



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Agenda Item No: 5.2

Oxford to Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership

To: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board

Meeting Date: 22 March 2023

Public report: Yes

Lead Member: Mayor Dr Nik Johnson

From: Steve Cox, Interim Director, Place and Connectivity

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Recommendations: What is the Board being asked to do?

The Board is recommended to:

- a) Confirm the Combined Authority's intention to become a member of the Oxford to Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership.
- b) Agree to the appointment of the Mayor as the Combined Authority representative on the Pan Regional Partnership.
- c) Agree to nominate the Lead Member for the Environment and Climate Change to represent the Combined Authority on the Environment Working Group of the Partnership
- d) Agree to nominate the Statutory Deputy Mayor, Lead Member for Economic Growth, to represent the Combined Authority on the Economy Working Group of the Partnership.

Voting arrangements: A simple majority of all Members present and voting

To be carried, the vote must include the vote of the Mayor, or the Deputy Mayor when acting in place of the Mayor.

1 Purpose

- 1.1 Proposals for a locally led Pan Regional Partnership (PRP) for the Oxford to Cambridge region have been formally approved by Government.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to confirm the Combined Authority's intention to confirm membership of the PRP and its representation on the partnership's board and working groups.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Combined Authority's Corporate Strategy focuses on four strategic priority areas: achieving good growth; increasing connectivity; ambitious skills and employment opportunities; and enabling resilient communities. It also recognises that strong partnership working and delivery as a key component in enabling this strategy to be successfully delivered. Membership of the PRP will support the Combined Authority in its delivery of the Corporate Strategy through stronger collaboration, more efficient working and further strengthening joint working and influence with central Government.
- 2.2 The Oxford to Cambridge region is an area of economic success of global significance which will require continued investment and support if it is to be sustained. It is also a region of contrasting economic performance and investment needs. Investment in infrastructure is a priority to support and enable inclusive growth in low demand areas and ensure the pressures of growth in high demand areas are managed in a sustainable way.
- 2.3 On 18th January 2023, Secretary of State Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP endorsed the proposition to set up a pan regional partnership for the Oxford to Cambridge area. Letter attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.4 The overall purpose of the Oxford to Cambridge Partnership will be to champion the Oxford to Cambridge region as a world leader of innovation and business, acting on shared interests in delivering environmentally sustainable economic growth that brings benefits to communities now and in future.
- 2.5 The Partnership will strengthen cross-boundary collaboration so that joint working is locally-led and focused on the issues that matter to people who live and work in the region. The Partnership will define the outcomes it seeks to achieve but it does not have delegated authority or any formal or legal decision-making powers from any of its partner members
- 2.6 Currently, the priorities of the Partnership are focussed on supporting delivery of clean, green and inclusive economic growth as well as delivering increased environmental gain and benefits from this growth for our communities now and in the future.
- 2.7 Government endorsement of the Partnership unlocks the opportunity of up to £2.5million for the remainder of the current Spending Review period (to 2024/25), with £500k in year to support activity to deliver:

- an Investment Prospectus & Atlas
- a significant Environment Programme, including:
 - Nature Recovery Strategy Support
 - Minerals & Waste Restoration Environmental Gain
 - Regional Energy & Water Strategy Scoping
- a Data Observatory & Innovation Network.

2.8 The Partnership is not a formal committee in Local Government terms but as a condition of gaining Government support and funding, it is required to have the following:

- a constitution which includes clarity on governance, membership, openness and transparency, which sits as part of a wider performance and assurance framework which covers financial and risk management
- a committed work programme which builds on the Partnership's consensus in terms of priorities, objectives and expected outcomes
- a representative Board from across the Partnership including an Independent Chair.

2.9 A Shadow Board is in place to oversee an initial partnership programme and agree governance and funding arrangements. The Shadow Board will be in place until the initial conditions and milestones have been met (i.e. constitution in place, Independent Chair selected). It is anticipated the Board will meet outside of shadow form by June 2023.

2.10 Members of the Shadow Board are:

- Cllr Barry Wood, Leader Cherwell District Council sitting as Interim Chair of the Shadow Board.
- Cllr Susan Brown, Leader of Oxford City Council, representing the Future Oxfordshire Partnership as current Chair
- Cllr Pete Marland, Leader of Milton Keynes City Council, representing the Central Area Growth Board as current Co-Chair
- Cllr Richard Wenham, Leader of Central Bedfordshire Council, representing the Central Area Growth Board as current Co-Chair
- Cllr Anna Smith, Leader of Cambridge City Council and currently Acting Mayor, representing the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
- Professor Alistair Fitt, Pro-Vice Chancellor Oxford Brookes University representing the Arc Universities Group as current Chair
- Peter Horrocks CBE, Chair of SEMLEP, representing Chairs of LEPs and Business Boards and, sitting as interim Chair of the Economy Sub-Group.
- Cllr Bridget Smith, Leader South Cambridgeshire District Council sitting as interim Chair of the Environment Sub-Group
- To be confirmed, Representative from England's Economic Heartland

Once fully operational, there will be three main layers to the governance model: an overarching Plenary group, which includes all partners, that will meet at least annually; a main Board which will oversee governance, work programme delivery and communications; Sub-Groups which are themed groups (currently economy and environment) which focus on specific project delivery. All groups will be supported by a

small operational team as well as an Accountable Body.

2.11 The Oxford to Cambridge Partnership Board will succeed the shadow board to oversee the work and operations of the Partnership, as agreed by its members. Representation on this Board will include:

- An Independent Chair;
- One Chair from each of the member Growth Boards or equivalent sub-regional groups (plus an additional Co-Chair from the Central Area Growth Board);
- One Chair representing each of the Board's Programme Sub-Groups;
- One Chair each from the main constituent stakeholder groups: one on behalf of all Local Enterprise Partnerships, one of behalf of the Arc Universities Group, and one from England's Economic Heartland.
- A minimum of two Independent Stakeholders (NEDs) as selected by the Board
- Senior Government representatives (whilst the Board is in receipt of core Government funding).

2.12 Cherwell District Council is currently the Accountable Body for the Partnership. Such a body is required for the Partnership given direct public funding from partners and Government. This role involves the Council having oversight and responsibility for ensuring proper governance, financial and risk management is in place.

Significant Implications

3 Financial Implications

3.1 The Oxford to Cambridge Partnership currently has transition funding of £250,000 from Government with access to a further £250,000 this year plus local partner contributions. This money is being committed to support the transition programme of delivery, recruitment of the Chair and to support a small transition team until the Partnership is formally set.

3.2 There is commitment from Government for access to a further £2,500,000 over the next two financial years, subject to business case being agreed. As part of accessing this funding local contributions are required, both in officer time and in cash contributions. This will be determined through development of the business case.

4 Legal Implications

4.1 The PRP constitution is being drafted which will set out the principles and rules governing it. There will also be a formal partnership agreement between the partners.

5 Public Health Implications

5.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

6 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are none arising directly from the report, however, the PRP has a strong focus on the environment, with a proposed environment working group and an emerging work programme that will address climate and environment priorities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

7 Other Significant Implications

- 7.1 None

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Letter from Secretary of State – 18 Jan 2023 (signature redacted)

9 Background Papers

- 9.1 None.