



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government



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Dear Cllr Cooper,

We have today announced that we are launching the process for developing the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework. This is part of the Government's commitment to supporting sustainable growth in the area, and I want this to be the start of the next stage of our collaboration with partners and communities across the region as we plan for a sustainable and prosperous future for the Arc.

We know that the Arc is one of the most productive and innovative areas of the country. The recent development of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is only the most recent example of successful innovation and collaboration in the area, and one which is benefitting the world. Over the coming years and decades, the Arc's economy is likely to continue to grow. But that growth will bring greater pressures on infrastructure and the environment, and there is a risk that we do not realise the full potential benefits for communities and places across the Arc. As the country rebuilds from the pandemic, I believe that the Arc can be a source of national economic recovery. Development of a long-term plan for sustainable growth across the area is key to achieving this.

That is why we have today set out how we plan to approach the development of a Spatial Framework for the Arc. The approach we have set out in Planning for sustainable growth in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc builds on the commitment we made in the Joint Declaration in 2019, and the key messages we have heard from the work that has been led by the Arc Leaders group since then. I want to emphasise three things:

- **We want to work with local partners to develop the Framework** and its evidence base – my team of specialists will produce the Spatial Framework, but we will need to work together to shape our vision, bring together robust evidence, and test policy options as they emerge. The starting point for this will be engagement over the Spring on the vision for the Spatial Framework, and my team will be in touch on plans for this.
- **We are committed to broad and meaningful engagement with communities** throughout this process, and have set out three phases of consultation, which we will use to listen to residents – particularly those who are traditionally considered to be harder to reach.
- **We will have a relentless focus on unlocking economic growth and driving more sustainable outcomes** – which is why we have committed to developing an economic strategy and infrastructure plan and undertaking an integrated Sustainability Appraisal as part of this work.

As well as the Framework, we have also announced our intent to establish an Arc Growth Body to drive and support economic growth in the region, unleashing the Arc's potential as a global innovation powerhouse. This announcement demonstrates our commitment to putting economic growth and jobs at the heart of the Government's Arc ambition, and I look forward to working with partners across the Arc as we develop proposals.

Going forward, we would also like to start engagement with functional economic geographies in the Arc to develop a series of early-stage investment propositions to create jobs, support the delivery of more homes and help to unleash the full potential of local economies and the Arc as a whole as we build back better. I would welcome your collaboration and ambition here.

I look forward to continuing to work with you over the coming months.

Your sincerely,
Christopher Pincher

RT HON CHRISTOPHER PINCHER MP