

Digital consultation launched to shape the future of the OxCam Arc

- From today Oxford-Cambridge Arc residents can go online and have their say on their vision for the future of the area
- The digital consultation on the vision for the Spatial Framework will be open to all for 12 weeks
- The government is also establishing a new expert panel ,which will engage with local authorities and communities, to advise on bringing forward sustainable economic and housing growth in the Arc

People across the Oxford Cambridge Arc, and all with an interest in the area, will have the opportunity to contribute to the long-term development of the area, as part of a newly launched government consultation.

A new plan aims to enhance the infrastructure, environment and new developments in the counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. It will be developed by government, informed by engagement with local communities and stakeholders, and will have sustainability at its core.

This public consultation is the first of three that will guide a new Spatial Framework over the next two years, and a digital platform has been created that will make it quick and accessible for people who live, work, and have an interest in the area to make their voices heard.

Comments received in the consultation will help create the Spatial Framework's vision for the area to 2050, and will help guide local planning and investment decisions in four areas; the environment; the economy; connectivity and infrastructure; and place-making. Visit: <https://placebuilder.io/futureofthearc>

The consultation is also [seeking views on the work the government has done to set the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal](#).

The government has additionally today announced a new expert panel to advise on sustainable economic and housing growth in the Arc. The panel will be chaired by leading development and regeneration expert Emma Cariaga and will advise the government on issues ranging from design and sustainability to delivery and investment models.

The panel's primary area of focus is between Bedford and Cambridge, where the government is examining opportunities to bring forward well-designed, inclusive and sustainable places.

Other members will consist of industry leaders, local representatives and subject area experts from a range of disciplines, who will work with local government and other partners to inform the panel's advice. The full panel will be confirmed in due course. See [further details](#).

Housing Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP said:

Today is a big step forward for the OxCam Arc as we have launched an innovative digital consultation with the public, including those that live and work in the Arc, so that everyone has a chance to have their say.

This is a fantastic opportunity for people across the Arc to make their voice heard and help create the future for their community that they want to see.

Both the Spatial Framework consultation and Expert Advisory Panel will help us to ensure the Oxford-Cambridge Arc will be a great place to live and work – now and in the decades to come.

Transport Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said:

The East West Rail project plays an important role in enabling connectivity within the OxCam Arc and will help us build back better from COVID-19.

We've committed £760 million to the first phase of EWR which will support improved access to jobs and other opportunities in the area as well as boosting economic growth in the region more widely.

Cllr Barry Wood, Leader of Cherwell District Council and Chair of the Arc Leadership Groups said,

The bold economic and sustainability ambitions we have set out for our region need to be matched by well-planned, long-term and coordinated investment into our towns, cities and rural areas. Inclusive growth, with high environmental standards so that all our residents can benefit, remains at the heart of what we seek to achieve.

By progressing the Arc Spatial Framework, government will look at how and where we need to connect and build new infrastructure, whilst enhancing our environment to deliver the sustainable growth that our region is capable of. To start, we must shape a shared vision for the type of growth we want to see.

This is why it's so important for every single resident to be able to have their say directly to government on what matters most to them. How we create opportunities for people to prosper, today and in the future, is an important matter for everyone.

Dr Barbara Ghinelli, Director, Harwell Campus Development and High-Tech Clusters, UKRI-STFC said:

The Oxford-Cambridge Arc has a unique combination of world-class scientific, technical and knowledge capabilities that can drive forward the economy, improve quality of life and benefit all the residents of the United Kingdom.

These capabilities are crucial for attracting talent to further science and technology excellence across a number of business sectors and therefore making the UK highly competitive on a global scale. It is important that we do not squander the opportunities thus created, and that means fashioning an environment in the region where people can thrive, be engaged and deliver their best.

Clare Walton, Chief Executive, Community Action: MK said:

The success of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc will be measured by the experience of the communities who live there. The key to creating inclusive and sustainable communities will be partnership working and investment in community support.

This is an exciting opportunity for the government to think differently about how large-scale housing developments can design out inequalities. The Arc offers great potential to innovate and embrace science and technology, but our collective prosperity must be paramount. We must create opportunities for all people regardless of income, gender, race, disability, age, and this requires commitment to social infrastructure. Enabling the Voluntary and Community Sector to thrive in these new communities will help create vibrant sustainable places that people feel invested in and a part of.

Emma Cariaga, Chair of the Expert Advisory Panel, said:

I am delighted to be chairing the new panel exploring opportunities for sustainable economic and housing growth in the Arc. The past 18 months have highlighted the importance of the quality of the places in which we live, work and enjoy ourselves. So it is great to see those opportunities to bring forward well-planned places that make the most of existing, proposed and emerging infrastructure are being properly considered.

As a panel, we will explore a range of subjects – including design, finance models and sustainability – that will be vital for these places to get right if they are to serve present and future communities. I look forward to getting started

This regional success will build on the work of the United Kingdom Government that has helped millions of people continue to provide for their families as part of its Plan for Jobs to protect, support and create employment.

The Oxford-Cambridge (OxCam) Arc is the name given to the area identified by government as a key economic priority with the potential to be one of the most prosperous, innovative and sustainable economic areas in the world. It is made up of the five ceremonial counties of Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, and Northamptonshire. It includes:

3 county councils: Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, and Cambridgeshire.

17 district councils: City of Oxford, South Oxfordshire, Vale of the White Horse, West Oxfordshire, Cherwell, Northampton, South Northamptonshire, Daventry, Wellingborough, Kettering, Corby, East Northamptonshire, City of Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire.

6 unitary authorities: Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes, Luton, Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, and City of Peterborough.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

The consultation document published today, '[Creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc](#)'

- is the first of 3 planned public consultations on the Spatial Framework. Alongside this, the government have published the [Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report](#) for consultation. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) will inform development of the Spatial Framework and ensure that sustainability is at its heart. The consultation will be supported by a new and innovative digital engagement platform designed to give a voice to the wider community, as well as traditional engagement methods such as workshops.
- Feedback from this consultation will help to create the Spatial Framework's vision for the Arc to 2050. Using the vision as a foundation, the next document 'Towards a Spatial Framework' is planned to be published for consultation in Spring 2022, focussing on options for delivering the Spatial Framework's objectives based on feedback from engagement, initial evidence gathering and analysis.
- The government then hope to publish a draft Spatial Framework for consultation in Autumn 2022, with implementation of the final framework shortly after. The public will be consulted with at each of these stages and government will continue to work closely with local stakeholders throughout. The consultation is open to all members of the public.

- With the right interventions and investment, local economic forecasts suggest that by 2050 we would see economic output in the Arc doubling to over £200bn. The Arc's success is key to the UK's national prosperity, international competitiveness, and ability to meet the challenges and opportunities we will face as a country over the next century, including climate change and supporting nature recovery, technological change, fighting COVID-19 and preventing future pandemics
- The OxCam Arc offers a significant opportunity for the government and partners to work together to support the harmonious delivery of improved connectivity, productivity and place-making, whilst ensuring pioneering environmental standards and enhancements are delivered and the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan is put into action.

Expert Advisory Panel

- In addition to the development of the Spatial Framework, the government is also exploring potential options for sustainable economic and housing growth in the Arc.
- An advisory panel, to be chaired by Emma Cariaga, will explore potential opportunities for sustainable and economic growth in the Arc, with the Bedford-Cambridge area as its primary focus.
- The panel will provide recommendations to the government on issues ranging from design and sustainability to delivery and investment models.
- The panel will report to the Minister for Housing, the Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP.

Biography – Emma Cariaga – Joint Head of Canada Water Development, British Land:

Emma jointly leads the development of Canada Water, a 53-acre new urban centre in Central London. Her role involves building and leading a best-in-class multi-disciplinary team to set the vision for the new place, deliver an exemplar mixed-use development for London and creating a long-term sustainable investment for British Land.

She joined the Executive Committee of British Land in 2019. Alongside her role on Canada Water, she leads their Public Affairs strategy to ensure the organisation can respond to the wider issues that affect real estate including global trends (economic, technology, shareholder/consumer behaviour), as well as the social and natural capital impact of their investments.

She is a Non-executive Director of Assura Plc as well as a Non-executive Director of TEDI-London – a higher education provider for future engineers founded by Arizona State University, King's College London & UNSW Sydney. She is also a Committee Member of the British Property Federation Development Committee.

Emma joined British Land in 2014 from Landsec where she delivered several Central London developments as well as overseeing their strategic land portfolio. Prior to this, Emma held development and land management roles at Barratt and Crest Nicholson.