

CENTRAL AREA GROWTH BOARD
Councillor N Blake
Leader of the Council

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This report sets out the approach for the new Central Area Growth Board (CAGB) which is proposed as the new Joint Committee responsible for strategic leadership as part of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Growth Corridor. It covers the governance structure, terms of reference and function. Cabinet endorsement is sought for the proposed approach and governance proposals.

2 Recommendations

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| <p>2.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the arrangements for the new Central area growth board joint committee as set out in this report.</p> <p>2.2 Cabinet is asked to agree the new Governance Structure and becomes a full member of the Central Area Growth Board, adopting the Terms of Reference (Annex A).</p> <p>2.3 To commit to associated contribution of £5k per annum of ongoing revenue to support the work of the Growth Board.</p> <p>Cabinet is also asked to recommend to Council that it adopts the proposals for the joint committee and delegate any amendments to the terms of reference to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader.</p> |
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3 Supporting information

- 3.1 The National Infrastructure Commission's (NIC) Interim report on the Cambridge-MK-Oxford growth corridor identified that one factor holding the area back from achieving its full potential as the UK's 'Silicon Valley' is the lack of joined-up planning of housing, jobs and infrastructure across traditional local authority boundaries.
- 3.2 "Current governance mechanisms are not sufficient to deliver the step-change in strategic leadership and collaboration needed... and will require a fundamental shift in the scale at which local authorities collaborate on planning and infrastructure."
- 3.3 In its final report on the Cambridge – Milton Keynes - Oxford corridor, 'Partnering for Prosperity: a new deal for the Cambridge – Milton Keynes - Oxford arc', the NIC encouraged authorities within the central section of the arc to "strengthen structures for collaborative governance and collective decision making" and referenced the work ongoing in the central area to establish a growth board.
- 3.4 The final report contained several recommendations within it. AVDC has prepared a written response to each of these recommendations and these have been attached as an appendix to the Cabinet report regarding the Ox-Camb Expressway Corridor options. Cabinet have been asked to support these written responses.
- 3.5 Government, in its initial vision for the Corridor published at Autumn Budget, stated that "it will be necessary for authorities to work together much more closely going forwards."

- 3.6 Within the Cambridge – Milton Keynes - Oxford corridor, formalised stronger regional working arrangements have been established at either ‘end’ of the corridor through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and the Oxfordshire Growth Board. Establishing a Growth Board for the ‘Central Area’ allows Aylesbury Vale District Council and its partner authorities to meet the challenge of councils working together closely in the future.
- 3.7 Aylesbury Vale District Council has been actively engaging since last summer on closer regional working with the 17 local authorities within the South East Midlands and Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) footprints that are locally defined as being within the Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford corridor. All of the authorities across this geography have agreed to form the Central Area Growth Board (CAGB), with the exception of Buckinghamshire County Council. Partners have agreed in principle to formally establish a Growth Board to coordinate cross-boundary working within the central area.
- 3.8 The CAGB is to be constituted as a Joint Committee under Sections 101(5) and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000 and pursuant (where applicable) to the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions)(England) Regulations 2012.
- 3.9 The establishment of a Growth Board in the centre of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes- Oxford corridor also allows the central area to be an active participant in the cross corridor working arrangements currently being established.
- 3.10 The CAGB will provide the strategic leadership to enable the area to plan for, and realise an economic transformation across the central area and the Growth Board will be a single coordinating voice for the region with central government. Its key function is to focus on growth-related matters with four key outcomes:
- Accelerate the delivery of planned growth across the area, where this is enabled by investment in infrastructure and services
 - Provide the strategic leadership that will enable existing mechanisms and processes to plan for, and realise an economic transformation across the area;
 - Secure long-term benefits and opportunities for local communities; and
 - Attract increased private sector investment
- 3.11 It will also seek to:
- Establish Common Planning Areas to produce an integrated and holistic approach to strategic planning for employment, housing and infrastructure that builds on Local Plans
 - Accelerate and increase the delivery of planned growth across the area, where this is enabled by investment in infrastructure and services
 - Work together to influence the route planning options in order to realise the opportunity for the area including an “Expressway” (road and rail) and other associated linkages that may be delivered

- Approve and monitor the implementation of a Central Area programmes of work including those flowing from any Place Deals, Strategic Economic Plans and transport strategies and other relevant infrastructure programmes agreed
 - Bid for and secure investment, including from Government and external sources of resources to support the above purposes and
 - Contribute to and be an active member of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor cross corridor governance arrangements
- 3.12 The Terms of Reference set out the governance structure and roles and responsibilities of Board members. A full list of members and the Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.13 No powers are being ceded from member authorities to the Growth Board. If members of the Growth Board agree to vest powers into it, this would be agreed by individual councils via their decision making processes. Hence Aylesbury Vale District Council will only cede powers to the Growth Board if it and all other member authorities choose to. Milton Keynes Council is the Accountable Body for the CAGB and will provide the Section 151 officer role to the CAGB.
- 3.14 In the visioning document 'Helping the Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford corridor reach its potential' published at Autumn Budget, government announced its ambition to work with the central area on housing and growth deals throughout 2018. Whilst any potential housing and growth deals will not necessarily cover the whole geography of the Central Area, the Growth Board will have an important role to play in coordinating these at the sub-regional level.

4 Options considered

- 4.1 (a) Do nothing
- 4.2 Establishing joint working at the two ends of the corridor (ie: Oxford and Cambridge) has played a significant role in securing investment, flexibilities and commitments from government. Doing nothing would mean that AVDC would not have a voice in such regional discussions.
- 4.3 (b) Become a full member of the Central Area Growth Board
- 4.4 By becoming a full member of the Central Area Growth Board, AVDC will be an active participant in contributing to agenda on strategic planning, economic development and infrastructure planning at the sub-regional working.

5 Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 To seek agreement from Cabinet to become a full member of the Central Area Growth

6 Resource implications

- 6.1 Collaborating and proactively planning for growth through the forum of a Growth Board will allow regional partners to proactively shape the future growth of their places, rather than having growth imposed from above.
- 6.2 By joining the Central Area Growth Board, AVDC is committing to an ongoing annual £5k commitment to support its work and to fund officer roles to support its operation. Further contributions may be sought for specific pieces of work.

6.3 In the years in which AVDC is the Host Authority (those in which it chairs the Growth Board), Committee Management services will be provided by Aylesbury Vale District Council.

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Appendix: Terms of Reference

Background Documents NIC Partnering for Prosperity: a new deal for the Cambridge- Milton Keynes- Oxford arc

Central Area Growth Board – Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference are not legally binding but are intended to lead to a legal agreement in due course.

Central Area Growth Board

1. Governance

1.1 The Central Area Growth Board (the Joint Committee) includes at commencement the following local authorities:-

Full Members

- Aylesbury Vale District Council,
- Bedford Borough Council,
- Central Bedfordshire Council,
- Cherwell District Council,
- Chiltern District Council,
- Corby Borough Council,
- Daventry District Council,
- East Northamptonshire District Council,
- Kettering Borough Council,
- Luton Borough Council,
- Milton Keynes Council,
- Northampton Borough Council,
- Northamptonshire County Council,
- South Bucks District Council,
- South Northamptonshire District Council,
- Borough of Wellingborough Council and
- Wycombe District Council.

1.2 The Central Area Growth Board is a Joint Committee under s101 (5), 102 Local Government Act 1972 and s9EB Local Government Act 2000 and pursuant (where applicable) to the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012.

Each member authority must take the Terms of Reference through its internal processes.

1.3 The Growth Board will exercise the powers which its members have agreed to vest in it on a unanimous basis under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 insofar as they relate to the promotion of development or economic growth or matters ancillary to this. These powers will be exercised concurrently with the constituent members and members will unanimously decide the voting mechanism for exercising powers. This excludes ceding the decision making powers on planning matters, which will remain vested with the Local Planning Authorities, as set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

1.4 The Growth Board will also include associate members, who will be able to participate in meetings but not be able to vote. The LEPS that operate in the area are entitled to be associate members.

1.5 It will also include other co-opted non-voting named members from those organisations listed at 4.4 below.

2. Accountable Body and Host

2.1 The Accountable Body for the Growth Board is Milton Keynes Council which will provide the Section 151 officer role to the Growth Board.

2.2 Milton Keynes Council's Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) will provide the Growth Board with a quarterly financial report. This report will provide the Board with an overview of the funds spent, funds committed against funds allocated.

2.3 Programme management will be provided by dedicated growth board officer support and will include milestones and outcomes achieved and where necessary, ensure that action plans are put in place to address any concerns.

2.4 The Growth Board will be hosted under local government arrangements and this will be rotated in accordance with the arrangements for the Chair (see Section 8). Committee services are provided by the Host in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, as outlined in paragraph 8.3.

3. Purpose of the Central Area Growth Board

3.1 To provide the strategic leadership that will enable us to plan for, and realise an economic transformation across the central area, speaking to Government and its Agencies with one co-ordinated voice and encouraging private sector investment.

3.2 To seek to establish Common Planning Areas to produce an integrated and holistic approach to strategic planning for employment, housing and infrastructure that builds on Local Plans, Local Transport Plans and Strategic Economic Plans.

3.3 To accelerate and increase the delivery of planned growth across the area, where this is enabled by investment in infrastructure and services.

3.4 To work together to influence the route planning options, in order to realise the opportunity for the area in the Cambridge-Milton Keynes- Oxford growth corridor, "Expressway" (road and rail) and other associated linkages that may be delivered.

3.5 To approve and monitor the implementation of a Central Area programmes of work including those flowing from any Place Deals, Strategic Economic Plans and transport strategies and other relevant infrastructure programmes as agreed. This is not an exhaustive list and may be expanded at agreement of the Growth Board.

3.6 To bid for and secure investment, including from Government and external sources of resources to support the above purposes.

3.7 To contribute and be an active member of the Cambridge- Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor cross corridor governance arrangements.

4. Membership

4.1 As the Growth Board is (where applicable) discharging executive functions then the appointed person must (where applicable) be from the Executive. In authorities where the committee system is

in operation the Leader should be the representative. There shall be one member from each constituent body.

4.2 Each constituent authority/body shall appoint a substitute (also being an executive member or in the case of councils using the committee system, another senior member). The substitute member shall have the same rights of speaking and voting at the meetings as the member for whom the substitution is made.

4.3 Subject to the legal right of the Growth Board to appoint a Chair and Vice Chair of its choice each year, the proposed protocol is that there will be a rotating Chair and Vice Chair as set out in 8.2 below.

4.4 Other non-voting members as required for good linkages shall be a single named-position representative from the bodies as detailed below:

- England's Economic Heartlands
- Universities Representative
- Further Education Colleges
- DCLG/BEIS/Department for Transport
- Homes and Communities Agency Representative for South East
- Buckinghamshire County Council

4.5 The Growth Board can agree to allow other authorities/parties outside of the initial members (listed in 1.1, 1.4 and 4.4 above) to have either full or associate membership of the Central Area Growth Board and agree the terms on which this is to be permitted. Associate members would not have voting rights.

4.6 The Growth Board can also invite other relevant observers to meetings of the Board.

5. Voting

5.1 One member one vote for each constituent authority member. The Chair will have an original but not a casting vote.

5.2 Normal rules as to declarations of interest and conflicts of interest to be applied to Local Authority members in accordance with the respective Council's Code of Conduct and LEP members in respect of the LEP Assurance Framework.

5.3 Any questions to be decided by the Growth Board will be decided by way of two thirds majority of constituent members present and voting.

5.4 Members votes are only valid when they have paid the annual subscription (see 10.0 below). Each member must pay their contribution before the agreed date for the year, if the subscription is not paid on the agreed date, the Local Authority will only be entitled to observe Growth Board meetings.

6. Quorum

6.1 The quorum for a Growth Board meeting shall be 2/3rds of (12) constituent members, including the Chair.

7. Functions

7.1 The Members have agreed that the main function of the Growth Board is to focus on growth related matters. The Members have agreed that there are four key outcomes it wishes the Growth Board for the Central Area to focus on, namely to;

- a) Accelerate the delivery of planned growth across the area, where this is enabled by investment in infrastructure and services.
- b) Provide the strategic leadership that will enable existing mechanisms and processes to plan for, and realise an economic transformation across the area.
- c) Secure long-term benefits and opportunities for local communities and
- d) Attract increased private sector investment

7.2 The Growth Board will, in relation to matters of general importance to the Central Area

- Represent the Central Area as a whole
- Respond to consultations, express views and make recommendations to Government and others, including partners, on matters of general importance to the Central Area. This will include on:
 - i. Proposals for major development, including local plans.
 - ii. Proposals for major infrastructure.
 - iii. Funding submissions to Government or its agencies.
 - iv. Strategic Economic Plans.

7.3 Coordination of whether spatial planning, infrastructure and public services are integrated and make recommendations to encourage this.

7.4 Advise partners on matters of collective interest.

7.5 Commission and share research and analysis in support of the preparation of statutory and non-statutory plans and strategies (including local plans and strategic economic plans). This will include work designed to assist compliance with the duty to cooperate in connection with plan-making.

7.6 Lead and coordinate the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) liaison process on Central Area wide regeneration and housing issues and contribute to any related interaction with Government agencies.

7.7 The Growth Board will also:

- i. Provide a forum for partnership working and collaboration on spatial planning, economic development, housing, transport, and general infrastructure issues.
- ii. Input into development of a Local Industrial Strategy for the Central Area.
- iii. Engage with and represent the Central Area to the Sub-national Transport Body covering the Central Area.
- iv. Wherever possible, the Growth Board will aim to streamline existing processes

8. Meetings

8.1 The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Growth Board will be elected at the first meeting and subsequently at the start of each municipal year (i.e. the first meeting after local government elections are or would usually be held).

8.2 It is expected that the role of Chair and Vice Chair will rotate on a municipal year basis (except in the first year which will be slightly longer than a municipal year), and that the Vice-Chair will serve as the Chair in the following year. It is expected that there will be a rotation of those positions to ensure that each constituent member and geographic area of the Central Area has the opportunity to serve, over time.

8.3 Meetings will be convened by the Chair or on the written request of five or more constituent members. Meetings shall normally be held on a bi-monthly basis at the host authority (that of the Chair), but meetings may be called as and when required to ensure that important timescales are met. Papers will be published in line with the Local Government Act 1972 to ensure statutory timescales are met .

8.4 Proposals for decisions by the Growth Board may be put forward by the Chair or by any member of the Growth Board.

8.5 Local Authority Chief Executives will attend in support of the political attendees at the meetings. Local Enterprise Partnership Chief Executives will attend in support of their LEP Chair.

9. Secretariat and Support

9.1 The secretariat and support for the Growth Board will be established. Primarily the support will be led by dedicated growth board officer support and an Executive Officer Group, the Central Corridor Group (CCoG). CCoG will drive the technical and operational elements and the preparation of advice and recommendations to the Growth Board.

9.2 Dedicated Growth Board officer support will be established. Support will be provided by lead executive officers at each constituent member and LEP, each of whom will link into the CCoG.

9.3 Other investment partners will be involved as appropriate, again connecting directly to the Programme Manager and linking to CCoG as the lead co-ordination group for matters of general importance to the Central Area including the Homes and Communities Agency, Environment Agency, Highways England, Network Rail and England's Economic Heartlands Transport Forum/Sub-national Transport Body. These will advise on the investment and work programme.

10. Funding Contributions

10.1 The budget of the Growth Board will be agreed each year by the Growth Board not later than 1st December of the preceding financial year. The cost of meeting the expenditure planned in the budget shall, to the extent not met from other sources, be divided equally among the members (both constituent and associate) of the Growth Board. This shall be their subscription. At the time of establishment of the growth board, the annual contribution will be £5k. If the Growth Board wishes to seek additional contributions for any further work, proposals will be referred to partners for decision making.

10.2 If the proposed subscription is higher than the preceding year's subscription plus CPI, if any constituent or associate member is unwilling to pay the subscription so determined they may give written notice to the Host on behalf of the Growth Board no later than 1st January preceding the financial year to which the budget will apply. Unless they withdraw in writing that notice they shall cease to be a member from 1st April of that year (and the normal notice period given in Section 11 will not apply).

10.3 Any member which has not given due notice under 10.2 (and whose membership has not come to an end under Section 11) shall be obliged to pay its subscription for the year.

11. Withdrawal

11.1 Any member may give written notice to the Host, on behalf of the Growth Board, of its intention to withdraw from the Growth Board.

11.2 Such notice, unless withdrawn in writing, shall come into effect on the first 1st April which occurs after 12 months after the notice is given.

12. Joining

12.1 Any English local authority may apply to become a consistent member of the Growth Board. The Growth Board may approve such an application if it is satisfied that the applicant's area is closely economically linked to the existing Central Area, and that its joining would not render the governance of the Central Area unreasonably difficult.

12.2 Any English Local Enterprise Partnership may apply to become an associate member of the Growth Board. The Growth Board may approve such an application if it is satisfied that the applicant's area is closely economically linked to the existing Central Area, and that its joining would not render the governance of the Central Area unreasonably difficult.

12.3 On the application to join being approved, the new member shall take on the rights and obligations of the existing members of the Growth Board, including paying the appropriate proportion of the subscription due from members for the financial year in which it joins.

13. Scrutiny Arrangements

13.1 Decisions made by the Growth Committee shall be subject to the usual scrutiny arrangements of each constituent authority.