

Agenda item 4

Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB) – Work Programme 2021 Progress Report

Report Author: Patsy Dell, Hertfordshire Growth Board (Tel: 07949 887794)

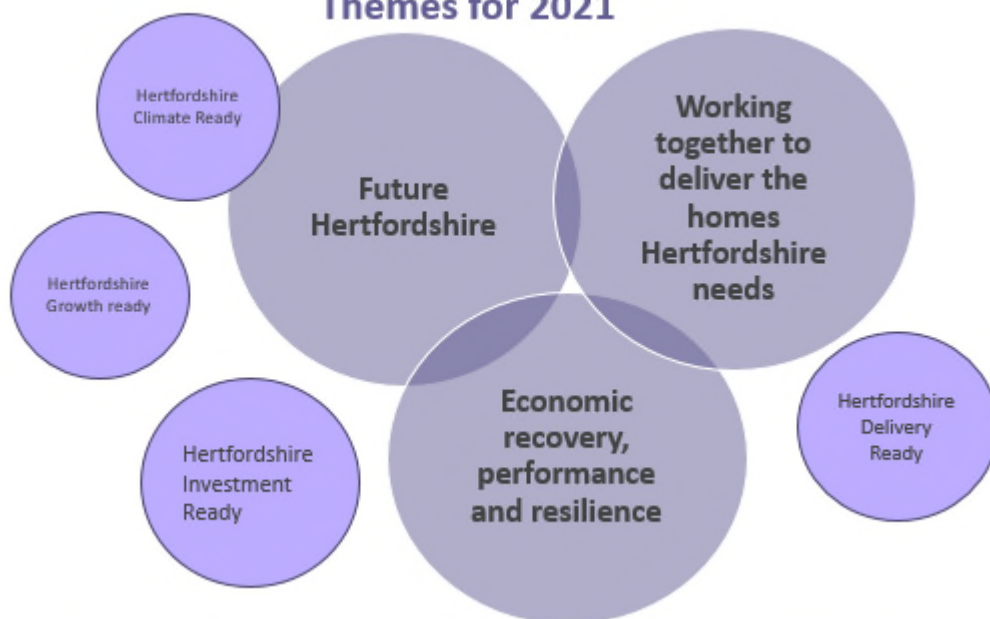
1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report updates on progress with the agreed work programme for the Growth Board in 2021 and specific areas of work that are new or which the Board needs to provide a view on.

2 The 2021 Work Programme and Priorities

- 2.1 At the January Board, Leaders confirmed the priority themes for 2021 as:
- Economic Recovery, performance and resilience;
 - Working together to deliver the homes that Hertfordshire needs;
 - Future Hertfordshire.
 - Completion of the 2020 Work programme Projects

Hertfordshire Growth Board Work Programme Themes for 2021



- 2.2 By December 2021, the Board's ambition is to have:
- Matured its Governance and its 'reach';
 - Continued to build on the HGB brand, story and reputation;
 - Secured a Growth Deal with HM Government;
 - Protected Hertfordshire from the impact of the virus upon its economy;
 - Established the Hertfordshire Housing pipeline and Delivery Pathway;

- Developed an investment prospectus and approach;
- Assembled a spade ready projects investment portfolio;
- Embedded high productivity systems of joint working across its portfolio of projects;
- Delivered wave 1 projects (current) and be progressing wave 2 (new).

2.3 Attached at Appendix 1 is the Work Programme Plan to September 2021. This was approved in draft in January 2021 and has been updated to roll forward to September 2021. It is a dynamic document which will be updated regularly to reflect progress on the Growth Board workstreams.

3 Engagement with HM Government & 2021 Budget

3.1 Board members will by now be aware of the announcements in the Budget on 3rd March 2021. In summary, the Chancellor announced over £1 billion funding for a further 45 towns in England through the Towns Fund, including £37.5 m for Stevenage, the publication of the government's Build Back Better: Plan for Growth and £4.8 billion UK-wide Levelling Up Fund which provides guidance for local areas on how to submit bids.

3.2 Broxbourne, North Hertfordshire, Watford and Hertsmere are all designated as category 2 priority areas under the Levelling up Fund, Three Rivers DC Stevenage, Dacorum, St Albans, East Herts and Welwyn Hatfield are all in priority category 3. All Councils are all reviewing potential projects at the moment.

3.3 The Budget also unveiled plans for the creation of the National Infrastructure Bank and a taskforce designed to stimulate housebuilding using modern methods of construction (MMC), backed by £10m of government funding.

3.4 A fuller update was published on the Growth Board website: <https://www.hertfordshiregrowthboard.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Budget-headlines-2021.docx.pdf>

3.5 Board Members will receive a briefing from MHCLG which will be an opportunity to better understand the detail of the budget announcements and objectives for delivery by HM Government.

4 Housing workstream update

4.1 The forthcoming briefing from MHCLG will also update on current national policy towards supporting the acceleration of housing delivery and any housing partnerships that the government is looking to get into with local areas.

4.2 Dealing with Hertfordshire's broken housing market and delivering the homes that Hertfordshire needs is a key priority for the Growth Board. Work is progressing on the housing pipeline and is exploring a number of local actions to support accelerated delivery.

4.3 One option which was identified last December and now appears in the approved work programme is to investigate the feasibility of becoming a local authority strategic partner with Homes England. These partnerships are prioritised to the

delivery of new affordable homes by local authorities. Once approved through the process strategic partners are able to access funding under the Homes England Affordable Homes Fund (Total funding in the fund is £7bn).

- 4.4 Officers have been investigating that option and MHCLG and Homes England have now issued a prospectus for the submission of expressions of interest (EoI).
- 4.5 These links are to the prospectus, guidance and expression of interest process:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-affordable-homes-funding-through-a-strategic-partnership>
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/affordable-housing-funding-strategic-partner-application-process>
- 4.6 The guidance includes the option for Local Authorities to form Strategic Partnerships as follows:

Local authority strategic partnership

A local authority may bid for a strategic partnership alone or with another local authority.

To apply you must:

- deliver at least 1500 grant funded homes
- start on site by 31 March 2026
- complete by 31 March 2028
- agree to draw down all grant by 31 March 2026
- have a total grant ask below £150 million

We will pay a single grant claim quarterly against the grant recipient's eligible development expenditure incurred in arrears.

- 4.7 Officers are working through the Homes England guidance, and the feasibility (potential benefits) of putting in a joint expression of interest is being evaluated. Additional specialist housing consultancy support is being taken on to help with the evaluation and preparation process. Officers have been waiting for Homes England to confirm the precise window for submission of EoI bids and that appears to be March and April 2021.
- 4.8 The alternative to becoming a strategic partner is to engage in a process of 'Continuous Market Engagement' with Homes England, which many growth board partners already do. That option will also be evaluated as a means of increasing funding options.
- 4.9 Given the work that has been undertaken in preparation for earlier bids, the evidence base forming the Hertfordshire housing pipeline will be a useful part of the EoI work. It is likely however that the EoI will need to be prepared quite rapidly

and the consultant and joint team will lead the preparation of this, working with the political lead Cllr A Williams and lead CEx Claire Hamilton.

- 4.10 Leaders are advised that the date of the next Growth Board meeting in June 2021 and the likely timing of submission of the EoI may mean that the governance and approval of the EoI submission will probably need to be somewhat flexible. The commitments that individual partners and the Growth Board will need to make to secure a strategic partnership will become clear over coming weeks and arrangements may need to be made to deal with this off-line, via a special meeting of the Board or delegated authority via the Chief Executives Co-ordinating Group. A further update will be given at the meeting on 30th March 2021.

5 Hertfordshire Investment Ready Workstream

- 5.1 This workstream is to take forward the Boards intention to secure greater investment into Hertfordshire. The ambition for this work is to secure public and private sector inward investment into the region to support jobs and communities. The private sector market wants to invest in places like Hertfordshire, but it is a challenging funding environment. While Hertfordshire has a track record of attracting private finance to certain schemes, others are stalled.
- 5.2 An initial short programme of work has been put together that provides Leaders, LEP Board members and Chief Executives the opportunity to discuss Hertfordshire's approach to investment, to consider what is possible, and assess the practical implications that these bring.
- 5.3 Last year, some work was undertaken to understand better the overall pipeline of investable projects and a workshop with Leaders explored how the market views Hertfordshire. This programme will build on those early discussions with a view to:
- Establishing a shared understanding of the art of the possible in securing private sector investment;
 - Reviewing the current investment landscape, alongside the pipeline of investable projects;
 - Assessing what the role of the Hertfordshire Growth Board could be as an agent to facilitate significant investment;
 - Identifying routes to fund quasi and non-commercial infrastructure; and
 - Identifying how best to use the capability and experience that exists within Hertfordshire.
- 5.4 It is proposed that the new work will follow these initial steps:
- a) Workshop 1 with Leaders, Chief Executives and LEP Board representatives – the “art of the possible”. This workshop will address the potential role of Private Sector investment alongside Government and Local funding. Drawing on experience from other parts of the UK, it will provide practical examples to help create a shared understanding of what is possible and the strategies that need to be deployed to be successful. Using the analysis of Hertfordshire's situation, will enable local examples to be used to further illustrate how investment streams operate in tandem. It will be facilitated by Martin Whiteley.

- b) Workshop 2 – developing an investment fund. Building on the outputs from the first workshop this facilitated session, will consider the features that need to be in place in Hertfordshire, if it is to successfully deliver the emerging strategy and attract the levels of investment required. This will include the role of the Hertfordshire Growth Board, the investment skills and expertise required, and how to draw on the capability that already exists in the Hertfordshire network. This workshop would focus on preparing proposals that can subsequently be taken back to the full Board for endorsement.
- c) A short report will be provided at the conclusion of the initial work. It will establish the basis for the next steps to move forward into implementation including the potential to set up an investment and infrastructure advisory panel.

5.5 The board is asked to provide any feedback on what has been planned at this stage.

6 Growth Board Governance next steps

- 6.1 Following the work undertaken in 2020, the Growth Board is now established as a statutory joint committee. This change in the governance of the Board now provides the opportunity to extend the membership of the board to additional co-opted members. This was an ambition for the board from the outset and reflects the arrangement seen elsewhere e.g. Oxfordshire Growth Board.
- 6.2 Broadening the membership of the Growth Board to include partners such as NHS/Health, Higher and Further Education, Government Agencies and Homes England would be advantageous in extending the reach and influence of the Board. Working closer with these partners (and any others that Leaders consider should be approached) could also support implementation of the Board's work programme and improve joint working.
- 6.3 The adopted integrated governance framework allows for additional co-opted members to be invited to join the board. Board members are reminded that Voting rights do not extend to co-opted members. This extract from the integrated governance framework confirms that the Board has the ability to invite new co-opted members as and when it chooses to.

HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD STANDING ORDERS

1. Membership

- 1.1 The HGB will have a voting membership of eleven, each Council being entitled to appoint one voting member.
- 1.2 The HGB may agree to co-opt other non-voting members to its membership where it is considered conducive to the effective consideration of any matter.

6.4 Leaders are asked if they wish the necessary approaches being made to the above and any additional organisations for them to be invited to join the Growth Board from June or September 2021.

7 Update on Place Narrative, Branding and Communications workstream

7.1 **Past, Present, Future Hertfordshire:** this webinar on Friday 12 March 2021 was the first in a series of internal engagement events over 2021 to keep senior officers and members updated on HGB's progress and priorities. The recording of the event will be sent out to HGB's new internal database (300 +) and another webinar for all Councillors and LEP Board Members in Hertfordshire is expected to take place after the local elections in May 2021.

7.2 **Stakeholder bulletins:** these will now go out to HGB's internal and external stakeholders on a bi-monthly basis and/or following the cycle of Board Meetings.

7.3 **Budget:** HGB published its summary to the Chancellor's Budget [here](#).

7.4 **Joint Governance Committee:** all meetings are now being live-streamed, and the link will be hosted on the HGB website. HGB will shortly have its own YouTube Channel to share dynamic footage.

7.5 **Communications Protocols:** Following its approval at the January 2021 Board Meeting, all HGB members have now added the HGB mission statement to their websites. An example is [here](#).

7.6 **Events and sponsorship:** HGB continues to raise its profile with speaker opportunities at targeted events.

8 Implications

8.1 There are no adverse legal, financial, equalities, environmental, sustainability or other implications arising from this report and its recommendations which support the ongoing work and priorities of the Growth Board.

9 Recommendations

9.1 That the Board notes the progress with the work programme and the overall priorities to September 2021, as set out in the paper and in appendix 1.

9.2 That the Board additionally notes and approves the current scope of work for the housing workstream (noting that the final submission of any Expression of Interest to be a Homes England Strategic Partner will need the board partners support). The Board to discuss this further with updated advice at the HGB meeting on 30 March 2021.

9.3 That the Board notes and approves the scope of investigatory work for the investment workstream

9.4 That the Board extend invites to the organisations named in section 6 (and/or as may be additionally suggested by the board) to join the Growth Board as a co-opted member with effect from June or September 2021.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HGC Infrastructure Delivery Plan • Social Housing Delivery • Sustainable Energy Infrastructure Projects - Evidence Base Study 																										
		Hertfordshire MRT System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRT Promotional Video • Options Assessment Report; Appraisal Specification Report • Strategic Outline Business Case 	Progress being reported through project updates.																									
		SE Hertfordshire Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park Plaza West - planning permission secured • New Park Lane Railway Station (Waltham Cross) - Footbridge Procurement • New Business Park and hi-tech starter Centre: Maxwells West – Planning permission & procurement • Waltham Cross Town Centre Regeneration - Public realm design - Phase 1 	Progress being reported through project updates.																									
		Watford Junction Interchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOBC Transport Interventions (subject to funding) • Network Rail design pedestrian link/entire station development • Development Agreement 	Progress being reported through project updates.																									
Workstream	Key deliverables	Projects & key milestones		Apr (w/c)	May (w/c)	Jun (w/c)	Jul (w/c)	Aug (w/c)	Sep (w/c)																				
				0	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	3	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	2				
				5	2	9	6	3	0	7	4	1	7	4	1	8	5	2	9	6	2	9	6	3	0	6	3	0	7
Northern Corridor Board	Northern Corridor Programme Board	Board oversight	Northern Corridor Programme Board dates	1							2					3													2
		Community Wealth Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CWB Pilot 1 Stevenage & 2 North Herts 		3						4					0													3

and Delivery Programmes	Northern Corridor Delivery Programmes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Wealth Building Plan County-wide working group established 																													
		Future Growth Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope review to be undertaken 	█																												
		Town Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal steering group with monthly meeting Health check questionnaire 	Progress being reported through project updates.																												
		Science and Technology (Cell and Gene Focus) Sector Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Framework/Masterplanning/visioning study for Gunnels Wood Road 	Progress being reported through project updates.																												
		Climate, carbon and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalised Water Action Plan Biodiversity Action Plan and baselines established Carbon Action Plan finalised Transport Action Plan finalised 	Progress being reported through project updates.																												
Workstream	Key deliverables	Key milestones & activities			Apr (w/c)		May (w/c)			Jun (w/c)			Jul (w/c)			Aug (w/c)			Sep (w/c)													
					0	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	3	0	1	2	2	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	2		
					5	2	9	6	3	0	7	4	1	7	4	1	8	5	2	9	6	2	9	6	3	0	6	3	0	7		
Joint Strategic Planning (JSP) workstreams	SWH JSP	JSP Programme			On-going implementation programme across 2021																											
	NECH JSP	JSP Programme			Commissioning of Growth Study							█																				