

Notes

OF A MEETING OF THE



The Future Oxfordshire Partnership Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Group

HELD ON THURSDAY 14 OCTOBER 2021 AT 10.00 AM
VIRTUAL VIA MS TEAMS

Present:

Councillors Emily Smith (Chair), Colin Clarke, Duncan Enright, Jeff Haine, Debby Hallett, Anne-Marie Simpson and Louise Upton

Officers: Adrian Colwell (Oxfordshire Plan 2050), Andrew Down, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Giles Hughes (West Oxfordshire District Council), Kevin Jacob, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Archie Martin, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership) and Michele Smith (Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Team)

30 Apologies for absence and notifications of substitutions; declarations of interest; Chair's announcements

Apologies were submitted from Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Oxford City Council, (substituted by Councillor Louise Upton). Councillor Colin Clarke Indicated that he would need to leave the meeting at 11:30.

There were no declarations of interests or Chair's announcements.

31 Notes of the previous meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021 were agreed as a correct summary.

32 Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation Update presentation

Michelle Smith, Communications and Engagements Advisor for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Team and Adrian Colwell, Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Team, provided an interim high level update on Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation that had opened on 30th July 2021 and ran until 8th October 2021.

Officers highlighted that:

- Although the consultation had officially closed responses were still being logged. An accurate figure on the exact number of responses could not be given at this stage.

However, over 1,000 responses from over 250 different organisations and individuals have been logged so far. The responses had been from a combination of e-mails and the 'Oxfordshire Open Thought' website.

- The response logging exercise was taking longer than expected. From the information given through the responses a matrix has been produced on the number of responses, policies and spatial options. A process has been put in place to mitigate the duplication of responses. There had been responses from a wide variety of organisations and individuals including public developers, parish and town councils and three of the partner bodies from the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
- A number of developers had responded to the consultation and a number of potential sites for development promoted. Consideration would be given as to how these sites would be expressed.
- There is now a focus on how the material gathered from the Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation was going to be published.
- The level of activity and engagement about the consultation with the public through social media had been very encouraging, especially in-regards to reaching a larger variety of new and traditionally 'hard to reach' audiences.
- An amalgamation of three website's (The Future Oxfordshire Partnership, the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and the Open Thought consultation site) is being considered. It was hoped that a progress update could be provided at the next meeting on this issue.

Officers gave the Group an overview of the analytics provided by the social media companies on the success of the consultation's digital marketing campaigns, where additional promotional campaigns had been commissioned. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram had proved the most successful in terms of value for money and audience members reached, with up to 5,000 people being reached through one post. There had been a relatively successful targeted campaign across all of the main social media channels by the Communication team to try to attract a younger audience to become engaged in the consultation.

The Group was also informed that as part of the consultation, four public workshops had been undertaken and these had been well attended. The format of these presentations had included a half an hour PowerPoint presentation talking in detail about the five key policy themes and special options which had been followed by an hour Q&A. Two more technical workshops and a focus group had been run relating to the Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment (OGNA).

Looking ahead to the next stage in the adoption of the Plan as part of the Regulation 19 process, the Group was provided with a provisional communication timetable.

The Group members were informed that it was expected that a report setting out a summary of the issues raised in the consultation could be published before February 2022, but there was a communication strategy in place to issue a holding statement in November 2021 via the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, Future Oxfordshire Plan websites and posts to social media. This was to inform the public and other key partners that their responses had been received, highly valued and on the progress so far in considering them.

Officers indicated that the consultation summary report would cover three key areas.

1. Reporting on the progress and matrices of the social media and workshop responses.
2. The analysis of the responses, a summary of the key points being made.
3. Providing answers for what the next steps are now the consultation stage is finished.

In discussion, members suggested that this report could form the framework of a note that could be taken to partner authorities as the basis of a separate briefing note/toolkit to all councillors to help raise the profile of the Plan, findings from the Regulation 18 consultation and issues to be considered leading into the selection of preferred options at the Regulation 19 stage of the Plan's development.

33 Work programme beyond the Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation

Giles Hughes, Chief Executive, West Oxfordshire District Council and Adrian Colwell, Oxfordshire Plan Team presented an updated work programme for beyond Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation, leading up the anticipated submission of the Plan in summer 2022.

The following points were highlighted:

- The need for councillors from all the partner councils to be fully engaged in the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 in-order for them to believe in its potential and support its adoption. The full consultation responses report would be circulated to the different council's overview and scrutiny committees, so that more feedback could be gathered at this stage, prior to, and in addition to, engagement with before overview and scrutiny committees on the final Regulation 19 consultation document. This would also give the opportunity for councillors to get a clearer picture of the direction of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 before formal approval was sought from partner councils to go out to statutory consultation.
- There was a need for regular engagement with the Planning Inspectorate and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to keep them abreast of the future direction of the Plan.
- The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 document would be reduced in length from that published at the Regulation 18 Part 2 stage, guided by the findings highlighted in the consultation report and the narrowing down of preferred policy options

In discussion, there was collective support amongst the Group for engagement with council's overview and scrutiny committees as soon as was appropriate and possible.

The Group was informed that a potential Green Belt Review, more details of which had been set out in proposed policy 10 of the Regulation 18 consultation document, could only be commissioned at a county level and not done individually. Members mentioned their desire for this to be brought to the forefront, as a prominent issue. Officers highlighted that if there was to be a Green Belt review, it had to be transparent and robust. Therefore, a specification and remit for this work was being developed carefully. It was agreed by members that this would be discussed in further detail in future meetings.

The Chair asked when the summary report to partners councils' overview and scrutiny committees would be finalised. Officers responded that it was intended to bring a draft of the report back to the Group by no later than the December meeting, together with a

presentation, prior to a final version of the report being submitted to each partner council for consideration through its individual decision making processes.

The Chair concluded the discussion by commenting that the Group had been given a good overview of the Plan's work programme. Officers were asked that the work programme be updated and presented to Group as a standing item.

(Note: Councillor Colin Clarke left the meeting at 11:30)

34 The Arc Vision and Options implications

Giles Hughes, Chief Executive, West Oxfordshire District Council and Andrew Down, Future Oxfordshire Partnership Director provided an update to Group on the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, Arc Vision Consultation, and wider governmental issues:

- Individual and group responses had been submitted in respect of HM Government's public consultation on its proposed Arc Vision. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership had made its own response.
- Officers are waiting for HM Government's response to the consultation, which only recently closed.
- As part of the most recent re-shuffle, the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government had been renamed as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities with Rt Hon Michael Gove MOP as the new Secretary of State. It was too early to gauge the potential impact of the change.
- Although there had been nothing new from HM Government in respect of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, there continued to be helpful engagement from civil servants, but contact would be maintained.
- Following on from this there has been some sessions set up with central government to discuss the spatial framework across the Arc and get technical officers from across the arc involved.
- The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 team and the OX-Cam Arc teams are in communication to make sure the two policies align.

Members of the Group asked about the potential impact the Oxford to the Cambridge Arc would have on the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan. Officers responded by saying the Arc spatial framework was being seen as an advisory planning policy such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and went on to explain that if there was planning policy within the Arc local planning policy will need to take account of it.

35 Update on team resources and progress with recruitment

Giles Hughes, Chief Executive, West Oxfordshire District Council gave the advisory group an update on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Team and resourcing. It was noted that Philip Wandsworth would lead the team as Plan Lead as of 1 November 2021.

36 Future meetings

The advisory group noted that its future meeting dates as set out in its agenda.

The meeting closed at 11.47 am