

Agenda item 6

Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB) – Work Programme Progress Report March 2023

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1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report updates on progress with the current Growth Board work programme and specific areas of work that are new or which the Board needs to provide a view on. The last Growth Board meeting took place on 12 January 2023.

2 The Growth Board Work Programme and Priorities

- 2.1 The Growth Board is currently reviewing its priority themes and work programme and item 5 on this agenda confirms the proposed priorities for 2023 - 25.

3 Work Programme Updates

UK Shared Prosperity and Levelling Up Funds (UKSPF)

- 3.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation has been confirmed and Hertfordshire District and Borough councils have received their first allocations of UKSPF.
- 3.2 Levelling Up Fund round two bids were submitted by Broxbourne, Dacorum and Watford Borough Councils last year. £14m was subsequently confirmed and awarded to Broxbourne to invest in projects in Waltham Cross.

Digital Workstream

- 3.3 The Hertfordshire digital framework was approved by HGB in January 2022 and the working team and Digital Board are now fully operational. The board has approved priorities including bidding for further national funding and a market engagement day took place in December 2022.
- 3.4 Next steps include the relaunch and unpausing of the Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme. There will be a focus on establishing supplier contact following the Market Information Day and a review of future Project Gigabit options in unserved areas with BDUK.

Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Development Board (HIDB)

- 3.5 The HIDB entered its second successful year of operation with a membership of over 50 organisations. Attendees for each quarterly meeting now exceed 100 plus people, demonstrating the high levels of industry and sector interest in engaging with this consultative body.
- 3.6 The meetings have been focussed on key issues for the sector and the Growth Board, including capacity and resilience for growth delivery, delivering sustainable growth, regeneration, and the cost-of-living crisis. The February 2023 meeting focussed on housing delivery.
- 3.7 Growth Board Leaders, Portfolio Holders, Chief Executives and Heads of Planning Services represent the board and lead the sector level engagement through the HIDB events. Cllr Lewis Cocking has taken over as Chair for the second year of the HIDB.

Hertfordshire Planning Resilience and Capacity Task and Finish Group

- 3.8 The Task and Finish group are taking forward the action plan actions agreed last year. The project to investigate a joint planning application validation service has commenced and a consultant has been appointed to support this work. Sector partners and the Growth Board have contributed towards the cost.
- 3.9 Following the successful symposium for planning staff held at the end of November, a planner's mentoring scheme has been launched and a new Continuing Professional Development programme is at an advanced stage of preparation.

Hertfordshire Film Office

- 3.10 The Film Office business plan was approved last meeting and a new Film Office Manager has been appointed to take this project forward. Project mobilisation will accelerate in March 2023, when the new manager starts.

Temporary Housing Accommodation Joint Investigation project

- 3.11 The Temporary Accommodation working group and Member oversight group have continued to move this joint work forward and most recent progress includes:
- The development of a new Predictive Model for temporary accommodation focussed on operational improvements to aid response to the need for TA. The model includes a process that aggregates approved data from all authorities, enabling county wide view of TA numbers. The products were implemented in January 2023 across housing authorities in Hertfordshire. An evaluation process is running alongside, and an initial evaluation report is due in early April 2023.

- Ultra-High Needs: The focus here, following discussion with the Heads of Housing stakeholder group, is on the cohort of homeless people with complex needs, that do not fit a Housing First / other pathway approaches. The work has been influenced by the launch of government funding that focusses on the 18 to 25 yr. group in North Herts. Joint work is underway to respond to the funding round, with a submission aimed at the June 2023 funding window.
- Hospital Step Down: System wide interest in pursuing a collaborative approach to developing such a facility has been confirmed. Data is now available to support the need in relation to discharge of homeless people from the Watford Acute Hospital Trust. A visit has been made to a similar facility in Oxford. Potential delivery partners, sites and funding have been identified and work is underway to finalise the operational governance with key partners.

Growth Corridor Programme Boards – Project Updates

3.12 The updates from active projects are attached at Appendix A.

Joint Strategic Planning Activities

3.13 The Board will receive a presentation on the progress of both of the joint planning collaboration groups.

4 Implications

4.1 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.

5 Recommendations

5.1 That the Board notes the progress with the work programme, workstream projects and the overall priorities as set out in the paper and at Appendix A.