

Written Questions Submitted to the Oxfordshire Growth Board meeting of 30 July 2015

Questions Submitted by Sunningwell Parish Council

The Business Case Form OxLEP-003 for the A34 Lodge Hill Interchange, Park and Ride and Freight Park.

- In this business case it is stated on p6 that the scheme is in the Green Belt, therefore planning approval and demonstration of the need for this site, rather than an alternative will need to be made to the Planning authority with regard to the Park and Ride. Furthermore that other options have been considered and that this site provides the best fit in terms of linking to the strategic network at an appropriate location.
- Please would the OGB make available to Sunningwell Parish Council and the general public the evidence that “other sites” have been considered: identify which sites and provide the detailed research that has led to them being discounted?
- Can the OGB confirm that whilst an improved Lodge Hill junction with south facing slips is economically viable as a standalone project (per the Business case). This is actually predicated on being able to build the 1,000 house in North Abingdon, as identified in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan?
- Furthermore can the OGB confirm that the upgrade of Lodge Hill with south facing slips only, rather than a full interchange junction would not meet the OGB/Oxfordshire County Council’s strategic requirements to enable the relocation of the Redbridge Park and Ride to Lodge Hill nor would it provide an adequate junction upgrade for a lorry park/freight consolidation/trans-shipment facility at this location?
- Sunningwell Parish Council would like to request a copy of the “Evaluation of Transport Impact” (ETI) document referred to on p17 of the business Case AND Appendix 2 the Lodge Hill Interchange Feasibility Assessment R2 Atkins Dec 2014 documentation. These can be emailed to the clerk@sunningwellpc.org.uk.

The programme presented to the Growth Board for outline endorsement contains a wide range of Public, private and voluntary/Community sector projects which are subject to varying degrees of confidentiality.

With regard to Lodge Hill specifically, this is a County Council lead project following the last government’s announcement of “in principal” support for the scheme under the LGF round 2 announcements made in March 2015. This project has been identified for some time in the Oxfordshire Transport Strategy, hence the support shown by DfT and government officials under the last funding round negotiations. Both of these programmes were the

subject of extensive public consultation and options appraisal detailed in these documents.

Detailed questions on the scheme, including requests for documentation, should be properly directed to the lead authority.

Question Submitted by Sharon Parnes, Woodstock

In response to Question Number 3 recorded on the "Questions to the Growth Board; 25th June 2015" Document (Agenda Item 5 on the Growth Board's 30 July 2015 amended Agenda), the Growth Board stated:

"The long list of possible projects to be considered for promotion through the Local Growth Fund are submitted by a variety of stakeholders across business and local government and it is for them to involve stakeholders as they deem appropriate. This initial long list will be developed further into a shorter list of full business cases for government and at that point it will be determined what additional consultation will be required aspart [sic] of that development."

Does this mean that in principle there remains scope for circumstances in which applications for any proposed development funding from central Government might be submitted without - or before - town/parish councils (or their constituents more directly) are formally consulted? If 'yes', what are some examples of kinds of projects for which such local consultation might not be necessary pre-submission; and if 'no', will the Growth Board provide an express assurance that Growth Board / LEP -backed submissions of funding applications to central Government will never precede public consultation (i.e., towards ensuring evaluations of public consultation responses would not be prejudiced by funding grants by then already affirmatively decided, given foreseeable reluctance to return or adjust levels of funding once granted)?

The projects submitted to the Growth Board are an indicative list of potential submissions to Government.

All transport and infrastructure related projects are promoted by Local Authority partners and are subject to due planning process. As such none of these projects would be in a position to proceed without having first agreed all statutory processes.

There are other projects which are either education, business or private sector sponsored which are not subject to public consultation but would have to comply with all necessary consents and regulations.

Questions submitted by CPRE, Oxford

CPRE Oxfordshire would like to ask two questions related to remarks made by Bob Price, as recorded in the Minutes of the meeting of the Growth Board on 25 June 2015, under section 6, 'Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme', as below:

Bob Price, responding to the proposal acknowledged that this was a matter of ongoing debate and reiterated the City's position was that their 2011 Local Plan was robust and that the city has sought to address as much of their unmet

housing need as possible. He confirmed that the Oxford SHLAA was based in their view upon an exhaustive examination of sites and indicated that consultants employed by the City to review Oxford's SHLAA had concluded that a review of the Local Plan was unnecessary.

Can we have sight of the consultant's rationale for deciding a Local Plan Review was unnecessary; why the opinion of a "Critical Friend" was not taken, rather than just a paid consultant; and can Bob Price give us his reasons why it would be undesirable for a new Local Plan to be developed giving the public the opportunity to be involved in determining the future of Oxford.

A series of Planning Inspectors' reports have dismissed the proposition by CPRE and others that there is a need for a review of the Oxford Local Plan. The Planning Inspectors have confirmed that the Oxford Core Strategy is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and remains up to date and fit for purpose in the context of planning appeals and local plan examinations. Further, a senior Planning Inspector and 'critical friend' to the Growth Board Executive Officer Group has similarly advised that there is no requirement for an Oxford Local Plan Review at this time. None of the Planning Inspectors or the senior Planning Inspector, acting as a critical friend, is a 'paid consultant'.

The independent consultants who undertook the Oxford SHLAA did not comment on the Oxford Local Plan, and it was not in their remit.

The consistent advice from the Planning Inspectorate is that the Oxford Local Plan meets national planning policy, remains up to date and fit for purpose. There is therefore no point in undertaking a review at this time, and it would be an unnecessary diversion and delay at a time when there is a pressing need to address the city's Objectively Assessed Need for new homes and affordable homes.

2. Can we ask through the Growth Board for each Local Planning Authority to advise whether the City's position as described by Mr Price is satisfactory for their proper planning of their own areas, and if not whether they consider the City is fulfilling its statutory duty to co-operate.

This matter was debated at the Growth Board on the 25th June and recorded in the minutes.