

To: Oxfordshire Growth Board
Title of Report: Renaming the Growth Board
Date: 19 July 2021
Report of: Andrew Down, Oxfordshire Growth Board Director

Executive Summary and Purpose:

As invited by the Growth Board at its meeting on 8 June 2021, this report summarises the steps required to be undertaken to change the name of the Board. The report also presents the opportunity to resolve to adopt a new name, should the voting membership of the Board wish to do so.

How this report contributes to the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision Outcomes:

It is important that the name under which the current Growth Board operates remains compatible with the Strategic Vision for the county and suitably articulates its purpose.

Recommendation:

1. That the Growth Board considers whether it wishes to adopt a new name, and if agreeing so, selects a new name and authorises the Director to make consequent changes to the Terms of Reference.
2. Notes that an implementation period will be required to update all relevant webpages, documents, and templates.

Introduction

1. One of the recommendations emerging from the review of the Growth Board's operating arrangements undertaken during 2019 was to consider a change of name, to better reflect the evolution of work since the Board was formed and named in 2014.¹ Many respondents to the review felt that the Board's name could better reflect its role and function, which is to coordinate local efforts to manage economic, housing and infrastructure development in a way that is inclusive and maximises local social and environmental benefits.² This paper provides the Board with the opportunity to change its name.

Findings from the review

2. Emerging from the 2019 review were several suggestions for renaming the Growth Board to better reflect its current or possible future role and function,

¹ Concluding report presented to the Growth Board in January 2020.

² Growth Board Terms of Reference, 2020.

whilst a minority wished for its name to remain the same. To those who considered the Board to be a wide-ranging forum considering a cross-section of issues, the Oxfordshire Partnership or Vision Oxfordshire were considered appropriate titles. Others suggested that sustainability should be in the title, alongside planning, infrastructure and / or development. Alongside numerous requests to remove “Growth” from the title (on the basis it implies that growth takes priority over other interests), the “Board” element of the title was also highlighted as inappropriate, given that it rarely takes decisions.

3. Extensive discussion has taken place among members of the Growth Board, and the name **The Future Oxfordshire Partnership** has emerged as a well-supported option.

Financial Implications

4. Any change to the Growth Board’s name can be managed within existing budgets, though time will be required to implement any changes. Additionally, officer resource will be required to update a range of existing documents, web pages and templates.

Legal Implications

5. On occasions where decisions are made by the Growth Board, they should be made by a majority voting amongst the six local authority representatives with a quorum requirement of four. The Growth Board’s Monitoring Officer has advised that a formal decision by each member council is not required for a change of name. This is because, under the Terms of Reference for the Board, changing the name does not constitute a change of the Joint Committee’s powers or functions which if that was the case, would require each constituent authority to agree (General Principles Para 14.1). Officers therefore consider that a change of name is a matter which can be resolved by the Growth Board itself at its meeting on 19 July 2021. Any name change would be reflected in the Terms of Reference.

Other Implications

6. The Growth Board has developed a profile in its seven years of operation that includes a strong online presence through search engines and social media, as well as recognition across the region and nationally. Changing the name will require a coordinated transition period which may have a short term negative impact on the Board’s profile whilst the name is updated and communicated.
7. Although it is not yet clear what the final form of any new institutions in the Arc will be, Growth Boards appear likely to be building blocks in HM Government’s model, and it seems probable that national government and Arc documents will continue to refer generically to “growth boards” for the time being at least. This terminology is therefore unlikely to disappear altogether even if Oxfordshire has adopted a new name.

Conclusion

8. The Growth Board is asked to consider whether it wishes to adopt a new name, and if agreeing so, selects a new name also.

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