

Supplementary Papers

Oxfordshire Growth Board

held in the Virtual meeting viewable by a weblink
on Friday, 30 October 2020 at 2.00 pm

2. **Public participation** (Pages 50 - 51)

A copy of a public address submitted by Michael Tyce on behalf of CPRE
Oxfordshire

3. **Growth Board Scrutiny Panel update** (Pages 52 - 56)

To receive the recommendations from the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel meeting
held on 21 October 2020.

Public speakers

30 October 2020

OXFORDSHIRE

G R O W T H B O A R D

Questions

1. Michael Tyce on behalf of CPRE Oxfordshire

The Arc is an organisational fiction. None of us in the Arc knew we were part of an Arc until we were told we were. We still have not been told what it is that is both common to all of us and unique to the Arc that makes it an entity we have to be part of.

The Arc is a totally manufactured concept, like the Midlands Engine, the Northern Powerhouse, and the various other imaginary tribes England has been divided up amongst. Despite the advertising ours is a rural County and the Arc is not a unique home of the white heat of technology. Indeed, the area usually referred to as England's Silicon Valley is the M4 corridor of Slough, Windsor, Maidenhead, Reading, Bracknell and Newbury.

Neither is the Economic Prospectus economic. It contains scant information on income and expenditure. It promises a return on investment of £4 for each £1 invested but does not say how much should be invested or how such staggering returns would be generated, or over what kind of time scale they might be achieved. It is all stall and no merchandise. It is just a vehicle to compete against the other Engines and Powerhouses for Government money in the Spending Review Beauty Contest.

One thing is certain though, that if the Prospectus is endorsed the Arc will acquire governance and structure. Arc governance would lead to the same outcomes as Planning for the Future and the new standard method would – the withering away of local autonomy and accountability and the imposition of central decisions. That is precisely why Bucks has quit.

As a sign of things to come the prospectus has been sent to Government without your endorsement and without consulting what the public feel about an Arc overstructure to “fulfil their true economic potential to deliver transformational economic growth”. In fact, we know this is not what the public want because the just published Oxfordshire Vision tells us they want an approach that *is more Oxfordshire-specific and reflective of local people's views*.

There are motherhood and apple pie sentiments in the Prospectus on climate change and protecting the countryside of course with which no-one can disagree. But we do not need an Arc structure to implement those, nor to engage in desirable cross border spatial planning. But endorsing the Prospectus endorses the principle of the Arc as an entity and is a long stride in the direction of an Arc governance body which will make Oxfordshire development decisions and make funding agreements over your heads as well as ours: and which can only drain further power from Local Authorities and voice from the people they represent.

Now, with Bucks, which is the fulcrum of the whole edifice, deciding to go their own way, the very thing that the Oxfordshire Vision says Oxfordshire people also want, there is an

obvious point at which to reconsider whether the Arc should be endorsed. We say it should not. The Arc is an artificial construct without democratic legitimacy, or rationale. It does nothing good for us that we could not do for ourselves and it will inevitably restrict Oxfordshire's ability to move forward the way we want.

It is another top down step when we should be moving towards bottom up. For whatever reason they made it, we suggest Bucks made the right call. **We ask you not to endorse the Arc or its Prospectus because of the certainty of what will follow.**

To: Oxfordshire Growth Board
Date: 30 October 2020
Report of: Growth Board Scrutiny Panel
Title of Report: Recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 21 Oct 2020

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| Purpose of report: | To present recommendations from the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 21 October 2020 to the Growth Board. |
| Scrutiny Lead: | Councillor Andrew Gant, Chair of the Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel. |
| Recommendation: | That the Oxfordshire Growth Board states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report. |

Introduction and overview

1. The Scrutiny Panel would like to thank Bev Hindle (Growth Board Director) for attending the meeting to answer questions.
2. The Panel received a document from Bev Hindle (Growth Board Director) on the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision specifically the approach for setting a strategic vision for Oxfordshire. The Panel discussed at length the need for clarification on the correlation between existing forward-looking policies; plans of individual councils and partner organisation and the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision with regards to content and timescales. The Panel also expressed its views on the approach in this document which referenced outdated past plans whilst preparing a future vision. The Panel also expressed the need for the Vision to be concise.

Recommendation 1: That the Growth Board acknowledges that the timescales in the final version of the Strategic Vision running from the year 2021 and its content may not necessarily align with existing forward-looking policies, plans of individual councils and partner organisations running up to the year 2030 and with this in mind the Growth Board ensure that continuity between this Vision and other policies & plans is carefully considered.

The Panel welcomed the idea of a public consultation on the Strategic Vision but expressed concerns that in the past locally elected members of the respective councils were not able to read and comment on the text of such plans.

Recommendation 2: That the Growth Board asks Council Leaders to ensure there is clear visibility of the Strategic Vision public engagement exercise to the elected members of their respective councils and guarantee that they would be given the opportunity to read and comment on the text.

3. The Panel also discussed that previous consultations within the remit of the Growth Board had very low numbers in responses and limited coverage throughout Oxfordshire especially in rural areas. The Panel also observed that there was a clear need for better public engagement by ensuring greater coverage and visibility.

Recommendation 3: That the Growth Board asks Council Leaders encourage their wider networks and the public to engage with the Strategic Vision engagement exercise.

4. The Panel observed that given the timeline of the Strategic Vision goes up to the year 2050 the key demographic for the consultation should be younger people in the 20-40 age group who are most likely affected by this vision and also that they are traditionally underrepresented in local government consultations.

Recommendation 4: That the Growth Board ensures that the public engagement exercise actively targets engagement with younger people (who are traditionally underrepresented in local government consultations) as part of a wider effort to ensure that views are sought across Oxfordshire's demographic.

5. The Panel also received the Oxford - Cambridge Arc Economic Prospectus from Bev Hindle (Growth Board Director). The Panel discuss the contents of the prospectus covering a lot of the same areas as the Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire but in greater detail. The Panel expressed concern that an endorsement of the prospectus by the Growth Board without careful comparison to the vision could possibly undermine the principles laid out in the Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire.

Recommendation 5: That the Growth Board ensures the policies and plans within the final version of the Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire are not undermined by the endorsement of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Economic Prospectus.

Future Work

6. As well as reviewing the Growth Board's response to these recommendations at its next meeting on 17th November 2020, the Panel will also be considering in detail:
 - Q2 Housing and Growth Deal Progress Report and Financial summary

- Oxford-Cambridge Arc Update
- Oxfordshire Plan 2050 update (provisional)
- Devolution White Paper (provisional)

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Growth Board Draft response to recommendations of the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel Recommendations made on 21st October 2020

The Growth Board is requested to provide a draft response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel, to be published as a supplement collectively with the Scrutiny Panel's report, for decision at its meeting on 30 October 2020.

| Recommendation | Agree ? | Comment |
|---|------------|---------|
| Recommendation 1. That the Growth Board acknowledges that the timescales in the final version of the Strategic Vision running from the year 2021 and its content may not necessarily align with existing forward-looking policies, plans of individual councils and partner organisations running up to the year 2030 and with this in mind the Growth Board ensure that continuity between this Vision and other policies & plans is carefully considered. | | |
| Recommendation 2. That the Growth Board asks Council leaders to ensure there is clear visibility of the Strategic Vision public engagement exercise to the elected members of their respective councils and guarantee that they would be given the opportunity to read and comment on the text. | | |
| Recommendation 3. That the Growth Board asks Council Leaders encourage their wider networks and the public to engage with the Strategic Vision engagement exercise. | | |

Appendix 1

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| <p>Recommendation 4. That the Growth Board ensures that the public engagement exercise actively targets engagement with younger people (who are traditionally underrepresented in local government consultations) as part of a wider effort to ensure that views are sought across Oxfordshire's demographic.</p> | | |
| <p>Recommendation 5. That the Growth Board ensures the policies and plans within the final version of the Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire are not undermined by the endorsement of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Economic Prospectus.</p> | | |