

Central Area Growth Board Report

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Future of the Central Area Growth Board

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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To action an 'away day' for Leaders and CX's on the future of the growth board to look at:
 - a) Strategic aims and Terms of Reference of the Central Area Growth Board;
 - b) Branding of the Central Area/South East Midlands;
 - c) Building a common picture of ambitions for any Devolution discussions for the area; and
 - d) Considering the future of services formerly delivered by SEMLEP provided, including future arrangements to involve the voice of business.
- 1.2 To bring an update to the December meeting of the Central Area Growth Board on discussions regarding the future of the Central Area growth board.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Central Area Growth board was originally established in 2018 as a shadow joint committee across the area known as the South East Midlands, to further joint working across the area and ensure a strong voice in issues related to the Oxford-Milton Keynes- Cambridge corridor.
- 2.2 The six Local Authorities have reconfirmed their intentions to continue working across this geographical area on larger than local issues, most recently in their decisions to continue across the central area footprint the business and economic services formally provided by the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) and due to be delivered by West Northamptonshire on behalf of the area from April 2024.
- 2.3 The context for this joint working has changed considerably since 2018, with a key focus now on issues of economic importance across the area and an exploration of potential level 2 Devolution for the area. With this context in mind, this marks a sensible point in time for Leaders of the Central Area growth board to develop more strategic thinking on the future of regional working across the area.