

Chair's Update

Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB)

1 Advocacy

- 1.1 Over the past quarter we have continued to strengthen the Growth Board's role as Hertfordshire's collective voice for growth, investment and place advocacy. Despite the Government's recent decision to pause Local Government Reorganisation, devolution remains firmly at the centre of national policy. The Growth Board will maintain its focus on demonstrating Hertfordshire's readiness for greater devolved responsibilities and future mayoral governance. The proposed programme of activity is set out in the forward plan.
- 1.2 The Growth Board's website is being refreshed to better reflect its evolving role and purpose. The updated content positions HGB as the strategic advisory forum for the development of Hertfordshire's Local Growth Plan and other strategic documents, highlights the county's growth ambitions and priority strategies, and will provide a clearer public gateway to key evidence, consultations and engagement opportunities. This will help strengthen stakeholder understanding of HGB's role in championing Hertfordshire's growth, investment and devolution ambitions.
- 1.3 **UK Screen Investment Programme:** The UK Screen Investment Programme is now in its second year of delivery, building on the success and momentum established since its launch. HGB continues to play a leading role in shaping the programme, which now brings together representatives from most of the UK's major screen production hubs. Through a year-round programme of events, roundtables and investor engagement activities, the initiative is helping to strengthen relationships between industry, Government and regional partners while supporting collective advocacy on the opportunities and challenges facing the sector.
- 1.4 The UK Screen Investment Dinner this month brought together a highly influential cross-section of senior leaders from across the screen sector ecosystem, including major studios, broadcasters, production companies, real estate, investors, developers and the Office for Investment, alongside Hertfordshire and other regional growth partners. The breadth of attendance reflected the UK's position as a global screen production hub and provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen relationships and move away from individual clusters towards a joined-up national offer. The programme will culminate in the UK Screen Investment Summit at BAFTA on 19 November. Further information can be found [here](#).
- 1.5 **Hertfordshire Film and TV Festival:** Over the summer, plans have progressed for the inaugural Hertfordshire Film & TV Festival, which will take place from 2-4 July 2027. Conceived as the local expression of Hertfordshire's screen success, the festival will celebrate the county's contribution to film and television, connect communities to local opportunities and inspire the next generation of creative talent. The pilot festival will be centred around Watford and Elstree & Borehamwood, bringing together

industry activity, public events, education and careers initiatives, screenings, talent showcases and community engagement. Significant progress has already been made, including the establishment of an Advisory Board and project team, the securing of three headline partners, including Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden, and venues, and engagement with more than 80 organisations from across the public, private and education sectors.

- 1.6 The festival remains subject to securing external funding and sponsorship, but early interest from partners has been extremely positive and demonstrates strong support for creating a flagship celebration of Hertfordshire's screen sector.

2 Missions update

- 2.1 This section highlights notable updates from Mission leads including how this work is pivoting to support the development of the Local Growth Plan.
- 2.2 **World Class Economy and Digital Mission:** this work is delivered by Hertfordshire Futures.
- 2.3 **Healthy and Safe Places Mission:** While this mission has formally closed, work continues to embed the Healthy and Safe Places Framework operationally and strategically across Hertfordshire. A training programme has been developed for all local planning authorities. Due to the huge level of interest shown from other parts of the UK, the plan is to make this available nationally, evidencing how the county continues to be a trailblazer in this area.
- 2.4 **Transport for Hertfordshire Mission:** The Mission has had a key role in developing the new Local Transport Plan. As well as discussion at Steering Group meetings, members of the Mission provided detailed comments on the draft document. This will now be subject to public consultation in the Autumn, with comments received being considered by the Steering Group. The target is still to adopt the Plan in early 2027.
- 2.5 The Mission has now started work on helping to develop the Local Transport Plan supporting documents. The September meeting heard from the trade association Logistics UK, who emphasised the need for appropriate spatial planning to support good transport planning. The Mission will be providing input to a new Freight and Logistics Strategies over the next few months.
- 2.6 **Right Homes, Right Places Mission:** Various elements are underway including:
- Development Quality Charter:** work is underway to explore opportunities to strengthen the Charter's value, impact and industry recognition. This includes consideration of how the Charter could better promote high-quality design, Passivhaus standards, and long-term stewardship of land, whilst encouraging greater commitment and buy-in from developers.
- Pipeline of Development Sites:** Hertfordshire County Council has mapped and will continue to update information on Local Plan site allocations and planning applications, so we have a comprehensive knowledge of pipeline sites. The housing mission group is also engaging with Homes England to understand what funding bids are submitted from districts and developers, although we have been advised there may be some confidentiality issues to overcome.

Strategic Infrastructure Prospectus: this work continues to progress with a number of stakeholder demos. Hertfordshire Constabulary have expressed an interest in the Prospectus and indicated a desire to participate.

Spatial Development Strategy (SDS): The National Planning Policy Framework indicates that the SDS should cover at least 25 years. Initial government funding has been awarded to Hertfordshire County Council to begin preparatory work. HCC and Districts are working together to coordinate Local Plans and SDS preparation, amidst the backdrop of the evolving local government reorganisation landscape.

3 Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Development Board

- 3.1 Following the Government's recent announcement regarding Local Government Reorganisation, the September meeting of the Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Development Board provided one of the first opportunities to consider the immediate implications for Hertfordshire and the county's wider growth agenda. Discussion focused on what the pause means in practice, the likely next steps nationally, and how partners can continue to maintain momentum on key growth priorities during a period of increased uncertainty.
- 3.2 The September meeting was followed by an annual review session to reflect on the Board's progress, identify priorities for the year ahead and consider how engagement can be strengthened across both the public and private sectors. As part of HIDB's ongoing focus on social value, the November meeting plans to spotlight plans for the UK's first dedicated retreat centre for teenagers and young adults living with and beyond cancer. Delivered through a partnership between Teens Unite and VolkerWessels UK, the project demonstrates how investment, development and partnership working can be harnessed to create lasting social impact alongside economic growth.

4 Dates for the diary

- 4.1 **Hertfordshire Medical School:** Members will be invited to the launch of Hertfordshire Medical School on 26 November, 10-1pm. The county's first medical school welcomed its inaugural cohort of students this September and represents a major investment in skills, healthcare and innovation. The launch will provide an opportunity to showcase Hertfordshire's strengths in education, life sciences and workforce development.
- 4.2 The next HGB Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on 26 January, 11-1pm and the next HIDB meeting will take place on 25 November, 8-11am, at The Riding School, Hatfield House.