

OXFORD-CAMBRIDGE ARC

The Oxford-Cambridge Arc is a huge swathe of middle England that has been identified for inward investment and development.

The Arc is a centre of high-tech manufacturing and research but east-west infrastructure within the Arc is limited. Work has begun to extend East West Rail from Bicester to the West Coast Main Line at Bletchley (Milton Keynes) and onward extension to Cambridge is planned. New roads linking the A34 near Oxford with the A14 near Cambridge are planned.



With the improved infrastructure comes huge economic and residential development. The plan is for one million new homes in the Arc by 2050.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has launched a consultation called “*Creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc*”, which will “*focus on making the Arc a better place to live, helping to implement strategic planning under four ‘pillars’: environment, economy, connectivity and infrastructure, and place-making.*”

Sustainability will be at the heart of the process, so alongside seeking views on the vision, the government is also seeking views on the initial work done to set the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which will address environmental, social and economic factors.

The consultation will run for 12 weeks until 12 October 2021 and is open to all members of the public. Councils are encouraged to respond and to share the consultation with residents. Whether the Arc is a good thing for Northamptonshire depends on your point of view. It will bring jobs and investment, but it will also bring significant housing and population growth. See the government’s consultation pages at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/creating-a-vision-for-the-oxford-cambridge-arc> for details on how to respond.