

OXFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD – 30 NOVEMBER 2016

Growth Board Work Programme Review

Report of the Acting Director for Environment & Economy, OCC

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Board on progress with developing its future work programme.

Recommendation

That the Growth Board notes progress with developing its work programme to date.

Background

2. The Growth Board was established in September 2014 to facilitate and enable partnership working and collaboration between local authorities and partners in business and higher education on economic development, strategic planning and growth.
3. At its last meeting the Board was presented with a report that noted that, with the completion of the Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme there was an opportunity to review the Board's work programme. Accordingly the report offered proposals to the Board on how it could develop its work programme.
4. The Board asked for the actions proposed to be progressed and this report offers an update. However the Board also asked that officers widen the scope of the review. Specifically the Board resolved that:

Following the publication of the PwC and Grant Thornton reports on local government in Oxfordshire it is clear that there are several areas where joint working may help us realise significant savings and improvements of public services. A working group should be established including Chief Executives and Leaders of local authorities, CCG and LEP to explore how these transformational changes can be progressed in areas including, but not exclusively: infrastructure, skills, economic development, strategic spatial planning, public assets, business rates, health and social care. The working group will investigate, but will not be restricted to reviewing the future function of the Oxfordshire Growth Board and to consider the feasibility of establishing a combined authority for Oxfordshire.

5. Accordingly this report also offers an update on developing this resolution and offers some initial proposals in work streams that are currently part of the Board's focus, these being planning and housing delivery.

Progress to date

Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy

6. Following the approval of a brief and budget for the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OXIS) by the Board in May 2016 a consultant, AECOM was employed to complete the project under the guidance of a steering group drawn from across council partners.

7. The project is split into two phases with data collection and research, together with stakeholder engagement taking place up until February 2017 with the report then being drafted and finessed. It is anticipated that a report will be available to the Board for consideration in the late spring of 2017.

Oxfordshire Spatial Vision (OSV)

8. Following the last meeting of the Board officers were asked to prepare an initial scoping report for the Executive Officer Group (EOG) on the development of a Spatial Vision for Oxfordshire (OSV). This report was presented to a meeting of Oxfordshire CEOs who have approved the development of a project brief for the OSV.
9. Accordingly officers are working on the OSV project brief with a view to it being presented to CEO in the new year and then onto the Board for consideration

Improving Public Participation in meetings

10. At the last meeting the Board recognised that the public participation scheme for the Growth Board has been in place for 12 months and it is appropriate to review whether it has functioned satisfactorily. Accordingly, officers have contacted a number of regular participants in Board meetings to ask for their feedback on the manner in which they are able to engage with the Board and their suggestions for future improvements.
11. This feedback, together with some research on best practice from elsewhere in the country will be presented to the Board for consideration at its next meeting.

Developing the role of non-voting members

12. The Board recognised at the last meeting that one aspect of partnership working worthy of consideration is the manner in which non-voting members are engaged in the Board's work programme, recognising that these members play a vital role in shaping an agenda for growth in Oxfordshire.
13. As the majority of non-voting members are appointed by or allied to OxLEP. Officers have approached OxLEP to discuss how best to assist their representatives to better engage. This has led to a proposal that the Board host, through officers, a series of workshops that will examine the growth agenda with a view to both informing non-voting members and engaging them in a discussion about how to progress the Board's agenda. These workshops will be hosted by the County Council as lead authority and will draw upon partners to assist with the workshops development

Review the Growth Board's terms of reference and interaction with related partnership structures

14. At the last meeting the Board recognised that it will be appropriate to ensure that Oxfordshire's partnership structures remain aligned to the regional and national agendas and is able to engage with and influence emerging sub-national structures and any revised view of infrastructure, industrial and trade strategies.
15. A first stage of this, a review of the officer structures that currently exist within Oxfordshire in the fields of planning and housing delivery and how they could be better aligned under

the Board to best deliver its work programme, have begun and proposals are being developed that will be presented to the Board at its next meeting.

Conclusions

16. The resolution of the Board, reproduced in paragraph 4, offers the opportunity to carry out a root and branch examination of how the Board progresses its work programme, together with a wider examination of joint working across Oxfordshire. This report details the first steps in delivering this resolution. Officers will continue to report to the Board on progress at future meetings.

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