

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Oxfordshire Growth Board

OXFORDSHIRE

G R O W T H B O A R D

HELD ON TUESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2018 AT 2.00 PM

DIDCOT CIVIC HALL, BRITWELL ROAD, DIDCOT, OX11 7JN

Present:

Voting members: Councillors Jane Murphy (Chairman) (South Oxfordshire District Council), Roger Cox (Vice-Chairman) (Vale of White Horse District Council), Susan Brown (Oxford City Council), Ian Hudspeth (Oxfordshire County Council), James Mills (West Oxfordshire District Council) and Barry Wood (Cherwell District Council)

Non-voting members: Professor Alistair Fitt (Universities' Representative), Angus Horner (Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership business representative - Science Vale), Peter Nolan (Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership business representative - Oxford City), Lesley Tims (Environment Agency Strategic Planning and Engagement Manager for Thames Area), Catherine Turner (Homes and Communities Agency),

Officers: Steve Culliford (South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils), Andrew Down (South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils), Christine Gore (West Oxfordshire District Council), Caroline Green (Oxford City Council), Bev Hindle (Oxfordshire County Council), Jonathan McWilliam (Oxfordshire County Council), Yvonne Rees (Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council), and Paul Staines (Oxfordshire Growth Board)

Other attendees: Andrew Gant (Growth Board Scrutiny Panel Chair), Ahmed Goga (Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership), and Diane Hedges (Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Gordon Mitchell (Oxford City Council Chief Executive) and Mark Stone (South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council Chief Executive).

2 Chairman's announcements

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

3 Declarations of interest

None

4 Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Oxfordshire Growth Board's meeting held on 25 September 2018 be signed and adopted as a correct record, subject to clarifying in minute 24 that the statement "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" was the view of Councillor Ian Hudspeth, leader of Oxfordshire County Council as the strategic transport authority, not the collective opinion of the Growth Board.

5 Public participation

The Growth Board received three questions and one statement.

1. Question from Councillor Suzanne Bartington (Oxfordshire County Councillor for Witney North and East Division):

"The UK was at the forefront of negotiating the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda – the global framework for tackling the most pressing global challenges of our time. Agreed by world leaders at the UN in 2015, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs are universal with all signatories expected to contribute to them internationally and deliver them domestically, however progress has been variable across the UK. How does the Growth Board plan to embed the SDGs within the vision for Oxfordshire and embed relevant indicators to measure progress towards delivery?"

In reply, the chairman reported that in terms of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, all councils were clear that the challenge for Oxfordshire was to plan for future growth in a sustainable way. The advantages of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan was that long-term comprehensive planning offered benefits over and above the usual approach to spatial planning. The Joint Statutory Spatial Plan would set a framework for the future of Oxfordshire and would seek to help address a number of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular to help ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing (goal 3), promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth (goal 8), promote the building of resilient infrastructure (goal 9), make human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (goal 11), and take action to combat the impacts of climate change (goal 13).

2. Question from Helen Marshall on behalf on the Oxfordshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE Oxfordshire):

"Ref. Agenda item 7 – Feedback from sub-groups

As Growth Board members are hopefully aware, CPRE Oxfordshire has sought from the start to respond to the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan process in a positive and constructive way and we have welcomed the Growth Board's recognition of the value we could add as an informed stakeholder. It would therefore be disappointing, to say the least, if meaningful engagement should fail at such an early stage.

We are most surprised to note that an outline version of the JSSP Regulation 18 consultation document was due to be brought to a meeting of the Advisory Sub-Group on 15 November, which we assume has now taken place. At the October meeting, this is described as a 'skeletal document, however what the document would say is broadly known'.

However CPRE and, we assume, other stakeholders have not yet been involved in any detailed discussions to inform this document.

We ask the Growth Board to:

- (a) Confirm what level of detail this document covers, including whether it has begun the process of identifying broad areas for growth
- (b) Confirm specifically how and when stakeholders will be involved in discussions relating to its content
- (c) Explain what information and evidence the Board currently considers will be required to support the biodiversity & natural environment and green infrastructure strategic policies proposed in the JSSP Scoping Document, and what resource will be made available to achieve this?"

The chairman replied:

- (a) Work had commenced on sketching out the scope and structure of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire that would be published for consultation in February/March 2019, as identified in the Local Development Scheme. Over the coming weeks, the officer team responsible for the preparation of the plan would continue to gather evidence and background information, and engage with partners and stakeholders to begin fleshing out the content of that document. Work had not commenced on identifying broad areas for growth.
- (b) Engagement would be an on-going process throughout the project and not limited to the formal consultation stages. A Joint Statutory Spatial Plan launch event was planned for December and invitations would go out to over 100 stakeholder bodies (including the CPRE) in the coming days. This was one step in the engagement process but would provide valuable input into the consultation document. A communications and engagement advisor had been appointed to the officer team and would be working up a more detailed communications and engagement plan for the project.
- (c) The level of information and evidence required to support the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan would be built up as the project progresses. At this early stage of the plan-making process, officers already had access to good quality baseline information and would seek to add to this for the later stages of the project. Conversations were underway with officers of the councils and Thames Valley Record Centre to ensure the appropriate evidence would be available at the right times and procured in a timely manner. The Joint Statutory Spatial Plan budget had provision for commissioning advice, data and analysis from expert bodies/consultants.

Helen Marshall replied with a supplementary statement. Whilst recognising the challenging timescales and problems with staff recruitment, could the Growth Board remember the challenges the CPRE, and other stakeholders, had themselves to engage with tight timescales imposed by the Growth Board, and work with stakeholders to address that.

3. Question from Sue Haywood on behalf of the coalition Planning for Real NEED not Spectacular GREED in Oxfordshire:

“Need Not Greed Oxfordshire (NNGO) is a coalition of 35 groups from across the county, together representing thousands of community members. At a meeting in the Spring, and in further conversations with Growth Board Members, NNGO was grateful to hear that its involvement in the JSSP process would be welcome, with rhetoric that suggested opportunities whereby we could add value in bringing evidence and issues for consideration that are pertinent to a broader sustainability agenda for Oxfordshire actively into the decision-making processes and in particular would be well placed to contribute valuable voice and appropriate insights about rural community needs and the rural economy.

We have noted the changing JSSP timetable, and acknowledge the challenges that the Growth Board and project team are having to manage, yet some of the reports presented to this meeting suggest a number of activities are progressing for which we would have expected stakeholder engagement to have been necessary in order to provide any meaningful basis and evidence and struggle to see how and when the stakeholder input required for this could have been undertaken. An example of this is the proposed production of the draft Regulation 18 document for the JSSP Panel, albeit just "testing options" at this stage, but difficult to reconcile when even the consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement has yet to start. NNGO would therefore ask:

- In light of its previous indications, how specifically does the Growth Board see NNGO adding value to the JSSP process and where in the structure would this occur?

Also, given the changing timetable, how does the Growth Board see meaningful wider public engagement, as well as just consultation processes, happening, what changes to the LDS and Statement of Community Involvement might now need to be made, and who will do this (will locally elected members have an opportunity to input to this process for example)?”

The chairman reported that:

- (a) Engagement would be an on-going process throughout the project and not limited to the formal consultation stages. A Joint Statutory Spatial Plan launch event was planned for December and invitations would go out to over 100 stakeholder bodies (including one for NNGO) in the coming days. This was one step in the engagement process but would provide valuable input into the consultation document. A communications and engagement advisor had been appointed to the officer team and would be working up a more detailed communications and engagement plan for the project.
- (b) The key milestones of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan project were set out in the Local Development Scheme that had been approved and adopted by all councils in September/October 2018. Those milestones had not been amended. The Statement of Community Involvement was approved for public consultation at the same meetings of the councils. That public consultation was programmed to begin in the next week and would run for an extended period of six weeks to take into account the Christmas break. The intention was that a report will go to all councils in January seeking approval and adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement (subject to any amendments that were necessary following the public consultation) and also approval of the spatial plan consultation document to commence public consultation which would run

in February and March. The decision makers at every stage of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan project would be the elected members of the district councils. County councillors would receive the same reports in the same timetable as the district councillors.

Sue Haywood asked a supplementary question. Whilst welcoming the opportunity to take part in the stakeholder event, would there be an opportunity to change the scope of the spatial plan and its Local Development Scheme?

The chairman replied that every suggestion would be given proper consideration.

4. Statement from Helen Gee, a South Oxfordshire resident (read out in her absence):

“I understand that the Oxfordshire Growth Board will hold its next meeting on 27 November. I would like to write, as a resident of South Oxfordshire, and register my wholesale objection to the completely undemocratic nature of this Board. It does not, in any way, represent the wishes of the people of Oxfordshire. It appears, from your minutes of the 25 September meeting, that you have 6 voting members who seem to have complete authority to make decisions which will affect the lives of thousands of people in the county. I cannot understand how the Oxfordshire Growth Board, as an unelected body, has this power.

I see that the Board has resolved a statement that it welcomed the principle of the proposed expressway as a way to ‘relieve traffic pressure on the A34 and separate local traffic from national traffic’. This is not the view of a vast majority of people in the county and is highly unrepresentative. I am extremely angry that the Growth Board appears to be pushing for the A34 to be a road for ‘local traffic’ and thereby supporting a new motorway to the south of Oxford. This would destroy miles of rural land, Green Belt and village communities. It is completely unnecessary and would have an extremely detrimental effect on the current residents of the affected areas.

On a connected note, I believe that there is clearly another agenda here – to do with housing and the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, which seems to be a Government bribe to override the views of the current residents of Oxfordshire and impose unreasonable and outrageous levels of house building.

I note that the minutes of 31 July state that the Growth Board is entering into an intensive period of engagement with stakeholders. I believe that we, the people who live in Oxfordshire, are stakeholders and yet our views, expressed individually and though our Parish Councils are not being listened to.

The 31 July ‘Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Update’ states that it anticipates that the deal will ‘realise significant long term economic benefits to the UK’. This seems nonsensical when there are other regions in the UK that are far more in need of Government money, infrastructure and an economic boost.

The Growth Board’s stance on both the Expressway and the housing and growth plans for Oxfordshire are not consistent with the view of the residents (stakeholders) of Oxfordshire.”

The chairman thanked the four members of the public for their participation.

6 Feedback from the scrutiny panel

Councillor Andrew Gant, chair of the Growth Board's Scrutiny Panel, gave some feedback from the recent panel meeting. The panel had made several recommendations to the Growth Board. The chairman gave the following replies.

| Scrutiny Panel's recommendation | Growth Board chairman's reply |
|--|---|
| <p>1: That the Growth Board considers and adopts the following principles of responding to the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations:</p> <p>(a) The presentation of recommendations, and their accompanying narrative, is presented to the meeting at which a relevant decision is to be taken. The Panel asks that the Growth Board gives full consideration and written responses to the recommendations made, addressing not only the recommendation, but also the rationale and context as provided in these reports going forward.</p> <p>(b) A suggested template response form was provided for the Growth Board to use to record its responses. It is requested that once a draft response is completed (preferably by the Growth Board's chairman in liaison with officers) that this document is published as a supplement to the Growth Board's agenda or minutes, and the Board will be asked to give its full endorsement or otherwise to the draft response and decision in relation to any recommendations.</p> <p>(c) Under the current meeting arrangements, the Scrutiny Panel would hope to circulate its report and recommendations to the Growth Board on Friday or Monday after its meeting, and would hope to publish this together with the Growth Board's draft response on the morning of the day the Growth Board is due to meet (Tuesday). The response(s) will also be reported back to the Scrutiny Panel at their next meeting.</p> | <p>The Growth Board would use its best endeavours to meet these requests.</p> |
| <p>2: That the Growth Board takes further steps to raise concerns with Central Government about the timing of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan's submission deadline, and individual Local Plan submission deadlines, in April 2019 as required by the Growth Deal, without first understanding more details about the impact of the proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway.</p> | <p>Agreed</p> |
| <p>3: That in light of the continuing uncertainty about the route choice and its impact on the communities affected and the wider county, the Growth Board clarifies its rationale and evidence base for endorsing the expressway.</p> | <p>The Growth Board's stance on the proposed Oxford to Cambridge expressway was set out in the letter to Government dated 1 October 2018 and published on the Growth Board's website. The decision on the route</p> |

| Scrutiny Panel's recommendation | Growth Board chairman's reply |
|--|--|
| | of the expressway lies with the Government, not the Growth Board or the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. |
| 4: At least one member of the Growth Board should attend each Scrutiny Panel meeting to answer questions about the Board's work. The chair of one of the sub-groups should attend in rotation to discuss the work of their sub-group. | Growth Board members or sub-group chairmen should be invited when a relevant item appears on the Scrutiny Panel's agenda. |
| 5: Officers working on the Housing and Growth Deal's strands as part of the Deal team and the Lead officer for the councils should attend the Scrutiny Panel as appropriate to answer questions and discuss their work. | Officers should be invited when a relevant item appears on the Scrutiny Panel's agenda. |
| 6: That the Growth Board establishes a clear pro-active process for informing district, county and parish councillors about their work and future consultations and decisions. This may take the form of a circulated newsletter or bulletin sent out by the Board's programme officer, and should not rely solely on the information posted on the Board's website. | All parish councils would be sent a link to the Growth Board's website. County and district councillors could also update parish councils. |
| 7: That the Growth Board takes formal votes on all items for decision, and records in the minutes each Leader's individual vote, to increase transparency about decisions and each Council's stance. | The Growth Board would take a formal vote, if requested by a Board member. |
| 8: That the Growth Board remains fully committed to encouraging public engagement in the Board's work. | The Growth Board continues to be committed to encouraging engagement, as evidenced by the public participation at this and every Growth Board meeting. |
| 9: That the Energy Strategy Action Plan is revised to ensure it contains SMART targets and clear and measurable objectives. | The Energy Strategy is on the agenda for this meeting. This point is valid. |

7 Feedback from the sub-groups

The chairmen of the Growth Board's sub-groups gave feedback from their recent meetings, the minutes of which were included with the Growth Board's agenda.

The Growth Board noted that:

- the Government's forthcoming decision on the route of the Oxford to Cambridge expressway had significant implications for Oxfordshire's Joint Statutory Spatial Plan
- the scoping document of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan had been updated
- the affordable housing programme was on track in year 1
- Homes England had agreed 'in principle' to reprofile the year 1 infrastructure programme; formal agreement was being sought

8 Healthy place-shaping in the wider growth agenda

Further to the discussion at the last meeting, the Growth Board discussed a paper on embedding health into the growth agenda. Jonathan McWilliam, the Director of Public Health at Oxfordshire County Council, also gave a presentation on the benefits of healthy place-shaping.

The Growth Board welcomed the opportunity to bring together planning health and wellbeing with planning for housing and economic growth, and planning for improved infrastructure. The benefits of healthy place-shaping had already been experienced through successful schemes at Barton and Bicester, which had improved people's lives. Healthy place-shaping could be embedded through the sub-groups working on housing, infrastructure and the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, and there should be a common agenda developed for the Growth Board, the Health and Wellbeing Board, and the Community Safety Partnerships.

The Growth Board suggested that the experiences gained from Barton and Bicester should be used to develop healthy place-shaping. Such a strategy should aim, for example, to reduce health inequalities, build communities and reduce loneliness, improve air quality, reduce reliance on private transport and move towards cleaner vehicles, and help people to live in their own homes for longer. The councils and agencies must work together and avoid duplication. The Growth Board considered that officers could use the Growth Deal's capacity funding to assist with this agenda through the preparation of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, if funds were available.

The preparation of a healthy place-shaping strategy was supported by Diane Hedges representing the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and by Lesley Tims representing the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) request the production of a strategy for how healthy place-shaping can ensure that development supports the creation of healthy communities. This will inform the work of the Housing and Growth Deal and Growth Board workstreams;
- (b) embed officers with a remit for healthy place-shaping into the Growth Board sub-structures, including the Growth Deal Programme Board and the workstreams for the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, infrastructure, housing, and productivity working with the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership;
- (c) embed healthy place-shaping into the development of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, the Local Industrial Strategy and the Environment Strategy. This will ensure influence over the strategic design and siting of local communities and local industry

and will also embrace environmental concerns. This will also enable the principles of healthy place-shaping to be incorporated into the Local Plans of the future in Oxford City and the districts;

- (d) create a network of officers from across respective organisations whose role (in addition to their other duties) will be to understand and keep up to date with the developments in the approach to healthy place-shaping and its evolving evidence-base. The intention is that healthy place-shaping becomes a routine part of planning in the county, and so the network will be drawn from officers with specialist knowledge of implementing healthy place-shaping and our various local authority planning departments as well as from the NHS, public health, and other partners. A lead officer and a chief executive sponsor will be appointed to coordinate this approach across the work of the Growth Board and the Housing and Growth Deal;
- (e) hold a county-wide workshop for senior councillors and officers on this topic, as set out in programme for the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan. This will scope further the potential for this approach and will help to define how it will be included in the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan when it goes for public consultation in February 2019. This should be convened jointly with the Health and Wellbeing Board, which will further serve to strengthen joined-up planning across all organisations; and
- (f) consider how capacity to assist with implementing the healthy place-shaping strategy should be funded.

9 Energy strategy

Ahmed Goga, of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, presented the draft Energy Strategy. This was in response to the Government's request to develop local strategies that supported the national goal for clean growth.

The Growth Board welcomed the draft strategy but believed that the Growth Board should have a greater influence over energy providers' strategic decisions, where they had an impact on Oxfordshire's growth.

The Growth Board noted the intention to develop a delivery plan that would take into account the emerging Local Industrial Strategy and the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan.

RESOLVED: to endorse the draft Energy Strategy, subject to the action plan being revised to ensure it contains SMART targets and clear and measurable objectives.

10 Housing and Growth Deal delivery

Officers reported on progress with delivering the Housing and Growth Deal. The Growth Board noted the main messages that:

- there had been slippage in the year 1 infrastructure programme with an associated underspend. Homes England had agreed 'in principle' to reprofile the year 1 infrastructure programme; formal agreement was being sought
- the draft infrastructure programme for years 2 to 5 was presented for the Growth Board's approval, after which a detailed delivery plan would be prepared
- the affordable housing programme was on course to meet its year 1 targets and an indicative programme for years 2 to 3 had been prepared and submitted to Homes

England by 30 September 2018, in accordance with the agreed milestone in the deal

- work was progressing on the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan
- the draft Local Industrial Strategy (encapsulating the productivity stream of the deal) was being prepared and would be subject to consultation with stakeholders

The Growth Board welcomed the report and reiterated its support for the Housing and Growth Deal. Members urged officers to keep up the good work on delivering the deal to retain the benefits for Oxfordshire. The Growth Board endorsed the draft infrastructure programme for years 2 to 5.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) note the progress at the end of quarter 2 against the year 1 milestones in the Housing and Growth Deal;
- (b) endorse the summary indicative affordable housing programme for years 2 to 3; and
- (c) endorse the infrastructure delivery programme for years 2 to 5.

11 Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership update

The Growth Board received an update from the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. In December, the partnership would have its annual meeting with the Government to assess its performance against the delivery of the productivity stream of the Housing and Growth Deal and to identify future projects. An update would be provided at the next meeting.

12 Growth Board Work Programme

The Growth Board reviewed its work programme for 2019 and asked officers to refine it further and publish it on the Growth Board's website.

13 Updates on matters relevant to the Growth Board

No further matters were raised.

14 Dates of next meetings

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

- 29 January 2019
- 26 March
- 4 June

The meeting closed at 3.17 pm

Chairman

Date