

Infrastructure Planning and Funding

Author: Martin Tugwell

Tel: 01865 815113

Email: martin.tugwell@oxfordshire.gov.uk

AGENDA ITEM NO:

4

SPIP Administration Contact:

Joanna Rödel / Amanda Jacobs

Economy, Spatial Planning and Climate Change

Oxfordshire County Council

Environment and Economy, Speedwell House, Speedwell Street OX1 1NE

Email: espcc@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01865 816025 / 01865 328781

Infrastructure Planning and Funding

1. Infrastructure planning is at the heart of creating the conditions for economic growth and is likely to be given added impetus as part of the forthcoming Decentralisation and Localism.
2. With public sector funding under pressure in the short/medium term, improving the alignment of investment across public and private sectors to deliver a shared ambition for economic growth will have added importance. It is a theme that is central to the Government's White Paper on economic growth. It is also the central theme of the successful Oxfordshire City-Region Enterprise Partnership.
3. With changes to the funding for transport schemes, the introduction of proposals for Tax Incremental Finance and with changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy in the pipeline, so the need for decisions on investment priorities to be taken within a common framework increases. As the recently published National Infrastructure Plan highlights, our approach to infrastructure planning must also look to influence and shape the investment decisions at the national level, including regulated industries.
4. All of this reinforces the need for our work on infrastructure planning to provide leadership in the co-ordination of investment. In this way we will be well placed to transform the planning system into an enabler of sustainable economic growth.

Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership

5. The Oxfordshire City-Region Enterprise Partnership proposition sets out how we will build upon the success of the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership, and its ground breaking work as a pilot for the Homes and Communities Agency's 'single conversation'.

6. It goes on to map out the need to develop our understanding of how public and private sector investment, including funding secured through developer contributions, can be aligned. We need to consider how the existing S106 regime can be developed to incorporate the latest thinking on tariffs and/or incentives for new housing. We need to take forward our ideas for establishing a forward funding arrangement for enabling infrastructure on the back of future funding secured through developer contributions.
7. The Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership will use the Local Investment Plan (and its associated agreement) as the basis for taking this work forward, in particular looking to improve the alignment of decision making across delivery agencies. The Local Transport Plan provides a further opportunity to improve the alignment of investment priorities in support of economic growth. However we must also look beyond these areas to involve the wider group of infrastructure providers, including the utilities, learning and skills and health sectors.

Next Steps

8. In the short term we need to agree:
 - a) the format for reporting on progress on the current Local Investment Plan;
 - b) a programme for updating the Local Investment Plan assessment sheets;
 - c) a way forward for prioritising future investment priorities in response to changes in the level of funding available.
9. In parallel we need to develop the detail of our approach to infrastructure planning. In particular the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership needs to provide leadership in;
 - Preparing the Infrastructure Plan – working to identify (in broad terms) the strategic infrastructure required to deliver planned growth and support investment by the private sector;
 - Engaging with the programme of work arising from the coalition Government's commitment to a National Infrastructure Plan;
 - Adopting a tariff/levy based approach to securing developer contributions – using the framework provided by the Infrastructure Plan to explore the potential to use the resulting funding stream to establish a forward funding mechanism for enabling infrastructure;
 - Aligning funding streams at national level with those managed by local authorities – using the framework provided by the Infrastructure Plan to improve co-ordination of investment across public sector and other agencies (e.g. infrastructure providers that operate within an independently controlled regulatory regime – utilities, rail);

- Providing support for partnerships with external bodies that are focused on facilitating economic growth – for example working through the Oxfordshire City-Region Enterprise Partnership to co-ordinate proposals for funding channelled through the Regional Growth Fund.

10. Our ambition should be to take both streams of work forward as a matter of priority, with a substantive discussion on both to take place at the next meeting of the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership.

Recommendation:

11. That the streams of work identified above are taken forward as a matter of priority and that officers report back on progress to the next meeting of the Partnership.