

Report for:	<b>BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SHADOW EXECUTIVE</b>
Meeting Date:	<b>10th September 2019</b>

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Establishment of a Buckinghamshire Growth Board</b>
Responsible Officer or Relevant Member:	Neil Gibson & Steve Bambrick, HG&E Co-Chairs
Officer Contact:	<a href="mailto:negibson@buckscc.gov.uk">negibson@buckscc.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:steve.bambrick@chiltenandsouthbucks.gov.uk">steve.bambrick@chiltenandsouthbucks.gov.uk</a>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p>That the Shadow Executive consider the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorse the creation of a new Buckinghamshire Growth Board with the indicative purpose, functions and governance as outlined in the report to go live following the May 2020 elections.</li> <li>• Endorse the establishment of a Shadow Growth Board as proposed in the report to undertake the development work needed to establish the formal Growth Board and to engage with MHCLG about Bucks potential contribution to the Arc CSR 2020</li> <li>• Note that MHCLG anticipate the Buckinghamshire District Councils joining the Bucks Growth Board do not remain members of the Central Growth Board, requiring the District Councils to formally withdraw from the Central Growth Board as soon as possible.</li> <li>• Note that MHCLG anticipate that Buckinghamshire LEP will be the LEP member of the Bucks Growth Board and SEMLEP the LEP member of the Central Growth Board.</li> </ul>
Corporate Implications:	<p>It is not proposed at this transition stage that the Growth Board would have any formal decision making powers – those would remain with the constituent organisations. It would in fact be an informal partnership developing a shared understanding of the future direction and integrated priorities for Buckinghamshire.</p> <p>Initial advice, however, has been sought from the Shadow Authority Monitoring Officer on the legal framework within which any future formal Growth Board would operate. This will guide the permanent formal governance arrangements for the Growth Board as part of the new Buckinghamshire Council.</p> <p>Growth Boards are established under general powers (s1 localism act) but that they are nevertheless subject to the provisions relating to local authority governance (as set out in section 2). This means that any exercise of Executive functions will be subject to the usual rules and any decisions made by the</p>

	<p>Executive Leader subject to Executive rules.</p> <p>There is no need for a formal growth board in an area where there is only one Council, unlike areas where a Growth Board is a formal joint committee to enable Councils to make decisions jointly. In Buckinghamshire the Growth Board can be an informal partnership where the Council makes decisions in consultation with others. This partnership may be called a board but the governance is not that of a decision-making body.</p> <p>There are a number of advantages to this approach. The Leader can exercise all executive functions at a meeting of the board or can choose to make decisions after a meeting having consulted the board. This would enable the membership to be as described without formal voting and will limit formal governance to compliance with the new Council's rules relating to individual member decisions of the Executive Leader.</p>
Options:	<p>With the emergence, and recent increasing profile of a number of significant strategic national conversations involving Buckinghamshire, there is an established need for the public bodies within the County to come together under a clear vision for the future supported by effective delivery framework governance. This need has been brought into clearer focus more recently in discussions with the Ministry for Housing Communities &amp; Local Government (MHCLG) regarding the formation of 'sub-regional growth boards' and associated 'growth packages' to "drive forwards our shared ambitions for the wider Oxford-Cambridge Arc". (Appendix A)</p> <p>A Buckinghamshire Growth Board will ensure the right platform, on Buckinghamshire geography, to align the relevant public bodies and the BTVLEP for delivering a holistic and place-shaping approach to growth and development.</p> <p>The establishment of a Buckinghamshire Growth Board is consistent with equivalent blocks in the Arc (Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and the Central Area) and enables a Buckinghamshire discussion with key national and regional partner, including Central Government.</p>
Reason:	<p>A case for this was discussed and supported at a Member meeting in July 2019 and supported by the MHCLG as a key 'block' within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. Going forward, Central Government will look to the Buckinghamshire Growth Board to engage with in the discussion about growth related matters and also to deliver appropriate expertise and input when considering matters such as the Autumn Comprehensive Spending Review and other Arc development.</p> <p>With the recent change in Prime Minister/Cabinet and emerging new domestic policy agenda, it is even more important that Buckinghamshire has a direct line of conversation with Government officials on such matters.</p>



## **1. Purpose of Report**

To set out the purpose, function and membership of a Buckinghamshire Growth Board.

## **2. Content of Report**

### **Purpose**

The proposed Growth Board, as a partnership, will provide a single forum working across the public and private sector for the development and oversight of a Buckinghamshire Growth Agenda and other associated place-shaping activities in enabling a single coherent voice on local and national opportunities.

It is not proposed at this transition stage that the Growth Board would have any formal decision making powers – those would remain with the constituent organisations. However, those individual decisions would be significantly influenced by the shared understanding of the future direction and integrated priorities for Buckinghamshire, built through the discussions on these matters by the emerging Growth Board.

The core purpose of the Growth Board when fully established might therefore include:

- To develop a shared vision for growth in the county and deliver this through the actions of the constituent organisations,
- To facilitate and enable collaboration between Buckinghamshire public sector bodies and the Buckinghamshire LEP (BLEP) on economic development, strategic planning, growth, place shaping, and the emerging national environmental agenda,
- To facilitate the delivery of programmes of work that cut across organisational, geographical, and thematic boundaries, and ensure that these programmes are adequately funded,
- To coordinate collective engagement with national, regional, and sub-regional bodies on growth, infrastructure, environmental, and strategic planning matters, e.g. the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, Heathrow, Expressway, and England's Economic Heartland,
- To develop and provide shared ownership of the data and evidence on growth, including the Buckinghamshire Strategic Infrastructure Tool,
- To agree growth bids for the allocation of resources and investment in Buckinghamshire and,
- To ensure that decisions and cross-cutting work across all public sector bodies and the BLEP are aligned to 'good growth' principles and align to Buckinghamshire's values and vision.

Further work would need to be done to determine how the Growth Board will formally relate to the new Buckinghamshire Council and where decision making responsibilities could lie from vesting day.

### **Functions**

To fulfil this purpose it is proposed that the Growth Board when fully established does the following:

- Provides a forum for the identification of priorities, development of co-ordinated investment strategies, strategic economic, and environmental plans,



- Provide a single voice in liaison with Government in respect of growth issues,
- Support bids for and secures the allocation of growth related investment,
- Has a role in prioritising and co-ordinating infrastructure schemes,
- Provides a forum for partnership working and collaboration on strategic spatial planning, economic development, housing, transport, health, environment, education, and general infrastructure issues at regional and sub-regional level,
- Addresses cross border issues, advocating the needs of Buckinghamshire,
- Facilitates the integration of spatial planning, infrastructure, and public services (e.g. education, adult social care, health, emergency services),
- Is involved in the direction of a new Buckinghamshire Local Plan,
- Consider frameworks i.e. strategic spatial planning, transport, economic and health, that Buckinghamshire may be invited to join e.g. related to the Arc,
- Provide comment on wider proposals, consultation, and funding investment decisions from national agencies,
- Work across the public sector (in particular the NHS, Fire and Police) to plan for future service delivery and progress conversations concerning One Public Estate,
- Explore and drive innovative projects, and,
- Engage with utility providers, including water and waste treatment, gas and electricity provision and digital infrastructure.

## Membership

The Growth Board's core membership would need to be confirmed through the development of the Board's formal Terms of Reference, which would also cover matters such as any voting rights. Its Terms of Reference and relationship with Buckinghamshire Council will form part of the new Council's constitution as necessary. However an indicative Membership might be:

- Buckinghamshire Council Councillors (number to be determined)
- BLEP Chair and Business Representatives (number to be determined)
- Chief Executive of Buckinghamshire Council
- Chief Executive of Buckinghamshire CCG
- Skills Board Chair
- Education Representative
- Buckinghamshire & MK NEP Chair

The Leader of Buckinghamshire Council would chair the Growth Board.

### Potential additional representatives in attendance (in an advisory capacity)

- Homes England
- MHCLG
- Other Government Agencies such as Highways England, Environment Agency
- Chief Constable TVP
- Other Senior Officers from Buckinghamshire Council

Review of the Growth Board governance would take place in line with the establishment of the new Buckinghamshire Council. A proposed target date for agreeing formal governance and Terms of Reference is February 2020, with this governance commencing May 2020 post the new Buckinghamshire Council elections.

Consideration will also need to be given to the resource needed to support the Growth Board from May 2020 and its location within the new Council's structure.

## **Arrangements during Transition to the new Buckinghamshire Council**

In the transition period prior to vesting day for the new Council, a 'shadow growth board' will be needed to progress a number of key deliverables/functions on behalf of the existing Councils and Shadow Executive. These will include:

- Developing proposals alongside Government for potential infrastructure funding and other matters related to the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, in particular engagement related to the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review,
- Developing the evidence base and consensus across the Local Authorities on infrastructure funding priorities,
- Establishing a compelling narrative for economic growth, environmental sustainability, and place-shaping in Buckinghamshire,
- Ensuring that Buckinghamshire residents and businesses are appropriately consulted on major growth matters,
- Proposing the permanent formal governance arrangements for the Growth Board as part of the new Buckinghamshire Council.

Given the above delivery requirements for the Shadow Growth Board during the transition period, the Shadow Growth Board membership will reflect the roles needed. This membership at this stage is proposed as:

- Representatives of the Buckinghamshire Council Shadow Executive
- Buckinghamshire Council Chief Executive
- Other CIG Representatives (HGE Co-chairs and/or permanent Corporate Director when appointed)
- BLEP Chief Executive
- Buckinghamshire CCG Chief Executive.

The chair of the Shadow Growth Board will be the Chair of the Shadow Executive.

It may make sense in due course to have MHCLG, Homes England, and other agencies such as Highways England and the Environment Agency, involved too in an advisory capacity during transition. This is a matter the Shadow Growth Board can take a view on once established.

The Shadow Growth Board will be supported in transition by a working group made up of nominated officer representatives from across key infrastructure delivery teams in the Councils, as well as a representative from each of the local planning authorities and the BLEP. It would be led by the HGE Co-Chairs.

### **3. Consultation**

Not Applicable.

### **4. Next Steps**

To initiate the Shadow Growth Board, an inaugural meeting will be scheduled for mid/late September 2019. This would be in a workshop format where the Shadow Growth Board, supported by the officer working group, would develop the formal Growth Board proposal in this paper, steer the direction of the vision and growth strategy for Buckinghamshire, including any submission to MHCLG next Spring linked to CSR 2020.



This will be a facilitated session and will be aligned with other Member and Officer engagement already being planned as part of the development of the Buckinghamshire Council's new corporate plan.

All the Buckinghamshire District Councils are currently formal members of the Ox-Cambs Central Growth Board. In light of the positive steer already given by the Informal Shadow Executive on 9 July to form a Buckinghamshire Growth Board, it will be necessary for them to make arrangements as soon as possible to formally withdraw from the Central Growth Board governance arrangements. It is understood that there may be a 12 month formal notice period to leave the Central Area Growth Board, which must be provided in April each year. However, with the decision to create a unitary council by next April this may be negotiable. It will be for each district authority to determine the mechanism to ratify any decision to leave the Central Area Growth Board and ensure this is managed through the democratic process.

There is also the issue that Aylesbury Vale DC remains a member of SEMLEP and that SEMLEP and BLEP overlap in north Buckinghamshire. The Government's decision in respect of this matter is still awaited and there is no indication when this may be announced. In the meantime AVDC will still continue to be a member of SEMLEP until the end of March 2020, when the authority is dissolved.

<b>Background Papers</b>	None other than Appendix A attached
--------------------------	-------------------------------------

