

# **Minutes of a meeting of the OXFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD on Monday 30 October 2017**

## **Voting members of the Committee present:**

<b>Councillor Bob Price</b>	<b>Chair - Leader of Oxford City Council</b>
<b>Councillor John Cotton</b>	<b>Vice- Chairman - Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council</b>
Councillor George Reynolds (substitute for Cllr Barry Wood)	Deputy 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:**

Jeremy Long	Chairman of OXLEP
Adrian Lockwood	Vice Chairman and Skills Board Representative
Professor Linda King (substitute for Professor Alistair Fitt )	Universities Representative
Richard Venables	OXLEP Business Representative – Oxford City
Kevin Bourner	Homes and Communities Agency Representative
Veronica James	Environment Agency Representative

## **Officers:**

Paul Staines	Oxfordshire Growth Board Partnership Programme Manager
Caroline Green	Assistant Chief Executive, Oxford City Council
Gordon Mitchell	Interim Chief Executive, Oxford City Council
Peter Clark	Chief Executive, Oxfordshire County Council
Andrew Down	Head of Devolution and Government, 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
Nigel Tipple	Chief Executive, OXLEP
Bev Hindle	Environment and Economy, Oxfordshire County Council
Lorna Baxter	S151 officer, Oxfordshire County Council
Adrian Colwell	Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy South Northamptonshire and Cherwell District Councils
Jennifer Thompson	Committee and Members Services Officer, Oxford City Council

## **Apologies:**

Apologies were received from: Councillor Barry Wood, Professor Alastair Fitt, Phil Shadbolt, and Andrew Harrison.

## **26. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations or interest.

## **27. 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 September 2017

## **28. Chair's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

## **29. Public Participation**

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

The Board heard:

- A question submitted on behalf of CPRE Oxfordshire and read by Peter Collins, emphasising the need for public engagement, consultation and accountability in developing the Joint Spatial Plan.
- A question submitted and read out by Colin Thomas, Need not Greed Coalition, emphasising the need for adequate public accountability and transparency in the Joint Spatial Plan process.

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

## **30. Joint Spatial Plan business case**

The Board considered the report and the business case for a Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) for Oxfordshire.

Gordon Mitchell and Adrian Colwell introduced the report and set out the rationale for having a Joint Spatial Plan, namely to provide an Oxfordshire-wide integrated strategic planning framework and supporting evidence base to support sustainable growth across the county, including the planned delivery of the new homes and economic development, and the anticipated supporting infrastructure needed. It was noted that as the JSP would in part replace elements of current local plans that there would be

consequent savings that could be reinvested and that the business case had attempted an initial estimate of this although more detailed budget analysis was required.

In discussion the Board noted comments including but not confined to:

- Councillor Cotton was in favour of starting from the basis of a statutory plan as this would give greater control and certainty, and the agreement and the overseeing body should be set up at the outset. He commented however that it was difficult to agree to the process when no funding was agreed and no money available.
- Much of the work required in the initial stages of evidence collection was identical for both the non-statutory or statutory JSP options. Consequently, while the status of the plan must be agreed in a timely manner and legal advice taken into account, this decision point did not prevent the JSP progressing.
- The timetable set out in the report was provisional and dependent on a number of external factors including any agreement of progressing the spatial plan with government and any proposed new NPPF regulations that will be changed upon the conclusions of the current consultation on the calculation of Objectively Assessed Need.
- The costs of preparing the plan, were outlined in the Business case. All councils noted that it was not possible to complete the JSP without adequate additional resources.
- The deficit in infrastructure was holding back growth and a JSP would allow key and major pieces of infrastructure to be planned across district boundaries.

**The Board resolved to note the comments and to recommend to constituent councils:**

- 1. that they work together to take forward a Joint Spatial Plan; and**
- 2. within the first stages of the project and in discussion with government, seek to agree the most appropriate arrangements to take forward a Joint Spatial Plan; and**
- 3. that the Chief Executives of the Oxfordshire Local Authorities take forward the necessary programme of work to achieve a Joint Spatial Plan.**

### **31. Housing and Growth (Place Based) Deal update**

Gordon Mitchell gave an update on the progress of discussions with Government officials on developing a housing and growth (Place based growth) Deal for Oxfordshire. He reported: progress with the discussions with government covering various funding initiatives (HIF, business rates pooling;); in return for commitments from Oxfordshire to promote the growth identified in the SHMA. Gordon reported that there was interest in transferring aspirations into reality; and it was hoped that the government's commitments might become clear after or shortly before the Budget speech on 22 November. As well as working with government as a delivery partner, it was essential to work with all parts of the county to find an acceptable way to meet the terms and aspirations of any deal.

Kevin Bourner explained the HCA's position that Oxfordshire was a key area for growth and development and the Agency expected housing to be a key part of the budget's focus.

Nigel Tipple outlined the discussions with government on productivity including partnership working on innovation in business, skills, and young people.

**The Board noted the updates.**

### **32. Business Rates update**

The Board considered a report (published after the agenda) setting out the application from the six councils of Oxfordshire to be considered as a pilot for the 100% Business Rates Retention Scheme for 2018-19.

The Board noted that:

- the proposal had been submitted on 27 October and a decision on the pilot areas would be announced shortly after 22 November;
- if the bid was successful, additional funding would be distributed via the Growth Board: if unsuccessful then the current pooling arrangements would continue;
- the pilot was for one year initially and the scheme would have to be reviewed before committing to any extension;
- Councillor Cotton's comments that there was a need to be cautious and not overcommit or over-offer.

**The Board agreed to formally record its support for the application.**

### **33. Oxfordshire 2050 transport vision - video**

Councillor Hudspeth and Bev Hindle introduced the short film, available on YouTube, released to coincide with the launch of the Oxfordshire 2050 transport vision and setting out the aspirations and ideas for delivering transport improvements and innovations to support growth.

The film was played for the Board.

### **34. Living Labs - Developing a placed based approach to the industrial strategy**

Llewelyn Morgan gave a presentation (attached to the minutes) informing the Board about the 'Living Labs' project, and an overview of the work already in progress and planned to develop and implement transformative technologies in a synergistic manner through cross-collaboration and cross-fertilisation of ideas both in laboratory and real world situations.

He highlighted the innovation strategy; the Smart Oxford initiative; and existing projects including the Go Ultra Low Oxford project installing and testing on-street electric vehicle

charging points, work on autonomous vehicles, and the technological synergy involved in developing a low-cost network of flood detectors.

**The Board noted the presentation.**

**35. Matters arising from OXLEP**

Nigel Tipple provided a verbal update on:

- the Transformative Technologies Science and Innovation Audit (SIA) process, currently in the evidence gathering stage, the outcome of which was to support innovation in four areas of new technology and allied disciplines to lead to commercial applications.
- the status of the four Innovation Centres agreed as part of the City Deal programme:
  - Culham Advanced Manufacturing Hub is near capacity
  - Begbrooke Innovation Accelerator is at about 80% occupancy.
  - Harwell Innovation Hub is nearing completion
  - Oxford Bioescalator (Churchill Hospital/ Old Road Oxford) is nearing completion

**36. Updates on matters relevant to the Growth Board**

Councillor Price noted the need for a formal relationship between the Growth Board and Swindon to discuss the impacts of new housing, industry and infrastructure in the south west of the county and the proposals for an Oxford-Cambridge link. Proposals for this would be brought back to a future meeting.

**37. Dates of next meetings**

The Board noted the dates of future meetings.

**The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.30 pm**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Thursday 30 November 2017**

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Growth Board 30 October 2017  
Public participation  
Contact: Paul Staines: Growth Board Programme Manager  
E- mail: Pstaines@Oxford.gov.uk

**To:** Oxfordshire Growth Board  
**Date:** 30 October 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 including responses

### 1. Helena Whall on behalf of CPRE Oxfordshire

CPRE Oxfordshire welcomes the business case for a Joint Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire and we are pleased to see we have mention as sponsors of this initiative.

We are also pleased to see that a JSP ‘will help to address the perceived “democratic deficit” by giving the public a clear overview of and transparent engagement in the county growth/development picture’.

And we are very encouraged that the JSP will address ‘environmental implications and potential for securing environmental gains’ – CPRE has long called for consideration of the incremental impact of Oxfordshire’s growth plans on the environment.

*However, we believe that there is little point in pursuing a JSP unless it is statutory and binding on all Oxfordshire Councils, not optional whether they conform or not.*

We welcome the opportunity today to comment on the business case for a Joint Spatial Plan and have a number of questions which we seek answers to from the Board:

1. Firstly, how will 5 year supply issues be handled? If one Council fails to build, will that mean all Councils will be at risk? At the time the JSP begins, will all deficits be “pooled”?
2. Secondly, the plan talks only of the 2014 Oxfordshire SHMA. We believe it should be explicit that if the Government determines a new formula for OAN, this will be adopted in the plan. Can the Board assure us that this will be the case?
3. Finally, while we appreciate the commitment to full public consultation (with Oxfordshire electors) and an EIP, we would like the plan to be more explicit. The

consultation and Enquiry *must* include consideration of whether the Growth Strategy which forms part of the process is itself supported by the public, or whether the public seek to retain e.g. (more of) Oxfordshire's rural character. Can the Board guarantee this?

### **Response**

1. The issues around how the 5 year housing land supply figure is calculated and apportioned across Oxfordshire is one of the matters that will need to be considered in developing the JSP and in the light of the revised National Planning Policy Statement (NPPF) expected in the New Year.
2. The business case for the JSP makes it clear that the JSP will be based upon an up to date calculation of the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing in Oxfordshire. This will of course follow whatever guidance is enshrined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at the time of its calculation.
3. Regardless of whether the plan is statutory or non-statutory the JSP business case makes it clear that at the relevant stages the emerging document would be subject to consultation and engagement with the general public and stakeholders. If the plan should take a statutory route then, it would be subject to an examination by the planning inspectorate.

### **2. Colin Thomas on behalf of the Need not Greed Coalition.**

The NNGO coalition has for some time expressed its concerns around the Growth Board's lack of democratic accountability and the absence of public engagement concerning the county's growth plans, so we welcome Para. 11 of the business case: "[The JSP] will help to address the perceived "democratic deficit" by giving the public a clear overview of and transparent engagement in the county growth/development picture, thus enabling a better understanding of the growth trajectory and underpinning evidence across the county and an increased ability to engage in collective decision making.

Bearing in mind our view of the lack of public accountability and transparency of the Growth Board, what assurances can the Board give that the JSP process and its outputs, already criticised by many, will ensure effective public engagement and independent public examination?"

### **Response**

We do not accept the assertion that the Growth Board lacks accountability. It is a statutory committee of the 6 democratically elected councils of Oxfordshire and all its business is conducted in public with opportunities for engagement via questions and statements.

Regardless of whether the plan is statutory or non-statutory the JSP business case makes it clear that at the relevant stages the emerging document would be subject to consultation and engagement with the general public and stakeholders. If the plan should take a statutory route then, it would be subject to an examination by the planning inspectorate.