



# **Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) Ltd PR and public affairs agency recruitment tender document February 2020**

## **Tender headlines:**

***A two-year opportunity for a retained PR and public affairs agency, to be reviewed after year one. The first year will run from April 2020 to March 2021 (inclusive).***

***Build high-profile, high-quality and measurable campaigns that make significant impacts at an international, national and local level.***

***Make a significant impact, promoting the global opportunities that can be capitalised via the Oxfordshire economy – one of the best-performing economies in the UK.***

## **1. OxLEP background**

The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) was launched in March 2011. We are one of 37 LEPs in England and we are responsible for championing and developing Oxfordshire's economy.

In recent years, we have made considerable progress in strengthening Oxfordshire's economy by establishing robust and effective relationships between businesses, academia and the public sector.

We act as an informed, independent advocate for those driving innovation and growth across the county and – through a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for Oxfordshire – we prioritise key programmes that build dynamic economic growth.

Our highlight achievements to-date includes:

- We have secured in-excess of £650 million-worth of central government and European funds benefitting the Oxfordshire economy and our communities
- Working with the private sectors, we have supported the creation of around 50,000 new jobs between 2012 and 2017, representing over 50% of a 2031 target of 85,600 new jobs

- Working alongside key partners, we now oversee a £2.2bn growth programme for the county
- We have led the development of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy, which has an ambition to position the county as one of the top-three global innovation ecosystems, highlighting our world-leading science and technology cluster
- We have led the development of Oxfordshire Energy Strategy, which sets out an ambitious framework to enable the county to be at the forefront of energy innovation to foster clean growth
- We are a key player – working alongside Government departments, local authorities, academia, businesses and communities – in the evolution of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc

**Our vision is to see:**

***‘Oxfordshire as a vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, world leading economy, driven by innovation, enterprise and research excellence.’***

## **2. OxLEP today**

Today – we continue to build-on several years of success, championing the Oxfordshire economy and securing funding for the benefit of both our business community and wider Oxfordshire communities.

We have three distinct areas of our work:

- **OxLEP** (*strategy and major Government-funded projects*)
- **OxLEP Skills** (*promotion of apprenticeships, work experience, linking business with education – supported by stakeholders, including the Careers Enterprise Company and the ESF-supported Skills for Business programme*)
- **OxLEP Business** (*growth hub, the ERDF-funded programmes of eScalate and Innovation Support for Business (ISfB) and international trade and investment for Oxfordshire*)

## **3. The Oxfordshire economy**

As a county, Oxfordshire continues to reaffirm a world-leading economic position, with many international and national bodies highlighting the success of our county's economy – this includes:

## Economy:

- A GVA of £23bn per year, currently, one of just three net County contributors to the exchequer
- A significant player in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, which contributes over £111bn GVA per year, with the potential to do more
- A potential £180bn boost to the UK economy through our four transformative technologies, as identified in the county's 2017 Science and Innovation Audit

## Jobs and business survival rates:

- Around 50,000 new jobs created in Oxfordshire between 2011/12 and 2016/17
- The UK five-year survival rate for businesses born in 2011 and still active in 2016 was 44.1%, Oxfordshire averaged 49.3% during the same period

## Academia and research:

- Home to the number one 2019 Times Higher Education's globally-ranked university – the University of Oxford was also number one in 2018
- £600m: The largest fund for university spin outs in Europe, via Oxford Sciences Innovation
- The number one concentration of science research facilities in Western Europe, via Harwell Campus

## 4. The tender opportunity

Outlined below is an overview of the required support:

<b>Support required:</b>	<b>Approximate percentage of project brief:</b>
<b>Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy and Oxfordshire Energy Strategy:</b>  Build a national and international profile (targeting an agreed set of stakeholders) for:  1. <b>The Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy</b> – specifically supporting its ambition to be a top-three global innovation ecosystem, driven by the county's transformative technologies and their collective capabilities	30%

<p>And;</p> <p>2. <b>The Oxfordshire Energy Strategy</b> – specifically supporting its ambition to be at the global forefront of energy innovation to foster clean growth</p> <p><b><i>Lead-on the development of a compelling story about Oxfordshire’s economic strengths and capabilities, taking this narrative to international, national and significant sector audiences, with a view to influence key decision makers.</i></b></p>	
<p><b>International Trade and Investment:</b></p> <p>Working alongside OxLEP’s Head of Innovation and Inward Investment to support the international work that promotes the unique global assets and lead Oxfordshire has in key sectors (as outlined in the LIS and <a href="#">Internationalisation Delivery Plan</a>) to an international audience of trade and investment advisers working for UK Government in our embassies and consulates across the world and foreign trade and investment advisers based in the UK.</p> <p><b><i>Raise awareness of trade and investment opportunities and drive trade and investment enquires and success in Oxfordshire.</i></b></p>	30%
<p><b>Secretaries of state and Oxfordshire MPs engagement:</b></p> <p>Use significant stakeholder management and communications skills to build a clear narrative of Oxfordshire’s economic strengths and globally-significant capabilities, targeting identified secretaries of state and Oxfordshire MPs.</p> <p>Regarding Oxfordshire MPs – this narrative should also highlight how the county’s communities can benefit at first-hand from the county’s globally-significant technologies (more below).</p> <p><b><i>Create opportunities for meaningful dialogue with key representatives in Westminster.</i></b></p>	20%
<p><b>Highlighting how Oxfordshire communities can benefit from the county’s globally-significant technologies:</b></p> <p>Working with the in-house OxLEP Communications team, help to devise a clear approach to promoting how Oxfordshire communities – across all socioeconomic backgrounds – can</p>	20%

benefit from Oxfordshire's ambition to be a top-three global innovation ecosystem.	
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<b><i>Support the creation of measurable campaigns that can genuinely reach out to communities in Oxfordshire, promoting the benefits of the county's future ambitions.</i></b>	
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**Expected approach:**

We expect the recruited agency to be both **a)** collaborative in its approach (with both OxLEP and our key partners) and **b)** possess the ability to show autonomy in developing projects and campaigns.

**5. Project budget**

This is a two-year opportunity, which will be reviewed at the end of year one (provisionally April 2021).

For year one, a maximum budget of £45,000 (not including VAT) will be available for this contract. This will run between 1 April 2020 (the earliest possible start date, subject to 'standstill period' – more in section 7) and 31 March 2021. We would expect a contract proposal that is at least 12 months in length.

An additional pool of budget will be available to support the chosen agency's activity – this will be defined upon appointment. We believe this budget will allow the preferred agency to meet project expectations.

**6. Expected experience of recruited PR agency**

Specific criteria, outlining the recruitment of the selected agency during the interview process – can be found in section 8. However, broadly-speaking we would hope to attract responses from agencies who clearly demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Those with a significant reach into international and national influencers that are specific to this brief
- Those with experience of working with MPs, central government and other government departments
- Those with a strong experience of B2B communications
- Those with a strong understanding of the Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire economy, Oxfordshire communities and the county's key assets
- Those with a strong understanding of the role of Local Enterprise Partnerships

- Those with a strong understanding of key Oxfordshire strategies – including the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy, the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy and Oxfordshire Plan 2050

## 7. Tender process

The table below outlines key dates relating to the tendering process. We aim to have commissioned this project to a preferred agency **by Tuesday 31 March 2020** with interested agencies submitting tender response documents by: **Friday 6 March 2020 (5pm) – details of submission can be found in section 10.**

Key dates are as follows:

<b>w/b 10 February</b>	Tender document launched on OxLEP website and publicised accordingly
<b>Friday 6 March (5pm)</b>	Closing date for tender responses
<b>Wednesday 11 March</b>	All agencies who responded to be notified of success/non-success of tender response – a minimum of three agencies to be shortlisted for face-to-face interviews
<b>Provisionally Monday 23 March</b>	Shortlisted agencies interviewed by OxLEP panel
<b>By Tuesday 31 March</b>	Winning agency and unsuccessful agencies to be notified

***Please note:** After we inform the interviewed agencies of the interview result, a ‘standstill period’ of at least 10 days will be triggered. This process is designed to allow time for any bidder who is dissatisfied with the bidding process to act. Following this period, a contract will be issued.*

## 8. Selection process, appraisal and scoring

All submitted proposals and the interview process for shortlisted agencies will be scored against a pre-determined criterion, outlining OxLEP’s requirements from a partner agency.

Proposals should include information that outlines the following details:

- Demonstrable understanding of the potential scope for a retainer agreement and alignment with narrative
- A clear proposal and outline as to how the proposed brief could be met
- Full budget breakdown
- Number of hours covered by retainer fee
- Details and credentials (skills/experience) of who would work on the account
- Evidence of work in a similar field(s)

- Distinctive methods of communication to reach target audiences

The scoring criteria will be as follows:

Area of scoring	Further detail	Percentage of overall score
<b>Competency</b>	It is our aim to employ an agency that demonstrates competence against the brief and also demonstrates a clear understanding of Oxfordshire's position as a key player in a future, globally-facing UK economy. We would particularly invite you to share past experience(s) with us that relate strongly to OxLEP's work.	40% (0/40)
<b>Creativity</b>	Bringing Oxfordshire's 'world-class' narrative and key assets to life with identified stakeholders – through dynamic and integrated campaigns – will form an important part of your pitch.	30% (0/30)
<b>Personality</b>	Working with an agency, matching our team's enthusiasm and positivity is key to ensuring a strong, long-lasting relationship.	15% (0/15)
<b>Price</b>	Demonstrating good value for money benchmarked against similar agency support and outlining an expected return on an investment (though not necessarily financial) will also be considered as part of your pitch.	15% (0/15)
		<b>Total score: (out of 100)</b>

For those agencies shortlisted through to the interview stage (provisionally Monday 23 March), it is likely they will present to a panel made-up of the following representatives:

- OxLEP Director of Strategy and Programmes
- OxLEP Head of Innovation and Inward Investment
- OxLEP Communications Manager
- OxLEP PR and Communications Executive

## 9. Working arrangements

The retainer will be managed by OxLEP's Communications Manager on a day-to-day basis – therefore, they will be your primary contact throughout the duration of the contract.

Other key contacts within OxLEP will include:

- Chief Executive
- Director of Strategy and Programmes
- Head of Innovation and Inward Investment
- PR and Communications Executive

Currently, the OxLEP Communications team is made-up of the following personnel:

- Communications Manager
- European Programmes Communications and Events Executive
- PR and Communications Executive
- European Programmes Communications and Events Assistant

## 10. Bidding, FAQs and further information

### Bidding process:

All tender submissions must be received by OxLEP by **Friday 6 March at 5pm** – please note, all late submissions will not be considered.

Completed tender responses can either be emailed to:  
**robert.panting@oxfordshirelep.com**

Or sent via post:

**OxLEP Ltd  
First Floor – Jericho Building  
City of Oxford College Campus  
Oxpens Road  
Oxford  
OX1 1SA**

Please state '***OxLEP PR agency support response***' in any email correspondence.

### FAQs:

Agencies are welcome to contact OxLEP for a discussion regarding the project prior to the submission deadline. Please contact Rob Panting – Communications Manager at OxLEP – via: **07748 333402** or email: **robert.panting@oxfordshirelep.com**.

To ensure equal treatment – where clarification is sought on anything in relation to this tender document – we will promptly make the information available to all potential bidders too though a set of FAQs.

A set of updated FAQs will be regularly uploaded to:  
[www.oxfordshirelep.com/tenderopportunity](http://www.oxfordshirelep.com/tenderopportunity).

No further queries regarding this tender opportunity will be permitted – either via phone or email – **after Wednesday 4 March at 5pm**.

A final updated set of FAQs will be updated and posted to the above link by **12noon on Thursday 5 March**.

#### **11. Suggested further reading material:**

Detailed below are a number of additional reading materials we suggest you review prior to your submission:

The Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy:  
[www.oxfordshirelep.com/lis](http://www.oxfordshirelep.com/lis)

The Oxfordshire Energy Strategy:  
[www.oxfordshirelep.com/energystrategy](http://www.oxfordshirelep.com/energystrategy)

The Oxford-Cambridge Arc: government ambition and joint declaration between government and local partners:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-oxford-cambridge-arc-government-ambition-and-joint-declaration-between-government-and-local-partners>

The Oxfordshire Internationalisation Delivery Plan 2019 to 2022:  
<https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxfordshire%20Internationalisation%20Delivery%20Plan%202019%20FINAL%2001%2007%202019.pdf>

The OxLEP Business Plan 2019 to 2021:  
[https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/MASTER%20-%20Business%20Plan%202019-21%20FINAL\\_3.pdf](https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/MASTER%20-%20Business%20Plan%202019-21%20FINAL_3.pdf)

The Oxfordshire Science and Innovation Audit 2017:  
[https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/OxTTA\\_SIAreport.pdf](https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/OxTTA_SIAreport.pdf)