

Public speakers

4 June 2019

Question 5

5. Sue Haywood on Need Not Greed Oxfordshire

The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is ostensibly shown to have both an "influencing" as well as "influenced by" relationship with both the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and the Ox-Cam Arc. Indications are the LIS may be signed off by Government in early summer, risking pre-determining the Plan's outcomes. Why, therefore, is there so limited visible discussion to date about these at Growth Board meetings or its subcommittee meetings or by the Growth Board's constituent local authorities committees?

Answer

The Chair replied that:

The Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy had been developed over a number of months with several key stakeholder meetings with presentations on its progress from time to time through the Growth Board and a presentation was also given to the Oxfordshire Leader's meeting recently. While the Growth Board reviews this strategy in its remit overseeing the Housing and Growth Deal (the LIS is part of our Deal), the governance for its adoption is through the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Once adopted it will be one strategy of many that will have influence to some extent on the emerging Oxfordshire Plan. Whilst non-statutory in nature it is still valuable evidence and strategic direction which needs to be considered and taken account of in the emerging Oxfordshire Plan. These were ongoing processes, not one offs and would need to be kept up to date.

As for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, this will have little impact on the Oxfordshire Plan in the immediate future until more was known about it; over time, this may change to have greater influence and all these things would be kept up to date and under review. As outlined in the Spring Statement there is a commitment between local authorities and LEPs in the Arc to work collaboratively with Government to develop a shared ambition. It is expected the Growth Board and its constituent members will be active as that work develops which was still at the beginnings. If it did progress, the Arc would have an impact on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and if and when there was a material impact, due consideration for such impact will be considered by the Growth Board by updates. A key message was that the Oxford to Cambridge Arc was new and arrangements were still evolving.

Supplementary question

Sue Haywood asked a supplementary question. The comments made by the Chair of the Growth Board at the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 30 May and earlier that day about a review of the Growth Board's processes in light of the new and developing relationships were welcomed. It had been a concern of Need Not Greed members that a number of

matters had not come out to councillors in the individual Growth Board authorities for meaningful discussion, such as the intended Joint Declaration. Therefore, would the review of the Growth Board be able to consider the timing and dissemination of knowledge about the Growth Board to local councillors?

Supplementary answer

The Chair replied that she hoped that would be the case and that relevant timings would need to be part of the review including the timing of the Scrutiny Panel relative to the Growth Board meeting itself. In principle it was hoped that things would improve including the Growth Board's communication with the public, councillors and local organisations.