



HM Government



OXFORD -  
CAMBRIDGE  
ARC

# Creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc

Consultation

July 2021



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# Scope of this consultation

Geographical scope:	This consultation relates to the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. This is shown in Figure 1.1 and defined as the area that covers the ceremonial counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire.
Topic of this consultation:	This consultation is being undertaken to inform our approach to the future of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, which has been identified by the government as a key economic priority. We are seeking views to help us create a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework, and in doing so guide the future growth of the area to 2050. This is in line with the commitment we made at the launch of the Spatial Framework process <sup>1</sup> in February 2021. The Spatial Framework will form national planning policy and transport policy for the Arc and local planning and local transport authorities must have regard to it when preparing local transport and local development plans and policies <sup>2</sup> , and it will be capable of being a material consideration in relevant planning decisions in the area.
Scope of this consultation:	<p>In February 2021, the government published a policy paper<sup>1</sup> that set out how we intend to develop a Spatial Framework to help us realise our ambition to support sustainable economic growth in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.</p> <p>In this consultation, we are seeking views on what the vision for the future growth of the Arc should be to 2050 to be delivered through the Spatial Framework.</p> <p>We are undertaking a fully integrated Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating a strategic environmental assessment for the purposes of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (commonly referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations 2004 or “SEA Regulations”). The Sustainability Appraisal will also be informed by other statutory assessments and regimes such as a habitats regulations assessment pursuant to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. As part of this consultation, we are seeking views on the initial work we have done to set the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal. Questions related to the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal can be found in Chapter 8 of the <a href="#">Scoping Report</a> published as part of this consultation.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Planning for sustainable growth in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc: An introduction to the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework, February 2021. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/962455/Spatial\\_framework\\_policy\\_paper.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962455/Spatial_framework_policy_paper.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See s.112 Transport Act 2000 and s.19(2) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

	<p>We are interested in hearing from those who live, work and have an interest in the future of the area – particularly from those who have not responded to a consultation of this kind before.</p> <p>We recognise that we have provided a limited range of options for responses to questions – this is so that the consultation is accessible and easy to respond to, and so that we can more easily collect and analyse the views of everyone who responds at this early stage. However, we are open to other ideas on the vision and will consider all relevant views expressed.</p> <p>There will be further opportunities to have your say. This is the first of three planned consultations on the Spatial Framework for the Arc.</p> <p>For information, where relevant, responses to this consultation may be considered as part of the development of other government led initiatives and proposals in the Arc to help realise economic growth ambitions. It is also highly likely that in parallel to the Spatial Framework consultations, the government will hold other consultations on such further proposals, which may support the development and delivery of the vision for the Spatial Framework.</p>
<p>Impact assessment:</p>	<p>The government is mindful of the Public Sector Equality Duty and its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. This includes the need to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work such as shaping policy and delivering services, and the duty to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people as set out in the Equality Act 2010. This duty and other responsibilities will be kept under consideration as the Spatial Framework develops to ensure we consider the impact of its proposals and policies on all individuals including those with protected characteristics. We are seeking, through this consultation, the views of all people, including groups with protected characteristics. We have designed this consultation process to be inclusive and accessible to different people and groups.</p>

## Basic information

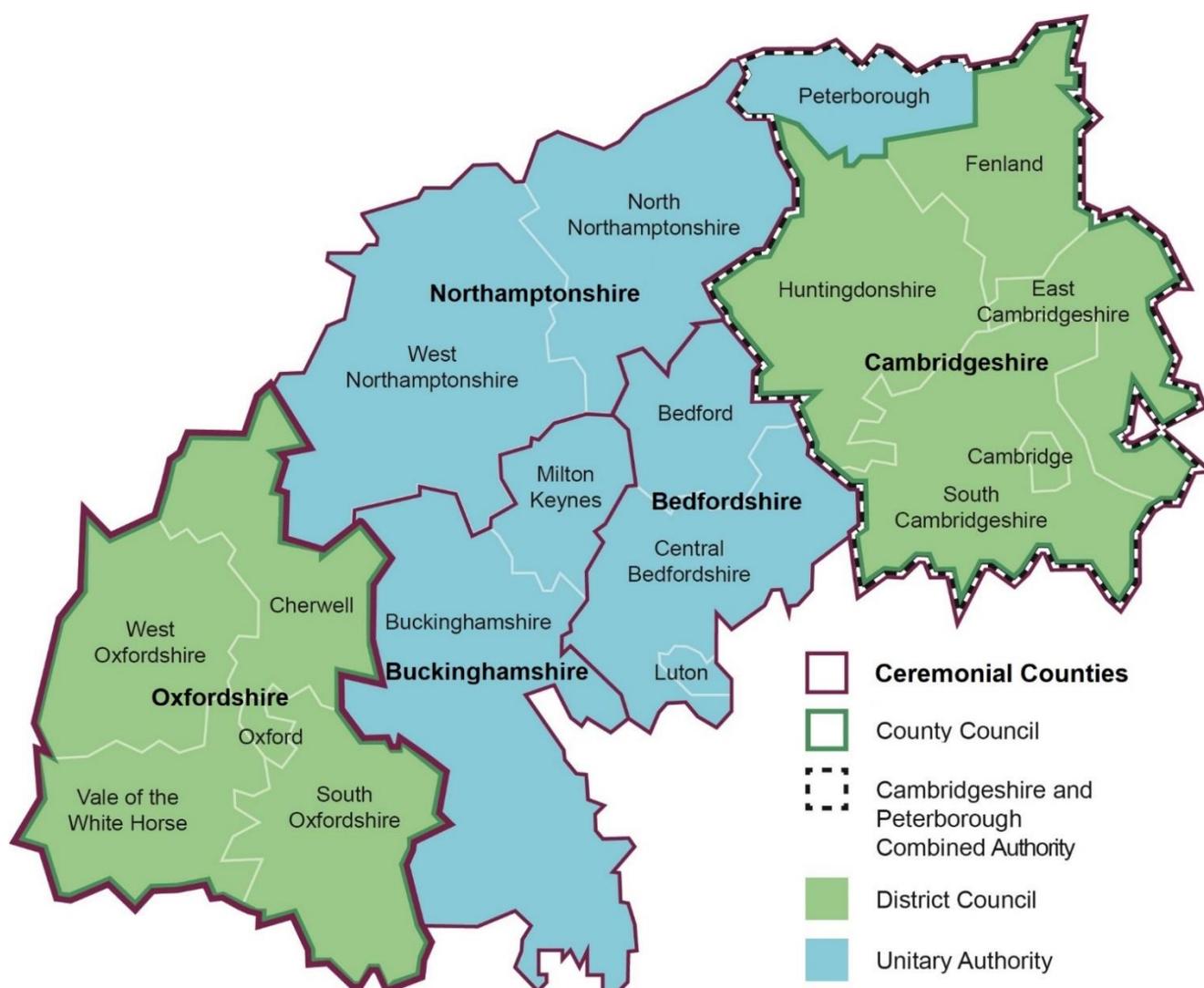
<p>To:</p>	<p>This consultation is open to everyone. We are keen to hear from the public and interested parties from across the public and private sector.</p>
<p>Body/bodies responsible for the consultation:</p>	<p>Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</p>
<p>Duration:</p>	<p>This consultation will last for 12 weeks from 20 July 2021 to 12 October 2021.</p>

Enquiries:	For any enquiries about this consultation, please visit our online platform or our <a href="#">guidance webpage</a> for more information.
How to respond:	<p>You can respond by using our <a href="#">online platform</a>, which we strongly encourage you use. Using the online platform greatly assists our analysis of the responses, enabling more efficient and effective consideration of issues raised. If you are responding in writing, please make it clear which question or questions you are responding to. Written responses should be sent to:</p> <p>Oxford-Cambridge Arc Unit Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF</p>

# 1. Introduction: Creating a Vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc

## The government's ambition for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc

- 1.1 The Oxford-Cambridge Arc is a national economic priority area<sup>3</sup>.** We believe it has the potential to be one of the most prosperous, innovative and sustainable economic areas in the world, and can make a major contribution to national economic recovery as we seek to build back better from the impact of COVID-19.



**Figure 1.1 – The Oxford-Cambridge Arc**

<sup>3</sup> See the policy paper on the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, published from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in February 2021, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/oxford-cambridge-arc/oxford-cambridge-arc>

## The government is developing a Spatial Framework to help deliver on that ambition

**1.2 The government wants to support sustainable economic growth in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, so we are developing a Spatial Framework to plan for that growth – to 2050 and beyond<sup>3</sup>.** The Spatial Framework will set national planning policy and national transport policy for the area set out in Figure 1.1, which covers the ceremonial counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire. At a strategic scale, this will coordinate and focus investment in the area and shape future local planning decisions on:

- how land is used;
- how the environment is protected and enhanced;
- where and what type of new development happens; and
- what infrastructure is provided.

**1.3 We are developing a long-term Spatial Framework for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc so that we can plan for growth in a more sustainable and strategic way.** We believe that the Spatial Framework will allow us to plan for growth in a way that:

- makes the area a better place to live and work for all;
- leaves a long-term legacy by protecting and enhancing the Arc's built and natural environment and beautiful places; and
- helps combat and build resilience to climate change.

**1.4 The government will lead the development of the Spatial Framework, and we will work closely with communities and local stakeholders at each step.** We want to hear anyone interested in the local area, including people and organisations in all parts of the Arc as we start to set priorities and gather evidence. This will help identify how we can best meet our ambition for the area. This consultation is the first of three that we will undertake as we develop the Spatial Framework over the next two years.

## What is the Spatial Framework, and what could it do?

**1.5 We think a joined-up, long-term approach to planning for growth is the best way to realise our ambitions for economy and sustainability in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.**

**1.6 The Spatial Framework will be a long-term strategic plan for the area, developed by the government, and informed by engagement with local communities and**

**stakeholders.** It will have sustainability at its core and guide planning decisions and investment under four policy ‘pillars’:

- the environment;
- the economy;
- connectivity and infrastructure; and
- place-making.

**1.7 The Spatial Framework will provide a national planning policy framework for the area of the Arc.** This will help to better coordinate and provide a strategic direction for:

- **Development Plans including Local Plans, produced by local planning authorities – such as district councils.** Local Plans set the policies that guide the development and use of land in its area. For example, Local Plans designate land uses, and set an overall strategy to deliver enough housing (including affordable housing), infrastructure, community facilities (such as schools and health centres) and to protect, enhance and recover the natural, built and historic environment. There are 18 local planning authorities in the Arc (including new authorities that have replaced joint planning areas in Northamptonshire);
- **Local Transport Plans, which are produced by strategic authorities such as county councils.** These plans set out objectives for transport and identify priority projects and funding requirements for them. In the Arc, there are eight transport planning authorities; and
- **Local Enterprise Partnerships,** who have developed Local Industrial Strategies to identify local economic strengths, challenges and opportunities, the action needed to boost productivity, earning powers and competitiveness in the area for example by identifying investment opportunities to unlock economic potential.

**1.8 We believe that this approach will allow us to better plan for economic growth supported by new homes and infrastructure and more sustainable results. The Spatial Framework will form national planning and transport policy for the Arc,** and inform Development Plans including Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans; Local Transport Plans; and Local Industrial Strategies within the area and local decision-making. Local planning authorities must have regard to such national policies when preparing local plans, and take them into account, where relevant, when making decisions on planning applications. Decisions on planning applications need, as a matter of law, to be made in accordance with such local plans unless material considerations (including national policy) indicate otherwise. National transport policy (and/ or guidance) is intended to guide the content of local transport plans in the Arc, as local transport

authorities must have regard to it and/ or take it into account under current legal framework.



Figure 1.2 – Status of the OxCam Arc Spatial Framework within the planning system

**1.9 We will also make sure that sustainability is at the heart of the Spatial Framework by undertaking a fully integrated Sustainability Appraisal.** This will be a rigorous process that will ensure full consideration is given to environmental, economic and social sustainability in the policy development and decision-making process, and across each of the four ‘pillars’ of our approach.

## Why we are consulting you now

**1.10 We believe that for the Spatial Framework to work best as a national planning policy for the Arc, it should be shaped by those who live, work and have an interest in the area.** We want you to help us create a vision for the area to 2050 and help set the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal. Whether you live, work, learn, invest, visit or just have an interest in the Arc, all views matter to us. We are particularly keen to hear from those people who normally do not engage in planning consultations and decisions. This is part of our commitment<sup>4</sup> to developing the Spatial Framework in a way that is open, collaborative, inclusive, digital, and evidence-based.

<sup>4</sup> You can find more information on our commitment here: <https://www.gov.uk/Government/publications/planning-for-sustainable-growth-in-the-oxford-cambridge-arc-spatial-framework/planning-for-sustainable-growth-in-the-oxford-cambridge-arc-an-introduction-to-the-spatial-framework#what-the-spatial-framework-will-do>

- 1.11 The purpose of the Spatial Framework is to support the delivery of government’s ambitions for the OxCam Arc in the most sustainable way<sup>5</sup>.** The aim of this consultation is to seek your views on the Spatial Framework’s vision for the Arc and the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal, and set the direction of travel for future policies and growth.
- 1.12 Creating a vision is an important first step in the preparation of the Spatial Framework and development of its policies.** The vision will form the core of the Spatial Framework. Its aim is to clearly and simply bring to life and illustrate the kind of place that the OxCam Arc will be in the future, as a result of the policies working together.
- 1.13 We think the vision for the Spatial Framework should be ambitious and aspirational, unique to the Arc and reflect its people and places.** We think it is important to also look at potential opportunities for transformation. The world will be a very different place by 2050, and we want to ensure that the vision helps make the area an even better place to live, work, travel in and enjoy for existing and future communities alike. The vision will need to be realistic too, reflecting the strategic planning role and remit of the Spatial Framework. And above all, we want to create a shared vision, one that has been developed through working with as wide and representative audience as possible.
- 1.14** There are lots of ways you can develop a vision. You can ask people to picture the kind of place it will be in the future. Some like to think about it in the current context, by considering what currently works well and what could be improved. Others like to approach it by thinking about what the vision will do and seek to achieve. Asking people what their priorities are for the future can cut across all three of these methods. We tested these approaches with different audiences earlier this year and through their feedback concluded that the best way to engage our diverse audience was to use a mix of all of these approaches. The design of this consultation, including our questions, reflects this.

## What you have told us so far

- 1.15** We want to take an open, collaborative and inclusive approach to developing the Spatial Framework.
- 1.16** When we launched the Spatial Framework in February 2021<sup>1</sup>, we committed to carrying out some initial engagement with people in the Arc so that we could get the most out of this consultation – by starting to understand key priorities, helping to identify what questions we could ask in this consultation, and testing how we could engage with different people across the area.
- 1.17** Then, in March 2021, we held a short series of initial workshops and conversations with a small sample of local residents, young people, academic experts, businesses, charities, campaign groups and local councils that allowed us to test our approach to engagement in advance of this consultation. We hope to publish a summary of the feedback from this

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<sup>5</sup> See paragraphs 1.1 to 1.9 in ‘Planning for sustainable growth in the Oxford- Cambridge Arc: An introduction to the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework’, published from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in February 2021, available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/962455/Spatial\\_framework\\_policy\\_paper.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962455/Spatial_framework_policy_paper.pdf)

early engagement in the near future for your information. All feedback received will be further considered in combination with this public consultation.

**1.18** On how we should engage different people, we heard that:

- people across the Arc really care about their local areas, and want to have an opportunity at the beginning of this process to tell us what they like, and what could be better;
- people want to see the data and evidence we have on the Arc, where available; and
- people really want to be engaged in this process, although not necessarily in the same way.

**1.19** We also learned how we can communicate best with a wide audience. People told us how much they care about the area and want to influence how it develops for the better through this planning process. However, many found the language and terminology used, such as planning policy, a barrier. We have taken this feedback on board and reflected it in the approach and design of this consultation. We have kept the language and content as simple and short as possible. The aim is to reach as wide and diverse an audience as possible through this consultation, in particular those people who do not normally engage in planning.

**1.20** We heard a lot of different views on what our focus and priorities for the future of the Arc and the Spatial Framework should be, but there were some common themes. You can see more about what people told us in the sections that follow on each pillar or policy theme. In summary:

- the four policy 'pillars' or themes – the environment, the economy, connectivity and infrastructure, and place-making – reflected much of what the people we spoke to value and what they are worried about in their area;
- people strongly supported environmental sustainability and connectivity as priorities – for example, people told us they want to see environmental improvement and more space for nature, and would like to see local transport options improved;
- younger people in particular saw an opportunity to support more education and job opportunities, but they also wanted growth to be environmentally sustainable; and
- there was a lot of worry about rising house prices and the cost of living, as well as acceptance that new homes were needed, but focus upon the character of places, health, well-being, the environment, climate change and improving local infrastructure, such as walking and cycling paths, green space, and healthcare facilities.

1.21 We have used this to help:

- inform the types of questions we are asking in this consultation;
- guide the data and evidence we have provided alongside it, and how we have presented this; and
- shape how we are engaging, including through this digital platform.

1.22 For this consultation and for our future work on the Spatial Framework, we will continue to develop our approach based on feedback we receive and the evidence base that we are preparing.

1.23 You can find out more about how we are planning to engage in Chapter 6.

## Next steps

1.24 This consultation will run for 12 weeks, closing on 12 October 2021. We hope this will give anyone interested an opportunity to have their say.

1.25 We will consider all comments received to this consultation which, alongside other considerations, will help create the Spatial Framework's vision for the Arc to 2050 and inform the development of the Sustainability Appraisal. In spring 2022, we expect to publish the vision as well as a public consultation on options for the policies in the Spatial Framework. We will also publish a summary of comments received and our response as part of this consultation, so you can see how views have been taken into account.

1.26 The development of the Spatial Framework will be supported by two further public consultations:

- **Towards a Spatial Framework** – using the vision as a foundation, we will develop options for delivering its objectives. The options will be based on feedback from engagement, initial evidence gathering and analysis. We hope to publish this, including a Sustainable Appraisal 'Issues and Options' Report, for public consultation in spring 2022 to give everyone a chance to have their say; and
- **Draft Spatial Framework** – to finalise the Spatial Framework, we will consider responses to the previous consultation, and undertake further spatial analysis, option testing, impact assessments and engagement. We hope to publish the draft Spatial Framework with its Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report, for consultation in autumn 2022, with implementation of the final framework shortly after.

## What do you think?

What is your positive vision for the Arc in the future?

### **1. What place could it be? What words come to mind?**

- Sustainable
- Sense of community
- Equal/ inclusive
- Progressive
- Collaborates for better outcomes
- More life opportunities
- Better environment
- Eco-friendly
- Connected
- Better transport
- Better infrastructure
- Thriving economy
- Better place
- Better homes
- More available homes
- More affordable homes
- Other – please specify

**2. If you can, we would love you to tell us more about your vision for the Arc to 2050.**

**3. How do you feel overall about the future of the Arc? What are your hopes and fears?**

We are preparing the OxCam Arc Spatial Framework to make the most of the area's unique potential for economic growth to 2050 and beyond.

**4. What do you think are the most important things that it needs to do, as a strategic plan, to achieve this? Work at an Arc-wide level to tackle shared issues/ opportunities on:**

- Environment
- Economy
- Connectivity and growth
- Place-making
- Supporting monitoring and delivery

**5. If there is anything you would like to add, we would love you to tell us.**

## 2. The Environment

### Our ambition for the Arc's environment

- 2.1 The government wants to support growth in the Arc in a way that is sustainable – by improving the natural environment and making sure it is protected, and can recover from harm. This will help us to meet our commitment to combat and build resilience to climate change.** We think there is an opportunity for the Arc to become a world-leader for environmental sustainability over the coming decades.

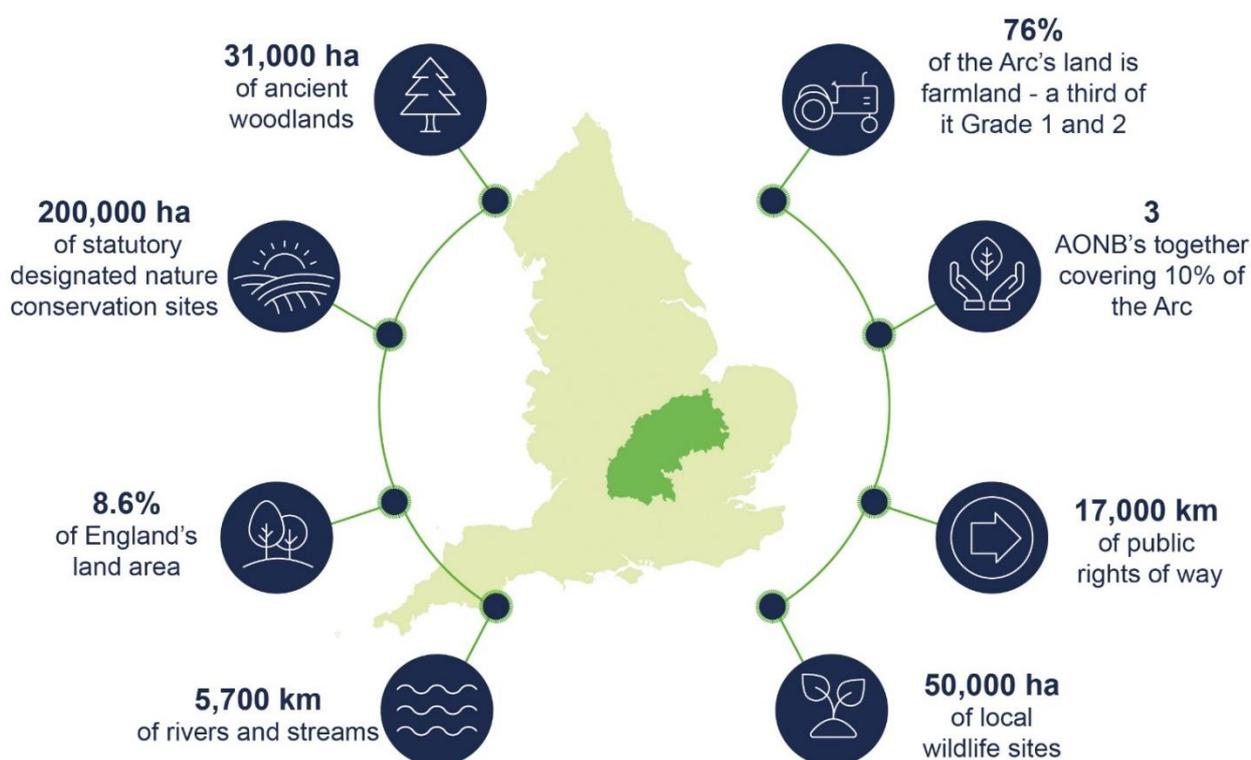
### The Arc's environment today

- 2.2 The Oxford-Cambridge Arc is already home to precious habitats and biodiversity, green spaces which are highly valued and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).** For example<sup>6</sup>:

- the landscapes of its Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the Chilterns, the North Wessex and Downs and the Cotswolds;
- biodiverse woodlands and grasslands, with over 200,000 ha of statutory designated nature conservation sites;
- the areas of wildflower-rich meadows and species-rich fenland in Cambridgeshire;
- around 31,000 ha of ancient woodlands, from Wychwood in Oxfordshire to the Whittlewood Forest in Northamptonshire;
- there are over 5,700 km of rivers and streams across the Arc; and
- the 6,000 acres<sup>7</sup> of green public space in Milton Keynes.

<sup>6</sup> You can find more information in the Scoping Report for the Spatial Framework's Sustainability Appraisal, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/creating-a-vision-for-the-oxford-cambridge-arc>

<sup>7</sup> Taken from the 'Facts and Figures' webpage of the Milton Keynes Parks Trust. Available at: <https://www.theparkstrust.com/our-work/about-us/facts-and-figures/>



Source: [OxCam Local Natural Capital Plan](#), SA Scoping Report

**Figure 2.1 – Key facts on the Arc's environment today**

**2.3 However, there are real challenges<sup>6</sup>.** Air quality is poor in many parts of the Arc, caused in part by high rates of car use, and this is harming the environment and the health of local residents. Flood risk is high and growing, particularly around the floodplains of the Arc's major rivers. The Arc's natural environment has declined in quality, and become less connected over the last 40 years, and we know that people's access to open areas of nature rich countryside can be limited. The Arc is also one of the most water stressed areas of the country; which means that sustainable abstraction and water resilience is key to future planning. Finally, the impact of COVID-19 has shown the importance of natural green space to healthy lifestyles – but many existing sites of value for nature are already heavily used for a range of recreational activities, which is having a negative impact.

**2.4** If you would like to know more about the Arc's environment and the social and economic context of the area today, you can read more in the Scoping Report for the Spatial Framework's Sustainability Appraisal<sup>6</sup>, which is part of this consultation, including questions related the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal in Chapter 8.

## How the Spatial Framework could help us to realise our ambition

**2.5 The Spatial Framework offers a unique opportunity to preserve and enhance a green Arc and support nature recovery, improve air quality, reduce flood risk and improve access to nature and green space across the area.** We have committed to support this, including by:

- developing policy to take a more coordinated approach to the environment, by:
  - making sure that the environment is at the centre of economic, transport and housing and planning decisions;
  - taking an integrated approach to water management and flood risk, cleaner air, sustainable land management, nature recovery, climate change mitigation and adaptation, in line with the government's 25 Year Environment Plan<sup>8</sup>, Net Zero ambitions<sup>9</sup> and Clean Growth Strategy<sup>10</sup>;
  - making sure natural capital forms a key part of planning and decision-making, understanding what nature provides us and the value that brings so that we can invest and improve it (including by using the environmental baseline identified in the government led Local Natural Capital Plan<sup>11</sup> that has been developed for the Arc);
  - using Local Nature Recovery Strategies<sup>12</sup> to inform priorities.
- setting policy to:
  - support retention of, and investment in, key existing and potential new habitats;
  - improve access to nature and green space for all whilst ensuring nature conservation;
  - set high standards for new development, including on carbon emissions, active travel, water management, green space, different types of green infrastructure, and biodiversity;
  - support an integrated approach to water management, taking into account sustainable water abstraction and drought resilience, water quality, reducing risk and building resilience to flooding and how and where new infrastructure should be developed;
  - support clean air outcomes, with clear links to housing and transport policies;
  - improve natural capital across the Arc.

<sup>8</sup> You can find more information on the government's 25 Year Environment Plan here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf)

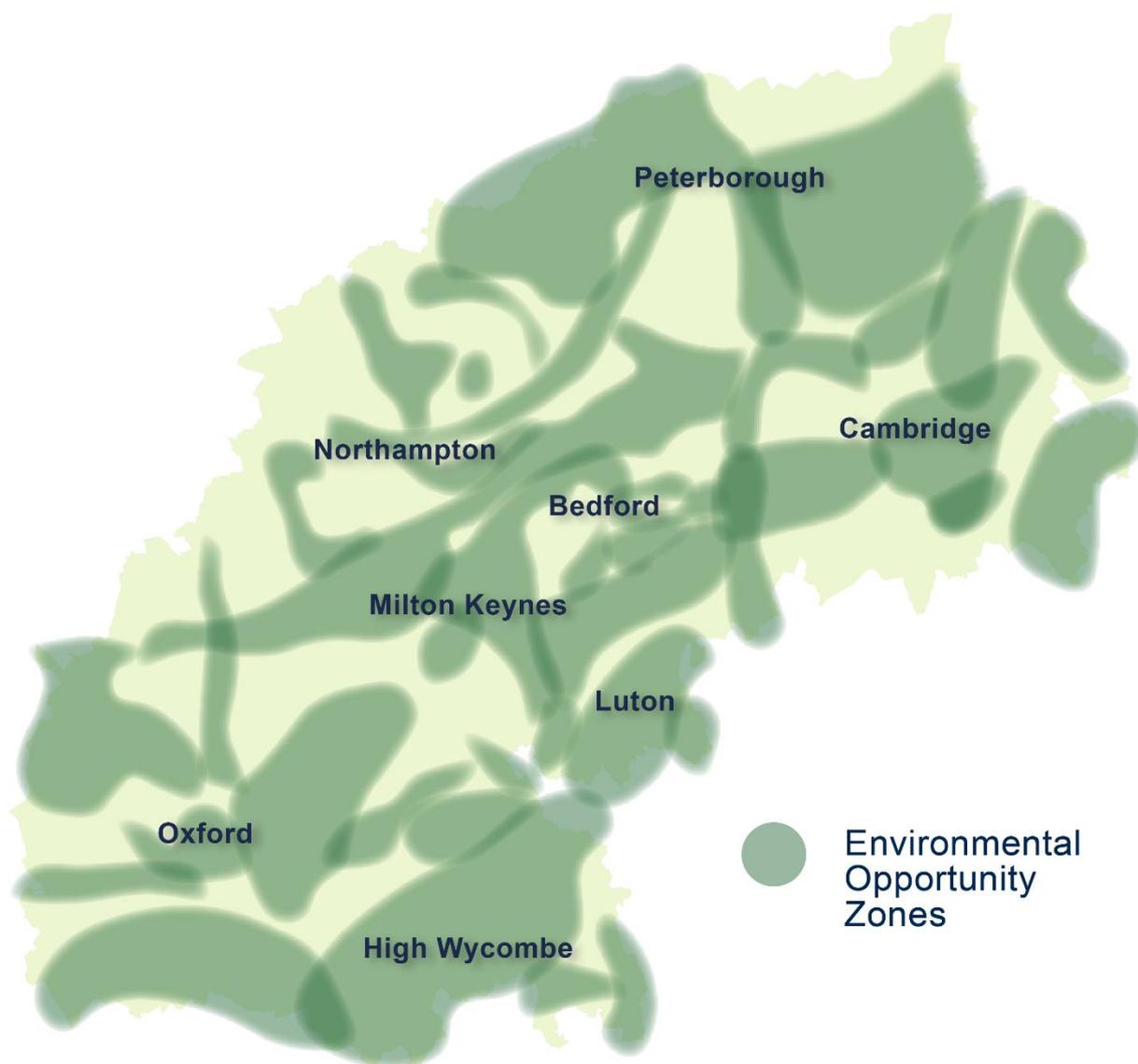
<sup>9</sup> See the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended). You can find more information on some of the government's proposals for Net Zero here: <https://www.gov.uk/Government/publications/energy-white-paper-powering-our-net-zero-future/energy-white-paper-powering-our-net-zero-future-accessible-html-version>

<sup>10</sup> You can find more information on the government's Clean Growth Strategy here: <https://www.gov.uk/Government/publications/clean-growth-strategy>

<sup>11</sup> See Local Natural Capital Plan for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, developed by the Environment Agency. Available at: <https://www.oxcamlncp.org/>

<sup>12</sup> You can find more information on Local Nature Recovery Strategies here: <https://www.gov.uk/Government/publications/environment-bill-2020/10-march-2020-nature-and-conservation-covenants-parts-6-and-7>

- 2.6** We have also committed to identifying environmental Opportunity Areas, including for water infrastructure, which use nature-based solutions, supporting nature recovery, biodiversity net gain and carbon sinks, where these can bring the most benefits for environmental sustainability.



Source: [Local Nature Partnerships' Strategic-Scale Environmental Opportunity Mapping: Doubling Nature in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc](#)

**Figure 2.2 – Strategic-scale environmental opportunity zones<sup>13</sup>**

- 2.7** To ensure sustainability is embedded in the Spatial Framework we are producing a **Sustainability Appraisal**. The aim is to address environmental issues alongside social and economic issues as the Spatial Framework and its policies develop. This will inform decision-making and help achieve improved sustainability outcomes. A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report<sup>6</sup> has been prepared as part of this consultation. This provides

<sup>13</sup> For more information about each of these zones, please refer to the Local Nature Partnerships' Strategic-Scale Environmental Opportunity Mapping: Doubling Nature in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, available at: <https://bucks.mknep.co.uk/download/2469/>

more information on our approach and more detailed information on the Arc's environmental assets; social and economic context and changing climate.

- 2.8** We will also build on the evidence baseline identified in the government led Local Natural Capital Plan<sup>11</sup> that has been developed for the Arc. The government has invested in this project with local partners to understand the Arc's environment, its unique features, pressures and identifying opportunities to develop and invest in nature.

### What you have told us so far

- 2.9** We want to understand different views about the Arc's environment to help us form our vision. The first part of this was initial conversations in March - including with some local residents, community and campaign groups, local authorities, and businesses. What we were told helped us to develop our approach to engagement and understand some of the key issues and questions for this consultation. The following summarises some of the themes that came from these discussions.

- 2.10** People seem to agree on some of the good things about the Arc's environment:

- accessible green space is highly valued by communities across the Arc and is seen as key to well-being and quality of life; and
- environmental sustainability is a priority for all groups we have spoken to so far.

- 2.11** And there are some common concerns:

- the risk of flooding is a major worry for many people; and
- there are concerns about the impact of development on the environment, particularly the loss of green space.

- 2.12** Meanwhile, some are unsure about the future, but have views about what the Spatial Framework could do to support prosperity for everyone and in all parts of the Arc:

- many people told us that the Spatial Framework could be an opportunity to make future development much more sustainable; and
- there is some doubt about whether high environmental ambitions can be delivered.

**2.13** This has given us a sense of some of the issues and questions we should cover in this consultation. Now we want to hear from you to help us create a vision for the Arc's environment.

## What do you think?

Thinking about your vision for the future of the area, how important is it that the Spatial Framework focuses on:

*Green spaces, nature, and biodiversity*

**1. Making sure the natural environment is protected, restored, and improved. For example, improving new and existing green spaces.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**2. Making sure the most is made of the natural environment and that all people can have access to it. For example, making improvements to woodlands, wetland, green space and water and making sure people can visit them if they want to.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**3. Making sure new growth leaves the environment in a better state than before. For example, keeping land in its natural state, and making it more wild, where appropriate.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**4. Anything else to add about your vision for green spaces, nature, and biodiversity?**

*Climate change resilience and net zero*

**5. Making sure new development helps to achieve net zero carbon at an Arc level towards national net zero targets. For example, through good design, sustainable travel choices, renewable energy and trapping carbon.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**6. Making sure that new development can respond to the current and future effects of climate change. For example, through new carbon emissions, water use, waste disposal and renewable energy targets.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**7. Anything else to add about your vision for climate change and/ or the contribution to net zero?**

*Air quality and waste*

**8. Making sure new development helps to improve air quality within the Arc. For example, through high quality design, low emission zones and sustainable transport.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**9. Taking a combined approach to air quality across the Arc. For example, through being careful about where each land uses should go, supporting journeys via public transport and active travel and enhancing green spaces and routes across the area.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**10. Making better use of resources and managing waste. For example, promoting the re-use of materials, and protecting and improving soil quality and minerals.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**11. Anything else to add about your vision for air quality and waste?**

*Water*

**12. Promoting a combined approach to managing water across the Arc, through protecting water resources, improving water quality and reducing the risk of flooding. For example, treating wastewater, improving water storage, and reusing surface runoff.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**13. Making sure new development reduces existing flood risk and is resilient to future flooding. For example, through tree planting and multifunctional sustainable drainage.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**14. Improving water availability and cutting the risk of drought. For example, through new sustainable water resources and infrastructure, and measures which reduce water use.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**15. Anything else to add about your vision for water?**

# 3. The Economy

## Our ambition for the Arc's economy

**3.1 The government's priority for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc is sustainable economic growth.** We are putting sustainable economic growth first because we think that the Arc can be one of the most productive places in the world by creating new jobs, improving the standard of living and the quality of life for local communities. We want to support economic growth that is sustainable – economically, socially and environmentally. Taking this step will also help national prosperity as we build back better from the impacts of COVID-19.

## The Arc's economy today

**3.2 The Oxford-Cambridge Arc is already home to a booming and varied economy that contributes to national prosperity.** Over the last 20 years, it has grown faster than any region outside London, and employment and wages are above the national average. It is home to some strong and innovative sectors, world-leading companies, internationally recognised research and development centres and research universities – for example:

- **the life sciences cluster in Cambridge**, which is the most productive in Europe – with 400 companies based there and contributing £2.9 billion to the UK economy, while also playing a critical role in developing a vaccine for COVID-19<sup>14</sup>;
- **the largest space cluster in Europe** is located in an area spanning Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire;
- **the nationally leading energy cluster is in Oxfordshire, focusing on activities to decarbonise energy production, distribution and consumption;**
- **the digital innovation boom in Milton Keynes**, with new cutting-edge developments in Artificial Intelligence and machine learning;
- **Cambridge is a leading UK and global hub of innovation**, its rate of patent applications, a key indicator of innovation, is the highest in the UK outside of London and over 12 times the national average; and
- **the Arc's 11 major higher education institutions**, including the world-leading centres of learning in Oxford and Cambridge; Cranfield University, a leader in automotive and aerospace engineering; and the Open University.

<sup>14</sup> Taken from The Oxford-Cambridge Arc Economic Prospectus, published by the Arc Leadership in October 2020 - available at: [https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxford-CambridgeArcProspectus\\_Approved\\_1.pdf](https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxford-CambridgeArcProspectus_Approved_1.pdf)



Source: Internal analysis using ONS data

**Figure 3.1 – The Arc’s economy (based on 2018 prices) compared to other areas in England**

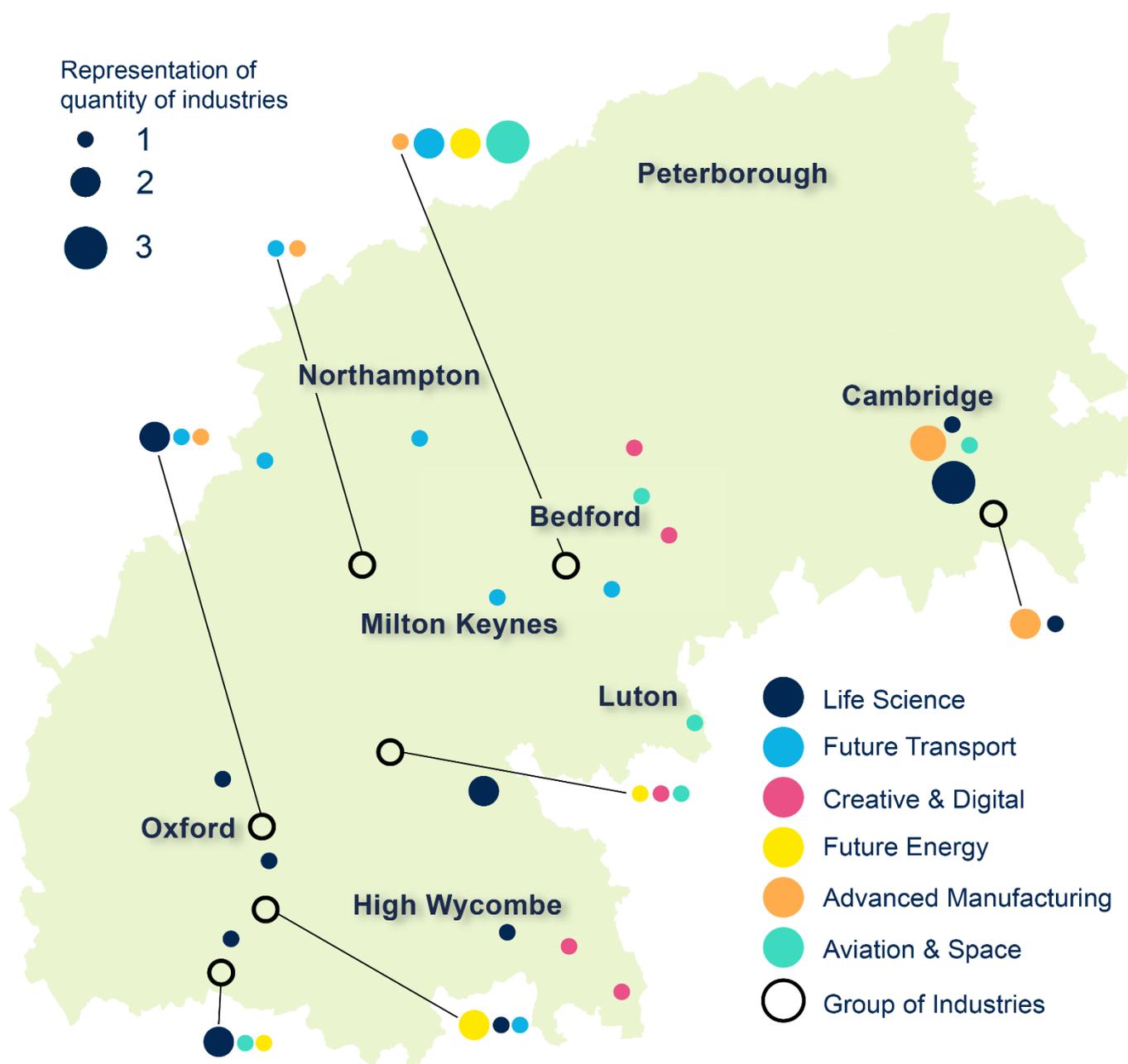
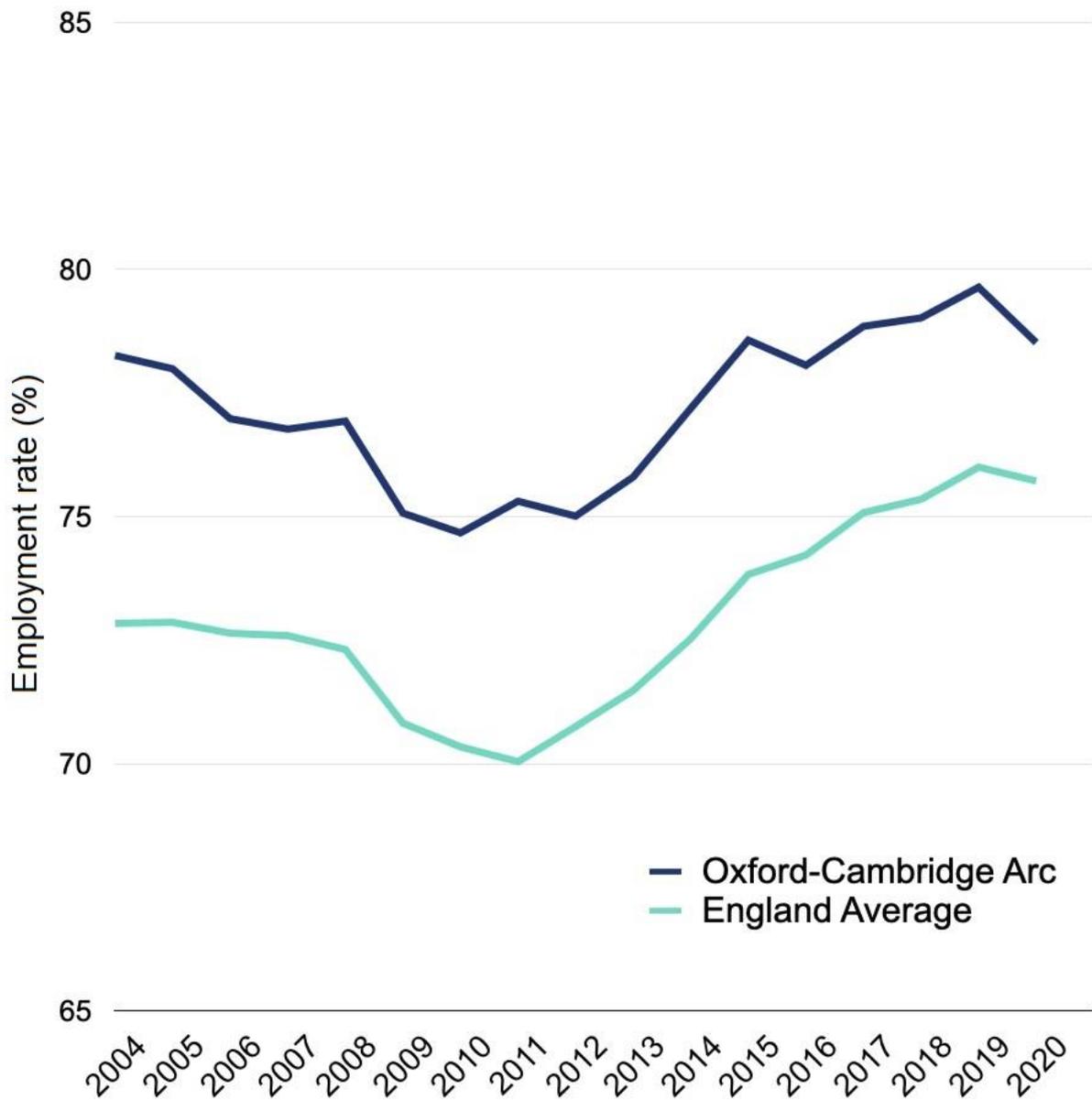


Figure 3.2 – Economic clusters in the Arc

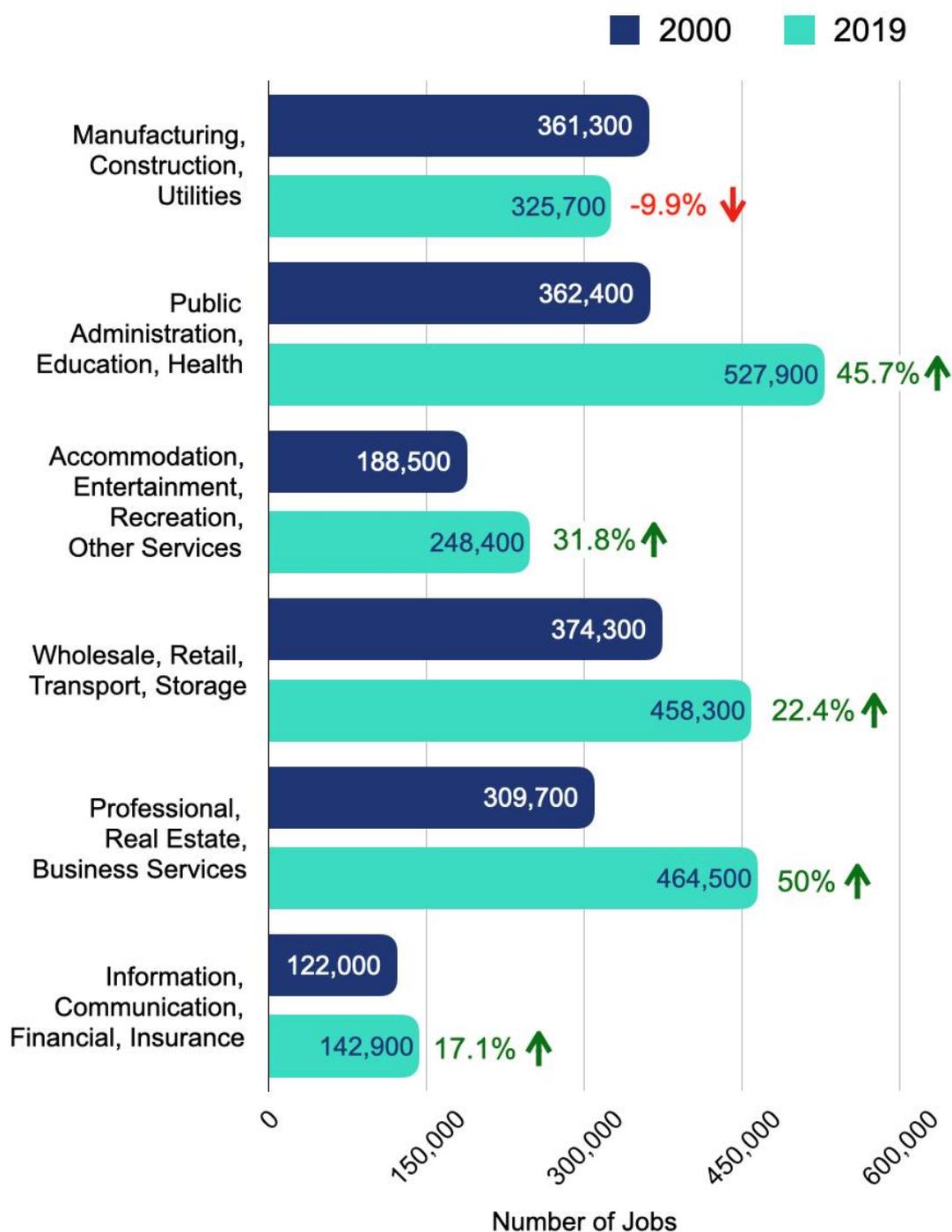
**3.3** This growth has brought benefits to places and communities across the area, but we know these have not been felt by all, and communities are worried for the future. For example, places like Oxford, Cambridge and Milton Keynes have seen significant economic and wage growth<sup>15</sup>; however, this has not been spread evenly across these centres or in other towns and rural areas. The cost of homes has grown a lot over the years, particularly in these areas. Local communities are worried that people and businesses do not have access to the right infrastructure that they need such as better transport connections and digital services.

<sup>15</sup> Internal analysis using ONS data.



Source: Internal analysis using ONS data

**Figure 3.3 – Employment growth in the Arc**



Source: Internal analysis using ONS data

**Figure 3.4 – Employment by sector in the Arc<sup>16</sup>**

<sup>16</sup> Culture and tourism services are included in the 'Accommodation, entertainment, recreation and other services' class

## How the Spatial Framework could help us to deliver our ambition

**3.4 We want to use the Spatial Framework to help tackle these problems. We want to make the most of the economic potential of the Arc by planning for sustainable growth and making the Arc an even more attractive place for all to live, work and do business.** We have committed to doing this by:

- developing an Economic Strategy, supported by strong economic evidence, to identify the policies, locations and investment needed to deliver the Arc's potential for sustainable and green economic growth;
- setting policies to make sure growth is felt by all communities and the Arc becomes a better place to live and work for all, such as by providing more housing in the right places, making sure people can move around by public transport and other infrastructure, and enhancing the Arc's natural capital<sup>11</sup>;
- setting policies which help local planning authorities to plan for new business and employment space, support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and places for global companies; and
- setting policies to meet the needs of different sectors and businesses – from large firms to start-ups and promoting the green economy, industry, innovation and technology.

**3.5** Together, these will help businesses find the space they need for new jobs and help local communities. The government is also considering setting up a new Arc Growth Body<sup>17</sup> that would be a clear economic leadership voice to help businesses and innovation within the Arc. It would also help boost the area's potential as a global innovation powerhouse by promoting the Arc internationally.

## What you have told us so far

**3.6** We want to understand different views about the Arc's economy to help us form our vision. The first part of this was initial conversations in March - including with some local residents, community and campaign groups, local authorities, and businesses. What we were told helped us to develop our approach to engagement and understand some of the key issues and questions for this consultation. The following summarises some of the themes that came from these discussions.

**3.7** People seem to agree on some of the good things about the Arc's economy:

<sup>17</sup> See press release from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on the intention to establish the Arc Growth Body, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/Government/news/Government-plan-to-transform-oxford-cambridge-arc-into-uk-s-fastest-growing-economic-region>

- residents and businesses were excited by the potential for jobs growth and innovation in the Arc;
- younger people really value employment and education in many parts of the Arc; and
- people want to see their local high streets and local retail and leisure businesses grow.

#### 3.8 And there are some common concerns:

- some residents are worried about the loss of retail that they have seen on some high streets;
- that the benefits of economic growth, such as greater investment and more jobs, may not be felt in all places, leading to greater inequality; and
- there is also doubt about whether growth could be sustained for the long-term.

#### 3.9 Meanwhile, some are unsure about the future, but have views about what the Spatial Framework could do to help all parts of the Arc:

- some wonder who will be the winners and losers of growth;
- we need to understand the needs of different sectors, industries and types of job in the Arc; and
- the Spatial Framework should be ambitious and should focus on the strategic national importance of the region.

#### 3.10 This has given us a sense of some of the issues and questions we should cover in this consultation. Now we want to hear from you to help us create a vision for economy in the Arc.

## What do you think?

Thinking about your vision for the future of the area, how important is it that the Spatial Framework focuses on:

### *Education and training*

**1. Making sure the Arc keeps growing as a place of educational excellence, partnership and research. For example, through growth which helps existing universities and colleges.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**2. Making sure the economic benefits of growth are felt by all communities within the Arc. For example, through putting new education and training facilities in places where more people can easily get to go to them.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**3. Anything else to add about your vision for education and training?**

### *Jobs and businesses*

**4. Making sure that the Arc keeps growing as a place for business, science and technology, and innovation. For example, through putting these types of new workspaces in places where they can make the most of cross-sector collaboration.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**5. Making sure that existing industries keep growing within the Arc. For example, through putting industries in the best places to suit their needs.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**6. Making sure the Arc builds upon and grows its skills, expertise and capabilities. For example, through making sure people can get around easily to bring the right people to the right job locations.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**7. Making sure that the right types of buildings are provided in the Arc so that businesses can keep growing as well as supporting the green economy. For example, through building new flexible and adaptable workspaces meeting the needs of a range of different businesses of different sizes.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**8. Anything else to add about your vision for jobs and businesses?**

## 4. Connectivity and Infrastructure

### Our ambition for connectivity and infrastructure in the Arc

- 4.1 We want the Oxford-Cambridge Arc to be a great place to live and work – now and in the future.** That means it will need to be better connected – by making it easier for walking, cycling, and public transport to become first choice for everyone in the Arc. It will also mean making places that reduce the need to travel in the first place. And it means improving communities' access to the services they need – like a good quality, sustainable water supply and broadband, schools, cycle lanes and healthcare, as part of a great approach to place-making.

### Connectivity and infrastructure in the Arc today

- 4.2 The government is already investing in a major new rail link to connect Oxford to Cambridge via Milton Keynes and Bedford – the East West Rail project<sup>18</sup>.** This would create a new east-west connection<sup>19</sup> across the Arc to link some of its major towns and cities – making it easier, more accessible and more sustainable to travel across the area and better connect with the Arc's businesses and research institutions.
- 4.3** The Arc is also home to businesses and universities that are leading the way in developing new technology which will shape the way we live in the future, including for vehicles that will make travel more sustainable – such as electric cars and robotic delivery vehicles.

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<sup>18</sup> You can find more information about the East West Rail project at: <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/>

<sup>19</sup> This was a major theme of the National Infrastructure Commission's analysis of the Arc. See the NIC's final report, Partnering for Prosperity (2017), available at: <https://nic.org.uk/app/uploads/Partnering-for-Prosperity.pdf>

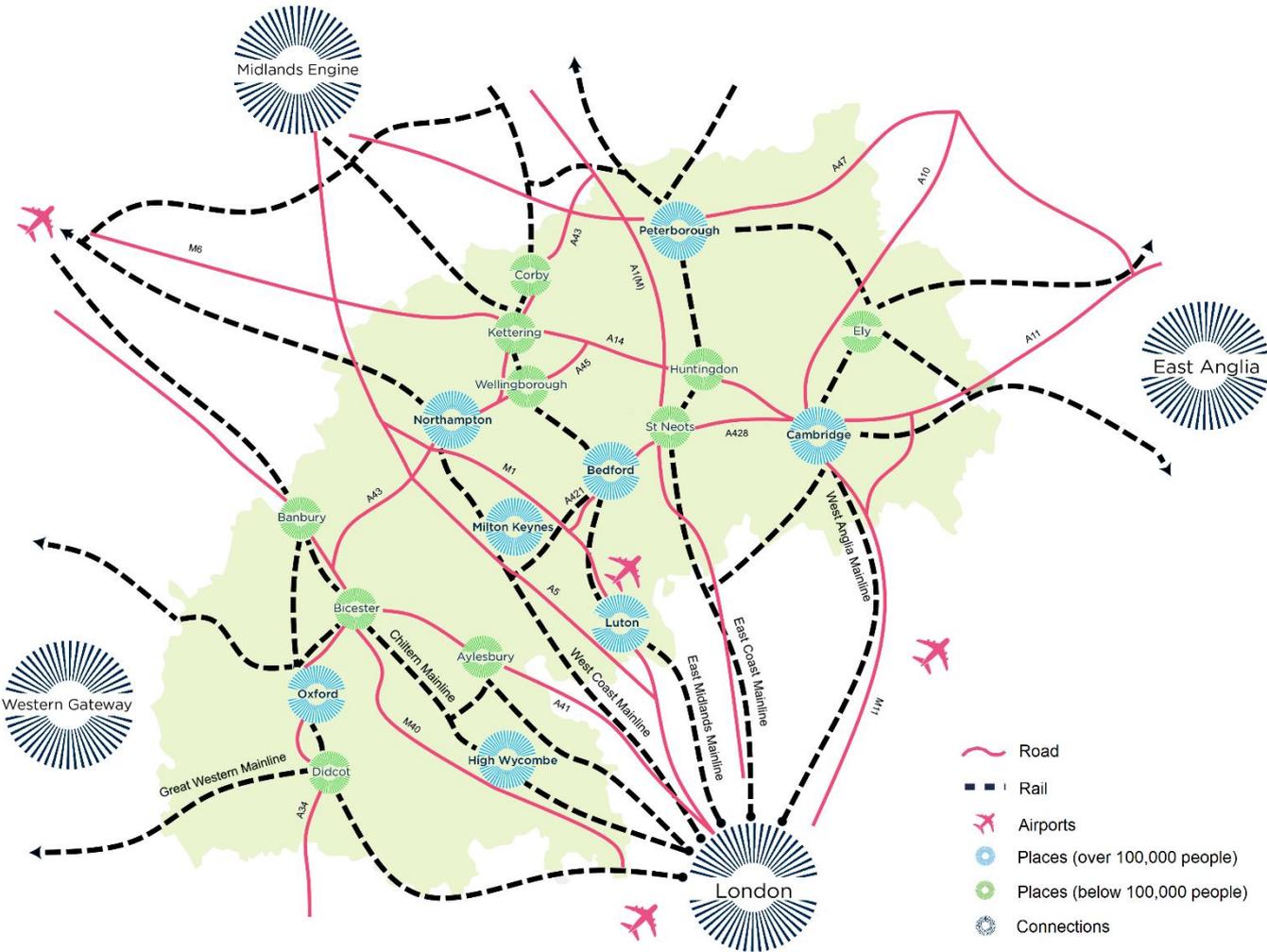
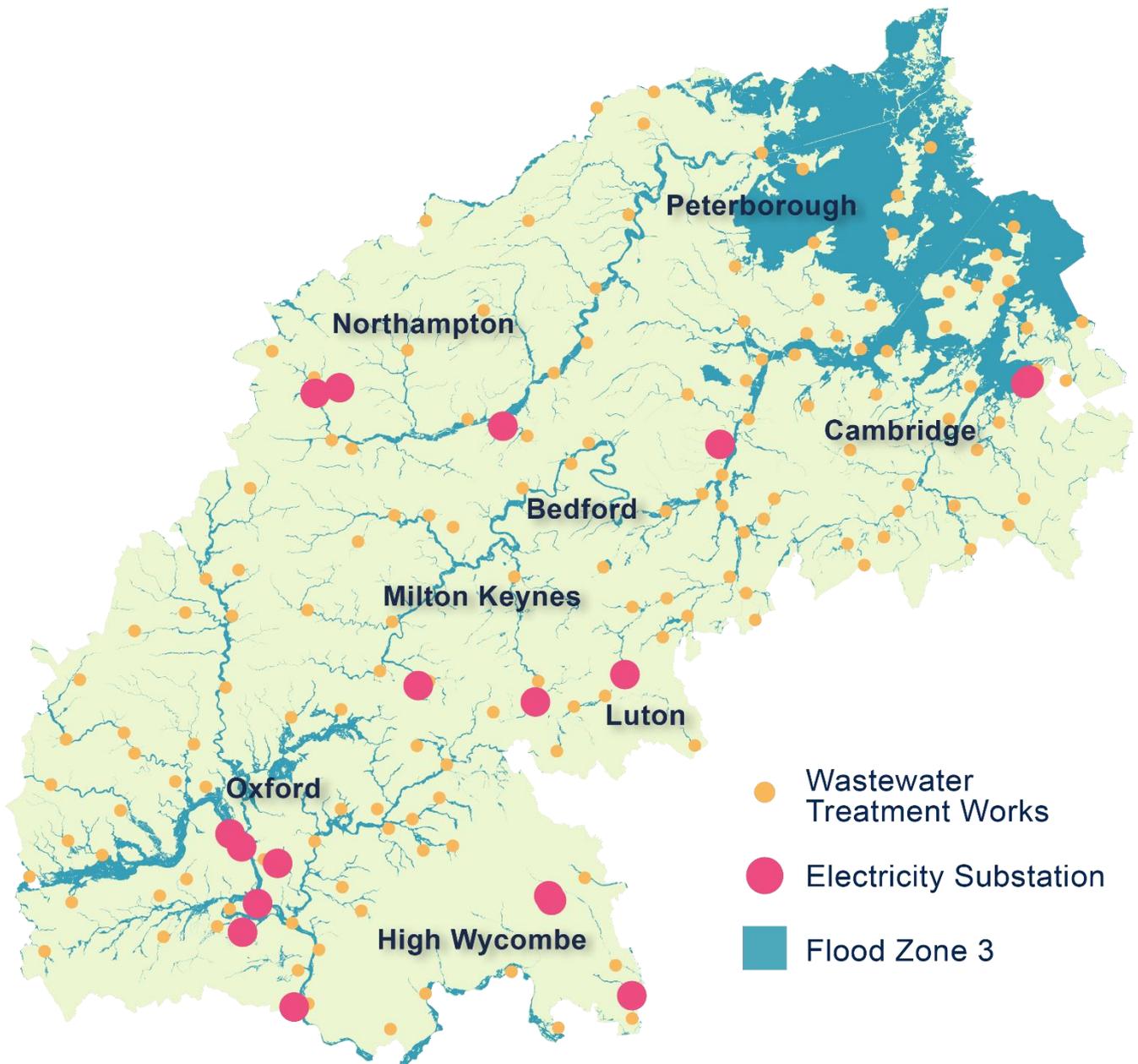


Figure 4.1 – Major transport links in the Arc today



Source: [Flood map for planning](#), data summarised from published Water Cycle Studies and Water Quality Assessments for Local Planning Authorities across the Arc, National Grid

**Figure 4.2 – Flooding and selected utilities infrastructure in the Arc today**

**4.4 We know we need to do more.** Studies tell us that a lack of transport and utilities infrastructure in different towns and cities in the Arc can hold back the area's growth and sustainability:

- **we know that many people rely on private cars, and that to tackle climate change and improve air quality we will need to encourage them to travel by bike, foot or public transport instead.** 67% of people travelling to work – pre-COVID-19 – go by car, compared with 60% nationally. Carbon emissions from transport are higher in the area at 47%– compared with 37% nationally<sup>20</sup>;
- **there are long-standing concerns about utility supplies** – including water, flooding, digital, clean energy and waste recycling – to meet the growing needs of the Arc's communities and businesses, and the challenges of climate change; and
- **the Arc's population is likely to grow, age and become more diverse over the coming decades<sup>21</sup>,** which will bring new demands for social infrastructure such as healthcare, but also risks of increasing existing inequalities – including health inequality – that we know exist today.

## How the Spatial Framework could help to deliver our ambition

**4.5 We have a unique opportunity to address these challenges by planning for sustainable infrastructure in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc through the Spatial Framework.** We will be able to set national planning and transport policy for the area, and prioritise projects that should be considered for investment. We have committed to:

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<sup>20</sup> These figures are for the area including Hertfordshire and Swindon. See England's Economic Heartland (2020) Transport Strategy, available at: [https://eeh-prod-media.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Connecting\\_People\\_Transforming\\_Journeys\\_av.pdf](https://eeh-prod-media.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Connecting_People_Transforming_Journeys_av.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Internal analysis based on ONS population data, available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/nationalpopulationprojections/2018based>

- identifying and mapping the existing transport, health, education, accessible natural green spaces, utilities, green (land) and blue (water) infrastructure and other infrastructure at an Arc-wide scale;
- identifying the long-term need for new infrastructure and the investment across the Arc to 2050, taking into account climate change, and gaps in existing provision;
- using this work to create an infrastructure plan to support future growth and place-making, such as:
  - delivering sustainable and public transport;
  - protecting and enhancing the environment;
  - giving communities access to the public services they need – including education and health;
  - making sure our waste is minimised, recycled or disposed of sustainably where this is the only option;
  - providing the water, digital and utilities infrastructure needed to support growth;
- setting strategic policies for local transport authorities and local planning authorities, building on the England’s Economic Heartland transport strategy<sup>22</sup> and evidence base, including the four key principles for transport connectivity in the area:
  - aiming for net zero carbon emissions from transport by 2040, but no later than 2050;
  - improving quality of life and wellbeing through a safe and inclusive transport system for all;
  - connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities;
  - making sure people and goods can move more efficiently through the area and to/from international gateways, in a way which reduces the environmental impact;
- setting strategic climate resilience and air quality policies based on air quality modelling; and
- setting strategic policies to support investment in new water, digital, utilities, green and blue infrastructure alongside new development.

<sup>22</sup> See England’s Economic Heartland (2020) Transport Strategy, available at: [https://eeh-prod-media.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Connecting\\_People\\_Transforming\\_Journeys\\_av.pdf](https://eeh-prod-media.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Connecting_People_Transforming_Journeys_av.pdf)

### What you have told us so far

**4.6** We want to understand different views about the Arc's economy to help us form our vision. The first part of this was initial conversations in March - including with some local residents, community and campaign groups, local authorities, and businesses. What we were told helped us to develop our approach to engagement and understand some of the key issues and questions for this consultation. The following summarises some of the themes that came from these discussions.

**4.7** People seem to agree on some of the priorities for the future:

- transport should be more environmentally sustainable; and
- it should be easier to walk and cycle within towns and cities.

**4.8** And there are some common concerns:

- that growth will put pressure on existing infrastructure, such as roads and transport capacity; and
- about transport options in rural communities in particular, but also across the Arc.

**4.9** We also heard a range of views about what how the Spatial Framework can help connectivity and infrastructure in all parts of the Arc, including that:

- it should create specific plans for new transport and infrastructure;
- it should support a shift away from cars towards walking, cycling, rail and bus travel;
- it should support more investment in homes and infrastructure in towns and villages across the area; and
- it should ensure that new developments are better designed to support walking and cycling.

**4.10** This has given us a sense of some of the issues and questions we should cover in this consultation. Now we want to hear from you to help us create a vision for infrastructure and connectivity in the Arc.

## What do you think?

Thinking about the future of the area, how important is it that the Spatial Framework focuses on:

### *Infrastructure*

**1. Making sure planning takes a combined approach to new development by providing the infrastructure and services required at the right time to support growth. For example, by planning for the need for utilities (e.g. water, energy, waste) and community infrastructure (e.g. schools, hospitals, GP surgeries).**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**2. Making sure new development makes the most of existing resources. For example, through making sure that materials are reused, renewable energy supplies are used, and waste is properly planned for.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**3. Making sure that digital infrastructure is put in at the same time as other development takes place. For example, speeding up the fitting of high-speed broadband to support home-based work and help new ways of learning.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**4. Anything else to add about your vision for infrastructure?**

### *New development*

**5. Making sure growth within the Arc is placed around areas with better transport links. For example, through having more development around stations and bus routes, supported by cycling and walking tracks.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**6. Making sure new development cuts down the need to travel around the local area. For example, through providing safe and easy walking and cycling routes to town centres, shops and schools.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**7. Making sure new developments reduce existing and future infrastructure demand and resources used. For example, making sure that designs leave enough space for existing and future measures which reduce energy and water use, and cut down on waste.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**8. Making sure sustainable transport principles are included in the design of new developments. For example, by designing new developments in a way that enables people to walk or cycle all or part of their journeys.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**9. Anything else to add about new developments in the context of connectivity and infrastructure?**

*Getting around*

**10. Creating better transport connections across the Arc and making sure they are provided in a way which supports sustainable new growth. For example, by planning for public transport and physical transport infrastructure requirements.**  
[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**11. Making sure there are more opportunities for active travel such as walking and cycling across the Arc. For example, wider pavements, segregated cycle lanes, improved network of cycle lanes, and better pedestrian crossings.**  
[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**12. Making sure that there is the right form of public transport in the right areas across the Arc and can be used by all travellers, including people with any particular needs.**  
[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**13. Cutting down on the impact of cars and other private vehicles within the Arc. For example, by supporting more sustainable forms of private travel like cycling.**  
[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**14. Anything else to add about your vision of getting around?**

# 5. Place-making

## Our ambition for place-making in the Arc

- 5.1 Place-making is the process of designing and creating great places to live, work, play and learn in. We think there is an opportunity for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc to be a world-leader in sustainable place-making and community living.**
- 5.2** We know that, as the Arc grows, new homes and places will be needed. Our ambition is to help ensure those new homes and places are great places to live by being more sustainable, beautiful and green, and have better access to the services and infrastructure they need. And we want to improve existing places and learn from those that are most valued by local communities as we think about the places of the future.

## Place-making in the Arc today

- 5.3 The Oxford-Cambridge Arc is already home to great places – old and new. For example:**

- the medieval centres of Oxford and Cambridge;
- historic market towns such as Bedford, Aylesbury and Wellingborough;
- Milton Keynes, a leading example of a post-war ‘new town’, with 6,000 acres<sup>7</sup> of protected green space for public use;
- the beautiful villages and rural areas that characterise many parts of the Arc;
- the new self-build development at Graven Hill in Bicester, Oxfordshire, a great example of how new development can create opportunities for more people to design and build their own homes; and
- the new University-led Eddington development in North West Cambridge, which demonstrates best practice and award-winning design.

- 5.4** We want to make the most of opportunities to enhance existing places and learn from those that are most valued by local communities as we think about the places of the future. We know that the Arc has the potential for more sustainable growth and places to meet current and further needs.
- 5.5 We are concerned about the affordability and availability of housing in the Arc, and what this will mean for the Arc’s communities, economy and environment.** Development of new homes is already happening in the Arc, but in the main centres this has not kept up with need. We also know people are being priced out of the area, increasing the need to make more polluting journeys for work and leisure, and making

home ownership less likely for many. And we have heard concerns about the quality and sustainability of new development.

## How the Spatial Framework could help us to deliver our ambition

**5.6 We want to use the Spatial Framework to make sure that we build places that the Arc needs to support sustainable growth, and that communities will enjoy for decades and centuries to come.** We know that local authorities and local communities through Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans are already working to plan for a better future for their areas, and we want to work closely with them in this process. We have committed to doing this by using the Spatial Framework, supported by the Sustainability Appraisal, to identify:

- the most sustainable locations for new homes, including identifying Opportunity Areas, to support local planning authorities to plan for this growth;
- the infrastructure – such as transport, health and education facilities, utilities and digital – needed to support sustainable growth in those locations, and the key locations for strategic infrastructure; and
- locations to protect and improve the environmental as part of sustainable growth and development.

**5.7** We will also seek to set policies to enable:

- new development to come forward at the scale and speed needed, in sustainable locations, with a focus on brownfield redevelopment;
- new development to support the recovery of nature, new green space that can be accessed by all, resilience to climate change, and protection of highly valued existing green space; and
- housing needs to be met in full, including much-needed affordable housing.

**5.8** In parallel to the development of the Spatial Framework, the government is also exploring options to speed up new housing and infrastructure development in the Arc to help meet its ambitions, where evidence supports it. This includes examining (and where appropriate, developing) the case for new and/or expanded settlements in the Arc, including options informed by possible East West Rail stations between Bedford and Cambridge and growth options at Cambridge itself. The government will undertake additional Arc consultations on any specific proposals for such options as appropriate. The Spatial Framework will guide the future growth of the Arc to 2050, including on the question of new housing and infrastructure and will, as part of its development, take into

consideration any significant new housing and infrastructure coming forward to meet the Arc's ambition.

## What have you told us so far

**5.9** We want to understand different views about place-making in the Arc to help us form our vision. The first part of this was initial conversations in March, including with some local residents, community and campaign groups, local authorities, and businesses. What we were told helped us to develop our approach to engagement and understand some of the key issues and questions for this consultation. The following summarises some of the themes that came from these discussions.

**5.10** People seem to agree on some of the good things about the Arc's places today:

- green space, and play and sports facilities are highly valued;
- historic and beautiful buildings are highly valued by local residents; and
- some people welcome new homes and investment in their towns and villages.

**5.11** And there are some common concerns:

- there are worries about a lack of affordable housing and rising house prices;
- some residents are concerned about pressures from housing developments on existing infrastructure, particularly in rural areas;
- there is some concern about how new development would connect with existing places; and
- some expressed concerns that towns and cities would receive most of the development focus with rural areas being left behind.

**5.12** Meanwhile, we heard a range of views about what the Spatial Framework could do to support place-making in all parts of the Arc, including that:

- well-being, health and quality of life should be addressed in the Spatial Framework;
- sustainability and community living are highly valued; and
- we should take a joined-up approach to place-making and planning.

**5.13** This has given us a sense of some of the issues and questions we should cover in this consultation. Now we want to hear from you to help us create a vision for place-making in the Arc.

## What do you think?

Thinking about the future of the area, how important is it that the Spatial Framework focuses on:

### *Location of growth*

**1. Making sure new developments are built in the most sustainable locations, for the environment, the economy and communities. For example, by developing brownfield redevelopment and making sure they have good access to town centres, shops and schools.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**2. Anything else to add about your vision for location of growth?**

### *Homes in your area*

**3. Ensuring the right types of housing are delivered in the right locations to meet the needs of both renters and buyers. For example, family houses, first-time buyers, specialist housing, student accommodation and opportunities for people to build their own homes.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**4. Increasing the amount and availability of affordable homes within the Arc.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**5. Anything else to add about your vision for homes in your area?**

*Design of new developments and streets*

**6. Making sure a coordinated approach is taken to the design and delivery of new developments to ensure they are supported by new and existing infrastructure.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**7. Making sure the environment and sustainability is at the heart of new developments. For example, by improving the built and natural environment, making sure development complements surrounding areas, and is supported by the right level of infrastructure.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**8. Making sure there is the right mix of uses in new developments to help make high quality and thriving new places.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**9. Making sure new developments help support healthy lifestyles for existing and future communities. For example, through walking and cycling, high quality green spaces, and accessible streets.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**10. Making sure new developments promote resilience to climate change. For example, through green roofs, managing surface water, tree planting, storing rainwater and new green spaces.**

[Not important/ Less important/ Neutral/ Important/ Very Important]

**11. Anything else to add about your vision for the design of new developments and streets?**

## 6. Our commitment to engaging communities

### Why do we want to engage?

- 6.1 We want to ensure the Spatial Framework is built on a vision shared with communities it will serve.** We intend to undertake effective, innovative and people-focused consultation with those that live and work in the Arc, so that everyone – particularly those who are normally under-represented in consultations of this kind – has a chance to have their say about the Spatial Framework.
- 6.2 We aim to conduct wide and meaningful engagement throughout this process to give as many people as possible the opportunity to influence how the Spatial Framework develops.** To achieve this, we will need to work closely with stakeholders including local authorities, businesses, social enterprises, Local Enterprise Partnerships, sub-national transport bodies and academia to reach and capture the widest possible range of views possible.

### Our commitment to you

- 6.3 We want to deliver an exemplary programme of engagement throughout this two-year process.** We are committed to doing this in a way that is:

- **collaborative** – we will work with stakeholders, including local councils, businesses and universities to build on local relationships and foster meaningful engagement;
- **adaptable** – we will adopt an engagement strategy which is clear and consistent yet retains sufficient flexibility to meet our delivery milestones;
- **integrated** – we will adopt a multi-method engagement approach so that we can reach the right people in the right way throughout the process;
- **inclusive** – our engagement approach will prioritise inclusivity. We strive to go beyond traditional channels of engagement and take individual needs into account; and
- **digital-first** – we will make better use of digital tools to support better, more accessible policy engagement.

### What have we done so far?

6.4 At each stage of our work so far, we have been informed by local partners:

- **in 2019, we published a joint declaration<sup>23</sup> between government and local partners<sup>24</sup>**, where we agreed to work collaboratively in realising the Arc's potential and exploring options for long-term planning in the Arc. These relationships mean that we are not starting from scratch and have an opportunity to build on existing knowledge and evidence. Continued engagement with this now evolved original group of local partners, many of whom are represented on the Arc Leaders Group, is important to ensuring the Spatial Framework supports long-term sustainable growth for the Arc, and is as effective as possible;
- **in February 2021, we formally launched the process to develop the Spatial Framework<sup>1</sup>**. We made a commitment to consulting and engaging three times during that process, and to do so in a way that is open, collaborative, digital and inclusive; and
- **in early 2021, to prepare for this consultation, we held some initial conversations** with around 120 residents and representatives of businesses, local authorities, charities and campaign groups. We used these sessions to test our approach to consultation, including by hearing initial views on priorities for the future, and gathering views on effective ways to engage with different groups. We hope to publish a summary of the feedback from this early engagement in the near future for your information. All the feedback received will be further considered in combination with this public consultation.

6.5 The government has also invested in the development of a Local Natural Capital Plan<sup>11</sup> for the Arc. Over the last 18 months, we have worked with local partners to understand the area's environment, which has identified the unique features, pressures and opportunities to develop and invest in nature.

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<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, The Oxford-Cambridge Arc: Government ambition and joint declaration between Government and local partners, March 2019. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/799993/OxCam\\_Arc\\_Ambition.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/799993/OxCam_Arc_Ambition.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> This joint declaration has been agreed between the Government, local authorities across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, the Arc's four Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), and England's Economic Heartland.

### How will our engagement be structured?

**6.6** This consultation is the first phase of formal public consultation taking place in summer 2021. Two further phases of consultation will follow on the Spatial Framework, that will be supported by ongoing engagement with local partners. The precise timing of phases on the Spatial Framework will be subject to the outcome of the Sustainability Appraisal process, but are intended to be as per the following indicative phasing:

- **Vision: 12-week public consultation to develop a vision for the Arc.**
- **Towards a Spatial Framework: publication of an interim document setting out options for policy and launch of second public consultation.** Using the vision as a foundation, we will develop options for delivering its objectives. The options will be based on feedback from engagement, initial evidence gathering and analysis. It is highly likely that these options will consider strategic growth locations and distribution of growth. We hope to publish this, including a Sustainable Appraisal 'Issues and Options' Report, for public consultation in spring 2022 to give everyone a chance to have their say.
- **Draft Spatial Framework: publication of the draft Spatial Framework alongside third public consultation.** To finalise the Spatial Framework, we will consider responses to the previous consultation, and undertake further spatial analysis, option testing, impact assessments and engagement. We hope to publish the draft Spatial Framework with its Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report, for consultation in autumn 2022, with implementation of the final framework shortly after.

## Engagement roadmap

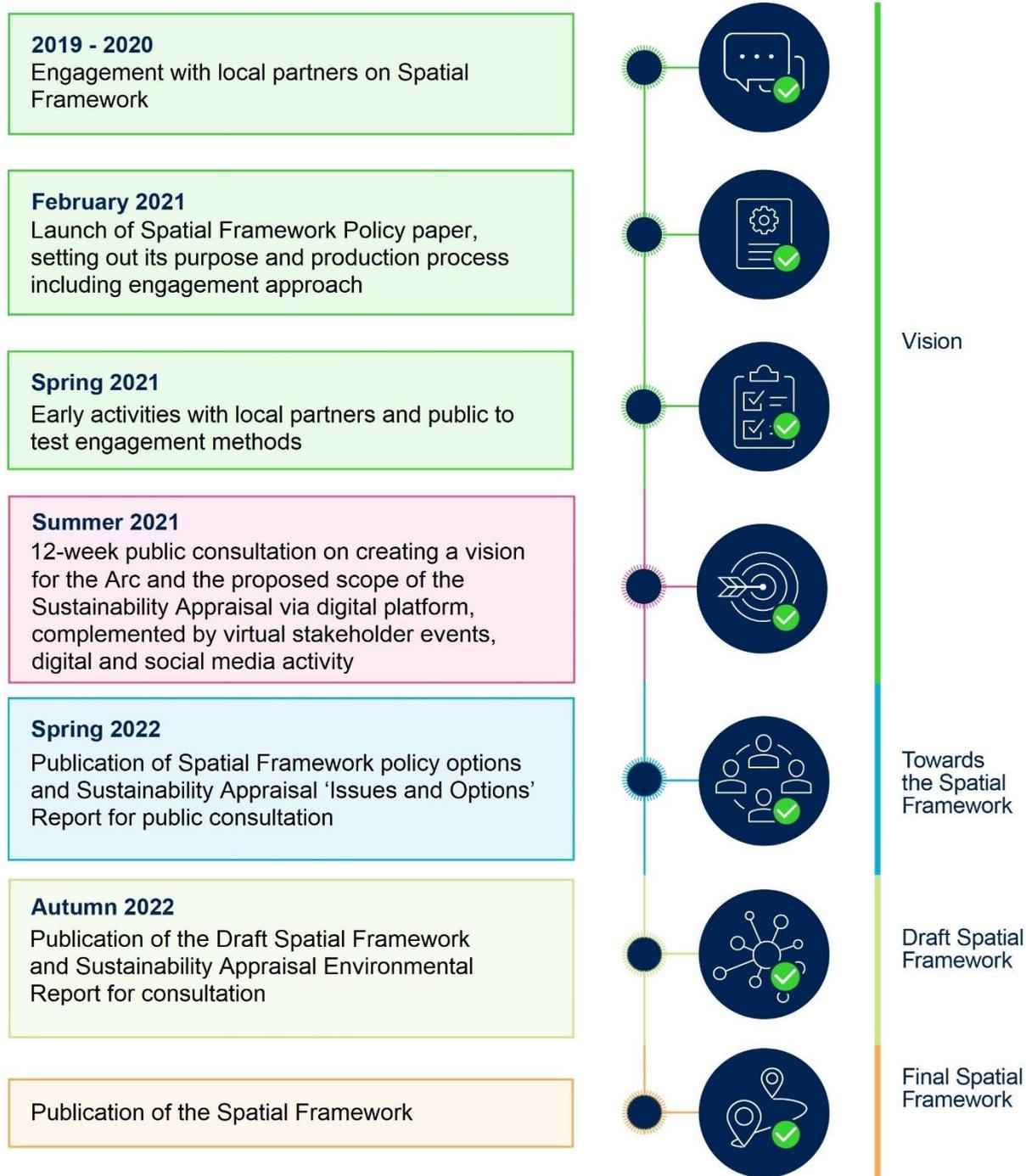


Figure 6.1 – Indicative timeline for developing the Spatial Framework

## Have your say

- 6.7** The development of the Spatial Framework will be informed through, and will benefit from, consultation with who live, work and have an interest in the Arc. In this consultation we are inviting the public to help us create a vision for the area to 2050 and help set the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal. This consultation is open to everyone and all views are important to us. There will be further opportunities for people to have their say. This is the first of three planned consultations on the Spatial Framework. If you would like to be kept updated on the progress of the Spatial Framework and other government-led Arc proposals, you can sign up to the mailing list at the [GOV.UK policy webpage](#).

## What do you think?

**1. How can government engage the public better?**

[Communication materials/ Social listening/ Focus groups/ 1-1 interviews and experiments/ Ethnography/ Citizen assemblies and citizen juries/ Other types of engagement]

**2. Before this consultation, I was familiar with the area known as the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.**

[Yes/ No]

**3. Do you have anything else to add on engaging communities?**

# 7. Our commitment to data, evidence and digital tools

## Introduction

- 7.1 We are building an evidence base so that the Spatial Framework can be based on the latest and most reliable data and analysis available.** This will help us to support sustainable growth, as it will allow us to fully understand and assess the possible environmental, economic and social impact of different policies and spatial options. This will not happen overnight – we will need to work to develop our evidence base over the course of creating the Spatial Framework. We also want to leave a positive legacy of data and evidence for future planning and policy-making in the Arc.
- 7.2 We want everyone to have access to our evidence base, and we will use the latest digital technology to make this possible.** We believe that this will give us an opportunity to create a lasting resource for communities, local authorities and businesses in the Arc, so that everyone has greater access to better data and evidence. There are 18 local planning authorities, eight transport planning authorities, four Local Enterprise Partnerships and one sub-national transport body in the Arc – this is a rare opportunity to improve the way data and evidence is collected and used within and between public and private sector organisations over a wide area.
- 7.3 We want your views on our approach to using evidence and data to support the development of the Spatial Framework,** so that we can create digital tools that can genuinely support better access and use of data and evidence across the Arc and government’s Arc-related work, as we set out in the [‘Planning for the Future’](#) consultation.

## Our commitment

- 7.4** We are committed to creating a robust evidence base that is easily accessible because:

- **the planning system could make better use of interactive digital services and tools.** We need to go further to realise our ambition for use of data and digital tools in the Arc. By making processes more reliant on data rather than documents, engagement with planning could become easier;
- **at the moment, evidence can vary and be difficult to access, limiting its use and the impact that it can have;** and
- **the best way to build good services is to understand the needs of everyone that will have access to them.** We will start small with samples and improve them over the course of developing the Spatial Framework, so that we can leave a positive legacy for communities and stakeholders in the Arc.

### 7.5 Our approach will be based on the following principles:

- **open access** - we will promote open data, open standards and open source models, while remaining consistent with the principles of data security;
- **quality** - we will underpin evidence with high-quality, verifiable and reliable data, use the best analytical methods and ensure high quality of presentation of outputs;
- **transparency** - we will use transparent approaches to handling data and evidence to make the options, benefits and impacts of the Framework more clear;
- **accessibility** - we will ensure access to evidence and data that supports the Framework and promote user-friendly data visualisations available to all;
- **collaboration** - we will work across central government departments, local government and organisations to break down barriers and align work in the Arc; and
- **add value** - we will start with end-users' needs by making sure that data can be easily found, interpreted, and reused.

### 7.6 Our commitment is to:

- **develop a reliable and complete evidence base** to support the Framework and provide the basis for strategic cross-boundary planning in the Arc;
- **use the latest digital technology and data analytics to develop the evidence base** for the Spatial Framework. We will undertake reliable spatial analysis, option testing and assessment of impacts to inform policy set by the Framework;
- **support development of an open source, digital platform for data and evidence to support collaboration between government, businesses, local councils and communities in decision-making.** We will work with local partners to create an accessible digital platform for data used to support the Spatial Framework, and easy-to-use tools so that people – including the public and businesses – can engage meaningfully in the process; and
- **create a visual, interactive and map-based Spatial Framework for public engagement.** The Framework will be carefully designed with the user in mind and to ensure that it is available in different formats, on different devices, and can be accessed and understood by all.

### Evidence base

- 7.7** The Framework will be based on a reliable, consistent and complete evidence base, which we will make publicly available through a digital platform that we intend to create. This will include a summary of responses (anonymised where appropriate as to individuals) to at least the three planned consultations, including this one. This is going to be a process that develops over the course of the Spatial Framework to ensure that our evidence base is appropriate to inform policy-making.
- 7.8** We recognise and appreciate the significant work that has already been undertaken by our local partners in the Arc to develop an evidence base to support planning. In order to avoid duplication, we will review the evidence base that has been developed to date and seek to build on and use the most relevant, appropriate, up-to-date and reliable existing analysis, which could be used to inform how the Spatial Framework is developed and delivered.

### What do you think?

**1. To what extent do you agree with our proposed approach on data and evidence?**

[Strongly disagree/ Disagree/ Neutral/ Agree/ Strongly agree]

**2. Do you have anything else to add on data, evidence and digital tools?**

# 8. How we will monitor and deliver the Framework

## Delivery and funding

### Introduction

**8.1 The Spatial Framework will set the direction for sustainable growth in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc to 2050.**

**8.2 This is why we will work across government and with local partners to create plans to deliver the identified investment needs set out in the Spatial Framework. To do this we will develop:**

- **a Spatial Framework delivery plan** that will identify priority investments needed for sustainable economic growth in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc;
- **an infrastructure delivery plan** that will set out the Arc's long-term infrastructure needs, phasing and costs; and
- **strategies and action plans across the Spatial Framework's thematic pillars**, which will focus on practical measures government, local authorities and partners can take to improve delivery in the Arc.

**8.3 We want your views on how the Spatial Framework can be delivered.** In this section, we set out:

- our approach to delivery and funding; and
- questions on how you think we should deliver the Spatial Framework.

## Our approach to delivery and funding

**8.4** The Spatial Framework will be supported by evidence across our four thematic pillars to achieve sustainable long-term growth for the Arc. The Spatial Framework will enable a coordinated cross-boundary approach to support its delivery and investment across the Arc.

### 8.5 Therefore, we intend to:

- assess the viability of any proposed policies in the Spatial Framework, to make sure that these costs do not risk its deliverability;
- identify when and where the demand for infrastructure arises within the Arc, based on future options for sustainable growth;
- identify priority schemes at a strategic level across transport, utilities, social infrastructure, environment and housing in the Arc beyond those already committed to, which are required to support the Arc's long-term ambition for economic growth;
- propose potential investment opportunities, with indicative timescales and an understanding of how these will interact with already committed schemes and phasing;
- identify potential delivery mechanisms for the investment priorities within the Spatial Framework. For example, the government is considering setting up a new Arc Growth Body<sup>17</sup>. This provides an opportunity to also consider the role the body could potentially play in driving forward the Arc's investment priorities identified in the Spatial Framework; and
- work with stakeholders to understand how the existing regulatory framework can accommodate the Spatial Framework's ambition for energy and water infrastructure, which currently sits outside the remit of government spending.

### What do you think?

#### **1. To what extent do you agree with our proposed approach on delivery and funding?**

[Strongly disagree/ Disagree/ Neutral/ Agree/ Strongly agree]

#### **2. Do you have anything else to add on delivery and funding?**

## Monitoring and evaluation

### Introduction

**8.6 We want the Spatial Framework to support lasting improvements to places across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.**

**8.7 We will develop a strong evidence base, and assess the cumulative effects of policies, to help deliver better outcomes for communities and places across the Arc.** We know we will see significant economic, environmental and social change in the

area over the coming years and decades. As those changes take place, they will have different impacts on different communities and places. We also know that policies may not have the impact we had originally intended.

**8.8 As we try to drive more sustainable outcomes and support economic growth in the Arc, it is vital that we know what impact our policies are having.**

**8.9 We will make sure that policies in the Spatial Framework are fit for purpose by monitoring and evaluating their impacts.** We will make sure we make better use of data and digital tools to do this, and to do it in an open and transparent way so that communities, local authorities and employers can see what is happening. We also want this approach to help local planning authorities to deliver their Local Plans, and to support investment and growth. In this section, we want your views on how we can do this most effectively.

### Our commitment to monitoring and evaluation

**8.10** We believe that:

- setting up a robust monitoring and evaluation framework is important for assessing the effectiveness of the Spatial Framework and its policies, and the significant effects identified through the Sustainability Appraisal;
- monitoring and evaluation are crucial to keeping the Spatial Framework under review, identifying areas where objectives aren't being met, unforeseen adverse effects and enabling changes to policy, development management and/or other appropriate action where required; and
- the monitoring and evaluation process should be an effective way to gather evidence for future policy related to the Spatial Framework, support development management decisions and help stakeholders understand the purpose of planning in the area.

### 8.11 Our commitment is to ensure arrangements are in place to:

- publish regular monitoring and evaluation reports to provide a clear picture of the Spatial Framework's effectiveness. We will look to:
  - set up a performance framework to monitor and evaluate progress towards the delivery of the Spatial Framework's policies;
  - monitor and evaluate the environmental, social and economic impacts of the Spatial Framework's policies such as significant effects and unforeseen adverse effects identified through the Sustainability Appraisal, planning performance, and infrastructure delivery; and
  - create an interactive and accessible dashboard on the digital platform to monitor policy effectiveness against the Framework's objectives.

### What do you think?

#### **1. To what extent do you agree with our proposed approach on monitoring and evaluation?**

[Strongly disagree/ Disagree/ Neutral/ Agree/ Strongly agree]

#### **2. Do you have anything else to add on monitoring and evaluation?**

