



To: Oxfordshire Growth Board
Date: 26 March 2019
Report of: Growth Board Scrutiny Panel
Title of Report: Recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 21 March 2019

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	<p>To present Scrutiny Panel recommendations concerning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation to the Chair of the Growth Board to attend the next Scrutiny Panel meeting on 30th May 2019 • Consultation on Issues (Scale of growth and broad locations - Reg 18 Part 2) preceding the government’s decision on the Oxford – Cambridge Expressway route. • Green Belt, AONB and Rural Oxfordshire • Climate Change - Carbon Sequestration, Zero Carbon Strategies and Reforestation • General overview of Scrutiny Panel response to Oxon Plan 2050 Consultation • Affordable Housing Performance and Projected Targets • Oxfordshire Growth Board Agenda. Publication of details of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc executive committee with regards to its role and functions • Revisiting the recommendation on structured communication between the Growth Board and council’s members
Scrutiny Lead Members:	Councillor Andrew Gant, Chair of the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel.
Recommendation: That the Oxfordshire Growth Board states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.	

Appendices
Appendix 1 – Draft Growth Board response to the recommendation

Introduction and overview

1. The Panel was pleased to welcome public contributions at its meeting which it is hoped will continue from a wide range of people.
2. The Scrutiny Panel considered the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 project plan and Green Belt, in addition to considering the Scrutiny Panel’s joint response to the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 consultation.
3. The Panel also considered an update on affordable housing delivery from 2018/2019 to date, in addition the Chair presented the recommendations previously made to the Growth Board and the responses received.
4. The Scrutiny Panel considered the Growth Board’s Agenda for its meeting on 26 March 2019.
5. The Panel would like to thank Anita Bradley (Monitoring Officer – Oxford City Council), Andrew Down (Head of Partnership & Insight- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils), Giles Hughes (West Oxfordshire District Council, Head of Planning and Strategic Housing) for attending the meeting to answer questions.

Recommendation 1: That the Chair of the Growth Board be invited to attend the 30th May 2019 meeting of the Scrutiny Panel.

Oxfordshire Plan 2050 – update on project plan and Green Belt

6. One of the main items discussed was the project plan for Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and specifically, the time table for the Consultation on Issues (Scale of growth and broad locations - Reg 18 Part 2) running from June- August 2019 preceding the Central Government’s decision on the Oxford – Cambridge Expressway.

Recommendation 2: That the Growth Board reflect on the inability of the Consultation on Issues (Scale of growth and broad locations - Reg 18 Part 2) to be effective as it precedes the Central Government’s decision on Oxford – Cambridge Expressway route.

7. The Panel discussed at length the need for the continued protection of not just the Green Belt but AONB and Rural Oxfordshire as well to be added as a principle to the Oxon Plan 2050 vision and objectives. The panel also discussed the need to see the findings of experts in this field.
8. The Panel also considered the sustainability of the number of houses being proposed. The panel noted that the Green Belt map in the report was not up to date with developed areas still showing in green, furthermore existing allocation of development sites were not factored in to the Green Belt review.

Recommendation 3: That the Growth Board emphasise the continued protection of not only the Green Belt but also the AONB and Rural Oxfordshire by adding it to the principles of the Oxon Plan 2050 vision and by including it as a part of the Green Belt review: reinforcing the existing policies in the NPPF. In addition, the existing allocation of development sites within the Green Belt by local authorities is factored in to the Oxon Plan 2050 Green Belt review.

9. The panel also discussed the need for a holistic view on climate change, addition of Carbon Sequestration, Zero Carbon Strategies and Reforestation to the environmental infrastructure would play an important role in mitigating climate change and the provision of such infrastructure within local development plans would support the permanence of the Green Belt and facilitate the environmental objectives of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

Recommendation 4: That the Growth Board take a holistic view in mitigating climate change and preservation of the Green Belt by adding Carbon Sequestration, Zero Carbon Strategies and Reforestation as part of the environmental infrastructure to the Oxon Plan 2050.

Scrutiny Panel response to Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (JSSP) consultation

The panel agreed that the final consultation response should capture as many points as possible. It was agreed that given the requirement to submit the response by the end of Monday 25 March the Growth Board Scrutiny Officer should compile the final wording in consultation with the Panel Chair. **Listed below are general themes and not the final response.**

10. The panel noted the need to capture the different evidence base between needed growth and government's aspirations for growth in light of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc: government ambition and joint declaration between government and local partners.
11. The panel also noted the need for aspirations of clean energy generation such as windfarms and the protection of world heritage sites within Oxfordshire. In addition, the protection of water resources with regards to the Abingdon reservoir. The need for placemaking to be defined and using this opportunity to develop country parks to facilitate sustainable living.
12. In addition, rail networks in Oxfordshire have successful links to Marylebone but Oxford-Cambridge arc seems to focus on roads. Broadband speeds remain low in many parts of Oxfordshire and the panel disagreed that technologies would be advanced enough to remove the need for rush hour commute as population growth had not been considered appropriately.

Affordable Housing Sub-Group update on performance 2018-2019

13. The panel discussed the report and concluded that not all partner councils had achieved targets and a report on projected targets for the years to come would be beneficial to the process of the Scrutiny Panel.

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14. The panel also noted the lack of a Growth Board Work programme making it more difficult for the Scrutiny Panel to panel to perform its role. In addition to the high number of verbal items, the panel is dissatisfied with the Growth Board papers as there are an excessive number of items on the agenda and only two supporting reports were available in advance and the other reports produced on the day of the scrutiny panel meeting not giving enough time for a proper review.
15. The panel also noted that the written responses to questions raised by the public at the previous Growth Board meeting were not published with the agenda.

Recommendation 5: That the Growth Board have a clear work programme. In addition, items on the Growth Board agenda should be concise and substantial and also be supported by reports/information on all items which are published along with the substantive agenda. This includes update notes from the three advisory Sub-Groups ensuring that the reports are produced well in advance of the Scrutiny Panel meeting and that the Growth Board minutes including any written responses to public questions.

16. The panel also wished to understand the rationale of process being followed by the Growth Board with regards to appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2019/2020.

Recommendation 6: That the Growth Board outline the rationale of the process/protocol being followed for the appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman to the Growth Board for 2019/2020.

17. The panel noted insufficient information on the item of appointment of a representative to Ox-Cam Arc Executive Committee and the lack of background information on the role or basis for appointment.

Recommendation 7: That the Growth Board provide background information on Ox-Cam Arc Executive Committee and the role of the representative to the Committee including basis of appointment.

18. Members of the panel also noted that there still is not a clear structure for communications between the Growth Board and each council's members after members reported having received incomplete and incorrect information from the Growth Board with regards to representation in Sub-Groups

Recommendation 8: That the Growth Board revisit the recommendation on structured communication between the Growth Board and council's members considering member reports of having received incorrect and incomplete information.

Future Work

19. As well as reviewing the Growth Board’s response to these recommendations at its next meeting, the Panel will also be considering in detail:
- a. An up to date Oxford Green Belt Map which includes already developed areas and existing allocation of sites for development.
 - b. Clear breakdown of Affordable Housing Sub-Group’s projected delivery rates and affordability targets for housing in the respective districts.
 - c. Growth Deal Infrastructure team report and to attend Scrutiny Panel meeting.
 - d. Report on Air Quality plans been adopted by each local authority
 - e. Health services and Green transport and safety (Cycle routes) vision in Oxon Plan 2050.
 - f. The report concerning the Local Industrial Strategy (OxLEP)
 - g. The Energy Strategy
 - h. Updates from Growth Board Sub-Groups.
 - i. To consider the Growth Board’s Agenda, and any items for discussion including Quarter 3 monitoring data that was previously requested by panel.

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