

Supplementary Papers

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FOR THE MEETING OF

Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel

held in the The Long Room, Oxford Town Hall, St Aldates, Oxford

on Wednesday 4 March 2020 at 6.30 pm

The reports marked 'to follow' on the agenda published on 26 February are attached. Please bring these with you to the meeting.

7.c Oxfordshire Plan 2050 sub-group update (Pages 56 - 61)
Summary notes from the meeting held on 13 February 2020.

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Oxfordshire Growth Board Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Sub-Group

HELD ON THURSDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 10.00 AM
COMMITTEE ROOM 1, WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL,
COUNCIL OFFICES, WOODGREEN, WITNEY, OX28 1NB

Present:

Councillors: James Mills (Chair), Colin Clarke, Jeff Haine, Alex Hollingsworth, Jeannette Matelot, Judy Roberts and Sue Roberts

Officers: Adrian Duffield, (South Oxfordshire District Council), Giles Hughes (West Oxfordshire District Council), Kevin Jacob (Oxfordshire Growth Board), Andrew Thompson, (Oxfordshire Plan 2050) and Rachel Williams (Oxfordshire Plan 2050)

Other councillors: None

36 Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes; declarations of interest; Chair's announcements

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Catherine Webber, (Vale of White Horse District Council) who was substituted by Councillor Judy Roberts.

There were no declarations of interest.

Chair's announcements

The Chair informed the sub-group that it was expected that HM Government would make an announcement on the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway as part of the March 2020 Budget, but no further information was currently available. He also reported back on his attendance at the Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel.

37 Notes of the previous meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 14 November 2019 were agreed.

The following points were raised as matters arising:

- West of England Joint Spatial Plan, (WOE) – The Oxfordshire Plan Team had attended all the WOE examinations and there had been useful learning from the WOE

example relevant to the drafting of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. Although, the Planning Inspector had found the specific process of the WOE plan to be unsound, the principle of joint strategic spatial planning had been supported.

- An issue is that the tests for examining a joint spatial plan are the same as for a local plan, despite being very different outputs. This does not easily fit with HM Government's objective of encouraging more joint spatial work. Representations had and would continue to be made to the Planning Inspectorate and MCHLG that the regulations needed to be refreshed. Other authorities within the Oxford to Cambridge ARC were experiencing similar issues and the ARC was a potential route to highlight the issue.
- Along the ARC (and elsewhere in the country), it appeared that other authorities were looking to work together on spatial planning issues on a non-statutory basis. No other Growth Deals had been agreed to date, but this was still felt to be the direction of travel from HM Government.
- Officers were looking at the opportunities around the potential alignment of local plan periods.
- It was noted that the completion of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 would require the completion of many projects. It was important to prioritise the projects carefully to meet requirements within the Plan shared with Local Plans noting and taken account of projects outside of that needed for a Local Plan.

38 Presentation on Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan

The sub-group received a presentation from John Disley, Infrastructure Strategy & Policy Manager, Oxfordshire County Council on recent progress in the development of the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, (LTCP). Areas covered within the presentation included:

- Reasons for the drafting of a new plan which included the need to reflect new priorities such as climate action, air quality and healthy place shaping, the impact of new funding from the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, Housing Infrastructure Fund, Oxfordshire Garden Town/Village initiatives and new ideas and strategies.
- Proposed approaches to engagement with the public in the development of the LTCP.
- A list of subject specific topic papers which would be available online and an explanation of the hierarchy between the proposed topic papers which would contribute towards the LTCP, its objectives and other documents including the Oxfordshire County Council Corporate Plan.
- Key dates and next steps. It was noted that it was intended that following formal sign off by Oxfordshire County Council of the approach to engagement, engagement activity would commence on 27 February 2020 through to 30 March, with public consultation on a draft LTCP scheduled for June and July. An approval decision was expected during December, but all timings were dependent on the interface with other plans including Oxfordshire Plan 2050.
- The LTCP's place and relationship within the map of strategic policies within Oxfordshire including but not limited to the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, local plans, Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy, Oxfordshire Plan 2050 etc.
- The significant growth in mobility driven by private motor car since the 1950's compared to public transport, the consequences of this including congestion and air pollution and the actions taken to start to seek to address these negative outcomes including 'Connecting Oxford' and the Oxfordshire Zero Emission Zone.

- Options for the future up to 2050, including zero/lower emission cars (although congestion would not be removed as an issue), autonomous cars, public transport, the encouragement of cycling and walking, journey sharing and increasing all forms of connectivity – i.e. digital connectivity especially in rural areas that might reduce the need to travel.
- Specific initiatives in respect of car sharing, buses, trains and freight, walking, cycling and using technology such as apps to join up all the available travel options.

Observations from the sub-groups discussion and questions asked during the presentation included:

- The challenge of biodiversity as a driver for the drafting of a new plan although it was noted that climate emergency was one of the LTCP objectives.
- Members of the subgroup commented that the list of topic papers needing to be drafted was extensive and challenging to complete. They queried whether enough resources and capacity were available within the County Council to support this. Officers responded that links and synergies with other local authorities and organisations both inside and outside the county such as England's Economic Heartland were being explored. Whilst the LTCP was formally owned by Oxfordshire County Council it was very much a collaborative process and input was welcomed. This approach was supported by members.
- The LTCP at present was silent on the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, but if the Expressway was to go forward the LTCP would take account and align with it.
- Rural bus networks – the sub-group was informed that Oxfordshire County Council was exploring how the present rural bus network might be restored and extended following the announcement of HM Government's National Bus Strategy. Limited funding was likely to be available so the challenge was to think how projects might be pump primed.
- Cycling networks – a challenge was improving the ease of travelling between towns and connecting the networks together.
- It was important to guard against the LTCP becoming overly Oxford City focussed as a transport hub as there was also a need to link up all areas without the need to necessarily travel through Oxford.
- The sub-group was informed that it was felt that more transport hubs should be developed and that a potentially a different approach to hubs such as Park and Ride should be explored. The regulatory environment would be important as would the outcome of the Williams Rail Review and significant cultural and modal shift around travel would be needed.
- Various members commented that buses between towns without the need to travel via Oxford was important as was provision of cycle routes to bus and train stations.

Following a discussion around 'Greenways', Councillor Hollingsworth indicated that he would give an update on Greenways to members outside of the meeting.

39 Presentation on Local Energy Oxfordshire Project

The sub-group received a presentation from Inga Doherty, Energy Insight Lead at Oxfordshire County Council on the Local Energy Oxfordshire, (LEO) project. Areas included in the presentation included:

- The Local Energy Oxfordshire project was a £40m three-year demonstrator project with a 10-year vision and one of a relatively few trials across the country tied to electric vehicles.
- The project included partners from local authorities, the universities and electricity generation and distribution companies.
- A significant challenge existed in managing the objective of net zero carbon emissions against the expected growth in electricity demand across Oxfordshire of 875 GWh by 2030.
- There was a need to consider as part of the project how electricity was provided, and the wider distribution network given that Oxfordshire's electricity network was near capacity and would be expensive to upgrade.
- It was not just a question of connecting new renewable electricity generating capacity. It would involve a transition from the conventional linear distribution network, centrally controlled to a local network based on diverse energy sources.
- Market platform development formed part of the project which would look at developing and testing potential platforms to enable participation in the Local Energy Systems.
- Energy efficiency would be as important as energy production in the future and work had begun to map areas with low energy efficiency for instance using thermal imaging techniques. It was hoped that this could be made available to local authorities and project officers were in touch with local plan teams.

In the sub-group's discussion, the following points were raised and noted.

- That if areas of Oxfordshire such as parts of the Cotswolds were to become part of a new national park in the future this might potentially involve additional planning constraints.
- The study did not include MOD owned estate such as RAF Brize Norton.
- Members raised the issue of emissions from gas boilers currently burning natural gas and initiatives from industry around the potential for conversion to burning hydrogen. It was noted that the LEO project had focussed on electricity generation, although there was a hub focussed toward vehicles and fuel cells and it was recognised such provisions would be part of the solution required to cut emissions.
- Constraints and pinch points included the physical and technical difficulty in connecting new generating capacity as grid infrastructure required updating and removing barriers for peer to peer electricity selling.
- The project was engaging with big energy users in the county, many of whom had dedicated connections to the electricity grid.
- Oxford City was one around four energy super hub projects nationally where battery storage was being trialled.

40 Engagement and Consultation Update

The sub-group received a presentation from Andrew Thompson, Senior Planner, Oxfordshire Plan 2050 setting out an update on engagement for the Oxfordshire Plan. The presentation covered:

- A recap on engagement and consultation undertaken from February 2019 to date which had included residents' workshops facilitated by an external specialist provider and an Oxfordshire Plan 2050 discussion at the Voice of Oxfordshire Youth, (VOXY) Environmental Impact Campaign and workshop sessions.

- Three college engagement sessions were being undertaken at Abingdon and Witney College and two at City of Oxford College up to February 2020.
- Themes from the engagement sessions to date were that young people were aware of the challenges in planning for the future and the impact that a plan like the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 would have on their lives in the future. They were aware and cognitive of issues around high housing costs including affordability, the cost of public transport, albeit with a preference for private transport, immediate action on climate change and belief that town centres would not continue to exist in their current form.
- A session focussed on Black and Minority Ethnic engagement with the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 had been scheduled during February.
- A marketing student at City of Oxford College with an interest in planning had started a work placement with the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 team until May 2020. The student would help provide a young person's perspective and help design further engagement.

In discussion, the sub-group noted the comments made by young people in respect of social justice issues and the cost of public transport and the timing of public transport relating to college start times.

The Chair referred to his attendance at the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel and interest shown by the Panel about the outcome of youth engagement in the Plan.

It was **agreed** that an update report setting out all the elements of engagement and consultation and next steps should be scheduled for the Growth Board's meeting in June 2020.

41 Dates of future meetings and work programme

Rachel Williams, Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Lead set out a draft work programme for the sub-group covering the period up to September 2020. The focus of work of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 team (alongside compilation of the evidence base) for the next few months would be to refine the spatial and scale options for the Plan and then to draft a consultation document. A single report and consultation document would be submitted to all districts for formal approval by each council prior to a period of formal public consultation (Regulation 18, part 2) to test the options presented.

The sub-group was informed that ideally the consultation document would present a preferred option or strategy if consensus could be built between the partners in time, as this would enable moving smoothly into the later stage of plan production towards the end of 2020.

A three-stage cycle ahead of the formal decision-making process was outlined:

1. To provide an outline of the work to identify spatial and scale options.
2. To provide early/initial outputs from that work.
3. To secure support for the proposed interpretation of the work and of the draft consultation document.

A potentially revised list of future meeting dates was presented. Members of the sub-group were asked to help brief and communicate with colleagues within their respective councils as the current phases of work progressed.

The draft programme was noted.

The meeting closed at 12.15 pm