

# Notes

OF A MEETING OF THE



## **Future Oxfordshire Partnership Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Group**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 12 AUGUST 2021 AT 10.00 AM  
VIRTUAL VIA MS TEAMS**

### **Present:**

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

**Officers:** Giles Hughes (West Oxfordshire District Council) and Yi Li (Future Oxfordshire Partnership)

### **19 Apologies for absence and notifications of substitutions; declarations of interest; Chair's announcements**

Apologies received from Paul Staines, Interim Head of Programme, and Adrian Colwell, Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

### **20 Brief update on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation so far**

Michele Smith, Communications and Engagement Advisor for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and Andrew Thompson, Principal Planner, updated that the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation website was launched on time and responses from the public were starting to come through.

Members commented that the consultation website had areas to be improved upon and said there was the potential for confusion for the public in some areas. Officers agreed to meet with the web designer to discuss some improvements to the website's functionality in due course.

Officers also explained that there was a plan to reschedule the consultation webinars to the end of August and beginning of September, with a mixture of lunch time and evening meetings set on different dates to encourage more attendance. Additionally, the presentation used in the consultation webinars would be amended to be more accessible. For example, it could be a short email with links to be sent to various councils, members, communities and the public.

Members discussed the impact that may be caused by rescheduling the consultation webinars and suggested that for a 10-week consultation period, most meetings should ideally not be scheduled closely together towards the end. Councillor Emily Smith (Chair of the advisory group) emphasised that Officers should ensure that any plans for the webinar's dates should comply with the decisions made by Local Authority Cabinets when the consultation documents were approved in July 2021.

Officers concluded that they would revisit the current consultation webinar dates, and if they were set in stone, the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 team would have to work with them.

Officers confirmed that there was a Communication Plan which was approved in the week commencing 9 August 2021, and it would be circulated after the meeting.

Officers provided an update on social media and the attempt to boost followers, commenting that:

- News on climate change was posted by Officers on all the social media platforms (LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook) in the week commencing 9 August 2021, building on relevant national and international news headlines.
- Members were encouraged to share, retweet and like posts where possible to boost awareness and engagement on social media.

Officers introduced the plan to engage with young people as much as possible and suggested that Members and Officers could visit schools (Primary, Secondary, Sixth Form Centres, and Universities) to talk to young people about the future, as young people had a huge influence on their parents.

An Instagram account was created for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (formerly the Growth Board) in the week commencing 9 August 2021 in the hope to reach more young people.

Some members suggested that an engagement toolkit could be useful for engaging with schools, though others suggested that resource implications needed to be understood

## **21 Work programme beyond the Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation**

Giles Hughes, Chief Executive, West Oxfordshire District Council, provided an update on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 work programme and explained that there were still tasks to be done to get to Regulation 19.

The tasks included:

- To assess consultation responses which could reflect on the work programme planning process.
- To consider the implications that the Planning Bill could have on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. This meant that if the Planning Bill was produced in the autumn, it is assumed that it was likely to come with a "Transition Provision" which would allow local plans to continue. Therefore, it was not expected to cause difficulties for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

- To hold meetings with the Environment Advisory Group and the Infrastructure Advisory Group for strategic discussion, which would feedback into the work on Oxfordshire Plan 2050.
- To ensure the objectives of both the Local Transport Connectivity Plan and the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 were aligned to progress to the next stage of the work programme.
- For the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 to go through the Local Authority Scrutiny and Cabinet meetings during April 2022.
- For the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 to be signed off by councils, then to start public consultation by the end of May 2022.

Members commented on the potential difficulty of the timing in this work programme:

- It did not sound like there was adequate time for the Scrutiny meetings, which could make it difficult to make changes if required by the Scrutiny process.
- Some councils would have local elections in May 2022. If the Scrutiny process was not allowed sufficient time in the work programme, it could risk complications at the end.

Councillor Emily Smith (Chair of the advisory group) agreed with the concerns and explained the importance of ensuring that this document was supported by every council. Therefore, adequate time for the Scrutiny meetings was crucial as well as enough time for changes to be made after.

Officers and Members concluded that the work programme would be amended as set out below:

- To call for members' ideas and suggestions as early as possible rather than all at the end of the work programme through the Scrutiny meetings.
- To consider ideas and suggestions from the consultation and assess whether they were appropriate in achieving the objectives of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. Then to firm up policies and the levels of future growth with consideration of sustainability.
- To allow adequate time for the Scrutiny process, ensuring all Members' inputs were considered and assessed, and allow adequate time for making changes, ahead of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 final iteration going to Local Authority Cabinet meetings.

The Chair requested that Members notify her regarding the potential for any disagreement within their Councils about policies being proposed for inclusion in the Regulation 19 Consultation Document. Early communication was required between each of the Councils to ensure that the final version was agreed collectively before Councils adopting it as policy.

## **22 The Arc Vision and Options implications**

Giles Hughes, Chief Executive, West Oxfordshire District Council, reflected on the Oxford-Cambridge Arc vision consultation and explained that everyone (members, individuals, and organisations) was encouraged to respond to the consultation ahead of the development of the Arc Spatial Framework (ASF). As there had never been any ASF before, the more feedback the better because it would help in building the ASF.

The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 had been positively supported through discussions with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and Officers would continue to actively engage with MHCLG as the ASF was developed.

Members requested updates in the next meeting (16 September 2021) on the ASF and the approach to viability and spatial options of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

Giles Hughes highlighted that it was too soon to give an update at the next meeting on 16 September 2021. However, an update would be provided for Members in upcoming future meetings.

## **23 Update on team resources and progress with recruitment**

Giles Hughes, Chief Executive, West Oxfordshire District Council, confirmed that the role of Oxfordshire Plan Programme Lead had been filled and that this person would be joining the team in November 2021.

There were vacancies for a Principal Planning Officer and a Senior Planning Officer. Work was ongoing to ensure adequate programme support.

In response to questions, Giles Hughes explained that posts were funded through a mixture of funding from the Growth Deal and Councils. Going forward, how posts were funded would be under consideration as part of a broader piece of work across the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

## **24 Future meetings**

The dates of future meetings for 2021/2022 were noted by Members:

- 16/09/2021 at 10:00
- 14/10/2021 at 10:00
- 18/11/2021 at 10:00
- 16/12/2021 (15:00 to 17:00)
- 20/01/2022 at 10:00
- 17/02/2022 at 10:00
- 17/03/2022 at 10:00
- 14/04/2022 at 10:00
- 16/06/2022 at 10:00
- 14/07/2022 at 10:00

Updates of the following items were requested for future meetings:

- The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation
- The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Group work programme
- How viability of spatial options will be approached

The meeting closed at 11.30 am