

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET – 16TH DECEMBER 2019
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

1 **Executive Summary**

- 1.1 To invite the Cabinet to approve the attached Hertfordshire Growth Board Memorandum of Understanding setting out the objectives, principles, and scope of the collaborative work being and to be undertaken through the Hertfordshire Growth Board.
- 1.2 Since the formation of the Hertfordshire Growth Board in September 2018 Leaders and Chief Executives of the eleven Hertfordshire Councils and the Local Enterprise Partnership have worked together to develop a Place Leadership model for Hertfordshire. In March 2019 the Growth Board development programme was commissioned. This six-month supported programme has explored how issues relating to housing, infrastructure, and funding can be jointly addressed in future. This programme reached a major milestone at the September Growth Board meeting where an ambitious forward work programme was approved and the transition into an implementation phase was started.
- 1.3 At the September meeting Leaders also agreed to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to signal their intent to work collaboratively on place-based issues to central government, partners, and Hertfordshire residents. This document would help set out the objectives of the work to be undertaken through the Hertfordshire Growth Board, the principles which the parties will apply to their work and to working with each other, and what is – and what is not – within its scope.

2 **Recommendation**

- 2.1 Cabinet agree to the Memorandum of Understanding set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

3 **Explanation**

- 3.1 Since September 2018 the Hertfordshire Leaders and Local Enterprise Partnership Chair have been collaborating through the Hertfordshire Growth Board. Together they have undertaken the Growth Board Development Programme, which has allowed the leaders to identify their key growth challenges, emerging programmes of work, and key features of an emerging proposition to government. Work is now taking place to move those programmes into implementation and to deepen our ongoing collaborative ways of working and engagement with central government.
- 3.2 The Leaders of the District Councils, County Councils, and the Local Enterprise Partnership agreed at the September 2019 Hertfordshire Growth Board meeting to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to be considered by the

Hertfordshire Growth Board at its meeting on 15th October. The Memorandum of Understanding attached to these papers has now been considered by the Growth Board and is recommended for agreement by all the Hertfordshire Councils and the Local Enterprise Partnership Board.

- 3.3 In terms of scope and content, the Memorandum of Understanding sets out the Core Objectives and Aims of working through the Hertfordshire Growth Board and the Principles of Partnership between the parties to the agreement. It also makes clear what is in and what is not within the scope of the work of the Hertfordshire Growth Board:
- The objectives of the collaboration focus on taking a broader place-based approach to strategic planning for development, infrastructure, transport, climate change, and economy. The aims of the collaboration expand on the work that the parties might undertake through the Hertfordshire Growth Board to help achieve these objectives.
 - The principles set out some of the benefits to be achieved through partnership working, using the two-tier system at its best, responding to wider challenges, providing leadership of place, and increasing impact. It also sets out the principles of how the parties will work together, how they will undertake placemaking in Hertfordshire, and approaches towards governance.
 - The scope of the Memorandum of Understanding makes clear that any council exercising any particular function shall continue to do so – including local plans, housing, and development management.
- 3.4 The Memorandum of Understanding has a number of legal terms and conditions, which are summarised as follows:
- It is not enforceable in law and cannot override existing statutes;
 - Parties are free to withdraw individually at any point, and the Memorandum of Understanding shall wholly terminate if the growth board dissolves; and
 - It is amendable only by the unanimous written consent of all its members.
- 3.5 Drafts of the MOU have been circulated through the Chief Executives and Leaders groups and amended as a result of feedback. The attached version has the support of the Growth Board to go forward through individual Councils democratic processes.
- 3.6 The draft Memorandum of Understanding, if adopted by the Councils and the Local Enterprise Partnership, will give a very clear signal to Government and partners about the Hertfordshire joint working ambition. It will also demonstrate how the Growth Board's members are providing place-based leadership and governance across Hertfordshire and is maturing as a body that government can talk with about an enhanced collaborative relationship in future.

Implications

4 Legal Implication(s)

4.1 The MoU has been considered by the Legal team and the legal considerations are set out in paragraph 3.4.

5 Financial Implication(s)

5.1 The signing of the MOU does not commit any Hertfordshire Council or the Local Enterprise Partnership to expenditure at this stage. The work of the Growth Board is evolving and at present is being funded in-kind or through use of the Growth Fund established for use by the Growth Board through the retained Business Rates Pilot Funds secured for Hertfordshire.

6 Risk Management Implications

6.1 The risks related to this proposal are:

6.2 Reputational risks

7 Security and Terrorism Implication(s)

7.1 None.

8 Procurement Implication(s)

8.1 None.

9 Climate Change Implication(s)

9.1 None.

10 Human Resources Implication(s)

10.1 None.

11 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)

11.1 None.

12 Communication and Engagement Implication(s)

12.1 A press release and communications approach has been agreed by the Hertfordshire Growth Board and engagement events with councillors and officers are taking place.

13 Link to Corporate Priorities

13.1 This links to all Corporate Priorities.

14 Equality and Diversity

14.1 An EqIA was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

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Appendices 1 - Hertfordshire Growth Board Memorandum of Understanding October 2019