

Notes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Oxfordshire Growth Board Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Sub-Group

**HELD ON THURSDAY 14 MAY 2020 AT 10.00 AM
VIA MS TEAMS**

Present:

Members: Councillors James Mills (Chair), Colin Clarke, Jeff Haine, Alex Hollingsworth, Jeannette Matelot, Anne-Marie Simpson and Catherine Webber

Officers: Lyndsey Bayly, (Oxfordshire Plan 2050), Giles Hughes (West Oxfordshire District Council), Kevin Jacob (Oxfordshire Growth Board), Peter Truman, (Oxfordshire Plan 2050) and Rachel Willems (Oxfordshire Plan 2050)

55 Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes; declarations of interest; Chair's announcements

There were no apologies for absence or declarations of interest.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson to the meeting as the new representative of South Oxfordshire District Council.

56 Notes of the previous meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 16 April 2020 were agreed.

It was noted that a revised draft Oxfordshire Plan 2050 guiding principles document was included in the current agenda for discussion.

57 Oxfordshire Open Thought launch (including demonstration of material and website) Peter Truman (Oxfordshire Plan Team)

Peter Truman, Communications and Engagement Advisor for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Team provided a demonstration of the proposed Oxfordshire Open Thought website and the subgroup discussed it and the proposed launch. The following summary points were highlighted:

- It was intended that Oxfordshire Open Thought would help bridge the gap between previous and future formal consultation engagement by introducing a new and innovative and creative form of engagement.

- The website had been structured around the themes of living and working, connectivity and climate change. It was designed not to be prescriptive, but to seek to inspire a genuine debate about the future of the themes by asking a series of open questions and conversation points.
- The public could contribute via a contact form which would include the ability to upload documents and even video contributions. This was not restricted to contributions from people or organisations based in Oxfordshire, all contributions were welcomed.
- The website had been tailored towards academics and expert groups, but all responses were welcomed.
- The weblink would be circulated to the sub-group as soon as possible after launch, (2 June) and the assistance of sub-group members was sought to publicise it both within their home authorities and to the public generally. The link would also be circulated to parish councils.

Members of the subgroup welcomed the exercise and the indicative website. In discussion, several suggestions were made, and points noted:

- Small business leaders were a useful audience for engagement
- The site did not have any overt local authority branding and would a member of the public be able to understand how the engagement process linked back to their own Local or Neighbourhood Plans and existing structures? It was noted that this information was available via the 'About' section of the website and that it had been felt important to create a different look and feel to the website than might have otherwise been the case with more traditional local authority consultations.
- Engagement with young people, particularly considering the closure of schools, colleges and universities due to Covid-19. It was acknowledged that the pitch of the Open Thought exercise was around 6th form level, and the original intention was to launch a linked young person's exercise. This is complicated by Covid-19 but this could still be launched at a later date. That exercise will also be shared with sub-group members before launching.
- There had been and would be close liaison with the communications teams of the Oxfordshire districts, city and county council to publicise the launch and social media would be employed.

58 Briefing all Members on the Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment work (to include a trial of a draft presentation and discussion on how to refine it and present it) Lyndsey Bayly (Oxfordshire Plan Team)

The sub-group received a briefing on work to develop the Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment and a draft explanatory presentation which it was intended to present to councillors across the county remotely considering the Covid-19 emergency. Lyndsey Bayly of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Team presented the item and talked through each of the key headings including:

- The requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); the need to develop an Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment, (OGNA) as part of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 process; the challenges of developing such an assessment for a spatial plan for a period as far ahead as 2050.

- It was intended that the OGNA would look at a range of possible options and would include consideration of contributing strategies such as the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy influences such as East West Rail.
- The OGNA would build on local plans but would not replace them. It did need to be able withstand detailed scrutiny in light HM Government regulations.
- The impact of Covid-19 was not yet clear, but this would need to be considered as much as possible.
- Options around how the presentation might be delivered to councillors within the partner councils were being considered including the potential for the presentation to be supplied with a common audio track. Officers from the partners councils had been and would continue to be involved as the development of the OGNA progressed.

In discussion, members of the sub-group felt it was important for the impacts of Covid-19 on the OGNA to be investigated and it was considered that these impacts could be potentially significant. The sub-group was informed that the intention was to include some initial consultant work, but it was likely that more in depth work would need to take place later when impacts of Covid-19 were more known. The view was expressed that it was important for there to be breadth of consultants to achieve as wide an analysis as possible.

It was agreed that a map setting out a series of sub-regional functional areas that are being used for the OGNA would be circulated outside of the meeting.

In response to a question, the process for the appointment of consultants by the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 team on behalf of all the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 councils was set out which included appropriate liaison and discussions with officers within those councils. The point was made that it was important for there to be as much transparency as possible about this.

The draft presentation was noted.

59 Guiding Principles: further iteration of the work to incorporate previous Member sub-group comments and additional officer suggestions from all authorities

Rachel Williams presented an updated iteration of a draft document setting out potential guiding principles for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. This reflected consideration of comments and suggestions made by members of the sub-group in and following previous meetings.

In discussion, members of the subgroup welcomed the updated document and thanked officers for their hard work to get it to this point. A number of additional suggestions for further consideration were made:

There was a need for a spatial plan to include how to contribute to equality of opportunity as significant inequalities existed within Oxfordshire, some of which had been highlighted by the Covid-19 emergency. It was agreed that this could be considered, and that health inequality was one such issue, but also issues like access to broadband. There were a broad range of inequalities and the aim was included a golden thread linking the positive contributions of growth.

Members also highlighted the importance of the provision of affordable housing, acknowledging that this had been incorporated into draft principle 2 aimed at improving overall health and positively impacting inequalities.

The importance of the protection of biodiversity within the principles was emphasised and it was noted that it was intended that draft principle 3 relating to countryside and landscape and principle 4 relating to enhancing natural capital assets were intended to cover this area and work around natural capital work feed into this. Collated information could be provided to a later meeting.

Although there was a need for the Oxfordshire Plan to reference partner plans and influences such as Thames Water's proposals for future reservoir provision or East West Rail, decisions on these proposals were not within the remit of the Plan. The priority for the Oxfordshire Plan was to deliver infrastructure that supported the needs of Oxfordshire's present and future residents.

The revised guiding principles document was noted.

60 Future meetings

Thursday 18 June 2020

The meeting closed at 12.00 pm