

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.

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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.