

Draft Notes

OF A MEETING OF THE



The Future Oxfordshire Partnership

Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Group

HELD ON THURSDAY 16 JUNE 2022 AT 10.00 AM
VIRTUAL VIA MS TEAMS

Present:

Members: Councillors Emily Smith (Chair), Colin Clarke, Duncan Enright, Debby Hallett, Alex Hollingsworth, Carl Rylett and Anne-Marie Simpson

Officers: Giles Hughes (West Oxfordshire District Council), Kevin Jacob, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Paul Staines, (Housing and Growth Deal Team), Andrew Thompson (Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Team) and Philip Wadsworth (Oxfordshire Plan Team)

1 Apologies for absence and notification of substitutions; declarations of interest and Chair's announcements

Apologies for late arrival were submitted by Councillor Duncan Enright, Oxfordshire County Council because of an existing commitment.

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Carl Rylett to the advisory group as the new representative of West Oxfordshire District Council.

2 Notes of previous meetings

The notes of the meeting held on 29 April 2022 were agreed as a correct summary.

As a matter arising, a number of members expressed concern that a number of the papers mentioned within the notes as items for the current meeting had not been included in the agenda and that the advisory group meeting planned for May had been cancelled. Giles Hughes, Chief Executive of West Oxfordshire District Council and Senior Responsible Officer for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 responded that since the previous meeting, the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan Team had been working intensely at a fine level of detail with Planning Policy Managers from across the councils. This arrangement was proving to be successful, but he accepted that this work and work to commission additional evidence had taken longer than had been hoped for even though resources remained focussed on the development of the Plan. In response, members stressed the importance of reaching a

political agreement and approach on numbers first and questioned why additional evidence was required as political agreement on numbers had not yet been reached.

Giles Hughes continued that the decision had been taken to bring as many items and information as possible to the current meeting, recognising that this might mean the papers would be in early draft form. However, it was considered highly important to provide as early an opportunity for members of the advisory group to feedback on the papers being developed.

Members were referred to the draft revised Plan timetable included for discussion as an Agenda item and the first indicative draft of Regulation 18 Part 3 consultation document.

3 Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Timetable and work programme

The advisory group considered a paper that set out different options around a revised timetable for the Oxfordshire Plan.

It was noted that the officer recommended revised timetable was to undertake a further Regulation 18 (Part 3) public consultation commencing in late October 2022 before the Regulation 19 stage could be undertaken. A further joint workshop between Leaders and the Oxfordshire Plan Advisory Group was expected to take place on the 14 July 2022.

A number of members stressed the importance of the work around future housing need and numbers having been completed and a consensus position reached between the authorities before another Reg 18 consultation. However, it was also pointed out by members that the political agreement on numbers and approach should come first and inform the work in time for such a consultation to be undertaken. The scale of the practical challenges that would need to be overcome in the context of the difficulty of meeting previous commitments was also highlighted.

It was also stressed that there was a risk of significant adverse knock on implications for the review of individual Local Plans in several of the Districts if a Part 3 consultation were to commence later than October 2022. Officers responded that although challenging an October timescale was achievable.

The importance of communication at all levels of any changes to the programme was emphasised by members and concurred with by officers who agreed it would be important to develop an appropriate statement which could be shared with members outside of the meeting.

A general point made was that in developing a revised programme due consideration needed to be given to any potential timetable impact arising from the local government pre-election period leading into the local government elections in 2023. Officers agreed to undertake further investigations and seek appropriate advice.

Members discussed the first three options set out in the paper and a range of views were expressed and clarification provided by officers around each option. After further discussion, the consensus of the advisory group was in support of a further Regulation 18 public consultation (Part 3) prior to the Regulation 19 stage.

4 Revised "6 Steps" process update

The advisory group was informed that further discussion was to take place with the Planning Policy Managers in each partner council later that day and therefore the update would be presented to a future meeting.

5 1st draft of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 consultation documentation

The advisory group considered an early draft Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (Regulation 18 Part 3) consultation document. In presenting the document, Phil Wadsworth, Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Lead explained that although what was presented was in early draft form, officers had wanted to engage the advisory group members at the earliest opportunity around the overall direction of travel and style of the document.

As well as comments in the meeting, it was suggested that in addition to feeding back via Planning Policy Managers and other appropriate officers, members could consider submitting additional detailed individual comments direct to the Plan Team if they wished to. The Chair commented that it was important that all members should engage fully with their Planning Policy Managers and other members regarding the Plan. This was because final decisions around the Plan would ultimately be made by elected members as political decisions.

Members were informed that the draft plan document had been discussed with partner council Planning Policy Managers and so reflected their input. There had been an effort to condense the Plan and to reduce the number of proposed policies to reflect the nature of the document as a spatial level plan and the balance between it and Local Plans. The document would also seek to address how feedback from the Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation had been addressed. In addition to the full consultation document, it was also intended to provide a more accessible summary version.

A number of points were raised by various members of the advisory group regarding the draft:

- It was very important for readers to be able to understand how the latest version of the consultation document related and linked back to previous versions in terms of common threads.
- The reader needed to be able to see how responses to previous consultations had been considered and reflected. Officers responded that as the document was refined further, it would set out how previous feedback had been addressed in greater detail.
- It was imperative that the welcome acknowledgement and emphasis within previous versions towards climate change and the holistic, good growth principles of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision were retained. A number of members insisted that the revisions to the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision, Good Growth Principles and Objectives be undone and it was pointed out by them that the Vision and good growth principles had received strong support in the consultation responses. It was felt to be a regressive move to change them.
- Policies needed to be kept as concise as possible and the order reflect the overall focus on climate change.

Officers commented that these points were acknowledged and that it was also important to reflect the requirements of the NPPF and to have a view to future consideration by the Planning Inspectorate.

It was agreed that:

- 1) for the next meeting Officers prepare a list of changes between the previously consulted Oxfordshire Plan 2050 consultation document and the current draft setting out the rationale for any changes.
- 2) members of the advisory group give feedback on the current draft through their relevant partner council Planning Policy Manager and in addition individually if they wished to.

6 Update on mapping and spatial options work

Andrew Thompson, Principal Planner, Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Team provided a presentation that set out an update on spatial options identification and assessment using a data layering approach. This included:

- Details of an updated methodology for identification of broad locations for future change.
- High level details of sites suggested through the 'Call for Ideas'
- Site filtering processes, (including use of Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments – HELAA)
- Long list of site clusters

The advisory group was informed that it was intended to present further mapping information to the July meeting on potential housing numbers and scale.

In discussion, members raised a number of detailed technical questions and highlighted the issue of the inclusion of employment sites to provide an employment insight as well as dwelling information. The view was also expressed by a member that it was important in hierarchical terms that the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 provided a steer to Local Plans as a spatial level strategy.

The update was noted.

7 Dates of future meetings

The date of future meetings as set out in the Agenda was noted.

The meeting closed at 12.10 pm