

Oxfordshire councils unveil draft infrastructure strategy

An independent report commissioned by Oxfordshire's six councils sets out the investment in transport, schools, hospitals and other infrastructure needed to support the predicted growth in population, jobs and homes to 2040 and beyond.

The report '*A draft infrastructure strategy for Oxfordshire*' highlights the need for long-term investment that will be required to plan for and manage growth in a way that supports the local economy and protects quality of life across the county

For the first time a draft infrastructure strategy for Oxfordshire has been developed detailing the county's key infrastructure requirements, outlined in individual Local Plans and the Local Transport Plan. It includes investment in major projects such as:

- Improvements to the A34
- Rapid bus routes linking key locations
- East-West Rail connecting Oxford to Cambridge
- A long term strategy to address congestion on the A40
- Redevelopment of Oxford Station
- A new Garden Town for Didcot
- Incentives to encourage businesses to locate and expand within the Science Vale

The draft infrastructure strategy was commissioned by the Oxfordshire Growth Board and has been developed jointly by Oxfordshire's six councils. It considers what transport, housing, education, health services and strategic community infrastructure will be needed to support anticipated growth to 2040 and beyond and what it will cost to deliver it, currently estimated at £9 billion. This will help infrastructure providers to plan for the future.

Outgoing chair of the Oxfordshire Growth Board, Councillor Ian Hudspeth, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, said: "Across the county, people need places to live, with a great environment, transport and other vital infrastructure to support them. We remain committed to attracting the necessary investment to the region so that we can have the right infrastructure in place through to 2040 so that residents, businesses and visitors continue to thrive."

Incoming chair of the Oxfordshire Growth Board, Councillor Bob Price, Leader of Oxford City Council, said: "It is really important that we plan and rank the infrastructure needed to support Oxfordshire and its growth. By having an integrated strategy that clearly shows the infrastructure needed to support future growth such as new housing developments and new businesses, we stand a greater chance of securing the necessary funding to deliver what is required."

Once complete, the new strategy will identify, map and support the county's strategic infrastructure requirements. It will include evidence of the infrastructure required for strategic transport, energy and the utilities, waste management, flooding and water management, green infrastructure, education, adult social care and broadband.

Bringing together all this evidence will allow Oxfordshire to engage in strategic discussions with Government and other infrastructure funding partners to understand how we will cohesively address the challenges that providing the scale of infrastructure required presents.

The report is published on the Oxfordshire Growth Board website at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/growthboard and there is an opportunity to submit comments online.

Funding is sought from the Government's £23 billion National Productivity Investment Fund to help support significant new growth initiatives, which includes a £2.3 billion pot for unlocking sites for new homes in areas of high demand.

The infrastructure strategy was commissioned by the Oxfordshire Growth Board and has been developed jointly by Oxfordshire's six councils. The Growth Board is a joint committee of the six councils, formed to provide strategic planning for all the challenges that the growth agenda for Oxfordshire brings.

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Notes to editors

The six councils represented on the Oxfordshire Growth Board are Cherwell District Council Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council.

Cllr Bob Price and Cllr Ian Hudspeth are available for interview. To arrange this, please contact Oxford City Council's press office...