

# Notes

OF A MEETING OF THE



## **Oxfordshire Growth Board Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Sub-Group**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2019 AT 10.00 AM  
COMMITTEE ROOM 1, WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL,  
COUNCIL OFFICES, WOODGREEN, WITNEY, OX28 1NB**

### **Present:**

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

**Officers:** Giles Hughes (West Oxfordshire District Council), Kevin Jacob, (Oxfordshire Growth Board) and Rachel Williams (Oxfordshire Plan 2050)

**Other councillors:** None

### **30 Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes; declarations of interest; Chair's announcements**

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Colin Clarke, (Cherwell District Council).

There were no declarations of interest.

### **31 Notes of the previous meeting**

The notes of the meeting held on 17 October 2019 were agreed.

### **32 Presentation on the role and scope of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050**

The sub-group received a presentation from Rachel Williams, Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Lead which set out an explanation of the role and scope of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. This included the Plan's relationship with district council local plans, the advantages of Oxfordshire 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> tier authorities working collectively and in collaboration for Oxfordshire residents, governance arrangements for the Plan and lessons to be learned from the West of England spatial planning process.

The sub-group noted in the update and their discussion:

- The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 would not replace district local plans but would work alongside them. Individual decisions would be required by each of the district councils to agree each step of the Plan's adoption.
- The Oxfordshire Plan was strategic in nature and covered the long term. Accepting that much would change in the period to 2050, the Plan needed to be flexible enough to take account of this.
- Working together offered the benefit of increased opportunities than would otherwise be available through individual local plans. This included the sharing of common evidence bases, sharing of resources and joined up working and links to other strategic level plans such as the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy and Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy.
- Oxfordshire Plan 2050 would cover the high level and give an indication of approximate possible locations for development, with specific requirements and conditions for development, with a further level of detail within local plans.
- There could be opportunities in the future to coordinate and align the time period of the district local plans. Members of the sub-group supported the principle of collaboration and coordination recognising the existing statutory duty to cooperate. Officers were asked to progress this outside of the meeting as appropriate.
- Lessons from the West of England Joint Plan were discussed and noted. These included:
  - Identifying and articulating a cohesive common and distinct strategic spatial plan rather than a combination of individual local plans.
  - Demonstrate a robust evidence base in connection to the selection of Strategic Development Location, (SDL) site selection and robust site selection process or strategy.

A discussion took place regarding the timeliness of supporting papers for the meeting and the role of the sub-group in terms of its consideration and oversight of budgetary and programme issues relating to the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. A range of view was expressed, but it was noted that primarily the role of the sub-group was to act as an informal strategic level discussion forum that could make recommendations about the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 to the Oxfordshire Growth Board and individual authorities. It was felt that there could be ways to improve the sharing of historical information and papers which could be investigated.

The sub-group noted the update.

### **33 Presentation on the Guiding Principles for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050**

The sub-group received a presentation from Rachel Williams, Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Lead which set out indicative draft guiding principles for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. This explained the aim of the guiding principles and set them out in no particular order as:

- Collaboration
- Local distinctiveness
- Health and well-being
- Climate change
- Natural capital
- Technological change
- Countryside and landscape

- Good economic growth
- Design quality
- Relationships with neighbours

Discussion took place regarding each principle. It was acknowledged that the wording of the principles was indicative and not set at this stage. Observations from the discussion included:

- There was a logic around collaboration in managing growth in the best interests of Oxfordshire residents, notwithstanding any formal requirements to collaborate around planning.
- Health, wellbeing and education needed to be reflected strongly within the Plan principles. This was not limited to the delivery of hard infrastructure projects.
- The Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy was to be refreshed alongside the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and this would consider the implications of growth and what it meant in terms of providing infrastructure to meet the needs of residents, with the detail down to local determination through the local plans process.
- The opinion was expressed that there should be more emphasis and mention in terms of the local distinctiveness of Oxfordshire and its countryside and landscape principles.
- It was noted that there was a relationship between influencing land use to increase bio-diversity and the minerals and waste policy, although the Minerals and Waste Plan was not technically part of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.
- The anticipated impact of technological changes whilst hard to predict should inform the principles and thinking behind the Plan, i.e. impact of super-fast broadband and 5G mobile connectivity, decrease in demand for meat, effect of increasing internet-based shopping etc.
- The potential role of Local Nature Partnerships should be recognised within the context of the good economic growth principle.
- In terms of building design and quality, building regulations were an important tool to achieve this, but were not regarded as being a panacea. Challenges around design and quality from developers were often linked to concerns around effects on site viability.
- Some members of the sub-group felt that the facilitation of 'necessary growth' was a more appropriate description than the facilitation of 'good growth'
- It was important to foster links with neighbouring areas being mindful of the often arbitrary nature of boundaries and that HM Government tended to set sub-regional priorities. Members of the sub-group noted the work being undertaken by the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 team to foster good relationships with neighbouring local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnership, (LEP) teams.

Arising from the discussion it was agreed that issues around the impact of technological and behavioural change on the rural economy would be taken away for consideration in the context of planning policy and land use.

The sub-group noted the update.

## **34 Presentation on the Influencers on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050**

The sub-group received a presentation from Rachel Williams, Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Lead which set out a list of key parties and issues which would influence the development of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. These were split into influencers at the countywide level, i.e. the

Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy etc, sub-regional influencers such as the Oxford to Cambridge Growth Arc and national influencers such as UK level policy including the National Planning Policy Framework and UK Clean Growth Strategy.

The next steps in the development of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 would be to pull the various influences and evidence gathered together and the development of spatial scenarios with a range of different growth scenarios for testing. This recognised that the final decision on any scenarios would be political decision by each partner authority.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- Preliminary work had been undertaken on a range of growth scenarios, but commissioning of further evidence gathering work was planned.
- The process to develop the range of potential growth scenarios for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 was different from that used in the previous Strategic Housing Market Assessment, (SHMA). It was focussed on testing a range of scenarios with the ultimate objective of finding the right level of growth for Oxfordshire. At a strategic level it would fundamentally give a steer for the level of growth in the districts.
- It was noted that a range of factors would influence any scenarios around future growth, including housing market data, demographic data and technical information. A range of views were expressed regarding the accuracy and applicability of Office of National Statistics population projections to future demand for housing in Oxfordshire.
- Oxfordshire's situation was different to the West of England Joint Plan in that all the Oxfordshire Growth Board constituent local planning authorities retained sovereignty and no numbers or allocations could take place unless there was individual agreement to do so through the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.
- Rather than site specific site allocations, areas for future growth would be identified in the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and discussions around the level of detail on these would form part of the drafting process.

The sub-group noted the update.

## **35 Future meetings**

The next meeting of the sub-group was scheduled for 12 December 2019. Considering the announcement of this day as the date of the General Election the sub-group decided to cancel the meeting.

Future dates in 2020/2021 were agreed as follows and after discussion it was agreed to continue with the current venue:

16/01/2020  
13/02/2020  
19/03/2020  
16/04/2020  
May 2020 – no meeting  
18/06/2020  
16/07/2020  
13/08/2020  
17/09/2020  
15/10/2020

19/11/2020  
17/12/2020  
21/01/2020  
18/02/2021  
18/03/2021  
15/04/2021  
May 2021 – no meeting

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm