

## **Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel**

At 9:30am on Thursday 23 September 2021

Held in the Committee Room, Municipal Offices, Bowling Green Road, Kettering

### **Present:**

Councillors:

David Brackenbury (Chair)	Mark Dearing
Barbara Jenney	David Jenney
Anne Lee	Steven North
Kevin Thurland	

### **In attendance:**

Councillor Mike Tebbutt

## **23 Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting.

Councillor Steven North, former Chair of the Panel, wished to put on record his thanks to all councillors and officers who had supported him during his time as Chair of the Panel.

In response, the Chair thanked Councillor North for all of his work as Chair.

## **24 Apologies for non-attendance**

An apology for non-attendance was received from Councillor Valerie Anslow. Councillor Anne Lee attended as substitute.

## **25 Members' Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **26 Minutes of the meeting held on 19 August 2021**

**RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 19 August 2021 as a correct record.

## **27 Creating a Vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc**

Simon James, Policy Manager, introduced the report which sought feedback on the proposed planning policy draft response to the 'Creating a Vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc' consultation. This was the first of three planned consultations on the Arc Spatial Framework (ASF).

The Oxford-Cambridge Arc had been identified by the Government as a key economic priority. The Government were now seeking views on what the vision for the future

growth of the Arc should be to 2050, to be delivered through the ASF. The ASF would form national planning policy and transport policy for the Arc area, and local planning and local transport authorities would have to have regard to it when preparing local transport and local development plans and policies. It would be a material consideration in relevant planning decisions in the area.

During discussion on the report, Members congratulated officers on the draft response. Specific comments on the draft response included:

### General comments

- Concern at the proposed weighting of the ASF as it was not a Bill that would have to go through Parliament to confirm it.  
*The ASF would be national planning policy and so would be a material planning consideration. The issue of testing had been flagged up by the proposed Arc Leaders Group response and they were also looking for details of transitional arrangements, particularly for Development Management.*
- Welcomed that the ASF would be a national planning policy as there had been some scepticism that the introduction of the ASF would just be another layer of planning being introduced.
- The latest information was that Buckinghamshire was now not part of the Arc and what would the impact be on North Northamptonshire.  
*It was believed that Buckinghamshire had taken the view not to take part in the governance structures or development of the Arc. It was a political decision to step away but as far as the Government were concerned Buckinghamshire was still a part of the Arc.*
- Did the response need to say anything about funding as significant government funding would be needed. An undertaking from the government was needed to ensure that infrastructure was delivered before housing.

### Section 1 – Introduction

- Response was welcomed. The delivery of significant levels of housing would not happen without the necessary infrastructure put in place.
- There were concerns that Local Housing Need for North Northamptonshire would be taking into account the wider Arc requirements.  
*Local Housing Need needed to take into account areas of high economic growth and investment and Members' concerns about picking up housing from other areas would be added to the response.*
- Housing was cheaper in North Northamptonshire than in other areas such as Cambridge, Oxford and Peterborough but if incomes are lower there was a danger that developers may not want to build in our area, leading to a shortage of numbers and a risk of developments that we did not wish to see.
- The vision appeared to be vague and interferes with localism. There was a need for us to have our say and perhaps be more specific with the responses. There was a need to make clear what we required and wanted.  
*Officers had tried to keep the responses sufficiently succinct to make the points clearly. There was a lot of detail that sat behind the response and officers would make sure that this was more clearly referenced and understood.*

## Section 2 – The Environment

- The consultation document showed that North Northamptonshire had less Environmental Opportunity Zones compared to other areas. The environment was very important and there was concern that the authority would not benefit from green areas and would just become an area with large amounts of warehousing.

*There was a very strong environment process supporting the Arc with the endorsement of the Arc environmental principles.*

- With regards to water, the opportunity for new water resources appeared to be limited and significant investment was needed in some areas. If there was to be more housing then there needed to be more investment in water treatment.
- The use of new technologies was welcomed and was already being developed in our area and needed to be spread out to develop skills.

## Section 3 – The Economy

- The comment about the lack of a higher education facility in the area was welcomed.
- Members commented that they had not seen the North Northamptonshire Economic Prospectus which had been referred to. There was concern that logistics was the first sector mentioned as a strength. Paragraph 35 should also include renewable energy in the list of growth sectors.

*The Economic Prospectus had been endorsed in September 2020 by the Joint Planning Committee. Logistics was seen a strength in our economy and the document recognised existing strengths and future opportunities. Officers would add more explanation and evidence as it was important to flag up future opportunities.*

- It was noted that health was not included in the consultation and where was this being picked up.  
*It was explained that a number of separate boards supported the Arc and health was already being heavily covered but health and public health could be emphasised more in the response.*
- Superfast broadband had other opportunities as well as for transport and this paragraph needed to be reworded.

## Section 4 – Connectivity and Infrastructure

- In paragraph 40, it needed to be more specific on what type of infrastructure was required.
- There was a need to emphasis better delivery of walking and cycling routes as these were often watered down during viability discussions in relation to S106.
- The target of delivering net zero transport links needed to recognise the realities of the limitation of modal shifts in rural areas.
- New infrastructure was needed before the delivery of new houses.

*The response recognised that there was an existing infrastructure deficit and there was a need to ensure the needs of existing residents were addressed.*

## Section 5 – Place-making

- There was a need to ensure that local housing needs were identified properly rather than picking up the needs of other areas. Aspiration also needed to be considered.

*A housing and employment needs assessment was about to commence.*

- A lot of one-bedroom properties with no amenity space were now receiving planning permission. This could be an opportunity to improve on garden space or shared community space.

The final draft response would be circulated to Panel members once all comments had been considered and incorporated.

**RESOLVED:**

That the feedback on the draft planning policy response inform the North Northamptonshire Council response, to be submitted with the agreement of the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economy.

**28 Executive Forward Plan**

The Executive Forward Plan for September to December 2021 was noted.

**29 Close of Meeting**

The meeting closed at 11:30am.

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Chair

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Date