



Ox-Cam Arc – Government Spatial Framework Consultation – Please respond!

CPRE Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is asking all our members, every parish and town council and as many individuals as possible in the County to respond to the Government's public consultation on the Ox-Cam Arc

The Government consultation "*Creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc*" (the Vision) is divided into four themed sections: Environment, Economy, Connectivity & Infrastructure and Place-making. It asks a series of questions to identify people's priorities.

Respondents are asked to rate issues from 'Not important' to 'Very important'. However, it is clear that because of the way questions have been framed, very few of the matters are going to be rated as 'Not important'! A questionnaire that prompts the answers such that everything is 'Important' is pretty unhelpful as a collection of data for honest and systematic analysis. So CPRE is asking respondents to make the most of the 'Anything else' text accompanying questions to make their views known.

The consultation can be viewed at <https://cdn.placebuilder.io/prod/2021/07/19/87/87a82cf2.pdf>. The deadline for response is 12th October 2021.

Ox-Cam Arc – 5-Minute Survey (Alternative Spatial Framework Consultation). – Please complete this also!

The campaigning group 'Stop the Arc' has created an alternative questionnaire which by asking clear open questions, they hope will give a real feel for what people think about the Arc.

The link to the 5 Minute Survey is:

<https://us3.list-manage.com/survey?u=d5211c882faf4e1d15fdf9932&id=23be9ea342&attribution=false>

More details of the Stop the Arc group can be found on their website <http://www.stopthearc.org>

Background: Where we are...the Arc in a nutshell

The Arc project seeks to increase the number of jobs, houses and people in the five counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire by 60-65% by 2050 to help 'achieve the area's full economic potential'.

The region's current population of 3.7 million will be massively impacted by the proposed 1 million homes to be built, not to mention the associated infrastructure and industry. The government is interested only in growth, and appears to be neglecting climate change, the environment and quality of life. Yet the government documents imply the Arc can do everything: provide great economic growth, a wonderful environment whilst making everyone healthy and happy.

Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, announced the cancellation of the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway because 'the benefits are outweighed by its costs'. CPRE welcomed this decision although it appears to have been made on financial rather than environmental grounds. We believe the environmental impacts would have been unacceptable, in terms of landscape, rural tranquility, wildlife and loss of agricultural land as well as the climate change effects of increased road traffic. How long will the announced cancellation last when the project to upgrade the A428 to expressway standard is being continued and the next stage of the National Infrastructure application process has commenced?

Government has published a Paper on how it intends to prepare a **Spatial Framework for the Arc**. This will comprise plans for new and expanded settlements, transport and other infrastructure, economic development and

environmental enhancement. They have promised consultations on options and a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Paper concentrates on **how** the Framework will be developed, so doesn't identify specific locations for new or expanded settlements. We fear:

- Loss of 'ordinary' countryside, tranquility and productive agricultural land
- Increased light pollution
- Likelihood of continued/increased car dependency & the impact on biodiversity and climate change commitments
- Plans not developed by democratically-elected local authorities
- No commitment to accessible and integrated public transport
- Housing targets far in excess of what is needed, even allowing for economic expansion
- The volume of housing is likely to attract commuters increasing journey distances.

The proposal is not consistent with 'levelling up' the UK. It will largely serve to make an already prosperous area even more so. The Policy Paper can be viewed at <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>.

Just compare the £4.8bn national levelling up fund with the c. £10bn of transport and infrastructure investments alone that are proposed for the Arc in Cambridgeshire.

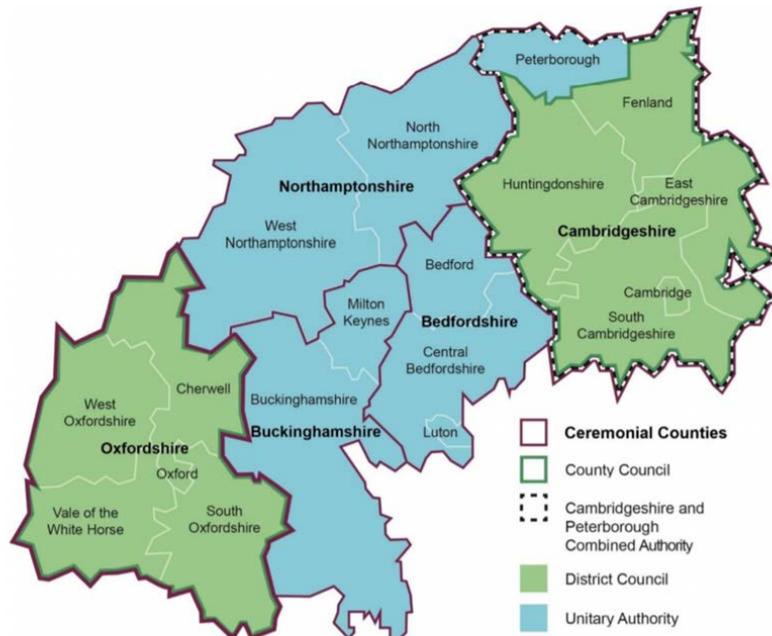


Figure 1.1 – The Oxford-Cambridge Arc

Map source:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1003974/Creating_a_vision_for_the_Oxford-Cambridge_Arc.pdf p. 1

This is the first real chance to influence the future of the Ox-Cam Arc and development within it. If anyone wants help in understanding the Vision or completing the questionnaire, please contact CPRE Cambridgeshire and Peterborough: office@cprecambs.org.uk

If you share our concerns, *please help us*. Visit the Challenge the Arc website, developed by the CPRE branches of the affected counties! [How you can help](#).