



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Agenda Item No: 2.6

OxCam Arc Environment Principles

To: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board

Meeting Date: 27 October 2021

Public report: Yes

Lead Member: Councillor Smith, Lead Member for the Environment and Climate Change

From: Paul Raynes, Director of Strategy

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: KD2021/059

Recommendations: The Combined Authority Board is recommended to:

Endorse the OxCam Arc Environment Principles.

Voting arrangements:

A simple majority of all Members present and voting

To be carried, the vote must include the vote of the Mayor, or the Deputy Mayor when acting in place of the Mayor.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the request from the OxCam Arc Leadership Group to endorse a set of Arc-wide Environment Principles. These will form a shared statement of ambition for the Arc. They will influence the environment policies in the Arc Spatial Framework and provide a frame of reference to further develop the Principles at a local and sub-regional level.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2020 the Arc Leadership Group Environment Working Group (chaired by Cllr. Smith) agreed to produce a set of Arc-wide Environment Principles. After a collaborative piece of work led by a range of partners and stakeholders (including LUHC), the Principles (attached as Appendix 1) were endorsed by Arc Leadership Group Plenary on 09 March 2021. The Arc Leadership Group is asking each local authority, including the CPCA, to individually endorse the Principles.
- 2.2 The Principles are not formal policy but rather a shared statement of ambition for the Arc. They are intended to:
- support the position with respect to the environment policies emerging from the Arc Spatial Framework;
 - allow use of the Arc as a place for DEFRA to test and apply its 25-year plan and funding through pilots and projects;
 - support Local Planning Authorities with a frame of reference to further develop the Principles through Local and Strategic Plans at a local and sub-regional level.
- 2.3 The Arc Leadership Group will next be developing an Arc Environment Strategy which will provide the route map to delivering against these ambitions, including trajectories for meeting ambitious future performance targets.
- 2.4 There are five overarching principles:
- To target net zero carbon at a pan-Arc level by 2040;
 - To protect, restore, enhance and create new nature areas and natural capital assets, including nationally and locally designated wildlife sites and priority habitats through the implementation of the spatial planning mitigation hierarchy of avoid, mitigate, compensate and gain;
 - To be an exemplar for environmentally sustainable development, in line with the ambitions set out in the government's 25-year plan. This will incorporate a systems-based and integrated assessment and implementation approach. Aim to go beyond the minimum legislated requirements for development;
 - To ensure that existing and new communities see real benefits from living in the Arc;
 - To use natural resources wisely.
- 2.5 Establishing the Arc as an exemplar for environmentally sustainable development accords with the CPCA's vision for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to be a world class place to live, work and learn.
- 2.6 Principle 1 commits to work towards a pan-Arc net zero target by 2040. The March 2021 report of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate did not recommend achieving net zero carbon for the CPCA area earlier than the national

target of 2050, but did emphasise the need for rapid action to deliver reductions. The Commission's background work by the University of Leeds identified a roadmap to achieving net zero by 2050. This included some offsetting measures (to capture carbon) for certain emissions that could not be avoided. That study also highlighted that some of the reduction will rely on technological innovation. A pan-Arc target of 2040 is therefore very challenging in the local context but would commit government to supporting the CPCA and local partners in taking suitable action, and should be on the premise that it will attract significant additional investment into the area to do so.

- 2.7 Principle 2 seeks to protect and enhance the natural capital in the Arc, including 'doubling nature'. This accords with the Doubling Nature ambition of the CPCA (which was itself the genesis of this ambition across the Arc) and is in line with the CPCA's response to the relevant recommendation of the Independent Commission.
- 2.8 Principle 2 also sets out to deliver 20% net biodiversity gain on both Town & Country Planning Act developments and nationally determined developments. The Environment Bill currently proposes to mandate a national minimum of 10% net biodiversity gain. Delivering increased levels of biodiversity has many benefits, particularly so in the CPCA area that has comparatively low amounts of rich wildlife areas. It would contribute to the doubling nature ambition. It can also be combined with other environmental or societal benefits, such as improved public realm. Delivering biodiversity net gain can in many cases be through better scheme design (and hence not unduly affecting scheme financial viability). Applying this ambition for 20% net gain to the CPCA's projects (rather than 10%) will have implications for project costs if additional land or offsetting payments are needed. This is not able to be quantified at this stage. However, the CPCA can also consider delivering projects that include biodiversity gains, and in effect 'recycle' any additional costs into those suitable projects.
- 2.9 Principles 3, 4 and 5 are intended to ensure that existing and new communities see real benefits from living in the Arc, and the associated health and wellbeing benefits are realised. These accord with the response of the CPCA to the Independent Commission on Climate's recommendations.

Significant Implications

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 Under the proposals of the Environment Bill future CPCA infrastructure projects will be required to deliver a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity, which will need to be part of project design. Applying an ambition for a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain might increase project costs. This will need to be considered on a case by case basis through the project business case approval process.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 None.

5. Other Significant Implications

5.1 None.

6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1 – Shared Regional Principles for Protecting, Restoring and Enhancing the Environment on the Ox-Cam Arc

6.2 An accessible version of this appendix is available on request from democratic.services@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk

7. Background Papers

7.1 [Initial report of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate Change](#)

7.2 [Arc Environment Principles](#)