

Agenda

OXFORDSHIRE

G R O W T H B O A R D

Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 24 January at 6.30pm

The Council Chamber, Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford OX1 1BX

Contact: Jennifer Thompson, Committee and Members' Services, Oxford City Council
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Scrutiny Panel members 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019

Councillor Andrew Gant (Chair)	Oxford City Council
Councillor John Tanner (from Jan 2019)	
Councillor Craig Simmons	
Councillor Neil Prestidge	Cherwell District Council
Councillor Sean Gaul	
Councillor Sean Woodcock	
Councillor Nick Carter	Oxfordshire County Council
Councillor John Sanders	
Councillor Emily Smith	
Councillor Elaine Hornsby	South Oxfordshire District Council
Councillor David Turner	
Councillor Ian White	
Councillor Debby Hallett	Vale of White Horse District Council
Councillor Ben Mabbett	
Councillor Chris Palmer	
Councillor Derek Cotterill	West Oxfordshire District Council
Councillor David Harvey	
Councillor Julian Cooper	

The quorum is 6 members, one from each council. Substitutes are allowed and should be notified to the Committee Services contact above.

This meeting is open to the press and public.

AGENDA

PART ONE PUBLIC BUSINESS

Pages

- 1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTES;
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST;
CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS;
INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF TO THE SCRUTINY PANEL**

- 2 **ELECTION OF VICE- CHAIR TO JUNE 2019**

To elect a Vice-Chair/ Vice-Chairman to replace Cllr David Henwood who has stepped down from this Panel.

- 3 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Recommendation: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting (attached)

7 - 14

- 4 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The terms of reference of the Panel state:

Members of the public may address meetings of the Scrutiny Panel, where notice is given to the secretariat no later than 4.00pm on the last working day before the day of the meeting.

The Chair will have discretion to manage the public participation procedure as they see appropriate, including rejecting frivolous, defamatory or offensive questions and managing the time afforded to public addresses.

Notice of a wish to address the meeting, including the subject of the address or the full question to be asked, must be sent to

democraticservices@oxford.gov.uk

by 4.00pm on Wednesday 23 January 2019.

The Chair's decision will be final.

5	GROWTH DEAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME	15 - 22
	Purpose: To introduce the Scrutiny Panel to the Growth Deal Affordable Housing Work stream and consider how to address some of the key issues in building a successful programme.	
	Information: Affordable housing report (attached)	
	Recommendation: The Scrutiny Panel note and comment upon the report	
6	COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE OXFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD	23 - 32
	Purpose: To advise the Scrutiny Panel of the current arrangements for communication sand engaging with the public and other stakeholders and to provide a summary of the work taking place to engage the public in the work of the Growth Deal.	
	Information: Communications and engagement report (attached)	
	Recommendation: The Scrutiny Panel note and comment upon the report	
7	GROWTH BOARD RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS - NOVEMBER 2018 MEETING	33 - 34
	Purpose: To consider the Growth Board's response to the recommendations to the Board from the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 22 November 2018	
	Information: Response attached	
	Recommendation: To discuss and note the response.	
8	OXFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD PAPERS 29 JANUARY 2019 FOR DISCUSSION	
	Purpose: To consider reports and matters on the agenda for the Oxfordshire Growth Board meeting on 29 January 2019.	
	Information: Agenda and reports published on 21 January separately from this agenda .	
	Recommendations: To make any recommendations or comments to the Growth Board.	

9 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE SCRUTINY PANEL - JANUARY 2018

35 - 36

Purpose: To discuss the draft work programme for the Scrutiny Panel submitted for consideration by the Panel's acting scrutiny officer.

Information: Work programme (attached)

Recommendation: To agree the draft work programme as set out and to note that other relevant items may be added to agendas at the request of officers or the Chair.

10 DATES OF MEETINGS

Purpose: To note the dates for meetings of this Panel:

Scrutiny Panel	Venue	Growth Board meets on
Thurs 21 March 6.30pm	Oxford Town Hall	26 March 2pm
Thurs 30 May 6.30pm	Oxford Town Hall	4 June 2pm
Thurs 25 July 6.30pm	The Beacon, Wantage	30 July 2pm

*if no rooms available in Town Hall or The Beacon, venue will change

Councillors' duties on declaring interests

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed "Declarations of Interest" or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your* employment; sponsorship (ie payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licences for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest.

If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Member's Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member "must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself" and that "you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned". What this means is that the matter of interests must be viewed within the context of the Code as a whole and regard should continue to be paid to the perception of the public.

*Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those of the member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Minutes of a meeting of the OXFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD SCRUTINY PANEL on Thursday 22 November 2018

Voting members of the Committee present:

Councillor Sean Gaul	Cherwell District Council
Councillor Neil Prestidge	
Councillor Sean Woodcock	
Councillor Andrew Gant	Oxford City Council
Councillor Craig Simmons	
Councillor John Sanders	Oxfordshire County Council
Councillor Emily Smith	
Councillor Elaine Hornsby	South Oxfordshire District Council
Councillor David Turner	
Councillor Judy Roberts (as substitute for Councillor Debby Hallett)	Vale of White Horse District Council
Councillor Ben Mabbett	
Councillor Chris Palmer	
Councillor Derek Cotterill	West Oxfordshire District Council

Officers contributing to and supporting the Panel:

Caroline Green	Interim Deal Director
Paul Staines	Oxfordshire Growth Board Partnership Programme Manager
Sue Halliwell	Director for Planning and Place, Oxfordshire County Council
Giles Hughes	Head of Planning and Strategic Housing, West Oxfordshire District Council
Dawn Pettis	Strategic Planning Team Leader, Oxfordshire County Council (for the Energy Strategy item)
Stefan Robinson	Scrutiny Officer, Oxford City Council (supporting the Panel)
Jennifer Thompson	Committee and Members Services Officer, Oxford City Council (supporting the Panel)

10. Apologies for absence and substitutes; declarations of interest; Chair's announcements

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Nick Carter	Oxfordshire County Council
Councillor Debby Hallett	Vale of White Horse District Council
Councillor Julian Cooper	West Oxfordshire District Council
Councillor David Harvey	West Oxfordshire District Council

There were no declarations of interest.
There were no announcements.

11. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 18 September were agreed as a correct record.

12. Work programme for the Scrutiny Panel - November 2018

The Panel took this item after the public speakers.

The Panel discussed considering one of the Deal strands in detail at each meeting. They asked for a report on Affordable Housing at the January meeting.

Attendance and appropriate contributions by at least one member of the Growth Board at each Scrutiny Panel meeting would help communication between the Panel and the Board.

It is also important that the Panel equally holds local leaders to account, as it has until now only scrutinised officer's that support the Growth Deal.

The Panel also discussed improving communication between the Growth Board and its Scrutiny Panel and the Board's Sub groups

The Panel noted that communications between the Growth Board's Sub-groups and Scrutiny Panel were still being established, as was communication between these groups and the Board.

The Panel noted that there was considerable overlap and interdependence between the different Deal strands and also with the Board's other work. Good communications between the groups and project planning was needed to avoid duplication of work between groups, and to ensure that all the groups and the Panel understood the terms of reference of each other's' work.

The Panel asked for clear information and a briefing on the remit and work of each Sub-Group to better understand how these contributed to the delivery of the Deal and the work of the Growth Board, starting with a presentation from the Chair and officers of the Housing Sub-Group.

The Panel noted that each Leader should be encouraged to put in place a clear structure for communications between the Growth Board and each council's members.

The Panel agreed recommendations to the Growth Board:

1. At least one member of the Growth Board should attend each Scrutiny Panel meeting to answer questions about the Board's work. The Chair of one of the Sub-Groups should attend in rotation to discuss the work of their Sub-Group.
2. Officers working on the Deal's strands as part of the Deal team and the Lead officer for the councils should attend the Scrutiny Panel as appropriate to answer questions and discuss their work.

The Panel agreed:

1. To take at the January meeting:
 - a. A report on public engagement at the Growth Board
 - b. A report on the Affordable Housing strand of the Deal (inviting the Chair of that group and relevant officers)
2. To ask for the work plan for each advisory sub-groups.

13. Public Participation

The Panel heard one address and two questions from members of the public.

Adrian Townsend, in summary, spoke about the lack of accountability, transparency and engagement of the Growth Board. He considered that most parish councils and communities were unaware of the Board's existence. He asked for a directly elected Board solely comprising one member from each district, plus parish council co-optees from each district's area. He also asked that the Growth Board be asked to formally retract their statement on the Expressway.

Sue Haywood, representing Need Not Greed Oxfordshire, sent a written question, asking the Panel:

- what further impact they feel that the recent NIC statement will now have on the governance structures and local accountability,
- what opportunity is there to protect local accountability,
- whether the key documents in which any mandate and process for the JSSP is currently defined - including the Statement of Common Ground and Terms of Reference for the Growth Board, and the LDS, Scoping Document and Statement of Community Involvement - will require revision in light of any "new governance structures" that might be introduced, and
- by what process (and with what opportunity for local consultation) will this be done if this is to happen?

Peter Collins, representing CPRE, asked the Scrutiny Panel to:

- Confirm that this draft document (outline version of the JSSP Regulation 18 consultation document) exists and was considered at last week's Advisory Sub-panel.
- If so, to consider how this sits alongside the Growth Board's commitment in the draft Statement of Community Involvement to 'early, proportionate and meaningful engagement between plan makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and statutory consultees' and the 'initial scoping of key issues and options with stakeholders'.

The Panel asked that the Chair convey the substantive points to the Board.

In discussion about the issues raised the Panel commented:

1. They would not recommend disbanding or reconstituting the Growth Board: however the Panel would like to be consulted on any changes to terms of reference of the Board or sub-groups.
2. The Panel noted its own and all three public speakers' concerns over what appeared to be a lack of transparency around decision making, remoteness of the Growth Board from grass-roots bodies and representatives, and a lack of ability to influence and understand the rationale for major decisions. This is a perennial issue for the Growth Board and has been raised by the speakers in different forums. These concerns covered lack of transparency at the Board meetings; being unable to contribute to or see development of the high-level strategies prepared by OxLEP and the Board.
3. There was also concern about the lack of information-sharing and consultation around the Expressway (including some parish councils not receiving an invite from Highways England to information events for all parish councils). While acknowledging that the Growth Board was not responsible for arranging those information events, the Panel asks that officers involved in arranging events ensure or request that first and second tier councillors be invited to events run for parish and town councils. The discussions there would inform their own positions and allow them to better represent their residents.
4. The Panel noted that although information was available on the Growth Board's website this was not always the most obvious site for either elected members or the public to view frequently and so key information could easily be overlooked.
5. The Panel discussed, from their position as newcomers to the Board's processes, improving the Board's transparency and engagement.

The Panel agreed recommendations to the Growth Board:

1. That the Growth Board establishes a clear pro-active process for informing district, county and parish councillors about their work and future consultations and decisions.
This may take the form of a circulated newsletter or bulletin sent out by the Board's programme officer, and should not rely solely on the information posted on the Board's website.
2. That the Growth Board takes formal votes on all items for decision, and records in the minutes each Leader's individual vote, to increase transparency. about decisions and each Council's stance.
3. That the Growth Board remains fully committed to encouraging public engagement in the Board's work.

14. Energy Strategy

The Panel considered the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy and covering report, and a presentation from Dawn Pettis (Oxfordshire County Council) on the key elements of the strategy.

They noted a number of places in the Strategy where targets were defined or presented differently, particularly in relation to carbon and energy reduction.

They noted the very ambitious targets of reducing emissions substantially while also increasing housing and employment, and of retrofitting 4000 homes. Officers themselves acknowledged these were extremely ambitious targets. The Panel were concerned that the contribution made by vehicle emissions remained high in recent years, and would continue to do so.

They noted that more information on grid capacity and management would be useful for planning authorities seeking to encourage the use of electric vehicles.

The Panel agreed one recommendation to the Growth Board:

That the Energy Strategy Action Plan is revised to ensure it contains SMART targets and clear and measurable objectives.

The Panel agreed:

- to consider the action/delivery plan before it was presented to the Growth Board;
- to scrutinise delivery of the action plan.

15. Oxford to Cambridge Expressway

The Interim Deal Director Caroline Green and the Director for Planning & Place (Oxfordshire County Council) Sue Halliwell gave an update on proposals for the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway.

The Panel noted in the update and their discussion:

- One of the biggest challenges identified as part of the Growth Deal process, as already highlighted by the JSSP Advisory Sub-Group, is the misalignment of Highways England's timescale for the Expressway and the development of the JSSP.

The Growth Deal requires that each of the Oxfordshire Council's submit their Local Plans no later than 1 April 2019. However, Central Government Planning Inspectors have not accepted two neighbouring Local Plans (Aylesbury Vale and Vale of White Horse district councils) at least partially on the basis that they do not take account of the Oxford / Cambridge expressway in their housing forecasts; an expressway which does not yet have an assigned route, nor detail of its precise function. Public consultation on the route options is not due to take place until autumn 2019, with a preferred route being announced in 2020.

This conflict between deadlines suggests that the planning process for these significant projects is not well aligned.

- If the Local Plan submission deadline of 1 April 2019 is recognised as a first draft stage, and open to review beyond this deadline, then there is less concern about needing to take account of the JSSP and the Expressway in the plans before further material details are announced.
- Officers and Leaders had already raised these concerns with government departments and Highways England (HE) and discussions about aligning timetables and deadlines were ongoing.
- The Panel expressed disquiet about the statement in minute 24 of the Growth Board minutes of 25 September 2018 which could be read as conveying rather more support for the expressway than may have been intended, given the level of uncertainty around the proposals from HE.
- The Panel commented that expressway did not fit well with sustainability strategies, and the experience of HS2 suggested that there may be more disruption than benefit for communities along the route.
- Highways England was running events for district and parish councils, by invitation, and all invitees were encouraged to attend. However, Panel members noted instances where parish councils had not received an invitation and asked that officers impress on HE the need to use up to date contact information held by Oxfordshire County Council.

The Panel agreed recommendations to the Growth Board:

1. That the Growth Board takes further steps to raise concerns with Central Government about the timing of the JSSP submission deadline, and individual Local Plan submission deadlines, in April 2019 as required by the Growth Deal, without first understanding more details about the impact of the proposed Oxford Cambridge Expressway.
2. That in light of the continuing uncertainty about the route choice and its impact on the communities affected and the wider county, the Growth Board clarifies its rationale and evidence base for endorsing the expressway.

16. Oxfordshire Growth Board papers 27 November - for discussion

The Panel discussed the reports published for the Oxfordshire Growth Board meeting on 27 November.

They discussed and asked questions on the reports, and noted points and raised matters summarised as but not limited to:

JSSP Sub-Group

1. The Joint Statutory Spatial Plan was very high-level and long-term: the Panel commented that communications had to be managed to make it relevant, manage expectations, and get proper public engagement in the process. The difficulties with

matching major projects' timetables and public involvement had been discussed earlier

2. Planned consultation events would involve around 100 stakeholder groups plus parish councils: the Panel asked that relevant district and county councillors were invited to events involving parish councils so the parishes' concerns could be understood and fed back to the district councils.
3. In late January all district councils would be asked to agree the initial JSSP 'Regulation 18' Preferred Options Document for consultation through February and March, but this document was still at an early stage.

Infrastructure Sub-Group

4. Officers were working on a methodology to properly attribute without double-counting additional affordable housing (to that already being provided through other means) to the correct funding stream (infrastructure funds, Deal funding, and HIF grants).
5. Government's decisions on bids to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) would be announced in summer 2019 and funding would be available in 2019 or 2020.
6. The Panel noted that information on delivery of the Year 1 infrastructure projects, as well the list of projects in the years 2-5 programme would be agreed and published.

Housing Sub-Group

7. Officers would work to try and speed up housing delivery after planning permission was granted to avoid long delays. A house counted as 'delivered' when a contracted start date on site was agreed.
8. Affordable housing under the Deal counted only those additional homes attributed to Deal funding, so did not show all the affordable housing which would be provided in the county.
9. The Panel asked for clear information about the delivery targets and additional affordable housing when this was available; and asked that the work of Housing Sub-Group and the affordable housing strand be considered at their next meeting.

Healthy Place shaping report

10. The Panel noted this was the result of work on Oxfordshire County Council's Public Health report. They noted the role Local Plans could play in promoting public health.

The Panel noted the reports and suggested that a chart showing the timelines of key projects for each strand of the Deal delivery would be helpful.

17. Growth Deal - matters not contained in Board papers

No matters were raised under this item.

18. Recruitment and staffing for the Growth Deal

The Interim Deal Director gave an update on recruitment and staffing for the Growth Deal delivery team and management of the Growth Board:

1. All posts for work on the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan had been filled and the new officers were starting work over the next few weeks. This included an office

manager, project manager, and planning policy officers. Recruitment to key senior posts for the other Deal strands was underway. These would help councils co-ordinate and manage the delivery of the programmes.

2. The Growth Board and its scrutiny panel and sub-groups would be supported by a dedicated programme manager and committee secretary, and the scrutiny function supported by a part-time post from the Growth Board host authority (currently SODC). These posts were currently advertised.

The Scrutiny Panel noted the update.

19. Dates of meetings

The Panel agreed the dates of meetings as:

Scrutiny Panel
Thurs 24 January 6.30pm
Thurs 21 March 6.30pm
Thurs 30 May 6.30pm

All meetings to be held in Oxford Town Hall

The meeting started at 6.30 pm and ended at 8.30 pm

Chair

Date:

Report to Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel

Growth Deal Affordable Housing Programme

Report Purpose

- 1) To introduce the Scrutiny Panel to the Growth Deal Affordable Housing Work stream and consider how to address some of the key issues in building a successful programme.

Background

- 2) The Scrutiny Panel will be aware of the high levels of need for affordable housing in Oxfordshire. The median average earnings per year required to purchase an entry level market house is 12 times average salary. Consequently, there are currently 9228 people in housing need on the council's housing registers.
- 3) The performance of council partners in response to this need has been encouraging with levels of affordable housing provided rising in recent years as overall house build levels increase. On average councils in Oxfordshire have provided just over 1000 new affordable homes per annum in the last three years. This still however leaves a significant annual shortfall each year which grows as each year passes and demand exceeds supply.
- 4) These figures also mask the fact that many of the Affordable Homes provided include low cost home ownership initiatives such as Starter Homes and Affordable Rented homes with rents that are significantly higher than traditional social housing rent levels. Whilst these are valid response to identified tranches of housing need, there remains therefore a need to provide both increased levels of affordable housing and to attempt to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable of our residents.
- 5) In response to this identified local priority a key part of the Housing and Growth deal was a bespoke Oxfordshire Programme of Affordable Housing, tailored to identified local need

Definition of Affordable Housing

- 6) The definition of Affordable Housing is set out by Government and contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. The appendix of this report contains the full definition.
- 7) As the Growth Deal Affordable Housing Programme is funded through Homes England, the Programme must comply with these definitions. Within this umbrella however there is some flexibility to consider a locally tailored definition to reflect a locally identified priority.

The Affordable Housing Programme

- 8) Within the Housing and Growth Deal there are two elements to the housing delivery commitment made by the partners, these are;
- Homes from Infrastructure (HFI)- the acceleration of circa 6500 planned housing units- facilitated by the development of strategic infrastructure.
 - Within the overall planned homes commitment, the provision of at least 1320 additional affordable homes.
- 9) The focus of the affordable housing element of the work stream is on supporting increased housing delivery through the deployment of a £60 million affordable housing fund. In effect the fund will be used to make a greater proportion of the planned homes affordable by providing grant funding for them to relevant partners.
- 10)The £60m funding supports a bespoke Oxfordshire-wide Affordable Housing Programme(AHP) that will support delivery of at least 1320 affordable homes across a range of tenures to achieve contractual start on site by 2021. The fund is in addition to the existing Homes England Affordable Homes Programme.
- 11)To demonstrate the ability to deliver the programme, the partners were asked to provide an indicative AHP over three years. This programme was not designed to be our final commitment. It was however meant to demonstrate that there was capacity within the existing affordable housing ambitions of the councils to deliver a programme of additional affordable housing of this size.
- 12)The indicative AHP was developed in a relatively short space of time and of necessity, largely consists of existing or planned schemes that the partners are either working upon delivering or are aware of. It was also based upon an estimate of developers and Registered Providers (RPs)to deliver affordable housing, over and above that which we would expect to secure through the planning process.
- 13)The indicative totals for the AHP was set out in the Deal Delivery Plan. It is split by indicative tenure, together with the average grant rates agreed within the Deal for each tenure as follows.

Tenure and Split	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total starts on site by 2021	Avg. Grant rates per unit
Social Rent	49	272	383	704	£55,000
Affordable Rent	67	124	199	390	£40,000
Shared ownership	32	68	128	228	£25,000
Total	148	464	710	1322	

14) The milestones agreed with Homes England for the AHP are:

- Agreement of the Year One AHP- March 2018.
- Agreement of the Years 2-3 AHP, end of September 2018.
- Quarterly review and reporting of progress against the agreed targets leading to agreement of the final year end position at the third quarter meeting in January.

Current Position

15) The agreed milestone for the delivery of the years 2-3 programme was met in September 2018.

16) Officers will be reporting in detail on the progress towards delivery of the year one programme to the Growth Board on 29th January. In summary, we are hopeful that we are on track to meet the target of delivering 148 affordable homes by March 2019 but recognise that more work is needed to ensure that these homes move to the trigger for completion agreed in the Deal, contractual Start on Site.

Key issues

Developing a Gross programme

17) The partners have developed a Gross indicative AHP from which to draw the commitments agreed in the table above. For 2018/19 this originally totalled 329 homes across the county compared to the required 148 homes. Similarly, across the three-year programme partners have constructed an indicative gross programme, that currently totals 1651 units from which to draw the required 1320.

18) Whilst the totality of these programmes should provide partners with confidence that there is a population of homes from which we can draw our required targets, officers are aware that the delivery each scheme is a project, with issues and challenges that must be addressed to ensure it reaches fruition.

19) The experience of year one, with the gross programme only yielding some two thirds as actually deliverable should also serve as a reminder that the gross AHP developed need to be of sufficient size to withstand the drop off rates or movement of schemes between years we are experiencing.

20) The reasons for this movement broadly fell into two categories:

- Firstly, challenges are financial, i.e. the scheme is struggling to be viable at the agreed grant rates. This is an ongoing challenge for the AHP.
- Secondly, the challenges were one of timing. The year one AHP had been developed from a standing start and many of the schemes were required to gather a pace they were not anticipating upon inception. This posed significant challenges, for example to get planning and procurement processes in place by 31st March 2019. Where these challenges were considered achievable they remained in the year one AHP, otherwise they had been earmarked for year two.

21) The task for officers is therefore to include sufficient schemes within the AHP to ensure delivery against target, whilst at the same time steering the schemes included towards Deal Completion, contractual start on site.

Building Partnerships

22) The Scrutiny Panel will be aware that the Affordable Housing provided in Oxfordshire is through either local housing companies in Oxford and Cherwell, wholly owned development arms of the councils or through Registered Providers taking up affordable housing secured through the S106 planning obligations imposed by councils on developers, with the latter providing much of the affordable housing.

23) In this context, and with the Deal requiring the ultimate owner of the homes to be a Registered Provider, the councils need to secure long term strategic partnerships to deliver the programme. Securing these partnerships is a key challenge for the programme.

24) Discussion and engagement with existing partners is underway. This included a successful launch event held in September 2018 and subsequent meetings with interested parties that are ongoing. Scrutiny will be aware that to assist in these conversations we have developed a prospectus for the Oxfordshire Affordable Housing Programme available on the Growth Board website.

25) The intention of this promotion and subsequent conversations is to present the programme as an exciting opportunity for the councils and partners to deliver the first step in what is hoped to be a step change in affordable housing development.

26)The key messages are:

- (i) The Councils are looking to build long term key strategic partnerships with Registered Providers and others to deliver Oxfordshire's affordable housing requirements over the long term and will be seeking commitment to such arrangements.
- (ii) We want to provide additionality in the AHP, not just additional numbers from those we would secure through S106 arrangements but an AHP that is responding to the identified local needs that the mainstream affordable housing programmes are not able to.
- (iii) We have worked hard to make the AHP as attractive as possible financially, recognising that potential partners are already working with Homes England on their programmes and we need to divert part of their attention towards the Oxfordshire AHP.

27)The Deal Team have been encouraged by their discussions to date with several new Registered Providers, keen to work with us on the deal and to explore longer term partnership arrangements. Engagement with developers and landowners has been more challenging however and building this needs to be a focus for the work of the Deal team.

28)In responding to this, one aspect of potential partnership work that needs further examination is how the councils, as planning authorities can offer a service that smooths the processes of affordable housing negotiation and provides greater certainty of outcome at an early for developers and Registered Providers. Councils need to reflect upon this clear wish from potential partners and consider what arrangements could be put in place to meet this aspiration, whilst at the same time maintaining the probity of the planning process

Innovation

29)Our commitment to Government made it clear that innovation is key to the success of the AHP and we need to scope and understand how we can work in partnership to promote and facilitate innovation, both in terms of the product and the delivery vehicles that bring it forward.

30)The Scrutiny panel will recall that in previous meetings we have discussed for example promoting modular build housing and self-build as two examples where we would like the AHP to be able to focus.

31)When the officers met to discuss the AHP they identified the issue of land assembly as one key aspect that would underpin a range of potential innovations. This is because one of the biggest barriers to any innovation is the competitive nature of the housing land market.

- 32) Almost all housing land is optioned to developers who then land bank and bring land forward for development when they believe it's most financially advantageous. Once land is brought forward for planning a developer will seek, often at short notice a partner to take the affordable housing units they have developed to meet their planning obligations from them at the most competitive price.
- 33) This usually means that the units are largely a fait-accompli for the Registered Provider and sold at a cost that leaves little room for flexibility in, for example design
- 34) If the partners could secure land for affordable housing by, for example buying the plots from the developer and then selling on to an RP or developing through in-house arrangements, they would buy themselves the space to consider a raft of innovative approaches to design, management, and tenure.
- 35) Inevitably there would be a cost to this for the partners but it could be seen as the cost of providing the types of affordable housing product or communities that we might aspire to. More work is required to scope this potential innovation and understand its costs and benefits more clearly

Conclusions

- 36) The Oxfordshire AHP is an exciting opportunity for the county to respond to the high levels of housing need we experience in Oxfordshire.
- 37) Whilst the initial fund may be modest when compared to the total costs of meeting Oxfordshire's affordable housing need, and the grant levels within it not game changers for partners, officers believe that this could be the first of a series of such funding streams if we can prove that we are able to deliver against the agreed targets.
- 38) In this context, and with the opportunity to build longer term strategic partnerships and secure innovative methods of delivery and product, the AHP is an opportunity to secure a step change in affordable housing delivery in the county.

Appendix- Definition of Affordable Housing

Definition of Affordable Housing

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) **Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) **Starter homes:** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

c) **Discounted market sales housing:** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

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Report to Growth Board Scrutiny Panel

Communications and engagement with the Oxfordshire Growth Board

Report Purpose

- 1) To advise the Scrutiny panel of the current arrangements for communication and engaging with the public and other stakeholders and to provide a summary of the work taking place to engage the public in the work of the Growth Deal

Recommendation

The Scrutiny panel note and comment upon the report

Background- public engagement with the Growth Board

- 2) Since its inception in 2014 the Oxfordshire Growth Board has been mindful of the need for it to develop meaningful channels of communication and engagement with a range of stakeholders, including Government, residents and other interested parties.
- 3) The original Public Participation Protocol (The Protocol) for the Board was based upon a similar statutory joint committee that had been successfully operating in Northamptonshire for some years. This protocol was reviewed in November 2015 after a short consultation exercise with those who regularly attended Growth Board meetings.
- 4) A copy of the Protocol is attached at Appendix One to this report
- 5) The Board decided that, as a meeting in public as opposed to a public meeting, it would make the space for questions and addresses in much the same way as other local authority public meetings.
- 6) Accordingly, the Board asked that the agenda and accompanying reports be published in advance to allow for interested parties to read and consider them prior to making any representations to the Board.
- 7) The Protocol then allows the public to submit questions to the Board and to ask a supplementary question on the day.
- 8) Finally, the Protocol also allows for addresses to be made to the Board which the chairman may or may not respond to.

- 9) The only restrictions on these activities are time, to allow the business of the Board to continue to timetable and for the questions or addresses to be relevant to an item on the Board agenda at that meeting.

Wider Engagement and Communication

- 10) The Board are aware that engagement with the public at Board meetings is but one element of communication and engagement with its public.
- 11) In recent times resources have been put towards the development of the Oxfordshire growth Board website. www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org
- 12) Although further work required is required to bring historic data onto the website, once complete, the website will bring together the historic and current Growth Board work in one place to make it more easily accessible.
- 13) The website also has a comments section where questions, statements or messages can be conveyed to the Board electronically.

The Growth Board Communications Strategy

- 14) The Growth Board adopted a Communications Strategy (the Strategy), or Protocol in 2015.
- 15) At the time the Board was fully engaged in a major project to identify, agree and then apportion the unmet housing need of Oxford to the other districts. Accordingly, the Strategy is framed in that context.
- 16) The Strategy, attached at Appendix Two to this report requires updating and will be a priority for the Growth Board Lead Authority, South Oxfordshire over the next few months.
- 17) The Protocol places the lead role for communication of the work of the Board with the lead authority. Its role is to ensure that the work of the Board is communicated through a range of mediums including the website, press releases and staff and stakeholder briefings. There should be communications to each of these audiences bi-monthly (as a minimum), coinciding with the Growth Board meetings.

Communication and the Housing and Growth Deal

- 18) Officers recognise that now the Housing and Growth Deal Delivery Plans are agreed with Government it is important we increase the level of communication and engagement of media, stakeholders, and the public on the different aspects of Deal delivery.

- 19) Officers recognise that the Board wants to build public understanding and support for how the investment is being spent, where the new transport and community infrastructure and affordable housing projects are, and what benefits these will bring. Public engagement will also be key around the Productivity workstream following adoption of the Local Industrial Strategy - as we implement programmes to boost skills and enable Living Lab projects.
- 20) Finally, the board also need to build public awareness and involvement in the development of the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan, this is discussed further in the relevant section below.
- 21) Communications plans are being developed at strategic and tactical levels to provide opportunities for regular communication about different Deal workstreams. For example, we have published outline details of the 43 infrastructure projects that will be supported with Deal funding. Similarly, the Board will publish headline details of the Affordable Homes projects once contractual start on site is confirmed.
- 22) Work is also underway to include interactive maps on the Growth Board website, thus enabling residents to see where the various projects are located.
- 23) There will also be case studies of community investment are planned – for example in Berinsfield, where additional housing is creating the critical mass needed to enable investment in new social infrastructure; or in Great West Park where a residents' association was born out of a Facebook page created by new residents.

Engaging the public on the Oxfordshire 2050 plan process

- 24) In common with all Statutory Development Plan Documents the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 requires a formal Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) that sets out our commitment for engaging with the people of Oxfordshire. This document has been the subject of consultation and will now be presented to the individual Oxfordshire district planning authorities for approval.
- 25) The SCI commits the Board to early, proportionate and meaningful engagement with communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and statutory bodies.
- 26) The early stages of the plan preparation have involved engagement with specific stakeholders, prescribed bodies, partners and consultees to inform the identification of issues and options. The Boards hosted an event in December with more than 80 delegates giving their views on the vision for Oxfordshire, addressing challenges and suggesting solutions.

- 27) Public consultation will continue in 2019 in three phases. The initial public consultation in February/March will consider the context and issues facing the county, and prompt discussion over the aspirations for Oxfordshire for 2050. Comments from this consultation will then feed into the second stage of consultation due to take place this summer, which will look at the various options available to achieve the agreed aspirations and consider which of these options are best for the county and to improve quality of life for all.
- 28) The final stage of consultation, due in October 2019, will present a draft Oxfordshire Plan incorporating the issues and options discussed and asking for feedback before seeking approval from Oxfordshire's planning authorities and submitting to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination

Website

- 29) As stated in the SCI, officers are encouraging electronic engagement as the primary portal for consultation. An easily-navigable, user-friendly, and informative website has been produced to give visitors a brief overview of the project, answer frequently asked questions, provide details of governance, allow downloading of documents and direct them to register to comment on current consultations. The website also contains a video that summarises the key points of the Oxfordshire Plan and how to get involved. The website can be found using this link <https://oxfordshireplan.org/>
- 30) The website is promoted and supported by Oxfordshire Growth Board social media platforms. It is intended that key messages, news updates, event/consultation reminders, discussion points and landmark achievements will be promoted via the Oxfordshire Growth Board social media accounts across all platforms using specially curated content designed to maximise engagement on that platform. Promoted posts will target key audiences and increase the profile of the Oxfordshire Plan to help stimulate debate and participation. Twitter polls will be used to help inform us of public opinion, while its limitations noted.

Consultation sessions

- 31) The SCI commits us to hold a series of drop-in consultation sessions in each of the five districts during the Plan consultation periods. Information, questionnaires and flyers will be available. Additional events and/or displays across the county are being explored.
- 32) Options will be explored to form a discussion forum made up of representative groups of Oxfordshire residents, similar to a Citizens Jury, to better gauge and reflect community opinion especially among harder to reach groups. Finally, market research companies are also being explored to carry out a survey with

a representative number of residents reflecting demographic makeup of Oxfordshire to again better canvass opinion.

Newsletters and publications

- 33) Officers intend that regular updates on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 will be published in all authorities' newsletters, with a link to the website for the latest news and further information.
- 34) News updates and landmark achievements will be announced through district/city to town/parish councils and to residents/businesses/organisations signed up to relevant mailing lists.
- 35) Regional media will be the main avenue for press coverage about the Plan, to communicate with residents. Main titles to target include BBC South, BBC Oxford, Jack FM, the Oxford Mail, the Oxford Times, The Witney Gazette, the Herald series, the Bicester Advertiser, the Banbury Cake, the Henley Standard, the Thame Gazette.
- 36) Finally, very locally focussed newsletters- hyperlocals- such as Rose Hill News in East Oxford will be considered to provide information to highly localised groups.

Conclusions

- 37) This report summarises the work officers current undertake to engage with and communicate to our stakeholders and public. Scrutiny will note that considerable resource is put into effective communication and that innovative solutions to ensure effective communication are being actively pursued, particularly through the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.
- 38) Scrutiny are asked to note and comment upon the communication and engagement work to date

Appendix One

Oxfordshire Growth Board: Public Participation Protocol

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Members of the public may ask questions of the Chairman of the Growth Board, or address the Growth Board on any substantive item at a meeting subject to the restrictions set out below. There shall be a specific agenda item near the start of each meeting of the Growth Board to permit such public participation to take place.
- 1.2 Questions shall be directly relevant to some matter in which the Growth Board has powers and duties and which directly affects the area of Oxfordshire.

2. Questions

- 2.1 Any member of the public wishing to ask a question may do so at a meeting of the Growth Board, and must give notice of the question in writing or by email to the Chief Executive or the Secretariat of the host authority, at least three clear days before the meeting (i.e. not counting the day of the meeting or the day of receipt).
- 2.2 The Chairman will answer submitted questions.
- 2.3 The questioner may read his/her question, but the Chairman will do so if the questioner wishes for that, or is not present at the meeting. One supplementary question is then also allowed relevant to the first question to allow for clarification.
- 2.4 The answer given by the Chairman may take the form of an oral statement, or may be given subsequently in writing to the questioner. A written copy of the response will be circulated to all Growth Board Members. It is intended the written response will be given within ten working days of the meeting.
- 2.5 No discussion shall take place on the question or the answer.
- 2.6 The Chief Executive of the host authority may, in consultation with the Chairman of the Growth Board, refuse to accept a submitted question if s/he considers it to be offensive, defamatory, frivolous, or vexatious, or if in his or her opinion it does not meet the requirements of paragraph 1.2 above.

3. Addresses

- 3.1 Any member of the public may address the Growth Board on any substantive agenda item. Such address shall be for up to three minutes.

- 3.2 The speaker shall give notice of their wish to address the Growth Board by email or in writing no later than 12 noon on the day before the meeting to the Chief Executive or the Secretariat of the host authority.
- 3.3 Once a member of the public has spoken and, with the leave of the Chairman, any questions of clarification asked of the speaker by Growth Board members duly answered, the Growth Board shall hear any further addresses, and after public participation shall proceed onto the next item of business. There will be no debate on any representations made except to the extent that they are considered when the relevant agenda item is considered later in the meeting.

4. Restrictions

- 4.1 Submitted questions shall be dealt with in the order of receipt by the host authority.
- 4.2 The total amount of time allowed for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed 30 minutes unless the Chairman consents to that in the interests of the proper conduct of the business of the Board.
- 4.3 In addition to the point in the preceding paragraph, the Chairman may vary the provisions of this scheme for a particular meeting should s/he believe, on taking advice, that to be appropriate.

Appendix Two

Oxfordshire Growth Board – Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme Communications Strategy

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment undertaken in Oxfordshire during 2013/14 identified a need for a significant increase in housing provision in the area particularly in Oxford where the City Council has concluded that there is a shortfall of suitable land within the City to meet its needs.

As required by the Duty to Cooperate, each of the Oxfordshire authorities is now working jointly, through the Oxfordshire Growth Board, to agree a process for considering the extent and most sustainable ways of addressing Oxford's 'unmet' housing need.

Our aim is to provide information at appropriate stages to the media, interest groups and the public to keep them informed of the progress of the work being undertaken on behalf of the Board. This has two aspects.

- Developing a commonly agreed process for media interface,
- Developing a system for ensuring that all Growth Board partners provide common messages about the work of the Growth Board, particularly to ensure that agreed key messages are consistently highlighted by all partners.

Developing a Commonly Agreed Process

1 Produce and maintain informative web pages

Each Council to publish a dedicated web page, or section, with details of the Growth Board's work. To include:

- The post SHMA Strategic Work Programme which will be updated periodically to indicate progress being made against the programme set out and an indication of any revisions to projected timescales.
- Publish any agreed explanatory statements by way of supplementary information at key stages.

Some of the above processes and procedures will be complex, but the aim is to present them as clearly and fairly as possible, without over-simplifying facts.

Each of the Council's web pages will link to:

- Oxfordshire County Council's Growth Board web pages, which contain meeting and agenda papers and Terms of Reference for the Board
- The Lead Administration authority's website. This will contain additional information as the Growth Board Programme Manager will more regularly update it.

Action: Oxfordshire Growth Board Manager to draft website text for approval by the Growth Board Executive.

2 Dealing with media issues and enquiries

Press enquiries should be directed, in the first instance, to the Growth Board Manager / Communications Officer of the Lead Authority

The Communications Officer will:

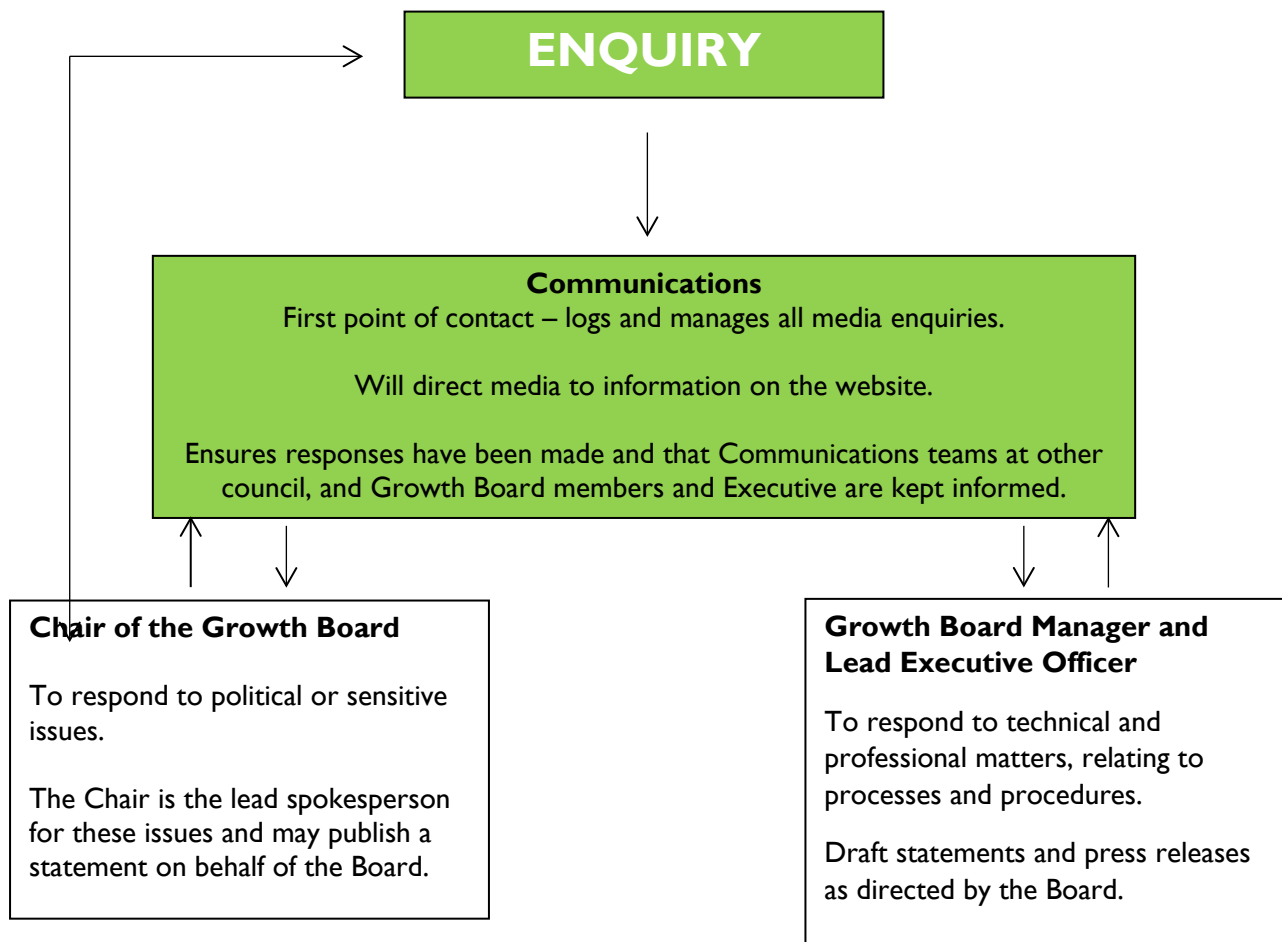
- record enquiries and ensure they are responded to
- liaise with the Growth Board Manager and Leading Chief Executive / Lead Executive Officer to provide a response for technical or operational queries (liaison may need to be expanded to a wider group, depending on the nature of the query)
- keep communications officers and relevant officers and board members at other authorities informed and issue copies of responses or statements to them, as appropriate
- direct enquiries of a political or sensitive nature to the Chair of the Growth Board.

The Growth Board agree that the Council acting as lead authority coordinates and deals with media requests in the first instance.

3 Non-routine enquiries

Speculation regarding issues such as any potential strategic sites is unavoidable and Board Members are likely to be contacted directly for this type of enquiry.

Statements on behalf of the Board would be made by the Chairman, in consultation with other Board Members.



Press releases

Press releases requested by the Board would be drafted by a Communications Officer, with the assistance of the Growth Board Manager.

Before release, the content must be approved by:

- The Chair of the Board
- Relevant Board Members
- Lead Executive Officers for each Council.

Press releases would appear on each authority's website.

**Growth Board response to recommendations of the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel
Recommendations made on 22 November 2018
Draft response provided by Paul Staines**

The Growth Board is requested to provide a draft response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel, to be published as a supplement collectively with the Scrutiny Panel's report, for decision at its meeting on 27 November 2018.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Recommendation 1: That the Growth Board considers and adopts the principles of responding to the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations (set out in the report of Panel from 22 November)	Yes	The Growth Board has resolved to use its best endeavours to meet these requests.
Recommendation 2: That the Growth Board takes further steps to raise concerns with Central Government about the timing of the JSSP submission deadline, and individual Local Plan submission deadlines, in April 2019 as required by the Growth Deal, without first understanding more details about the impact of the proposed Oxford Cambridge Expressway.	Yes	Agreed, officers are currently progressing a series of meetings with Government on this issue.
Recommendation 3: That in light of the continuing uncertainty about the route choice and its impact on the communities affected and the wider county, the Growth Board clarifies its rationale and evidence base for endorsing the expressway.	Yes	The Growth Board's stance on the proposed Oxford to Cambridge expressway was set out in the letter to Government dated 1 October 2018 and published on the Growth Board's website. It is important to note that the decision on the route of the Expressway lies with Government, not the Growth Board or the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

<p>Recommendation 4: At least one member of the Growth Board should attend each Scrutiny Panel meeting to answer questions about the Board's work. The Chair of one of the Sub-Groups should attend in rotation to discuss the work of their Sub-Group.</p>	<p>Agreed in part</p>	<p>Growth Board members are happy to attend Scrutiny as appropriate, however it believes attendance will be more effective if members or subgroup chairmen are invited when a relevant item appears on the Scrutiny Panel's agenda.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5: Officers working on the Deal's strands as part of the Deal team and the Lead officer for the councils should attend the Scrutiny Panel as appropriate to answer questions and discuss their work.</p>	<p>Agreed in part</p>	<p>Officers should be invited when a relevant item appears on the Scrutiny Panel's agenda.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: That the Growth Board establishes a clear pro-active process for informing district, county and parish councillors about their work and future consultations and decisions. This may take the form of a circulated newsletter or bulletin sent out by the Board's programme officer, and should not rely solely on the information posted on the Board's website.</p>	<p>Agreed in part</p>	<p>The Board agrees with the principle of informing and engaging with all councils but this needs to be done in an effective and efficient manner. Accordingly, the Board has agreed that all parish councils will be sent a link to the Growth Board's website. County and district councillors should also take on the role of updating town and parish councils at their liaison meetings.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: That the Growth Board takes formal votes on all items for decision, and records in the minutes each Leader's individual vote, to increase transparency about decisions and each Council's stance.</p>	<p>Agreed in part</p>	<p>The Growth Board will take a formal vote on any matter if requested by a Board member. It does not however agree that it is necessary to record each voting members decision, although minutes will record all views offered in any discussion prior to voting</p>
<p>Recommendation 8: That the Growth Board remains fully committed to encouraging public engagement in the Board's work.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Growth Board continues to be committed to encouraging engagement, as evidenced by the public participation at this and every Growth Board meeting.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: That the Energy Strategy Action Plan is revised to ensure it contains SMART targets and clear and measurable objectives.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Growth Board agrees that the point made is a valid one for discussion and will include it in its deliberations on the Energy Strategy, which is on the agenda for this meeting.</p>

Growth Board Scrutiny Panel Work Plan

The Growth Board Scrutiny Panel agrees its own Work Plan, which is reviewed at each meeting. The Panel is encouraged to be strict in prioritising key issues for review, in addition to the entirety of the Growth Board’s forthcoming agendas, which will feature as a standard item on the Work Plan. The Panel’s ongoing review of their work plan should be considered in conjunction with the Growth Board’s Forward Plan.

Meeting date	Item	Description and rationale	Contact
24 January 2019	Public engagement with the Growth Board	To consider how the Growth Board is engaging the public in its work and promoting transparency and public awareness of its work. Also, to consider progress in establishing a forward plan of decisions for the Growth Board work.	Peter Trueman/ Mish Tullar
	Affordable Housing	To understand how affordable housing is defined within the context of the Deal, and the scale and ambition of plans to promote affordable tenures.	Paul Staines
	Growth Board Agenda	To consider the Growth Board’s agenda, and any items for discussion.	N/a
21 March 2019	The Local Industrial Strategy	Consideration of a report concerning the Local Industrial Strategy.	Ahmed Goga (OxLEP)
	Oxfordshire Energy Strategy Delivery Plan	To consider the delivery Plan developed from the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy	Ahmed Goga (OxLEP)
	Growth Board Agenda	To consider the Growth Board’s agenda, and any items for discussion. This will include <u>Quarter 3</u> monitoring data that was previously requested by the Panel.	N/a

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Agenda Item 9

Items to be scheduled

Item	Description and rationale	Lead Officer
Strengthening social value and Environmental Capital	To consider to what extent the Growth Board is taking account of, measuring and then extracting social value in the growth agenda. Also, to consider the strategic approach to maximising the utility of environmental capital.	TBC