Draft CDC Response: Creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Consultation July 2021

1. Cherwell District Council ("the Council") is pleased to provide a response to the Creating a Vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc consultation. The Council believes that the Arc Spatial Framework provides a unique, transformational opportunity to bind the strengths of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire and develop innovative, future facing policy that will be a catalyst for an economic and environmental leap forward and as part of a national programme.

2. The Council supports the ambition set out in the economic prospectus (2020):

   "We have ambition for a Green Arc. We aim to be home to world-leading innovations that seek to address climate change and the decline in natural capital. Where a protected and enhanced environment, natural resources and the health and wellbeing of people are fundamental aspects of our economic ambition. The Arc's growth will be innovation-led and aimed at helping to solve the major economic, environmental, health and social challenges facing the world. This will drive UK growth and create better-quality opportunities for our residents and businesses, now and in the future."

3. Cllr Wood, as Chair of the Arc Leaders Group and Leader of the Council, has said: "*The Arc region has a critical mass of research, high-technology expertise and innovation assets found nowhere else in the UK. Yet we are at a pivotal time, during which our nation's economic resilience is being tested far beyond anything we've seen before. Working with Government we can release the potential of the Arc's key sectors, scientific community and entrepreneurial spirit to propel our country's response to the major national and global challenges we face.*"

4. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership (formerly known as the Oxfordshire Growth Board) has started to consider these issues. The five Local Planning Authorities (Cherwell District Council, Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire and Oxford City Council), in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and with the involvement of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, are engaged in the preparation of a Joint Spatial Plan. This plan is currently subject to an Options Stage consultation with the Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) draft due in Spring 2022 and submission to the Secretary of State later the same year. The Plan is informed by Oxfordshire's Vision for long term sustainable development agreed by the now Future Oxfordshire Partnership and endorsed by this Council in April 2021 (https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Strategic-Vision-full-document.pdf). It sets out the ambitions and guiding principles for the County and will be used to help create an agreed set of long term, strategic economic, infrastructure and environmental priorities.

5. The Oxfordshire Plan (2050) will set out an ambitious strategic vision and embrace the key national priorities for **addressing climate change**; **improving environmental quality**, **creating strong and healthy communities**, **planning for sustainable travel and connectivity** and **creating jobs and providing**

homes. It provides a joined-up, countywide opportunity to help both inform and successfully deliver the vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and we would welcome further reference to it within the Vision and Spatial Framework. Work on the Oxfordshire Plan will help evidence the development of the Framework. Many of the topic areas covered by the vision document are being considered through the Oxfordshire Plan process and in a way that is reflective of the county's particular needs and challenges. There will be mutual benefit in addressing common issues.

6. Further details of the Oxfordshire Plan consultation are available at the following web link: https://www.oxfordshireopenthought.org/oxfordshire-plan

7. In addition, the Council has commenced a review of its district Local Plan to meet the national policy requirement for maintaining up-to-date plans and this work is being progressed in cooperation with the other Oxfordshire Authorities in parallel with the Oxfordshire Plan process. The commitment to bring a plan review forward at this particular time means that there is a rare opportunity for positive policy-making across three spatial levels in parallel. This will ensure Cherwell is well-placed to respond to our economic, climate change and place-making needs.

8. We therefore welcome the scope for a more collaborative and joined-up approach to planning and policy making than would otherwise be achieved.

9. We have structured our response around the main questions set out in the consultation and welcome the opportunity to expand upon any of the matters raised.

   Section 1: Introduction- Creating a Vision for the Oxford Cambridge Arc

   Question 1 - What kind of place could it be? What words come to mind?

   Question 2 – If you can, we would love you to tell us more about your vision for the Arc to 2050.

   Question 3 - How do you feel overall about the future of the Arc? What are your hopes and fears?

   Question 4 - What do you think are the most important things that the Spatial Framework needs to do, as a strategic plan, to make the most of the area's unique potential for economic growth to 2050 and beyond?

   Question 5 – Is there anything you would like to add, we would love you to tell us.

10. We agree with the statement at paragraph 1.5 that a joined-up, long-term approach to planning for growth is the best way to realise the ambitions for the economy, sustainability and well-being across the Arc. In doing so, we are pleased that there is a commitment that the framework will be informed by engagement with local communities and stakeholders. We recognise the vision

for the Arc needs to go beyond land use planning to reflect the potential for the communities and businesses in the area and increase engagement with a wider group of residents, businesses, visitors and prospective investors in the area, focused on a greener, more productive and healthier future that responds positively to the challenges and opportunities, including the climate emergency.

11. As indicated in paragraph 1.7 of the consultation document, the Framework will provide national planning policy for the Arc and it is intended to coordinate and provide a strategic direction for (amongst other documents) Development Plans produced by local planning authorities. Cherwell is committed not only to the Oxfordshire Plan, but also to the review of its own Local Plan and to complete these plans at pace. There is a clear opportunity for these processes to be mutually beneficial with development of the Framework

12. The Council agrees that the vision should be ambitious, aspirational and unique to the Arc. There is great economic transformational potential across the area as highlighted in the economic prospectus. The 'knowledge-intensive' opportunities 'book-ended' by two global universities are clear. The aspirational vision for the Arc to be 'a global hub for innovation, and home to exemplary models of green development' is supported.

13. The Framework should also recognise the identity, roles and diversity of existing settlements and communities. The 'Arc' is not a single, uniform entity or place and the opportunities for innovation and change must be supported by valuing and protecting what is distinctive and cherished, particularly in our 'natural' and historic environments. The particular context and characteristics of Oxfordshire and its districts need to be well reflected. The role and value of the emerging Oxfordshire Plan should be also be recognised. The Plan will help inform and deliver the Arc's vision. There is a partnership opportunity.

14. Our communities are concerned about issues with existing infrastructure; investment in healthcare facilities and education. Cherwell has seen significant development in recent years and, from our recent Local Plan consultations, we know that many communities are concerned about the need for development to be supported by the early provision of infrastructure. We know that a strong infrastructure will encourage economic opportunity. The Framework should articulate how investment can be achieved over above the contributions ordinarily required to support specific development proposals for the benefit of existing communities and to attract global business. Similarly, we would welcome proposals to ensure that we are able to focus on planned development without the risk of the Arc Vision being undermined by ad-hoc, speculative development.

15. This is should be an iterative process and we wish to work with Her Majesty's Government (HMG) in the development of the Vision to ensure the best outcomes for local communities throughout the Arc is achieved. On this basis, we would like to invite the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) - formerly the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to visit our district to learn more about our ambitions for Cherwell building on the successful delivery of our place-based programmes. The Bicester programme, for example, is already delivering a local vision for the

town as it continues to grow and thrive as a strategic location, destination and community in the Arc.

16. A transformational approach to the delivery of green infrastructure, environmental improvement, climate change action and in the delivery of a wider range of critical infrastructure would achieve the objectives – responding to community concerns while creating an high quality, attractive environment that attracts investment, improves health and well-being and encourages active lifestyles.   The global and national challenges of climate change and environmental sustainability, and the local accommodation of significant levels of development to meet identified needs (both for Cherwell and Oxford), means that there is heightened awareness of the need for policy-making to do all it can to achieve environmental protection and gain.   Climate change action, nature recovery and the importance of ensuring that developments are genuinely sustainable are of increasing importance to communities within Cherwell. Moreover, the Framework will need to have the utmost regard for irreplaceable environmental assets.

17. As a Local Authority, we would welcome support in all the areas identified in question 4 to allow local authorities to lead the delivery of the strategic vision at the local level. The availability of skilled resources and a consistency of approach across the Arc is considered important to ensure that we can deliver the ambition of the framework as well as building a consistent and reliable evidence base to support local decision making to implement and deliver the ambitions of the arc.

Section 2: The Environment

18. The Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and is working closely with Oxfordshire County Council to deliver its climate action framework. The acknowledgement of real challenges around air-quality is particularly welcomed. The measures in paragraph 2.5 for enhancing a 'green Arc', supporting nature recovery, improving air quality, reducing flood risk and improving access to nature and green space are generally supported.

Green spaces, nature, and biodiversity

Question 1 - Making sure the natural environment is protected, restored, and improved. For example, improving new and existing green spaces. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

19. **Green Spaces:** Making sure the natural environment is protected, restored, and improved is **very important**.

Question 2 - Making sure the most is made of the natural environment and that all people can have access to it. For example, making improvements to woodlands, wetland, green space and water and making sure people can visit them if they want to. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

20. Ensuring access to the natural environment is also **important**, but it must also be recognised not all areas will be appropriate for public access.

   Question 3 - Making sure new growth leaves the environment in a better state than before. For example, keeping land in its natural state, and making it more wild, where appropriate. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

21. It is **very important** that new growth leaves the environment in a better state than before wherever possible, and we would be interested to understand how this will be implemented.

   Question 4 - Anything else to add about your vision for green and blue spaces, nature, and biodiversity?

22. We would urge the vision to reflect many of the principles contained within the emerging Oxfordshire Plan, in particular around a more ambitious target for biodiversity net gain to apply across the whole of the Arc.

   Climate change resilience and net zero

   Question 5 - Making sure new development helps to achieve net zero carbon at an Arc level towards national net zero targets. For example, through good design, sustainable travel choices, renewable energy and trapping carbon. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

   Question 6 - Making sure that new development can respond to the current and future effects of climate change. For example, through new carbon emissions, water use, waste disposal and renewable energy targets. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

   Question 7 – Anything else to add about your vision for climate change and/ or the contribution to net zero?

23. Achieving **Net Zero Carbon** at an Arc level is **very important**. We are committed to delivering large scale zero carbon development at North West Bicester in accordance with our adopted Local Plan and exemplar approaches to development have been achieved. Having these requirements set out within a statement of national policy is, in our view, likely to assist in providing developers and others with the certainty around what is expected at an early stage including in land acquisition negotiations. There is a need to minimise the opportunity for exceptions through development viability arguments at application stage. As with biodiversity, the approach being taken in the production of the Oxfordshire Plan in relation to climate change and net zero should be considered for residential and commercial development. It is equally **very important** that development is future proofed for climate change as far as reasonably possible. Setting this out in the long term vision to 2050 will provide certainty and allow time for the transition to be made but we need to act fast.

Air quality and waste

Question 8 - Making sure new development helps to improve air quality within the Arc. For example, through high quality design, low emission zones and sustainable transport. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 9 - Taking a combined approach to air quality across the Arc. For example, through being careful about where each land uses should go, supporting journeys via public transport and active travel and enhancing green spaces and routes across the area. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 10 - Making better use of resources and managing waste. For example, promoting the re-use of materials, and protecting and improving soil quality and minerals. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 11 - Anything else to add about your vision for air quality and waste?

24. The approach to air quality and waste are all **very important** in ensuring the Arc offers an opportunity for genuinely sustainable development. We agree that planning and distribution of land uses to achieve a healthy living environment is very important and that the Framework will need to consider how to maximise the opportunity for sustainable, and increasingly, 'zero emission' transportation. As the Framework will not be a Development Plan document the potential for instruments outside of the planning system to minimise emissions and waste should be explored. We consider that there will a need to avoid the opportunity for development to 'side-step' the Framework's requirements; for example, through speculative 'five year land supply' proposals for residential development. Bespoke arrangements across the Arc may be needed to ensure that all development is policy complaint and not provided in less sustainable locations and where it is less likely that environmental objectives will not be met.

Water

Question 12 – Promoting a combined approach to managing water across the Arc, through protecting water resources, improving water quality and reducing the risk of flooding. For example, treating wastewater, improving water storage, and reusing surface runoff. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 13 – Making sure new development reduces existing flood risk and is resilient to future flooding. For example, through tree planting and multifunctional sustainable drainage. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 14 - Improving water availability and cutting the risk of drought. For example, through new sustainable water resources and infrastructure,

and measures which reduce water use. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 15 - Anything else to add about your vision for water?

25. Cherwell is in an identified area of water stress, yet there are also areas at high risk of flooding. Through our Local Plan Review consultation, we consider that a holistic approach to managing flood risk is required, including close connections with our approach to green infrastructure. The measures set out in **Q12-14** are all considered to be **important**. In respect of **Q13** specifically, consideration would need to be given to the measures needed to require developers to address existing flood risk problems. We note that within the document, there is no mention of the Environment Agency Thames Valley Flood Storage Scheme or Thames Water reservoir proposal. The former could be relevant to the environmental opportunity areas which are identified in part for water infrastructure (para. 2.6) (**Q15)**.

Section 3: The economy

Education and training

Question 1 – Making sure the Arc keeps growing as a place of educational excellence, partnership and research. For example, through growth which helps existing universities and colleges. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 2 - Making sure the economic benefits of growth are felt by all communities within the Arc. For example, through putting new education and training facilities in places where more people can easily get to go to them. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

26. A core driving force for the Arc is its economic potential. It is recognised by the Council that the potential of the whole is greater than its individual parts. Paragraph 3.2 recognises that there is a varied economy and it is important to ensure that industries and employers which are less aligned to knowledge- and innovation-based objectives are equally supported. This is apparent within Cherwell District with our towns and main settlements performing different, complementary roles, within sub-markets. Some of these, particularly for Banbury are important to areas on the periphery of the Arc.

27. One of the key drivers for the Arc are the world-class educational 'anchors' at Oxford and Cambridge, as well as the institutions in the areas between. The universities and the research and development investment they attract are clearly central to the economic ambition. However, we would welcome reference to other opportunities for educational excellence that exist beyond formal institutions and the scope for the expansion of apprenticeships and re-skilling within industry.

28. Whilst wages are above national averages and the Arc is home to world-leading companies and institutions these do not benefit all residents. Within Cherwell, there are pockets of deprivation in respect of access to skills and high-quality

jobs. It is imperative that, in the pursuit of economic growth, existing divisions are not allowed to widen, and opportunities are available for all to access the training required. The Council is preparing a long-term economic strategy, the Cherwell Recovery and Prosperity Strategy which will set out the vision, strategic economic priorities and delivery plan for the district over the next 10 years, which looks at this matter. The Arc vision needs to support and guide the economic recovery plans for the area working closely with local authorities and businesses. Therefore, making sure the economic benefits are felt by all communities, rural and urban alike, is **very important.**

Question 3 - Anything else to add about your vision for education and training?

29. We would welcome the vision setting out the skills, training and education aims and ambitions within the Arc and the approach to increasing productivity as part of sustainable and inclusive growth which benefits all.

Jobs and businesses

Question 4 - Making sure that the Arc keeps growing as a place for business, science and technology, and innovation. For example, through putting these types of new workspaces in places where they can make the most of cross-sector collaboration. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 5 - Making sure that existing industries keep growing within the Arc. For example, through putting industries in the best places to suit their needs. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 6 - Making sure the Arc builds upon and grows its skills, expertise and capabilities. For example, through making sure people can get around easily to bring the right people to the right job locations. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 7 - Making sure that the right types of buildings are provided in the Arc so that businesses can keep growing as well as supporting the green economy. For example, through building new flexible and adaptable workspaces meeting the needs of a range of different businesses of different sizes. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 8 – Anything else to add about your vision for jobs and businesses?

30. To support the economic ambitions for the Arc, the points in **(Q4-7)** are generally all considered to be **important** and perhaps in some cases very important. However, there will need to be a recognition that in many cases businesses will naturally create clusters based on their needs, be this access to skills and workforce and the homes required to support these workers, or physical transport networks. Additionally, there may be environmental, policy or historical reasons

why the 'best places' from a market perspective may not be deliverable or optimal.

31. 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.

Section 4: Connectivity and Infrastructure

Infrastructure

Question 1 - Making sure planning takes a combined approach to new development by providing the infrastructure and services required at the right time to support growth. For example, by planning for the need for utilities (e.g. water, energy, waste) and community infrastructure (e.g. schools, hospitals, GP surgeries). [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 2 – Making sure new development makes the most of existing resources. For example, through making sure that materials are reused, renewable energy supplies are used, and waste is properly planned for. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 3 – Making sure that digital infrastructure is put in at the same time as other development takes place. For example, speeding up the fitting of high-speed broadband to support home-based work and help new ways of learning. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 4 – Anything else to add about your vision for infrastructure?

32. We welcome the opportunity to improve connectivity across the Arc, particularly by more sustainable modes such as rail. We would urge the vision to consider local movements (e.g. those made by residents on a day-to-day basis) as well as the significant movements of people from our rural areas into the surrounding towns. Across Oxfordshire, we are working collaboratively with Oxfordshire County Council on the Local Connectivity and Transport Plan, which supports many of the *getting around* principles (**Q10-14).** However, there appears to be little recognition of the challenges of connectivity for our rural communities which is a core concern (paragraph 4.8). As noted previously, infrastructure provision is a key concern for many of our communities.

33. "*Making sure planning takes a combined approach to new development by providing the infrastructure and services required at the right time to support growth. For example, by planning for the need for utilities (e.g. water, energy, waste) and community infrastructure (e.g. schools, hospitals, GP surgeries)."* *(Q1)* - is **very important.** However, it is not just dependent on planning. There is a need to consider investment needed in infrastructure to support and delivery

mechanisms e.g. advance funding, infrastructure providers lead in times etc. Moreover, investment in infrastructure should also be of benefit to our existing communities and not as a 'reward' to those areas that are subject to significant development, noting that we may choose to access services that are most convenient, rather than in closest proximity to our homes.

New development

Question 5 – Making sure growth within the Arc is placed around areas with better transport links. For example, through having more development around stations and bus routes, supported by cycling and walking tracks [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 6 – Making sure new development cuts down the need to travel around the local area. For example, through providing safe and easy walking and cycling routes to town centres, shops and schools. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 7 – Making sure new developments reduce existing and future infrastructure demand and resources used. For example, making sure that designs leave enough space for existing and future measures which reduce energy and water use, and cut down on waste [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 8 - Making sure sustainable transport principles are included in the design of new developments. For example, by designing new developments in a way that enables people to walk or cycle all or part of their journeys [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 9 – Anything else to add about new development in the context of connectivity and infrastructure?

34. Matters **Q5-Q8** are all **important** and supported. However, we would urge caution in applying a 'one size fits all' approach across the Arc and highlighting the role that planning at a more local level, through the Local Transport Plan, Oxfordshire Plan and Local Plans, can play in delivering development that is well located, minimises the need to travel and is placed in areas with 'better transport links'.

Getting around

Question 10 - Creating better transport connections across the Arc and making sure they are provided in a way which supports sustainable new growth. For example, by planning for public transport and physical transport infrastructure requirements.

Question 11 - Making sure there are more opportunities for active travel such as walking and cycling across the Arc. For example, wider pavements,

segregated cycle lanes, improved network of cycle lanes, and better pedestrian crossings.

Question 12 - Making sure that there is the right form of public transport in the right areas across the Arc and can be used by all travellers, including people with any particular needs.

Question 13 - Cutting down on the impact of cars and other private vehicles within the Arc. For example, by supporting more sustainable forms of private travel like cycling.

Question 14 - Anything else to add about your vision of getting around?

35. Again, matters Q10-14 are all **important** matters to be considered in identifying the most sustainable approach to development and transportation. As previously highlighted, the Framework will need to be future proof and the move away from dependency on the combustion engine will, in time, alter the overall consideration of sustainability factors.

Section 5: Place-making

Location of growth

Question 1 – Making sure new developments are built in the most sustainable locations, for the environment, the economy and communities. For example, by developing brownfield redevelopment and making sure they have good access to town centres, shops and schools. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 2 – Anything else to add about your vision for location of growth?

Homes in your area

Question 3 – Ensuring the right types of housing are delivered in the right locations to meet the needs of both renters and buyers. For example, family houses, first-time buyers, specialist housing, student accommodation and opportunities for people to build their own homes. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 4 – Increasing the amount and availability of affordable homes within the Arc. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 5 – Anything else to add about your vision for homes in your area?

36. We generally feel that the matters highlighted (**Q1-5)** are all **important**. We would appreciate any additional guidance in respect of whether the approach to affordable housing or other types of housing may differ from the current definitions within the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that the

specific needs of our communities are met and we are able to deliver genuinely affordable housing.

37. The need for homes people can afford to rent and buy has been identified as an important theme from the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (formerly the Oxfordshire Growth Board) work. The Spatial Framework provides an opportunity for innovative and more bespoke solutions to be considered and so not necessarily being restricted to the current government definition of 'affordable', which can be prohibitive within a high-cost area like Oxfordshire.

38. Another key theme to be identified within Cherwell and Oxfordshire is the importance of the health agenda and for healthy place shaping. It is essential this is embedded throughout the Spatial Framework at all levels and to permeate through the associated policies and programmes.

39. Ensuring homes are built in the right places is vital to the success of the Arc. We would support bespoke measures applying across the whole area in respect of monitoring land supply to help protect the area from ad-hoc, speculative development whilst we strive to achieve the step change required to deliver more sustainable, transformative growth. This could, for example, take the form of the previous "3-year" flexibility which applied across Oxfordshire as part of the Growth Deal. This measure ensured that councils, such as ours which have consistently delivered to an ambitious housing requirement, were able to focus on allocated sites without the risks of speculative developments.

Design of new developments and streets

Question 6 – Making sure a coordinated approach is taken to the design and delivery of new developments to ensure they are supported by new and existing infrastructure. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 7 – Making sure the environment and sustainability is at the heart of new developments. For example, by improving the built and natural environment, making sure development complements surrounding areas, and is supported by the right level of infrastructure. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 8 – Making sure there is the right mix of uses in new developments to help make high quality and thriving new places. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 9 – Making sure new developments help support healthy lifestyles for existing and future communities. For example, through walking and cycling, high quality green spaces, and accessible streets. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 10 – Making sure new developments promote resilience to climate change. For example, through green roofs, managing surface water, tree

planting, storing rainwater and new green spaces. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Question 11 – Anything else to add about your vision for the design of new developments and streets?

36. The principles set out in **Q6-11** are all **important** planning and design considerations, albeit the Framework needs the recognise the role of Development Plans and that some matters and levels of detail are likely to benefit from a more local approach and may be best delivered through Local Plans. Our ambition is to create, healthy, happy, attractive and sustainable places for people to live, work and visit. The design of development is critical to achieving successful places and communities. We would welcome a master planning approach towards planning new developments so that high standards of design and integration with the existing environment is created. This has been the approach adopted in Bicester and should be supported by the Vision. It requires close working relationships with all levels of national and local government and extensive engagement with our communities and business to be established as a guiding principle of the Arc vision so that existing and future residents, business and visitors are supportive and understand what is going on – see Section 6.

Section 6: Our commitment to engaging communities

Question 1 - How can government engage the public better? [Communication materials/ Social listening/ Focus groups/ 1-1 interviews and experiments/ Ethnography/ Citizen assemblies and citizen juries/ Other types of engagement]

Question 2- Before this consultation, I was familiar with the area known as the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. [Yes/ No]

Question 3- Do you have anything else to add on engaging communities?

37. We emphasise that community engagement is fundamental to preparing a robust and supportable Framework. We note that para 6.6 indicates a Spring consultation document to contain options to consider strategic growth locations and distribution of growth. We welcome the opportunity for continued partnership working to help inform and deliver the Spatial Framework and ensure that it is fully aligned with the Oxfordshire Plan process, along with our Local Plan. Community engagement requires resource and commitment and is a long term ongoing, process. As local authorities, we are well placed to reach out to our local communities through the Arc process and this is another example of where local and national government need to work together.

Section 7: Our Commitment to data, evidence and digital tools

Question 1 - To what extent do you agree with our proposed approach on data and evidence? [Strongly disagree/ Disagree/ Neutral/ Agree/ Strongly agree]

Question 2 - Do you have anything else to add on data, evidence and digital tools?

38. The Council is supportive of the commitment to building an evidence base (as would be expected for a Local Plan) and the use of digital technology and acknowledges the benefits of opportunities for consistent digital tools across the whole Arc to support plan making. However, it is considered very important that the approaches used are accessible to all communities including those that may not have access to the internet.

39. In respect of evidence, the Oxfordshire Plan and the Cherwell Local Plan has already started to gather comprehensive and robust evidence at an Oxfordshire and Cherwell level. As explained above, the work under way in Oxfordshire provides an opportunity to help inform and successfully deliver the Arc vision.

Section 8: How we will monitor and deliver the Framework

Question 1 - To what extent do you agree with our proposed approach on delivery and funding? [Strongly disagree/ Disagree/ Neutral/ Agree/ Strongly agree]

Question 2 - Do you have anything else to add on delivery and funding?

40. The Council agrees that a delivery mechanism will be needed that includes some sort of levelling/equalisation across the whole, or parts of the Arc and that there is a need for a co-ordinated approach to monitoring; bespoke guidance on the latter would be beneficial. The Framework must be deliverable.

Sustainability Scoping Report

40. We have the following specific observations on the Sustainability Scoping report:

- Figure 4.1 in the Environmental Assets section shows Green Belt which is a planning constrain rather than an asset. 4.4 indicates they are a means of protecting rural space- this assumes that they will be maintained.
- There is no mention of Banbury as a main urban centre/notable location.
- It would be helpful for the maps to be larger scale so they can be more easily interpreted.
- Para 4.11 should also mention local sites- LWSs, LGSs, LNRs.