

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report considered by Cabinet – 6 March 2018

CENTRAL AREA GROWTH BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Responsible Cabinet Member: Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Report Sponsor: Sarah Gonsalves, Acting Director of Policy, Insight and Communications

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Executive Summary:

To demonstrate its commitment to regional working and to being an active partner within the Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford corridor, Milton Keynes Council has been actively engaging in discussions to establish a Central Area Growth Board across the 'middle' of the corridor.

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.

This report recommends that Milton Keynes Council becomes a full member of the Central Area Growth Board, outlining the Terms of Reference (annexed) for adoption and committing to the relevant ongoing contributions for the approval of Cabinet and recommendation to Council.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That within the context of the National Infrastructure Commission and Government's work on the Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford corridor, Council be recommend to agree that:
 - (a) the Council becomes a full member of the Central Area Growth Board, adopting the Terms of Reference
 - (b) the Council commits to an associated contribution of £5k of ongoing revenue to support the work of the Growth Board; and
 - (c) the Council acts as the Accountable Body for the Growth Board.

2. Issues

The National Infrastructure Commission's (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.”

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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.”*
- 2.3 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 Milton Keynes and its partner authorities to meet the challenge of councils working together closely in the future.
- 2.4 MKC has been actively engaging since last summer on closer regional working with the 17 local authorities within the South East Midlands and Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) footprints that are locally defined as being within the Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford corridor, with the exception of Buckinghamshire County Council. 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.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 The Growth Board will 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 MKC will only cede powers to the Growth Board if it and all other member authorities choose to.
- 2.7 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

(a) Do nothing

Establishing joint working at the two ends of the corridor (ie: Oxford and Cambridge) has played a significant role in securing investment, flexibilities and commitments from government. Doing nothing would mean that MKC would not have a voice in such regional discussions.

(b) Become a full member of the Central Area Growth Board

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

4. Implications

4.1 Regional working is a key priority for MKC within the Council Plan, where the Council's commitment to strengthening regional relationships is outlined. 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.

4.2 By joining the Central Area Growth Board, MKC is committing to an ongoing annual £5k commitment to support its work and to fund officer roles to support its operation. Further contributions may be sought for specific pieces of work.

4.3 In the years in which MKC is the Host Authority (those in which it chairs the Growth Board), Committee Management services will be provided by Milton Keynes Council.

4.4 Milton Keynes Council will be acting as the Accountable Body for the Growth Board so will provide Section 151 officer support. MKC's Chief Finance Officer will therefore be required to provide the Growth Board with a quarterly financial report. Additional remuneration for this role will not be received.

	Capital	X	Revenue		Accommodation
	IT		Medium Term Plan		Asset Management

4.5 Legal

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.

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.

4.6 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.

4.7 Other Implications

	Equalities/Diversity		Sustainability		Human Rights
	E-Government		Stakeholders		Crime and Disorder

Background Papers:

NIC, *Partnering for Prosperity: a new deal for the Cambridge – Milton Keynes - Oxford arc* [partnering-prosperity-new-deal-cambridge-milton-keynes-oxford-arc](#)

NIC Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford Corridor Interim report [Cambridge-Milton-Keynes-Oxford-interim-report](#).

Helping the Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford corridor reach its potential, HM Government [helping-the-cambridge-milton-keynes-oxford-corridor-reach-its-potential](#)

Annex:

Annex – Central Area Growth Board Terms of Reference