

Minutes



To: All Members of the Hertfordshire Growth Board
From: Legal, Democratic & Statutory Services, Hertfordshire County Council
Ask for: Elaine Shell or Deborah Jeffery
Tel: 01992 555565 or 01992 555563

MINUTES of the meeting of the HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD on TUESDAY, 7 APRIL 2020

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Council Leaders

- L Cocking, Broxbourne Borough Council
- L Haysey, East Herts District Council
- D Williams, Hertfordshire County Council (Chairman)
- M Stears-Handscorn, North Hertfordshire District Council
- S Taylor, Stevenage Borough Council
- S Bedford, Three Rivers District Council
- P Taylor (Mayor), Watford Borough Council
- T Kingsbury, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- C White St Albans City and District Council

Council Chief Executives

- J Stack, Broxbourne Borough Council
- S Marshall, Dacorum Borough Council
- R Cassidy, East Herts District Council
- S Bijle, Hertsmere Borough Council
- D Scholes, North Hertfordshire District Council
- A Foley, St Albans City and District Council
- M Partridge, Stevenage Borough Council
- J Wagstaffe, Three Rivers District Council
- D Nolan (Managing Director), Watford Borough Council
- R Bridge, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

- N Hayes, Chief Executive
- M Bretton, Chairman
- Adrian Hawking Deputy Chairman

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ACTION

1. APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Owen Mapley, Chief Executive, Hertfordshire County Council and Cllr Morris Bright, Leader, Hertsmere Borough Council

2. MINUTES

- 2.1 The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 3 March 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

Admin note- due to the fact that the meeting was held virtually, the minutes of the meeting will be signed by the Chairman at the next non virtual meeting of the Committee.

David
Williams

**3. HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD/HERTFORDSHIRE LEP
– PRESENTATION ON CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION**

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- 3.1 Prior to the presentation being received, the Chairman advised the Board that recent communications with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in the light of concerns raised by the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the need for the work of the Growth Board to continue in order to support the revival of the economy.
- 3.2 It was explained that it would be necessary to review the existing interventions of the Growth Board, and relationship with other programmes such as the Town Deal Fund to ensure that investments were being targeted in the areas of most need.
- 3.3 In response to a Board Member question, assurance was received that the communications with MHCLG had been undertaken as immediate emergency high level contact in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Joint working through the Hertfordshire Strategic Co-ordinating Group was happening and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) would continue to take a lead role in economic support and recovery.
- 3.4 Board Members received a presentation highlighting the current global, national and local economic situation.
- 3.5 The Board were concerned to learn of the considerable impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had made on the economy, but noted that China, where the pandemic had started, were beginning to experience some economic recovery, which offered some positivity for recovery in other countries. The presentation also highlighted the areas of the UK economy that had been most affected, including retail, leisure and tourism, and how this had led to a 75% increase in Universal Credit claims.
- 3.6 Board members were advised that locally, the retail and tourism industries had been most affected by the economic downturn, with Hertfordshire being registered by LEP as 5th in the top 10 areas in the UK experiencing the most job losses.
- 3.7 It was noted that approximately a third of the Hertfordshire workforce commute to London for work, and self employment in the county is proportionately higher (13.6%) compared to the rest of the UK which averages at 10.8%.
- 3.8 Board Members attention was also drawn to individual areas of the county more affected, for instance, Broxbourne, where 12% of the workforce worked in food, leisure or retail, compared to an average of 5% countywide.
- 3.9 In response to a Board member comment, it was confirmed that the house building and construction industry activity was

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RESOLVED

3.12 Members noted the details outlined in the presentation. It was agreed that the presentation would be circulated to Board Members after the meeting with the caveat that it should not be further circulated due to confidential nature of the information. Neil Hayes

4. HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD/HERTFORDSHIRE LEP – REVIEWING OUR CURRENT PROGRAMMES TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC RECOVERY

4.1 Members received a presentation outlining the current programmes agreed by the growth board, with the view to reviewing these for their contribution to stimulate economic growth and recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic impacts had receded.

4.2 The Board were reminded that MHCLG had expressed the need for Herts Growth Board placed based work to keep going, and Board Members were encouraged to continue to be ambitious, recognise the global significance of Hertfordshire economic assets and to support recovery through the joint work already being undertaken.

4.3 In response to a Board Member query, it was confirmed that there were very limited funds available to mitigate any losses to projects caused by COVID-19.

4.4 Board Members noted the increasing reliance on digital technology and resilience at this present time and discussed the potential of these being prioritised in growth and recovery programme in the future.

4.5 The Board recognised and supported the need for the focus of work to be channelled towards supporting the more deprived communities and employment sectors within the county.

4.6 **RESOLVED**
It was agreed that the Board would consider the presentation in detail outside of the meeting and feedback any comments to Patsy Dell and Neil Hayes as appropriate. All Board Members

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5. HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD PROGRAMME – IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS UPDATE.

- 5.1 Board Members received a report outlining the progress of the Growth Board programme since the previous meeting.
- 5.2 The Board acknowledged that since the previous meeting, the MHCLG had redirected the work of the programme to consider how the Growth board would support the economic recovery in the county post COVID-19.
- 5.3 Board members were disappointed to learn that the national Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Bids for Brookfield and Broxbourne had been unsuccessful, but were pleased to learn that Homes England had given encouragement for these projects to now be rolled into the Board’s deal proposition as potential accelerated housing projects
- 5.4 It was confirmed that Harlow Gilston Garden Town had secured a funding commitment of £172m from HIF.
- 5.5 In response to a Board Member question, it was explained that whilst the Secretary of State had indicated the need for devolution and change and to work with other authorities on joint ventures including through development corporation and other delivery models, the details of how this ambition could be achieved were not yet clear.

RESOLVED

- 5.6 Leaders:
 - 1. Noted the progress across the workstreams over the last four weeks;
 - 2. Noted the feedback from Government through MHCLG and other contact;
 - 3. Agreed to consider the report in more detail outside of the meeting and give feedback on the programme priorities including any implications that need to be incorporated as a result of the CV19 crisis and the need to plan for future economic recovery.

All Board Members

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6. HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD – CAPACITY AND RESOURCING PLAN

6.1 The Board considered a report outlining the future resources and capacity plan for the Hertfordshire Growth board

6.2 Members of the board welcomed the news that Patsy Dell from Hertfordshire County Council had been seconded into the role as Director - Hertfordshire Growth and would be supporting the Growth Board work full time.

6.3 The Board acknowledged that due to the impact of COVID-19, the work programme outlined at point 2.8 had been delayed.

RESOLVED

6.4

Leaders noted the paper and agreed:

- a) The Chief Executives Group continue the establishment of the dedicated delivery team as set out in 2.5 and 2.7. of the report, including agreeing details of roles, responsibilities, recruitment, hosting and contractual management; supported by the Director role.
- b) Funding for the delivery team and associated Growth Board activities as set out in Appendix A (from the Growth Board Growth Fund/retained business rates pilot).

7. HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD – COMMUNICATIONS

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7.1 The Board received a report outlining the progress on communications since the last meeting of the HGB. It was acknowledged that work in this area had been delayed or disrupted due to the impact of COVID-19.

7.2 Board members were advised that officers had written to Grant Shapps, MP regarding the work of the Board but the subsequent meeting had been cancelled due to the COVID-19 epidemic.

7.3 Reassurance was received that further work, as outlined at section 3 of the report, would be undertaken in the area of communications and an update would be presented to the Board at its next meeting on 2 June 2020.

7.4 A Board member comment that not all Board Members supported the 'More for Life' branding was noted. It was advised that consideration would be given to reviewing this as well as the timing for any future campaign, particularly looking at the sensitivities in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESOLVED

7.5 Leaders are asked to note the progress, reasons for the amended milestones and give any feedback on progress and next steps.

8. STANDING ITEMS OF BUSINESS

8A. South West Herts Joint Plan

8.1 Board Members were pleased to learn that £540k of capacity funding had been received from MHCLG to progress work in this project area.

8.2 The Board were also interested to learn that the plan had been shared on social media with 3,200 people viewing it in the previous two weeks.

RESOLVED

8.3 Members noted the update.

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8B. North, East and Central (NEC) Herts Joint Planning activities

8.4 The Board acknowledged that there had been limited progress in the area due to the impact of COVID-19.

8.5 Board Members were interested and pleased to learn that it had been suggested that the East West North Growth corridor and NEC Joint planning work should be merged as far as possible into a single workstream, rather than separately as before. Recognised that the detail of this was still to be discussed with all partners before this change could be confirmed.

RESOLVED

8.6 Members noted the update.

8C. Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Bids: Update

8.7 Members were reminded that Harlow Gilston Garden Town had successfully received a funding bid from HIF, and although unsuccessful, MHCLG had advised officers to consider placing the Baldock and Brookfield sites forward as 'growth deal acceleration sites', which offered hope for their future development progress

8.8 In response to a board member question, it was confirmed that officers had contacts within Homes England and would now work to strengthen the communication channels to enhance progress on the Baldock and Brookfield sites, further to the recommendation from MHCLG for these to be growth acceleration sites.

Patsy Dell

RESOLVED

8.9 Members noted the update

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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9.1 The next meeting will be held at 9.30 am on 2 June 2020 at County Hall or by Teams Teleconferencing (to be advised closer to the date).

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 None recorded.

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