

# Agenda item 6

## Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB) - Advocacy Status Report

**Report Author:** Lucy Gravatt, Interim Director of Advocacy and Partnerships

---

### 1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 At the last Hertfordshire Growth Board meeting members endorsed the proposed approach to developing a new advocacy plan. This twin track plan of action would:
  - Spotlight where Hertfordshire can play a key role nationally via a programme of high-profile events and other activities.
  - Take a more tactical approach to how and when we can influence Government. This will enable us to become more agile in our decision making and become more responsive on key policy issues relating to the HGB Vision and Missions and wider growth agenda.
- 1.2 While these two pillars still form the basis of this workstream, Hertfordshire Growth Board can play a vital role in the next couple of years positioning the county and a future mayor for success. By articulating Hertfordshire's ambitions for place with key stakeholders, residents and government, HGB can be a galvanising force for action and help set the foundations for a new Strategic Authority. This activity would align with the devolution timescale and use the key components of the new Local Growth Plan and the Missions as a framework for engagement.
- 1.3 This approach would enable us to enter into a more meaningful dialogue with Government by aligning advocacy to the wider devolution and policy agenda. As part of developing a new Local Growth Plan, a raft of strategies will be brought forward over the next six/12 months. These will be factored into the wider advocacy programme.
- 1.4 With a renewed focus on growth and what can be realistically achieved in the timescales this would foster community cohesion and a greater sense of momentum and ownership. An annual stakeholder event would enable Hertfordshire Growth Board to report back on progress and build consensus for future devolved arrangements, being led by Hertfordshire County Council, and the plan for growth.
- 1.5 The advocacy strategy to be presented at the Board Meeting will set out an integrated approach to delivering our strategic objectives across government relations, policy influencing, communications and marketing and audience engagement functions. Once activated it will also provide a steady drumbeat

of activity during a period of significant transition and reorganisation. With the appropriate level of resourcing in place, this will drive our reputational, influencing and engagement work, elevating our status and national outreach. The Advocacy Director will work closely with Mission Leads to co-develop policy positions that recognise the co-interdependencies between climate, housing, health, transport, the economy and digital inclusion. This may require additional technical expertise to develop responses.

## **2 Advocacy activity update**

- 2.1 The table at appendix 1, provides an interim update on advocacy activity that has already taken place over the last quarter and other key events/activity planned over the next six to 12 months where HGB can have a key influencing role.
- 2.2 This programme of activity has been designed to play to Hertfordshire's strengths across its key sectors and spheres of influence. Some of the activity has been or will be hosted in Hertfordshire showcasing where the county has assets of global importance, attracting further investment. Other activity, such as UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiIF) and EXPO Real in Munich, will enable Hertfordshire to compete nationally and internationally. Where possible, we have cross-referenced this activity to the Missions. Other activity aligns to the second pillar – developing a Hertfordshire voice on national issues and policy. This area will be the focus of the Strategy.

## **3 Recommendation**

- 3.1 For Hertfordshire Growth Board to:
  - Note the activity set out in Table 1 and to endorse the draft Strategy which will be presented at the next Board Meeting.
  - Agree that the Advocacy Director acts as dedicated lead officer with strategic oversight from HGB Steering Group or another HGB Board Member.
  - Agree for this work to get underway immediately after the Board Meeting, subject to any modifications required.
  - Note the activity will be funded from existing budgets.

## Appendix 1: Schedule of Activity

Date	Name	Core Audience/Purpose	Activity	Mission
<b>JAN – DEC 2025</b>	UK Screen Investment Programme (UKSIP)	Investors, industry, Government officials and local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new national platform set up to secure the next wave of capital investment for the UK's screen sector.</li> <li>Steering group chaired by former Hertfordshire Futures Board Member David Conway, CEO, Pinewood Group with representation from HGB Vice Chair Cllr Jeremy Newmark; Hertfordshire Futures Board Member Celia Taylor, Head of Media Trust; film studios; British Film Commission; Screen Alliance North and range of investors.</li> <li>Key local partners comprise Hertfordshire Futures; Hertfordshire Growth Board and University of Hertfordshire.</li> <li>Two steering group meetings held in central London providing top tier industry voice into Government on key issues such as impact of US tariffs on 'foreign made' productions. Policy discussion with sector Director from Department for Business &amp; Trade who leads the overall on creative sector growth plans for Industrial Strategy.</li> <li>Programme comprises series of roundtable events with <b>AI roundtable on 26 June</b> with further roundtables on screen tourism and skills (working with University of Herts) planned for later in the year. <b>Investor dinner to be hosted by Hertfordshire Growth Board at The Grove with summit for up to 150 high level stakeholders and Government officials set to be hosted by Hertfordshire at BAFTA in central London on 26 November.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Class Economy</li> </ul>
<b>MAY</b>	UKREiif	Real Estate Industry: Developers/Investors/Policy makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed pipeline of sites with a Gross Development Value (GDV) of £12.9 billion.</li> <li>Streamlined <a href="#">investment brochure</a> to facilitate investor interest.</li> <li>Secured commercial sponsorship deals worth £22.5k</li> <li>Brokered greater dialogue with real estate sector via Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Development Board (HIDB).</li> <li>Shifted focus away from generic place promotion (year one) to investor ready sites and more targeted media placements in trade/investor press (year 2).</li> <li>Partner evaluation now underway to drive continuous improvement and streamline offer for year 3 onwards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Class Economy</li> <li>Right Homes, Right Places</li> </ul>
	Pharmaceutical Industry Network Group (PING) Conference	Life Science/Pharma Sector, key local stakeholders and government representatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High profile event held at Hatfield House developed in partnership with Hertfordshire Futures.</li> <li>Keynote address from Hertfordshire Futures Board Member Dr Stephen Ward, CTO, Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult and video broadcast from Andrew Lewin, MP for Welwyn Hatfield.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Class Economy</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sent out clear message of intent to 120 stakeholders from across life science industry that Hertfordshire is an attractive place for further sector growth.</li> <li>• PING Innovation Award presented by Chair Hertfordshire Futures, Adrian Hawkins OBE, to local SME VasoDynamics trialling innovations in cancer care for patients. Further evidence of strong ecosystem of support for SME growth.</li> <li>• Thematic discussion on sustainability within pharma with series of online roundtable sessions on other topical issues planned for Autumn 2025 with Ethical Medicines Industry Group (EMIG) and VVV who provide legal advice to the sector locally.</li> </ul>	
<b>JUNE</b>	Elstree Studios Centenary launch	Royal Visit with key local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh visits Elstree to mark the official start of its centenary celebrations. HRH accompanied by Elstree's Head of Studios, Rebecca Hawkes, Chairman, Cllr Jeremy Newmark and accompanied by Acting CEO Michael Beavan.</li> <li>• Use centenary as a launchpad for projects to enhance Hertfordshire's creative industry infrastructure and global visibility, including a Film and TV immersive experience in Borehamwood High Street and Hollywood-style lettering along the A1.</li> <li>• Align UK Screen Investment Programme (UKSIP) with landmark centenary and leverage its unique heritage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Class Economy</li> </ul>
	Invest 2035: Modern Industrial Strategy	Stakeholders and Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Hertfordshire-wide response that brings in diverse viewpoints across key sectors/business groups; academia and wider place partnerships to engage with Government. <b>This will form a central strand of our advocacy work.</b></li> </ul>	
<b>JULY</b>	Adult Skills Strategy  Small Business Strategy Launch	Working in partnership towards full employment, promoting lifelong learning, retraining and upskilling opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish July 2025, and work with partners to align all adult skills and job initiatives, including Get Britain Working and Apprenticeships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Class Economy</li> </ul>
<b>SEPT-DEC</b>	Economic Strategy and Digital Strategy launch	Key local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First building block of Local Growth Plan evidencing Hertfordshire's growth ambitions and key economic priorities shaped around four key themes: innovation; creativity; people and community; openness and connectivity.</li> <li>• Potential for digital summit building on themes of Economic Strategy digital inclusion webinar.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Class Economy</li> <li>• Digital Access for All</li> </ul>
	EXPO Real, Munich	International trade fair for property and investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore partnership opportunities for Invest Hertfordshire to have enhanced profile and build on its presence from 2024.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Class Economy</li> </ul>

	UKSIP		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investor Dinner and Summit, as above. Invitations to go out to Treasury and Department for Business and Trade co-signed by local partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Class Economy</li> </ul>
	Clean Growth Conference	Business focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aimed at c. 75 businesses showcasing green innovation and stimulating net zero action. Align with development and launch of Hertfordshire Retrofit Strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable County</li> </ul>
	Local Nature Recovery Strategy Launch/Publication	Land owners/managers; investors; environmental bodies; construction; businesses; residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public consultation: July/August</li> <li>Review consultation feedback/refinements: Sept</li> <li>Formal launch: Oct onwards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable County</li> </ul>
	Get Hertfordshire Working	Lead Hertfordshire's response on reducing worklessness and providing employment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Sept 2025 onwards.</li> <li>Implementation from March 2026</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Class Economy</li> <li>Healthy and Safe Places for All</li> </ul>
	Local Transport Plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation with residents, Sept 2025 onwards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transport for Hertfordshire</li> </ul>
	Hertfordshire and Infrastructure and Funding Prospectus		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch updated version, Dec 2025</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transport for Hertfordshire</li> </ul>
<b>JAN 2026</b>	HGB Annual Stakeholder Event		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model based on Westminster reception 2025 bringing in diverse range of voices across industry, local government and sponsored by a Hertfordshire MP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ALL</li> </ul>
	Spatial Development Strategy	Setting out a policy framework and identifying potential locations for economic growth, housing growth and strategic infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development starts Jan 2026 onwards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Right Homes, Right Places</li> <li>World Class Economy</li> </ul>
<b>MAY 2026</b>	UKREiif	Real Estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For HGB to play a more active role in setting out our stall for place and our 'pitch' for devolution. This would put us on the front foot – using this forum as a platform to set out the 4/5 high level projects/ambitions that would set Hertfordshire apart both regionally and nationally. <b>The work on this agenda needs to start now.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Class Economy</li> <li>Right Homes, Right Places</li> </ul>