

## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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<b>Report Originator</b>	Martin Hammond	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i>	
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All	18 <sup>th</sup> April 2018	
<b>Title</b>	<b>OXFORD - MILTON KEYNES - CAMBRIDGE ARC GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS</b>		

**Portfolio Holder: Cllr Lloyd Bunday**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To seek approval for the Council to become a member of the Central Corridor Growth Board

### **2. INFORMATION**

- 2.1. Members will be aware that the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) has been engaged on a study into the economic potential of the southern midlands (described as an arc from Oxford to Cambridge) which encompasses Northamptonshire. The NIC Interim report on the Cambridge-MK-Oxford growth corridor identified that one factor holding the area back from achieving its full potential as the UK's 'Silicon Valley' is the lack of joined-up planning of housing, jobs and infrastructure across traditional local authority boundaries.

***“Current governance mechanisms are not sufficient to deliver the step-change in strategic leadership and collaboration needed... and will require a fundamental shift in the scale at which local authorities collaborate on planning and infrastructure.”***

- 2.2. In its final report on the Cambridge – Milton Keynes - Oxford corridor, 'Partnering for Prosperity: a new deal for the Cambridge – Milton Keynes - Oxford arc', the NIC encouraged authorities within the central section of the arc to *“strengthen structures for collaborative governance and collective decision making”* and referenced the work ongoing in the central area to establish a growth board.
- 2.3. Government, in its initial vision for the Corridor published at Autumn Budget, stated that *“it will be necessary for authorities to work together much more closely going forwards.”*

Within the Cambridge – Milton Keynes - Oxford corridor, formalised stronger regional working arrangements have been established at either 'end' of the corridor through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and the Oxfordshire Growth Board. Establishing a Growth Board for the 'Central Area allows this Council and its partner authorities, particularly within the

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context of North Northamptonshire, to meet the challenges of local authorities working together closely in the future.

- 2.4 Together with the other 16 councils and 2 LEPs, this Council has been actively engaging in discussions to establish a Central Area Growth Board across the 'middle' of the corridor, covering Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire. Establishing a Growth Board demonstrates to government that authorities across the South East Midlands and Buckinghamshire are committed to delivering a step change in sub-regional collaboration. The Growth Board will allow the area to speak with a single voice to government on cross-boundary issues, matters of sub-regional importance and coordinate any 'Housing and Growth deals' agreed across the sub region. Partners have agreed in principle to formally establish a Growth Board, constituted as a joint committee, to coordinate cross-boundary working within the central area.

The establishment of a Growth Board in the centre of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes- Oxford corridor also allows the central area to be an active participant in the cross corridor working arrangements currently being established.

- 2.5. The attached terms of reference set out what the Growth Board's purpose is, which is to act in a co-ordinating and collaborative role, to promote the development of the sub-region, to encourage sustainable growth and economic development of the area, and provide the means by which a dialogue can take place with national bodies and with government on issues which influence growth and the economy. It will therefore be a single coordinating voice for the region with central government. No powers are being ceded from member authorities to the Growth Board. If members of the Growth Board agree to vest powers into it, this would be agreed by individual councils via their decision making processes. Hence Kettering Borough Council will only cede powers to the Growth Board if it and all other member authorities choose to.
- 2.6. In the visioning document 'Helping the Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford corridor reach its potential' published at Autumn Budget, government announced its ambition to work with the central area on housing and growth deals throughout 2018. Whilst any potential housing and growth deals will not cover the whole geography of the Central Area, the Growth Board will have an important role to play in coordinating these at the sub-regional level.

### 3. **OPTIONS AND NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CONTEXT**

- 3.1. Initially, the NIC report was unclear whether the whole of North Northamptonshire was included within its definition of the corridor. The four planning authorities which make up the NN area sought clarification on this, as

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well as agreeing that they would go forward together, either inside or outside of the arrangements being developed. Government additionally made it clear that any housing and growth deal which it sought to negotiate would be with smaller groups of authorities rather than across the whole corridor.

- 3.2. Since the NIC report was published, we have established with government that a housing and growth deal could be negotiated with North Northamptonshire as an area; and that this would be separate from, although clearly linked to, any sign up to the Central Area Growth Board. The government has already agreed a provisional growth deal with Oxfordshire which offers significant amounts of infrastructure funding in return for progress in accelerating housing delivery. They are clearly looking to replicate this arrangement with other areas within the corridor.
- 3.3. Following these discussions, there was a joint meeting of the North Northamptonshire Joint Delivery Committee and the Joint Planning Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018, which agreed that the constituent members should
- a) become members of the central area growth board
  - b) enter into discussions with government about a North Northamptonshire housing and growth deal .

In doing so, the joint committees recognised that the area was well placed because of its existing shared governance arrangements, its existing joint capacity, its status as a garden community area, and its track record in delivering growth to date. An emphasis on delivering *existing* housing consents, by addressing infrastructure constraints, was welcomed, and the already established housing targets to 2030 and beyond demonstrated adequate ability to deliver new housing numbers in the period between now and 2050 without significant strain, should that infrastructure come forward under a growth deal.

- 3.4. The alternative – to exclude ourselves from both the corridor and a growth deal – would be to potentially isolate the area, make unlikely the ability to draw down significant funding in future, and may not protect us from the imposition of new housing targets at the same time. The risks associated with increased housing numbers, on the basis of a deal similar to the Oxfordshire one – would appear to be manageable, and the Council would not have to sign a deal if it did not feel it was advantageous to do so.

#### 4. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Collaborating and proactively planning for growth through the forum of a Growth Board will allow regional partners to proactively shape the future growth of their places, rather than having growth imposed from above.

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By becoming a full member of the Central Area Growth Board, the Borough Council will be an active participant in contributing to agenda on strategic planning, economic development and infrastructure planning at the sub-regional working.

### 5. **FINANCE and HR RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 By joining the Central Area Growth Board, the Council is committing to an ongoing annual £5000 commitment to support its work and to fund officer roles to support its operation. Further contributions may be sought for specific pieces of work.

### 6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. The Growth Board will be set up as a joint committee under Section 101 (5), 102 Local Government Act 1972 and section 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000 and pursuant (where applicable) to the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 6.2. Whilst no powers have been vested in the Growth Board, as a joint committee, it will exercise any powers which members agree to vest in it on a unanimous basis under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 insofar as they relate to the promotion of development or economic growth or matters ancillary to this. These powers will be exercised concurrently with the constituent members and members will unanimously decide the voting mechanism for exercising powers. This excludes ceding the decision making powers on planning matters, which will remain vested with the Local Planning Authorities, as set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 6.3. With the Growth Board acting as a Joint Committee under the relevant legislation, meetings will be publically held, and subject to legislation ensuring meeting documents are published in a timely manner. The work of the Growth Board at the point of formal establishment will be subject to FOI legislation.

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### 7. RECOMMENDATION

- a) That the Council becomes a full member of the Central Area Growth Board, adopting the Terms of Reference (Annex A).
- b) That the Council commits to a contribution of £5000 of ongoing revenue support to help fund the work of the Growth Board.
- c) That the Leader of the Council or the Deputy leader be appointed to represent the Council on the Growth Board
- d) That the Committee note and endorse the proposal to enter into a discussion with government about a housing and growth deal for North Northamptonshire.

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#### Background Papers:

NIC, *Partnering for Prosperity: a new deal for the Cambridge – Milton Keynes - Oxford arc* [link](#)

*NIC Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford Corridor Interim report* [link](#)

*Helping the Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford corridor reach its potential, HM Government* [link](#)

Reports to Joint Delivery Committee 2017-18

#### Previous Reports/Minutes:

Report to North Northamptonshire Joint Delivery Committee and Joint Planning Committee – both on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

Annex A – Central Area Growth Board Terms of Reference