

## **Growth Board Update to Vale of White Horse District Council 7 October 2020**

The Growth Board is a joint committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire together with key strategic partners. It has been set up to facilitate and enable joint working on economic development, strategic planning and growth. It does this by overseeing the delivery of projects that the councils of Oxfordshire are seeking to deliver collaboratively in the fields of economic development and strategic planning. This includes monitoring and implementation of the Housing and Growth Deal.

Councillor Emily Smith is Chair of the Growth Board this year.

### **Oxfordshire Growth Board**

Recent Oxfordshire Growth Board Meetings have included: Updates on the ongoing Growth Board Review and implementation of improvements – including the inclusion of the Oxfordshire Strategic Transport Form on the Infrastructure Sub-Group; Agreeing a shared (and critical) response from the Board to the consultation on England's Economic Heartland Transport Strategy; Agreeing to the commissioning of a report into supporting Community Led Housing in England (to be paid for by a grant from Homes England); Agreed to write again to government asking for clarity on the OxCam Expressway; Update on OxLEPs Economic Recovery Plan for the county (which our officers have input into). This shows the damaging impact of covid on the hospitality sector and the opportunities in the scientific research and development sector; Update from the Environment Agency about the Local Natural Capital Plan that the Arc Leaders' Environment work stream is leading.

Councillor Emily Smith attended the Growth Board Scrutiny panel on 15<sup>th</sup> Sept to update the panel on the activities of the OxCam Arc Leaders Executive (which she is a member of) and the work to produce a 'Prospectus' aimed at the Treasury making the case for infrastructure in the Arc region to enable us to plan and manage the expected growth in the part of the region.

Minutes, agendas and links to other documents and news stories can be found at [www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org](http://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org) You can contact Growth Board Officers (who are currently part of the Vale's officer team) via [democratic.services@oxfordshiregrowthboard.org](mailto:democratic.services@oxfordshiregrowthboard.org) or on twitter @OxonGrowthBoard

### **The Housing and Growth Deal**

As well as officer groups that meet to work on delivery of the Growth Deal, there are three member sub-groups that Vale has a seat on which help steer the Affordable Housing (Councillor Judy Roberts is the Vale Rep), Infrastructure (Councillor Judy Roberts is the Vale Rep) and Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (Councillor Catherine Webber is the Vale Rep) work streams.

### **Growth Board Housing sub-group (last meeting 10 September 2020)**

Delivery of affordable homes and infrastructure as part of the deal was falling behind and Covid exacerbated that but Oxfordshire Growth Board has secured support in principle from the Government for extensions to various programmes within the Housing & Growth Deal.

There has also been agreement to look at flexibility around the timeline of OxPlan50 to take account of the consequences of other Plans and to ensure it is likely to succeed at Examination.

The infrastructure programme is at risk due to Covid. Oxfordshire County Council have put in place an executive team to progress the delivery.

The projected housing target has now fallen to 6,668 which is still above the deal target of 6,549 but will still be a very challenging.

The sub-group is also keen to progress low carbon housing. They have to the Secretary of State re low carbon building standards; They ran a competition for the best environmentally designed homes “Home of 2030”; They are working with Local Energy Oxfordshire (LEO)..

Work is being done to align the definitions the different councils use to define the different categories of affordable and social housing so that easier comparisons can be made.

**OxPlan50 advisory sub-group (last meeting 17 September 2020 – Councillor Hallett attended in place of Catherine Webber)**

This group’s role is to advise officers working on OxPlan2050 about priorities for inclusion in The OxPlan50. The Chair since inception, Councillor James Mills of WODC, is stepping down, and Councillor Sue Cooper of SODC has expressed interest in becoming Chair. There were two presentations: Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) and Oxfordshire Open Thought results (the engagement exercise recently concluded).

The OxIS refresh exercise is starting now. From the presentation (if anyone wants to see the slides, contact Councillor. Debby Hallett): While OxIS was successful in securing funding for growth across Oxfordshire it is acknowledged that the original OxIS report was largely limited in its definition of growth as a measurement of housing and job numbers; Factors that contribute towards sustainable growth and healthy places did not score highly in the prioritisation matrix; All six councils have now declared a climate emergency and OxIS must reflect this; As a county, Oxfordshire is committed to sustainable and inclusive growth which is reflected in the updated objectives of OxIS.

Open Thought was largely to create a space for conversation around the future of Oxfordshire. From the presentation (if anyone wants to see the slides, contact Councillor. Debby Hallett): Just under 300 submissions were received; Included individuals, academics, environmental groups, developers, consultants and businesses; Currently processing submissions before Plan team analyse for potential policy ideas ahead of next consultation; Will publish a summary report of submissions and distribute accordingly once processing complete.

**Growth Board Infrastructure sub-group (last meeting 17 September 2020)**

OxIS update: There will be much more emphasis on environmental, health and well-being objectives moving forward, not just on the delivery of housing and jobs numbers as previously. Consultants are being appointed, there will be a consultation early next year and the final plan should go to the Growth Board in July.

Oxfordshire County Council’s transport strategy will feed into the England’s Economic Heartland Transport Strategy.

There was a presentation on the County Council’s Active Travel plans which deliver next to nothing in the Vale.

There will be direct input from a representative of cyclists, pedestrians and bus users in the future.

There was a Homes from Infrastructure programme update. Within the Vale this covered the Milton Heights bridge and Wantage Eastern link Road for which funding is in place, and the as yet unfunded, Frilford Junction Improvements and Relief to Marcham (merge of two projects) Scheme Description.

**Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships and Place**