

28 September 2020

Baroness Vere of Norbiton
Transport Minister for Roads, Buses and Places
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Dear Baroness Vere

Oxford to Cambridge Expressway

At its meeting on 22 September 2020, the Oxfordshire Growth Board asked me to write to you in my capacity as Chair of the Board to you as Minister for Roads to request an update with regards to the Government's paused proposals for an expressway between Oxford and Cambridge.

In January this year we wrote to the Secretary of State for Transport with a similar request, and your response indicated that Highways England were developing their understanding of potential options to help inform the departments thinking. Since then, our partnership has made significant steps in progressing a suite of plans and strategies that will support the development of a once in a generation Statutory Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire (Oxfordshire Plan 2050). At this critical stage, as we move towards a second round of public consultation, there is a pressing need for clarity concerning HM Government's ambitions for the project.

The Growth Board is acutely aware of several emerging cross-boundary strategies and projects under development that could benefit significantly from understanding HM Government's intentions for the Expressway. England's Economic Heartland recently consulted on a Draft Transport Strategy for the region, with the Expressway being a key discussion point at their recent conference. We have also been working in partnership to develop an Arc-wide Economic Prospectus for HM Government consideration as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review. Oxfordshire County Council is similarly leading several projects that rely on a spatially led evidence base, including; The Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy refresh, the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, and the Oxfordshire Rail Connectivity Study.

Given the impact that an Expressway would have on these projects, it is imperative that we understand HM Government's expectations for this scheme, so that this can be considered in our long-term planning. Thank you for your continued dialogue with us, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,



Councillor Emily Smith
Chair, Oxfordshire Growth Board