

Report Title: Report to SPIP Members on Oxfordshire's Local Economic Assessment

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**AGENDA ITEM
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1. Purpose of Report:

This report presents the draft Oxfordshire Economic Assessment to SPIP members and seeks their feedback on both content and process.

2. Background

Oxfordshire's Local Economic Assessment (LEA) is being prepared ahead of the start of the statutory duty in order to inform policy development in a number of areas including the single conversation with the HCA and the review of the county's economic development strategy. While the formal statutory duty will sit with the County Council the legislation, and the obvious links with other policy areas – including the District level LDF's – mean that the Oxfordshire Leaders Group agreed that the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership will be closely involved in oversight of the LEA process.

The work developing the economic assessment has been supported by officers from the districts and the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership who have provided comments on an earlier draft that are currently being addressed.

SEEDA has organised two meetings of those leading on economic assessments across the South East in order to share data and lessons on how to proceed. The intention is that the resulting economic assessments will be sufficiently consistent and comprehensive to provide the evidence base for the forthcoming Integrated Regional Strategy.

3. The report

Attached is a *Summary of Findings* report that has been developed on the basis of the evidence and analysis pulled together through the economic assessment process. The format is 4 pages of text that summarise the findings from the full assessment followed by 20+ pages of selected evidence in the form of maps, diagrams and tables that supports the text. The intention of this report is to build a 'shared story' about the Oxfordshire economy that will provide the basis for all stakeholders to contribute with increased effectiveness to the county's economic development.

The full *Oxfordshire Economic Assessment* presents a wide range of more detailed evidence by theme across all the areas specified in the draft guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government. This is currently being revised on the basis of comments fed back by members of

the project and technical teams that have been supporting the economic assessment process. This report will follow separately.

Next Steps

These reports will go to the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet on March 16th - for approval of the report *as the basis for consultation* from late March. As the assessment is not itself a policy, the consultation is not about approval of recommendations but rather a request for feedback on what is missing in the way of data or analysis or about where the analysis could be improved or is wrong. The details of how this will be done will be subject to feedback from the SPIP members.

Possible consultation questions could include:

- Does the evidence provided correctly describe the Oxfordshire economy?
- Do you have further evidence that could be contributed to improve the assessment?
- What areas do you think are missing from the economic assessment and should be added?
- What areas do you think require further research?

I will be working on getting the reports and related 'working papers' on to a web site in order to make access easier.

4. Recommendation

SPIP Members are requested to provide feedback on;

- Any additional evidence/information that should be taken into account in the assessment
- Suggestions for questions that might be addressed through the consultation process.

Report by: **Chris Cousins, Head of Sustainable Development, Oxfordshire County Council**

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