

## **Oxfordshire Growth Board Environment Advisory Group Terms of Reference**

### **1. Purpose and Objectives**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Environment Advisory Group is to act in an advisory and consultative capacity to the Growth Board and provide strategic oversight in the development and delivery of key projects and programmes within its remit.
- 1.2 The Advisory Group will work on the principle of consensus in advising the Growth Board, whilst at the same time each member will act as the individual lead and conduit, both to and from the authority they represent.
- 1.3 The Advisory Group will operate within the remit set by the Growth Board. Their role is to:
  - 1.3.1 Broaden engagement and involvement of the constituent councils in key areas of the Growth Board's work and ownership of each constituent council's part in delivery of Growth Board programmes.
  - 1.3.2 Provide strategic oversight in the development and delivery of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal programmes and wider Growth Board programmes
  - 1.3.3 Provide a councillor forum in which to examine and discuss relevant issues in more detail.
  - 1.3.4 Inform development of the Growth Board's work and of opportunities for new areas of work to progress the Growth Board objectives
  - 1.3.5 To develop areas for joint work across the Growth Board partnership to address key growth challenges and inform policy development.
- 1.4 As an advisory body, the Group does not have decision making powers but will advise and make recommendations to the Growth Board on the areas outlined above.

### **2. Membership and appointments**

- 2.1 The Advisory Group will comprise of at least one executive member from each of the partner authorities which has relevant responsibilities, plus a chair appointed by the Growth Board. The partner authorities are as follows:
  - Cherwell District Council
  - Oxfordshire County Council
  - Oxford City Council
  - South Oxfordshire District Council
  - Vale of White Horse District Council
  - West Oxfordshire District Council
- 2.2 The Chair of the Advisory Group will be drawn from the voting membership of the Growth Board.

- 2.3 Each partner authority shall appoint one executive substitute member for each Advisory Group, who can substitute for their member as required. The substitute member shall have the same rights as the member for whom the substitution is made.
- 2.4 Co-opted non-voting members may be appointed for specific items or a period of up to a year by the Advisory Groups with the agreement of the voting membership of the Growth Board.
- 2.5 Where the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, but still wishes for it to progress, the Advisory Group may elect a Chair for that meeting only.

### **3. Role of the Chair**

- 3.1 The Chair must act in an independent and facilitative capacity to organise the Advisory Group's activities in support of the objectives of the Growth Board. At all times, the Chair must use their discretion to act in the interests of Oxfordshire and the Growth Board, and not of their own political group or local authority area.
- 3.2 The Chair will manage meetings in accordance with the Advisory Group's terms of reference and provide leadership and direction to the Advisory Group in an open and transparent manner.
- 3.3 The Chair will report directly into the Growth Board on the work of their Advisory Group as agreed. In reporting to the Growth Board, the Chair will present the views of their Advisory Group, and not necessarily their own views.
- 3.4 The Advisory Group is not a decision-making body, and the Chair should aim to reach a consensus on matters under discussion. Where a consensus cannot be reached, the Chair shall present the split views of the Advisory Group to the Growth Board.
- 3.5 The Advisory Group should be mindful of the work of the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel and any other Advisory Groups to avoid any duplication of work. The Advisory Group should also be mindful of any work it may require of officers, and the impact this may have on existing priorities.

### **4 Role of Members**

- 4.1 In addition to contributing to the overall role of the Advisory Group, members will be a proactive conduit between the work of the Advisory Group and their respective council. This might include, for example, providing regular updates to their own council on the work of the Advisory Group.

### **5 Meeting Arrangements**

- 5.1 The Advisory Group will meet in accordance with a schedule of meetings that satisfies the requirements of the relevant programmes of work. The notes of a meeting will be drafted and included in the agenda for the next available Growth Board meeting.

- 5.2 Meetings may be rearranged, cancelled or additional meetings scheduled with the agreement of the Chair of the Advisory Group.
- 5.3 The quorum for a meeting shall be three members. Non-attendance of partner authorities shall not affect the legitimacy of an Advisory Group's conclusions. However, where the effect of a particular consideration would give rise to contractual or financial implications for a partner authority that is not in attendance, or if their views cannot be obtained, then this fact will be reported to the Growth Board.

## **6 Access to information**

- 6.1 It is expected that the Advisory Group will have the right to see the same information as that of the Growth Board when advising on any given issue, in order that an informed view can be made.
- 6.2 The Advisory Group will meet in private and the meetings will not be subject to the provisions of s100 of the Local Government Act (LGA) 1972 as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. However, the conclusions of the Advisory Group shall be conveyed in public to the Growth Board at each of its meetings, except in circumstances where the matter under consideration contains exempt or confidential information, as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
- 6.3 The Advisory Group's agendas and associated written reports will be circulated to the members of the Advisory Group, and the designated officer of the respective partner authorities, at least three clear working days before the meeting. Non-adherence to this principal however will not invalidate a meeting.
- 6.4 The work of the Advisory Group will not be subject to scrutiny by the Joint Scrutiny Panel, although their notes will be available to Scrutiny to comment on as published reports to the Growth Board.

## **7 Work Plan**

- 7.1 The Advisory Group will establish a forward Work Plan of matters to consider, which will be reviewed at each meeting. The development and management of the Work Plan will be led by the Chair, having regard to the requirements of the Growth Board, the advice of the Housing and Growth Deal Programme Board and Executive Officer Group, and the wishes of the Advisory Group.
- 7.2 The Work Plan will set out the matters to be considered, and the date at which they are to be considered. The Advisory Group will have a specific role in:
- a) Horizon scanning, seeking to identifying opportunities for collaboration on joint projects and programmes which support the delivery of the Board's Vision, and specifically its environmental ambitions.
  - b) Providing advice concerning the delivery of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.
  - c) Acting as a sounding board in the development of Executive Officer Group proposals for the Growth Board

- d) Providing advice to the Growth Board concerning forthcoming issues, acting in support of the objectives of the Growth Board, and considering any additional matters that the Growth Board requires of them.

## **8 General principles**

- 8.1 Each partner authority agrees to support the purposes of the Group by ensuring that in their own decision making, they collaborate and cooperate with one another in an open and accountable manner in the interests of the whole of Oxfordshire, whilst acting in good faith.
- 8.2 The joint management of the Advisory Groups will be conducted in such a way that no authority's capacity to deliver day to day services is disadvantaged more so than another through their commitment to the Advisory Groups.
- 8.3 The normal rules as to declarations of interest will be applied to local authority members in accordance with the respective Council's Code of Conduct.
- 8.4 The Growth Board may amend these Terms of Reference or discontinue the work of the Advisory Group at any time.