

# Notes

OF A MEETING OF THE

## **Oxfordshire Growth Board Housing Advisory Group**

**HELD ON TUESDAY 27 APRIL 2021 AT 6.30 PM  
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM**

### **Present:**

Councillors Susan Brown (Chair), Robin Bennett, Liz Brighouse, John Donaldson, Jeff Haine and Judy Roberts

**Officers:** Kevin Jacob, (Oxfordshire Growth Board), Megan McFarlane (Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Team), Dave Scholes (Oxford City Council) and Paul Staines, (Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal)

### **56 Apologies for absence and notification of substitutions, declarations of interests; Chair's announcements**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillor Mike Rowley, (Oxford City Council).

There were no declarations of interest or Chair's announcements.

### **57 Notes of the last meeting**

The notes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021 were agreed.

### **58 Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal 2020/2021 draft year end position**

The subgroup was provided with a presentation setting out updated performance management information in respect of the Affordable Housing Programme, (AHP) and Homes from Infrastructure, (HFI) elements of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal across the county as whole and by district/city council.

Headlines from the presentation included an overall AHP delivery across the programme period of 1,464 units against an overall budget spend of £64,508,275 and achievement of the Year 3 programme target of 275 units. The subgroup was informed delivery in Year 4 was likely to be challenging which would necessitate a corporate approach to the issue by partner councils and the development of a scheme of prioritisation and contingency position. Individual projects would be risk assessed on a 'RAG' basis.

Members of the subgroup discussed the impact of the requirement from Homes England that Community Lead Housing Trusts obtain Registered Social Landlord status in order to

receive public funding for the affordable housing schemes they proposed. It was agreed that the subgroup should be provided with a report to its next meeting which set out the status of individual CLT schemes across the county that fell within the scope of the Deal and their status including any funding issues.

In respect of Homes from Infrastructure, (HFI) the subgroup was informed the overall predicted Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Trajectory was delivery of 6,564 additional accelerated housing units as a result of HFI funded schemes against an overall target of 6,549. The extension of the HFI programme meant that an additional 1,992 housing units could be considered as accelerated under the terms of the Deal. Spend for 2020/2021 totalled £30.2m against a target of £30m.

Indicative information was also provided relating to the breakdown of projects within the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy, (OxIS) update.

In discussion, several members expressed the view that infrastructure schemes that aimed to reduce car usage through mechanisms such as Active Travel were very important but acknowledging the need to reflect current Local Plans requirements and current HM Government guidance.

The subgroup noted the presentation.

## **59 First Homes: Outcome of HM Government consultation and outcomes**

The subgroup received a presentation setting out an overview of HM Government's First Homes scheme aimed at first time buyers. The policy is intended to promote home ownership and several public and technical consultations had been undertaken by HM Government leading up to the publication of its latest responses in April 2021, but further technical details had yet to be published. The presentation included a summary of the key policy aspects of the scheme which included provision that First Homes should be sold with, at least, a 30% discount on the market price, with the percentage discount being retained in perpetuity.

In discussion, members of the subgroup discussed the potential impact of the scheme on the housing market within Oxfordshire with some concerns expressed that there might be a potentially negative impact of the provision of affordable housing and if, in the context of the Oxfordshire housing market and high values, whether First Homes would be genuinely affordable. It was agreed that a more detailed paper should be prepared when more detail was known, ideally for the next meeting, setting out local impacts.

The subgroup noted the presentation.

## **60 Update on Low Carbon Housing Action Plan**

The subgroup noted an update on agreed Low Carbon Actions agreed by the Growth Board in March 2020.

## **61 Community Led Housing Update**

The subgroup considered an update setting out actions and resources required in respect of recommendations agreed by the Growth Board about Community Led Housing. It was

noted that work was being undertaken to develop an action plan which would be presented to the next meeting.

In discussion, it was suggested by the Chair that each local district or city partner council should consider the naming of a councillor champion to promote Community Led Housing within their areas and asked for the assistance of the members present to raise the profile of community led housing within their organisations. It was noted that no specific target relating to community led housing existed within the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and concern was again expressed that the requirement to obtain registered social landlord status in order to receive public funding would act as a disincentive for some community led housing projects.

The subgroup noted the update.

## **62 Dates of future meetings**

29 June 2021

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm

Chairman

Date

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