

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Oxfordshire Growth Board

HELD ON TUESDAY 4 JUNE 2019 AT 2.00 PM

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

Present:

Voting members: Councillors Susan Brown, Sue Cooper (Chair), Ian Hudspeth, James Mills, Barry Wood and Emily Smith, (Vice-Chair).

Non-voting members: Angus Horner (OxLEP business representative - Science Vale), Professor Linda King (Universities representative), Adrian Lockwood (OxLEP Vice-Chairman and Skills Board Representative), Jeremy Long (OxLEP Chairman), Louise Patten (Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group), Lesley Tims (Environment Agency) and Catherine Turner (Homes and Communities Agency).

Officers: Caroline Green (Oxford City Council), Bev Hindle (Oxfordshire Growth Board), Giles Hughes (West Oxfordshire District Council, Kevin Jacob, (Oxfordshire Growth Board), Gordon Mitchell (Oxford City Council), Paul Staines, (Oxfordshire Growth Deal), Yvonne Rees, (Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council), Aaron Rosser, (Oxfordshire Growth Deal), Mark Stone, (South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils) and Nigel Tipple, (OxLEP).

Other councillors: Councillor Andrew Gant (Oxford City Council and Chair of the Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Committee).

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Alistair Fitt, (Universities Representative), who was substituted by Professor Linda King, Peter Nolan, (OxLEP Business Representative for Oxford City) and Philp Shadbolt, (OxLEP Business Representative for Bicester).

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Oxfordshire Growth Board held on 26 March 2019 be signed and adopted as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- Clarification of the statement in the last paragraph, 2nd sentence of minute 39 to read “In respect of the A40 HIF bid, Councillor Mills commented that there had been a good level of engagement between West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council in the design of the proposals. He welcomed this given the big impact of the A40 *had on anyone who lives, works and travels through West Oxfordshire*.”
- Clarification of the fifth bullet point of Minute 40 to replace reference to natural capacity to ‘*natural capital*’.

4 Chairman's announcements

The Chair announced that a review was to be undertaken of the Growth Board to ensure it remained fit for purpose. The scope of the review was yet to be finalised but would consider several issues including the functions of the Growth Board and its operation and transparency. Other matters such as the timing of meetings, funding of the Board and input from partners would also be assessed. Bev Hindle, Growth Board Director, had been asked to undertake this review and would report back on progress at the September meeting.

Speaking in her capacity as Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, the Chair expressed her opinion that the review should include looking at changing the Growth Board’s name. It was important that it reflected the importance of sustainability not just growth as this had negative connotations amongst a proportion of the public.

With the agreement of the Chair, Councillor Ian Hudspeth responded that, notwithstanding any potential name change, it was important to recognise that the Oxfordshire Growth Board had been successful in securing significant funding for infrastructure and affordable homes from HM Government – in a way that other growth boards sought to emulate. While concerns around growth were understood, the key was around achieving growth that was sustainable. Care, therefore, had to be taken not to send a message to HM Government that there was any misunderstanding of purpose.

5 Public participation

The Growth Board received five public questions from members of the public.

1. Daniel Scharf MRTPI

The majority of the constituent councils are now operating under a “Climate and Environmental Emergency”. It should be safe to assume that this will frame and inform all their future operations and decisions, as well as those of the Growth Board?

In terms of “growth”, will the Growth Board now commission work on how its preoccupation with economic growth could be made consistent with the need to reduce carbon emissions in very short order (i.e. heading for zero by 2030), and reverse the collapse of biodiversity due to operations both within the County, and through impacts elsewhere, but attributable to its activities?

Answer

In reply, the Chair commented that as the Growth Board was a joint committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire (together with key strategic partners), the priorities of the constituent councils will shape the Growth Board’s operations and decisions.

In terms of planning, the balancing of social, environmental and economic objectives will be tested locally and explored through the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan, particularly through a robust and comprehensive Sustainability Appraisal process.

At this point, speaking as in her capacity as Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, Councillor Cooper set out the approach of South Oxfordshire District Council in declaring a climate change and environmental emergency and at her invitation, the other Leaders present set out the approach of their respective councils.

2. Daniel Scharf MRTPI on behalf of Antony Melville

For the operation of the Growth Board to succeed, there needs to be a high level of trust by the public in the land use planning system, beginning with ensuring that growth does not take place at the expense of the environment.

A very clear example of how trust has broken down is the proposal to build an Expressway between Oxford and Cambridge. The construction of a new road, to enable 1 million car dependent houses to be built along a 'corridor' of movement, will substantially increase carbon emissions during a period when these must be eliminated. The energy intensive process of manufacturing new electric vehicles and batteries will mean that electrification of the road system will not result in a significant reduction in net carbon, without there being significantly fewer vehicles, that would remove the need for any new road building. It will be very hard to trust in promises of biodiversity gains. The National Infrastructure Commission, (NIC) has itself stated that new road building is a spur to the growth of car and road freight traffic (see NIC Congestion, capacity and carbon 2017).

Has the Growth Board been provided with any evidence regarding:

- the impact of electrification or automation of road traffic?
- the prejudice that the threat of a new road would have on completion of the rail link (i.e. make it less likely and/or less viable)? or,
- the increase in traffic and congestion on the A34 and other feeder roads along its length and at either end?

I have had lengthy correspondence with the NIC and there are no answers to these questions.

Answer

The Chair replied that the agenda for the meeting included an update on the Oxford to Cambridge Arc which she hoped Mr Scharf would find informative. The proposal to build an Expressway between Oxford and Cambridge is being led by Highways England on behalf of the Department for Transport, not the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

Many of the Oxfordshire councils have raised questions about the Expressway proposals and/or sought further information.

Highways England has indicated that it expects to undertake consultation on route options this autumn. It is likely that more information will be made available at that time.

3. Daniel Scharf MRTPI on behalf of Steve Dawe

There is a consensus that half the carbon associated with new housing is embodied in the building and associated infrastructure at practical completion, and before occupation [see National House Building Council (NHBC), the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) and the UK Green Building Council

(UKGBC)]. This implies a moratorium on the use of concrete and masonry until the climate emergency is over, and meeting housing needs by concentrating on carbon negative materials and reducing the levels of under-occupation of the existing housing stock through incentivizing sub-divisions. 50% of houses in Oxford City have one and, more often, two spare bedrooms. Outside the City the number is closer to 80%. In these circumstances, what specific measures are being taken by the Growth Board to ensure that 'embodied carbon' is taken fully into account to ensure that the building of housing, employment and associated infrastructure will approach net zero emissions by 2030?

Answer

The Chair responded that National Planning Policy allowed local planning authorities to set local requirements for building sustainability in a way that was consistent with HM Government's zero carbon buildings policy and nationally described standards. Any local requirements for building sustainability must be informed by evidence and subject to consultation. The potential to establish Oxfordshire-wide requirements for building sustainability will be explored and tested through the Oxfordshire Plan process.

The issues of policy on zero carbon buildings was a matter for the local planning authorities rather than the Growth Board except for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. Speaking as the Leader of South Oxfordshire District, South Oxfordshire is very keen to explore zero carbon building in future, but I am slightly concerned about the timing of any moratorium on the use of concrete and masonry. I hope that HM Government will soon upgrade building regulations which would be the easiest way of getting zero carbon buildings in place and that local councils do all that they can.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Susan Brown commented on the question in relation to references to Oxford City. As part of its draft local plan, Oxford City had proposed very high environmental standards which would be considered as part of the local plan process and looked forward to an upgrade in national building regulations. In respect of empty rooms, the figure of 50% of houses in Oxford with one or more spare bedrooms was not recognised, rather her experience of Oxford was of people living in overcrowded conditions. There was a housing crisis in Oxford and a need to build new homes. Whilst there was a need to build to high environmental standards, she could not support a total moratorium on the use of concrete and masonry.

Daniel Scharf responded with a supplementary statement that the figures quoted had taken from the 2011 census. The Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government had informed him that building regulations would not cover the issue of embodied carbon because of the lack of an agreed methodology. For this reason, the organisations including the UK Green Building Council had been referenced and it was not possible to build out of the housing crisis without breaching carbon limits.

The Chair responded that, therefore, it looked likely that it would be up to local councils to achieve the highest standards that they could.

4. Helen Marshall on behalf of CPRE

We note from the minutes of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Sub-Group, 18 April, that there is a table setting out the work required to develop the emerging evidence/evidence needed in support of the Plan. However, at the recent Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Stakeholder Forum, the Plan team appeared unable, or possibly unwilling, to answer the following question:

“Has an update to the Oxfordshire SHMA 2014 and/or an Oxford Green Belt Review been commissioned and, if so, will the Terms of Reference be made publicly available and when will the report/s be published?”

Can the Growth Board:

- a) Please, give an answer to this question?
- b) Undertake to make the table referenced above publicly available? (This would increase the transparency of the process and enable non-statutory organisations, that may well have access to vital and relevant evidence, to understand the timing and context in which this should be provided).

Answer

In reply the Chair commented that the Oxfordshire Plan will need to be supported by an appropriate level of evidence to satisfy an inspector that the plan is sound. This evidence will need to be appropriate to the scope, time period and geographical coverage of the Oxfordshire Plan.

The next stage of work on the Oxfordshire Plan includes identifying and testing options, including on levels of growth. As such further work on housing needs (to look at the whole plan period) is required inform those options. It is intended that the next stage of public consultation will explore and test those options and please feel free to participate in that consultation when it opens.

In 2015, consultants were commissioned by the Oxfordshire Growth Board to undertake an assessment of Green Belt within the County. The Councils are currently considering commissioning an update to the 2015 study to reflect more recent changes to Green Belt boundaries in emerging local plans as well as any recently completed development.

All of the evidence that will inform the choices to be made in the Oxfordshire Plan will be made publicly available in order that the options being tested, or later, the draft policies being promoted, can be considered in the light of the evidence available.

The table that has been shared with the Member Sub-group is a living list of the various streams of work being progressed to build the required evidence base, and is shown below:

Stream of work/Document	Lead/Notes
Sustainability Appraisal	LUC commissioned
Infrastructure Delivery Plan	County Council leading on work
Green Belt Assessment	Considering commissioning an update to the 2015 study
Local Industrial Strategy	OxLEP leading on work
Housing Needs Assessment and Economic Forecasting - part 1	Iceni Projects Ltd commissioned
Employment Land Needs Assessment	Included in above commission
Living Labs	County Council and LEP carrying out work
Future role of town centres	Topic paper

Strategic Housing and Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and Call for Ideas	Oxfordshire Plan Team
Viability/Deliverability	To be commissioned later in project
Health Impact Assessment	Authority health specialists working on project
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Part of SA
Habitats Regulation Assessment	Ricardo commissioned
Landscape, Heritage and Natural Capital	Authority specialists working on project
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	Use a combination of all five districts SFRA data
Water Cycle Study	Being commissioned
Transport and connectivity	To be commissioned with the County Council
Energy	Authority specialists working on project

5. Sue Haywood on behalf of Need Not Greed Oxfordshire

The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is ostensibly shown to have both an "influencing" as well as "influenced by" relationship with both the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and the Ox-Cam Arc. Indications are the LIS may be signed off by Government in early summer, risking pre-determining the Plan's outcomes. Why, therefore, is there so limited visible discussion to date about these at Growth Board meetings or its subcommittee meetings or by the Growth Board's constituent local authorities' committees?

Answer

The Chair replied that: The Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy had been developed over a number of months with several key stakeholder meetings with presentations on its progress from time to time through the Growth Board and a presentation was also given to the Oxfordshire Leader's meeting recently. While the Growth Board reviews this strategy in its remit overseeing the Housing and Growth Deal (the LIS is part of our Deal), the governance for its adoption is through the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Once adopted it will be one strategy of many that will have influence to some extent on the emerging Oxfordshire Plan. Whilst non-statutory in nature it is still valuable evidence and strategic direction which needs to be considered and taken account of in the emerging Oxfordshire Plan. These were ongoing processes, not one offs and would need to be kept up to date.

As for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, this will have little impact on the Oxfordshire Plan in the immediate future until more was known about it; over time, this may change to have greater influence and all these things would be kept up to date and under review. As outlined in the Spring Statement there is a commitment between local authorities and LEPs in the Arc to work collaboratively with Government to develop a shared ambition. It is expected the Growth Board and its constituent members will be active as that work develops which was still at the beginnings. If it did progress, the Arc would have an impact on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and if and when there was a material impact, due consideration for such impact will be considered by the Growth Board by updates. A key message was that the Oxford to Cambridge Arc was new and arrangements were still evolving.

Supplementary question

Sue Haywood asked a supplementary question. The comments made by the Chair of the Growth Board at the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 30 May and earlier that day about a review of the Growth Board's processes in light of the new and developing relationships were welcomed. It had been a concern of Need Not Greed members that a number of matters had not come out to councillors in the individual Growth Board authorities for meaningful discussion, such as the intended Joint Declaration. Therefore, would the review of the Growth Board be able to consider the timing and dissemination of knowledge about the Growth Board to local councillors?

Supplementary answer

The Chair replied that she hoped that would be the case and that relevant timings would need to be part of the review including the timing of the Scrutiny Panel relative to the Growth Board meeting itself. In principle it was hoped that things would improve including the Growth Board's communication with the public, councillors and local organisations.

6 Oxford to Cambridge Arc Update

The Growth Board received a presentation from Bev Hindle, Director Oxford to Cambridge Arc Leaders and Chief Executive Groups and Director Oxfordshire Growth Board, which provided an update on the Oxford to Cambridge Arc. Key aspects from the presentation were in summary that:

- The Arc was in the early stages of its development and the role of Director of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Leaders Group was being defined. At this stage it was principally to help organise what was a coalition of willing participants to explore and understand what might be meant by the Arc, what its geographical area might be and why it was needed.
- The rationale and ideas for coordination and grouping of the area between Oxford to Cambridge to realise its potential had evolved over time, but the genesis of the current initiatives related to the work of the National Infrastructure Commission and efforts to understand more about the economic potential of the region. HM Government's response to the NIC's work at that time was that it wanted to investigate the potential further with the support of local authorities, local enterprise partnerships and universities. However, it had been difficult to agree a shared vision for the project and unfortunately some unhelpful headlines had emerged around housing numbers and the public's perception of the Arc had been coloured by this.
- An objective of the Arc Leaders Group was to seek to rebalance this conversation
- The Arc area encompassed 30 local authorities including county, district and unitary authorities, 4 local economic partnerships, 10 universities, many diverse business interests.
- HM Government in its 2019 Spring Statement set out that the Arc was an area of economic importance for the country, that it was a Government priority and that ministerial and civil servant resourcing should be coordinated and allocated to it.
- Local Enterprise Partnerships had done significant work to map significant clusters of economic activity across the Arc area. The challenge was to do more by linking the areas up. Such linkages did not, however, necessarily imply the provision of an expressway or railway line, as it might be possible to achieve the same result through other means e.g. digital connectivity.
- The challenge and opportunity for the Arc was to achieve more in collaboration than would have otherwise been possible through the sum of the actions of individual organisations or which would have happened anyway to plan for growth and economic area.

- The Arc Leaders Group does not currently have any decision making or formal board governance structures. It is a grouping of local authorities, local enterprise partnerships and universities working collaboratively and was not intended to reinstate a version of a regional assembly.
- Although sub-national structures and groupings had been created in other areas of the country, for instance London and the Northern Powerhouse, no such group had existed for the area of the country covered by the Arc - even though this area had been the most successful economic area of the country apart from London
- The different strands of the Arc activity fed into the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Leaders Group of local authorities and Arc as a whole. The Arc also had links to other regional strategic grounds such as England's Economic Heartland, (EEH).
- The workstreams of the Arc related to productivity, place and connectivity would be very important in pulling the work of the Arc together. Future potential workstreams included the environment and greater work with the health sector.
- The Joint Declaration with HM Government set out a shared ambition for the Arc up to 2050 and represented a general commitment to seek to work together without specific commitments that might have been problematic. It did not represent a commitment towards joint governance or joint planning within the Arc area at that stage.
- It was fundamental to explore the potential for tangible benefits for Oxfordshire coming out of engagement in the Arc whilst still taking account of the impact of events outside of the Arc area.
- Next steps include a genuine process by local authority leaders, local enterprise partnerships and universities to engage with the public and reframe and restart the conversations about the Arc, its value, its purpose and programme. It was intended to take a report to the Arc Leaders Group meeting on 21 June regarding this.
- In addition, further HM Government commitment to the Arc would be sought through the Autumn Statement/Comprehensive Spending Review and discussions about a spatial framework and implications for Oxfordshire would continue. His recommendation to the Growth Board and its constituent authorities was that they should consider engaging in that process.
- The Arc was not about the Expressway or about an East West rail. It was recognised both were relevant to and happening in parallel to the Arc's own work, but that they were following distinct and separate statutory processes.

As Chairman of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Leaders Group, Councillor Barry Wood added the following points in summary:

- He wished to reinforce the point that the Arc represented a coalition of the willing and that it was open to local authorities who did not wish to collaborate to leave if they choose to.
- In his view it was important that all councils recognised the potential value of collaborating in this area with HM Government in addition to greater coordination and collaboration within central government itself. It was also important to join up local aspirations and aims with HM Government and its next step agencies such as Homes England, Environment Agency etc.
- It was recognised that regional planning agencies and plans had not been popular prior to their abolition, but there was the prospect of the potential for collaboratively achieved sub-regional planning and that there could potentially be benefits to Oxfordshire of that work.
- Working collaboratively opened the potential of not just achieving more than would otherwise be the case, but also achieving better outcomes.

- An environmental workstream within the Arc's work would be an important part of the Arc's work.
- The emphasis within the Joint Declaration of the value of the natural environment and the aim of realising housing and growth ambitions without degradation of the environment was highlighted along the link to HM Government's 25-year environmental plan and importance of innovative housing design.
- There was much to be gained and achieved through joint working and collaboration by Oxfordshire in the Arc.

In discussion, Louise Patten on behalf of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group commented that recognition of the importance of health and healthy placemaking was welcome. It was important that a networked approach was taken across the potential geographical area of the Arc to understand emergent thinking and for the health sector to be part of building the infrastructure that would be needed. Health leaders were already working together across the area and it was suggested it would be possible to report back to the Growth Board on emerging health thinking and how it linked back to the Growth Board and the development of the Arc.

Councillor Hudspeth commented that all Leaders were part of the Leaders Group, but that Councillor Wood had been elected to be Chair and paid tribute to his role. He outlined some of the issues with the previous regional planning authorities but commented that in his view it was now important to engage with Arc so that Oxfordshire authorities were represented.

Councillor Mills referred to his appointment as the Growth Board's representative to the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Executive Committee at the previous meeting. When the Executive Committee met he would report back to the Growth Board

Lesley Tims on behalf of the Environment Agency commented that the Environment Agency and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs bodies would be leading work around a natural capital plan across the Arc and that she would be happy to report back to the Growth Board at a future meeting.

RESOLVED That the update report be noted.

7 Housing and Growth Deal delivery Annual Review Report

The Growth Board considered a report setting out the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal End of Year Review for 2018/2019 and received a presentation from Paul Staines and Aaron Rosser, Growth Deal Service Delivery Managers. The report set out progress updates in respect of the 4 workstreams that made up the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. The following key points of the presentation were highlighted.

- The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal was a five-year programme which included the delivery of £150m of infrastructure.
- Year 1 achievements included:
 - Established a quarterly reporting process
 - Agreed Y1 Infrastructure Schemes – September 2018
 - Produced a plan for Year 2-5 infrastructure schemes – December 2018
 - Produced a plan for Year 2-3 Affordable Housing
 - Achieving Year 1 commitments for Homes from Infrastructure
 - Achieving Year 1 commitments for Affordable Housing

- Oxfordshire-wide JSSP Statement of Common Ground agreed
- Explored a Strategic Infrastructure Tariff April 2019
- The spend profile of the Homes from Infrastructure Programme was on track against projections with a spend of £30m meeting commitments for Year 1.
- The profile of the expected number of accelerated homes arising from the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal was expected to be 7,940 by Year 5 versus a baseline of 6,549.
- £60m was set aside within the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal to support the delivery of affordable housing through the Affordable Housing Programme (AHP). In Year 1, delivery stood at 191 homes versus a commitment of 148. Looking forward, the current programme indicated the delivery of 1,372 versus an agreed AHP target of 1,322 but it was recognised that achievement of the programme would be more challenging than in Year 1.
- Other challenges in connection to the AHP included: the need to consider the need to increase programmes to build confidence, the importance of innovation in supporting delivery which would not be achieved through business as usual and ongoing discussions with HM Government.
- Productivity would be supported through a local industrial strategy which had headline ambitions to: double the worth of the Oxfordshire economy by 2040 to £46bn, deliver a 2% pa growth in productivity, create a minimum of 108,000 net new private sector jobs and £4 of benefit to the UK economy for every £1 invested.
- The expected timetable for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 was outlined and it was noted the timetable remained under constant review.

The Growth Board welcomed the update. In discussion, Councillor Mills stressed the importance of the housing element of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and the Housing from Infrastructure programme. In delivering housing it was also important to deliver different types of tenure.

Catherine Turner on behalf of Homes England commented that the delivery of key milestones within the Deal represented a significant achievement and paid tribute to the Officers and Members involved.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8 Infrastructure sub-group update

The Chairman of the Infrastructure Sub-Group provided an update on its most recent meetings held on 18 March and 28 May. On 28 May, the sub-group had been provided with reports giving an overview of the Growth Deal Infrastructure Delivery Programme, an update on the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy and an update of the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.

He thanked all the Officers involved in the successful delivery of Year 1 of the infrastructure strategy programme. This was a significant achievement and meant that no Growth Deal funding was at risk of being clawed back by HM Government. In Years 2/3 a better profile of spend was expected, but extra care would need to be taken in Years 4/5 to ensure performance was in line with expected levels. The Chairman of the Sub-Group commented that he hoped that HM Government would reflect on the good track record of the Growth Board in bidding and delivering infrastructure and would consider removing some of the current restrictions. He argued that his greater flexibility would enable the delivery of further sustainable infrastructure going forwards.

In response to a question from Councillor Mills referring to the notes of the 18 March meeting, Councillor Hudspeth commented that a meeting with Thames Water with regard to water infrastructure was yet to take place.

9 Housing sub-group update

The Chair of the Housing Advisory Sub-Group updated the Growth Board on its work as set out in the note of the meeting held on 21 May. This had included a summary of the end of year position of the Growth Deal Affordable Housing Programme and Housing from Infrastructure position.

The sub-group had also held a discussion on each council's approach to the provision of low carbon housing. This had provided a useful opportunity for the sharing of ideas and best practice examples, as well as any potential challenges and problems.

In terms of future areas of work, the Growth Board was informed that the sub-group planned to consider information on unfulfilled planning permissions across Oxfordshire. This was felt to be an important area in the context of housing delivery and Councillor Brown requested the support of the other Leaders present in encouraging the provision of data from their individual councils. This was endorsed.

10 Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (JSSP) sub-group update

The Chairman of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Sub-Group presented an update of its most recent meetings held on 18 April and 30 May. He thanked officers for their hard work in supporting the Group over what had been a very busy period to strict deadlines. He highlighted the successful Oxfordshire Plan 2050 consultation workshop held with stakeholders on 24 May which had touched on a variety of themes and the workshop on healthy placemaking that had taken s earlier that day. A wide range of stakeholders had attended from all the Oxfordshire councils, but also importantly stakeholders from the within the health economy.

In respect of consultation responses to the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 so far, he highlighted that the majority had been received from people aged 45 plus and that as Chair of the sub-group he was keen to promote work with schools, colleges and the universities to increase responses from younger people given that they would be the group most affected by the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 in the future.

11 Scrutiny panel update

The Growth Board welcomed to the meeting, Councillor Andrew Gant, Chair of the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Gant reported on the outcome of the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 30 May and set out its written report to the Growth Board. He commented that the report and the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations reflected its role to consider both the inputs of its members and its engagement with the public. The Scrutiny Panel had made six recommendations. The Chairman set out the following responses during the discussion:

Scrutiny Panel's

Growth Board Chairman's reply

recommendation	
<p>1: That the Growth Board clarify the governance structure for the Ox-Cam Arc Committee and the appointment procedure of the representative to the Ox-Cam Arc Committee.</p>	<p>There is no appointment procedure per se. Growth Board elected to nominate a Leader as its representative on a working group dealing with Place matters, when and if a member presence is required at future meetings.</p>
<p>2: That the Growth Board revisit the earlier recommendation on structured communication between the Growth Board and council's members considering member reports of having received incorrect or incomplete information.</p>	<p>While in principle it would be a good idea if a brief update report could be circulated to all councillors on items considered following Growth Board meetings, it was, nevertheless, up to individual leaders how they reported back to their own Councils.</p>
<p>3: That the Growth Board commission a review of the Oxford Green Belt and/or request an update to Oxfordshire SHMA 2014.</p>	<p>Reviewing the evidence base in support of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is underway. This will include any required update to the review of the Green Belt work done previously, collectively or individually, and take consideration of the assessment of housing need to 2050. This may not be in the form of an update to Strategic Housing Market Assessment, (SHMA), but will be through an agreed methodology consistent with Government guidance.</p>
<p>4: That the Growth Board reflect on the mutual dependencies between the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and both the Local Industrial Strategy and Ox-Cam Arc and also that the Growth Board commit to informing the Government with urgency the need for the LIS to go through Local Authority sign off process prior to final endorsement.</p>	<p>The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 will reflect on such dependencies.</p> <p>The Local Industrial Strategy is currently due to be reported back to HM Government on 22 July. It is to be stressed that the Local Industrial Strategy is a living document requiring continual updating. Potentially, therefore, there may be a need for a more general procedure to address how such issues can be made subject to democratic accountability.</p> <p>It is not for the Growth Board to inform HM Government about how they should receive information from local Growth Boards. The Local Industrial Strategy will be</p>

	<p>reviewed by every Council and it is for them to agree how they feed their views back to the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). Therefore, responses would be on an individual Council basis rather than a single Growth Board view, reflecting their own positions.</p> <p>OxLEP’s Board, taking due consideration of any comments received will then agree the Local Industrial Strategy in line with HM Government expectations.</p>
<p>5: That the Growth Board outline what procedures were followed for the changes to Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Regulation 18 Part 1 Consultation and reflect on the changes in the text which altered the narrative between the endorsement of the Local Authority Scrutiny Committees and the publishing of the document in the public domain.</p>	<p>The Director for the Oxfordshire Growth Board has been asked to explore this further and to ensure that correct procedures are in place to ensure that further changes in text are avoided after publishing.</p>
<p>6: That the Growth Board seeks clarification on the process; how and when the Joint Declaration of Ambition HM Government and Local Partners will be subject to public scrutiny and debate.</p>	<p>The Oxford to Cambridge Arc Leaders Group is a coalition of the willing, councils were not required to join it, and it has no constituted status – therefore, the support or otherwise given was from the Leaders and Chairs who attend the Group meeting. There will not be any formal public scrutiny of that particular support, but there is intended to be a full public engagement programme over the summer and autumn where the merits, purpose and direction for any regional collaboration across the Oxford to Cambridge Arc will take place. It is expected the Oxfordshire Growth Board and its constituent members will fully engage in that programme and afford the opportunity for local debate, discussion and where appropriate, scrutiny.</p>

Councillor Gant set out the future work programme for the Scrutiny Panel as presented in the report and highlighted that the Panel had sought further clarifications on the work of OxLEP with regards to skills gaps and opportunities with existing workforces. Councillor Brown indicated that the Housing Advisory Sub-Group was also considering similar issues, so it would be sensible for some coordination of their work.

12 Oxfordshire local plans progress

The Growth Board received a verbal report on progress towards the adoption of local plans across the Oxfordshire districts.

Councillor Cooper commented that at South Oxfordshire District Council, information was continuing to be gathered and possible future options explored, but no decisions had been taken in respect of its Local Plan. At Vale of White Horse District Council, the Local Plan Part 2 was currently with the Planning Inspectorate and the outcome of the submission of several main modifications were awaited shortly. Vale had also not come to a decision in respect of its response to any comments on the plan made by the planning inspector.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Hudspeth updated the Growth Board in respect of the development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 5, (LTP5) which was an Oxfordshire County Council responsibility. The plan would act to underpin development and followed on from the LTP4 which had been last updated in 2016. The LTP5 would be an overarching schedule of policies and would enable bids to be made for funding if such opportunities became available. The new plan would be subject to consultation and the County Council was working to ensure housing and transport were joined up in a way that hadn't taken place before and reflected a change away from Local Transport Plans being a process of bidding to one more focussed on ambition.

In respect of Cherwell District Council, Councillor Wood informed the Growth Board that its local Plan Part 1 was still being considered by the Planning Inspectorate. Councillor Mills commented that the West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan was in place, but that work was in progress to draft an area plan in respect of the Oxfordshire Cotswold Garden Village project – a consultation document would be released in July.

Councillor Brown commented that the Oxford City Local Plan had been submitted and an inspector appointed. An update was expected in the Autumn.

13 Updates on matters relevant to the Growth Board

Councillor Mills updated the Growth Board that he had written to Kit Malthouse, Minister of State for Housing, about the Blenheim model at West Oxfordshire District Council. This model was designed to support the delivery of several social rented and shared ownership housing projects. It was not possible currently to use any Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal funds to support the model because of stipulations around the use of Deal funds and the request to the Minister was for greater flexibility. This would help enable the delivery of more affordable housing based on 60% of market value not 80% which was an issue raised by many Oxfordshire residents.

He also commented that a report from Oxford Brookes University on the Blenheim model would also be shared with the other district councils.

14 Dates of next meetings

The Chair commented that the next meeting of the Growth Board was due to take place on 30 July. However, considering the review of the Growth Board being undertaken and absence of time critical business it was proposed that the meeting be cancelled. This was agreed.

During this time, it was likely that several officer and members workshops would take place to inform the review and it was expected that an update would be provided to the September meeting.

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

- 24 September 2019
- 26 November
- 28 January 2020
- 31 March
- 2 June

The meeting closed at 3.55 pm

Chairman

Date