

Growth Board 25 June 2015

Agenda item 7

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Report from Oxford Scrutiny Committee

Recommendations

That the Growth board approve the report as a response to the Oxford Scrutiny committee.

Purpose of the Report

To advise the Growth Board (the Board) of the recommendations of the Oxford Scrutiny Committee (the Committee) and suggest a response

Background

The Scrutiny Committee at Oxford City met on 29th January 2015 to consider the work of the Growth Board. They received a short presentation on the work of the Growth Board from the Programme Manager and answered questions from the leader of Oxford City council.

The Committee made three recommendations to the Board, these together with the suggested response of the Board are set out below.

- 1. That the Growth Board takes a more holistic approach to sustainability, ensuring that it is a key consideration in all planning and development activities.**

The Committee were provided with clarification over the role of the Board in planning matters and explained that the remit of the Board was confined to an examination of strategic choices, with the detailed examination of development options being the role of the local planning authority. As part of this process of examining these strategic choices issues of sustainability will be considered notwithstanding the more detailed formal sustainability appraisals by or on behalf of local planning authorities in reviewing their Local Plans.

- 2. That the Growth Board considers whether it can and should have a wider brief in order to achieve greater benefits from collective working. This could include having scope to promote innovative ways of delivering new affordable housing, and further joint lobbying to Government.**

The Committee received an explanation of the remit of the Growth Board, namely a joint statutory committee established to oversee delivery of the City Deal, Local Growth Fund and other projects delivered by local authorities in partnership. It also pays a role in forming a collective voice for Oxfordshire in its discussions with Government. The remit of the Board is a matter for the Board to keep under review

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according to circumstances and the views of Scrutiny Committee in this regard are noted.

3. That all reports to the Growth Board are available in document form.

The Committee commented that, on the agenda it examined, there had been a number of verbal reports. Officers explained that it was always the intention to keep such reports to a minimum but on occasions it was unavoidable and when it took place the discussion was recorded in the minutes of the meeting.