

CPD/004/122/070: Support to the Strategic Outline Business Case for the OxCam Arc

Scope of commission – summary

Background

1. MHCLG is responsible for government policy relating to housing, planning and building, local growth, local government, integration and community cohesion. Its job is to create great places to live and work right across the country. It is a ministerial department, supported by 13 agencies and public bodies.
2. One of MHCLG's priorities is the Oxford-Cambridge Arc (the Arc). The Arc is a globally significant area between Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge. It is formed of five ceremonial counties: Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire. It supports over two million jobs, adds over £110 billion to the economy every year and houses one of the fastest growing economies in England.
3. But the region also faces many constraints – including sub-optimal infrastructure, escalating housing costs and complex local governance – that inhibiting growth or potentially worsening outcomes for the environment and the people who live there. To overcome these constraints and capitalise on its globally renowned assets, the Arc has been identified as a government economic priority area. Forecasts vary, but successive studies have found that there is a clear transformative opportunity in the region.
4. MHCLG's OxCam Unit coordinates a portfolio of government investments in the region so that they are strategic and in the public interest. As this work enters an important stage of policy development and delivery, an integrated and robust framework is required to appraise and evaluate the government's activities in the Arc across multiple departments.

Scope of requirement

5. This commission comprises the development of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the portfolio of government activity that MHCLG's OxCam Unit coordinates. Understanding the full range of costs and benefits of complex, cross-departmental and interdependent portfolios is challenging but doing so is key to well-evidenced decision making in the Arc that achieves value for money.
6. The appointed supplier will be expected to develop a robust methodology to develop the SOBC, conduct the economic analysis to support the case and deliver the final product. A successful SOBC will result in more effective decision making at the strategic level, provide a clear framework for Arc initiatives to dock into and help ensure government investments in the region achieve better value for money.
7. Close working will be required with the client team and other relevant parties involved in the work to ensure the supplier has access to the correct information. A cross-department Steering Group will be established to input to the commission and the supplier may be required to present interim and final outputs to this group and other stakeholders as specified by MHCLG.
8. The main output will be a Green Book-compliant SOBC, with supplementary reports and analysis expected as well as an interim SOBC. The preferred timeframe for completion of the final product is 8-9 weeks.