Oxford Economic Growth Strategy – Comments received from Stakeholders

Report to the Oxford Economic Growth Strategy Steering Group Meeting, 20th December 2012

1. Responses

1.1. The following organisations and individuals have responded:
- Becky Buell and Ruth Mayne (leaders and experts in low-carbon development in Oxford)
- Cherwell District Council
- Experience Oxfordshire
- Kier Property
- Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action
- Oxfordshire County Council
- ROX
- Thames Valley Police
- University of Oxford

1.2 Responses have ranged from very short comments or no comment, but thanking us for the opportunity to respond. All comments are attached as received in Appendix one.

2. Outline summary of each response

2.1 The following table provides a very brief outline summary of each response and proposes action for the Steering Group at the meeting on 20th December 2012

Organisation and summary of comments	Proposed Action for the Steering Group
Experience Oxfordshire (Tony Stratton)	

• Pleased to be included in future planning • Will work with partners to develop Tourism and Cultural Strategy	Note comments, no action required
Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (Alison Baxter) • Nothing substantive to suggest • Welcomes acknowledgement of contribution of voluntary sector • Identifies typos in some sections	Note comment SI to check typos
KEIR Properties (Kevin Dixon) • No comments	No action required
ROX (Graham Jones) • Carefully considered and well written document covering all key factors and opportunities • Some minor comments on retail and identifies typos in some sections	Note comment SI to check comment and typos
Thames Valley Police (Chris Sharp) • "I like the document and it covers the necessary points" • affordable overnight accommodation to encourage younger people to stay overnight in Oxford • Include mention of promoting motorcyclists/scooters in order to ease congestion • Allow use of bus lanes by motorcyclist • Late night refreshment facilities concentrate on alcohol - encourage later opening of coffee shops to help bring a better mix of the evening economy	Note comment Section 3.50 covers need for mid range boutique hotels Pass to County Council as Transport Authority? Note comment
University of Oxford (Michael Sibly / Phil Clare) Refer to Appendix 1.6 (page 10-11) for full details • Most useful study and broadly endorse its conclusions • Welcome focus on innovation and knowledge based economy as the engine for growth • Consider that investment in developing the innovative & high tech cluster within and around Oxford can make a major contribution to future economic well-being of the city/region • Cautious to a piecemeal approach to implementation of the eleven elements of the Strategy • Growth depends on investment in support and co-ordination, but also solving the difficult underlying infrastructural issues • Disaggregating elements would not be a sensible strategy and hope the City can press forward	Phil Clare to briefly present comments and answer any questions. Steering Group to consider comments and any actions arising and impact on the Strategy and Action Plan

with all elements at the same • Endorses the need for a strong partnership as note in element eleven and would wish to join such an endeavour	
Cherwell District Council (Steven Newman) Refer to Appendix 1.7 (page 11-12) for full details • Gaps you may wish to fill in relating it across the border to Cherwell's adopted ED Strategy (2011-16) which seeks many common goals • Entrepreneurs - How does advice and support to entrepreneurs fit into your Strategy? Oxford City is the main beneficiary of support and advice services run through Oxfordshire Businesses Enterprises • Stakeholder consultations – no reflection of CDC input • How does the Strategy integrate with elements of the Cherwell ED Strategy? • No mention of Chiltern Rail, Evergreen 3, East-west rail or Water Eaton – what effect and what should be done to maximise benefits • Oxford Airport (£3m business hub facilities and only passport controlled airport between London and Birmingham) – trade and investment opportunities for Oxford? • Begbroke Innovation Centre outline planning permission and set to double in size • Oxford is not always "the economic centre" – road and rail out of the city in the morning have so much capacity compared to in-commuting – create a more sustainable situation • How does this Strategy fit with the City's Housing Strategy • Homeworking/Remote working – link to broadband and investment elsewhere in the (rural) County as well as city - reduction of in-commuting • Bicester mentioned for high residential growth – why not employment growth and support of Oxford's businesses is they are searching for better value business space, less congestion	Steering Group to consider comments and any actions arising and impact on the Strategy and Action Plan
Becky Buell and Ruth Mayne Refer to Appendix 1.8 (page 13-16) for full details <u>General Comments</u> • Very thorough and high quality job – a strategy relevant and specific to Oxford • Economic growth does not guarantee reduction of equalities – need to redress existing	Steering Group to consider comments and any actions arising and impact on the Strategy and Action Plan

imbalances to deliver equality of outcomes

- Contradictions between economic growth strategy, pressures on infrastructure and increased carbon emissions – recommendations needed that ensure managed approach to growth
- Question whether becoming a retail centre is a desirable/necessary aim for a historic centre – ensure that planning drives the kind of retail that distinguishes Oxford
- Knowledge hub – focus on biotech and medical. Potential as a low-carbon hub – national and global leader in low-carbon development – attracts green industry, talent and resource
- Potential for joining up the medical/bio capabilities with low-carbon capabilities (e.g. recently launched Centre for the Advancement of Sustainable Medical Innovation

Specific Recommendations (refer to Appendix 1.8, p14-16)

- Change name from Economic Growth Strategy to "Sustainable and inclusive growth strategy" or "Well-being strategy"
- Growth strategy needs to reflect 50 year time frame
- Point 11 – the single team – be broadened to include responsibility for some of the cross cutting issues – e.g. growth projections, sustainability, inclusion
- Set scenario based milestones for ensuring infrastructure keeps pace with economic development and that growth is managed within environmental limits
- Rec 9 should include need for climate resilience plan
- Low Carbon Oxford can support and engage on rec 9, but without resources is not in a position to lead.
- Dual job in this respect – integrating low carbon agenda into planning processes; creating & widening ownership and responsibility for the low carbon agenda across city / county councils
- Rec 9 - engagement strategy should reinforce importance of engaging Oxford's diverse range of citizens. Collaboration required to achieve level of behavioural change required
- No specific proposals that indicate how inequalities will be addressed e.g. housing development for low-income, homeless, at risk; need for a city wide fuel poverty strategy
- Strategy should include recommendations for building wealth and skills to create Oxford as a hub for innovation and investment in the "green knowledge economy"
- Recommendations should support agenda of "powering up" (massive investment in renewables) and "powering down" (energy efficiency and demand reduction, local green jobs)

• Identify and recommend possible use of new powers under localism bill etc that the Council could use to raise money and shape pattern of growth – e.g. progressive council tax policy • If key problem is underemployment and working poor, should there be a recommendation on living wage policy across the city?	
Oxfordshire County Council (Martin Tugwell) Refer to Appendix 1.9 (pages 16-26) for full details <u>General Comments</u> • Supports the need to realise the potential of the knowledge based economy across the County and recognises the important role the city will play in delivering economic growth • Recent work on "Oxford Phenomenon" has concluded that Oxford accounts for 17% of the county's high-tech employment. Largest concentration is in Science Vale (Culham, Harwell) • The commissioning of a Growth Strategy for the city provides an important part of a larger jigsaw but inevitably raises issues which cannot be adequately addressed without expanding the debate to the wider region • Oxfordshire economy has the potential to move on to a higher growth trajectory and support the wider UK economy if partners can develop a joint economic narrative under the auspices of the LEP • The research commissioned by the OSP adds value to the available evidence base • The County Council is committed to working with the City Council through the SPIP and with the LEP to develop a comprehensive economic strategy for Oxfordshire – this work provides a useful building block <u>Specific Comments – refer to Appendix 1.9, p17-26</u> Recommendation One • Revise wording of recommendation 1 action and next steps • Strategy needs to be developed with adjoining district councils and extend beyond the County boundary • Further work required to assess growth potential of sectors prior to delivery plan being developed Recommendation Two	Tom Flanagan to briefly present County Council comments and answer any questions. Steering Group to consider comments and any actions arising and impact on the Strategy and Action Plan

- GVA per capita is not a reliable measure of economic performance – more valid to look at performance across the functional economic area
- LEP has a key role to play in working with the business community to identify specific barriers to delivery of accommodation not just in the City but across Oxfordshire
- Invest in Oxfordshire established to provide inward investment service – a key account management function is beginning to be established for Oxfordshire

Recommendation Three

- Additional plans for employment and housing growth across the functional economic area would need to be considered as part of "due process" through a review of employment and housing land
- County Council supports a rapid desk review of employment land across the county under the auspices of SPIP to complement the SHMA to assess whether land availability detailed in Local Plans is sufficient to meet likely demand

Recommendation Four

- County Council is reviewing and updating the Oxford Transport Strategy to reflect development proposals in the City
- Committed to continue to work to support the shared objectives of improving the retail offer

Recommendation Five

- Support for tourism should be linked to modernisation of the sector, the investment of skills and creation of higher value jobs – to help encourage extended stay visits in Oxford
- County Council will work with City Council to ensure that Experience Oxfordshire develops the tourist offer across Oxfordshire

Recommendation Six

- Revised wording of recommendation and key decisions and next steps
- Within existing framework, County Council welcomes support from partners in raising level of educational attainment
- Want to find ways to work with schools to improve employability skills and raise standards
- Agrees that there are opportunities to extend apprenticeship programme and recommends that the Oxfordshire Skills Board look to lead and co-ordinate on behalf of the LEP

Recommendation Seven

- County Council supports the proposal by SPIP to undertake a Strategic Housing Market Assessment and suggests the City undertakes a contemporaneous Housing Needs Assessment
- City Council should consider whether it can play a transformational role through its ownership of housing stock and land holdings in the city – good deal of equity 'locked-up' in the housing stock that could be released for injection of investment

Recommendation Eight

- Welcomes the success of the Oxford Super Connected Cities funding bid
- Welcome support for the Better Broadband (replacing OxOnline branding) campaign

Recommendation Nine

- County Council is a proactive and supportive player in Low Carbon Oxford (LCO) and agrees the pioneering approach taken should be expanded – the Intelligent Energy Europe project will provide a platform to develop a more strategic approach and increase pace of delivery
- County Council will champion environmental jobs through sector support and skills development
- Environment technologies sector growing in stature and importance – leading growth sector identified by EU; significant investment through R&D programme that partner universities could access to enhance Oxford in this field
- A specific strategy should be developed by LCO for investment in business development and skills training leading to employment opportunities

Recommendation Ten

- County Council continues to be committed to ensuring the Oxford Transport Strategy remains up to date – robust framework for determining investment priorities that enable potential to be realised
- Significant investments announced in recent years that will support the strategic connections to and through the city
- County Council engaged in detailed work with the City Council to deal with the consequences of development proposals and congestion in and around Oxford
- County Council looking at opportunities to develop new funding and delivery mechanisms that bring forward enabling infrastructure at an earlier stage in development process

Recommendation Eleven

• County Council recommends that both City and County Councils build upon existing relationships in the first instance as this provides the opportunity to create a 'virtual' delivery team supporting activity in Oxford City • County Council supports on-going work to strengthen working arrangements between SPIP and the LEP – existing officer support teams for these should provide the basis on which to develop a 'virtual' delivery team • This approach is strengthened by the commitment of both partnerships (SPIP and LEP) to review employment and housing land requirements and their support for a single economic narrative for Oxfordshire • Agreement on single narrative will help ensure that the delivery activities of all partners are aligned in the most effective way • The recommendations of the Oxford Economic Growth Strategy make a valuable contribution towards developing a shared narrative – an overall strategy needs a strong link to the wider economic context • County Council recommends that all partners work to develop the existing collaborative working arrangements in the first instance	

SJ 16.12.13

Appendix One – Comments as they were received

A1.1   Tony Stratton, Experience Oxfordshire (15/11/12)

Experience Oxfordshire is pleased to be included in the future planning for our city region and will work with the City Council, the County Council and others to develop an enhanced Tourism and Cultural Strategy.

A1.2   Alison Baxter, Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (27/11/12)

Nothing substantive to suggest and paragraph 3.73 on the contribution of the voluntary sector is very welcome. On the same topic and just to nitpick, paragraphs 2.54 and 2.55 seem to have rather a high proportion of typos and grammatical infelicities - could do with a further proofread!

A1.3   Kevin Dixon, Director, KIER PROPERTY (03/12/12)

I have no comments. Thanks for sending.

A1.4   Graham Jones, ROX (14/12/12)

Overall, the draft final report is a carefully considered and well written document, covering all the key factors and opportunities for Oxford.

I just wish to pick up on a few areas that are particularly relevant from my organisations points of view or are of a typographical nature.

Page 22 Para 2.44   The sentence starting "There" does not seem to read correctly. Should it be: "There are two major shopping centres (Westgate and Clarendon)... and I think that "Covered Market" should be capitalised.

Under this section on retailing there should be some mention of improving the choice for consumers to increase the general shopping offer in Oxford.

Page 42 second paragraph Believe that the wording should be stronger to reflect the comments made later on to support it. Can "continues to be Oxfordshire's primary retail centre and a very strong international tourist destination" be changed to "strengthen its position as Oxfordshire's primary retail centre and as a top international tourist destination" (If agreed, the wording needs to be changed on page 64 as well).

Page 49 Para 3.37   Surely, the second sentence should read something along the lines of "Oxford also benefits from five district retail centres at Cowley, Headington, Jericho and Little Clarendon Street, St Clements and Cowley Road, and Summertown as well as retail parks at Cowley and in the Botley Road.

Finally, on the second page of Appendix 1, please can you change my entry to:-
Graham Jones, Oxford High Street Association and ROX- Promoting Oxford Business

A1.5   Chris Sharp, Thames Valley Police (16/11/12)

I like the document and it covers the necessary points.

Some very minor points, whilst aware that it is a strategic document and there is no need to go into too much detail, I will make the following points;

- We discussed the fact that tourist visits were getting shorter and I see the plan ref hotels and the encouragement of visitors to stay overnight. With this in mind, we all see a significant number of groups of younger people and though they don't spend the larger amounts of money, I do feel they should be encouraged to also stay over, therefore the accommodation prospects should/could include more affordable accommodation to be borne in mind. For example hostels for these groups (not to be confused with the sort of hostels we have for the homeless!) I believe this will contribute to the longer term in that it promote them to return later in life, promote the education and cultural benefits of the city and encourage their relatives to come to Oxford

- Secondly, with regard to transport and in order to help congestion I think there should be a mention of promoting motorcyclist/scooters, I appreciate that cycling should remain the emphasis. In order to support this, motorcycling parking bays (expanded on what we currently have) and the use of bus lanes by motorcyclist. Firstly this (more use of this mode of transport) would help reduce congestion and secondly safety (in relation to bus lanes) instead of pushing the rider into the opposing carriageways when filtering. Many other towns have allowed the use of M/Cyclists in their bus lanes and Oxford now stands out as being behind in this consideration. The average age of motorcyclist these days are in their 40's and reasonably wealthy (Tourists) They are the only ones that can generally afford it. In addition to tourist (motorcyclist) the commuter!

- Lastly, the late night refreshment facilities concentrates on alcohol licensed premises – pubs, restaurants. I've tried getting a coffee at 8pm and the likes of Costa, Starbucks etc are closing or about to close. Encouragement of these sort of establishments to stay open would bring a better mix of the evening economy in my view.

A1.6   Michael Sibly and Phil Clare, University of Oxford (12/12/12)

The University is grateful for the opportunity to comment on the draft of the Oxford Economic Growth Strategy. We find this to be a most useful study and broadly endorse its conclusions. We particularly welcome the evidence-based focus on innovation and the knowledge-based economy as the engine for growth. Despite the sensitivities involved, we,

too, consider that investment in developing the innovative and high tech cluster within and around Oxford can make a major contribution to the future economic well-being of the City and the region. It will be of benefit to many existing Oxford companies and institutions, not least the University as we continue to invest in maximising the impact of our teaching and research on the economy and society.

We note that many of the eleven elements of the growth strategy are highly interdependent, and would be cautious of a piecemeal approach to implementation. In particular, it is evident that economic growth depends not only on investment in support and co-ordination, but also on solving the difficult underlying infrastructural issues that are holding back the City and the surrounding area. We would suggest that disaggregating these elements would not be a sensible strategy and hope that the City can press forward with all the elements at the same. The University endorses the need for a strong partnership as noted in element eleven, and would wish to join such an endeavour.

A1.7   Steven Newman, Cherwell District Council (12/12/12)

Thank you for the chance to comment and to build upon my previous discussions with Shared Intelligence. It's taking shape well but there are some gaps which you may wish to fill, particularly in relating it across the border to Cherwell's adopted ED Strategy (2011-16) which seeks many common goals.

I'll swiftly run through: please excuse any directness of these comments and questions:

1) Entrepreneurs - your focus in section 3 focuses more on the physical requirements rather than associated advice and support. Para 2.20 recognises briefly the need but then refers to Key Employers and Sectors. How important are 'regular' businesses? and how important is Oxfordshire Business Enterprises (OBE www.oxonbe.co.uk) and OB Mentors & Fredericks Fund in helping the bulk of start-ups - many of which will trade with and/or support the Key Sectors? As in attached, 93 one-to-one advice sessions were provide in Oxford since April 2012 (up to end of Nov 12), and 80 residents of Oxford City Council's area have benefitted (according to client feedback). You'll see that Oxford City is the main beneficiary of this service, helping to nurture its future businesses. How does this fit into your Strategy? Have you involved OBE/or would you wish to? Is it important to support 'regular' businesses or only high growth sectors?

2) Stakeholder Consultations - no reflection of CDC input via previous correspondence. Also, I'd suggest OBE advisers are involved - especially those based in Oxford as they may have specific advice for you on the clients they see.

3) How does your Strategy integrate with elements of the Cherwell ED Strategy? (I've previously sent the Cherwell strategy with comments to Emma and Patrick - they provide pointes on the matters below).

4) No mention of Chiltern Rail, Evergreen 3, East-west rail or Water Eaton interchange. What effect will these major investments have and what should be done to maximise the economic benefits?

5) Oxford Airport only gets one mention (para 3.26) - and nothing about its recent £3m business hub facilities - the only passport controlled airport between London and Birmingham. Is this important for Oxford and its ability to attract international trade and investment?

6) Begbroke's Innovation centre has outline planning permission and is set to double in size following the recent completion of the access road to A44. Oxford University's Super Computer is based at Begbroke and much of its critical infrastructure driving the Universities cutting edge work.

7) Oxford's not always 'the economic centre': a fundamental point which is not considered at all: Oxford as an economic driver is recognised but Oxford residents also commute out of Oxford to work, and could potentially do so to a greater degree whilst still adding GVA to the economy. Given that the roads and rail out of the City in the morning have so much capacity when compared to the congested in-commuting, how can Oxford's Economic Strategy create a more sustainable situation? Does it need to continually attract more inward commuting workers?

8) Related to 7, how does this Strategy fit with the City's Housing Strategy? How can Oxford's serious housing affordability gap be addressed? Role for neighbouring areas that doesn't simply add to congestion?

9) Homeworking / remote working could be mentioned as part of the answer, perhaps building on the strong theme around superfast broadband? Rather than focus just upon the City, what impact would investment in superfast broadband elsewhere in the (rural) County have in reducing the need for daily inward commuting to Oxford?

10) Bicester is mentioned a number of times as 'high growth' but only for residential. Why not for employment growth and support of Oxford's businesses if they are searching for better value business space, less congestion and better access to the M40 and rail? I suggest looking at recent investment by Unipart Automotive which moved its national HQ last month from Oxford to Bicester. How could this spin-out trend help businesses and jobs across Oxon and what policy agreements should we construct to meet the various needs of Oxon businesses trying to compete in a global economy?

I hope this helps. Please let me know if any further clarification is needed, or opportunities to develop joint actions.

A1.8 Becky Buell and Ruth Mayne, Leaders and experts in low carbon development in Oxford (12/12/12)

Thank you for sharing the draft Oxford Economic Growth Strategy for comment. We appreciated being part of the consultation, and also having the opportunity to comment. We were both part of the consultation that happened with a group of leaders and experts in low-carbon development in Oxford. We offer here several general comments, followed by some specific suggestions that we feel could improve the strategy.

General comments

1. Overall, we feel that Shared Intelligence did a very thorough and high quality job, producing a strategy that is both relevant and specific to Oxford. This is often not the case with Urban Strategies, which often take "off the shelf" ideas to promote growth and competitiveness, so we would like to congratulate SI on making this very true to our city. It also shows that they really listened to what different groups were saying in their consultation. Well done on process and result.

2. The strategy achieves a good balance between recognising the strengths of the city, and its unique social, environmental and cultural capital, while recognising that the city's prosperity will require not just economic growth, but measures to address inequality and deprivation. As recent studies have shown, inequality serves as a drag on growth, and also undermines attempts to draw the types of investment that Oxford is seeking to attract. However, the strategy falls short on recommendations that could effectively address this structural constraint. Economic growth on its own does not guarantee reduction of inequalities, therefore, specific strategies need to be developed to ensure that growth is directed to redressing existing imbalances, and towards delivering equality of outcomes for new investments. We have made recommendations below on how this might be addressed.

3. If Oxford City's goal is to be a prosperous, green and equal city, as we think it should be, there are some contradictions within the strategy the recommended economic growth strategy will put huge pressures on Oxford's infrastructure and will increase carbon emissions, thus undermining the city's ability to develop in the ways set out in the strategy. For example,

- more growth and expansion of employment land means more pressure on housing prices and transport thereby also increasing carbon emissions;
- becoming a regional retail centre with big brands pulls in yet more traffic, conflicts with the sustainability agenda, and potentially undermines the local economy.
- using more land for employment and housing creates more flooding and relaxing planning controls could reduce tourism

While the need to build a housing and transport infrastructure to support growth is identified, there is no indication of what the limits to growth might be, or what pace of growth might be manageable for a city of this size. We recommend that the strategy include recommendations that ensure a managed approach to growth across key sectors, with a long-term view on the infrastructure that will be required in a future of considerable pressures on social and environmental systems in the city.

4. Overall we would question whether becoming a regional retail centre is a desirable/necessary aim for a historic centre. What is the vision of retail in the city, and how do we ensure that planning drives the kind of retail that will distinguish Oxford from every other city centre in the southeast, and which is consistent with its desired identity and the diversity and uniqueness of the city. In any case, if jobs is the aim, what is the appropriate balance between retail, and other areas of the economy such as green jobs, services, etc? A Green Alliance report has recently shown that 2/3rds of all job growth in the UK is from the Green Economy.

5. The strategy recognises Oxford's strength as a knowledge hub, but focuses this in the bio-tech and medical areas. We also believe that Oxford holds a unique position as a potential low-carbon hub, that includes a significant academic and research community, community innovation that is looked to nationally, and the beginnings of collaboration across city government and communities that could position Oxford as a national and global leader in low-carbon development. This leadership not only attracts green industry and talent to Oxford, but brings resources to address issues that will challenge the development of the city in the future (eg flooding, waste, transport). There is also potential for joining up the medical/bio-tech capabilities with the low-carbon capabilities. For example, this month a group of Oxford scientists launched the Centre for the Advancement of Sustainable Medical Innovation. This is the type of cutting edge knowledge economy we should be promoting in the strategy. There might also be possible to develop innovation around quality and security of food supply drawing on university, farming and low carbon communities and food bank innovation.

Specific Recommendations

a) It may be late in the day, but we would recommend a reframing of the objective/name of the strategy from an Economic Growth Strategy to a 'sustainable and inclusive growth strategy' -or 'well-being strategy'. Increasingly, economists are focusing measures of economic development away from increased per capita incomes/consumption towards measures such as quality of life, well-being, health, happiness (NEF, Tim Jackson, Stern and new UN initiative on Gross National Happiness Indicator), with a long-term future perspective. Oxford could be a leader in framing what this looks like in practice, starting with calling its Economic Growth Strategy by a different name.

b) While acknowledging the difficulties of this, a growth strategy needs to reflect not just a 5 year time frame, but a 50 year time frame. What will be the demographic and environmental picture of Oxford and Oxfordshire in 2060, and are we putting in infrastructure that will be relevant for the mid-term future? The study needs to contemplate a city that will have many older people as our current generations age, fewer people entering school as birth rates fall, and a geography that will be transformed by flooding.

c) There are a number of aspects missing the strategy that do not fit neatly into any of the 11 recommendation areas. We recommend that Point 11 – "the single team" be broadened to include responsibility for some of the cross cutting issues that define the

nature of growth and development that currently get lost in the specific recommendations, eg growth projections, sustainability, inclusion.

d) Include in recommendations for "single team" (Rec 11) a specific piece of work that presents scenarios for the growth in housing, employment and new business development over the next 10-30 years, and the infrastructure that would have to be in place to support each scenario with a view to ensuring neutral or net-reduction in carbon emissions. This could serve as a set of milestones for ensuring that infrastructure keeps pace with economic development, and that growth is managed within environmental limits.

e) Related to this point, Rec 9 should include the need for a climate resilience plan especially given the prospect of future flooding of business and housing, if this does not already exist, and an indication that development plans need to reflect longer term horizons.

f) The suggestion (Rec 9) that Low Carbon Oxford can currently do the job of joining up the plans for a view on environmental impact and management is unrealistic. LCO is very small, under-resourced, and largely supported through voluntary effort. The job of strategic planning for a low-carbon, resilient future must be properly resourced. LCO can support and engage, but without resources is not in a position to lead. There is a dual job to be done in this respect: 1) integrating the low carbon agenda into current city and county planning processes, and 2) creating and widening the ownership and responsibility for the low carbon agenda across city and county councils.

g) In Rec 9, the engagement strategy for LCO should reinforce the importance of engaging Oxford's diverse range of citizens as part of a strategy to promote widespread behaviour change and reduce energy demand. Collaboration between the City Council and LCO will be required to get the level of behaviour change required, and to extend environmental stewardship beyond a relatively narrow demographic group and to share the benefits of green retrofitting and jobs fairly.

h) There are no specific proposals that indicate how inequalities will be addressed. In addition to giving the "single team" responsibility for overseeing approaches to reducing inequalities, each of the areas of recommendation could identify specifically targeted interventions. For example, on the proposals on housing development (Rec 7), it is worth highlighting the importance of specific strategies for low-income, homeless and at risk people in the community. There is also a need for a city wide fuel poverty strategy

i) The strategy should include recommendations (in Rec 1 and 11?) for building Oxfordshire's wealth and skills to create Oxford as a hub for innovation and investment in the "green knowledge economy". The recommendations should support the LCO and Hub agenda of 'powering up' ie massive investment in local renewables and 'powering down' through energy efficiency and demand reduction, and creation of local green jobs. This, and linking the medical/biotech knowledge hub with the low-carbon knowledge hub, may require a separate area of recommendation in the strategy.

j) The strategy needs to identify and recommend possible use of new powers under localism bill, sustainable community act etc that the Council could use to raise money and shape the pattern of growth. For example, could the council use new powers to develop a progressive council tax policy as a way of raising more revenue? Could it impose rent controls, living wage etc? What other powers could it use in relation to each of the key elements of the strategy?

k) If a key problem in Oxford is underemployment and working poor, should there be a recommendation on living wage policy adopted across city?

Thank you again for giving us the opportunity to comment.

A1.9   Martin Tugwell, Oxfordshire County Council (13/12/12)

General Comments

Oxfordshire County Council supports the need to realise the potential of the knowledge based economy across the County and recognises the important role the City will play in delivering future economic growth

The Oxford Strategic Partnership is therefore commended on launching a timely debate on the ambition for and challenges of growth for the city and surrounding region.

Within the functional economic area of Oxfordshire lies one of Europe's most innovative regions: not only does the county have a rapidly growing high-tech economy, it also has arguably one of the most advanced research, development and innovation support systems in the world.

The Oxfordshire economy hosts a number of premier league sectors: medical research and biotechnology; advanced automotive engineering; space and satellite technologies; cryogenics; digital information management. These sectors are grouped in clusters across the functional economic area, with particular concentrations in Oxford, Culham, Harwell, and Milton Park.

Recent work on the 'Oxford Phenomenon' has concluded: "The spatial footprint of the high-tech cluster extends across the whole county. The city of Oxford is important, accounting for 17% of the county's high-tech employment but the largest concentration of high-tech firms and employment (accounting for over half the jobs) is in Science Vale UK in the south of the county, clustered around the research institutes at Culham and Harwell and supported by specialist property developments, the largest of which is at Milton Park".

The potential of Oxfordshire's economy is further reflected in the scale of transformational growth identified across the County. Committed investment in transport infrastructure will help improve the connectivity between the three growth poles of Bicester, Oxford and Science Vale. The benefits of growth in those locations will spin out across the functional economic area.

Shared Intelligence has delivered a high quality, comprehensive report with input from a wide variety of stakeholders and provided a number of well-considered recommendations, raising the key issues that the City Council and the wider partnership need to address.

The County Council is clear that in supporting work to deliver this strategy we bring an important strategic perspective, looking at Oxford within a broader economic context   The commissioning of a Growth Strategy for the city provides an important part of a larger jigsaw but inevitably raises issues which cannot be adequately addressed without expanding the debate to the wider region.

The Oxfordshire economy has the potential to move on to a higher growth trajectory and support the wider UK economy if partners can develop a joint economic narrative under the auspices of the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The research commissioned by the Oxford Strategic Partnership adds value to the available evidence base. The County Council is committed to working with the City Council through the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership and with the Local Enterprise Partnership to develop a comprehensive economic strategy for Oxfordshire for which this work provides a useful building block.

Specific Comments

The County Council's response to each of the specific recommendations in the Oxford Economic Growth Strategy is set out below. In respect of recommendations 1 and 6 we have suggested specific changes to the draft wording for both the recommendation and the proposed key decision and next steps: these are shown as tracked changes.

1. Oxford City Growth Strategy - Recommended Action:

Assess the growth potential for each of the principal growth sectors and d~~D~~evelop a clear integrated delivery strategy ~~for the principal growth sectors~~ which extends from market assessment, inward investment promotion and marketing through to sites, infrastructure and funding.

Key Decision and Next Steps – Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, the LEP and the Universities should ~~agree to~~ develop a clear assessment of the growth potential of each of the principal growth sectors incorporating existing and planned research work (Oxford Phenomenon study etc.) and from this develop an integrated delivery strategy and action plan for each ~~the principal growth~~ sectors.

Oxfordshire County Council Response:

The County Council supports the concept of having a clear integrated delivery strategy for the principal growth sectors and recognises that there are significant gaps in our current collective knowledge and understanding. Such a strategy needs to reflect the reality that the functional economic area is broadly coterminous with the Oxfordshire boundary and

that key sites which are perceived as being part of Oxford (such as Begbroke, Oxford Science Park, the Churchill site and Oxford Brookes campuses at Wheatley and Harcourt Hill) are not all within the city's administrative boundary. It therefore needs to be developed not only with the City Council, Universities and Local Enterprise Partnership but also with the adjoining district councils. The delivery strategy also needs to take into account issues arising from consideration of supply chains which, in some instances, extend beyond the County boundary.

Further work is required to assess the growth potential of individual sectors prior to any delivery plan being developed. The County Council has commissioned Oxford Brookes University to pull together the evidence base from the Local Economic Assessment, the Oxford Growth Strategy and the Oxford Phenomenon into a coherent summary of what is currently known about the potential of the Oxfordshire Knowledge-Based Economy.

This summary will be available to support the development of an economic narrative for the functional economic area: one that could underpin the Local Enterprise Partnership business plan, a potential City Deal or indeed any other future proposals. The narrative could in turn underpin the development of bespoke action plans for principal growth sectors.

2. Oxford City Growth Strategy - Recommended Action:

Review and expand the choice and supply of accommodation for start-up and spin –out businesses in the city.

Key Decision and Next Steps – The City Council should review the choice and availability of accommodation for start-up and spin out companies in the city. The LEP should ask councils to establish a single county wide key account management function.

Oxfordshire County Council Response:

Oxford imports almost half of its working population on a daily basis from the surrounding Districts. Given this fact, GVA per capita for the city is not a reliable measure of economic performance. A more valid measure of economic performance would to look at performance across the functional economic area.

The development plans prepared by the City and District Councils identify planned levels of employment growth across Oxfordshire. The scale of that growth is transformational. The challenge facing the public sector across Oxfordshire is how it might support these allocations being brought forward to meet the need for accommodation. The County Council believes that the Local Enterprise Partnership has a key role to play in working with the business community to identify specific barriers to the timely delivery of accommodation for start-up and spin-out businesses not just in the City but across Oxfordshire.

The Invest in Oxfordshire service was established by the County Council to provide an inward investment service for the County. The service is being developed in partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnership, building upon the Memorandum of Understanding

that already exists between UKTi and the Local Enterprise Partnership. As part of the current offer a key account management function is beginning to be established for Oxfordshire.

The County Council supports the development of a more comprehensive approach to key account management and believes that this should be undertaken on a partnership basis between the Local Enterprise Partnership and all local authorities. It recommends that such an approach should involve a tiered system based on size, sector and growth potential with strategic employers being supported by the most appropriate agency and SME's being supported through the existing business networks, Chambers and FSB;

3. Oxford City Growth Strategy - Recommended Actions:

Undertake a county-wide review of employment land requirements including taking into account the needs of existing businesses and the requirements of Oxford's key growth sectors. Build a clear delivery plan for each of the major city employment sites both inside the City's boundaries, and with the relevant District Council and owners, for those sites near Oxford.

Key Decision and Next Steps – The SPIP should undertake further work to develop a county wide agreement on meeting employment land requirements.

Oxfordshire County Council Response:

The strategy states that planning controls have restricted development within and outside the city for the past sixty years. This must be set against the statement that over the last decade the Oxford city region has been the fastest growing (percentage) location in the UK for high-tech employment, with outstanding performance in both high-tech services and high-tech manufacturing.

It is clear that the scale of the development plans already put in place by local authorities will be transformational but need to be supported by appropriate levels of investment, devolved powers and streamlined governance arrangements. Any additional plans for employment and housing growth across the functional economic area would need to be considered as part of "due process" through a review of employment and housing land.

In this context the County Council supports a rapid desk review of employment land across the county under the auspices of SPIP to complement the SHMA to assess whether the land availability detailed in Local Plans is sufficient to meet likely demand;

4. Oxford City Growth Strategy - Recommended Actions:

Use the proposed Westgate redevelopment as a catalyst to raise the quality and range of the retail offer, including investment in public spaces, transport and environment. Support and revitalise the independent retail offer where this is practical.

Key Decision and Next Steps – Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council should develop a strategy that uses the proposed Westgate redevelopment as a catalyst to raise the quality of the retail offer including investment in public spaces, transport and environment as part of the transport strategy.

Oxfordshire County Council Response:

The County Council is reviewing and updating the Oxford Transport Strategy to reflect development proposals in the City. It is committed to continue to work with the City Council to ensure that the work on the transport strategy supports the shared objective of improving the retail offer. The County Council continues to work closely with the City Council on ensuring the potential of the Westgate proposal to be a key contributor towards unlocking the economic regeneration potential of the West End and wider city centre.

5. Oxford City Growth Strategy - Recommended Actions:

Build on the success of Visit Oxfordshire, the Destination Management Organisation and extend the tourism and cultural offer and event calendar. Extend the range of tourist accommodation, in particular hotels, to support extended trips and visitor expenditure across the region. Key Decision and Next Steps – Working with Visit Oxfordshire, the Destination Management Organisation—Experience Oxfordshire -- should develop a strategy to extend the tourism and cultural offer and event calendar across the city and county.

Oxfordshire County Council Response:

The County Council acknowledges the importance of tourism to the Oxfordshire economy. However, it is important to distinguish between 'volume' and 'value' in that while the influx of visitors and cash can boost the volume of money circulating within the local economy it can often fail to add value, i.e. it provides more GDP but not GVA. Therefore, support for tourism should be linked to the modernisation of the sector, the investment in skills and the creation of higher value jobs linked to such things as brand values, web presence and promotion of place to inward investment. This will help encourage growth in the number of extended stay visits based in Oxford.

The County Council will work with the City Council to ensure that Experience Oxfordshire (as the umbrella organisation that brings Visit Oxfordshire together with Oxford Inspires) develops the tourist offer across Oxfordshire.

6. Oxford City Growth Strategy - Recommended Actions:

Extend current initiatives to raise schools attainment and to bring greater co-ordination to the existing education/business initiatives, University volunteering schemes and relevant voluntary sector programmes to scale up support for schools (e.g. STEM engagement). Review with the business sector whether there is the potential to sustain a stronger apprenticeship and skills programmes across the city and county.

Key Decision and Next Steps – The County Council, ~~working with local schools~~ and the City Council -- ~~working through the Oxford Strategic Partnership~~ -- should determine how best to extend current initiatives to raise schools attainment and with the City Council and Oxford Strategic Partnership should determine how best **to bring greater coordination to the existing education/business initiatives, University volunteering schemes and relevant voluntary sector programmes to scale up support for schools (e.g. STEM engagement). Also, the OSP, with the LEP and business leaders should consider whether there is the potential to sustain a stronger apprenticeship and skills programmes across the city and county.**

Oxfordshire County Council Response:

The County Council is the body with responsibility for providing leadership in raising the level of educational attainment. Within this framework, we welcome support from partners.

In addition to raising educational attainment, we want to find ways to work with schools to improve the employability skills and raise standards. The County Council believes that good leadership is essential in this quest and we will look to work with the National College for School Leadership to provide local development opportunities for our school leaders. We would also like Teach First to be made available in Oxfordshire.

The County Council agrees that there are opportunities to extend apprenticeship programme and recommends that the Oxfordshire Skills Board look to provide leadership and co-ordination in this regard on behalf of the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The County Council acknowledges that small and medium sized businesses require support to implement in house training schemes such as apprenticeships. Helping key growth sectors to establish business to business support to encourage growing enterprises to adopt appropriate "grow your own" approaches to skills, is essential to breakdown existing barriers the small and medium sized enterprises face. The Oxfordshire Skills Board could provide leadership in this regard on behalf of the Local Enterprise Partnership.

7. Oxford City Growth Strategy - Recommended Actions:

Review the city housing requirement in the context of the forthcoming county-wide assessment to seek to reduce the burden of in-commuting, and improve the city housing-employment balance. Develop with adjoining District and County Councils, through SPIP, a set of compacts sharing the benefits and costs (under the Duty to Co-operate) to address the requirements of regional economic growth.

Key Decision and Next Steps – The SPIP should work to review the countywide housing land requirements study.

Oxfordshire County Council Response:

There is clearly an issue with regard to housing availability and affordability across the functional economic area. The County Council supports the proposal by the SPIP to undertake a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) as a matter of urgency and suggest the City undertakes a contemporaneous Housing Needs Assessment in parallel to clearly understand the level of need and demand within local neighbourhoods.

In developing a housing strategy across the area in response to a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the City Council should consider whether it can play a transformational role through its ownership of housing stock and land holdings in the city. There is clearly a good deal of equity 'locked-up' in the housing stock that could be released to provide a transformational injection of investment.

8. Oxford City Growth Strategy - Recommended Actions

Work with the OxOnline initiative to enhance broadband provision across the county, including the wider connections between Oxford's research infrastructure and the Enterprise Zone. Progress the current the Super Connected Cities Programme bid to further enhance the city and regional competitiveness in the knowledge economy

Key Decision and Next Steps – The OSP with the LEP and the Universities should work to ensure that the Super Connected Cities Bid makes a compelling case for further investment in Oxford's broadband capacity and with OxOnline to enhance broadband across the county and in the city.

Oxfordshire County Council Response:

The County Council welcomes the announcement in the Autumn Statement of the success of the joint City Council/County Council/Local Enterprise Partnership in securing 'super connected cities' funding.

The County Council welcomes the City Council's support for its Better Broadband (replacing the OxOnline branding) campaign.

9. Oxford City Growth Strategy - Recommended Actions:

Develop a more strategic framework to address and join up projects as well as increase involvement of the private sector in key areas such as energy and waste management. Identify with the universities, LEP and partners, applied research which could be developed on a practical scale to deliver low carbon solutions in the city and across the region.

Key Decision and Next Steps – Low Carbon Oxford should be supported to develop a more strategic approach to joining up relevant environmental projects

Oxfordshire County Council Response:

The County Council is a proactive and supportive player in Low Carbon Oxford and agrees the pioneering approach taken should be expanded into more substantial outcomes for the local economy. The Intelligent Energy Europe project (jointly promoted by the City and County Councils) project will provide a platform on which to develop a more strategic approach and to increase the pace of delivery.

The County Council will champion environmental jobs through sector support and skills development. In particular, environmental technologies should be seen as a sector growing in stature and importance, it is one of the leading growth sectors identified by the EU and significant investment is coming through the research and development programme that partner Universities could access to enhance Oxford's impact in this field. A specific strategy should be developed by Low Carbon Oxford for investment in business development and skills training leading to employment opportunities.

10. Oxford City Growth Strategy - Recommended Actions

Ensure that infrastructure and transport strategies for the city centre and the wider city are comprehensive and supported by investment and delivery plans.

Key Decision and Next Steps – The infrastructure and transport strategies for the city centre and the wider city need to be comprehensive including parking management, pedestrian and cycle movements and upgrading the quality of surfaces and public areas. The station redevelopment offers a major opportunity to deliver an exemplar transport interchange and catalyst for creating a new mixed used development extending through to Oxpens.

Oxfordshire County Council Response:

The County Council continue to be committed to ensuring that the Oxford Transport Strategy remains up to date. It is committed to ensuring that the strategy set out in the Local Transport Plan provides a robust framework for determining investment priorities that enable the potential of the Oxfordshire economy to be realised.

There have been significant investments announced in recent years that will support the strategic connections to and through the city. These include:

- A34 / M40 Junction 9 – Highways Agency pinch-point funding plus a £2m County Council contribution with expected delivery by March 2015.

- Evergreen 3, new Oxford – London (Marylebone) Rail Link, including Parkway Station at expanded Water Eaton Park & Ride site and redevelopment of Bicester Town. There will be shared infrastructure with East-West Rail between Oxford Bicester. Fully funded by franchise operator (Chiltern) with Council support and facilitation, complementary transport measures, e.g. to enhance station access. This should be operational from 2015.

- East-West Rail (western section) now including electrification of full scheme – placing Oxford at the heart of the national rail 'electric spine'. This has required £400m investment for the fully funded scheme including local contributions. This should be operational from 2017.

- Oxford Station - major expansion of rail and passenger interchange infrastructure. The County Council is working with the City Council and the rail industry on a master planning exercise that will determine the scope and cost of proposals for the station. There is likely to be a commercial development opportunity. Interface with Frideswide Square, as Gateway to the city centre critical. Access to the west 'bottleneck' will also to be addressed via replacement of wider/higher Botley Road overbridge. The detailed timescale is to be determined but should be in place by 2018/19

In addition the County Council is engaged in detailed work with the City Council to deal with the consequences of development proposals and congestion in and around Oxford:

- City centre: comprising (i) measures to facilitate delivery of new Westgate Retail Centre in 2017 – including full pedestrianisation of Queen St; (ii) wider central area enhancement to link in redeveloped Station with transport interchange, Oxpens redevelopment site; expansion of retail circuit to include Magdalen St / George St; other public realm enhancements including Broad Street.

- Headington Area - OUHT Proposals; Park Hospital expansion; Strategic approach with new P&R provision; network management junction upgrades; high quality public transport; targeted parking provision and management

- Northern Gateway – Strategic employment and housing development site providing 3,000 jobs, requiring major congestion issues to be tackled

- 'Greater' Oxford: looking at the wider growth and investment requirements across the City including Northern Gateway; Headington (Healthcare / R&D) Eastern Arc (Oxford Business Park, BMW expansion) – this includes a strategic review of A40 corridor around Oxford; Park & Ride provision; public transport network.

In taking forward this work, the County Council is looking at opportunities to develop new funding and delivery mechanisms that bring forward enabling infrastructure at an earlier stage in the development process.

11. Oxford City Growth Strategy - Recommended Actions:

Create a single City-County-Universities executive – with LEP resources as appropriate -- to take responsibility for ensuring the delivery of each of the elements of this Economic Growth Strategy.

Key Decision and Next Steps – The City and County Councils and the Universities should establish a dedicated delivery team to lead efforts for growing the knowledge based economy in Oxford and across the wider region.

Oxfordshire County Council Response:

The City and County Councils already work closely in a number of policy areas to help improve delivery. In addition both Councils meet with the Universities on a regular basis. The County Council recommends that both authorities build upon these existing relationships in the first instance as this provides the opportunity to create a 'virtual' delivery team supporting activity in Oxford City.

The County Council supports the need for stronger collaborative working across all local authorities within the functional economic area: in this regard it supports the on-going work to strengthen the working arrangements between the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership and the Local Enterprise Partnership. The existing officer support teams for these partnerships should provide the basis on which to develop a 'virtual' delivery team.

Such an approach is strengthened by the commitment of both Partnerships to review employment and housing land requirements and their support for delivering a single economic narrative for Oxfordshire. By very definition, agreement on a single narrative will help ensure that the delivery activities of all partners are aligned in the most effective way.

The recommendations of the Oxford Economic Growth Strategy make a valuable contribution towards developing such a shared narrative. While some can be delivered directly on a city geography, an overall strategy needs a strong link to the wider economic context

The County Council therefore recommends that all partners work to develop the existing collaborative working arrangements in the first instance.

Proposed Development Projects
Main Localities within Oxford City-Region 2011-2026/31

	Jobs	Employment land	Houses
Oxford	11,000	9 Ha Oxford Science Park 9 Ha Oxford Business Park 20 Ha Northern Gateway.	5,200
Bicester	13,300	Up to 104 Ha overall which includes: 18 Ha Bicester Business Park 25Ha NW Bicester 26 Ha Graven Hill 25 Ha East Bicester	6,600
Science Vale	14,000	92 Ha at the Science Vale Enterprise Zone which covers Milton Park and Harwell Oxford.	13,000
Witney sub-area	3,000	14 Ha	1,900
Carterton sub-area	3,000	11 Ha	1,850

Notes:
Includes sites allocated and/or proposed in Core Strategies/Local Plans. End date of Plans varies between districts.
Bicester: NW Bicester – 5,000 houses and 5,000 jobs proposed overall with 1,800 houses and 3,000 jobs planned to be delivered by 2031. Land and job estimates include sites that are proposals in the Local Plan currently out to public consultation.
Oxford – up to 11,000 jobs with Northern Gateway figure dependent on quantum of houses built.
West Oxfordshire Local Plan currently subject to public consultation.

Appendix Two – Comments received after 12th December 2012

A2.1   Beryl Guiver, Planning Policy Officer, South Oxfordshire District Council (17/12/12)

General

1 There are many good recommendations in the report which if applied in an Oxfordshire context could improve economic growth in the sub-region. There are however some general themes which are of strong concern set out below.

Strategy area

2 There are many references throughout the strategy to businesses throughout Oxfordshire, which suggest it is leading to a conclusion that an Oxfordshire wide economic strategy should be prepared. The final conclusion to progress an Oxford only approach is therefore inconsistent with the earlier evidence and discussion in the report. The report has been constrained because the brief restricted the area, the initial evidence gathering appears to be leading to a conclusion that the city region is so interconnected that Oxfordshire is a more appropriate area for the strategy. We would agree with this.

3 The recently published Heseltine Review 'No Stone Unturned' which was prepared at the request of Government includes the following recommendation that supports strategies which cover the whole of a LEP area:

'Taking full account of the Government's national growth strategy, all LEPs, in collaboration with local stakeholders, should lead the development of a long term strategy and business plan for their area that will be used to bid for economic growth funds from central government.'

4 Whilst the document in places purports to put Oxford in context it doesn't look at the county comprehensively or set the scene for what is happening in the county outside Oxford. What is the scale of business provision in Science Vale and Bicester? And how does this compare with that in Oxford? How do the three areas work together or are they competing for the same business?

5 Looking at the information on the economic strategy for Cambridge they appear to look at the greater Cambridge sub region. Whilst we recognise that the name Oxford provides a good brand there is no evidence that the prime business location in the future has to be actually in the city and that other business areas in the county are subservient to this. Ultimately, it is wrong to view Oxford in isolation, Oxford needs Oxfordshire as much as Oxfordshire needs Oxford - you cannot ignore this interdependence.

Planning procedures

6 The identification of specific areas of land for both housing and economic development at this scale needs to follow appropriate procedures. Such decisions would need to be made through a planning document, the economic strategy cannot fetter the ability of a planning document to follow the correct procedures. EU legislation relating to sustainability appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessments require that alternative options are

objectively assessed with a view to selecting the best option and mitigating any harmful impacts. This process has not been followed here and the conclusions if transferred to a planning document would therefore be open to legal challenge.   This has already happened with the proposals for SOSDA in the SE Plan, any work on progressing the conclusions in this strategy would be flawed for the same reason.

7 We would expect a much more detailed analysis of what makes Oxfordshire's economy work, what's helpful and what is unhelpful. Also innovative examples from elsewhere, plus evidence to back up the information and conclusions produced. We do not have this. One significant element not considered in the report is weighing in the balance the importance of the historic and green environment to the success of tourism and the attractiveness of Oxford to businesses and how we should value this element.

This whole issue has been discussed at SPIP previously and there was broad agreement from all parties that an economic strategy for the whole of Oxfordshire would be appropriate. There has also been discussion that this should be progressed hand in hand with the SHMA to give a comprehensive view of need for housing and employment across Oxfordshire.

Quality of the report and evidence
8 Many of the statements/conclusions in the report are not supported by any evidence they are just the consultants view. Any strategy needs a good understanding of how the area stands in the context of what's around it, and what impact the strategy will have on neighbouring areas. The report needs to be well evidenced to withstand scrutiny, and the conclusions need to be informed by the evidence. This is not the case with this report, and it does not provide a balanced and well reasoned approach.

Joint working
9 The document indicates in many areas that a good relationship between Oxford and neighbouring districts will be important to achieving the strategy; however the strategy has been prepared without involving neighbouring districts. Furthermore the strategy appears biased towards a single objective, allocating SOSDA, without providing a balanced and reasoned justification. This is not the way to establish a good working relationship.   It is clear that all the districts in Oxfordshire need to work together to prepare an economic growth strategy, the districts need to involved from the beginning in identifying the issues and scope of the strategy, not merely be presented with a solution to endorse. Whether there is any unmet need is still to be established as the county do not yet have an up to date SHMA to base these assumptions on.

Changes since previous plans were prepared

10 Since the South East Plan, identifying SOSDA for development was prepared, was prepared the Science Vale Enterprise Zone has been created and extended, there is huge potential for commercial growth in this area. This opportunity should be evaluated and the relationship between Oxford and Science Vale understood. It would be unfortunate if a new economic strategy for Oxford meant that there were adverse impacts on the potential success of Science Vale.

Detailed comments on Oxford Economic Growth Strategy

Para   Comment

1.3   Comment about macro-economic conditions applies to both Oxford and Oxfordshire

1.5   Comment about unique combination of factors applies to both Oxford and Oxfordshire

The assertion about the three growth locations in the county being complimentary to each other needs to be tested and the appropriate way of doing this is through the Oxfordshire Economic Assessment (which the strategy does refer to) and a subsequent high level Oxfordshire Economic Development Strategy.

1.5 and 2.6   There is no explanation of the relationship between the three areas Oxford, Science Vale and Bicester, this statement about complementing each other is unsupported. What is meant by complement each other? Are the areas sufficiently close that we could call all three areas a business cluster? It could well be however that the areas are competing for the same firms to locate there.

1.6   As para 1.1 indicates that Oxford and Oxfordshire are closely linked this objective begs the question as to whether Oxford can prepare its own economic growth strategy. Why is an Oxford only strategy appropriate?

Is 10 years an appropriate timescale?

1.9   Who are all the partners? Do they include all adjoining districts? Later in the document there is a clear indication that adjoining districts should be involved in implementing the recommendations. If so we should also be involved in the preparation of the strategy and should it therefore be an Oxfordshire wide strategy?

1.12 and 1.14 It would appear that the remit from the OSP was to look at the whole city region not just the city, why has this strategy been prepared that only looks at the city?

In para 1.14 it is also clear that partners the city has spoken to want better working with adjoining districts, effectively a county wide approach.

How can an initiative such as this result in strengthened working? Adjoining authorities need to be involved at the outset and continuously through the process not just be informed of the solution. This process should be part of the joint working arrangements.

1.15   Is it necessarily the case that the city benefits adjoining districts? Oxford and Oxfordshire are interdependent on each other.

1.17   Is the evidence from this work available as a background document for others to see?

Will this be in the Oxford Economic Narrative, July 2012 and can we have an advance copy?

1.20/1.21   No district councils are listed in the Appendix 1 list of consultees. How were the invitations made?

1.25   This paragraph should refer to the whole county or city region? Is there evidence to support that it should only be the city?

1.25   Is there scope to identify selected new locations in the city, the new locations proposed adjoin the city and lie outside its boundaries. Possibly one of the issues here is that no boundaries for this strategy have been defined. Although it has been prepared for the Oxford City political area much of the evidence refers to areas beyond the city boundaries eg when talking about the universities and the many references to the county as a whole. The recommendations include specific items outside the city boundaries for the location of new housing and employment land ie at SOSDA also recommendations for working closely with adjoining districts with effectively a county wide approach.

1.26   In order to have a chance of achieving this goal, all the leaders should be involved at the beginning and continuously through the process of devising an economic strategy.   The strategy should therefore look at the whole of Oxfordshire.

2.13   I'm not sure of the significance of this information particularly the employment by sector table. It appears to show that a large proportion of Oxford's jobs are public sector and that more of the non public sector jobs are in other areas of the county. In other words it is the county that is the engine for growth and not the city on its own.

2.14   Is Oxford an important headquarters location? Is the representation of national and international businesses greater than elsewhere in the county? This appears to be a statement with no evidence backing it up.

2.16   This is a general comment for Oxfordshire not only the city.

2.17   This paragraph demonstrates that many of the non public sector businesses in the county are in areas outside the city.

2.18   The information here does not demonstrate that the city is the focus for business and enterprise. Para 2.17 indicates that the city has significantly fewer non public sector businesses than the remainder of the county.

2.2   This statement would apply to all areas in the county.

2.22   Similar information should be provided for the whole county.

2.24 and 2.25 Since two of Brookes campuses are outside the city does this figure include employment on those sites?

Do we know more about the Cambridge phenomenon? My understanding is that it is based on growth across the Cambridge region and therefore supports our view that the economic strategy needs to look at the whole county.

2.26   I cannot believe that Oxford is a secondary education hub, there are more schools there because there are more pupils locally. Hub suggests that it is pulling in pupils from other areas. There must be relatively few pupils that travel from outside the city to schools there, particularly in the state sector. There are good schools both private and public throughout the county and in fact many pupils travel from Oxford to schools outside the city eg both Abingdon and Radley schools have a good academic reputation and as a day school Abingdon pulls in many students from Oxford.

2.32   This paragraph highlights that the majority (70%) of biotechnology companies are located outside Oxford. This sector has continued to grow and has further potential. There does not appear from this evidence to be a strong demand for companies to locate in Oxford itself.

2.37   This paragraph identifies that there is a cluster of automotive companies in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire not just in Oxford.

2.38   There are a number of publishing firms at Milton Park, this cluster is not limited to Oxford.

2.39   While Oxford has a significant publishing sector this paragraph acknowledges that it could be located in Oxfordshire not just the city.

2.40   In order to "convert" day visitors to staying visitors Oxford needs to widen the offer to include the market towns and rural areas of Oxfordshire.

2.42   This paragraph acknowledges the importance of attractions in the whole county to ensuring tourists stay longer in the area rather than visit just for day trips.

2.51   This paragraph acknowledges the importance of the county for creative industries not just the city. Henley has a strong media/creative sector - one of the strongest outside London.

2.53   This paragraph highlights the road congestion issues as a problem for the city, and that there is a need for major investment in train services. Is it therefore appropriate to significantly grow the city. There is no discussion or investigation into how the road congestion issues can be resolved, without this is it appropriate to reach a conclusion about the city's growth. The evidence prepared by Halcrow for us in relation to SOSDA concluded that there were no good solutions. We are aware A34 improvements have moved up the agenda through City Deal and OCC want a more active role in bringing through junction improvements with the HA. However whether this includes improvements around Oxford is unclear and no detailed schemes have been worked up yet

2.56   The paragraph acknowledges that whilst the city has a higher proportion of working age residents than other areas, this is largely the result of the high student numbers in the city. It is assumed that the student population are not wanting to be part of the workforce so it is incorrect to assume that the city has a more active working population as is implied. The city has more unskilled people than the rest of the county.

2.6   This paragraph shows that much of the employment in Oxford is relatively poorly paid compared to the county as a whole. This is likely to be a result of the high levels of public sector employment. Elsewhere in the county there are clearly more well paid jobs, this supports the view that it is the whole county that is providing the economic growth. The analysis of the relationship between the city, Science Vale and Bicester is welcomed but it should be tested through a high level Oxfordshire Economic Development Strategy that sets out how the locations can successfully grow for the benefit of Oxfordshire.

2.61   The employment rate in Oxford is also lower than that for the county as a whole. This paragraph acknowledges that the lower skill levels and educational attainment in Oxford contribute to this.

2.68   This paragraph acknowledges that building more homes will have a limited impact on house prices. There is no evidence that it will take pressure from the severely congested road network. This is supposition. It could just as easily increase congestion, the Halcrow evidence for SOSDA indicates that this will be the result as only those people who have jobs easily accessible by public transport will use it. The remainder will travel by car and a significant proportion of residents will travel to areas outside Oxford. The Halcrow Traffic Assessment for SOSDA indicated that 3000 additional homes S of the ring road would bring the ring road to a standstill and that existing residents in the city would be seriously inconvenienced. Halcrow could not suggest any remediation measures that they thought would work. Why is this report not referred to? There has also been a wider review of traffic issues around Oxford undertaken, this is not referred to either.

2.69   The final sentence refers to market evidence but this is not referenced, what market evidence?

2.71   Whilst Oxford house prices are higher than most of the rest of the county, the rate of increase in prices is similar. High house prices is a common problem for all the Oxfordshire authorities and the demand and supply situation needs to be assessed at a county level across the whole housing market area. It has been agreed that this work should take place on a county wide basis.

2.75   It is not clear why there will be a shortfall in meeting the core strategy housing target and why any shortfall should be made up in areas outside the city. This should be explained.

2.76   This paragraph acknowledges the importance of other areas in the county in helping to provide housing. It is not clear why this housing should be within walking or cycling distance of employment locations in Oxford. There is no evidence to support this

statement. For example, no evidence has been produced on how many Oxford residents walk or cycle to work rather than take public transport. Housing with easy access to public transport routes could be equally suitable and sustainable. If areas outside Oxford had access to 15 minute frequency bus services for example would this be sufficient incentive for people to change transport mode?

It may also be concluded from this section that restricting further growth in employment in the city would be a reasonable option which should be explored.

This paragraph is clearly aimed at targeting future development on a site(s) adjacent to the city boundary. A balanced report should enable the evidence to lead to conclusions.

2.77 – 2.78	These paragraphs have unsupported assumptions about people's likely travel choices and suggests that development close to Oxford is the only way forward. The districts already have plans that include significant amounts of new housing in areas with good transport connections to Oxford. How will these developments help meet some of Oxford's needs and how many people in these areas are likely to travel by public transport? The SHMA is the only way to establish objectively assessed need and this work has not yet been completed. Any assumptions on need therefore are not based on up to date evidence. Much of the development we are proposing in our core strategy already provides this eg the housing in Wallingford, Thame, Cholsey, Berinsfield, Benson, Didcot all have access to at least a half hourly public transport route into Oxford. Para 2.78 suggests that some public transport routes from parts of Oxfordshire are good with frequent and convenient services. This surely means that housing in those areas is helping to meet the city's needs and that future housing there will also do that.

2.85	There have been significant changes in circumstances since the structure plan and the SEPlan were prepared. In particular the identification of significant areas of land for employment at Science Vale and the designation of two enterprise zones at Harwell Oxford and Milton Park. The impact of this on the broad approach should be investigated. It is not correct to say that the underlying analysis and rationale is unchanged.

2.86	How much employment land has been lost to residential uses?

2.86	The ELS is now out of date – (6years old)

2.89	This paragraph suggests that land to the south of Oxford has already been identified as suitable for economic development. This is not the case, the allocation was challenged and further work need to be undertaken on alternative options. The transport assessment work undertaken indicated that the highway network in the area was inadequate to support further development in the area.

2.90	The highway issues encountered at the Northern Gateway also exist to the south of Oxford. This suggests that alternative options for economic growth in Oxfordshire should be assessed before any conclusions are made.

2.91	Highlights the need to work with adjoining authorities. This cannot be achieved by stipulating the solutions.

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2.110 – 2.113 These paragraphs highlight the need for a joined up approach across the county learning from the Cambridge Phenomenon. This can only be achieved by involving

partners on an equal footing at the outset. The strategy needs to be prepared for the whole county not just for one authority area. It needs to look at a variety of options and assess the impacts of each. If difficult decisions have to be made, the full analysis needs to be understood.

2.114 – 2.120 This section is of necessity highly Oxford focussed as this was the brief. However the earlier evidence does not support this analysis since so much of the evidence suggests the need for an Oxfordshire wide approach.

The analysis does not include any assessment of the context of Oxford within its economic region. In particular how the major economic areas in Oxfordshire interact, ie Science Vale/Harwell Oxford and Bicester. It is difficult to see how the strategy can be given any credibility without this.

3.6   This paragraph recognises the need for a more holistic approach across the county involving all districts but the strategy document does not provide any assessment of how the region's economy is working. It therefore provides for a very one sided arrangement where districts should accommodate Oxford's needs but there is indication about how it should work as an entity.

3.18   This paragraph recognises the need for joint working and even suggests a single economic development team. Any such cooperation must stem from an Oxfordshire approach. Paragraph 3.31 recognises this very clearly.

Should this role be tied into the LEP instead? Why include the universities - what about other relevant organisations? If this was progressed how would the districts' ED agenda's be delivered, e.g. market towns, business partnerships?

3.21   Supporting just the significant "top 100" is a significant move away from support new businesses or SMEs. Oxfordshire has a high number of entrepreneurial businesses - where would they fit?

3.22   This proposal identifies the need for a county wide service from day one, rather than a pilot that just involves the county and city council.

3.23   Whilst concern is expressed about lack of business space where is the evidence to support this, this is very circumstantial based on peoples impressions? There are no surveys demonstrating how many companies are looking compared to space available? Would business space outside the city meet the need? Is it just that businesses need help in finding the available premises?

3.26   This paragraph is setting out the solution rather than identifying a problem which authorities need to investigate and solve together. This approach will not encourage joint working. It is the city view that SOSDA has potential for development this is not necessarily agreed by others. The wording in this paragraph suggests there is agreement on this point which is incorrect.

3.31   This indicates that a sub regional economic development strategy is required

3.34   The conclusions in these statements again reinforce the view that Oxfordshire's economic development can be more effectively planned through an Oxfordshire rather than an Oxford strategy.

3.35   This key decision is unacceptable and it is extremely misleading to members of the public and other stakeholders as there is no clear evidence for it and any land allocations need to meet the process requirements of the planning system before they can be taken forward.

This assessment has not undertaken any analysis of the pros and cons, impacts and potential mitigation of alternative options available as is required by Sustainabilty Appraisal

and EU legislation. It is totally inappropriate therefore to include new sites or extensions to sites in the list of sites to be discussed.

It is also inappropriate for the city to specify to SPIP and other districts which sites it/they should bring forward. As highlighted earlier this is not the way to promote joint working.

3.44   Retail developments such as Didcot Phase 2 should help alleviate this pressure on the city.

3.52   Need to provide an "inclusive" tourism offer to visitors not limited to only "members" of DMO.

3.63   It is useful the city strategy identifies that Science Vale has skills needs that impact on the county as a whole.

-3.75 – 3.81   Work is in hand to look at this issue in a more coordinated way through SPIP and the new SHMA. There is an implicit suggestion that Oxford should be significantly more self sufficient in terms of employees and employment. Is this necessary? As long as people are not travelling excessive distances to work they should have a choice of places to live and work. Looking only at the city to address these issues is too small an area, it needs a wider approach. The statement about businesses finding it difficult to recruit staff is unsupported by evidence. It is slightly difficult to believe in the current economic climate but has probably been the case historically. Other statements in these paragraphs are also unsupported by evidence. Eg 3.79 ..signs that planning policy is not keeping pace with development pressures.

3.82   Broadband is a significant issue for Oxfordshire – there needs to be a joined up approach otherwise we will be "poaching" businesses from one district to another rather than "real" inward investment.

3.84   This statement likes many others points to the need for the city's economic growth to be considered within the context of a county wide strategy.

3.8   This paragraph does not explain the current situation with regard to the legal challenge to the SE Plan and gives an inaccurate explanation of the status of the SE Plan proposal. The paragraph takes no account of legal requirements as explained re par a3.35. The paragraph sets out both the location for and the type of housing which should be provided which is inappropriate and unsupported by any evidence of investigation of alternative options and of need.

3.87   Improved broadband will improve Science Vale connection's with a worldwide network of universities including Oxford.

3.97 – 3.100   There should be a wider approach to infrastructure needs across the county particularly for transport. Congestion issues around the city are unlikely to be resolved by taking just a city wide approach.

3.101 – 3.107 Any initiatives to secure a partnership approach should include the adjoining authorities and should include a strategy for the whole of the Oxfordshire economy acting together. The city council's approach of setting out the solution as the only option will not engender support and cooperation. Whilst the Oxford brand and the universities status are undoubtedly very important to the success of the county and the economic region, this suggested approach takes no account of the significance of other areas in the county and how they interact with business activity and growth in the city.

The proposal in 1.104 identifies the need for a county wide service from day one, rather than a pilot that just involves the county and city council.

A2.2   Adrian Duffield, Head of Planning, Vale of White Horse District Council (17/12/12)

Vale of White Horse District Council Evaluation of the draft Oxford Economic Growth Strategy

General

1.   There are many good recommendations in the report which if applied in an Oxfordshire context could improve economic growth in the sub-region. There are however some general themes which are of strong concern set out below.

Strategy area

2.   There are many references throughout the strategy to businesses throughout Oxfordshire, which suggest it is leading to a conclusion that an Oxfordshire wide economic strategy should be prepared. The final conclusion to progress an Oxford only approach is therefore inconsistent with the earlier evidence and discussion in the report. The report has been constrained because the brief restricted the area, the initial evidence gathering appears to be leading to a conclusion that the city region is so interconnected that Oxfordshire is a more appropriate area for the strategy. We would agree with this.

3.   The recently published Heseltine Review 'No Stone Unturned' which was prepared at the request of Government includes the following recommendation that supports strategies which cover the whole of a LEP area:

'Taking full account of the Government's national growth strategy, all LEPs, in collaboration with local stakeholders, should lead the development of a long term strategy and business plan for their area that will be used to bid for economic growth funds from central government.'

4.   Whilst the document in places purports to put Oxford in context it doesn't look at the county comprehensively or set the scene for what is happening in the county outside Oxford. What is the scale of business provision in Science Vale and Bicester? And how does this compare with that in Oxford? How do the three areas work together or are they competing for the same business?

5.   Looking at the information on the economic strategy for Cambridge they appear to look at the greater Cambridge sub region. Whilst we recognise that the name Oxford provides a good brand there is no evidence that the prime business location in the future has to be actually in the city and that other business areas in the county are subservient to this.   Ultimately, it is wrong to view Oxford in isolation, Oxford needs Oxfordshire as much as Oxfordshire needs Oxford - you cannot ignore this interdependence.

Planning procedures

6.   The identification of specific areas of land for both housing and economic development at this scale needs to follow appropriate procedures. Such decisions would need to be made through a planning document, the economic strategy cannot fetter the

ability of a planning document to follow the correct procedures. EU legislation relating to sustainability appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessments require that alternative options are objectively assessed with a view to selecting the best option and mitigating any harmful impacts. This process has not been followed here and the conclusions if transferred to a planning document would therefore be open to legal challenge.

7.   We would expect a much more detailed analysis of what makes Oxfordshire's economy work, what's helpful and what is unhelpful. Also innovative examples from elsewhere, plus evidence to back up the information and conclusions produced. We do not have this. One significant element not considered in the report is weighing in the balance the importance of the historic and green environment to the success of tourism and the attractiveness of Oxford to businesses and how we should value this element.

8.   This whole issue has been discussed at SPIP previously and there was broad agreement from all parties that an economic strategy for the whole of Oxfordshire would be appropriate. There has also been discussion that this should be progressed hand in hand with the SHMA to give a comprehensive view of need for housing and employment across Oxfordshire.

Quality of the report and evidence
9.   Many of the statements/conclusions in the report are not supported by any evidence they appear to be the consultants view. Any strategy needs a good understanding of how the area stands in the context of what's around it, and what impact the strategy will have on neighbouring areas. The report needs to be well evidenced to withstand scrutiny, and the conclusions need to be informed by the evidence. This is not the case with this report, and it does not provide a balanced and well reasoned approach.

Joint working
10.   The document indicates in many areas that a good relationship between Oxford and neighbouring districts will be important to achieving the strategy; however the strategy has been prepared without involving neighbouring districts. Furthermore the strategy appears biased towards a single objective, allocating the South Oxfordshire Strategic Development Area (SOSDA), without providing a balanced and reasoned justification. It is clear that all the districts in Oxfordshire need to work together to prepare an economic growth strategy, the districts need to involved from the beginning in identifying the issues and scope of the strategy, not merely be presented with a solution to endorse. Whether there is any unmet need is still to be established as the county do not yet have an up to date SHMA to base these assumptions on.

Changes since previous plans were prepared

11.   Since the South East Plan, identifying SOSDA for development was prepared, the Science Vale Enterprise Zone has been created and extended, there is huge potential for commercial growth in this area. This opportunity should be evaluated and the relationship between Oxford and Science Vale understood. It would be unfortunate if a new economic strategy for Oxford meant that there were adverse impacts on the potential success of Science Vale.

Detailed comments on Oxford Economic Growth Strategy

Para   Comment

1.3   Comment about macro-economic conditions applies to both Oxford and Oxfordshire

1.5   Comment about unique combination of factors applies to both Oxford and Oxfordshire

The assertion about the three growth locations in the county being complimentary to each other needs to be tested and the appropriate way of doing this is through the Oxfordshire Economic Assessment (which the strategy does refer to) and a subsequent high level Oxfordshire Economic Development Strategy.

1.5 and 2.6   There is no explanation of the relationship between the three areas Oxford, Science Vale and Bicester, this statement about complementing each other is unsupported. What is meant by complement each other? Are the areas sufficiently close that we could call all three areas a business cluster? It could well be however that the areas are competing for the same firms to locate there.

1.6   As para 1.1 indicates that Oxford and Oxfordshire are closely linked this objective begs the question as to whether Oxford can prepare its own economic growth strategy. Why is an Oxford only strategy appropriate?

Is 10 years an appropriate timescale?

1.9   Who are all the partners? Do they include all adjoining districts? Later in the document there is a clear indication that adjoining districts should be involved in implementing the recommendations. If so we should also be involved in the preparation of the strategy and should it therefore be an Oxfordshire wide strategy?

1.12 and 1.14 It would appear that the remit from the OSP was to look at the whole city region not just the city, why has this strategy been prepared that only looks at the city?

In para 1.14 it is also clear that partners the city has spoken to want better working with adjoining districts, effectively a county wide approach.

How can an initiative such as this result in strengthened working? Adjoining authorities need to be involved at the outset and continuously through the process not just be informed of the solution. This process should be part of the joint working arrangements.

1.15   Is it necessarily the case that the city benefits adjoining districts? Oxford and Oxfordshire are interdependent on each other.

1.17   Is the evidence from this work available as a background document for others to see?

Will this be in the Oxford Economic Narrative, July 2012 and can we have an advance copy?

1.20/1.21   No district councils are listed in the Appendix 1 list of consultees. How were the invitations made?

1.25   This paragraph should refer to the whole county or city region? Is there evidence to support that it should only be the city?

1.25   Is there scope to identify selected new locations in the city, the new locations proposed adjoin the city and lie outside its boundaries. Possibly one of the issues here is that no boundaries for this strategy have been defined. Although it has been prepared for the Oxford City political area much of the evidence refers to areas beyond the city boundaries eg when talking about the universities and the many references to the county as a whole. The recommendations include working closely with adjoining districts with effectively a county wide approach.

1.26   In order to have a chance of achieving this goal, all the leaders should be involved at the beginning and continuously through the process of devising an economic strategy.   The strategy should therefore look at the whole of Oxfordshire.

2.13   I'm not sure of the significance of this information particularly the employment by sector table. It appears to show that a large proportion of Oxford's jobs are public sector and that more of the non public sector jobs are in other areas of the county. In other words it is the county that is the engine for growth and not the city on its own.

2.14   Is Oxford an important headquarters location? Is the representation of national and international businesses greater than elsewhere in the county? This appears to be a statement with no evidence backing it up.

2.16   This is a general comment for Oxfordshire not only the city.

2.17   This paragraph demonstrates that many of the non public sector businesses in the county are in areas outside the city.

2.18   The information here does not demonstrate that the city is the focus for business and enterprise. Para 2.17 indicates that the city has significantly fewer non public sector businesses than the remainder of the county.

2.2   This statement would apply to all areas in the county.

2.22   Similar information should be provided for the whole county.

2.24 and 2.25 Since two of Brookes campuses are outside the city does this figure include employment on those sites?

Do we know more about the Cambridge phenomenon? My understanding is that it is based on growth across the Cambridge region and therefore supports our view that the economic strategy needs to look at the whole county.

2.26   I cannot believe that Oxford is a secondary education hub, there are more schools there because there are more pupils locally. Hub suggests that it is pulling in pupils from other areas. There must be relatively few pupils that travel from outside the city to schools there, particularly in the state sector. There are good schools both private and public throughout the county and in fact many pupils travel from Oxford to schools outside the city eg both Abingdon and Radley schools have a good academic reputation and as a day school Abingdon pulls in many students from Oxford.

2.32   This paragraph highlights that the majority (70%) of biotechnology companies are located outside Oxford. This sector has continued to grow and has further potential. There does not appear from this evidence to be a strong demand for companies to locate in Oxford itself.

2.37   This paragraph identifies that there is a cluster of automotive companies in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire not just in Oxford.

2.38   There are a number of publishing firms at Milton Park, this cluster is not limited to Oxford.

2.39   While Oxford has a significant publishing sector this paragraph acknowledges that it could be located in Oxfordshire not just the city.

2.40   In order to "convert" day visitors to staying visitors Oxford needs to widen the offer to include the market towns and rural areas of Oxfordshire.

2.42   This paragraph acknowledges the importance of attractions in the whole county to ensuring tourists stay longer in the area rather than visit just for day trips.

2.51   This paragraph acknowledges the importance of the county for creative industries not just the city. Henley has a strong media/creative sector - one of the strongest outside London.

2.53   This paragraph highlights the road congestion issues as a problem for the city, and that there is a need for major investment in train services. Is it therefore appropriate to significantly grow the city. There is no discussion or investigation into how the road congestion issues can be resolved, without this is it appropriate to reach a conclusion about the city's growth. We are aware A34 improvements have moved up the agenda through City Deal and OCC want a more active role in bringing through junction improvements with the HA. However whether this includes improvements around Oxford is unclear and no detailed schemes have been worked up yet

2.56   The paragraph acknowledges that whilst the city has a higher proportion of working age residents than other areas, this is largely the result of the high student numbers in the city. It is assumed that the student population are not wanting to be part of the workforce so it is incorrect to assume that the city has a more active working population as is implied. The city has more unskilled people than the rest of the county.

2.6   This paragraph shows that much of the employment in Oxford is relatively poorly paid compared to the county as a whole. This is likely to be a result of the high levels of public sector employment. Elsewhere in the county there are clearly more well paid jobs, this supports the view that it is the whole county that is providing the economic growth. The analysis of the relationship between the city, Science Vale and Bicester is welcomed but it should be tested through a high level Oxfordshire Economic Development Strategy that sets out how the locations can successfully grow for the benefit of Oxfordshire.

2.61   The employment rate in Oxford is also lower than that for the county as a whole. This paragraph acknowledges that the lower skill levels and educational attainment in Oxford contribute to this.

2.68   This paragraph acknowledges that building more homes will have a limited impact on house prices. There is no evidence that it will take pressure from the severely congested road network. This is supposition. It could just as easily increase congestion, the Halcrow evidence for SOSDA indicates that this will be the result as only those people who have jobs easily accessible by public transport will use it. The remainder will travel by car and a significant proportion of residents will travel to areas outside Oxford. There has been a wider review of traffic issues around Oxford undertaken, this is not referred to.

2.69   The final sentence refers to market evidence but this is not referenced, what market evidence?

2.71   Whilst Oxford house prices are higher than most of the rest of the county, the rate of increase in prices is similar. High house prices is a common problem for all the Oxfordshire authorities and the demand and supply situation needs to be assessed at a county level across the whole housing market area. It has been agreed that this work should take place on a county wide basis.

2.75   It is not clear why there will be a shortfall in meeting the core strategy housing target and why any shortfall should be made up in areas outside the city. This should be explained.

2.76   This paragraph acknowledges the importance of other areas in the county in helping to provide housing. It is not clear why this housing should be within walking or cycling distance of employment locations in Oxford. There is no evidence to support this statement. For example, no evidence has been produced on how many Oxford residents walk or cycle to work rather than take public transport. Housing with easy access to public transport routes could be equally suitable and sustainable. If areas outside Oxford had access to 15 minute frequency bus services for example would this be sufficient incentive for people to change transport mode?

It may also be concluded from this section that restricting further growth in employment in the city would be a reasonable option which should be explored.

This paragraph is clearly aimed at targeting future development on a site(s) adjacent to the city boundary. A balanced report should enable the evidence to lead to conclusions.

2.77 – 2.78   These paragraphs have unsupported assumptions about people's likely travel choices and suggests that development close to Oxford is the only way forward. The districts already have plans that include significant amounts of new housing in areas with good transport connections to Oxford. How will these developments help meet some of Oxford's needs and how many people in these areas are likely to travel by public transport? The SHMA is the only way to establish objectively assessed need and this work has not yet been completed. Any assumptions on need therefore are not based on up to date evidence. Para 2.78 suggests that some public transport routes from parts of Oxfordshire are good with frequent and convenient services. This surely means that housing in those areas is helping to meet the city's needs and that future housing there will also do that.

2.85   There have been significant changes in circumstances since the structure plan and the SEPlan were prepared. In particular the identification of significant areas of land for employment at Science Vale and the designation of two enterprise zones at Harwell Oxford and Milton Park. The impact of this on the broad approach should be investigated. It is not correct to say that the underlying analysis and rationale is unchanged.

2.86   How much employment land has been lost to residential uses?

2.86   The ELS is now out of date – (6years old)

2.90   The highway issues encountered at the Northern Gateway also exist to the south of Oxford. This suggests that alternative options for economic growth in Oxfordshire should be assessed before any conclusions are made.

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It is also inappropriate for the city to specify to SPIP and other districts which sites it/they should bring forward. As highlighted earlier this is not the way to promote joint working.

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The proposal in 1.104 identifies the need for a county wide service from day one, rather than a pilot that just involves the county and city council.

A2.3   Andrew Tucker, Strategic Director, West Oxfordshire District Council (19/12/12)

Comments on Oxford Economic Growth Strategy

•   We welcome the detailed analysis of the Oxford City economic profile recognising it as a key national asset, its strengths in key growth and high productivity sectors and that it is necessary to plan to further develop these assets. The report begins to demonstrate that in seeking to maintain Oxford's position in both the national and global economy, key challenges will need to be addressed not only within the confines of the City but also in the surrounding districts. However owing to the restricted nature of the study area the analysis used to inform the recommendations is only partial and needs to be seen in a wider context before any definitive conclusions can be drawn.

•   It is recognised that the future economic prosperity of Oxford and the Oxford Sub region are closely related and interlinked. The report highlights the interaction between

housing supply and cost, workforce and jobs and accessibility both within and beyond the city boundary. These relationships are not adequately reflected in the vision and 11 key elements which should be amended to more strongly include recognition of Oxford's important relationship with its wider sub region.

•   We welcome OSP proposition that it wants to see strengthened and collaborative working between the city and county councils a¬nd with adjacent district councils (1.14). The recommendations and actions in the report should specifically reflect this earlier commentary in seeking to ensure that there is meaningful engagement with the wider public sector, business and voluntary sector interests including District Councils.

•   Element 3 - The recommendation to ensure a sufficient supply of employment land is important but should be examined across the county to determine likely future adequacy of supply for different forms of potential job creating development. Any case for a Green Belt review would need to be evidence based and conducted through the appropriate planning mechanisms as part of a wider consideration of the long term needs and strategy for the sub region.

•   Element 7 – A Strategic Housing Market Assessment is being progressed through the SPIP.

•   Element 10 -The recommendation on infrastructure needs to recognise that this is an issue which goes beyond the wider city and includes the key strategic links into the City such as the A40. Proposals to address congestion hotspots must be brought forward – such as improvements associated with the Northern Gateway.

•   Element 11 – Support strengthening the links between the LEP and SPIP to ensure a more coordinated approach in planning to meet future employment, housing and infrastructure needs.

A2.4   David Williams, Director, Meeson Williams Limited (02/01/13)

My comments are as follows:

1.   Oxford city's economic function cannot be considered separately from Oxfordshire as a whole. The city is undoubtedly the intellectual engine driving innovation and economic growth in the County.
2.   In my experience, only companies with a clear operational need to be in the city will locate there. Usually this would be linkage to the Universities or labour supply. Oxford is a small city and the heritage must be protected.
3.   The Strategies listed are far reaching and comprehensive, but my concern is the ability to achieve these. Some of these issues have been discussed for years (if not decades) and with funding limitations I would suggest a policy of progress by 'marginal gain' by making rapid small beneficial changes which collectively add to up a great deal. The main danger to Oxford(shire) is being left behind on the global economic stage.
4.   I have attached our latest Oxfordshire Market Review, which analyses commercial property supply and demand. In short, Oxfordshire (like many Counties) is running short of

commercial units which are fit for purpose. For example, there is very limited supply of science/laboratory units. Property is one only element and needs to be considered alongside transport, housing, schools, broadband, etc. Again, 'marginal gain' is the likely course of action until major developments come on stream and encouragement and support should be given to refurbishment and modernisation of buildings to suit modern requirements.

5.   I have expressed my view in the past that Oxfordshire could take a lead on creating a single web portal for information on the County. Most business relocations are local, but the county does need to attract inward investment and it is surprising how difficult it is to find information using the web. If you are based overseas, for example, you do not have the knowledge (or desire) to research everything, and I have done this exercise for other locations including Cambridge. The web portal could have brief core information and then links to private and public sector 'partners' such as schools, town websites, residential and commercial property agents, etc.