



Report to:	Council	23 September 2021
Lead Cabinet Member:	Cllr Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council	
Lead Officer:	Liz Watts, Chief Executive	

Oxford-Cambridge Arc - Update

Executive Summary

1. This is the regular update on the work of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

Recommendations

2. That Council notes the report.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. Given the increasing profile and momentum of the Arc, it is important that all councillors are updated regularly on activities as they relate to the Arc geography, and to the Council in particular.

Details

4. The Arc Leadership Group met on 10 September 2021. This is the group of all leaders from across the Arc, and representatives from MHCLG and other departments.
5. Emran Mian, Director General for Stronger Places, from MHCLG had been due to attend, but was called away at the last minute and therefore wrote to the board setting out his update. This letter is attached at Appendix 1 for information.
6. MHCLG officers gave an update on the Spatial Framework consultation, which closes on 12 October. There have already been a strong number of responses, and civil servants noted they were particularly pleased to see responses from a large number of people who had never responded to a planning consultation before, suggesting that the consultation had reached and interested a wide range of people. MHCLG have also held workshops with environmental groups, businesses, residents (including younger audiences) and a range of under-represented groups. SCDC will be responding to the consultation and this response will be considered by Cabinet on 1 October and the Leader has written to parish councils to encourage them all to respond.

7. Since the launch of the Spatial Framework, a number of environmental NGOs have issued a media release criticising the consultation and stating that they want to see nature and climate prioritised and prevent unsustainable damaging development. This release is attached at Appendix 2 for information.
8. Professor Alistair Fitt, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University confirmed that all ten universities in the Arc are now represented by vice-chancellors and that the three key areas of work continue to be life sciences, sustainable aviation and space. The universities aim to build the region into the largest life sciences cluster in the world.
9. Noting the caution set out in Emran Mian's letter about fiscal constraints, leaders still agreed to make a submission to the Comprehensive Review Spending process, the outcome of which will be announced on 27 October. Key points leaders wanted raised were to stress the need for local involvement in the growth body and to request the establishment of an infrastructure fund for the Arc, to include the options for funding green infrastructure.

Options

10. To note the report.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

11. The Arc should contribute to three of the Council's priority areas, through growing the local economy, providing increased affordable housing, and ensuring that the Arc is a Green Arc and meets the aspirational environmental standards set out in the Environment Principles.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 – Letter from Emran Mian, Director General, MHCLG

Appendix 2 – Media release by environmental NGOs

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