

Hertfordshire Growth Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, 17 January 2024



Hertfordshire
Growth Board

Minutes

To: All Members of the Hertfordshire Growth Board
From: Legal, Democratic & Statutory Services, Hertfordshire County Council
Ask for: Stephanie Tarrant
Tel: 01992 555481

Date: Wednesday, 17 January 2024

Attendance

Council Leaders (11 Voting Members)

L Cocking, Broxbourne Borough Council
B Crystall, East Herts District Council
E Dennis, North Hertfordshire District Council (Vice-chair)
J Thomas (*substituted for R Henry*), Stevenage Borough Council
S Nelmes, Three Rivers District Council
J Newmark, Hertsmere Borough Council
R Roberts, Hertfordshire County Council (Chair)
P Taylor (Mayor), Watford Borough Council
R Tindall, Dacorum Borough Council
C White, St Albans City and District Council (Vice-chair)
P Zukowskyj, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Co-opted Members (4)

P Burstow, Hertfordshire and West Essex ICS, NHS
A Hawkins, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
S Johnstone, Homes England
D Lloyd, Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner

The full Board Meeting can be viewed here: [Hertfordshire Growth Board - 17 January 2024](#).

1. Minutes

- 1.1 The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 20 July 2023 (Part I) were confirmed as a correct record.

2. Public Questions – Standing order 12

- 2.1 There were no Public Questions.

3. Public Petitions – Standing Order 13

- 3.1 There were no Public Petitions.

4a. Hertfordshire Growth Board –Vision and Missions

[Officer Contact: Forogh Rahmani, Director, Hertfordshire Growth Board, Tel: 01992 588233]

- 4.1 The Board received a report which provided an update on the engagement activity that sought to contribute to the development of the vision, missions, and overall ambition for the Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB) for years to come. Board Members were provided with a supplementary presentation from the public relations agency, Meeting Place: [Vision and Missions Engagement](#). Members were given an overview of the results of the consultation and heard that there was good support for the vision and missions, with a good level of engagement.
- 4.2 In response to a Member question regarding whether the questions asked during the consultation were difficult enough to drill down from, Members heard that the questions were succinct enough to keep consultees engaged, without being too onerous in terms of time demands which would result in drop-outs from the survey. It was noted that there was the option for consultees to provide qualitative comments and where comments had been received, they were constructive and provided vision ideas. Members were conscious of the narrative behind consultation responses.
- 4.3 Members commented on the demographic of consultees, and it was noted that 339 respondents were under the age of 34. The Board queried if there were any differences in views from respondents online to those spoken to in person. Members heard that the responses had been similar, with the main difference being those spoken to face to

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face were more focussed on their own areas of expertise. Overall respondents agreed in terms of the missions and the direction of the missions, however there were some differences on how the missions could be delivered.

- 4.4 In response to a Member question regarding whether any significant issues were raised that did not fall into a mission, Members heard that whilst there were not any other key findings, there were preferences over missions i.e. people wanted a world class economy but not at the expense of a sustainable county. Officers advised that infrastructure was a key area not covered in any mission but that a lot of residents spoke about the impact of population and housing demands. Infrastructure had been strengthened within the housing mission since the original draft.
- 4.5 Members commented on the responses by demographic and considered whether the older respondents were more interested in short-term developments compared to younger respondents. Members were conscious that it was important to consider what future generations might like to see. Members heard that the respondents in the over 75 age group, were keen for digital access for all and a world class economy.
- 4.6 In response to a Member question regarding consultation responses from Hertsmere and North Herts, which appeared to have more positive response than other areas, it was noted that Hertsmere had 94 and North Herts had 128 attributed responses.
- 4.7 Members were interested to know how many respondents mentioned ULEZ in their responses and the way that qualitative data was used. Whilst the exact data was not available, it was noted that around 10% of respondents not supportive of the sustainable county mission, raised concerns around ULEZ.
- 4.8 Board Members noted that they thought the level of public concern around affordable housing was not represented in the findings in some boroughs, however it was acknowledged that affordable housing had still been highlighted as an important challenge by the public throughout the engagement process.
- 4.9 Members were keen to follow up on the responses on the public engagement and it was noted that the overarching report with breakdowns per district/borough would be shared with Members.
- 4.10 The full Board discussion on this item can be viewed here at 00:03:18 [Item 4a - HGB Visions and Missions.](#)

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RESOLVED

4.11 Members of the Growth Board noted the findings contained in report and the contents of the associated presentation.

4b. Hertfordshire Growth Board – Vision and Priorities 2023-25

[Officer Contact: Forogh Rahmani, Hertfordshire Growth Board, Tel: 01992 588233]

5.1 The Board received a report which provided an update on the progress made in refreshing the ambitions for the Hertfordshire Growth Board. Board Members received a supplementary presentation which can be viewed here: [HGB Vision and Priorities slides](#).

5.2 Members heard that the Vision and the Missions of the Board had been amended in response to the engagement feedback. Actions were focussed on how best the missions could be achieved. Members heard that it was proposed to launch the new Vision and Missions at the meeting of the Hertfordshire and Infrastructure Development Board in February 2024 and to publish the engagement report from Meeting Place. It was noted that implementation plan would be shared with the Board at the next informal meeting in March 2024.

5.3 Members commented on the nod towards safety within the missions but noted that a preference could be for the mission to be safe and healthy places for all. It was noted that a success measure around safety would help to hold a future Police and Crime Commissioner to account.

5.4 The Board noted that consideration needed to be given to increasing the use of bus transport. Members acknowledged the poor quality of service in some areas and noted that it was an issue that the Board should work to drive forward. The Board heard about the approach that the County Council were taking, noting the interlinked nature of some of the challenges. The County Council were working to bring together many of the functions relating to the missions, including transport, sustainability and spatial/economic growth and work was now underway for the department to align with the missions, alongside partners. The Executive Director for Growth & Environment for Hertfordshire County Council agreed to bring a future report on transport, bus links and sustainability to a future meeting.

5.5 Members thanked officers for the work undertaken since the original version and noted that safety was an important driver of health status

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and mental wellbeing and therefore needed to be reflected within the healthy places mission.

- 5.6 The full Board discussion on this item can be viewed here at 00:41:50 [Item 4b - HGB Visions and Priorities 2023-2025](#).

RESOLVED

- 5.7 Members of the Growth Board approved the new Vision and six Missions contained in this report, subject to the comments made by Members being incorporated.

5. Hertfordshire Growth Board – Progress Report

[Officer Contact: Forogh Rahmani, Hertfordshire Growth Board, Tel: 01992 588233]

- 5.1 The Board reviewed a report which detailed the 2023 Growth Board Progress report. The report provided information on the work, progress and achievements made by the Growth Board to date. Members were invited to provide any comments or feedback to officers.
- 5.2 Frustration was expressed at the Hertfordshire and Essex Rapid Transport (HERT) project being included in the progress report, due to little progress being made. Members noted that the progress report should set out how growth was being achieved across public transport. It was noted that the County Council remained committed to HERT links, however the challenge was noted.
- 5.3 The full Board discussion on this item can be viewed here at 01:06:20 [Item 5 - HGB Progress Report](#).

RESOLVED

- 5.4 Members of the Growth Board noted the 2023 Hertfordshire Growth Board Progress Report and agreed to it being finalised and circulated.

6. Hertfordshire Growth Board – Presentation from Homes England

[Officer Contact: Forogh Rahmani, Hertfordshire Growth Board, Tel: 01992 588233]

- 6.1 The Board received a presentation from Homes England which provided an overview of the strategic priorities and opportunities for

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investment in Hertfordshire. The presentation can be viewed here:
[Presentation from Homes England](#)

- 6.2 Members noted that often when developments were going through the planning process, there was an expectation that Homes England funding might be secured to increase the proportion of affordable housing but it was often not confirmed by the time it was presented to Planning Committees. Members queried whether Government were looking into the process to ensure more certainty was available to Planning Committees. Members heard that in relation to Brownfield, Infrastructure and Land (BIL) funding, it was expected that any support provided should match the policy compliancy level set by the Local Authority on affordable housing and some flexibility was required. It was noted there was also the affordable housing grant programme which could be provided in addition to policy compliancy levels and enabled programmes of up to 100% affordable homes to be delivered. Members heard that Government were reviewing the criteria for affordable homes and how the programme could be used more creatively.
- 6.3 Board Members discussed place making and housing dimension in relation to the new hospital programme on a national level and wider health infrastructure requirements. Members heard that Homes England were working with the Department of Health & Social Care (DASH) at a strategic level regarding redundant hospitals and whether old hospital sites could be used to bring forward new homes. It was noted that the funding process for primary and secondary care was very complicated, however work was underway on a strategic level and work around the Garden Communities Programme was built in.
- 6.4 The Board heard that Hertfordshire County Council and Broxbourne Borough Council were taking forward a scheme to deliver 15,000 homes and a new town centre, for which assistance from Homes England had been sought. It was noted that whilst the scheme was viable there was a requirement for £40m upfront infrastructure and Homes England had advised that they could only provide loans to the private sector. It was noted that due to the project being viable market failure could not be demonstrated and it was requested that Homes England and the Government review the rules set around the market failure element of projects. It was agreed for further review of the specific project to be undertaken with Homes England.
- 6.5 In discussion around healthcare, it was noted that there was a struggle to engage the NHS in conversations around development

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Jeff Stack

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and future required services. Homes England noted the feedback and advised that it needed to be raised with the NHS and DSHC, however noted that the concern would be fed back to the strategy team to develop discussions at a strategic level. Members heard that since concerns had first been raised with the team, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) employed to provide coordination and support had grown and a lead Director, Sue Fogden was in place to support councils.

- 6.6 The full Board discussion on this item can be viewed here at 01:09:40 [Item 6 - Presentation from Homes England](#).

RESOLVED

- 6.7 The Growth Board noted the information shared within the presentation.

7. Hertfordshire Growth Board – Presentation by Broxbourne Borough Council, Levelling Up Fund Programme

[Officer Contact: Forogh Rahmani, Hertfordshire Growth Board, Tel: 01992 588233]

- 7.1 Due to time constraints, it was agreed that this agenda item would be deferred to the next meeting of the Hertfordshire Growth Board.

8. Date of next meeting

- 8.1 The date of the next meeting was noted as Wednesday, 17 July 2024 at 11:30am.

9. Other Part I Business

- 9.1 None.

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