

Minutes of a meeting of the OXFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD on Wednesday 26 July 2017

Voting members of the Committee present:

Councillor Bob Price	Chair - Leader of Oxford City Council
Councillor John Cotton	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 Matthew Barber	Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council
Councillor James Mills	Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council

Non-Voting members of the Committee present:

Professor Alistair Fitt	Universities Representative
Kevin Bourner	Homes and Communities Agency Representative

Officers/ other attendees:

Paul Staines	Oxfordshire Growth Board Partnership Programme Manager
Richard Byard	Director for Business Development, OxLEP
Patsy Dell	Head of Planning, Sustainable Development & Regulatory Services, Oxford City Council
Caroline Green	Assistant Chief Executive, Oxford City Council
Gordon Mitchel	Interim Chief Executive, Oxford City Council
Fiona Piercy	Interim Assistant Chief Executive, Regeneration and Economy, Oxford City Council
Sue Halliwell	Director for Planning and Place, Oxfordshire County Council
Peter Clark	Chief Executive, Oxfordshire County Council
Adrian Duffield	Head of Planning, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
Yvonne Rees	Joint Chief Executive of South Northamptonshire and Cherwell District Councils.
Caroline Gore	Strategic Director, West Oxfordshire District Council
Jennifer Thompson	Committee and Members Services Officer, Oxford City Council

Apologies:

Apologies were received from:

Jeanne Capey, Jeremy Long, Phil Shadbolt, and Andrew Harrison

The Growth Board considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting together with addenda tabled at the meeting and made decisions as set out here. Except insofar as otherwise specified the reasons for the decision are contained in the agenda, reports and supporting papers attached to the signed minutes and available with these on the website. Where documents were updated after original publication, these were republished and marked as such.

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for the year

In accordance with its terms of reference, the Growth Board appointed Councillor Price as Chair and Councillor Cotton as Vice-Chairman for 2017/18.

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 29 March 2017 were agreed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chair as such.

Note: the meeting scheduled for 1 June was cancelled.

3. Chair's Announcements

The Chair announced that the meeting was being filmed for a about managing housing need and growth in Oxfordshire, and that there would be a presentation after the meeting on emergency planning in the county.

4. Public Participation

In accordance with the public participation scheme, the Chair invited those who had submitted addresses and questions to speak to the Board.

The Board heard:

- a question from Helen Marshall, CPRE (question and response read out by the Chair as the questioner was unable to attend)
- a question from Robert Warne, Chairman of Sunningwell Parishioners Against Damage to the Environment (SPADE), on behalf of Need not Greed
- an address from Ian Green, Chairman of the Oxford Civic Society
- an address from Robert Warne, Chairman of SPADE, on behalf of Need not Greed

The Chair replied to the questions and addresses.

Full details of the questions, responses, and addresses are in the supplement to these minutes.

5. Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy(OXIS) Approach to prioritisation and public engagement- report and presentation

The Growth Board considered the report, updated press release, and presentation given by the Growth Board Programme Manager setting out progress with this project to identify, map and rank Oxfordshire's infrastructure requirements to 2040 and beyond.

The Board noted that the consultation on the strategy had started on 19 July, hosted on the County Council's website, and that a report would come to their next meeting.

In agreeing the recommendations the Board made and noted points including:

- the recommendation from the Programme Manager that a supplementary budget of £9,500 was sufficient (not £19,500 as in the report);
- that much of the infrastructure requirement in OXIS was known to partners and had been subject to consultation through other processes (e.g. through local plans, Thames Water's strategy, and LPT4);
- noting that infrastructure did not stop at the county boundaries and OXIS must align with those for the areas beyond Oxfordshire
- that in respect of addressing the funding gap identified , that the gap was "gross" and that receipts from S106 agreements, CIL and other funding streams would offset the shortfall and would be raised from a range of private, local, and government sources;
- that when scoring and ranking projects , anything fully funded would be shown separately;
- that when considering the proposed questions on the web site to prompt public responses the first question was perhaps too closed and officers would re-examine the wording.
- and asked
- for the likely funding source(s) to be identified where this was possible;

The Growth Board resolved to:

- I. Note progress with OXIS.
- II. Approve a supplementary budget allocation of up to **£9,500** to cover the additional costs of OXIS and authorise EOG to engage with the consultants to finalise the additional costs within that cap.

6. Oxfordshire Joint Spatial Plan/Strategy

The Growth Board considered a paper setting out an update on the project and issues that needed to be addressed.

In agreeing the recommendations the Board made and noted points including:

- a report would be brought to the next meeting setting out the route map and required decisions;
- adequate resources would be required to keep to the timetable for developing this plan, either external consultants or a cross-district in-house team seconded

from the local authorities. The latter would have advantages of flexibility and local knowledge but must be adequately resourced;

- discussions with DCLG were continuing and productive;
- the interaction between this plan, the infrastructure plan, and five local plans (and the County Council's plans) was complex and, given the different timelines for each one, would require management to maintain alignment of the aims in each plan. This may mean a lighter touch plan until the end of the main local plan periods in the 2030s then a more definitive plan thereafter;
- the report would need to cover the interrelationship with adopted and in progress local plans
- delivery of the plan was key but much harder to achieve;
- a major challenge was the joined up long-term planning of transport, infrastructure and development at both local and national levels.

The Board noted that as it was not a body which could make statutory plans in its own right under the planning acts, each Council would need to separately adopt this as a statutory plan in their own right.

The Growth Board resolved to:

- I. Approve the preparation of a business plan for an Oxfordshire Spatial Plan/ Strategy, to be presented to the Growth Board in September 2017, based on the flexible approach set out in this paper;
- II. Agree that the Leaders should take part in an appropriate discussion during the autumn to address issues needed to progress the joint approach.

7. Community Employment Plans

The Growth Board considered the report and evidence paper from OxLEP seeking to facilitate the introduction of Community Employment Plans (CEP) in Oxfordshire.

Richard Byard, OxLEP, introduced the report and corrected Appendix 4 (proposed sites) to remove three which should be excluded from this paper:

- Oxford Science Village (Land to the south of Grenoble Road)
- Land at J7 of M40 (Harrington)
- Barnard Gate Garden Village

He also asked, and the Board agreed to add wording to the recommendations: III. OxLEPthreshold *via supplementary planning documentation as appropriate.*

The Board noted:

- that sites listed which already had planning permission and S106 agreements could not be subject to a requirement to develop a CEP;
- South and Vale were including the requirement for CEPs as a policy in their Local Plans to give more weight to these ;
- thresholds should include small satellite sites, and there was a need to be mindful that minimum thresholds could be circumvented.

The Growth Board resolved to:

- I. endorse the CEP Evidence Paper with the deletion on three sites from Appendix 4: Oxford Science Village (Land to the south of Grenoble Road); Land at J7 of M40 (Harrington); Barnard Gate Garden Village;

and that

- II. the CEP Evidence Paper (*as amended to include the changes above*) is published on OxLEP's website as evidence for CEP policies in Local Plans;
- III. OxLEP continue its work with each Local Planning Authority to facilitate the implementation of CEP policies and to request CEP's as a condition on development sites which meet the proposed threshold via supplementary planning documentation as appropriate.

8. City and Growth Deal Programme reports

The Growth Board considered the report and appendix setting out progress on the City and Growth Deal projects. The Board noted the announcement of funding for two new south-facing slip roads at the Lodge Hill Interchange.

On final funding for the flood alleviation scheme, Prof Alistair Fitt undertook to report back on the status of commitments from the two universities and Richard Byard undertook to report back on the status of commitments from private firms.

The Growth Board agreed to note the report and appendix.

9. Matters arising from the LEP

The Growth Board noted a verbal update from Richard Byard on the work of OxLEP.

- Three European Social Fund projects for Oxfordshire have been announced to support:
 - Skills opportunities for growth in Oxfordshire;
 - Training and employment for jobseekers and inactive people in Oxfordshire;
 - Skills for business in Oxfordshire.
- In addition there were substantial EU funds available for projects around social enterprises and access to finance.
- There was no confirmation of availability of place-based funding.
- OxLEP was looking for a 'long list' of viable projects to enable quick responses to funding opportunities.

10. Local Plan update

The Growth Board considered a report setting out progress towards Local Plans adoption across the county.

Cllr Barber reported that final planning permission for Grove Airfield had been issued.

Cllr Hudspeth announced the approved funding for the slip roads onto the A34 at Lodge Hill. This will unlock the delivery of 950 homes to the north of Abingdon currently being considered by the planning authority.

The Growth Board resolved to note the report

11. National Infrastructure Commission and DCLG Update

The Growth Board considered a report and verbal update on these projects and noted the challenges and progress, including ongoing discussions on the middle (South Northamptonshire) section of the Oxford to Cambridge corridor.

The Growth Board resolved to:

- I. Note the progress with the NIC workstreams.
- II. Note the progress on the development of an Oxfordshire housing and growth deal proposition to government.

12. Growth Board Forward Plan

The Growth Board considered the work plan and noted there was a need for both them and the CCG to better understand the interrelationships between the strategic planning and siting of health facilities (primary and hospital care; local and central) and the emerging infrastructure and spatial plans.

The Board asked for a formal meeting with the CCG to discuss these issues.

The Board noted their forward work plan.

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.35 pm

Chair

Date: Tuesday 26 September 2017

Growth Board 26th July 2017
Public participation
Contact: Paul Staines: Growth Board Programme Manager
E- mail: Pstaines@Oxford.gov.uk

To: Oxfordshire Growth Board
Date: 26 July 2017
Title of Report: Public participation - requests to address the meeting and questions submitted have been listed in the order submitted.

Introduction

1. Members of the public can address or ask questions of the Oxfordshire Growth Board.
2. Addresses and questions submitted by the deadline are listed below in strict order of receipt by the host authority.
3. Where written responses are available, these will be circulated at the meeting. The Chair may give a verbal response in place of or in addition to this. If no response is available for the meeting a written response will be sent and circulated to all Board members within ten working days of the meeting.

Addresses and questions

1. Question from Helen Marshall, Director, CPRE 1
2. Question from Robert Warne, Chairman of Sunningwell Parishioners Against Damage to the Environment (SPADE), on behalf of the Need not Greed Oxfordshire coalition..... 2
3. Address by Ian Green, Chairman, Oxford Civic Society relating to items 6,7,11 and 12 3
4. Address by Robert Warne, Chairman of Sunningwell Parishioners Against Damage to the Environment (SPADE), on behalf of the Need not Greed Oxfordshire coalition – relating to OXIS 3

1. Question from Helen Marshall, Director, CPRE

Given that the Oxfordshire Growth Board is actively engaging in the O2C Corridor discussions, based on the National Infrastructure Commission's stated ambition of creating 700,000 jobs and 1million new houses, what assessments have been made of the environmental impacts in relation to the supposed economic benefits.

Response

The National Infrastructure Commission or NIC is a Government advisory body, tasked with looking at the long term economic potential of the corridor and will make recommendations to government in respect of growth strategies and the implications for infrastructure necessary to achieve that economic growth potential. Oxfordshire has current commitments of homes and jobs growth to 2031, with an examination of infrastructure needs rolling forward to 2040. Infrastructure to support current committed growth has been a key focus for our engagement with the NIC.

Our involvement in the O2C discussions has two aspects, as set out in the NIC update report.

- An examination of the issues and implications of such growth upon transport connectivity in what's called the first/last mile; i.e. the end of the corridor here in Oxford/Oxfordshire
- The development of a pan-corridor governance model that could oversee future collaborative work on infrastructure, transport and strategic planning activities in the corridor.

Clearly it is very early days for these projects which may or may not lead to more detailed planning work above and beyond our current growth commitments. If this is the case this work will be undertaken in accordance with statute and regulation and involve full public engagement on the full range of implications for any proposals including environmental impacts.

2. Question from Robert Warne, Chairman of Sunningwell Parishioners Against Damage to the Environment (SPADE), on behalf of the Need not Greed Oxfordshire coalition

Need not Greed Oxfordshire welcomes the principle of an Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy as a necessary first step to a more strategic approach to development. However, we wish to ask the Growth Board:

- why the level of consultation now proposed falls far short of what was originally set out in the May 2016 paper to the Growth Board?

- how it anticipates that constructive contributions from knowledgeable organisations, such as those involved in the environmental sector, can now genuinely be obtained (noting that the deadline for comment is 3 September, but the whole document is intended for sign-off by the Growth Board on 26 Sept)?

- and what steps might be taken to re-visit the growth targets in light of the fact that only 1/18th of the infrastructure funding deemed necessary to support them has so far been identified?'

Response

The Board gave a commitment in the brief for the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy or OXiS that it would engage with the public and stakeholders. We would not agree that the plans we have for engagement falls short of the commitment given.

At the time of response all available work completed so far on OXiS is available to the public on the Growth Boards web pages, including an opportunity to respond. Further engagement is planned for later in the summer via a drop-in session for interested parties and stakeholders, although at the time of response dates have yet to be confirmed. In addition to the drop-in session we have promoted the public consultation process through the media and on the various Councils' websites – such that everyone that can add value through their engagement are being included.

We are therefore confident that we are fully meeting our obligations to engage and will of course ensure that when the final report is brought before the Board, that the narrative reflects the input we will have received to the engagement exercise and our response to that where appropriate.

Finally you ask about the identified gap between the funding required and that currently identified. It is important to note that OXiS covers the period up to 2040 and is a collation of the entire infrastructure requirements identified as being required by the various providers/sectors during that period. Not all infrastructure is required now, but will be necessary should all the growth as set out in District Local Plans come forward.

The Board recognises the challenge this poses to us as we develop our growth strategies for Oxfordshire and all partners will be working with the developers, infrastructure providers and government to ensure that funding is available to meet the required infrastructure where we can. Part of the rationale for OXiS is that it will provide a framework that will better enable us to make the case to attract funding for infrastructure required to support sustainable growth.

3. Address by Ian Green, Chairman, Oxford Civic Society relating to items 6,7,11 and 12

Text of address submitted:

Thank you for this opportunity to make a statement to the Board.

My statement concerns the Minutes of the previous meeting (para 65), Items 6 and 7, 11 and 12. All in 3 minutes. Here goes.

Minutes Para 65 – Growth Board Public Participation. *We made comments on the Growth Board public participation process in the recent Growth Board consultation. However from Growth Board's comments on our comments, it seems that our main point has been missed.*

Our main point was that before we focus on how statements are made at Growth Board meetings, or how questions are asked and answered, attention should be given to explaining to the Oxfordshire community at large what the Growth Board does and how it does it. We have plenty of evidence that the purpose and process of the Growth Board is not widely understood.

The Growth Board is doing very good things and should not hide its light under a bushel.

Oxford Civic Society also offered to collaborate with the Growth Board Secretariat to research how organisations similar to the Oxfordshire Growth Board, and across the country, work with their communities. Disappointingly, there was no response to this offer, but it still stands

Items 6, 7 and 11 – Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy and Joint Spatial Plan – we very much support these initiatives and recommend that they and especially the Joint Spatial Plan, are developed in a way which includes thorough public discussion of key issues.

OCS is very willing to constructively support this by, for example, organising public meetings.

Along with Friends of the Earth we contributed to a meeting at Brookes some weeks ago on Climate Change and Planning – we saw this as an early attempt to collaborate constructively to joint planning in Oxfordshire, but such events would be more effective if they were integrated into the Joint Spatial Plan preparation process.

We would welcome discussion on how civic organisations might contribute in this way - perhaps discussion of the way in which this could be done could be included in the preparation of the Business Plan before the next Growth Board meeting?

Item 12 – NIC E-W Corridor – linked of course to Items 6, 7 and 11 – we very much support this national level initiative as well and have been participating in NIC E-W corridor workshops and events.

OCS organises talks and events throughout the year, on topics concerning Oxford and Oxfordshire. We would be happy to include a public talk or talks on the E-W corridor with speakers from Growth Board members. The talk or talks do not need to be held in Oxford – they would be organised by our Oxfordshire Futures Group which includes civic groups from Oxfordshire and could be held anywhere where they would be useful.

We are sure that this would be a very popular topic

Overall comment –

With the Growth Board doing so much that is so positive is it possible for the Unitary County proposal supported by 3 Oxfordshire local authorities and the counter proposal supported by the other three local authorities to be taken off the table of the Secretary of State at DCLG?

It is not helpful to have the Damocletian sword of massive local government disruption hanging over these very forward looking and positive Growth Board activities.

Thank you

Verbal response at the meeting

The Chair noted the address and thanked Mr Green, and said that he and officers would consider the offers of help and suggestions above .

4. Address by Robert Warne, Chairman of Sunningwell Parishioners Against Damage to the Environment (SPADE), on behalf of the Need not Greed Oxfordshire coalition – relating to OXIS

Text of address submitted:

I am Robert Warne, Chairman of Sunningwell Parishioners Against Damage to the Environment (SPADE), speaking today on behalf of Need not Greed Oxfordshire, a coalition of over 30 local organisations from across the county.

Need not Greed Oxfordshire welcomes the principle of an Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OXIS) as a necessary first step to a more strategic approach to development.

However, we are concerned that the level of consultation now proposed falls far short of what was originally set out in the May 2016 paper to the Growth Board.

We are unclear how constructive contributions from knowledgeable organisations, such as those involved in the environmental sector, can now genuinely be obtained (noting that the deadline for comment is 3 September, but the whole document is intended for sign-off by the Growth Board on 26 Sept).

It is hard to envisage that any comments will be taken on in any meaningful manner in this timeline. We would appreciate any reassurances that the Growth Board can give that this will be the case.

The Growth Board press release claims the report is “independent” – this seems to be a claim without any justification as there has been no independent objective assessment of the claims made by commercial, privately owned, infrastructure providers of their requirements. It is essential to identify the scale of infrastructure provision that is required to address the existing deficit and planned growth in Oxfordshire, as opposed to that required by infrastructure providers for servicing their shareholders or other clients – such as Thames Water’s focus on building a mega-reservoir in Oxfordshire to serve their list of assets and the needs of London, (rather than mending their leaking pipework).

This assessment is simply not evident in the Stage 1 report.

Finally, we are concerned that only £500million of the £9billion of infrastructure funding deemed necessary to support the growth targets has so far been identified. This £8.5billion funding gap seems unbridgeable – even the DUP only got £1billion!!

Whilst it is noted that a ranking system to prioritise investments will be used, the sole determinant for this is listed as “directly supporting sites that will deliver the required economic and housing growth”. We invite the Growth Board to consider other determinants, such as where funding could best deliver protection and enhancement of the environment in light of both existing and planned development.

However, given that securing the total amount is vanishingly unlikely, we look forward to seeing the growth targets revised downwards to reflect this situation.

We reiterate that Need not Greed Oxfordshire supports the principle of OxIS as a vital stepping stone to a robust Joint Spatial Plan. It must therefore not just be a tick box exercise, but addressed properly, with genuine public engagement (not just lip service),

Thank you

Robert Warne

Verbal response at the meeting

The Chair said that the funding shortfall, while very large, would be met over a long period and sources for funding for different stages and projects would emerge over time and from a variety of sources. Cllr Barber shared reservations about the need and benefit of the proposed reservoir and that he considered there were far more pressing problems to deal with.

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