

Title: Public Participation at Oxfordshire Growth Board Meetings

Purpose of Report

1. To consider and approve a scheme for public participation at meetings of the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

Background

2. The terms of reference of the Growth Board do not currently make any reference to public participation.
3. At the 25 June 2015 Growth Board meeting, Members were advised that the Growth Board had been approached by the CPRE with a request to ask a question at the meeting. Given that the current terms of reference did not allow for any form of public participation, such as asking questions at a meeting, an undertaking had been given to provide a response on behalf of the Chairman of the Board. Subsequently, further questions from individuals and groups were submitted with the parties advised that formal written replies would be given.
4. The Growth Board Chairman at the 25 June meeting, Cllr Norton, had indicated that the Growth Board's Terms of Reference were due for review shortly and the matter of public participation of the at the meetings would be considered by the Executive Officer Group as part of that work and a report submitted to the September 2015 Growth Board meeting for consideration. This meeting was cancelled and the report will therefore be submitted to the November 2015 Growth Board meeting.
5. Appendix 1 sets out a proposed public participation scheme. The scheme allows for members of the public to questions at Growth Board meetings or address the Board on any substantive agenda item at meetings subject to restrictions. There will be a specific agenda item for public participation.
6. A draft scheme was submitted to the September Leaders' meeting, who requested that the Oxfordshire Monitoring Officers review the proposed scheme. The scheme at Appendix 1 has been updated to reflect the comments made at Leaders' meeting and subsequent review by the Oxfordshire Monitoring Officers.

Conclusion

7. The Growth Board terms of reference do not currently allow for public participation. Following the submission of questions to the Board, Members agreed that the would be considered by the Executive

Recommendations

8. The Board is requested to consider and approve the proposed public participation scheme.

Appendix 1: Oxfordshire Growth Board: Public Participation

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Members of the public may ask questions of the Chairman of the Growth Board, or address the Growth Board on any substantive item at a meeting subject to the restrictions set out below. There shall be a specific agenda item near the start of the each meeting of the Growth Board to permit such public participation to take place.
- 1.2 Questions shall be directly relevant to some matter in which the Growth Board has powers and duties and which directly affects the area of Oxfordshire.

2. Questions

- 2.1 Any member of the public wishing to ask a question may do so at a meeting of the Growth Board, and must give notice of the question in writing or by email to the Chief Executive or the Secretariat of the host authority, at least three clear days before the meeting (i.e. not counting the day of the meeting or the day of receipt).
- 2.2 The Chairman will answer submitted questions.
- 2.3 The questioner may read his/her question, but the Chairman will do so if the questioner wishes for that, or is not present at the meeting. No supplementary question may be asked.
- 2.4 The answer given by the Chairman may take the form of an oral statement, or may be given subsequently in writing to the questioner. A written copy of the response will be circulated to all Growth Board Members. It is intended the written response will be given within ten working days of the meeting.
- 2.5 No discussion shall take place on the question or the answer.
- 2.6 The Chief Executive of the host authority may, in consultation with the Chairman of the Growth Board, refuse to accept a submitted question if s/he considers it to be offensive, defamatory, frivolous or vexatious, or if in his or her opinion it does not meet the requirements of paragraph 1.2 above.

3. Addresses

- 3.1 Any member of the public may address the Growth Board on any substantive agenda item. Such address shall be for up to three minutes.
- 3.2 The speaker shall give notice of their wish to address the Growth Board by email or in writing no later than 12 noon on the day before the meeting to the Chief Executive or the Secretariat of the host authority.
- 3.3 Once a member of the public has spoken and, with the leave of the Chairman, any questions of clarification asked of the speaker by Growth Board members duly answered, the Growth Board shall hear any further addresses, and at the conclusion of public participation shall proceed onto the next item of business. There will be no debate on any representations made except to the extent that they are considered when the relevant agenda item is considered later in the meeting.

4. Restrictions

- 4.1 Submitted questions shall be dealt with in the order of receipt by the host authority.
- 4.2 The total amount of time allowed for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed 30 minutes unless the Chairman consents to that in the interests of the proper conduct of the business of the Board.
- 4.3 In addition to the point in the preceding paragraph, the Chairman may vary the provisions of this scheme for a particular meeting should s/he believe, on taking advice, that to be appropriate.