

Agenda item 10

Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB) – Evolving the Growth Board Governance

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

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 Following the work undertaken in 2020, the Growth Board is now established and successfully operating as a statutory joint committee. The ambition for the Growth Board has always been to ultimately extend the membership of the board to include additional co-opted members. This was envisaged from the outset in 2018 and reflects the arrangement seen elsewhere e.g. with the Oxfordshire Growth Board – extract below.

About the Oxfordshire Growth Board

The Growth Board is a joint committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire together with key strategic partners. Following an extensive public review in 2020, the Board has adopted a new purpose which is to:

- Coordinate local efforts to manage economic, housing and infrastructure development in a way that is inclusive and maximises local social and environmental benefits;
- Support the development of local planning policy that meets the UK Government's stated aim of net zero carbon by 2050, and contributes towards biodiversity gain whilst embracing the changes needed for a low carbon world; and,
- Seek to secure funding in the pursuit of these aims and oversee the delivery of related work programmes delegated to it by the Joint Committee's constituent local authority members.

- 1.2 This is the link to the Oxfordshire Growth Board Terms of Reference, these were reviewed in 2020 and covers co-opted members at paragraph 2.2 – extract below

<https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Terms-of-Reference-August-2020.pdf>

2.2 It also includes co-opted associate members from those organisations listed below:

- Chair of OxLEP
- Chair of the Oxfordshire Skills Board
- Universities Representative
- OxLEP Business Representative-Bicester
- OxLEP Business Representative-Oxford City
- OxLEP Business Representative-Science Vale
- Homes England Representative
- DEFRA Agencies Representative
- Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group Representative

2.3 When considering transport infrastructure matters, Network Rail and Highways England will have the right to attend as associate members.

1.3 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 our work programme and improve joint working.

1.4 At the last meeting, the principle of extending the co-opted membership was agreed but the Board wanted to consider a range of options first

2 Evolving the Growth Board membership

2.1 The adopted integrated governance framework allows for additional co-opted members to be invited to join the Board, as and when the HGB 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.

2.2 At the meeting in March 2021, the discussion identified three key considerations bearing on extending the co-opted membership:

- There were different ways that there could be meaningful engagement than inviting wider stakeholders/partners permanently onto the Growth Board – e.g. through occasional task and finish types groups, committees of investigation, broader contact groups

within the orbit of the Board. This could include bodies such as the Police (Blue light services), Chamber of Commerce, Volunteer networks, Housing Associations etc

- There was a need to avoid duplication with the work of the LEP. The LEP focus on skills and business support (including what may emerge from the current LEP review) means that involvement of Higher and Further education on the Growth Board could be duplicating existing activity and distracting capacity away from those areas
- The Growth Board's Place-based focus (paired with the LEP's lead on skills and business support) could mean that involvement of such bodies as Health/Wellbeing, Homes England, Department for Transport, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) , the Environment Agency and specific utilities representatives might be more appropriate.

3 Next steps

- 3.1 Officers were asked for a further paper on this matter and it was agreed that any new co-opted members would be asked to join from September 2021.
- 3.2 The three key points identified in the March 2021 discussion are helpful and some of which can be picked up in on-going communications and engagement planning. Avoiding duplication with the LEP focus on skills and business support also makes sense other than where this is a specific Growth Board work area.
- 3.3 The Board are asked for a steer on their preference for extending the co-opted membership at this time. Using the Growth Board forward work programme as a guide, the areas where an extended Growth Board governance approach would appear to be of immediate benefit would be in our engagement with HM Government and its agencies. In that respect extending an invitation to Homes England, Department of Transport and MHCLG could help strengthen the current relationships and visibility of the Boards work on housing and infrastructure delivery, economic recovery and the strength of our collaborative working as a place.
- 3.4 Leaders had also previously identified the need for close working with the health sector with the delivery of the Hertfordshire Integrated Care System (ICS), and to ensure appropriate health and wellbeing related infrastructure is secured to support growing communities. Clearly through the pandemic response there has been significant collaborative working across the sectors and there is now a joint officer workstream ensuring alignment on planning, developer contributions and strategic development activities. Building on this by putting in place a strategic alignment between the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Growth Board may be advantageous.

3.5 Finally, there is always the option to keep the governance under review and revisit any proposed change later this or next year should the Board prefer that.

4 Recommendations

4.1 The Board are asked to indicate their preferences.