

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Oxfordshire Growth Board

OXFORDSHIRE

G R O W T H B O A R D

HELD ON TUESDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 2.00 PM
DIDCOT CIVIC HALL, BRITWELL ROAD, DIDCOT, OX11 7JN

Present:

Voting members: Councillors Jane Murphy (Chairman), Roger Cox, Susan Brown, Ian Hudspeth, James Mills and Barry Wood

Non-voting members: Professor Alistair Fitt (Universities' Representative), Angus Horner (Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership business representative for Science Vale), Adrian Lockwood (OxLEP Vice-Chairman and Skills Board Representative), Jeremy Long (Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership), Louise Patten (Clinical Commissioning Group Chief Executive), Lesley Tims (Environment Agency Strategic Planning and Engagement Manager for Thames Area), and Catherine Turner (Homes and Communities Agency)

Officers: Peter Clark (Oxfordshire County Council Chief Executive), Steve Culliford (South Oxfordshire District Council), Andrew Down (South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils), Christine Gore (West Oxfordshire District Council Chief Executive), Caroline Green (Oxford City Council), Sue Halliwell (Oxfordshire County Council), Bev Hindle (Oxfordshire County Council), Gordon Mitchell (Oxford City Council Chief Executive), Yvonne Rees (Cherwell District Council Chief Executive), and Paul Staines (Oxfordshire Growth Board)

Also present: Andrew Gant (Oxford City Council and Chairman of the Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel) and Nigel Tipple (Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership)

17 Apologies for absence

None

18 Declarations of interest

None

19 Minutes

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Oxfordshire Growth Board's meeting held on 31 July 2018 were signed and adopted as a correct record.

20 Chairman's announcements

The chairman asked all present to silence their mobile telephones and advised of emergency evacuation arrangements.

The chairman also announced that Peter Clark, Chief Executive of Oxfordshire County Council, was retiring and this would be his last meeting. The Growth Board thanked Mr Clark for his work.

21 Public participation

Mr Adrian Townsend made a statement about the threat of development to Garsington village. He believed that it was unnecessary to build a new motorway through the Green Belt and near to Garsington. Other areas were in greater need of investment. The proposed motorway was both unwanted and unneeded. He urged the Growth Board to adopt this as its response to the National Infrastructure Commission.

The chairman thanked Mr Townsend for his statement.

22 Presentation from the Environment Agency

Joe Cuthbertson, of the Environment Agency, gave a presentation on behalf of the Defra group, which also included the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Natural England and the Forestry Commission. He spoke about the need to include environmental considerations into the planned growth for Oxfordshire and urged the Growth Board to involve the Environment Agency in its early discussions. He believed that there did not have to be a choice between development and the environment; they could help each other.

RESOLVED: to welcome the Environment Agency's proposal for early engagement in planning for Oxfordshire's growth and ask officers to take this into account.

23 Presentation from Active Oxfordshire

Keith Johnston, of Active Oxfordshire, gave a presentation on the need to create increased physical activity as a daily habit. He outlined how the Growth Board could help with this challenge by:

- embedding the goal of creating an active population in the Growth Board's vision and strategies for Oxfordshire
- considering the impact on inactivity in decisions the Growth Board and its partner councils made
- creating new 'active environments' in new housing developments
- actively supporting opportunities for collaboration

The Growth Board supported Active Oxfordshire's aims. The Environment Agency and the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group concurred. The Growth Board's Housing Sub-Group had already discussed the need to design active living into new housing developments. Examples of this were cited at Bicester and Barton.

RESOLVED: to welcome the aims of Active Oxfordshire and to encourage better design of new housing developments to increase physical activity of Oxfordshire's population.

24 Oxford to Cambridge expressway corridor

The Growth Board considered a report on the Government's recent announcement on the preferred corridor for the proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway. Although there was some disappointment that the announcement did not end uncertainty on the route, the Growth Board welcomed the principle of the proposed expressway as it should relieve traffic pressure on the A34 and separate local traffic from national traffic. However, once the route had been decided, the Growth Board would work with local communities to mitigate its impacts.

The Growth Board agreed a set of principles to allow Oxfordshire to have an overall strategic position and make clear the main issues requiring further consideration. These were to:

1. help secure a more sustainable and integrated Oxfordshire transport network by:
 - providing enhanced local connections to reduce transport pressures on local roads around key settlements;
 - linking with and strengthening key transport hubs, such as integrated bus, rail and Park and Ride facilities;
 - securing opportunities for the development of new Park and Ride connections to Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge and rapid bus links between the three cities and surrounding market towns;
2. minimise its environmental damage and avoid sensitive areas such as areas with sites of special scientific interest and protected habitats;
3. support growth and the investigation of new settlement options through joint spatial plans; and
4. be future proofed, in terms of taking account of modal shift and innovation such as the rise of autonomous vehicles.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) agree that the chairman writes to Homes England and the Department for Transport to ask that the four principles above be taken into account in further decision-making on the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway; and
- (b) first circulate the draft letter to Growth Board members for comment.

25 Housing and Growth Deal delivery update

A report was presented on progress made with the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. The focus had been on the delivery of the year one programmes and working on future years programmes. Officers had also been implementing the planning freedoms and flexibilities announced by the Government in September. The Growth Board noted that its three sub-groups and the Scrutiny Panel had all held their first meetings in September. An engagement event had been organised for 18 October to explore opportunities and innovations for affordable housing.

RESOLVED: to note the progress made towards the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal milestones, set out in the deal's Delivery Plan.

26 Planning freedoms and flexibilities

The Growth Board received a report on the Government's announcement confirming the planning freedoms and flexibilities afforded to Oxfordshire. This was announced through a written ministerial statement. This set the requirement for the district councils' housing land supply at three years. This was effective from 12 September 2018 and would continue in place for each district until the adoption of the Oxfordshire Spatial Plan.

The Growth Board welcomed the Government's announcement but recognised the importance of delivering the spatial plan.

RESOLVED: to note the report and to welcome the Government's written ministerial statement on Oxfordshire's planning freedoms and flexibilities.

27 Feedback from Scrutiny Panel and Advisory Sub-Groups

The Growth Board received verbal updates from the chairmen of its Scrutiny Panel and the three sub-groups.

Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Andrew Gant, of Oxford City Council, had been appointed as chairman of the Scrutiny Panel. He reported that the panel aimed to add value to the work of the Growth Board. Its first meeting had concentrated on process, timing of meetings, and membership. The panel had agreed to meet on the Thursday before each Growth Board meeting. The panel asked that the Growth Board's agenda was published in sufficient time to allow for effective scrutiny.

The panel aimed to compile a forward plan and asked that this was published on the Growth Board's website alongside the panel's agendas and minutes.

The panel had identified the need for greater public engagement in Growth Board matters such as affordable housing, the local industrial strategy, and the route of the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway.

Joint Spatial Plan Sub-Group

Councillor James Mills, chairman of the Joint Spatial Plan Sub-Group reported that the first meeting had been effective, setting parameters and ensuring that the spatial plan followed the statutory framework. The group proposed public engagement on the draft plan through the sub-groups and key stakeholders. It would prepare a forward plan to lead its work and aimed to meet monthly, at least for the remainder of 2018, to prepare for the Regulation 18 consultation.

Housing Sub-Group

Councillor Susan Brown, chairman of the Housing Sub-Group, reported that the first meeting had been productive. The sub-group would prepare a forward plan. The members wished to share best practice and had looked at modular build and self-build concepts and healthy living design for new developments, tying in with the aims of Active Oxfordshire and the Environment Agency.

Infrastructure Sub-Group

Councillor Ian Hudspeth, chairman of the Infrastructure Sub-group, reported that its first meeting had looked at which infrastructure should be prioritised to unlock new development. Such decisions should be in line with the Housing Infrastructure Fund bids submitted to Government and the need to tie in with the route of the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway and other infrastructure. The sub-group had identified the need for greater flexibility in decision-making.

RESOLVED: to note the feedback from the Scrutiny Panel and the three sub-groups.

28 Oxfordshire local plans progress

The Growth Board considered a report updating on progress with the Local Plans. It was noted that Oxford City Council would meet in October to consider its plan for consultation under Regulation 19. South Oxfordshire would be doing likewise in December.

RESOLVED: to note the progress on the Local Plans.

29 Local Enterprise Partnership update

The Growth Board received an update from the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's chief executive on the Government's review of local enterprise partnerships, on progress with the Local Industrial Strategy, and on cross-corridor work with other local enterprise partnerships.

The chairman thanked the chief executive, Mr Tipple, for his update.

30 Sub-National Transport Body

The Growth Board received an update on the Sub-National Transport Body that was meeting in September to develop a shared vision across the Oxford to Cambridge corridor. At the next Growth Board meeting there would be a further written report.

31 Rail Connectivity Update

The Growth Board noted that the rail connectivity study was progressing, using Government funding. Presentation slides were displayed giving the detail.

In answer to a question from a Growth Board member, it was noted that the study would not stop at Charlbury but would extend across West Oxfordshire and on to Hereford and Worcester.

32 Updates on matters relevant to the Growth Board

None

33 Dates of next meetings

The dates of future Growth Board meetings are below. These will be held on Tuesdays at 2pm in Didcot Civic Hall.

- 27 November 2018
- 29 January 2019
- 26 March
- 4 June

The meeting closed at 3.25 pm

Chairman

Date