



REPORT TO:	Cabinet	19 April 2021
LEAD CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Bridget Smith	
LEAD OFFICER:	Chief Executive	

ARC LEADERSHIP GROUP OXFORD TO CAMBRIDGE ARC ENVIRONMENT PRINCIPLES

Executive Summary

Background

1. In 2020 the Arc Leadership Group Environment Working Group agreed to produce a set of Arc-wide Environment Principles. The recommended principles are attached as Annex 1. They are the result of a collaborative piece of work led by a range of partners and stakeholders including:
 - Environmental NGOs (who drafted the first document)
 - Local Nature Partnerships
 - Local Government environment and planning policy representatives (we received responses from c. 20 local authorities, with representation from across the Arc)
 - DEFRA
 - Natural England
 - Environment Agency
 - MHCLG (planning policy lead)
 - University representative from the Universities' Environment Group
 - A LEP representative
 - Anglian Water
 - An Energy Hub representative
2. The document at Annex 1 has been endorsed by the Arc Leadership Group Plenary on 09 March 2021. It is hoped by having developed consensus and support for these principles, including direct engagement with Government, that these will be used to support emerging environmental policies within the emerging Arc Spatial Framework. The agreed principles will be strengthened further after being publicly considered by every partner organisation. This report has been drafted as a standard report to be used by all councils or LEPs in seeking local endorsement.

Key Decision

3. No

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a. Endorses the shared environment principles at Annex 1 hereto; and,**
- b. Supports the development of an Arc Environment Strategy which will provide for how the principles can be delivered.**

Reasons for Recommendations

5. The principles are not formal policy but rather a shared statement of ambition for the Arc. They are intended to:
 - support our position with respect to the environment policies emerging from the Arc Spatial Framework
 - allow use of the Arc as a place for DEFRA to test and apply its 25-year plan and funding through pilots and projects
 - support Local Planning Authorities with a frame of reference to further develop the principles through Local and Strategic Plans at a local and sub-regional level
6. The Arc Leadership Group will next be developing an Arc Environment Strategy which will provide the route map to delivering against these ambitions, including trajectories for meeting ambitious future performance targets.

Details

Outline of the Principles

7. There are five overarching principles:
 - To target net zero carbon at a pan-Arc level by 2040;
 - To protect, restore, enhance and create new nature areas and natural capital assets, including nationally and locally designated wildlife sites and priority habitats through the implementation of the spatial planning mitigation hierarchy of avoid, mitigate, compensate and gain;
 - To be an exemplar for environmentally sustainable development, in line with the ambitions set out in the government's 25-year plan. This will incorporate a systems-based and integrated assessment and implementation approach. We will aim to go beyond the minimum legislated requirements for development;
 - To Ensure that existing and new communities see real benefits from living in the Arc;
 - To Use natural resources wisely.
8. Each theme has several sub-principles which describe further the outcomes we aspire to. Some of the sub-principles will evolve further as we develop our thinking, (for example, a waste/circular waste principle).
9. Having been endorsed by the Plenary, the Arc Environment Principles will be shared amongst a wider audience including the development community to

gain support and buy-in. It is intended that each partner organisation will now proceed to take these through local decision-making processes to provide even more support for the shared principles.

10. The next piece of work for the Arc Environment Working Group is to develop an Environment Strategy which will set out a comprehensive plan for how the principles will be delivered in the Arc. It is likely that the strategy will take 12-18 months to complete.

Options

11. Not to endorse Arc Leadership Group Oxford to Cambridge Arc Environmental Principles

Implications

12. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

There are no significant implications.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Being green to our core

The principles are the first step in ensuring the growth across the Arc is delivered to high environmental standards, securing the status of the arc as the 'Green Arc'.

Appendices

Appendix A: Annex 1 – Arc Leadership Group Environmental Principles

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