

Agenda



Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 28 May 2020 at 6.30 pm to held be as a virtual meeting

From 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2020, the Oxfordshire Growth Board meetings are managed by South Oxfordshire District Council.

Contact: Kevin Jacob, Growth Board Democratic Services Officer

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Members (tbc):

Councillor Andrew Gant (Chair)	Oxford City Council
Councillor John Tanner	
Councillor Craig Simmons	
Councillor Tom Wallis	Cherwell District Council
Councillor Lucinda Wing	
Councillor Sean Woodcock, (Vice-Chair)	
Councillor Nick Carter	Oxfordshire County Council
Councillor Damian Haywood	
Councillor Richard Webber	
Councillor Peter Dragonetti	South Oxfordshire District Council
Councillor David Turner	
Councillor Sarah Gray	
Councillor Andy Cooke	Vale of White Horse District Council
Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne	
Councillor Matt Barber	
Councillor Derek Cotterill	West Oxfordshire District Council
Councillor Ted Fenton	
Councillor Julian Cooper	

The quorum is six members, one from each council. Substitutes are allowed and should be notified to the contact above.

The meeting will be web streamed. Please see the note at:

<http://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=376&Mid=2482> on how to observe the meeting.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record the meeting please let the contact officer know in advance of this meeting.

AGENDA

1 Election of Chair of the Scrutiny Panel for 2020/2021

To elect a Chair of the Scrutiny Panel for 2020/2021.

2 Election of Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Panel for 2020/2021

Election of a Vice-Chair of the Panel for 2020/2021.

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

4 Adoption of Virtual Meeting Procedure Rules (Pages 7 - 11)

In response to the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel is **recommended** to adopt the virtual meeting procedure rules adopted by South Oxfordshire District Council as the current hosting local authority, attached at appendix 1.

5 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 12 - 21)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2020

6 Public participation

Members of the public may submit an address or question in writing to the Scrutiny Panel, where notice in writing is given to the secretariat no later than **4.00pm** on **Wednesday 27 May 2020**. Questions and addresses should be no longer than one side of A4 paper in Ariel 12 font. The statement or question will be circulated to the Panel and read out by the democratic services officer or Chair on behalf of those who have submitted them. A response may be given at the meeting or a written answer supplied. The Chair will have discretion to manage the public participation procedure as they see appropriate.

Questions and notice of addresses must be submitted to democratic.services@oxfordshiregrowthboard.org

7 Growth Board response to scrutiny panel recommendations - 11 March 2020 (Pages 22 - 23)

To consider the Growth Board's response to the recommendations to the Board from the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 4 March 2020.

8 Update from Councillor Ian Hudspeth, Chair of the Infrastructure sub-group

Councillor Ian Hudspeth, Chair of the Growth Board Infrastructure Sub-Group and Leader of Oxfordshire County Council has been invited to join this meeting to give an update.

9 Oxfordshire Growth Board papers 2 June 2020

To consider reports and matters on the agenda for the Oxfordshire Growth Board meeting on 2 June 2020. Reports are set out under the subheadings below.

a Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (Pages 24 - 34)

To review a report to the Growth Board giving an update on the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has, and will have, on the delivery of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. This includes recommended revisions to the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 timeline.

b Updating the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) (Pages 35 - 45)

To review a report to the Growth Board setting out the scope, timescale, governance and funding for updating the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy, in support of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

10 Work Programme for the Scrutiny Panel and Action Log - May 2020 (Pages 46 - 52)

To discuss the draft work programme for the Panel as submitted by the Panel's Scrutiny Officer and requests for information/actions from previous meetings.

11 Dates of meetings

The dates of future meeting of the Panel are below based upon a quarterly Growth Board reporting cycle. These will normally be held in Oxford Town Hall unless otherwise stated, but this will be kept under review.

Scrutiny Panel	Growth Board
July (proposed additional meeting) final date to be confirmed.	July (proposed additional meeting) final date to be confirmed.
Tues 15 Sept 6.30 pm	Tues 22 Sept 2 pm
Tues 17 Nov 6.30 pm	Tues 24 Nov 2 pm
Tues 19 Jan 2021 6.30 pm	Tuesday 26 Jan 2021 2 pm
Tues 16 Feb 2021 6.30 pm	Mon 22 Feb 2021 2 pm
Tues 16 Mar 2021 6.30 pm	Tues 23 Mar 2021 2 pm
Tues 1 June 2021 6.30 pm	Tues 8 June 2021 2 pm

Councillors' duties on declaring interests

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed "Declarations of Interest" or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your* employment; sponsorship (ie payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the council's area; licences for land in the council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's register of interests which is publicly available on the council's website.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your register of interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Member's Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Councillors' Code of Conduct says that a member "must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself" and that "you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned". What this means is that the matter of interests must be viewed within the context of the code as a whole and regard should continue to be paid to the perception of the public.

*Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those of the member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Virtual Meeting Procedure Rules

The Government has issued The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No.392. The Regulations have been issued under Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. They allow the council to hold virtual meetings between 4 April 2020 and 6 May 2021. These Virtual Meeting Procedure Rules set out the procedure to be followed when the council conducts formal virtual meetings and should be read in conjunction with the procedure rules in the Constitution for the Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees, Joint Audit and Governance Committee, Planning Committee, General Licensing Committee, Licensing Acts Committee, Climate Emergency Advisory Committee, Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee, Area Committees, Community Grants Panel, and licensing and taxi panels. Except as varied by these rules, the procedure rules for meetings set out in the Constitution also apply to virtual meetings.

Annual meeting of Council

1. Council Procedure Rule 1, requiring an annual meeting of Council to be held, shall not apply between the date of adoption of these procedure rules and 6 May 2021. Council may hold an annual meeting if it wishes but is not required to do so during the period specified above. An annual meeting of Council may be called by:
 - (a) the Chair of the Council or
 - (b) a resolution calling for an Annual Meeting being passed at an ordinary or extraordinary meeting of Council.

Virtual meetings

2. Between the date of adoption of these procedure rules and 6 May 2021, the council may hold meetings:
 - (a) at a physical location, with some councillors in attendance in the meeting room and with some councillors attending through remote access, or
 - (b) at a virtual location, being a web address or a conference call telephone number or a combination of these.
3. The council will live stream these meetings for the public to listen to or watch.
4. A virtual meeting that is open to the public held between the date of the adoption of these procedure rules and 6 May 2021 includes any meeting specified in paragraph 2 above where business is transacted that is open to the public and press.

Participants in the virtual meeting

5. The following shall be deemed to be participants of the virtual meeting:
 - (a) Members of the meeting or their substitutes
 - (b) Other district councillors who have indicated a wish to speak at the meeting
 - (c) Other invitees to speak to a specific agenda item
 - (d) Officers in attendance

6. When participants are speaking, they must be able to be heard by other participants. There is no requirement to be able to see other participants, although this is preferable.

Observers

7. The council must provide a facility so that members of the public who are listening to or watching the virtual meeting, rather than participating, can hear the participants speaking at the meeting.

Notice of meetings

8. The head of legal and democratic will give notice of a meeting by publishing the agenda to the council's website at least five clear days in advance of meeting.
9. The notice will set out the date and time of the meeting, and the business to be transacted. The council will publish details of how the public may listen to or watch the virtual meeting.
10. Participants will be notified by email of how to join the virtual meeting.
11. The agenda will not be available as a paper copy if the meeting is completely virtual.

Attendance at virtual meetings

12. Attendance at virtual meetings can be either:
 - (a) by being present in the physical place the meeting is held or
 - (b) by joining the virtual meeting.
13. Participants will be asked to join the virtual meeting at least 15 minutes before the advertised start time. Councillors joining the virtual meeting must use their council-supplied device.
14. Any video camera should show a non-descript background or where possible, a virtual background. Participants are asked not to eat or drink while their audio and video link is active and wear appropriate clothing for a public meeting.
15. At the commencement of each meeting, the Chair shall take a register of all councillors and officers joining the meeting to allow their presence to be recorded and explain the protocol for councillor and public participation and the rules of debate.

Quorum

16. The normal quorum rules apply to each meeting.

Public participation

17. Members of the public may submit a statement or question in accordance with the relevant meeting's procedure rules, set out in the Constitution. The public may either:
 - (a) address the meeting in person if the meeting is held in a physical location or
 - (b) submit their address in writing to democratic.services@southandvale.gov.uk in order that it can be circulated at a virtual meeting or
 - (c) join and participate in a virtual meeting by invitation.
18. For meetings of the Planning Committee, the public who have already registered an interest in the planning application may submit a concise written statement by 12 noon two working days before the committee meeting. Written statements received by the deadline will be circulated to the committee members in advance of the meeting and will be published to the council's website.
19. The rules on deadlines for registering to address meetings other than the Planning Committee and the time limits on statements and questions at those meetings are set out in the relevant meeting's procedure rules in the Constitution.

Non-committee member's participation

20. If a councillor who is not a committee member, wishes to address the meeting during a particular agenda item, they should inform the Chair and Democratic Services by 12 noon on the working day before the meeting.

Technical failure during a virtual meeting

21. If the Chair becomes aware that the virtual meeting is not accessible to the public through remote means, due to technical failure or other means, the Chair may adjourn the meeting.
22. If the Chair becomes aware that the meeting is not accessible by one or more members of the meeting through remote means, due to technical failure or other means, the Chair may adjourn the meeting immediately but is not required to, unless the meeting is inquorate.
23. If a councillor temporarily disconnects and re-connects to the meeting due to technological issues, they are still considered to be present throughout the meeting as long as any matters discussed during their absence are repeated.
24. If a technical connection to a councillor or participant is lost during a Planning Committee or licensing panel hearing for a prolonged period, the Chair will announce that the relevant councillor is absent. The meeting may proceed as long as a quorum can be established, but the councillor who was disconnected will not be able to vote on the matter under discussion as they would not have heard all the evidence.

25. If the provision of access through remote means cannot be restored within a reasonable period, the Chair may adjourn the meeting or close the meeting and defer the remaining business to the next appropriate meeting.
26. If the Chair has technical issues and cannot take part in the meeting, the Vice-Chair or another councillor may take over the chair to allow the virtual meeting to proceed.

Consideration of agenda items, the debate and decision-making

27. During the meeting, each participant must specify their name to introduce themselves at the start of every contribution, unless they have been introduced by the Chair. This is particularly important for audio-only meetings or when video cameras are switched off.
28. The Chair will ask councillors if they have any interests to declare. Any councillor who declares a disclosable pecuniary interest in an item of business must not participate in the debate or voting and must leave the virtual meeting for that item.
29. With the exception of the Planning Committee to which this paragraph does not apply, the Chair will in turn invite each member of the public who has been invited to speak to address the meeting. The meeting may ask the members of the public questions of clarification only. The Chair or officer will refer the meeting to any written statements submitted.
30. The Chair will ask the relevant officer/Cabinet member to present their agenda item/report. Councillors may raise questions of clarification to the officer/Cabinet member.
31. Councillors or officers will indicate their wish to speak by the method agreed by the Chair, such as by raising their hand when video is available or by using the Chat facility.
32. Participants may unmute their audio and turn on their video when invited by the Chair to speak or to indicate their wish to speak. Participants shall address the Chair at all times, and not one another. Participants are not required to stand when speaking. Only one person may speak at a time.
33. Participants should turn off their video and mute their sound when not talking to the meeting.
34. The virtual meeting Chat facility must not be used for private or political conversations and does not constitute any part of the meeting's debate.
35. The Chair will determine the order of those speaking and may limit the length and content of speeches.
36. The Chair may ask councillors or officers to specify the relevant agenda page number and paragraph number when raising a particular point covered in the agenda. This allows others to follow the debate.

37. The Chair may ask the meeting as a whole or each councillor in turn for any further comments before completing the debate on that agenda item. If the meeting is in general agreement with a proposal, a vote need not be taken. Normal rules in the Constitution on proposing motions and amendments apply to allow votes to be taken where necessary.
38. If a vote is required, the Chair or the democratic services officer will ask each councillor in turn, alphabetically, to verbally announce whether they are voting in favour or against a motion or abstaining. The voting results will be declared by the democratic services officer and the decision will be confirmed by the Chair. A recorded or named vote will not be kept unless such a request was made prior to the vote.
39. In the case of virtual meetings considering planning applications and licensing panel hearings, councillors may be required to confirm that they have heard all of the discussion and indicate their vote.

Exclusion of the public and press

40. In the case of confidential/exempt business, councillors and relevant officers will be sent a separate link to a virtual, confidential meeting session that will follow the public meeting (after a short break). This virtual, confidential meeting session will not be accessible to the public.
41. If during a public debate, a meeting needs to move into confidential discussion to receive some confidential or exempt information before making a decision in public, the public debate will be deferred until the item can be discussed in confidential session. The final decision will either be taken in public at the next appropriate meeting, in confidential session and published after the meeting, or by individual Cabinet member decision or officer key decision as appropriate.
42. In confidential/exempt session, each councillor and officer present must ensure that no other person can hear or see the virtual meeting.
43. Councillors must ensure they do not share confidential or exempt content in the video feed.

Closing the meeting

44. The Chair will close the meeting. All participants must leave the virtual meeting quickly and quietly. Any subsequent discussion will not form part of the meeting, nor be recorded in the minutes.

Chair's discretion

45. The Chair shall exercise discretion on how the virtual meeting is conducted and may waive any of these virtual meeting procedure rules. The Chair's ruling on any procedure shall be final.

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny

Panel

OXFORDSHIRE

G R O W T H B O A R D

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH 2020 AT 6.30 PM

THE LONG ROOM, OXFORD TOWN HALL, ST ALDATES, OXFORD

Present:

Councillors Andrew Gant (Chair), Nick Carter, Andy Cooke, Julian Cooper, Peter Dragonetti, Hayleigh Gascoigne, Alex Postan, John Sanders, Anne-Marie Simpson, John Tanner, Richard Webber, Lucinda Wing and Sean Woodcock

Officers contributing to and supporting the Panel:

Amit Alva	Project and Scrutiny Officer – Oxfordshire Growth Board
Anita Bradley	Monitoring Officer – Oxford City Council
Caroline Green	Assistant Chief Executive – Oxford City Council
Susan Harbour	Strategic Partnerships Manager – South and Vale District Councils
Bev Hindle	Growth Board Director – Oxfordshire Growth Board
Giles Hughes	Chief Executive – West Oxfordshire District Council
Kevin Jacob	Democratic Services Officer – Oxfordshire Growth Board
Stefan Robinson	Growth Board Manager – Oxfordshire Growth Board

Other councillors: Councillor Barry Wood, Chair of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Leaders Group and member of the Oxfordshire Growth Board

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

Apologies were submitted from:

Councillor Matthew Barber, Vale of White Horse District Council

Councillor Derek Cotterill, West Oxfordshire District Council, (substituted by Councillor Alex Postan)

Councillor Ted Fenton, West Oxfordshire District Council

Councillor Sarah Gray, South Oxfordshire District Council

Councillor Damian Haywood, Oxfordshire County Council, (substituted by Councillor John Sanders)

Councillor Craig Simmons, Oxford City Council

Declarations of interest

Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne declared an interest in Item 7.c Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Sub-Group on the grounds that her partner worked for the Project LEO low carbon hub referred to within the notes.

Chair's announcements

With the Panel's permission, the Chair stated that he intended to change the order of the Agenda to consider item 8 Work Programme and Action Log prior to item 7.d Feedback from joint Oxfordshire Growth Board/Health and Wellbeing Board workshop.

At the Chair's invitation, Susan Harbour, Strategic Partnership Manager at South and Vale District Councils provided an update on the status of the South Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan. The meeting was informed that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government had used his powers under Section 27 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to direct South Oxfordshire District Council to progress its submitted Local Plan through examination and adoption by December 2020.

Although the meetings of the South Oxfordshire District Council Cabinet and full Council scheduled for Thursday 5 March would go ahead, and councillors would receive a verbal update from officers, they would not be able to consider the options set out in the officer report because of the Secretary of State's direction. The status of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan remained as submitted and it would proceed to examination, expected in October 2020.

At the invitation of the Chair, Anita Bradley Monitoring Officer at Oxford City Council reminded the Panel that the South Oxfordshire Local Plan did not fall within the Panel's Terms for Reference. It was important for members of South Oxfordshire District Council to continue exercise caution in respect of future statements of views prior to the eventual formal consideration of its Local Plan.

33 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2020 were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

The Chair referred the Panel to the action from the minutes to circulate a copy of officer advice in relation to the Panel's discussion of the status of the South Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan. Stefan Robinson, Growth Board Manager, commented that it had been necessary to obtain the view of the Growth Board's Monitoring Officer and the advice would be circulated to the Panel shortly.

Councillor Cooper expressed his concern that this had not already taken place given the date of the previous meeting and the legal basis of the advice. At the invitation of the Chair, Anita Bradley confirmed that the advice did not relate to case law, but as stated previously, the matter of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan was not within the Terms of Reference of the Panel.

34 Public participation

The Panel heard one address and received one question from members of the public.

1. Dr Peter Collins on behalf of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England Oxfordshire (CPRE) made an address in which he referred to concerns previously expressed by CPRE that there was an overall lack of transparency around the Growth Board and that engagement, including with CPRE, needed to be built into the way it operated if it were to be democratic. CPRE had been recognised as a key stakeholder and this had been recognised by the Panel itself. He expressed concern that in his opinion, CPRE had not been involved enough in the development of the informal steering groups and working group supporting the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 given its history and expertise as an organisation.

In response, the Chair commented that the Panel had previously supported CPRE's involvement in discussions of matters around strategic growth as much as possible and that he was happy to reiterate that view to the Growth Board.

2. Julia Benning on behalf of Need Not Greed Oxfordshire asked a question which was put in her absence. The question welcomed the report to the March Growth Board meeting about zero carbon housing and drew the Panel's attention to the introduction by the West Midlands Combined Authority of a localised definition of affordable housing linked to incomes rather than house prices.

The question went on to refer to paragraph 42 of the Quarter 3 Housing and Growth Deal Progress Report which and quoted reference to the establishment of a series of 'informal steering groups and working groups' to oversee specialist topic workstreams of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 including the workstream relating to an assessment of housing numbers. The Panel was asked whether it had confidence in relation to the membership of the groups, their brief, use of consultants, consideration of the environment, setting of a localised definition of affordable housing and reporting arrangements back to local authority councillors and the public.

In response, the Chair commented that in his view the Panel could have reasonable confidence in the composition of the steering groups, but that it was reasonable to continue to ask how the work of the groups' work would be reported back publicly. The Panel had been clear in its encouragement that the Growth Board put the environment at the forefront of its thinking and on the importance of affordable housing. A full response from officers to the technical elements of the questions put would be sent the questioner and the Panel following the meeting.

A short discussion took place regarding the merits of a common localised definition of affordable housing with a range of views expressed. It was noted that a common definition would require agreement of the five individual planning authorities, making that potentially more complex to achieve than in an area with a single local authority. It was felt by some members of the Panel that the Growth Board should be encouraging a common approach.

It was suggested that a list of the current local affordable housing definitions could be collated and brought back to the Panel.

35 Update from Councillor Barry Wood, Chair of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Leaders Group and member of the Oxfordshire Growth Board

The Chair welcomed Councillor Barry Wood, Chair of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Leaders Group, member of the Growth Board and Leader of Cherwell District Council to the meeting.

In summary, Councillor Wood informed the Panel that:

- The Arc Leaders Group covered the whole of the geography of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc and was composed of the leaders of all the local authorities within that areas. It was a significant footprint within the UK.
- Different aspirations and politics were reflected within the Group, which operated on the principle of seeking to arrive at consensus rather than complete unanimity. It was a collaboration of the willing, based upon the collective benefit of working together.
- Although the Arc had in the past been highlighted in statements made by Ministers relating to HM Government's ambition for housing numbers along the Arc footprint by 2050 and Highways England's proposal for an Oxford to Cambridge expressway, the expressway was a separate project to the Arc.
- It remained to be evidenced how this commitment in principle would be demonstrated and put into action, for instance, through the Budget, and/or HM Government Comprehensive Spending Review.
- It was expected that there would be a relationship between HM Government spending and how local partners collaborated in order to manage the impacts of growth in their areas to mutual benefit.
- The Oxford to Cambridge Arc Joint Declaration between HM Government and partners had included a specific paragraph relating to the value placed on the natural environment and the aim to meet joint economic and housing ambitions whilst overall improving, rather than degrading, the environment in the Arc for present and future residents.
- If the aspirations set out in that paragraph were to be realised, even in part, it would demonstrate the value of local authority and HM Government collaboration.
- Arc Leaders had recently agreed to look at the development of a co-designed, robust, deliverable, inclusive and sustainable economic and environmental framework for the Arc between HM Government and local partners. In addition, it had been suggested that there could be a green Arc which prioritised climate change.
- There had been a recommitment to the principles of subsidiarity with local planning authorities continuing to be a central pillar of land use planning, but with governance mechanisms such as Growth Board's providing a degree of collaboration and proof of the duty to collaborate.
- The Oxfordshire Growth Board had been one of the first Growth Board's to be established and whilst it could and would be improved, it would be an important building block in the development of the Arc.

The following points were raised during the Panel's discussion with Councillor Wood and Bev Hindle:

- HM Government had yet to confirm its acceptance, but ARC Leaders had been clear in their discussions with it that subsidiarity involved the taking of decisions and implementations of actions at the level of optimum effectiveness. Growth Boards could be a potential bridge between HM Government, local authorities and local people. For Oxfordshire, this would include a clear focus on sustainability and the Panel itself had a key role to play in monitoring and questioning the delivery of that agenda.

- The Arc provided a level of scale at which it was more likely that influence could be brought to bear on HM Government on cross boundary issues such as enhancements in building regulation to meet the climate emergency.
- The Oxfordshire Growth Board and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority were likely to be one of four governance bodies across the Arc with a form of Executive Committee comprised of representatives from all four groupings. It was felt by the Panel, that any members of this committee should be elected councillors.
- No definitive information was available at the time of the meeting in respect of the future of the Oxford to Cambridge expressway, although it was possible this would be an element of the Budget or connected statements.
- Confirmation had been received that the East West Rail project had been approved and this had the potential to significantly reduce road traffic between Oxford and Milton Keynes.
- Whilst the commitment to sustainability and the environment for the Arc was welcomed, the Panel sought actual examples of what the ambition would look like in practice. The Panel was informed that the incorporation of the role of sustainability and environment with the Arc was still at the vision stage of development, and it was important that HM Government took actions that would count and have real outcomes. There would be additional demands upon local authorities as partners arising from this which would need resources on the ground.
- Adding an environmental ambition to the other Arc objectives and in leading the way provided an opportunity to persuade the public of the wider benefits arising from the Arc otherwise it could be viewed as a threat.
- There should be an aspiration to make affordable housing genuinely affordable. It was noted that details of expenditure of the £60m provided as part of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal to support affordable housing were set out in the regular progress reports. It was likely that there would be deals equivalent to the Oxfordshire one across the geography of the Arc and lessons could be learnt from it.
- Concern was expressed that funding from HM Government might not be enough to meet the aspirations of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, particularly considering any reappportionment of funds to other parts of the country following the election. In response, the comment was made by Councillor Wood that it was felt there would still be funding available for the Arc, but it would be necessary to continue to put forward a good business case in a highly competitive context. HM Government was aware of the importance of the Arc geography for the UK economy.

The Panel welcomed the reference by Councillor Wood to the importance of improving the natural environment alongside the other objectives of the Arc set out in the joint declaration and felt that this should be championed by the Growth Board as the Oxford to Cambridge Arc developed. The Panel also supported the development of digital connectivity as part of the ambition for the Arc.

The Panel accepted the invitation from Councillor Wood that he could provide a further update on the Arc's development on an annual basis.

RESOLVED:

The Scrutiny Panel recommended that:

1. The Growth Board, in its future involvement in the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, continues to champion and seek deliverability specifically against the following section of the

Oxford to Cambridge Arc joint declaration between HM Government and local partners, which the Scrutiny Panel supports:

“We value the natural environment highly and aim to meet our economic and housing ambitions while overall improving, rather than degrading, the environment in the Arc. We want better places to live, which are beautiful and inspiring, to benefit the Arc’s residents today as well as tomorrow. The Government has already set out its intention for the Arc to embody England’s 25 Year Environment Plan, which we will work together to deliver, including through planning for local natural capital. We want new developments to use intelligent and sensitive design to create or enhance habitats and improve habitat 8 connectivity, in situ and in the surrounding area. We also want to improve access to the environment for existing and new communities in order to improve health and wellbeing.”

2. Any representation from the Growth Board within the formal governance structures of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc should remain reserved for elected councillors within the Growth Board.

36 Oxford to Cambridge Arc Update

It was noted this subject had been covered during the previous item.

37 Growth Board response to scrutiny panel recommendations - 23 January 2020

The Panel noted the Growth Board’s response to the recommendations from the meeting on 23 January 2020 as set out in the Agenda. In presenting the report the Chair highlighted that the recommendations had been received positively by the Growth Board. As requested, a formal request had been sent from the Growth Board to the Secretary of State for Transport regarding the future of the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway.

A copy of the letter and the response of the Transport Minister for Roads, Buses and Places indicating that an update on the future of the project would be given in due course had been circulated to the Panel and was also available via the Growth Board’s webpage.

38 Oxfordshire Growth Board papers 11 March 2020

a Zero Carbon Housing

The Panel considered a report to the Growth Board presented by Caroline Green, Assistant Chief Executive Oxford City Council, which set out emerging best practice and challenges faced by local authorities in promoting and encouraging net-zero carbon housing development.

The Panel was informed that the report had been informed by discussions at the Housing Advisory Sub-Group which had identified that the journey to Zero Carbon housing was a key priority for Oxfordshire authorities and nationally.

Expert advice on climate change indicated that meeting the challenges of delivering zero carbon housing would be key to meeting HM Government’s legal commitments on achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Systemic barriers to the upscaling of zero

carbon housing existed, but there were also genuine policy development opportunities available for Oxfordshire as set out in the report.

The Panel was informed that the report's recommendations had been drafted flexibly to allow for a potential programme of work to be developed by officers over time.

The Chair and Panel thanked Caroline Green for an important and informative report. In its discussion about the issues raised, the Panel commented and noted that:

- Higher design standards were welcomed as a possible objective of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 with policies to support the delivery of the energy strategy, (para 39.d). The Panel was reminded that the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 would require individual approval by each of the district local planning authorities. It would be a matter for each local planning authority to come to a judgement on what issues, (such as design standards) they were comfortable with for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 to cover versus what would be covered in their local plans. There would be an advantage in potentially having common standards across Oxfordshire which provide scope to be more adventurous.
- The best way to achieve high building standards would be through changes to national building regulations rather than through local plans, but it was argued that the regulations had not kept pace with the environmental standards local authorities aspired to. Many local authorities had sought to bridge this gap through local planning policies, but these needed to be tested. An advantage of an Oxfordshire Plan 2050 approach to zero carbon was that it could represent the next best opportunity to put in place a policy with real planning weight. More work was required, and it would require consensus across the Oxfordshire local authorities.
- A concern that the Government's consultation on the Future Homes Standards could remove discretion from local authorities to set higher standards.
- In addition to long-term national climate change targets, it was important for HM Government to put in place short and medium-term targets as staging points by which progress could be monitored.
- Significant financial investment through incentives and leadership would be required from HM Government to support the measures required to achieve zero carbon housing, particularly regarding the significant cost of retrofitting existing housing stock. This made it particularly important to move to a zero-carbon standard as soon as possible for new housing, both in its operation and construction.
- It was felt that the Growth Board did have an important role to play in seeking to encourage and coordinate joint action on zero carbon housing across Oxfordshire and in lobbying HM Government, potentially through the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.
- Encouragement of modern methods of construction was required, including from mortgage lenders as it could be difficult for borrowers to obtain finance for non-traditional building methods.
- It would be necessary to scale up from current early demonstrator zero carbon projects although there was evidence that it was possible to do so.
- There were issues around the capacity of firms to upscale zero carbon housing capacity and the sharing of skills and technologies.
- It was noted that zero carbon homes had not yet commanded a premium in the housing market to outweigh the current additional costs for most developments.
- It was important to ensure that new measures designed to encourage zero carbon housing did not contradict existing planning requirements.

After further discussion, the Panel welcomed the report and agreed that recommendations should be drafted based on its discussion at the Chair's discretion.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Growth Board encourage Government to put in place a series of phased incremental 5-year targets to reduce carbon emissions from new and existing homes to achieve Net Zero Carbon emissions by 2050. This could be an effective measure to increase the focus on realistic delivery towards this target.
2. That in view of the Government's target to reduce carbon emissions by 2050, the Growth Board recognise the significant need for a national household retrofitting programme in addition to ensuring current developments are inexpensive to retrofit. Furthermore, make the case to Government for investment support.
3. That the Growth Board recognise the higher than average purchase price for modular build and zero carbon housing built by modern methods, setting out to Government the need for more accessible mortgage products.

b Quarter 3 Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Progress Report and Financial Summary

The Panel considered a report to the Growth Board presented by Bev Hindle, Growth Board Director, which set out an update on progress at Quarter 3 (2019/2020) with the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, and the interim financial position. The following points were highlighted:

- Para 27 set out spend against the agreed programme for the Oxfordshire Affordable Housing Programme over a three-year period. A theme was that the programme was finding it difficult to compete with other schemes including those provided by Homes England, HM Government's housing delivery agency.
- Several proposals to help improve performance had been made to HM Government which had been received well, but the effect of these would take time to have an impact and might not have effect until after the end date of the programme.
- Active consideration was being given to how the Oxfordshire Affordable Housing Programme, (OAHP) and wider Growth Deal could be turned into a longer-term programme and there was the potential to deliver a lot more in the future.
- As of Quarter 3, a significant amount of learning was taking place around potential strengths and weaknesses and it was acknowledged that performance needed to improve.
- The target for capital programming had been achieved at Year 1, in part because a lot of work had already taken place on individual projects, but it had been harder to bring completely new scheme forward in Year 2.
- The capital programme for the OAHP was over a three-year period and the capital programme for Home from Infrastructure was a five-year period, but delivery experience indicated that a 10-15-year programme might be more appropriate.

In its discussion of the report with Officers, the Panel commented and noted that:

- The Chair commented that in his view, the overall tone of the report had been quite negative, particularly the change in performance outlined in paras 26-27 between June 2019 and December 2019 which showed a significant decrease in performance and the challenge around providing a competitive grant rate in comparison to other providers

- Concern was expressed regarding the scale of the challenge of delivering 70% of the affordable homes target in the final year of the programme and whether this could realistically be achieved.
- The scale of the challenge was accepted by officers, which was most acute in respect of the Affordable Housing Programme. Mitigations to improve performance had been proposed to HM Government, but unfortunately a number had not been accepted which was discouraging.
- Steps had been taken across the Oxfordshire local authorities such as the pooling of resources and developing dialogues with developers to build longer term relationships. The view of officers was HM Government strongly wanted the programme to succeed, but some of its current governance structures and processes had tended to make this more difficult.
- The Housing and Growth Deal had been the first of its kind and whilst it would deliver, all parties would seek to apply the learnings for future arrangements. It was a significant challenge to deliver complex housing projects within the period of the Deal, but progress was being made.
- The Panel welcomed the information set out in the report, but also commented that it would be helpful to see some of background information supporting it, particularly to help it understand spend versus benefits realised.
- The Panel suggested that it would be helpful for there to be a review of the Deal and programmes with recommendations for the future. It was noted that there was an annual review process with HM Government and that there was the potential to also undertake an audit. This would be welcomed as it would provide a useful insight for all parties on what could be improved.
- Concern was expressed about slippage in the Year 2 affordable housing programme and asked whether HM Government funding had been the most significant issue or whether other factors, such as planning delays had had also had an impact. The Panel was informed that the reasons were multi-factorial. Delivery of some major sites had slipped, and some potential sites had been lost to providers with more attractive grant offers and the picture had been similar in respect of infrastructure. It was necessary to be transparent and clear that not all factors on delivery could be controlled locally or that mitigations were not controlled local either.
- Members suggested that it might be appropriate to set numerical targets for delivery that reflected the risk of some sites dropping out of the Affordable Housing Programme and it was confirmed this was already considered.
- It was technically possible that HM Government could decide to clawback unspent funds, but both it and the Growth Board, were working to support the Deal.

The Panel strongly welcomed the actions being taken by officers in seeking to mitigate any risks to the Affordable Housing Programme and the Growth Deal and were supportive of a review.

RESOLVED: That the Scrutiny Panel recommended that the Growth Board, in considering the Housing and Growth Deal Progress report, seek to develop a reflective paper on experiences to date concerning the deliverability of the Housing and Growth Deal including mitigation activities and future risks. Furthermore, that the Growth Board ask the Government to respond to the request for extension made by officers on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 timelines and that this should reflect on the need to set flexible and realistic timescales for any future investment agreements with Government following an audit of existing arrangements.

c Oxfordshire Plan 2050 sub-group update

The Panel considered the notes of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Sub-Group held on 13 February 2020. Giles Hughes, Chief Executive West Oxfordshire District Council, commented that the meeting had focussed on the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, (LTCP5) and the Local Energy Oxfordshire Project.

In discussion of the notes, the Panel referred to the promotion of cycle networks as part of the LTCP5 and commented on the importance of towns and villages being properly connected. Efforts to increase awareness of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 amongst younger age groups and the BAME community were welcomed and supported.

In respect of the timeline for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, the Panel queried whether HM Government had agreed the 12-month extension to the date of adoption of the Plan. It was confirmed that HM Government had been written to requesting an extension, but formal confirmation had yet to be received. Plan officers were focussing on the next stage of the plan's formal consultation. It was highlighted to the Panel that councillor engagement within each authority would be very important.

Members of the Panel referred to the apparent priority given to social justice and inclusivity issues by young people in their responses to engagement on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. The Panel was informed these issues would be considered.

d Feedback from joint Oxfordshire Growth Board/Health and Wellbeing Board workshop

The Panel noted a short report to the Growth Board which set out feedback arising from a networking event between members of the Growth Board and members of the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Panel was informed that the event had been successful and had underlined the importance of both organisations working together for the benefit of Oxfordshire's residents and areas of joint work were being developed.

39 Work Programme for the Scrutiny Panel and Action Log - March 2020

The work programme of the Panel was considered as set out in the Agenda. Amit Alva, Growth Board Scrutiny Officer, introduced the report and drew the Panel's attention to the possibility of the Panel establishing task and finish groups in specific areas as endorsed at its previous meeting, and asked for suggestions to be submitted to him.

40 Dates of meetings

The Panel noted the dates of meetings as follows:

- 28 May 2020
- 15 September 2020
- 19 January 2021
- 16 March 2021
- 1 June 2021

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Chairman

Date



Growth Board response to recommendations of the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel Recommendations made on 4th March 2020

The Growth Board is requested to provide a response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 11 March 2020.

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
<p>Recommendation 1. That the Growth Board, in its future involvement in the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, continues to champion and seek deliverability specifically against the following section of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc joint declaration between HM Government and local partners, which the Scrutiny Panel supports:</p> <p><i>“We value the natural environment highly and aim to meet our economic and housing ambitions while overall improving, rather than degrading, the environment in the Arc. We want better places to live, which are beautiful and inspiring, to benefit the Arc’s residents today as well as tomorrow. The Government has already set out its intention for the Arc to embody England’s 25 Year Environment Plan, which we will work together to deliver, including through planning for local natural capital. We want new developments to use intelligent and sensitive design to create or enhance habitats and improve habitat 8 connectivity, in situ and in the surrounding area. We also want to improve access to the environment for existing and new communities in order to improve health and wellbeing.”</i></p>	Yes	<p>The Growth Board welcomes the Scrutiny Panel’s support for the statement set out in the Joint Declaration of Ambition. The Arc Leaders are currently a coalition of the willing, but as and when the Arc begins to develop more formal governance arrangements, the Board’s membership will continue to ensure that Oxfordshire’s environmental ambitions are heard.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2. That any representation from the Growth Board within the formal governance structures of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc should remain reserved for elected councillors within the Growth Board.</p>	Yes	<p>The Growth Board agrees that representatives of the Oxfordshire Growth Board on the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Leaders Group Executive should be chosen from the elected Local Authority Leaders to ensure democratic accountability is embedded as Arc level. The Growth Board also wishes to see</p>

		that LEPs and universities are represented on this Executive as well.
Recommendation 3. That the Growth Board encourage Government to put in place a series of phased incremental 5-year targets to reduce carbon emissions from new and existing homes to achieve Net Zero Carbon emissions by 2050. This could be an effective measure to increase the focus on realistic delivery towards this target.	Yes	The Zero Carbon Report considered by the Board on 11 March 2020 made a series of recommendations concerning the journey to zero carbon. This report represents the start of developmental work which can help to inform county wide planning for a zero-carbon future. The Board will ask officers to consider at what intervals phased targets might be most appropriate, and to make the case to Government as part of that wider work.
Recommendation 4. In view of the Government’s target to reduce carbon emissions by 2050, the Growth Board recognise the significant need for a national household retrofitting programme in addition to ensuring current developments are inexpensive to retrofit. Furthermore, make the case to Government for investment support.	Yes	The Zero Carbon Report considered by the Board on 11 March 2020 included a recommendation to seek incentive from Government to support carbon zero development. The Board will ask officers to make the case to Government on this issues as part of the wider work listed in response to recommendation 3.
Recommendation 5. That the Growth Board recognise the higher than average purchase price for modular build and Zero Carbon housing built by modern methods, setting out to Government the need for more accessible mortgage products.	Yes	The Board will ask officers to make the case to Government as part of the wider work listed in response to recommendation 4.
Recommendation 6. That the Growth Board, in considering the Housing and Growth Deal Progress report, seek to develop a reflective paper on experiences to date concerning the deliverability of the Housing and Growth Deal including mitigation activities and future risks. Furthermore, that the Growth Board ask the Government to respond to the request for extension made by officers on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 timelines and that this should reflect on the need to set flexible and realistic timescales for any future investment agreements with Government following an audit of existing arrangements.	Yes	<p>The Growth Board will ask officers to identify a suitable time in which a lessons learnt paper can be brought forward, once the audit has been confirmed as proceeding and completed.</p> <p>The Growth Board Director will seek clarity on the timing for an annual review meeting with MHCLG and Homes England where at this point, and other matters related to issues across the programme, should be addressed.</p>

To: Oxfordshire Growth Board

Title of Report: Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal

Date: 2 June 2020

Report of: Bev Hindle, Growth Board Director

Status: Open

Executive Summary and Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to update the Growth Board on the early impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the delivery of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, including a recommendation to revise the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Timeline. Officers will continue to monitor impact, reporting to future Growth Board meetings any actions necessary to mitigate impact over time. This report will be considered by a virtual online meeting of the Growth Board as a result of the recommended social distancing measures.

Recommendations:

That the Growth Board:

1. Notes the early impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the delivery of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, and in considering this;
2. Endorses a revised timeline for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, as set out in this report, for officers to take forward in discussion with MHCLG.

Introduction

1. As the first deal of its kind, the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal ('the Deal') was successful in securing £215m of Central Government investment to advance housing delivery and boost economic productivity in the area. Within the deal are four distinct workstreams.
2. The Homes from Infrastructure Programme (Hfi) within the Deal is a £150m investment in infrastructure to support the acceleration of already planned housing in Oxfordshire over a five-year period from 2018/19 to 2022/23. The Infrastructure projects include road, rail, cycle routes and footpaths, as well as social infrastructure such as schools. Similarly, The Affordable Housing Programme is a £60 Million investment over three years to support the delivery of at least 1322 additional affordable homes, using a range of tenures including social rent, affordable rent, shared ownership by March 2021.

3. Through the Deal, the Oxfordshire authorities agreed to develop a county wide Strategic Development Plan, known as the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, to support a more coordinated approach to long term spatial planning across the County. This is supported by additional time limited planning freedoms and flexibilities for local authorities to protect against unplanned development.
4. The fourth workstream within the Deal is Productivity which sits alongside the other work streams, led by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). At the centre of this work is an ambitious Local Industrial Strategy for Oxfordshire. It is the role of the Oxfordshire Growth Board to oversee and monitor delivery of the Deal and its workstreams.
5. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on populations globally, nationally and locally. Each of the Oxfordshire Councils are investing significant resources into managing local response efforts. This report however focusses on the impact that the pandemic is having on local delivery against the Deal programme; specifically, the Housing delivery, Infrastructure, Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and Productivity workstreams.
6. It is critical to note that this report provides an update on the early impacts of the pandemic only, and secondly that the fast-changing nature of the situation may render many comments in this paper out of date soon after publication. Forthcoming quarterly progress reports will reflect on the impact of COVID-19 and the actions taken in response on an ongoing basis as necessary.

Impact of COVID-19 on the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and the Housing Market

7. Prior to the COVID crisis, a picture was emerging in Oxfordshire of a housing market delivery trajectory that was slipping due to issues such as local plan delays and the beginnings of weakening developer confidence in certain areas of the Oxfordshire housing market. Within that overall picture however those sites that were supported by the Housing and Growth Deal through infrastructure investment were generally maintaining their delivery trajectory, partly because the infrastructure investment supported developer confidence and because these sites are the ones with the most robust demand profile and could withstand market movements more robustly.
8. Nationally, it is estimated that around 75% of housing sites closed due to the COVID crisis.¹ In Oxfordshire, all the major sites halted production because of COVID-19 and are now returning to work (May 2020). However, there will be on-site working practice restrictions in place that are likely to mean full productivity will not be possible whilst staff and contractors adapt to this new working environment. Some of the smaller development sites in Oxfordshire did not close, but capacity was limited as contractors were isolating or ill.

¹ Building.co.uk. 2019: Available at: <https://www.building.co.uk/news/coronavirus-stops-work-at-75-of-uk-housing-schemes/5105579.article>

9. There is also an issue of supply chains drying up and putting workers onto the Furlough Scheme, affecting the ability to develop.² However, there is evidence that these firms are also returning to work. In April for example, a major brickmaker Mickelmersh announced they would be returning to work.
10. Costs of construction will also be an issue affected by COVID-19. The market was already experiencing an increase in labour costs due to the effects of Brexit and this may well be compounded by the crisis. Coupled with the point made above that developers will not be able to run sites at full capacity due to the need for physical distancing, this will therefore impact upon the efficiency of sites and therefore costs.
11. Because of the slowdown, councils can expect housing delivery trajectories, both Deal related and more generally to be impacted. At the time of writing this report however officers have yet to complete the revised delivery trajectories for either Housing from Infrastructure or the Affordable Housing Programme. The former is being completed by partners and is expected to be available from late June, whilst the latter is being completed to an agreed deadline of the end of May.
12. Outside of the market slowdown, an added delay reported is the interruption to the planning process. Developers advise that where schemes are in feasibility stages work is progressing, but where either a consultation or decision point has been reached delays are inevitably occurring, although this is now reducing as an issue.
13. Looking to the longer-term impact on the housing market outside of the Deal timeframe market intelligence from Savills suggests that the housing market could see a 50% dip in activity in this financial year with the sharpest dip being in the second quarter. This is important because of the strong link between market activity (demand) and house prices. Accordingly, Savills suggest that house prices could fall as much as 10%, although they conclude it is too early to say whether the market will then re-adjust, or this will be a longer-term reduction.
14. Council partners will be aware of the government advice to councils to consider allowing SME developers to delay S106 commitments in a bid to support them through the crisis. For affordable housing this could take the form of either re-phasing or perhaps pressure to reduce the obligations, perhaps by remodelling or grant funding from government. This government advice has the potential to materially impact both the Deal and councils own affordable housing delivery trajectories as S106 accounted for 49% of all affordable housing delivered in 2018/19.
15. Developers will be concerned about any trend of slowing market housing activity and in particular shared ownership sales, which is seen as a softer market and more prone to economic cycles. This is because often the shared ownership client is usually on a lower quartile income for home ownership and the concern is that some of the potential purchasers may have had to use their

² Inside Housing, 2020. Available at: <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/housing-associations-warn-supply-chain-failures-caused-by-covid-19-could-hurt-development-plans-66156>

deposit savings for other needs, whilst others may not be able to access mortgages now due to a change of employment situation.

16. Developers have advised that the attitudes of banks will be central to their future performance as they rely upon loan funding for their development activities, funded from sale receipts. This is especially true if the sales market does not pick up as loan finance is often secured against built stock. There is for example already some evidence that finance against shared ownership is being temporarily stopped by some lenders
17. In terms of the role of the Housing and Growth Deal, the Board will be aware that current Deal finance restricts expenditure to either infrastructure that accelerates planned housing or grant for additional affordable housing. Post COVID however there is perhaps a wider role for the Deal in enabling sites that have stalled to progress, thus accelerating housing that would otherwise have stalled. A discussion about this wider role for the Deal will be an ask of Government as we discuss how the Deal can aid recovery in the housing market.
18. Within this overall housing development picture, the Housing and Growth Deal Affordable Housing Programme (OAHP) has inevitably slowed. The Board will be aware that the programme was experiencing challenges in the second year and these challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID crisis. The immediate impact was that a proportion of the schemes that were programmed to reach the relevant milestone to qualify for grant at the end of year two failed at the last minute as staff were off sick or contractors were not available. There were also several schemes where the COVID crisis led the Registered Provider of social housing (RP) concerned to reflect upon whether their development contract and the penalties it contained for exceeding costs or timescales is one they could sign up to.
19. These last minute delays could have reduced the grant payment from government; fortunately it was agreed with MHCLG that all the schemes that had been programmed for year two would have the grant paid over to OCC as the accountable body and that grant then passed on to the relevant district council for payment to the RP when the payment milestone was achieved.
20. Looking at the impact of the COVID crisis on the OAHP moving forward, feedback from RPs on the Oxfordshire affordable housing market is that they are typically building a 6-9-month delay into their initial revisions of development business plans (as of April 2020) but sense these could be optimistic assessments. RPs also expect pressure for contracts to be renegotiated to reflect expected increased costs, force majeure claims and a perceived inability to accept compensation clauses for delay.
21. Whilst also being developers, and therefore subject to the pressures other developers face, RPs have a strong financial position due to their asset base and rental income to support that. They recognise that this position and their ability to access government grant means they can play a crucial role in housing market recovery. For example, by land purchase from developers as a recovery tool to ease developer cash flow. This could be just holding an option

on the land for developer buyback or it could be a tool for a greater intervention in the housing market with subsequent development by the RP.

22. There is also a potential role for the OAHP in driving recovery in the final years of the programme, for example by working with RPs and local authority development companies to:
 - Assist with developer cash flow issues caused by slow market sales through the bulk purchase of units. These units would then be converted to affordable rented housing using OAHP grant. This is a proven method of assisting the market that was successful in the last housing market slump in 2009;
 - Converting shared ownership properties to affordable or social rented housing using OAHP grant funding. At present this is not permitted by the OAHP but will be an ask of government as we discuss how the Deal can assist in the housing market recovery.
23. It is important that the potential of the OAHP to assist with housing recovery is maximised in the final year of the programme and officers are discussing with Homes England revised terms for the OAHP to enable that to happen. The OAHP will need to reflect the new Oxfordshire housing market in these discussions, for example by the potential to grant fund social rented housing at lower rents to address issues of affordability for local people that will be brought into sharper focus by any economic downturn.

The impact of COVID 19 on Infrastructure delivery in Oxfordshire

24. The unprecedented circumstances present a challenge at the time of writing to say with any certainty what the overall impact of COVID-19 will be on infrastructure delivery related to the Housing and Growth Deal. This programme is delivered through Oxfordshire County Council's Capital Delivery Programme and much of its infrastructure programme will be impacted in the same way. There is no precedent to help understand what the potential future impacts are, coupled with limited information available on when restrictions may end and the details of future working arrangements (as of May 2020). There are also major questions being asked of the need and demand for particular infrastructure projects planned before COVID-19 e.g. national push for more cycle infrastructure.
25. A more granular understanding of the impacts will be developed over the coming months. However, what is clear now is that staff are continuing to work but in a very different way. Where schemes are in design, work has continued where possible and the impact is not thought to be significant. Site visits are expected to have been impacted, and where surveys are required, it is expected that there will have been an impact on the programme, and some surveys being seasonal this could have a significant impact. Schemes in construction are also expected to be impacted by the pandemic owing to changes to methods of working and travel limitations.
26. Contractors and consultants have measures in place to deal with change, such as project continuity plans, and these are being adapted to tackle COVID-19.

The supply chain has been impacted, and their operational situation is under constant review as it is changing regularly. This is a similar challenge across other workstreams within the Housing and Growth Deal. There is a risk of supply shortages, interruptions and delays due to closed factories, logistics challenges, and some smaller suppliers may even be closed and no longer in business. There may also be an impact on the cost of materials, but this is still unclear. The need to mitigate health risks for onsite staff may further impact delivery programmes.

27. Officers will continue to review projects to determine what measures can be in place in preparation for a shift in our ways of working. Each scheme will require an updated risk analysis for active projects and ongoing monitoring of the situation. A further impact analysis will need to be undertaken, together with a project resourcing plan to be best placed for future working arrangements. This will also need to factor in compliance with new and changing government guidance on construction work safety standards.
28. The Housing & Growth Deal Infrastructure Programme will play a vital role in Oxfordshire's post COVID recovery, and officers are working with our HM Government partners to explore flexibilities to the terms of the Deal. This also provides an opportunity to reflect on what our priorities are.

The impact of COVID on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050

29. The partner councils are working collectively on a strategic, long term statutory Plan for Oxfordshire. The intention is that the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 will be a strategy-led Plan and an opportunity to be transformative, adding real value to the typical Local Plan approach. The Plan will look beyond current and emerging Local Plans and will identify the number of new homes, the level of economic growth, and related infrastructure that is needed across Oxfordshire to 2050. This will set the scene for a future round of Local Plans where the Local Planning Authorities will subsequently establish detailed planning policies and site allocations at a local level.
30. The recent focus of work by the Oxfordshire Plan team has been on:
 - building up the evidence base
 - stepping up member briefing
 - developing the spatial strategy and options for the Plan
 - planning for the launch of the Oxfordshire Open Thought exercise
31. Since the start of the Covid-19 restrictions, the Team has been working hard to assess the impact on the overall programme. Many of the consultants involved in developing the evidence base have reassured us that much of their work can continue as planned. We are working with them to ensure that work on the evidence base incorporates where appropriate consideration of the changing economic and social circumstances of the Covid-19 situation and any possible longer-term impacts of those.
32. There are some significant challenges with other aspects of the programme. In particular, the required officer and member meetings to approve emerging work

during the Summer, and a series of special Council meetings that were planned for September, will now likely be dominated by the Covid-19 response and recovery, limiting consideration of the Plan.

33. There are also technical limitations when attempting to brief all district and county councillors and answer their questions on the project remotely; these would likely have less success than face-to-face briefings. In some areas, additional duties have been reprioritised in the short term to enable the Oxfordshire Plan and Growth Board Teams to support the Covid-19 response effort.
34. Considering the unprecedented circumstances, it is recommended that the Growth Board requests from MHCLG a minimum seven-month extension to the current timeline we are working towards. This must be considered as a minimum extension as the full effects of COVID-19 are yet to be known. Two key changes in the revised programme for the next year would be to:
 - Move the Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation approval process through each council back from September 2020 to December 2020, adding 3 months and consequentially:
 - Moving the Regulation 19 (Draft Plan consultation) back to September 2021.
35. As was previously planned, a series of special Council meetings will need to be held in a co-ordinated way (preferably during the same week) which would now be held in December to approve the Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation plans. This means the 6-week consultation would be launched in January 2021. This would have a knock-on impact on the subsequent Regulation 19 consultation, which would naturally move to after the May 2021 elections.
36. By extending our timeline by the recommended seven months (measured by adoption date), this should ensure that there is still a window for early (through the Summer if restrictions allow, or the Autumn) face-to-face engagement opportunities with councillors. This timeframe would also allow more time for the non-statutory engagement work through the “Oxfordshire Open Thought” concept to gather public feedback to help inform discussions.
37. Oxfordshire Open Thought will be an open online platform for people to have their say on the future of their county as part of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. It will tap into the wealth of knowledge and expertise within our communities to help find ideas and solutions to some of the big issues that affect our lives and the environment over the coming decades. This is a new initiative that won't replace previous consultations and responses.
38. The extension would allow more time to shape the strategy and consultation document with the Oxfordshire Plan Advisory Sub-group. This group continues to meet virtually every month. A recommended revised timeline for the development of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is set out below which incorporates the impact of the circumstances set out in this report.

Oxfordshire Plan Stage	Growth Board Sep 2019 Milestones	Proposed Milestones
Further engagement (Oxfordshire Thought)	Nov/Dec 19	May 20 & Sept 20
Consultation on spatial options (scale and broad locations) (Reg18 part2)	June/July 20	Jan 21
Consultation on Draft Plan (Reg 19)	Nov/Dec 20	Sept 21
Submission	March 21	Jan 22
Examination	June-Sept 21	Apr 22
Inspector's Report	December 21	July 22
Adoption	March 22	Oct 22

39. The extra time granted through the recommended timeline would allow us to take greater account of the long-term spatial framework that is being developed to support strategic planning across the Arc. This is a real opportunity to better align our work with wider sub-regional ambitions and feed into that process, and we will have more time to develop that conversation with Government. Some flexibility in the programme to allow for a greater level of engagement and opportunity for consensus building and briefing will result in a better plan, shaped by a wide variety of voices; and a stronger case to made to the Planning Inspector who will examine it.
40. Production of the Oxfordshire Plan will mean the development of a sound long-term strategy for the future of the county. This will be even more important post Covid-19; a clear strategy with consensus across the partnership can provide clarity and leadership for the community, and greater certainty for the market and service providers which will help with business planning.

Productivity

41. Productivity is an integral component of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and sits alongside the other work streams, led by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). The headline commitment under the Productivity workstream invited Oxfordshire to be one of three 'Trailblazer' areas to take forward the ambitions set out by Government in its Industrial Strategy White Paper. This is in the form of an ambitious and transformational, long term *Local Industrial Strategy (LIS)*, and involved close working with Whitehall departments in the development of the Strategy. Following a review meeting during Year One of the Deal with the Government's Cities and Local Growth Unit, officials proposed that the focus for all elements of the productivity stream moving forward needed to be built around the LIS. The productivity workstream does not have a specific funding allocation within the Deal.
42. Between November 2019 and March 2020, work has progressed in translating the ambitions set out in the LIS and across the 25 policy areas detailed in the Strategy, into a coherent programme of delivery which can attract the necessary investment from Government and the public and private sectors to realise the vision for Oxfordshire to be a top three global innovation ecosystem. The Investment Plan is over a medium-term horizon and anticipates a mixture of proposals which can be developed and ready for investment in the first 1-3

years of the LIS strategy. This also includes a mixture of medium to longer term projects which will have a 10-year runway to be fully developed out but will require critical work being undertaken in the first 12-24 months of the Strategy in order to be moved forward at pace. A wider range of engagement activities are being deployed to shape the plan and assess areas of common interest across the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

43. In light of the pandemic, the LIS Steering Group has considered the potential economic impact of the virus on the emerging investment programme. The past months (up to May 2020) have shown the remarkable world leading capability of the region's innovation ecosystem with Oxfordshire academics, research organisations and businesses consistently being at the vanguard of national and international efforts to respond to the emergency. It is important to recognise that this leadership role in the UK economy will become even more clear as we move from the respond and recover stages, and into rebuild and renew.
44. The guiding principles of the LIS are an important reference point for this process and continue to be highly relevant in a post-COVID environment:
 - a) **Invest in Oxfordshire, deliver for the UK:** As one of three net contributors to the exchequer, Oxfordshire will deliver economic growth and manufacturing and supply chain opportunities for the rest of the UK.
 - b) **Oxfordshire – The UK's Innovation Engine:** Oxfordshire has a world-class innovation ecosystem with a concentration of global assets and strengths unrivalled by anywhere else in the UK. This, along with our strengths in research and talented workforce, make Oxfordshire a great place to invest and drive R&D and innovation in new technologies, markets, products and services.
 - c) **Global Oxfordshire, Global Britain:** Many of Oxfordshire's industries already compete on a global level, and in new emerging markets. Investing in Oxfordshire will support us in our international potential and winning new market share in technologies of the future.
45. Each project sponsor under the Investment Plan is reviewing the current status of their respective business case to consider and adjust their proposals in light of COVID-19 and identify both the economic risks but also the market opportunities which could be harnessed. This is particularly illustrated by projects which are focused around the health and life sciences sectors and energy and zero carbon. OxLEP are also looking at those projects which would be accelerated in their development considering the impact it can have for areas of the economy which have been impacted disproportionately by the pandemic such as the creative and cultural industries.
46. The LIS Investment Plan will sit alongside an expected Oxfordshire Economic Recovery Plan (ERP), whose focus will likely be about short-term measures to stabilise the economy and interventions to stimulate economic activity. These will be necessarily complementing the detailed programme coming through the LIS investment Plan and be prepared through the Joint Oxfordshire Business

Support Group (JOBS), which is a bronze level cell feeding into the established Silver and Gold structures already in place for the County.

47. Based on the market intelligence that has been gathered since the pandemic started, there are reasonably three broad areas of ERP interventions that can be progressed: financial capital support; business support, restructuring and market development; and labour market support to help people back into work. These measures will need to be aligned to, and avoid duplicating, interventions already put in place by Government.

Conclusion

48. This report provides a high-level overview of the early impacts that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on the Housing and Growth Deal. It is expected that the impacts will continue and expand as we start to see what the pace of recovery will look like. We will continue to monitor our programme closely as well as develop actions and strategies to help address the impacts as they emerge and become better understood. We expect to bring forward to the next Growth Board a further assessment of impact and a detailed update on the mitigation strategies we have or would wish to employ. Some of these measures would have been needed pre-COVID-19 to address some of the market and deal issues we were already facing.
49. Notwithstanding the relative short-term shut down of local development sites, and the wider economic restrictions, the impact will be considerable across all workstreams within the Deal. Learning from this pandemic, and adapting our ways of working, will be critical to ensuring that Oxfordshire partners are best positioned to support an effective recovery. Officers supporting the Housing and Growth Deal across the various programmes have adapted their ways of working from the start of this crisis to ensure that where possible, business continues as normal, notwithstanding the market impacts that the pandemic has had on site delivery.
50. Discussions with Homes England over the possibility of adjusting the parameters of the Housing and Growth Deal to use it as a tool for recovery have commenced and officers are working closely with OxLEP to ensure that there is a consistent and robust Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire, of which the Housing and Growth Deal programme can play a major part. An initial contact has also been made with MHCLG to alert them to the potential impacts on the various workstreams of the Deal.
51. It will be important going forward for the Deal to take account of the new policy landscape and economic context. Delays caused across the various programmes provide an opportunity to re-evaluate priorities and milestones within the Deal, informed by the local and national recovery response. Flexibility to adapt delivery ambitions and working arrangements to match shifts in policy will be crucial in ensuring the Deal can continue to deliver for local people.
52. The Growth Board is asked to note the current impact the pandemic has had on the Housing and Growth Deal workstreams, and to endorse the revised timeline for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, as set out in this report, for officers to take forward in discussion with MHCLG.

Background Papers

53. None

Report Author:	Bev Hindle, Oxfordshire Growth Board Director
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To: Oxfordshire Growth Board

Title of Report: Updating the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS)

Date: 02 June 2020

Report of: James Gagg, Infrastructure Strategy Team Leader, on behalf of Sue Halliwell, Director of Planning and Place

Status: Open

Executive Summary and Purpose:

To update the Growth Board on the planning for the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) Update and outline next steps for delivery to align with the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 timescales.

Recommendation(s):

1. That the Oxfordshire Growth Board endorse the attached outline project brief and scope of work for the OxIS update, in line with the current commitment to update OxIS in the Oxfordshire Growth Deal.

Annex:

- 1) Outline Project Brief and Scope of Work for OxIS Update.

Background and update on scoping of the OxIS update

1. The original Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) was approved by the Oxfordshire Growth Board in Autumn 2017. The strategy built on an extensive evidence base review to set out the core projects and investment seen as required to support the sustainable growth of Oxfordshire. It identified and prioritised infrastructure across a range of sectors to support known local plan housing and employment development and outlined where funding was required to help deliver this growth. OxIS has been an important piece of work to support development of subsequent funding bids and agreements, helping to secure funding for schemes through the Housing & Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and the Growth Deal.
2. As part of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal agreed in 2018, there is a commitment to update the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS), recognising that this would give an opportunity to review and update the scope of required strategic infrastructure needed to support planned growth. In particular, updating OxIS aligns to the requirements of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 by providing an up to date infrastructure picture that complements the agreed growth trajectory and direction of the Plan, taking into account the latest policy and funding picture.

3. An outline project brief and scope of work for the OxIS update is attached as **Annex 1**. This outlines the proposed objectives, purpose, governance and outputs for the OxIS update.
4. As part of the brief it is proposed that the OxIS update is carried out in two stages with Stage 1 delivered by December 2020 to support the Reg 18 Oxfordshire Plan consultation, and Stage 2 delivered in Spring/Summer 2021 to support the Reg 19 Oxfordshire Plan consultation. This will allow for OxIS and the Oxfordshire Plan to develop iteratively with increased transparency and integration.

Next Steps

5. Following the endorsement of the outline project brief, the next key planned milestones for the project are given in the table below.

Milestone		Deadline
Consultancy brief drafted and agreed		June 2020
Procurement of consultants		July 2020
Commencement of Stage 1		August 2020
Draft Stage 1 completion		December 2020
Draft Stage 1 engagement		January 2021
Stage 1 endorsement		Spring 2021
Stage 2	Spring/ Summer 2021 to align with the Reg 19 consultation.	

6. Progress of OxIS will have the oversight of the Executive Officer Group of the Growth Board, supported and monitored by a cross-authority steering group.

Financial Implications

7. To complete the OxIS update there will be a need for engagement of consultants to undertake the technical work. This will be funded via the Growth Deal Capacity Fund. The cost of the original OXIS was approximately £130k, however it is expected that the cost is likely to be slightly less this time.

Legal Implications

8. Any consultancy work can be procured by Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of the Growth Board partners, and therefore relevant contract procedure rules would be followed.

Other Implications

9. Development of OxIS will need to be undertaken in consideration of wider policy and strategy developed or in the process of development by Growth Board partners. This includes the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy, the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, Local Plans and their associated evidence base including Infrastructure Delivery Plans, and Plans for Climate Action.

Conclusion

10. There is a commitment to update OXIS, but this needs to be done in a way that matches Growth Board partner expectations, and fits with other Growth Deal priorities and timescales, particularly the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. The Growth Board's endorsement of OxIS's outline project brief and scope will demonstrate its continued commitment to the Housing and Growth Deal.

Report Author:	James Gagg, Infrastructure Strategy Team Leader, on behalf of Sue Halliwell, Director of Planning and Place
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Annex 1:

Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) Update: Outline Project Brief & Scope of Work

May 2020

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1 Background

- 1.1 The original Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) was approved by Oxfordshire Growth Board in Autumn 2017 and examined required infrastructure across a number of sectors to support known local plan development. It included many of the schemes which have subsequently been promoted through the Housing & Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and those which now have Growth Deal funding which are predominately transport schemes.
- 1.2 Oxfordshire has strong transport links along the Bristol-Birmingham-London corridors and enjoys close proximity to Heathrow and Birmingham airports. The county is committed to improving links across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc with the development of the East-West Rail scheme. However, a growing economy and population is putting strain on rail and road infrastructure, as well as the energy sector. Housing also faces rising demand and affordability pressures. In order for Oxfordshire to deliver on the vision to be a world-leading innovation ecosystem, it must continue to work with government to develop resilient infrastructure that can respond to future demands and is sustainable for the environment. The current COVID-19 Pandemic has also underlined the importance of having sufficient capacity and resilient infrastructure for Digital Connectivity and the Energy sector.
- 1.3 As part of the Housing and Growth Deal there is a commitment to update OxIS, and it is intended that this is carried out alongside development of the Oxfordshire Plan, another key commitment of the Oxfordshire Growth Deal.
- 1.4 It is intended for the OxIS update to be a Growth Board led commission that all Oxfordshire Local Authorities will collaborate on. Oxfordshire County Council have committed project management resource to take forward development and delivery of the OXIS update, but it is important that all partners jointly inform the desired objectives and process.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives for the OXIS update have been defined as:-
 - 1) To set out the priority strategic infrastructure investment needed to support sustainable, clean and inclusive growth in Oxfordshire, aligning to the emerging Growth Board themes of:-
 - **Environment** | To maximise opportunities to build long lasting resilience to climate change, creating sustainable communities by providing good access to employment, housing, open space, transport, education, services and facilities to meet community needs and that address the climate emergency and support our zero-carbon ambition.
 - **Health** | To improve health and wellbeing by enabling independence, encouraging active and healthy lifestyles, facilitating social interaction and creating inclusive and safe communities.
 - **Placemaking** | Provide a quality environment and choice of homes needed to support growth and capitalise upon the exceptional quality of life, vibrant economy and the dynamic urban and rural communities of our county.
 - **Productivity** | Deliver and attract specialist and flexible skills at all levels, across all sectors, as required by our businesses, with full, inclusive employment and

fulfilling jobs. To encourage innovation led growth, underpinned by Oxfordshire's strengths in University research and development, business collaboration and supply chain potential.

- **Connectivity** | Enable greater connectivity and accessibility especially across key growth locations, ensuring communities are digitally connected and innovative technologies are supported.
- 2) To continue to shape & influence investment strategies at a national, sub-regional and local level, maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of existing infrastructure reducing the demand for new infrastructure.
 - 3) To plan for infrastructure over a longer time horizon to complement and provide an evidence base that supports the emerging Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

3 Purpose

3.1 The purpose of OXIS is to: -

- 1) Provide a strategic framework and mechanism for Oxfordshire Local Authorities to identify and prioritise infrastructure investment priorities.
- 2) Capture the quantum of strategic infrastructure required across Oxfordshire to 2050.
- 3) Identify delivery mechanisms from both the public and private sectors, including collaborative opportunities.

4 Benefits

4.1 The expected benefits of the OxIS update are similar to the original OxIS and are set out as follows:-

- Prioritise the delivery of different types of strategic infrastructure;
- Maximise the use of available infrastructure capacity;
- Make better informed choices about the location of future growth;
- Aligning infrastructure delivery with the timetable of growth and the strategic planning work across Oxfordshire;
- Better position Oxfordshire in funding and investment discussions with government;
- Clear and compelling evidence to improve the quality and content of bids for external funding;
- Inform and enhance strategic developer funding negotiations;
- Facilitate dialogue with communities, developers and key stakeholders on the needs, benefits and opportunities arising from growth.
- Demonstrate the attractiveness of Oxfordshire as a business investment location;
- Sell the Oxfordshire 'brand' within the wider sub-national, national and international contexts, including supporting development of the OxCam Arc ambitions;

5 Governance and Project Management

- 5.1 The Project will be commissioned and owned by the Oxfordshire Growth Board, which meets quarterly and facilitates cross-authority buy-in and engagement from key partners – including the LEP, Environment Agency, and Homes England.
- 5.2 The Growth Board are currently refreshing their Terms of Reference with the final revised version planned to be considered at the Growth Board meeting in September 2020. The OxIS update will need to reflect the Growth Board's updated Terms of Reference.
- 5.3 It is proposed that Oxfordshire County Council will project manage the update of OxIS, on behalf of the Oxfordshire Growth Board, with consultants engaged to undertake the technical work required.
- 5.4 Progress of the OxIS update will have Executive Officer Group (EOG) oversight, supported and monitored by a cross-authority steering group. Regular updates would also be given to members of the Growth Board Infrastructure sub-group.
- 5.5 Oxfordshire County Council is proposed to act as lead authority in terms of consultant procurement and contract / project management. Consultants would work closely with the Project Group, client Project Manager and lead officers, via a single point of contact.

6 Scope of work

- 6.1 Oxfordshire have identified specific resource to project manage the project on a day to day basis. However, consultants will need to be engaged to undertake the required technical work as they were for the original OxIS project.
- 6.2 OxIS should be prepared in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance, helping to identify and co-ordinate planning of strategic infrastructure requirements. However, it is recognised that the strategy should add value in relation to strategic priorities rather than duplicate District Council Infrastructure Delivery Plans (which are typically focused on more local infrastructure). It should consider best practice from elsewhere, including any similar strategic infrastructure plans which have been developed by other authorities in line with that proposed.
- 6.3 The project is proposed to be undertaken in two phases;
Stage 1 (to align with the reg18 Oxfordshire Plan consultation)
- 6.4 Refreshing and re-prioritising the existing infrastructure schemes to **2040** (including supporting data), in the light of successful HIF bids, new infrastructure requirements emerging through developing local plans and any change in scheme proposals emerging from updated policies and strategies e.g. Local Industrial Strategy, Water Resource Management Plans.
- 6.5 Alongside this we would re-examine and where relevant update the Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) used to inform the scheme prioritisation process and re-rank the revised infrastructure schemes. This would also allow us to refresh the methodology for agreeing the ranking of infrastructure and, involve partners on the steering group to ensure strategic infrastructure projects in each locality are included.

Stage 2 (to align with the reg19 Oxfordshire Plan consultation)

- 6.6 Concentrating on using the ranking methodology developed in the first stage, this will focus on identification and ranking of new strategic infrastructure requirements emerging from the growth options being progressed in the 2050 Plan, allowing for us to form a more comprehensive list of infrastructure requirements to 2050.

7 Stakeholder Engagement

- 7.1 We will engage with technical leads from a wide variety of stakeholders e.g. CCG, Utilities, Education, to ensure that we have the most up-to-date data set for OxIS, and that relevant policy and strategy is understood and reflected in the work.
- 7.2 Once the draft Stage 1 is produced, there will be an opportunity to undertake a wider engagement activity on outputs alongside the Regulation 18 consultation in January 2021. This will give an opportunity for interested parties to comment on draft outputs and these can be reviewed and taken into account prior to finalisation of the report in Spring 2021. Comments received can also be used to inform development of the Stage 2 work.

8 Outputs

- 8.1 It is expected that the refreshed OXIS will deliver the following outputs, which will become evidence base to support the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 at the next 2 stages of formal consultation: -

Stage 1 | 2020 – 2040

A Stage 1 report which will incorporate the following:

- 1) An updated strategy context, which will reflect wider new and emerging strategies such as the Local Industrial Strategy, Digital Strategy, Climate Action Plans.
- 2) An updated prioritised delivery plan, which takes account of committed and proposed development and sets out the existing/proposed/potential strategic infrastructure required to support it.
- 3) A clear, interactive map-based approach with supporting narrative – extending the map-based approach from the original OxIS and aligned to the emerging Oxfordshire Plan 2050.
- 4) A refreshed scoring matrix that is aligned to the emerging Growth Board themes of Environment, Health, Placemaking, Connectivity & Productivity, that supports the commitment to housing delivery outlined in the Growth Deal, and that reflects the relative importance of local and regional schemes and seeks to allow comparative ranking of a wider range of infrastructure requirements such as utilities, green infrastructure etc.

Stage 2 | 2040 - 2050

- 1) A Stage 2 report which takes into account feedback received through the Stage 1 engagement to provide a structured and prioritised long-term infrastructure investment approach, which also acts as meaningful evidence base to support the Reg 19 Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and directly supports and enables projected growth outcomes up to 2050.

9 Interdependencies

- 9.1 Stage 1 of OxIS will support the next phase of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 reg 18 consultation (strategic development options). This is currently scheduled for January 2021. On this basis it is assumed that the Stage 1 OxIS update would need to take place over a 6 month period for delivery by December 2020. It will also help in supporting co-ordination of infrastructure planning for development identified in current and emerging local plans across Oxfordshire. It is intended that Stage 2 of OxIS will support the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 reg 19 consultation planned for later in 2021.
- 9.2 OxIS does not necessarily need to coincide with the consultation on the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) currently expected in early 2021, but the two projects would need to be consistent and inform each other.

10 Budget and Resources

- 10.1 A project budget ceiling of £130,000 has been set to fund the consultants to undertake the technical work. This will be funded via the Growth Deal Capacity Fund.

11 Milestones

- 11.1 A detailed project plan will be agreed once the outline project brief has been agreed. On the assumption that a consultant would be appointed, an indicative project timetable is outlined below, with Stage 1 completed by December 2020 and Stage 2 to be carried out to align with the reg 19 Oxfordshire Plan 2050 consultation.

Milestone		Deadline
Consultancy brief drafted and agreed		June 2020
Procurement of consultants		July 2020
Commencement of Stage 1		August 2020
Draft Stage 1 completion		December 2020
Stage 1 endorsement		Spring 2021
Stage 2	Spring/Summer 2021 to align with the Reg 19 consultation.	

12 Risks

- 12.1 Covid-19 presents a unique situation for Oxfordshire, but we are not yet at a stage where we understand the wider impact of this across Oxfordshire the UK and globally. We will need to carefully monitor the situation as it unfolds and be alert to reflect any changes in OxIS as needed.

Growth Board Scrutiny Panel Work Plan

The Growth Board Scrutiny Panel agrees its own Work Plan, which is reviewed at each meeting. The Panel is encouraged to be strict in prioritising key issues for review, in addition to the entirety of the Growth Board's forthcoming agendas, which will feature as a standard item on the Work Plan. The Panel's ongoing review of their work plan should be considered in conjunction with the Growth Board's Forward Plan.

Meeting date	Item	Description and rationale	Contact
28th May 2020	Covid-19 Impact on Housing and Growth Deal Delivery	To consider a report to the Growth Board giving an update on the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has, and will have, on the delivery of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. This includes recommended revisions to the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 timeline.	Bev Hindle, Growth Board Director
	Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy Scope	To consider a report to the Growth Board setting out the scope, timescale, governance and funding for updating the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy, in support of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.	John Disley, Oxfordshire County Council Infrastructure Strategy Manager
	Infrastructure Sub-group	To receive an update from the Chair of the Growth Board Infrastructure Advisory Sub-group on its work.	Councillor Ian Hudspeth

Meeting date	Item	Description and rationale	Lead Officer
15th September 2020	Growth Board Review	To consider the revised draft terms of reference for the Growth Board, for subsequent approval by each constituent local authority. This builds on the work of the Growth Board Review which reported its findings on 28 January 2020.	Bev Hindle, Growth Board Director

Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Update (TBC)	To consider an update to the Growth Board on emerging work being carried out to identify the policy options for the Plan.	Bev Hindle, Growth Board Director
Supporting Oxfordshire's Tourism and Visitor Economy	Oxfordshire's tourism and visitor economy is a critical component of the County's economy accounting for over 12% of all employment and contributing over £2.3billion per annum to the economy and attracts over 30million visitors per year across our county. The sector has been severely impacted by a combination of factors including flooding, BREXIT and now, most recently, the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency which is putting thousands of jobs and businesses at risk. The Growth Board report will invited members to explore what measures Oxfordshire partners can introduce, with the support of the Government and industry, to sustain jobs and services in local communities and ensure effective recovery planning for this vital sector of our economy.	Ahmed Goga, OxLEP
Q4 Housing and Growth Deal Progress Report and Financial Summary	To consider the 2019/20 Quarter 4 progress report for the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and endorse any amendments to the programmes of work as necessary. Also, to receive the Quarter 4 financial summary for the Housing and Growth Deal. This report will include an update on the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the delivery of the Deal.	Bev Hindle, Growth Board Director
The Oxford to Cambridge Arc Update (TBC)	To note any updates from the Growth Board Director in respect of regional developments within the Oxford to Cambridge Arc	Bev Hindle, Growth Board Director

Action Log

This action log sets out requests for information and actions required by the Scrutiny Panel. Any requests for information that do not relate to a specific agenda item will be published on the Growth Board's website alongside the next available Scrutiny Panel Agenda, except where that information requires the disclosure of exempt information, as set out in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Date raised by the Panel	Action	Lead Member / Officer	Panel Updated/ Discussed on	Progress Notes
4 th March 2020	A request was made by the Panel for a list of the current local affordable housing definitions of each of the district councils within Oxfordshire.	Paul Staines Housing & Growth Deal Delivery Manager	28 th May 2020	Attached below

Note for Scrutiny Committee on Affordable Housing Definitions

Introduction

- 1) Scrutiny Committee will recall it asked for a note on the current local affordable housing definitions used in Oxfordshire.
- 2) There are in effect two broad national definitions of affordable housing, either rented or home ownership. Both must be made available to those in housing need either as defined by the local housing authority or, for some types of affordable home ownership the relevant legislation. The full national definition of affordable housing is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is provided as an appendix to this note.
- 3) Any local definition of affordable housing must comply with the national definitions. Oxfordshire housing authorities do not deviate from the national definitions but sometimes set additional criteria, within the umbrella of the national definitions.
- 4) There are practically two ways to apply a local definition of affordable housing, either attach it as a requirement of funding or enshrine it in planning policy.
- 5) Scrutiny will perhaps be aware that nationally there are local authorities that have established local definitions for affordable rented housing using the former method.
- 6) For example, in the West Midland Combined Authority an affordable rent criterion has been established as part of funding requirements to access local housing grant. Similarly, the Greater London Authority has set a London Living rent at 60% of market rents, again as a funding criterion.
- 7) These authorities both benefit from being the sole source of public funding for affordable housing in their locality, meaning that developers or RPs wishing to access grant must comply with the condition.
- 8) For other councils the only practical method of applying a local definition is through planning policy. In such instances any policy requirement will be subject to the test of viability and subject to negotiation and agreement with the developer.
- 9) The Oxfordshire Growth Deal Affordable Housing programme (OAHP) includes the ability to set local definitions as part of funding criteria. However, the fact that the OAHP is not the only source of funding for affordable housing in Oxfordshire led to feedback from RPs that setting such additional requirements would result in them seeking alternative funding sources.

Rented Affordable housing

10) The different national definitions of affordable rented housing are:

a. **Social Rented Housing**

This is affordable housing that is, since 2001 is let at what is called a social rent. These properties (which constitute a majority of rented social housing properties) have a rent set locally based on a formula set by government. This creates a 'formula rent' for each property, which is calculated based on the relative value of the property, relative local income levels, and the size of the property. The aim of this formula-based approach is to ensure that similar rents are charged for similar social rent properties.

b. **Affordable Rented Housing**

In 2011, the government introduced a new definition of affordable housing, 'affordable rent' which although not setting a minimum rent, permits rents to be set at a maximum of up to 80% of market rent (both inclusive of service charges).

Affordable Rented Housing in Oxfordshire

11) Scrutiny will note that there is no ability to depart from the national definition of Social Rented housing.

12) Although able to set rents for Affordable Rented housing at 80% of market rents, in practice most local housing authorities in Oxfordshire set a maximum level for affordable rented housing that is capped at the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels for that type of property. The LHA is the maximum amount that Government will pay for housing benefit for that type of house in that location. Setting Affordable Rents at the LHA cap means that the occupant would be able to meet their full rent costs in the event of having to claim housing benefit.

13) Oxford is a particularly high costs area for rents and both the housing strategy, and the most recent local plan note that 80% of market rents is not affordable for low income households. Instead Oxford sets a requirement of affordability being not more than 35% of net household income for a proportion of the affordable housing secured through S106 agreements.

14) West Oxfordshire DC are in the early stages of considering the establishment of a local affordable rent.

Affordable Home Ownership

15) The overall working national definition of Affordable Home Ownership is that it is made available to those in housing need at a discount of not less than 20% of open market value. There are several types included in the definition.

a. **Shared ownership/Rent to Buy Housing**

Shared Ownership or Rent to Buy offers eligible applicants an option to buy a share of a property based upon personal financial capacity with the option to buy further shares in the property. Whilst you don't own the whole property ground rent is charged on the remainder. The national scheme,

called Help to Buy requires a minimum purchase of 25% of the property, based upon an individual income assessment, although there are specific flexibilities for older persons and ex-armed forces personnel.

b. Help to Buy Equity Loans

Equity Loans are a subsidised loan from Government that allows an applicant to borrow a low-interest loan to put towards the cost of purchasing a newly built home. The equity loan is for the value of up to 20% of the purchase price for homes that are outside of London. For homes inside London, the equity loan is up to 40% of the purchase price.

c. Discounted market sale

Discounted market sale (DMS) properties are sold at a pre-set percentage discount with the proviso that if sold the same discount is applied. There are no national criteria beyond the minimum 20% discount, and this enables local authorities who secure DMS to set additional local criteria.

d. Starter homes

Starter homes are new build homes available exclusively for first time buyers aged over 23 and under 40, sold at 20 per cent below normal market prices.

- 16) Scrutiny may be aware that Government is consulting on a revamped scheme of discounted market sale called First Homes. This is a proposal to sell properties to first time buyers at a 30% market discount rate. The discount will be locked into the property for subsequent buyers. The consultation proposes that the scheme be prioritised for armed forces veterans and key workers

Affordable Home Ownership in Oxfordshire

- 17) The ability to set local definitions for affordable home ownership in Oxfordshire depends upon whether the scheme is the national scheme, or one established locally.
- 18) For the national schemes for shared ownership, rent to buy, equity loans and starter homes there is no ability to deviate from the national definitions, although within that there is a proposal for the First homes Scheme that councils will set the criteria for key workers.
- 19) Local housing authorities can establish additional local criteria for Shared Ownership/Rent to Buy or for Discounted Market Sale properties secured outside of the nationally funded scheme, for example those secured through S106 agreements. This could be a requirement for a local connection or perhaps to give priority to defined Key Workers.
- 20) In Oxfordshire, for example a number of councils require applicants for local shared ownership secured through S106 agreements to have a local connection with their district, whilst Oxford allow an applicant to purchase a smaller stake in a property than the 25% minimum purchase in the national programme, reflecting the high costs of housing in the city.

Appendix

NPPF Definition of Affordable Housing

Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- (a) Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- (b) Starter homes:** is as specified in sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.
- (c) Discounted market sales housing** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- (d) Other affordable routes to home ownership** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision or refunded to government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.