amongst others. This considered the nature of 'Good Growth' in Oxfordshire, sits alongside the Oxfordshire Plan Vision, was prepared & approved by the collective leadership of the Oxfordshire Growth Board and has been agreed by all Oxfordshire councils.
- 10) The diagram or map below shows the relationship between the Strategic Vision, the Oxfordshire Plan and other strategies and plans.



11) The Plan Team has also undertaken Duty to Co-operate scoping and continuous engagement with neighboring Councils. This has included the 6 Oxfordshire Councils and OxLEP, together with authorities adjoining Oxfordshire, including those in the Thames Valley, Buckinghamshire, and Swindon. It has also included the 'prescribed bodies', such as Natural England, Environment Agency, Historic England and NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups.

12) Finally, the Plan Team have also updated the Local Development Scheme, which sets out the key forward dates, prepared a detailed Equalities Statement and a new Statement of Community Involvement, which sets out the basis for engagement with the community, particularly how to engage using online' arrangements and ensuring that those in 'remote' communities-both physically and demographically- are given the opportunity to engage.

Developing the Plan Policies

13) The Oxfordshire Plan consultation document comprises four key elements:

- Introduction and Context
- Plan Vision and Objectives
- Plan Themes and Policies
- Strategic Spatial Options

14) The consultation document describes 32 Policy Options that will be tested at the Regulation 18 Part 2 stage. The consultation document sets out why options are included, and what the challenges are.

15) Policies for the Oxfordshire Plan were identified following the Regulation 18-Part 1 process. These have been subsequently expanded through consideration of evidence, such as the Sustainability Appraisal, into new policy proposals judged appropriate for consideration at the Oxfordshire level.

16) The proposed policies cover strategic, Oxfordshire-wide policy options where issues are related to more than one District. The document aims to set a long-term, overarching, and high-level spatial planning framework for Oxfordshire for the period up to 2050. Policies are in some case establishing an enabling/framework, others are more detailed. Others will be used in formulation of more detailed Local Plan policies.

- 17) Our development approach is set out under 5 themes that will create a County wide long-term framework. 32 strategic policies are proposed across five themes:
- Theme One: Addressing climate change.
 - Theme Two: Improving environmental quality.
 - Theme Three: Creating strong and healthy communities.
 - Theme Four: Planning for sustainable travel and connectivity.
 - Theme Five: Creating jobs and providing homes.
- 18) Under these themes county-wide policies are being proposed, including policies on climate change, environmental net gain, health impact assessment and urban renewal due to the retail changes impacting on our town and city centres, business site intensification and high design standards for new development.
- 19) The development of the Oxfordshire Plan is aligned with the development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and the OxIS infrastructure assessment. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan that will go with the Oxfordshire Plan will be based on the update of OxIS. This will be completed before the Oxfordshire Plan Regulation 19 stage.
- 20) The Oxfordshire Plan will also have a Monitoring Framework at the Regulation 19 stage that will also be aligned with the OXIS monitoring framework.
- 21) The policy options consulted upon at Regulation 18 Part 2 will be turned into final proposals by the Regulation 19 stage.

Developing the Strategic Spatial Options

- 21) The Oxfordshire Plan will also establish housing and economic growth requirements to 2050 and broad locations for growth. The consultation document proposes five spatial options for the distribution of growth to be tested through the Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation. The process for moving from Regulation 18 to Regulation 19 is set out in the Oxfordshire Plan.
- 22) The five spatial strategy options identified for consultation are:
- Option 1: Focus on opportunities at larger settlements and planned growth locations.
 - Option 2: Focus on Oxford-led growth.
 - Option 3: Focus on opportunities in sustainable transport corridors and at strategic transport hubs.
 - Option 4: Focus on strengthening business locations.
 - Option 5: Focus on supporting rural communities.
- 23) The adopted local plans already establish the distribution of significant growth to 2031/35/36 and are taken account of in the spatial strategy and proposed spatial options.
- 24) At this stage we are not identifying individual spatial options that can necessarily accommodate all of Oxfordshire's growth over the next 30 years, nor identifying any one of options taken in isolation as the eventual long-term spatial strategy. At the Oxfordshire Plan regulation 19 stage when a Draft Plan is published broad locations for growth will be identified, with Local Plans being the mechanism for final site allocations. The eventual long-term spatial strategy is anticipated to draw from all the five strategic spatial options at this next stage.

Level of new growth

- 25) We have undertaken an assessment of the growth needs of Oxfordshire up to 2050, the Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment (OGNA). This will be published alongside the consultation document, given its important role as an evidence document. It sets out three scenarios for housing need. One that is based on the Government's Standard Methodology, a mid-range option and higher one that factors in additional economic growth.
- 26) The decision on a proposed level of growth will be taken around December 2021 to inform the draft Plan at the Oxfordshire Plan Regulation 19 stage. In setting the level of planned housing provision, the OGNA will be one of a number of factors considered.
- 27) Our strategy seeks to take account of the five District Local Plans that have been adopted in Oxfordshire and take account of the committed growth in each of the Districts up to 2031-2036, totalling circa 75,000 houses. The consultation document therefore clarifies that the housing need assessment is just a starting point, the current Local Plans growth up to 2031, 2035 and 2036 have to be taken into account and this leaves a smaller 'residual' figure, of new development to be planned for in the Oxfordshire Plan.

The relationship with the Oxford-Cambridge Arc

- 28) The consultation document also includes a section on the relationship with the Oxford to Cambridge Arc. Our aspiration is for our work on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 to strongly inform and influence government's thinking on the Arc Spatial Framework.
- 29) MHCLG have announced the development of a Spatial Framework for the Arc, to take place in stages:
- Policy Statement – February 2021 (MHCLG announced a focus on brownfield land, new settlements, and climate change)
 - Vision consultation – Summer 2021
 - Options consultation - Spring 2022
 - Draft Framework consultation – Autumn 2022
- 30) The Oxfordshire Plan should, we hope help ensure that Oxfordshire has a strong voice in the development of the ARC Spatial Framework and that our interests are taken into account. Decisions on the development of the Arc Spatial Framework will also feed into the site assessment that is to be undertaken as part of the work to prepare the Regulation 19 draft Plan.

Accompanying documents

- 31) Several documents have been provided to be available when considering approving the Consultation Document. These include:
- An updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
 - A report on Duty to Cooperate.
 - Statement of Common Ground. (NPPF requirement, para 27)
 - Equalities Statement

32) There are also three independent studies that are being made available to inform the decision to proceed to consultation:

- Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
- Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)
- The Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment (OGNA)

33) The background papers for this report shows the extensive evidence base, reports and studies that will be published as part of the evidence base at the start of the consultation period.

34) This includes an updated Local Development Scheme that sets out all the forward dates for the completion of the Oxfordshire Plan.

Consultation Period

35) The consultation is to begin on 30th July 2021 for ten weeks, up to 8th October 2021. At the Regulation 18 Part 2 stage we have discretion as to the length of time the consultation period lasts and, bearing in mind that the consultation runs across the holiday period a longer consultation than we might otherwise propose seems sensible.

36) As noted earlier the purpose of this consultation is to seek public views and test the options presented in the consultation document. Councillors are requested to engage with the consultation process once it begins rather than looking to answer the questions posed before the consultation begins.

37) We have planned for an online engagement process, reflecting both the uncertainties caused by COVID and the advantages of using this method of engagement with, for example younger people.

Website

38) The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 has a website <https://oxfordshireplan.org/> where the consultation document and supporting documentation will be placed. The website will be the key tool for the engagement during the consultation period and will link to the commissioned Oxfordshire Openthought website that will be the dedicated portal for the consultation.

39) The website will contain:

- Overview text about the Oxfordshire Plan, stage reached and consultation purpose.
- A consultation response form, including a series of questions included.
- A summary leaflet.
- A downloadable Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation document.
- Links to enable the ability to access the key accompanying documents that the Councils will receive.
- Links to the supporting evidence including the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA).
- A link to the OGNA report
- Links to secondary evidence such as the Local Transport & Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS), which supports the Oxfordshire Plan, but which is being consulted upon separately.

- Text confirming that the County Minerals and Waste Plan is separate.
- A download form for proposals to be submitted by site promoters.

40) All partner councils will be asked to promote the consultation through their own websites with links.

Online events for which dates are being confirmed

- District based online seminars (webinars): 2 per district, the first to take place in 3rd week of August (commencing 16th), the second to take place in 3rd week of September (commencing 20th).
- A webinar with the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) - date confirmed as 19th August.
- Several specialist webinars covering Environment, Business and Developers. Each of these is to take place in the week beginning Tuesday 31st August. The partners will together draw up a list of invitees.
- Two OxLEP hosted business events, one w/c 19th July and one in mid-September
- A webinar with Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce on July 6th

The future timetable

41) The scale of the work undertaken at the Regulation 18 Part 2 stage puts the plan in a good position to meet the future timetable that was agreed with MHCLG in February 2021.

42) We plan to reach:

Stage	Timeline
Scrutiny Meetings	8 th - 15th July 2021
Cabinet/ Executive Meetings	19 th - 22nd July 2021
Second Regulation 18 Consultation(options)	30 th July - September 2021
Regulation 19 Consultation (draft plan)	May - June 2022
Submission	September 2022
Examination	November/December 2022
Inspectors Report	February/March 2023
Adoption	May/June 2023
Monitoring	From adoption onwards

Legal Implications

- 43) Legal advice on both the Consultation Document and the Strategic Vision is being sought with the intention that this will be available to councils when they consider the Plan.

Other Implications

- 44) None arising from this report

Conclusion

- 45) The Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation is the next important step in the delivery of the Oxfordshire Plan.
- 47) The district councils are being asked to formally approve the Oxfordshire Plan Regulation 18 Part 2 document for consultation by adopting the following draft recommendations
- i. To approve the Oxfordshire Plan Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation document for public consultation as attached; and
 - ii. To authorise the (appropriate officer) to make any necessary editorial corrections and minor amendments to the documents, and to agree the final publication style, in liaison with the (Relevant) Cabinet Member/Portfolio Holder and subject to agreement with their counterparts in the other four partner Local Planning Authorities.
- 48) This report's recommendation requests the Growth Board to note and support the Regulation 18 (Part 2) Plan consultation document and to endorse it for approval by the district councils.

Background Papers

Evidence Reports being published alongside the consultation document at Reg 18 Part 2 stage.

<i>Accompanying Overview Report</i>
The Reg 18 (Part two) Consultation Document
Statement of Community Involvement
Duty to Co-operate Statement
Statement of Common Ground
Equalities Statement
Published separately: Local Development Scheme update
<i>Key Evidence</i>
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)
Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment (OGNA)
<i>Secondary Evidence</i>
Transport and Connectivity
Water Cycle Study (Phase 1) incorporating SFRA
Health Impact Assessment
Climate Change Report
Natural Capital Work
Nature Recovery Network
Circular Economy
Settlement Potential (incl. Urban Capacity)
Infrastructure OxIS phase 1

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