



Culture & Visitor Economy Sub-Group Meeting

Monday 6th December 2021, 10am-12noon

Virtual via Microsoft Teams

Draft Minutes

Present:

John Hoy, Hoy Consultancy (Chair)
 Ahmed Goga, OxLEP
 Nigel Tipple, OxLEP
 Ruth Taylor, Artswork
 Paul Hobson, Modern Art Oxford
 Miranda Markham, Bicester Village
 Frank Smith, Experience Oxfordshire
 Venessa LeFrancois, Oxford Playhouse
 Helen Ryan-Wallis, OxLEP
 Chris Jackson, Cotswolds Tourism

Dr Peter Lugosi, Oxford Brookes University
 Paula Redway, Oxford City Council
 Dr Victoria McGuinness, University of Oxford
 Cllr Neil Fawcett, Oxfordshire County Council
 Suzanne de la Rosa, GLAM, University of Oxford
 Alexandra Capata, OxLEP
 Hazel Edwards, Arts Council England (*part only*)

Apologies:

Peter Heslip, Arts Council England

	Item	Action
1.	Introductions and welcome JH opened the meeting and welcomed Suzanne de la Rosa, GLAM Head of Communications and Marketing who will represent GLAM, and Frank Smith who will represent Experience Oxfordshire whilst HBG is away on maternity leave.	
2.	Minutes from the meeting held on 6 th September 2021 were accepted as a true record of that meeting. A session on Oxfordshire Plan 2050 should be included for the next meeting so that everyone understands how that impacts the visitor economy. AG reminded the group that the Minutes go onto the OXLEP website.	HRW
3.	LEP & Spending Review Briefing AG gave a verbal update: This update will focus on the ongoing LEP review and all aspects of government decisions on a few areas that we've been working around as part of the spending review and budget announcements made on the 27th of October. (A LEP Review Briefing Note with more detail was circulated with the agenda). NT - With regards the ongoing LEP review, OxLEP have worked with Government over the summer to help them to better understand their breath, the impact, and the importance of the relationships that have been built up through Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) over the last ten years. Various papers have been circulated around the kind of objectives and functions of LEPs and their geographies. There is still confusion over the mayoral combined authority areas (mostly an issue in the Midlands).	

	<p>Therefore, both the outcome of the LEP review and the forthcoming White paper are eagerly awaited, and whilst it is possible, that they could be out before the Christmas break, it is more likely they will be released in January 2022.</p> <p>Government departments are still working through allocating their CSR budget allocations, with OxLEP previously receiving £500k yearly.</p> <p>Despite the national policy environment still not being settled, OxLEP has a business plan agreed by the Board that runs until March 2024. To date, OxLEP over the last 3-4 years has had a turnover of £3.5 to £4 million and last year is likely to be substantially higher at over £6 million showing the breadth of extra activity that is funded via OxLEP (showing that OxLEP budgets are not wholly dependent on governments core funding). We will respond to the levelling up White Paper as it's published, and until then continue with our programmes such as the priorities being led by the CVESG, such as championing and supporting the Visitor Economy as part of our Economic Recovery Plan work. Alongside working through emerging issues still connected to BREXIT.</p> <p>JH then updated with regards the DMO de Bois Review. Whilst the DCMS led report received good recognition and support, it also offered strong recommendations about the future of tourism destination management organisations. These sadly so far, have been ignored. The DCMS budget allocation has increased from £2.2 billion to £2.8 billion for next year and then down to £2.7 billion for the next three years, seeing a 5.8% increase with wins such as £850 million for cultural and heritage infrastructure, £52 million for museums and cultural and sporting bodies, and, £14 million for world leading creative industries. However, despite DCMS budget increases, no funding has as yet been directly allocated for the DMO review.</p> <p>NT mentioned that locally we are still working with all the DMOs and that high level discussions are taking place to take forward a better system that works for all of Oxfordshire and for neighbouring areas.</p> <p>NF also fed back that there was general disappointment regarding the CSR budget allocations with many projects not receiving future funding.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Working Group – OXiA</p> <p>MM and HRW updated the group. There is positive progress regarding the plans for a major hub for sport, entertainment, business, and tourism that will serve the whole of Oxfordshire. The working group have been supporting the partner with many hurdles to date. There have been various approvals at certain levels of local government and it is expected that cabinet will be receiving information with regard to the plans in the New Year. It is still confidential, but as soon as we can share further details, we will convene an extra CVESG meeting to update everyone on the project.</p> <p>MM also shared with the group that whilst Bicester Heritage's plans for a hotel and Conference Centre were on hold, they are moving forward with their Wilderness Quarter in the old quarry, which is adjacent to the site, with three huge lakes and a park over 70 acres that will provide active travel, walking and cycling and hopefully eventually link into the town. Making Bicester a 'resort' destination.</p> <p>AG reminded the group that the forthcoming Conference Facility will be a legacy of the work that this group has done over the last two years - building on the Business Visitor Economy Commission that the CVESG commissioned Oxford Brookes to prepare has been instrumental in helping to move this project forward.</p>	<p>HRW/JH</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Working Group - The Visitor Economy</p> <p>HRW fed back:</p> <p>A substantial bid has been made to try and gain COMF (Continue Outbreak Management Funding) funding for the visitor economy based on the Visitor Renaissance proposal that was part of the Economic Recovery Plan. Projects within the bid amount to £1.6 million. It is in the final stages, and we are hopeful that some, if not all funding will be secured. Delivery will be over a two-year period with OxLEP managing the streams of activity.</p>	

<p>AG added that this funding will provide us with the necessary resources to help support a range of businesses within the sector, not just within tourism, wider hospitality, arts, and culture, and lots of other parts of the visitor economy as well. So, it's an important package that's hopefully being secured. Including support for the Oxford Pass, an important initiative being led by Experience Oxfordshire and transport and other attraction partners with the aim to increase the use of public transport to various visitor economy attractions.</p> <p>JH asked how will funding be awarded? Will the organisations need to apply for it?</p> <p>AG outlined that it will sit within the OXLEP team and be commissioned out based on individual parcels of activity.</p> <p>CJ asked if it will be an all or nothing decision?</p> <p>AG hoped that most of the funding should be received and asked that all local authority officers ensure that their Section 151 officers and Chief Executives were supportive of the bid.</p> <p>Sector Updates</p> <p>FS gave an update from Experience Oxfordshire: the feedback on the inspirational Oxfordshire culture campaign will be shared after the meeting (due to tech issues at the meeting). The main aim being to promote Oxfordshire as a world-renowned destination for arts and culture via a promotional video and messaging via social media channels. Also, to work with the 25 or so organisations that took part to promote their events over that time period. Website views were just over 82,000 and the total number of events uploaded onto the website was over 500. From the PR side there were 14.5k impressions with a click through rate of just under 5%</p> <p>Action: Circulate EO Campaign Report.</p> <p>The sector are still in very early stages of recovery, with corporate and public Christmas party cancellations now occurring in response to changes in government measures. Staff resourcing is still a significant issue, especially in hospitality (kitchens). However, supply chain issues seem to have reduced.</p> <p>City Centre hotels have had 95% occupancy for the last three or four weekends with leisure bookings. Bookings for February half term are good. Oxford sees the Easy Hotel opening imminently - but with no parking. This should see an increase in business for taxi and bus companies. A couple of international leads (America, Japan) are being worked on, five individual press visits have been held, and EO are taking part in Meet GB and Explore GB in 2022. Finally, EO are working with Jack FM on a radio campaign based around the hospitality guide with 186 radio spots over a two-week period.</p> <p>CJ from Cotswolds Tourism gave an update, reporting a similar situation with regards cancellations of Christmas party bookings (larger ones).</p> <p>There has been interest from overseas operators with familiarisation trips planned for February 22. Sustainability is being focused on, and a survey goes out to business shortly to gain intel and feedback. Also, with regards to improving accessibility, the Cotswolds are working with a tetraplegic influencer. With regards the DMO review, there is a rumour that the accreditation process may still go ahead despite no funds being available.</p> <p>MM raised whether there is an opportunity to explore a more permanent countywide events listing, like the previous Oxford Inspires one.</p> <p>PH suggests that a further conversation between the arts and cultural sector in Oxford should happen with Experience Oxfordshire to see how we can sustain promotional campaigns going forward. The initial campaign has been positive, and we need to find some other structure or package to enable this to continue</p> <p>Action: PH to meet with FS and discuss with the Arts and Culture Working group.</p>	<p>AC</p> <p>FS/CJ</p> <p>PH</p>
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	<p>CJ mentioned that Cotswolds has just received its 2020 Economic Impact Data and whilst summer saw some recovery it's still 50% down on the domestic leisure market and spend, with hardly any international numbers or spend.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Working Group - Creative Industries</p> <p>HRW fed back:</p> <p>The group have been meeting quite regularly over the last couple of months and commenced planning the second creative industries showcase for the 21st June 2022 (10am-3pm) at Oxford Brookes University. The overall theme is around storytelling. Various partners are already engaged and both Universities will be involved again. Fringe events are also being planned to connect other venues across Oxfordshire.</p> <p>The day will consist of panel discussions, a curated showcase of organisations, and we are working with OxLEP skills team to get schools engaged so that the talent pipeline plays a key part.</p> <p>VM mentioned that in addition to the event planning, both universities are exploring the creation of a shared fellowship with a creative industries partner. Also, a more recent event saw a mapped projection onto the Oxford Castle to celebrate its 950th birthday which attracted 2000 people throughout the evening.</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Working Group – Arts and Culture</p> <p>PH fed back:</p> <p>The main activity for the Arts and Culture Group has been to set up and manage the countywide network which has been meeting monthly via zoom. It has provided a mechanism for sharing information, expressing collegiate support, especially during the ongoing pandemic and to provide a platform for more collaborative working and to respond to opportunities as they arise (such as the recent collective bid into the Culture Development Fund 2 at the Arts Council). Also, the other key activity was the Inspirational Oxfordshire campaign, and to match the need for resilience training for leaders with a modified OxLEP growth Hub offering of which arts and culture organisations applied.</p> <p>The sector generally has bounced back effectively, yet capacity continues to be a big issue (with audiences in the order of about 50% to 60%) which creates operational uncertainty. Audiences are also starting to drop again, and school visits have cancelled. National Portfolio Organisations will be in the throes of preparing applications for the next round of funding from Arts Council, which are to be submitted by the 26th April 2022.</p> <p>HRW and JH thanked PH for his time in chairing the network.</p> <p>JH welcomed Hazel Edwards, Area Director, Arts Council England to the meeting.</p> <p>HE described that she has been in post since March and previously worked in museums in the northeast for 25 years, one of her previous jobs was to manage the Discovery Museum in Newcastle. Also, she has worked in universities and research for seven years, at Durham University, and at the University of West of England.</p> <p>HE would welcome further discussions with the University of Oxford.</p> <p>Let's Create strategy was launched January 2020 just before the pandemic, which is a 10-year strategy and the engine of change for investment and development work. It identified 54 priority places across England, none in Oxfordshire. They are revisiting their National Lottery project grant architecture, redesigning, and aligning to Let's Create.</p> <p>NPO's gain 55% of ACE investment, and the redesigned application process will go live after Christmas, closing on the 26th April 2022. Successful organisations will gain funding to start April 2023 for three years.</p> <p>With regards the White Paper, it is rumoured that Government sees the value of culture led regeneration, especially in the revival of town centres and high streets. Also, cultural tourism is also on Government's agenda, alongside arts and health.</p>	

	<p>As a part of the national delivery plan, a two-year area delivery plan will be developed and finalised by February 2022. There are three emerging themes: children and young people, skills pipeline, and leadership. Oxford is also down as a place of strategic interest, as it has areas of multiple deprivation.</p> <p>JH thanked HE for her excellent overview of the national and regional picture.</p> <p>ACTION: NT offered HE support for some of the future discussions, offering use of our skills advisory panels and ARC groups that already convene.</p> <p>PR also raised that Oxford City Council are willing to be involved in discussions going forward.</p> <p>JH welcomed HE to join our meetings (at least) once a year in order to enable a good partnership and to enable our work to feed into each other's.</p> <p><i>HE left the meeting.</i></p>	<p>NT/HRW</p> <p>HRW</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>2022 dates are confirmed as:</p> <p>Monday 28th February 2022 10.00-12.00 via Teams</p> <p>Monday 6th June 2022 10.00-12.00 via Teams</p> <p>Monday 12th September 2022 10.00-12.00 via Teams</p> <p>Monday 5th December 2022 10.00-12.00 via Teams</p> <p><i>Electronic diary invites have already been sent out.</i></p> <p>All the group wished to say goodbye and thanks to both Lucy Shaw and Laura Elliott for their valuable contribution to the group.</p> <p>JH then let the group know that AG will be moving on in the new year (AG is joining the CBI as their UK Director for regional policy and cluster development and will be part of their management board) and thanked him for all he had contributed towards the workings of the sub-group and for all his energy and enthusiasm over the last few years.</p> <p>All the group thanked AG for his time and wished him well for the future.</p> <p>RT mentioned that Oxford City Cultural Education Partnership have been successful in gaining COMF money supported by Partnership investment from Artsworld as part of their ACE Bridge money. It will work in and out of school with young people and support mental health.</p> <p>VM shared: https://twitter.com/TORCHOxford/status/1467179390593286144?s=20</p>	