

GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
8 SEPTEMBER 2021	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Steve Cox, Executive Director Place & Economy, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Peter Hiller, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investment.	
Contact Officer(s):	Richard Kay – Strategic Planning Manager	01733 453596

OX-CAM ARC – GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PAPER

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Steve Cox, Executive Director Place and Economy	Deadline date: N/A
<p>It is recommended that the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes that Government intends to prepare an Oxford Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework, within which Peterborough sits, and that a round 1 (of 3) consultation is currently underway, closing 12 October 2021; and 2. Provides any comments as it sees fit on the consultation proposals, with such comments to be reported to the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investment for the purpose of helping to establishing the Council’s formal response to the consultation. The Cabinet Member will be responsible for the final consultation response, by way of a Cabinet Member Decision Notice (CMDN). 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 With agreement by the Chairman, it was agreed that this important Government consultation paper be brought to Scrutiny Committee’s attention prior to Cabinet determining a formal response to it.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to enable Scrutiny Committee to express its views on the Government consultation paper entitled ‘Creating a vision for the Oxford Cambridge Arc’, available here and attached in Appendix B:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1003974/Creating_a_vision_for_the_Oxford-Cambridge_Arc.pdf:

Any views expressed by Scrutiny Committee will be reported to Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and investment. That Cabinet Member will then agree, via a Cabinet Member Decision Notice (CMDN), the final response on behalf of the Council.

2.2 This report is for the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider under

its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph no, 2.1 Functions determined by Council:

- 2. Environmental Capital
- 3. Economic Development and Regeneration including Strategic Housing and Strategic Planning
- 4. Transport, Highways and Road Traffic

2.4 The outcome of this Government led work has the potential to directly and indirectly support all of the council's corporate priorities.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Peterborough, along with the whole of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire, sit within the Government defined 'Oxford to Cambridge Arc' (Ox-Cam Arc). Government is proposing to establish national policy for this area, and is consulting on proposals. In the words of Government:

This consultation is being undertaken to inform our approach to the future of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, which has been identified by the government as a key economic priority. We are seeking views to help us create a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework, and in doing so guide the future growth of the area to 2050. This is in line with the commitment we made at the launch of the Spatial Framework process in February 2021. The Spatial Framework will form national planning policy and transport policy for the Arc and local planning and local transport authorities must have regard to it when preparing local transport and local development plans and policies, and it will be capable of being a material consideration in relevant planning decisions in the area.

4.2 To put it into context, this Spatial Framework would essentially be the guiding (and statutory) document sitting above, for example, the Peterborough Local Plan, the Cambridgeshire-Peterborough Local Transport Plan and other wider strategies and plans (such as environmental based strategies). For those with a good memory, it is not too dissimilar, it appears, to the 'Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) / Regional Economic Strategy (RES)' statutory plans that were around at the turn of the century, but which were formally revoked and abandoned as a concept in 2010. In those cases, such RSSs/RESs for Peterborough were the 'East of England' RSS / RES. This new form of strategy (or 'spatial framework') covers a different geographical area, this time focussing on what Government perceives as being an area of huge economic potential – the Oxford to Cambridge Arc area.

4.3 Undoubtedly, the next Peterborough Local Plan (and other local strategies) will be compelled to follow whatever this Arc Framework establishes. It is therefore of crucial importance that the final document contains policies and proposals which support and align to this Council's priorities and ambitions.

4.4 We are not yet at that final stage – indeed, this is round one of a promised three rounds of consultation. But nevertheless, it is important the council places on record its 'asks' for this document, to give it the best chance of securing those 'asks' in the final document.

The consultation proposals

4.5 The consultation document was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on Tuesday 20 July, the first of 3 planned public consultations on the Spatial Framework. Alongside this, Government has published a [Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report](#). The consultation is supported by a new and innovative digital engagement platform designed to give a voice to the wider community, as well as traditional engagement methods such as workshops.

- 4.6 Feedback from this consultation will help, it is stated, to shape the vision for the Spatial Framework and ensure that it is built on the priorities and aspirations of the communities it will serve, thus creating the Spatial Framework's vision for the Arc to 2050. Using the vision as a foundation, the next document proposed by MHCLG 'Towards a Spatial Framework' is planned to be published for consultation in Spring 2022. Government then hopes to publish a draft Spatial Framework for consultation in Autumn 2022, with implementation of the final framework shortly after. Consultation will take place at each stage, and is open to all members of the public.
- 4.7 Government's local economic forecasts suggest that by 2050 we could see economic output in the Arc doubling to over £200bn, and it see the Arc's success as key to the UK's national prosperity, international competitiveness, and ability to meet wider challenges (including climate change and supporting nature recovery, technological change, fighting COVID-19 and preventing future pandemics).
- 4.8 The consultation document is split into eight chapters, providing an introduction to creating a vision for the OxCam Arc:
- Introduction: Creating a Vision;
 - The Environment;
 - The Economy;
 - Connectivity and Infrastructure;
 - Place-making;
 - Commitment to engaging communities;
 - Commitment to data, evidence and digital tools; and
 - How to Monitor and deliver the Framework.

As part of the consultation the Government is seeking to identify potential delivery mechanisms for the investment priorities within the Spatial Framework, which includes the potential to set up a new Arc Growth Body.

- 4.9 Separately, but not forming part of Government's consultation proposals, it is worth noting a recently published document entitled *The Shared regional principles for protecting, restoring and enhancing the environment in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc* produced by the OxCam Arc Environment Working Group:
(https://www.semlep.com/modules/downloads/download.php?file_name=2306).
These 'principles' have been set to effectively create a 'Green Arc' as an internationally significant exemplar for the very best in sustainable living and working, for practical ways to doubling nature, and innovative solutions to energy and water shortages as well as stimulating a green economy.

- 4.10 The 5 principles are:
- working towards a target of net zero carbon at an Arc level by 2040;
 - to protect, restore, enhance and create new nature areas and natural capital assets;
 - to be an exemplar for environmentally sustainable development in line with the ambitions set out in the Government's 25 year plan;
 - to ensure that existing and new communities see real benefits from living in the arc; and
 - using natural resources wisely.

These principles have been created to form the basis for the creation of an OxCam-wide Environmental Strategy that will embrace everything from green spaces, to housing standards, to sustainable transport, energy generation and transmission and water management and conservation. These principles are not government proposals, but the Council may wish to comment upon them in parallel with commenting on the Government consultation proposals.

PCC Response to the consultation

- 4.11 Officers are currently considering the consultation proposals, and will be presenting a draft response to the Cabinet Member in due course, ahead of the consultation close in October.
- 4.12 The set of questions asked by Government are at Appendix A.

- 4.13 The questions are arguably not a particularly helpful framework to provide a PCC response to Government. The questions are almost entirely in the form of a statement, and requesting the responder to grade the statement from 'Not Important' to 'Very Important'. However, reading such statements, it's hard not consider every single one of them as 'Very Important'. To label any of them with anything other than 'Very Important' would imply PCC doesn't particularly 'care' about that the theme of that statement, when in practice it does. Officers are likely to recommend, therefore, that all such statements be graded as 'Very Important', but it is not clear what Government will learn from the consultation if all consultees respond likewise, which seems likely.
- 4.14 Other consultations are phrased somewhat unusually and, arguably, overly informal, such as Q2 ("we would love you to tell us more") and Q3 ("How do you feel overall about the future of the Arc? What are your hopes and fears?").
- 4.15 Notwithstanding the limitations of answering the majority of questions set, there are a number of other questions along the lines of "Anything else to add..." in respect of a particular topic or theme. Officers will be recommending these are the questions where a more specific 'Peterborough ask' can be given. That said, such responses under these questions are limited to 500 characters, which is perhaps less than this paragraph. Government is clearly not seeking lengthy submissions at this stage.
- 4.16 It should be made clear at this stage that this first round consultation document is very much a starting point, and not in any way a 'draft final plan'. It simply sets out high level evidence and broad statements of ambitions. There is very little spatially specific content, so there is very little 'Peterborough' specific content to comment on. Indeed, other than Peterborough being identified on the maps within the document, the word 'Peterborough' is not used a single time in the entire consultation document.
- 4.17 In terms of what the 'Peterborough ask' may be, it is likely to focus on:
- Infrastructure investment (including city centre regeneration)
 - Environmental ambitions (and alignment to the council's declared 2030 carbon net zero target)
 - Support for Education / skills
 - Natural environment commitments (including a potential request for a 'John Clare Countryside' landscape opportunity area designation)
- 4.18 To help the continued formulation of the PCC response to the consultation, Scrutiny Committee's views on the proposals (or what it would like to see as proposals in future consultation documents) will be most welcome. Such views will be reported to the Cabinet Member, so a final response can be submitted to Government.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 This is a Government led consultation event, with the Council a consultee. The Council is not a decision maker, in terms of the final content of the Framework. Two further rounds of consultation are promised, likely in 2022.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 It is anticipated that Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee will consider and comment on the consultation proposals, and set out its views for Cabinet Member consideration.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 To give the Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to influence the Council's formal response to the consultation paper.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 To not give Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to influence the Council's response. This was

rejected, because the long term implications of this Government proposals could be significant for Peterborough, therefore wider Member engagement was considered appropriate.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 Nil

Legal Implications

9.2 None directly, but once the Framework is adopted by Government it will form part of national policy with the same degree and influence as the National Planning Policy Framework. As such, as a minimum, all planning decisions determined by the council will be legally obliged to take into account the framework in reaching that decision.

Equalities Implications

9.3 The Equalities Implications are a matter for Government to determine, as it develops its proposals

Rural Implications

9.4 There are no presently known implications for rural areas, but depending on the final policy of Government there could be implications for rural areas, particularly in terms of planning, development, and the environment. These implications could be positive, negative or both.

Carbon Impact Assessment

9.5 The Council is not preparing or adopting the document, and therefore is not in a position to suggest whether the proposal has (or will have) any implications on carbon emissions.

The final document, as adopted by Government, has the potential for significant negative (eg construction) and positive (eg higher energy efficiency standards, carbon capture) carbon implications, depending on what policies it proposes. However, no view on this can be taken at this stage, as no specific proposals on these matters are set out.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 [Creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

11. APPENDICES

11.1 *Appendix A – the consultation questions*
Appendix B – Consultation Paper ‘Creating a vision for the Oxford Cambridge Arc’

Creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc:

Creating a vision

Q1: What place could it be? What words come to mind?

Q2: If you can, we would love you to tell us more about your vision for the Arc to 2050.

Q3: How do you feel overall about the future of the Arc? What are your hopes and fears?

Q4: What do you think are the most important things that it needs to do, as a strategic plan, to achieve this? Work at an Arc-wide level to tackle shared issues/ opportunities on the Environment; Economy; Connectivity and growth; Place-making; and Supporting monitoring and delivery?

Q5: If there is anything you would like to add, we would love you to tell us.

The Environment

Green spaces, nature and biodiversity

Q1: Making sure the natural environment is protected, restored and improved. For example, improving new and existing green spaces. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q2: Making sure the most is made of the natural environment and that all people can have access to it. For example, making improvements to woodlands, wetland, green space and water and making sure people can visit them if they want to. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q3: Making sure new growth leaves the environment in a better state than before. For example, keeping land in its natural state, and making it more wild, where appropriate. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q4: Anything else to add about your vision for green spaces, nature, and biodiversity?

Climate change resilience and net zero

Q5: Making sure new development helps to achieve net zero carbon at an Arc level towards national net zero targets. For example, through good design, sustainable travel choices, renewable energy and trapping carbon. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q6: Making sure that new development can respond to the current and future effects of climate change. For example, through new carbon emissions, water use, water disposal and renewable energy targets. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q7: Anything else to add about your vision for climate change and/ or the contribution to net zero?

Air quality and waste

Q8: Making sure new development helps to improve air quality within the Arc. For example, through high quality design, low emission zones and sustainable transport. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q9: Taking a combined approach to air quality across the Arc. For example, through being careful about where each land uses should go, supporting journeys via public transport and active travel and enhancing green spaces and routes across the area. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Important]

Q10: Making better use of resources and managing waste. For example, promoting the re-use of materials, and protecting and improving soil quality and minerals. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q11: Anything else to add about your vision for air quality and waste?

Water

Q12: Promoting a combined approach to managing water across the Arc, through protecting water resources, improving water quality and reducing the risk of flooding. For example, treating wastewater, improving water storage, and reusing surface runoff. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q13: Making sure new development reduces existing flood risk and is resilient to future flooding. For example, through tree planting and multifunctional sustainable drainage. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q14: Improving water availability and cutting the risk of drought. For example, through new sustainable water resources and infrastructure, and measures which reduce water use. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q15: Anything else to add about your vision for water?

The Economy

Education and training

Q1: Making sure the Arc keeps growing as a place of educational excellence, partnership and research. For example, through growth which helps existing universities and colleges. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q2: Making sure the economic benefits of growth are felt by all communities within the Arc. For example, through putting new education and training facilities in places where more people can easily get to go to them. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q3: Anything else to add about your vision for education and training?

Jobs and businesses

Q4: Making sure that the Arc keeps growing as a place for business, science and technology, and innovation. For example, through putting these types of new workspaces in places where they can make the most of cross-sector collaboration. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q5: Making sure that existing industries keep growing within the Arc. For example, through putting industries in the best places to suit their needs. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q6: Making sure the Arc builds upon and grows its skills, expertise and capabilities. For example, through making sure people can get around easily to bring the right people to the right job locations. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q7: Making sure that the right types of buildings are provided in the Arc so that businesses can keep growing as well as supporting the green economy. For example, through building new flexible and adaptable workspaces meet the needs of a range of different businesses of different sizes. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q8: Anything else to add about your vision for jobs and businesses?

Connectivity and Infrastructure

Infrastructure

Q1: Making sure planning takes a combined approach to new development by providing the infrastructure and services required at the right time to support growth. For example, by planning for the need for utilities (e.g. water, energy, waste) and community infrastructure (e.g. schools, hospitals, GP surgeries). [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q2: Making sure new development makes the most of existing resources. For example, through making sure that materials are reused, renewable energy supplies are used, and waste is properly planned for. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q3: Making sure that digital infrastructure is put in at the same time as other development takes place. For example, speeding up the fitting of high-speed broadband to support home-based work and help new ways of learning. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q4: Anything else to add about your vision for infrastructure?

New development

Q5: Making sure growth within the Arc is placed around areas with better transport links. For example, through having more development around stations and bus routes, supported by cycling and walking tracks. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q6: Making sure new development cuts down the need to travel around the local area. For example, through providing safe and easy walking and cycling routes to town centres, shops and schools. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q7: Making sure new developments reduce existing and future infrastructure demand and resources used. For example, making sure that designs leave enough space for existing and future measures which reduce energy and water use, and cut down on waste. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q8: Making sure sustainable transport principles are included in the design of new developments. For example, by designing new developments in a way that enables people to walk or cycle all or part of their journeys. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q9: Anything else to add about new developments in the context of connectivity and infrastructure?

Place-making

Location of growth

Q1: Making sure new developments are built in the most sustainable locations, for the environment, the economy and communities. For example, by developing brownfield redevelopment and making sure they have good access to town centres, shops and schools. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q2: Anything else to add about your vision for location of growth?

Homes in your area

Q3: Ensuring the right types of housing are delivered in the right locations to meet the needs of both renters and buyers. For example, family houses, first-time buyers, specialist housing, student accommodation and opportunities for people to build their own homes. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q4: Increasing the amount and availability of affordable homes within the Arc. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q5: Anything else to add about your vision for homes in your area?

Design of new developments and streets

Q6: Making sure a coordinated approach is taken to the design and delivery of new developments to ensure they are supported by new and existing infrastructure. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q7: Making sure the environment and sustainability is at the heart of new developments. For example, by improving the built and natural environment, making sure development complements surrounding areas, and is supported by the right level of infrastructure. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q8: Making sure there is the right mix of uses in new developments to help make high quality and thriving new places. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q9: Making sure new developments help support healthy lifestyles for existing and future communities. For example, through walking and cycling, high quality green spaces, and accessible streets. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q10: Making sure new developments promote resilience to climate change. For example, through green roofs, managing surface water, tree planting, storing rainwater and new green spaces. [Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

Q11: Anything else to add about your vision for the design of new developments and streets?

Our commitment to engaging communities

Q1: How can government engage the public better? [Communication materials/ Social listening/ Focus groups/ 1-1 interviews and experiments/ Ethnography/ Citizen assemblies and citizen juries/ Other types of engagement]

Q2: Before this consultation, I was familiar with the area known as the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. [Yes/ No]

Q3: Do you have anything else to add on engaging communities?

Our commitment to data, evidence and digital tools

Q1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed approach on data and evidence? [Strongly disagree/ Disagree/ Neutral/ Agree/ Strongly Agree]

Q2: Do you have anything else to add on data, evidence and digital tools?

How we will monitor and deliver the Framework

Q1: to what extent do you agree with our proposed approach on delivery and funding? [Strongly disagree/ Disagree/ Neutral/ Agree/ Strongly Agree]

Q2: Do you have anything else to add on delivery and funding?

Monitoring and evaluation

Q1: To what extent do you agree with our proposed approach on monitoring and evaluation? [Strongly disagree/ Disagree/ Neutral/ Agree/ Strongly agree]

Q2: Do you have anything else to add on monitoring and evaluation?

Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Q1: To what extent do you agree with the key strategic issues and opportunities in the proposed scope for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Spatial Framework? [Strongly disagree/ Disagree/ Neutral/ Agree/ Strongly agree]

Q2: Are there any other strategic issues and/or opportunities that need to be considered in the appraisal?

Q3: Are you aware of any additional strategic data that we should take into account as part of the sustainability appraisal?

Q4: Are you aware of any additional plans or programmes you think will be important to consider within the sustainability appraisal?

Q5: To what extent do you agree with our approach to the SA? [Strongly disagree/ Disagree/ Neutral/ Agree/ Strongly agree]