

FeCRA have have been sent a copy of the FOI response to StopTheArcGroup's FOI enquiry.

It is the minutes of the Arc Leaders Meeting in January that is referred to the South Cambs brief as well as minutes of an earlier meeting with the wonderful cynical statement:

**"If we can stop using words like 'growth' and 'sustainable' and start talking about things like 'doubling nature' and the 'green arc' we might start getting over this huge hurdle of public acceptance of the Arc."**

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** CherwellFOI <cherwell.foi@oxfordshire.gov.uk>

**To:** stopthearcgroupevent@gmail.com <stopthearcgroupevent@gmail.com>

**Cc:** CherwellFOI <cherwell.foi@oxfordshire.gov.uk>

**Sent:** Thursday, 14 April 2022, 17:20:43 BST

**Subject:** 1810 EIR - Final Response

**Our reference: 1810 EIR-CDC**

Thank you for your request of 15 March 2022 in relation to the Ox-Cam Arc.

Please find the response to your specific questions in bold below:

1. What effort, such as FTE, your council is currently expending on the OxCam Arc?

**The Ox-Cam Arc is a part of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership/Growth Deal agenda and, as such, varying proportions of senior officers' time are spent discussing the Ox-Cam Arc, but there is no specific FTE officer resource allocation provided.**

1. Minutes or records of the Arc Leadership Group, Arc Universities Group, or any other external meetings that your council leader or other representative has attended in the last 6 months.

**The agendas and notes for the Arc Plenary meetings of 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022 are attached, together with the agenda for the Plenary Arc meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022. The notes of the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022 Plenary Arc meeting are not provided, because these notes have not yet been**

**agreed and signed off. Once finalised, these can be made available.**

1. Details of any external meetings with developers, property agents, housebuilders, large landowners including universities and colleges, and any organisations with a commercial interest in development where the OxCam Arc has been discussed within the last 6 months?

**The details of external meetings have not been provided because the Council considers any such details to fall within the exception contained in Regulation 12(5)(e) of the Environmental Information Regulations.**

**Regulation 12(5)(e) states: -**

***12 (5) For the purposes of paragraph (1) (a), a public authority may refuse to disclose information to the extent that its disclosure would adversely affect –***

***(e) the confidentiality of commercial or industrial information where such confidentiality is provided by law to protect a legitimate economic interest”.***

**The exception is engaged because this is information that is:**

- **commercial in nature,**
- **protected by law through the common law of confidence (as they are not trivial and have not been released into the public domain) as well as through the contractual obligations of confidence.**
- **The confidentiality is protecting a legitimate economic interest.**
- **The confidentiality would be adversely affected by disclosure.**

**In reaching this decision, the Council was obliged to consider the Public Interest Test (PIT); in doing so, it reached the conclusion that it was in the public interest to maintain the exception under**

**Regulation 12(5)(e) and withhold the information. The following arguments were considered as part of the PIT:**

**Factors for disclosure**

- 1. There is a presumption in favour of disclosure under the EIR; and,**
- 2. Releasing this information may promote transparency and increase public awareness of the spending of public money and in the financial decisions the Council has made.**

**Factors against disclosure**

- 1. The likelihood of commercial damage being caused to third parties through a disclosure of information they consider commercially sensitive would adversely affect the relationship between the Council and third parties; and**
- 2. Disclosure of this information would be detrimental to the ability to build a strong partnership with third parties to the benefit of the provision of the services and the achievement of improvements in the interests of the taxpayers and community of Cherwell district.**

**Having considered these arguments, the Council considers that the public interest lies in withholding the details.**

**Internal review**

If you are dissatisfied with the service or response to your request, you can ask for an internal review as follows: Email [Cherwell.FOI@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Cherwell.FOI@Oxfordshire.gov.uk).

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Telephone: 0303 123 1113 Website: <https://ico.org.uk>

Please let me know if you have further enquiries. I would be grateful if you could use the reference number given at the top of this email.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Tatham

Economic Growth Officer