

Minutes of a meeting of the OXFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD on Monday 11 June 2018

Voting members of the Committee present:

Councillor Susan Brown	Chair - Leader of Oxford City Council
Councillor Jane Murphy	Vice- Chairman - Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council
Councillor Barry Wood	Leader of Cherwell District Council
Councillor Ian Hudspeth	Leader of Oxfordshire County Council
Councillor Roger Cox	Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council
Councillor James Mills	Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council

Non-Voting members of the Committee present:

Adrian Lockwood	Vice Chairman of OXLEP and Skills Board Representative
Catherine Turner	Homes England Representative
Julie Dandridge (substitute for Lou Patten)	Oxfordshire CCG Representative
Lesley Tims	Environment Agency Representative

Officers:

Paul Staines	Oxfordshire Growth Board Partnership Programme Manager
Nigel Tipple	Chief Executive, OXLEP
Gordon Mitchell	Chief Executive, Oxford City Council
Peter Clark	Chief Executive, Oxfordshire County Council
Giles Hughes	Head of Strategic Planning, West Oxfordshire District Council
Christine Gore	Executive Director, West Oxfordshire and Cotswold District Councils
Yvonne Rees	Joint Chief Executive of South Northamptonshire and Cherwell District Councils.
Andrew Down	Head of Partnership and Insight, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
Bev Hindle	Strategic Director, Oxfordshire County Council
Rachel Williams	JSSP Programme Lead
Patsy Dell	Head of Planning, Sustainable Development & Regulatory Services, Oxford City Council
Jennifer Thompson	Committee and Members Services Officer, Oxford City Council

Apologies:

Apologies were received from:

Jeremy Long	Chairman of OXLEP
Professor Alistair Fitt	Universities Representative
Phil Shadbolt	OXLEP Business Representative – Bicester
Peter Nolan	OXLEP Business Representative – Oxford City
Lou Patten	Oxfordshire CCG Representative

91. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chairman for this meeting and following meetings

The meeting was opened by Councillor Brown, as the Leader of Oxford City Council which has held the Chair since 1 July 2017.

The Board confirmed by assent the appointment of Councillor Brown as Chair and Councillor Murphy as Vice-Chairman of the Board for this meeting and until the next meeting of the Board (scheduled for 31 July 2018).

From the date of the next meeting

On being proposed and seconded, the Board confirmed the appointment of Councillor Murphy as Chairman from the start of the next meeting of the Board.

On being proposed and seconded, the Board confirmed the appointment of Councillor Cox as Vice-Chairman from the start of the next meeting of the Board.

92. Declarations of interest

None.

93. Minutes of the last meeting

The Board confirmed as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Oxfordshire Growth Board held on 26 April 2018.

94. Chair's Announcements

There were no announcements.

95. Public Participation

In accordance with the public participation scheme the Chair invited those who had submitted questions to speak to the Board. The Board had before them the written questions and written responses from the Chair.

1. **Cllr Debby Hallett, Chairman of Scrutiny Vale of White Horse District Council**, submitted a written question and asked a supplementary question about the Deal's and the Board's governance arrangements and accountability through the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair outlined the arrangements proposed (Minute 99) for oversight and accountability through Sub-Groups and a Scrutiny Committee.

2. **Cllr Judy Roberts, Vale of White Horse District Councillor**, asked for assurance that the viability and costs of the electrification of Didcot to Oxford and the whole of the East West rail link would be included in the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study.

Councillor Hudspeth outlined the remit of the study and the East West Rail delivery board.

3. **Ian Green, Oxford Civic Society**, asked if further follow-up with the Oxford Civic Society on the Statement of Community Involvement could proceed quickly; if the Board would consider the Society's report 'Oxford Futures and smarter growth in Central Oxfordshire'; and expressed support for the principle of the JSSP.

The Chair said the Board would be happy to receive the report and to consider how its recommendations can be taken forward in the JSSP.

Full details of the written questions, summaries of the supplementary questions, and the responses are in the supplement to these minutes.

96. Presentation from Oxford University

At the invitation of the Growth Board, Dr David Prout, University of Oxford Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources), spoke to the Board about the University's plans for expansion and provision of housing for students and staff.

In his presentation and in answer to questions from the Board he said in summary:

1. The University was preparing a plan and priorities for new development to 2023 to ensure it remained a world-leading institution both for teaching and research, could cope with the consequences of success, and ensure its future success both as a top university and a contributor to wider economic growth in the county.
2. 40% of its estate had been built since 2000 and numbers of graduates had doubled since 2008. The majority of accommodation was provided by colleges which had their own plans for expansion.
3. The University planned to construct 1000 graduate student units and 1000 units of subsidised housing for junior staff. They were working with SODC and Cherwell District Councils to find a location and were seeking development partners to build the graduate student units and a new community for staff.
4. A total investment of £1.5bn over 10 years would improve facilities across the University and colleges, including expanded facilities across the county: science parks at Begbrooke and Osney Mead; commercial and start-up operations; staff and student accommodation.

5. There were challenges: finding suitable sites; economic uncertainty; capacity to undertake an ambitious growth programme.
6. He asked the Board to work with the University to deliver the University's vision and to develop shared strategic objectives to provide the right level of accommodation and facilities and spin-off for the wider economy – and a coherent transport strategy to link the county – in order to provide sustainable expansion.

Board Members made comments, summarised as:

1. There was a substantive link between the work of the Growth Board and Oxford University's plans, as the University's growth and the county's success were inter-related. The Board has a remit to ensure all economic activities remained balanced and the county remained a good place to live and work.
2. Building dedicated accommodation for their staff and graduates may be the best way forward: the Board noted Cambridge's success in this and that discussions had taken place between the universities.
3. The Board were sympathetic to the University's plans while being mindful of the need to balance the effects and consequences of all the varied activities across the county.
4. Further discussions would be helpful: the University should consider with the Growth Board how to dovetail its expansion plans into the overall plans for the county, and make a strong coherent case to government for the economic and research benefits of the University's plans in the context of the overall Growth Deal
5. The agreed Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy has mapped out key infrastructure requirements and priorities.
6. Growth also required other essential infrastructure such as communications and IT, and further discussion between the University and Growth Board to define requirements would be helpful.

The Environment Agency representative reminded the University to discuss their plans with the agency at an early stage and not just approach them as a statutory consultee.

97. Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study

The Board considered a report proposing the Board's involvement in developing a rail corridor study for Oxfordshire. The report proposes that the Board:

- Work with Department for Transport, Network Rail and Oxfordshire train operators to develop a brief for the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study;
- Provide a governance framework and accountable body role for the Study including establishing an Oxfordshire Growth Board Rail Sub-Group;
- Provide an element of local match funding in the form of resource capacity to support the completion of this project.

The Board noted in discussion:

- Whilst the Board noted the need to develop the central rail spine of Oxfordshire, then report also needed to reflect the need for wider consideration. For example the Cotswold Line and stations needed to be included in the investment and improvement plans given its role in providing good transport links from new developments in West Oxfordshire.
- The Board asked that the narrative of the study brief should clarify why only the central area of Oxfordshire was included at this stage as a first tranche on necessary development, from which other developments such as upgrades to the Cotswold Line could then progress.
- Oxford Station played a central place-making role as the main entrance into the city for many people, was a significant transport hub in its own right and had an impact on surrounding transport links to and past the station concourse. The place-making aspect of the station redevelopment was absent from the project remit.

The Growth Board resolved to:

1. Endorse the draft remit for the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study as set out in Annex 1 (to follow), subject to final DfT and Network Rail approval.
2. Confirm a Growth Board contribution of up to £200,000 towards the study (*delegating the detailed award of funding to the Executive Officers Group: to be reported via the Deal financial monitoring*), to be supplemented by other funding sources set out in this paper.
3. Agree that the County Council as strategic transport authority and accountable body for the Growth Board should act as the lead authority on the study for the Growth Board, including leading on commercial and funding arrangements, drawing in technical and other input from partner authorities, to be coordinated via the proposed Oxfordshire Corridor Study Steering Group.

98. Housing and Growth Deal Delivery Plan update report June 2018

The Board considered a report setting out progress on meeting the targets of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.

They noted the advice of officers that the Deal Team were twin tracking both the mobilisation and initial delivery phases of a large and complex programme and that whilst progress was being made the Board should not underestimate the challenges this was posing to the Programme.

Notwithstanding this all relevant key milestones committed to in the Deal had been met in the 10 weeks since the Deal was signed. There are ongoing discussions and work to create sufficient capacity and recruit staff to deliver the outcomes in the Deal; and a further update would be given at the July meeting including the first of the quarterly performance reports required by the Deal .

The Growth Board noted the progress towards the Housing and Growth Deal Milestones as set out in the agreed Delivery Plan.

99. Joint Statutory Spatial Plan

The Board considered a report updating the Board on progress on meeting the targets in the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP) work stream and an update from Rachel Williams, JSSP Programme Lead.

The Board noted that the initial milestones for the JSSP had been delivered and was advised that regular reports on progress with the JSSP would come to future Board meetings.

The Growth Board noted the report and progress to date.

100. Endorsement of appointments to Programme Boards and the scrutiny committee

The Board considered a report setting out appointments from council partners to the three Housing and Growth Deal Advisory Sub Groups and the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel to provide oversight of the delivery of the Deal.

Councillor Wood confirmed that Councillor Woodcock would take Cherwell District Council's third place on the scrutiny committee.

The Board recommended that all councils formalise their arrangements for substitute members for the sub-groups. They also recommended that all Sub-group members were sent minutes for all other Sub-groups as the work of the groups were inter-related.

The Growth Board resolved to:

- 1. note and endorse the appointments to the three Housing and Growth Deal Advisory Sub Groups and Scrutiny Panel as set out below, and noting that Oxfordshire County Council would confirm their appointments on 19 June.**
- 2. confirm nominations for the independent Chairs of the sub groups as set out below.**

	Chair	Cherwell	OCC	Oxford	SODC	Vale	WODC
JSSP Advisory Sub Group	Cllr James Mills	Cllr Colin Clarke	TBC* (observer status)	Cllr Alex Hollingsworth	Cllr Will Hall	Cllr Anthony Hayward	Cllr Jeff Haine
<i>Substitutes</i>					<i>All Conservative Group</i>	<i>All Conservative Group</i>	<i>Cllr Toby Morris</i>
Housing Advisory Sub Group	Cllr Susan Brown	Cllr John Donaldson	TBC*	Cllr Mike Rowley	Cllr Imran Lokhon	Cllr Janet Shelley	Cllr Jeff Haine
<i>Substitutes</i>					<i>All Conservative Group</i>	<i>All Conservative Group</i>	<i>Cllr Toby Morris</i>
Infra-structure Advisory Sub Group	Cllr Ian Hudspeth	Cllr Lynn Pratt	Cllr Yvonne Constance	Cllr Linda Smith	Cllr David Nimmo-Smith	Cllr Mike Badcock	Cllr Jeff Hain
<i>Substitutes</i>					<i>All Conservative Group</i>	<i>All Conservative Group</i>	<i>Cllr Toby Morris</i>
Growth Board Scrutiny Panel		Cllr Neil Prestidge Cllr Sean Gaul Cllr Sean Woodcock	Cllr Nick Carter Cllr John Sanders Cllr Emily Smith	Cllr Andrew Gant Cllr David Henwood TBC	Cllr Elaine Hornsby Cllr David Turner Cllr Ian White	Cllr Debby Hallett Cllr Ben Mabbett Cllr Chris Palmer	Cllr Derek Cotterill Cllr David Harvey Cllr Julian Cooper

*Appointments at [19 June Cabinet meeting](#) were confirmed as:

- *Housing Advisory Sub Group – Cllr Liz Brighthouse (sub Cllr Yvonne Constance)*
- *JSSP Advisory Sub Group – Cllr Mike Fox-Davies (sub Cllr Jeanette Matelot)*

101. South Oxfordshire Local Plan Update - June 2018

The Growth Board considered a report on the current position of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (circulated after the agenda publication) and an update from Giles Hughes (Head of Strategic Planning, WODC).

The Board noted that it was not unusual for a local planning authority to find itself advised or required to reassess the strategic housing allocations proposed in an emerging Local Plan as the Plan's development proceeded.

However in the case of SODC the reassessment period was extremely constrained by the key milestone in the Growth Deal requiring all Oxfordshire Councils' local plans to be submitted by 1st April 2019. It was therefore in the Board's interest to support each local authority in meeting the Deal milestones and targets.

The Growth Board welcomed the further work SODC was undertaking to reconsider sites for development. They agreed that if SODC is able to find a way to achieve this, the Board would want to use the flexibility provided to use Deal investment, combined with an effective Local Plan for South Oxfordshire to deliver the Government's agenda for increased housing delivery.

Board members proposed, and the Board agreed recommendations to South Oxfordshire District Council as the Local Planning Authority as below.

The Growth Board resolved to recommend SODC, the Local Planning Authority to:

1. Consider sites that address Oxfordshire's housing need, including the need for housing in sustainable locations and in support of people who work or use services in Oxford City;
2. Bring forward sites that are viable and have sufficient confidence of delivery to pass through inspection whilst securing preparation for sites that might viable in the longer term;
3. Closely examine the options that would allow them to bring forward a viable plan in the timescales set by the Deal.

and that the Chair write to SODC on behalf of the Board.

102. Matters arising from OXLEP including LIS and the Oxfordshire City Deal Programme

Nigel Tipple, Chief Executive of OxLEP, drew attention to the details in the circulated operating plan and reported that OxLEP were working apace on the Local Industrial Strategy, consulting on this over the summer and aiming to submit this to government in October. There was discussion with BEIS on international aspects of the strategy. This was not a bid for funds as such but set out an investment plan for government and the private sector. The strategy would come to the Board in December.

He reported that the Growth Board members from OxLEP for 2018/19 would be:

Chairman of OXLEP	Jeremy Long
Vice Chairman and Skills Board Representative	Adrian Lockwood
Universities representative	Professor Alistair Fitt
OXLEP Business representative- Bicester	Phil Shadbolt
OXLEP Business representative- Oxford City	Peter Nolan
OXLEP Business representative- Science Vale	To be confirmed on appointment of the relevant Director

103. Oxford to Cambridge Growth Corridor - growth issues

Bev Hindle, Strategic Director Oxfordshire County Council, gave a short update on the working groups across the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor.

Councillor Wood reported he had been elected as the new Chairman of the Oxford-Cambridge cross-corridor Leaders' Group.

Nigel Tipple explained that the three LEPs and the Combined Authority across the corridor were recruiting consultants to work across the 4 areas to co-ordinate the Local Industrial Strategies, report back through the various project boards, with the aim of developing a coherent vision for the region.

104. Growth Board Forward Plan- June 2018

The Board considered the Forward Plan.

They asked, and Catherine Turner (Homes England) confirmed, that the proposed report on the *Role of Homes England in supporting the Housing and Growth Deal* including their enabling, monitoring and evaluating roles would definitely be taken at the 31 July meeting.

The Board noted the Forward Plan and list of decisions to come to future meetings.

105. Oxfordshire Local Plans progress report - June 2018

The Growth Board considered and noted the update on progress on each district council's Local Plan.

106. Updates on matters relevant to the Growth Board

There were no updates.

107. Dates of next meetings

The Board noted the meeting dates; that meetings would be held at Didcot Civic Hall, Didcot; and responsibility for management of these would pass to South Oxfordshire District Council with the Chairmanship.

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.15 pm

Chair

Date: Tuesday 31 July 2018

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GROWTH BOARD QUESTIONS AND WRITTEN RESPONSES

11 June 2018

1. Question from Cllr Debby Hallett, Chairman of Scrutiny Vale of White Horse District Council

The district and city councils have signed up to a deal with Government to provide a number of new houses that is significantly more than is needed (according to the housing minister). Growth Board says it needs effective scrutiny, yet as of this question's deadline, there is no scrutiny committee appointed to scrutinise whether signing this agreement was a good idea, nor the work progressing now.

- i. Who is the member of the Growth Board responsible for ensuring good governance practices (including Scrutiny) are set up and operating as expected and providing the value we all think they should?
- ii. What steps are being taken, by whom, reporting how, to ensure good governance of this Growth Deal?
- iii. How will Growth Board balance the need to get things done and progress the work, with your responsibility to be accountable to the people of Oxfordshire, and to ensure your decisions benefit residents?

Written Response

- i. Since its establishment in 2014, the responsibility for the scrutiny of any decisions made by the Growth Board has rested with the scrutiny arrangements in each of the six Oxfordshire councils that make up the Growth Board. Since this date several councils have taken up this option periodically. These arrangements reflected the fact that the Board has no Executive decision making powers of its own, save for those that are delegated to the council leaders in their capacity as that council's Board representative.
- ii. The decision by Government to rest the task of oversight of the delivery of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal with the Growth Board highlighted a need to adopt appropriate new scrutiny arrangements and the partners committed to this as part of the Deal. We are now in the process of establishing this scrutiny regime and council partners have been asked and provided nominations to a Growth Board Scrutiny Panel. Once these are approved at today's meeting, officers will be working with the nominees to set up the meetings, drawing up terms of reference etc. with a view to establishing a timetable of meetings as soon as possible.
- iii. The Governance arrangements for the Housing and Growth Deal are designed to balance the need for delivery, as required by the Deal with the transparency and accountability required for all local authority work. Cross partnership officer arrangements, up to and including Chief Executives will ensure a high quality output and this will be overseen at a detailed level by three Housing and Growth Deal Advisory Sub- groups , populated by councillors drawn from across the partnership, the Growth Board itself in its role as the strategic

governing body and both the scrutiny arrangements for the Board set out earlier in the response and the complimentary scrutiny arrangements that each council has in place to examine the work of the Board. The Board will review the effectiveness of these arrangements periodically to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Supplementary question

How does the Growth Board see its responsibility to create good governance and ensure the scrutiny committee is functioning effectively? Who has responsibility for this? It is disappointing that four months after the Deal was signed this committee has not yet met.

Response

At this meeting the Growth Board are appointing and noting the membership of the Sub-Groups and Scrutiny Committee. After this the first meetings of these will be set up to agree terms of reference and functions. There is no requirement for a dedicated scrutiny committee for the Growth Board but we considered this necessary for good governance. We hope it will allow you to have a strong oversight of the Board's work.

2. Question from Cllr Judy Roberts, Vale of White Horse District Councillor

Given that the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study is to identify the short/ medium and long term rail strategy, can I have the assurance of the Growth Board that the viability and costs of the electrification of Didcot to Oxford and separately the whole of the East West rail link will be undertaken as part of this study?

Written Response

The study will be taking account of and considering the electrification of Didcot to Oxford, although whether this project goes ahead will not be determined by the study alone

Electrification of East-West Rail (EWR) will not be considered, as this has been taken out of the Project Scope by Government, so there are no current plans for this part of the railway to be electrified. However where new structures are being built as part of EWR, they are being constructed to make provision for possible future electrification.

Supplementary question

Integration of the different delivery boards and including all relevant information is critical to the project. Are there any other identifiable sources of finance that can be used to support and enhance the study and programme of improvements before 2020?

Response from Cllr Hudspeth

The delivery board for East-West Rail project is established and work is in progress. There are separate project boards for each of the growth corridor and the expressway.

3. Question from Ian Green, Oxford Civic Society – referring to the JSSP

1. We would like to thank the OGB for following up our request that the Oxford Civic Society and other stakeholders participate in the finalisation of the Statement of Community Involvement for the JSSP: I was pleased to meet an officer from the JSSP Project Team for a preliminary discussion and look forward to further follow-up.

We note that the Statement of Community Involvement is planned to be presented to the next OGB meeting at the end of July and ask for confirmation that further follow-up with the Oxford Civic Society and other stakeholders can proceed quickly.

2. The Oxford Civic Society and URBED have prepared a report ‘Oxford Futures and smarter growth in Central Oxfordshire’ which we would like to submit to the OGB for consideration as shaping the JSSP proceeds.

The report reflects the Oxford Civic Society and URBED earlier report with the same title which four years ago, in 2014, proposed setting up an Oxford Futures Commission as a first step in drawing up ‘a spatial growth plan and charter for sustainable development’. With this history it is perhaps not surprising that OCS and URBED very much welcome the Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP) and look forward to contributing to its preparation and implementation.

The report includes a discussion of the relevance of garden city principles, JSSP priorities and objectives, where developments could be located, what forms of transport should be promoted and how investment can be funded. The benefits of engaging communities and interest groups in the preparation of the JSSP are also discussed. The new report has been prepared in the spirit of constructive collaboration and is intended, at this early stage of JSSP preparation, to support those considering the scope of the JSSP.

Can you please confirm that the OGB will receive the report (copies will be e-mailed) and consider the suggestions made in it? The OCS and URBED will be pleased to discuss the report or any aspects of it with members of the OGB and the JSSP project team.

Written Response

The Board welcome the report and the spirit of collaborative co-operation with which it is offered. We are happy to receive the report and to consider how its recommendations can be taken forward in the Joint Strategic Spatial Plan.

Supplementary statement

The Civic Society’s *Oxford Futures and smarter growth in Central Oxfordshire* 2014 report, revised in 2018, discusses a sustainable development and growth charter; the relevance of garden city principle; integrated transport; and objectives for growth – relevant in a wider context than simply Oxford or the JSSP. We are pleased you will consider the report and are happy to meet to discuss this and other aspects of the Board’s work. We would ask for the Draft Statement of Community Involvement to be sent out to consultation.

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