

[Shadow] Oxfordshire Growth Board

Friday 12 September 2014, 14:10

Committee Room One, West Oxfordshire District Council Offices

Present:

Councillor Anna Badcock, Deputy Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council
Councillor Barry Norton - Chairman, Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council
Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of Cherwell District Council
Councillor Bob Price, Leader of Oxford City Council
Councillor Ian Hudspeth, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council
Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council

Non-voting Members:

Adrian Shooter, Chairman Oxfordshire LEP
Alistair Fitt, Universities Representative, Oxford Brookes
Adrian Lockwood, Business Representative, Oxfordshire Skills Board

In attendance:

David Neudegg, West Oxfordshire District Council
Andrew Tucker, West Oxfordshire District Council
Paul Staines, Growth Board Programme Manager
Anna Robinson, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
David Edwards, Oxford City Council
Mark Jaggard, Oxford City Council
Val Johnson, District Councils Partnership Officer
Nigel Tipple, Local Enterprise Partnership
Sue Smith, Cherwell District Council
Sue Scane, Oxfordshire County Council
Tom Flanagan, Oxfordshire County Council
Peter Day, Oxfordshire County Council

Apologies:

Councillor Anne Ducker, South Oxfordshire District Council
Andrew Harrison, Business Representative
Phil Shadbolt, Business Representative
Richard Venables, Business Representative
David Warburton, Housing and Communities Agency
Jon Mansbridge, Environment Agency

1. Introductions and Welcome

Those present introduced themselves.

David Neudegg drew attention to the fact that this was, of course, the first meeting of the Shadow Board. He emphasised that the Board and the format and content of meetings and papers were both “works in progress”, and underscored the intention to ensure that the Board and its business were clearly distinct from the Local Economic Partnership (LEP).

2. Apologies for Absence

In receiving the apologies recorded above, the Shadow Board noted that Councillor Anna Badcock was substituting for Councillor Anne Ducker.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in matters to be considered at the meeting.

4. Matters arising from LEP Meeting on 2 September 2014

Nigel Tipple advised that, where necessary, relevant matters considered at the meeting were included elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting, and David Neudegg confirmed that matters arising from the previous LEP meetings would generally be included on agendas to ensure any particular issues were able to be considered by the Board. The intention was that these would be identified as specific agenda items.

5. Minutes of SPIP Board Meeting on 29 May 2014

The above minutes were noted and endorsed.

6. Terms of reference and framework for future meetings

In briefly introducing this paper, David Neudegg stated that once all the Councils had approved them, the Board would operate as a full Board (i.e. a statutory joint committee), which was likely to be effective from the meeting scheduled for November. He observed that the wording of the document was partially historic and would need to be updated, and suggested that the terms of reference should be approved, but with a commitment to review them after six to nine months, in the light of experience gained during that period.

Attention was also drawn to Appendix A, which included suggested meeting dates for the period to June 2015. In this context it was observed that there might be doubt about holding a meeting on 23 April 2015, because of the proximity to the general and local elections. It was agreed that the meeting arrangements would go ahead and that a decision would be made nearer the time.

In response to comments and questions, it was:

- confirmed that the Local Transport Board would formally merge with the Oxfordshire Growth Board on 1 April 2015
- acknowledged that the reference in paragraph 4.4. should be to Universities, plural
- reported that David Warburton would be the Housing and Communities Agency representative on the Board
- stated that the papers for Board meetings would be available on the website of the host authority, and that a link would be supplied to the other authorities and partners for inclusion on their websites

David Neudegg also suggested that the Board's work programme would be published on the host authority website, and that it would be for the respective Councils to include matters in their own Cabinet/Executive work programmes as necessary.

The Shadow Board –

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the terms of reference be approved, subject to a review after six to nine months;
- (b) That Board meetings be scheduled for Thursdays 20 November 2014, and 26 February, 23 April and 25 June 2015, all to begin at 2 pm at the West

Oxfordshire District Council Offices, but subject to the 23 April meeting being kept under review in views of its proximity to the scheduled elections; and

- (c) That the Board's meetings papers, and its Work Programme, be published on the website of the host authority, with the other Councils, and partners as desired, to provide links from their own websites.

7. Terms of reference for the Growth Board Executive Group

RESOLVED: That the terms of reference for the Executive Group be approved.

8. Local Transport Board

Tom Flanagan briefly presented the previously circulated paper, which provided a summary update of recent transport funding announcements covering City Deal, Local Transport Board, Local Growth Funding and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. It also provided an overview of LGF schemes which were not funded in the current round and options for those schemes that remained in the long list of approved Strategic Economic Plan LGF schemes; and sought guidance on the development of new schemes, including whether the Shadow Board would support reference to the original list in proposing schemes to replace those which had dropped out.

Nigel Tipple emphasised that, previously, no schemes had been rejected, but some had been more successful than others, so there was the option of re-presenting them and considering whether the priorities should be changed or different.

Matthew Barber queried how best information could be presented for monitoring and comparison purposes, including taking into account the fact that the meetings and papers would generally be public, and the need both to demonstrate proper and adequate monitoring and scrutiny and for presentation in the same format for ongoing comparisons. It was confirmed that this was actively under consideration, including the possible need for re-profiling.

David Neudegg stressed that this was another example of "work in progress" and, in response to a comment concerning some of the possible implications of potential schemes, and a query as to whether there could be occasions where reports had to be considered in private session, emphasised the need for precision and clarity, so that reports did not give a misleading impression that schemes were fully approved when that was not the case.

Sue Scane acknowledged the points, and also referred to the possible lack of transparency should reports be considered privately. She emphasised the need to be clear that these were not approved schemes, but bidding mechanisms for part of the funding with the remainder to be sought from various other sources, which could include local authorities, businesses, universities and developers.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposal to update and resubmit schemes that already appeared on the Local Growth Fund long list for 2016/17 be approved; and
- (b) That the Board should focus on new schemes with a start date post 2017/18 alongside those previously submitted, via the Oxfordshire LEP Local Growth Fund review process and with the approval of the Local Transport Board and the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

9. Growth Board Work Programme

The Shadow Board was advised that some of the points made in relation to the previous item also applied to this, in terms of future improvements to the information and presentation. It was intended that a monitoring report would be presented to each meeting, and suggested that the Board might wish the Executive Officer group to consider matters in detail.

Barry Wood expressed concern about the comments in the report about the lack of available data from the Skills Funding Agency in relation to trainees and apprenticeships. In response the Shadow Board was advised that agreement on targets had been reached with the SFA, and that an action plan to achieve them had been developed. These matters would be reported in detail at the next meeting.

David Neudegg referred to the importance of the programme report in terms of reassurance, and providing the Board with the ability to identify issues or concerns and seek appropriate action where necessary.

RESOLVED: That the report and the current position be noted.

10. Oxfordshire Growth Deal

The Shadow Board considered and noted the previously circulated report, which advised of the timetable for the next round of Growth Deal submissions and the proposed approach to the submission of bids. Nigel Tipple stated that whilst there had been no formal confirmation of timescales, it was anticipated that submissions would be required by the end of 2014 with announcements about the outcome towards the end of March 2015. Additionally, how much funding would be available and the split of funding were not yet known. He also referred to the possible opportunity to review those schemes which had been unsuccessful on the previous occasion.

In response to a question concerning the sign-off process, Nigel Tipple stated that the intended approach was for the Board to approve the programme, as a recommendation to the LEP prior to submission to the government. Matthew Barber expressed the wish for the Board to be able to sign off the final versions of the submissions although he accepted that this was not always possible. Ian Hudspeth endorsed this and suggested that the Executive Group would need to report on material alterations to submissions where necessary. David Neudegg emphasised that submissions needed to be considered by the Board far enough in advance to allow for any subsequent negotiation process; and that the Board would need to be clear about priorities, thereby necessitating a longer term strategic vision.

Adrian Shooter referred to the Strategic Economic Plan, with the view that that should be continued, alongside short, medium and longer term plans, even where funding was not clear. He also commented that although there had previously been late changes, more money had been achieved than anticipated.

RESOLVED: That the report and the current position be noted.

11. Post SHMA Work Update

Andrew Tucker presented this report, which provided a brief update on the advice being sought from independent 'critical friends' on the most appropriate way forward for dealing with unmet housing need arising from the findings of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). He advised that the draft consultant's report referred to in the report to the Board had been received,

and would be discussed at the next meeting of the Executive with a view to a further report setting out the recommended approach and resourcing implications coming to the Board in November.

He also advised the meeting that the City Council had commented on three points referred to in the report: (i) in paragraph 2, the quoted figure of 28,000 was actually the mid-point of the range of unmet need, being 24,000 to 32,000 homes in the period 2011 to 2031; (ii) independent consultants were due to report on the ongoing work to determine the likely capacity for additional housing within the City's administrative boundaries, referred to in paragraph 3; and (iii) in relation to paragraph 5, although Keith Holland was employed by the Planning Inspectorate, the meeting had actually been arranged under the auspices of the Department for Communities and Local Government.

RESOLVED: That the report and the current position be noted.

12. LEADER Programme and European Structural Investment Fund Update

Nigel Tipple introduced the report, the purpose of which was to introduce the Growth Board to the progress of the two programmes. In doing so, he drew particular attention to (i) the large amount of work needed to support the programmes and the need for active partner contributions (ii) the fact that the LEADER programme was separate from ESIF, and because both programmes related to Oxfordshire there was an opportunity for as much coverage of the county as possible, by avoiding duplication through different routes.

David Neudegg emphasised that the report was for information, and stated that whilst the funding for these projects came direct from government and was subject to distinct and prescribed governance arrangements there was an opportunity to align delivery of the projects approved with the priorities identified in the Strategic Economic Plan.

RESOLVED: That the report and the current position be noted.

13. Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Core Strategy

Sue Scane and Peter Day briefly presented the report, which was primarily for information, with the purpose of advising the Board on the issues arising from the recent consultation on the draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan, and how the County Council was minded to take the Plan forward.

In response to questions, it was (i) confirmed that whilst attempts would be made through the planning process to try to ensure that the excavation of mineral workings would be as close as possible to development areas, ultimately this was a commercial decision for the industry, which could not be forced to work in any particular place; and (ii) stated that routeing agreements were generally used where excavation was permitted within Oxfordshire, but that the county did not have control otherwise.

RESOLVED: That the report and the current position be noted.

14. Dates for Future Meetings

These had been approved under agenda item no. 5 (minute no.6 above).

15. Any Other Business

Nigel Tipple advised the Board of contact from a minerals company seeking support, to which the response had been that it was a planning issue and a matter for the planning process.

The meeting finished at 3:20 pm