

## MINUTES OF THE HARLOW GROWTH BOARD HELD ON

3 February 2021

10.00 - 11.30 am

### PRESENT

#### Members

John Keddie (Chair)  
Michael Beard  
Yvonne Barnett  
Steve Clarke  
Will Allanson  
Mark Doran  
Robert Halfon MP  
Chris Snow  
Guy Nicholson

Councillor Mark Ingall  
Councillor Tony Durcan  
Councillor Michael Hardware  
Michael Harrowven  
Martin John  
Brian Keane  
John McGill  
Jemma Mindham

#### Officers

Eden Duggan  
Julie Houston  
Sarah Langmead  
Hannah Criddle  
Jane Greer

Alison Fox  
James Gardner  
Oliver Gillard  
Shannon Harris  
Adam Halford

#### Guests

Rebecca Collings  
Rachel Bentley

### 30. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Suzanne Bennett and Iain McNabb. Both indicated that they would join the meeting if they were able to do so.

### 31. MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 2020 MEETING

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed.

### 32. ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

Rachel Bentley, Associate Director of CLES, gave a presentation on anchor institutions. Rachel Bentley explained that CLES was a thinktank that helped local places to achieve local development. The main objective of working with anchor institutions is community wealth building which keeps wealth local and helps regenerate the area.

- Anchor institutions are ones that have an important presence in the area – tied by their mission, history or physical assets
- Anchor institutions (hospitals, colleges, Housing Associations) can have a huge impact on local economy and can strengthen from within the town
- Harlow's anchors institutions: Harlow Council(HC), Essex County Council (ECC), Harlow College and schools, Anglia Ruskin University(ARU), Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH), Police and fire services

The five pillars of Community Wealth Building include; procurement, socially productive use of land and property, fair employment, financial powers and plural ownership of the economy. These five pillars need to be connected to local anchor institutions.

CLES would work with Harlow Council to assess current capacity, readiness/barriers for change, build an achievable action plan, support the roll out and create a plan tailored to local needs.

### **32.1 Q&A**

Robert Halfon – Asked for further information on how skills, knowledge and education fit into the plan and cost of the program.

Rachel Bentley – Skills, knowledge and education would fall under the fair employment practice pillar. They would aim to develop a pipeline of skills and tailoring learning journeys to support anchor institutions.

Rachel confirmed that the proposed program of support (including facilitating a workshop) was likely to be considered affordable.

**RESOLVED:** The Board approved for an Anchor Programme workshop with CLES. Potential partnership with ECC & ARU to ensure the program is not duplicated.

### **33. FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND FEEDBACK**

Jane Greer advised that the Future High Street Fund (FHSF) bid was not successful. Feedback received from the MHCLG was complimentary of the bid, however the bid did not meet the cost benefit ratio criteria. MHCLG suggested that the Levelling Up funding could be applied for later in the year. The bid showed strong project ideas for the town centre and other opportunities / funding to deliver these projects will be identified.

John Keddie enquired about whether there were any warning signs the bid may be unsuccessful and lessons learned.

Jane Greer advised that there unfortunately had been minimal dialogue from the funders throughout the bid development process. A key lesson to

be learnt from this would be to do all that is possible to ensure a good two way dialogue in any future bids. Officers are working with the appointed consultants to look in detail at the cost benefit ratio calculations that had a major impact on the outcome of the bid. It was reported that many of the successful bids had private sector investment which unfortunately HC did not have.

34. **TOWNS FUND UPDATE**

Rebecca Collings advised that this bid had a different model to the FHSF with better ongoing dialogue. There were no new outcomes to date. Initial feedback has suggested that some applicants have been offered a slightly lower envelope of funding; this is something Harlow should be aware of. Towns which have a mature approach and clear pipeline of delivery will be in a stronger position when new funds become available.

Jane Greer confirmed that further revised guidance on the introduction to business cases had been received. Jane highlighted that the next batch of announcements are due in early March and Harlow could be within that batch.

Robert Halfon highlighted that a House of Commons debate on the Towns fund was due to take place on 4<sup>th</sup> February, where if he was successful in the ballot he intended to give a speech supporting Harlow's bid. He encouraged Members of the Board to send over any suggestions /comments ahead of the session.

35. **PHE UPDATE**

Martin John advised that during the last six months the PHE moved through the approval process with preparation of the site work continuing. Looking forward, National Institute for Health Protection (NIHP) implementation would commence from April to October 2021. There would also be the appointment of the Chief Executive.

36. **PHE MOVE TO HARLOW UPDATE SUBGROUP (STRATEGIC AND SKILLS) UPDATE**

Alison Fox advised the Board that a sub group of the skills group would be meeting on Friday 5 February to work on mapping the skills pathways via the college and local universities into jobs at PHE. Alison Fox also confirmed that Harlow Council would be arranging STEM activities as part of a journal project for local children.

The work of the strategic sub-group would tie in with the Anchor Institutions presentations given earlier on in the meeting.

37. **PAH NEW HOSPITAL AND COVID SITUATION UPDATE**

Steve Clark confirmed that both Covid-19 infection and admission rates were dropping, however, there were still extremely poorly patients in the hospital. He advised that over 80 per cent of the staff at the hospital had received the vaccination.

Steve Clark advised the Board that the hospital was in the process of preparing the business case for the new hospital. The hospital is also going through a number of new hospital engagement exercises with people in the local area. The aspiration is to have a digitally enhanced and modern hospital.

38. **HARLOW INNOVATION PARK UPDATE**

James Gardner provided the Board with an update on potential tenant interest at the Park. He advised that there is a fit out project at the Nexus building and although there are some delays on the Modus site, practical completion is due in April 2021. James confirmed that the “central heart area” has received funding via the GBF fund and café designs had commenced. These will be presented to the Growth Board in due course.

39. **HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN UPDATE**

Guy Nicholson advised that a paper would be circulated to the Board summarising activity of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT). He explained how the team has now shifted from policy making and was now going into delivery mode. A planning application for 7 villages including 10,000 new homes in Gilston is currently with East Herts planning authority. £172m investment catalyst funding has been achieved for transport and connectivity. New more formal governance arrangements are being introduced.

40. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

41. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meetings will take place on 16 April 2021 and 18 June 2021. John Keddie suggested that a short meeting may take place before then to discuss any feedback from the Town Funds bid.