

REPORT TO OXFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD OXFORDSHIRE PLAN 2050 (JOINT STATUTORY SPATIAL PLAN)

Purpose of report

- 1) To update the Growth Board with progress on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan: JSSP) and plans for the first stage of public consultation.

Recommendation

- (i) *That the Growth Board note the report*

Background

- 2) The Board will be aware of the key commitment in the Deal to develop an Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan. The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 will build on the existing and emerging set of Local Plans to set the strategic direction for planning in Oxfordshire and address linkages to wider planning considerations, for example the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor.
- 3) Oxfordshire is committed to a positive plan led approach to ensure the protection and enhancement of its built and natural environment and resources, to define and steer the nature and location of future development and secure essential infrastructure. This is consistent with the Government’s core planning principles and the Duty to Cooperate.

Oxfordshire Plan 2050 timetable

- 4) The timetable for production of the Oxfordshire Plan was approved (through the Local Development Scheme) by all District Councils during September/October 2018. However, since then, considerable thought has gone into the approach towards the consultation stages. The aim is for the Plan making process to maximise engagement, interest and ‘buy-in’ for the Plan. The Plan should also seek to be enriched by the consultation process from the wealth of interest and suggestions that will emerge.
- 5) The key to effective consultation on this Plan will be to explain the narrative of the Plan clearly so that interested groups can think about the reasons for the vision, aspirations and objectives of the Plan. There is a danger that launching into broad locations for growth would distract from the critical overarching discussions around housing need and growth aspirations of Oxfordshire.
- 6) The proposal is therefore to have two Regulation 18 consultations where the first is an accessible discussion document concerning vision, aspirations, objectives and spatial scenario typologies, whereas the second consultation would look at broad locations for growth. The timetable below demonstrates how two Regulation 18 consultations can be accommodated without affecting the overall timetable of the Plan’s production.

Early stakeholder engagement	Commenced
Consultation on Issues (Vision, objectives and level of growth) (Reg 18 Part 1)	Feb/Mar 2019

Consultation on Issues (Broad locations for growth) (Reg 18 Part 2)	Jun/Jul/Aug 2019
Consultation on Proposed Submission Draft Plan (Reg.19)	Oct/Nov/Dec 2019
Submission (Reg.22)	Mar 2020
Examination (Reg.24)	Sep 2020 tbc
Receipt and Publication of Inspector's Report	Dec 2020 tbc
Adoption (Reg.26) by each partner local planning authority	Mar 2021 (subject to examination)

Regulation 18 (Part 1) Issues consultation

- 7) At their Cabinet / Executive Board meetings in late January and early February, each of the Oxfordshire district councils will be asked to approve an issues consultation document for the Oxfordshire Plan (see Appendix 1). Following approval of the document, it would be published for public consultation as part of the Regulation 18 requirements for plan making. The document will be professionally desk-top published prior to publication and consultation to ensure that is visually attractive, engaging and accessible. This will be the first formal public consultation on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.
- 8) The consultation document explores the context for the Plan (setting out the quality of life, economic, natural and built environment, housing, health and wellbeing and transport and movement contexts). It proposes a draft vision for the Plan and objectives, and invites comments and improvements to those.
- 9) The document also sets out 5 aspirations for the Plan:
 - Strong and healthy communities
 - Support economic growth
 - Improve housing availability and affordability
 - Protect environmental quality
 - Improve connectivity and movement
- 10) Each of these aspirations would offer real benefits to future generations if fully embedded in the Plan. Some of them however if taken to the extreme, or taken in isolation, would also likely result in real issues or have knock-on impacts for other elements of the plan. As with all complex planning issues there are choices to be made and balances that need to be struck. It is likely that different degrees of these aspirations, in combination, will be required and difficult decisions need to be made between them. We are keen to explore these issues with the public so that together we can decide where the appropriate balances may lie.
- 11) The consultation document also explores the potential spatial scenarios for accommodating growth in the Plan. For example, the Plan could take any of a range of options, for example intensification of existing settlements, providing new settlements or dispersing growth or it could take a combination of these options.
- 12) The intention is prompt discussion (among stakeholders and the public) on these aspirations and scenarios and to invite input and feedback to improve and refine the approach when taking it into the next stage of the Plan. Future stages of Plan

preparation will go on to consider broad locations for growth. By focussing the conversation at this this stage on the context, need and growth aspirations of Oxfordshire, this will be a vital step towards that further discussion.

- 13) The formal public consultation is programmed to be held for a period of 6 weeks in February and March (11th February to 25th March) concluding ahead of the purdah period for the local elections (being held in Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire).

Appendix 1: Regulation 18 (Part 1) Issues consultation document