

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc – Consultation Response

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 16th September 2021

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning

Report by: Strategic Growth Manager

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Executive Summary:

The purpose of the report is to provide an outline of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc spatial framework consultation document – ‘Creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc’ (Appendix 2) and summarise the Council’s response to the consultation, full details of which can be found at Appendix 1.

The consultation relates to the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and is the first of three consultations that will culminate in a spatial framework for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc area. The spatial framework will form part of National Planning Policy and is intended to guide the future growth of the area to 2050. This consultation runs for 12 weeks from 20 July 2021 to 12 October 2021. Further consultations on the spatial framework are scheduled for Spring and Autumn 2022

Huntingdonshire District Council must have regard to the final spatial framework when preparing its Local Plan. The spatial framework will also be a material consideration for relevant planning decisions in the area.

The consultation responses have been prepared in consultation with Council officers and with reference to corporate plans strategies and policies.

Councillors are recommended to read the response to the consultation found in Appendix 1, provide comments and delegate authority to submit the Council’s final consultation comments by 12 October 2021 to the Strategic Growth Manager in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet/Committee is

RECOMMENDED

To provide comments on the response to the consultation and delegate authority to submit the Council's final comments via the Oxford-Cambridge Arc digital engagement platform to the Strategic Growth Manager, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an outline of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc spatial framework consultation document – ‘Creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc’ (Appendix 2) and to summarise the Councils response to the consultation, full details of which can be found at Appendix 1.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The consultation relates to the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and is the first of three consultations that will culminate in a spatial framework for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc area (see Appendix 3). The spatial framework will form part of National Planning Policy and is intended to guide the future growth of the area to 2050.

- 2.2 Local planning and transport authorities will have to have regard to the spatial framework when preparing local transport and local development plans and policies. The spatial framework will also be a material consideration for relevant planning decisions in the area. It will set out national policy including, but not limited to how land is used; how the environment is protected and enhanced; where and what type of new development happens; and what infrastructure should be provided. Further detail as to how this will be approached, for example, if broad locations for development will be identified for local planning authorities to allocate specific land parcels in their local plans will become clearer as the development of the spatial framework progresses.

- 2.3 Key topic areas addressed in the consultation document include:

- Vision;
- Green Spaces, Nature and Biodiversity;
- Climate Change;
- Air Quality and Waste;
- Water;
- Education and Training;
- Jobs and Businesses;
- Infrastructure;
- New Development;
- Getting Around;
- Location of Growth & Homes;
- Design of New Developments and Streets;
- Public Engagement, Data and Evidence and Delivery and Funding;
- Monitoring and Evaluation;
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and Annex

- 2.4 This consultation is the first of three consultations. Phase one focuses primarily on a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc area. The final two consultation phases will be as follows:

- Towards a Spatial Framework - using the vision as a foundation, options will be developed to deliver objectives scheduled for spring 2022.
 - Draft Spatial Framework - After further spatial analysis, option testing, impact assessments and engagement a draft spatial framework will be published for consultation in autumn 2022.
- 2.5 Although the scope of the consultation is wide ranging, the consultation is clearly geared towards members of the public. The consultation is open to public sector organisations and businesses, however there is limited opportunity to provide comments of any substance; responses are restricted to 500 characters (including spaces) per topic area.
- 2.6 As this is the first of three consultation phases it is hoped that Huntingdonshire District Council will have further opportunity to provide more detailed commentary and evidence to help guide the development of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc spatial framework in Spring and Autumn 2022. Therefore the focus of responses for this first round of consultation is centred around key themes and priorities taken from officer comments, corporate plans, strategies and policies. This will provide a 'hook' for future consultations and discussions at a later date whilst demonstrating that key concerns and priorities have been raised early on in the consultation process.

3. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSE

- 3.1 A consultation response template with links to the consultation documents were distributed to key council officers via email for comment.
- 3.2 As consultation responses have been curtailed by a 500 character limit the need to summarise the responses seems redundant. Instead additional information has been provided below to justify the consultation responses and provide additional information where necessary. The Council's full response to the consultation can be found in Appendix 1.
- **Vision** – The response is guided by the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2021 priorities and Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 approach to housing mix (policy LP 25) and input from Leisure Development on Health and Wellbeing. Further comments on question 3 (*Hopes and Fears*) are in recognition of the impact that infrastructure provision and development viability has on the allocation and delivery of large scale development sites and key issues and considerations that contribute to successful to plan-making. The response to question 5 (*anything else you would like to add*) addresses the need for the Oxford-Cambridge Plan to provide certainty for Huntingdonshire in the delivery of its corporate and planning objectives.
 - **Green Spaces, Nature and Biodiversity** – The response reflects the aims of objectives of the HDC Healthy Open Spaces Strategy 2020. Input was also received from Leisure Development on appropriate mixes of open space and management of those spaces.

- **Climate Change** – Comments addressing climate change are reflective of Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 strategy for development, in particular, policies LP 4 Flood Risk, LP10 The Countryside, LP 16 Sustainable Travel, LP 36 Air Quality and emerging planning responses to climate change.
- **Air Quality and Waste** - Comments addressing air quality are reflective of Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 strategy for development, in particular policy LP 36 Air Quality and emerging planning responses to climate change. References to underground waste storage have been encouraged through the RECAP Waste Management Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2012, and the fact that where possible Huntingdonshire District Council is moving towards encouraging the provision of underground waste storage solutions. These offer multiple benefits including:
 - Reducing the visual impact of waste collection infrastructure and improved streetscape.
 - Improving recycling rates by promoting separation at source, helping to build on the already strong rates of recycling.
 - Encouraging community responsibility; evidence shows a reduction in fly tipping and vandalism.
- **Water** – The response reflects findings from the Huntingdonshire District Council — Stage 2 Detailed Water Cycle Study 2014 that highlights the importance of addressing downstream flooding issues and potential contamination associated with new developments and the need for increased waste-water treatment capacity. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Flood and Water SPD 2017 and Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2035 policy LP 5 Flood Risk, LP 6 Waste Water Management, LP 15 Surface Water and LP 37 Ground Contamination and Groundwater Pollution also provide approaches to flood risk and water management suitable for the district.
- **Education and Training & Jobs and Businesses** - The response reflects the aims of objectives of the Council’s *Ready to Recover” Economic Growth Strategy for Huntingdonshire District 2020-2025* and its accompanying *Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2020-2025*. Input provided from Economic Development.
- **Infrastructure** – Comments are in recognition of the impact that infrastructure provision, funding, viability and delivery have on the allocation and delivery of large scale development sites and key issues and considerations that contribute to creating successful sustainable communities. Input was received from Leisure Development regarding Local Authority strategies that can be used to inform the wider needs of the Arc.
- **New Development** – The comments refer to the Freiberg Principles and the Healthy New Towns Programme. The city of Freiburg, Germany is considered an exemplar of sustainable development and The Healthy New Towns programme explores how the development of new places could provide an opportunity to create healthier and connected communities with integrated and high-quality services. Further input was provided from Housing regarding rural connectivity, early implementation of infrastructure and prioritising brownfield

development and Estates regarding leaving room for future business expansion.

- **Getting Around** – The response was drawn from the Council’s Corporate Plan 2018-2021 priorities specifically ‘to prioritise accessible, high quality, well maintained open space, walking and cycling facilities on new housing developments’. In addition, Place-making principles from the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD were included and reference to objectives set out in Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 policy LP16 Sustainable Travel. Additional reference to electric bike and scooter provision has been referenced to reflect the successful roll out of such schemes in nearby settlements such as Cambridge. The consultation documents response to ‘Getting Around’ fails to address how business and freight connectivity could be addressed in a sustainable way.
- **Location of Growth & Homes and the Design of New Developments and Streets** – Comments addressing air quality are reflective of Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 strategy for development and approach to sustainable development. Further input from Housing was provided to address housing typologies and climate change impacts.
- **Public Engagement** – It is considered that the public engagement strategy does not satisfy equality or diversity requirements.
- **Data and Evidence, Delivery and Funding & Monitoring and Evaluation, Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and Annex –** The comments in these sections focus on the potential impacts that the Spatial Framework could have on local authority plan-making, delivery and resourcing. Reference to 5YHLS and HDT refer to the Five-year Housing Land Supply and Housing Delivery Test and are common abbreviations when referring to spatial plans. At this moment in time the consultation document provides little clarification on the role or benefits of settlements that are beyond the main infrastructure improvements within the Arc e.g. the A428 and East West Rail route. There is also concern that little attention has been paid to local evidence and strategies which would provide a more holistic understanding of the Arc area.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 4.1 The Panel discussed the Creating a Vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc – Consultation Response at its meeting on 1st September 2021.
- 4.2 The Panel noted that the consultation was the first of three expected consultations and that both Councillors and residents are encouraged to submit their own responses to the consultation.
- 4.3 Councillor Roberts praised the simplicity of the report and especially appreciated that the issues of green spaces and biodiversity were addressed within the consultation.
- 4.4 The Panel welcomed the report and encourage the Cabinet to endorse the recommendations contained within the report.

5. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 5.1 Potential resource implications if additional capacity is required to input into further development of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc spatial framework.
- 5.2 Clarity around who will represent Huntingdonshire District Council in any examination of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc spatial framework.
- 5.3 Once adopted the Oxford-Cambridge Arc spatial framework will form part of National Planning Policy and must be taken into account in the development of Local Plans and will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 Subject to approval from Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) and Cabinet the Council's final consultation response will be submitted via the Oxford-Cambridge Arc digital engagement platform by the deadline 12 October 2021.

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 The Oxford-Cambridge Arc spatial framework could assist in the delivery of a number of objectives related to the Council's work programme and key actions including:
 - People – Support people to improve their health and well-being.
 - Enabling people to live independently through the provision of adaptations and accessible housing.
 - Providing great, accessible green spaces, countryside, leisure and cultural facilities and opportunities for recreation and health.
 - Ensuring new developments have sufficient public green open spaces including play provision.
 - Facilitating and providing opportunities for positive activities that support residents' health and wellbeing needs.
 - Prioritising accessible, high quality, well maintained open space, walking and cycling facilities on new housing developments.
 - Meeting the housing and support needs of our population.
 - People – Develop a flexible and skilled local workforce.
 - Creating stronger links between businesses, education and training.
 - Place – Improve the supply of new and affordable housing, jobs and community facilities to meet current and future need.

- Planning and delivering the provision of decent market and affordable housing for current and future needs.
- Ensuring an adequate supply of housing to meet objectively assessed needs.
- Ensuring there are the right community and leisure facilities to support new housing developments.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None, this is a consultation response.

9. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework could include a variety of health benefits related to spatial development in the area especially in relation to climate change, sustainable development, emission reductions, active travel and healthy communities.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

10.1 The Oxford-Cambridge Arc phase one consultation is the first of three stages to develop National Planning Policy that will inform and guide growth across the Arc. The Council's response to this consultation will help to shape the final Oxford-Cambridge Arc spatial framework and enable the Council to highlight key concerns, objectives and aspirations that could directly affect the future growth of the district. Recommendations provided in the Council's consultation response will ensure that Huntingdonshire is adequately represented within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and that objectives are developed to support Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, ambitions for growth and corporate priorities.

10.2 It is recommended that the Committee read the response to the consultation found in Appendix 1, provide comments and delegate authority to submit the Council's final consultation comments by 12 October 2021 to the Strategic Growth Manager in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning.

11. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Huntingdonshire District Council Consultation Response to the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework consultation document
Appendix 2 – Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework consultation document – 'Creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc
Appendix 3 – Oxford Cambridge Arc Spatial Area.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [Creating a Vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc](#) – main consultation document
- [Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report](#)
- [Sustainability Scoping Report - Annex](#)
- [Oxford-Cambridge Arc – Digital engagement platform](#)
- [Learning from a Sustainable City - highlights of the key features of the German city of Freiburg](#) – The Journal of the Town and Country Planning Association December 2019, Vol. 88, No. 12, pages 514-515
- [Healthy New Towns Programme](#)
- [Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD 2017](#)

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