

Cherwell District Council

Executive

4 October 2021

Creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc - Consultation Response

Report of Assistant Director – Planning and Development and Assistant Director – Growth and Economy

This report is public

Purpose of report

To consider the proposed response to the public consultation.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the proposed response to the consultation for submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) - formerly the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Government is consulting on a document entitled 'Creating a Vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc' until 12 October 2021.
- 2.2 The consultation is similar to an issues consultation for a local plan and intended to help inform the development of the Arc's spatial framework.
- 2.3 The proposed response is positively framed. It aims to have a wider focus than a traditional land use planning vision document and supports the social, economic, environmental and well-being ambition for the Arc; it encourages collaborative working; and it seeks alignment between the preparation of the Arc's spatial framework, the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision, the Oxfordshire Plan and the Cherwell Local Plan Review.
- 2.4 The proposed response encourages the framework to be reflective of Cherwell's and Oxfordshire's particular characteristics and opportunities. It seeks positive engagement with our communities in its preparation. It highlights the opportunity the Arc provides for supporting bespoke solutions for delivering housing that is affordable for people to buy and rent and for an integrated approach to achieving health and well-being objectives and healthy place making across all Arc programmes.

2.5 Members should note that the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (formerly the Oxfordshire Growth Board) will also be making a submission to this consultation as will the City and other districts.

3.0 Report Details

3.1 The consultation document is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/creating-a-vision-for-the-oxford-cambridge-arc> .

3.2 It is a high-level document essentially seeking to understand priorities to help inform a vision for the area. It asks for people to consider what they want from the Arc and how they consider the importance of environmental, economic, connectivity and infrastructure and place-making considerations.

3.3 In doing so it sets out principles that may underpin the framework's approach.

3.4 The Spatial Framework will be a long-term strategic plan for the area and is intended to have sustainability at its core. It will guide future planning decisions as a 'material consideration' rather than as a statutory Development Plan document. It will also guide investment in the area.

3.5 It is important that this vision is also seen within the lens of the post-lock down economic recovery and meaningful engagement with business is critically important. The emerging Recovery and Prosperity Strategy for Cherwell and the Oxfordshire Economic Recovery Plan will also help to ensure that the practical implementation of the economic aspects of the Arc vision at regional and local levels is secured.

3.6 The consultation document explains that it has been informed by a short series of initial workshops and conversations with a small sample of local residents, young people, academic experts, businesses, charities, campaign groups and local councils.

3.7 It advises that the comments received to the current consultation will help create the Spatial Framework's vision for the Arc to 2050 and inform the development of a Sustainability Appraisal.

3.8 The development of the Spatial Framework will be supported by two further public consultations:

1. Towards a Spatial Framework (Spring 2022) – using the vision as a foundation - developing options for delivering the Framework's objectives informed by feedback from engagement, initial evidence gathering and analysis.
2. Draft Spatial Framework (Autumn 2022) – consultation on the Spatial Framework with implementation of the final framework shortly after – informed by responses to the previous consultation and further spatial analysis, option testing, impact assessments and engagement. It is intended to publish the draft Spatial Framework with its Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report.

3.9 The proposed response to the consultation is attached at Appendix 1.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 A response has been prepared to the public consultation which seeks to reflect the Council's priorities and those of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for approval for submission to DLUHC.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 Councillor Colin Clarke - Lead Member for Planning.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons set out below.

Option 1: Not to submit a consultation response

There is no obligation on the Council to submit a response but one is recommended in the interest of influencing the Framework's development at an early stage.

Option 2: To reconsider the content of the proposed response.

The proposed response has been prepared to best reflect the Council's priorities but can be amended if required by Members.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 There are no significant finance and resource implications arising from this report. The proposed response has been prepared within existing resources.

Comments checked by: Janet Du Preez, Principal Accountant, 01295 221606, janet.du-preez@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk

Legal Implications

7.2 None at this stage. The final Framework would be a 'material consideration' in planning decisions and inform policy making more widely.

Comments checked by: Matthew Barrett, Planning Solicitor, 01295 753798, matthew.barrett@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk

Risk Implications

7.3 None. This is a proposed consultation response.

Comments checked by: Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes 01295 221786, louise.tustian@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Equality & Diversity Implications

- 7.4 It is for the Government to ensure that all equalities implications are considered in developing the Framework. The proposed consultation response encourages the importance of community engagement and states, "...it is considered very important that the approaches used are accessible to all communities including those that may not have access to the internet".

Comments (to be) checked by: Emily Schofield, Acting Head of Strategy, 07881 311707, Emily.Schofield@oxfordshire.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision:

Financial Threshold Met No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected: All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Business Plan Priorities 2021-2022:

- Housing that meets your needs
- Leading on environmental sustainability
- An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres
- Healthy, resilient, and engaged communities

Lead Councillor

Councillor Colin Clarke - Lead Member for Planning

Document Information

- Appendix 1: Proposed consultation response

Background papers

None

Reference papers

Arc Economic Prospectus:

<https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxford-CambridgeArcProspectus Approved 1.pdf>

Oxfordshire Strategic Vision:

<https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/projects/oxfordshire-strategic-vision/>

Report Authors and contact details

David Peckford, Assistant Director – Planning & Development

01295 227006, david.peckford@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Robert Jolley, Assistant Director – Growth and Economy and SRO for Growth Deal

01295 221688, robert.jolley@cherwell-dc.gov.uk