



**Culture & Visitor Economy Sub-Group Meeting**

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021, 10am-12noon**

**Virtual via Microsoft Teams**

**Draft Minutes**

**Present:**

John Hoy, Hoy Consultancy (Chair)  
 Ahmed Goga, OxLEP  
 Ruth Taylor, Artswork  
 Miranda Markham, Bicester Village  
 Hayley Beer Gamage, Experience Oxfordshire  
 John Newbiggin OBE  
 Laura Elliot, Oxford Playhouse  
 Helen Ryan-Wallis, OxLEP  
 Chris Jackson, Cotswold Tourism  
 Dr Peter Lugosi, Oxford Brookes University

Paula Redway, Oxford City Council  
 Dr Victoria McGuinness, University of Oxford  
 Cllr Neil Fawcett, Oxfordshire County Council  
 Lucy Shaw, GLAM, University of Oxford  
 Alexandra Capata, OxLEP  
 Thandiwe Hara Msulira, OxLEP

**Apologies:**

Paul Hobson, Modern Art Oxford  
 Ross Burton, BEIS  
 Peter Heslip, Arts Council England

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Introductions and welcome</b></p> <p>JH opened the meeting and welcomed Cllr Neil Fawcett to the meeting.</p> <p>All the group wished to say goodbye and thanks to Lucinda Whiteley for her valuable contribution to the group and JH thanked her for continuing activities with the Creative Industries Working Group.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Minutes</b> from the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021 were accepted as a true record of that meeting.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Economic Recovery Plan and OxLEP Updates</b></p> <p>AG gave a verbal update:</p> <p>With regards the Oxfordshire economy, at a macro level recovery is underway seeing a fall in unemployment levels, growth in business sectors, and investment occurring. However, this is masking other sectors who aren't bouncing back, noticeably the visitor economy. It will be interesting to see if the summer has assisted any recovery across the arts/culture/wider visitor economy.</p> <p>The visitor economy requires targeted support, and the case is to be made to the Growth Board (now known as The Future Oxfordshire Partnership), suggesting a dedicated programme of support is necessary to help the sector recover.</p> <p>With regards the LEP review, timelines have lengthened linked to the forthcoming 'Levelling Up' White Paper. It has been recognised that there is a need for a strong business voice, and the role LEPs play is important at a local level. A rebrand of LEPs is still possible, also funding elements for LEPs are still under review. To date more</p>	

	<p>than £2.5 Billion over the last 7 years has been delivered via OxLEP into the Oxfordshire economy.</p> <p>The Shared Prosperity Fund is still not finalised.</p> <p>Activities continue with Oxford City Council on delivering the shared workspaces for Creatives at George Street and Cave Street (via LGF and City Council funds) - whilst also funding the opening of the Enterprise Space at Oxford Brookes (all are features of the Oxfordshire Recovery Plan).</p> <p>The Oxford-Cambridge Arc spatial framework (non-statutory) is out for consultation.</p> <p>Locally Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is a statutory spatial plan and is open for consultation now. Businesses and partners are asked to ensure businesses know about this consultation and to input ideas and thoughts to help shape the future of Oxfordshire. Particularly feed into the section on the Visitor Economy/Heritage/Town Centres.</p> <p><b>Action: All to feed into the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 consultation and extensively share with networks. Link is here: <a href="#">Oxfordshire Open Thought - 03</a></b></p>	ALL
4.	<p><b>Working Group – OXiA</b></p> <p>MM updated the group and brought NF up to date. The group are still supporting the partner who have a site in mind and whilst this is still confidential there isn't much more support the group can offer. Once the process progresses, members of the CVESG are welcomed to write letters of support (once knowing more about the facility). To date, Experience Oxfordshire have written their letter of support being in a position to know more regards the detail, and to voice support for the scheme.</p> <p>MM mentioned that the Comms Plan will be vital once this becomes public.</p> <p>NF mentioned he is briefed on the scheme, and there is overall positivity about the plans and recognition of the need for a larger conference/ performance space in Oxfordshire. However, there are planning constraints and traffic considerations to be thought through.</p> <p><b>Action: MM/AG/JH to keep regular meetings with the partner and once public, will consider calling an additional CVESG to let members know details and how they can support the scheme.</b></p>	MM/AG/JH
5.	<p><b>Working Group - The Visitor Economy</b></p> <p>HRW fed back: The DMO review has gone well, with numerous representations made from across the country from DMOs and LEPS, businesses and individuals. There is yet to be a date for the release of the paper. It is hoped that it will be during September. HBG noted that EO is cited in the document and raised the query as to whether the paper will also discuss where funding will come from.</p> <p>HBG then gave an update from Experience Oxfordshire (EO):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EO feedback to DCMS with regards to their Recovery Plan which is rather ambitious and ahead of Oxford Economics targets.</li> <li>• Summer has been positive, some cancellations of domestic bookings as the international gateways reopened. Budget and high end have both received good rates despite occupancy remaining lower.</li> <li>• Retail and Hospitality spend has greatly increased.</li> <li>• September-December will show whether recovery has begun.</li> <li>• There is a concern over the lack of promotional investment locally compared to other destinations.</li> <li>• There is interest for business visits for 2022 and beyond.</li> <li>• Visit England's 'We're good to go' campaign is due to end December 2021 which has been a great scheme with over 500 Oxfordshire businesses signed up.</li> <li>• The Welcome Back Fund has been a challenge locally due to the ERDF processes and procurement requirements.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L.A. Discretionary Grants are coming to an end and there is concern over the future support for businesses.</li> <li>• The Oxford Pass needs funding, this is considered a good recovery project.</li> <li>• Data on Tourism volume and value is due in October which will help create a new benchmark for recovery.</li> <li>• There is digital training being offered by EO to assist businesses, and they held the first 'in person' event at the New Theatre.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Escape the Everyday Campaign</a> was well received, it saw £32 million impressions, £160k website views, £15k direct bookings via the DMO and approximately £500k into Oxfordshire.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Inspirational Oxfordshire</a> has launched to help highlight the culture and the arts in Oxfordshire working with 32 partners.</li> </ul> <p>CJ gave an update from the Cotswolds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer saw twice the usual website traffic compared to 2019 which is positive. There has been other tourism issues, however:</li> <li>• The indoor offering is suffering more than outdoor.</li> <li>• The groups market has not recovered as predicted.</li> <li>• There are longer stays which is good (the average has increased from 2.5 to 4 nights). The high-end market has done very well.</li> <li>• There have still been a few events cancelled.</li> <li>• The DMO membership during the last year had been free, and now it is half price to continue membership, which is going well.</li> </ul> <p>MM queried if there was any change with regards the return of international visitors? HBG - 2023 is still seen as the main year for volume of visitors, although 2022 may see visitors from the USA and India. Europe is much slower (Brexit related).</p> <p>HRW queried if there are still significant recruitment issues in the Visitor Economy HBG and CJ both responded saying there are, and little loyalty in the market. Across the board, there are 50% vacancy rates, and this is impacting on service and welcome.</p> <p>NF raised the issues and challenges of planning how to have sustainable transport in rural areas. He asked all to share intel and ideas with himself and county transport colleagues. Also, another mechanism is to feed intel direct into the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 consultation.</p> <p>HBG reminded the group that the Oxford Pass is all about encouraging visitors to the wider parts of Oxfordshire via public transport and is a good recovery project that needs some funding.</p>	<b>ALL</b>
<p><b>6. Working Group – Arts and Culture</b></p>	<p>HRW fed back:</p> <p>It was very encouraging that so many arts and culture organisations were keen to come together collectively for a promotion. There were 32 partners engaged, and EO were commissioned to prepare 'Inspirational Oxfordshire' campaign – here is the video <a href="https://youtu.be/SUORr212C_E">https://youtu.be/SUORr212C_E</a>. The aim being to encourage audiences back to arts and culture venues in Oxfordshire. Thanks to Oxford City Council for the grant to enable this, and to Tony Hart and Paula Redway at City Council for getting the grant through quickly, and especially thanks to Paul Hobson for all his work in engaging the partners and being the lead organisation making this happen.</p> <p><b>Action: HRW asked EO to provide feedback data on the campaign at the next CVESG meeting.</b></p> <p>The Oxfordshire Arts and Culture Network is still meeting monthly, with more organisations joining each month. Feedback has been received on how useful it is, particularly complimenting the Oxford City culture partnership.</p> <p>The Expression of Interest went into Arts Council England on behalf of 14 organisations asking for £4.5 million capital funds for a range of small and larger</p>	<b>HBG</b>

	<p>projects. However, Oxfordshire wasn't encouraged to go further to full application stage due to others more fully meeting the criteria.</p> <p>For Oxfordshire, on a positive note, it means we have a pipeline of projects that require funding and it created new networks and contacts. OxLEP and partners will continue searching for other funding opportunities.</p>	
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Working Group - Creative Industries</b></p> <p>JN fed back:</p> <p>A discussion in the working group is what is Oxford and Oxfordshire's USP in relation to the Creative Industries. Smaller clusters are having big impacts (according to recent Policy Evidence Centre [PEC] data).</p> <p>Building on the 2019 showcase, Brookes have just held the May Cultural Industries Festival of which Oxlep hosted two successful panel events. We are now looking at hosting another event next year, around the relationship between arts and technology; 'Createch'. We have reached out to the organisers of Createch, Cog X, and UKIE about doing a regional event in Oxford receiving interest from all.</p> <p>The working title for such an event is 'Imagining the Future', and a paper prepared for the working group by Lucinda Whiteley and Guy Gadney explores event themes such as the county's literary and cultural traditions with technology and life sciences.</p> <p>Oxford could lead the way as no other regional Createch style events are taking place yet.</p> <p>The group are also supporting and advising the Cave and George Street projects to bring forward co-working space for creatives.</p> <p>JH asked to try and include the wider arts/culture/visitor economy sectors somehow with the event.</p> <p>VM mentioned Storytelling and Creative Industries are a key part of the research led engagement projects in the Humanities at the University of Oxford and a key part of their structure going forward. It is fundamental for the Humanities Cultural Programme as they move towards the new Humanities Building in a few years' time.</p> <p>JN mentioned the major issue that is becoming known is the shortfall in creative careers uptake going forward to meet the need, particularly in the film and production areas.</p> <p>HRW suggested that we look to engage neighbouring LEPs into our event planning.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>The 2022 dates will be shared shortly. All meetings will remain on Teams for now.</p> <p>HBG asked for further details about the paper going to Growth Board.</p> <p>AG mentioned that it is a wider Economic Recovery update paper with the Visitor Economy referenced as a key sector that needs continued support.</p> <p><a href="#">Oxford Brookes</a> are hosting a webinar on 14th September discussing how to manage and prepare for visitor flows in support of sustainable tourism as part of economic recovery. You can register for the event via the link.</p> <p>TORCH have a couple of internal calls for their researchers to get a bit of funding for partnership projects: further info here:</p> <p>Knowledge Exchange Fellowships: <a href="https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/event/torch-knowledge-exchange-fellowship-2021-2022">https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/event/torch-knowledge-exchange-fellowship-2021-2022</a></p> <p>Knowledge Exchange Innovation Projects: <a href="https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/event/torch-knowledge-exchange-innovation-fund-2021-22">https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/event/torch-knowledge-exchange-innovation-fund-2021-22</a></p>	

	<p>Also, TORCH hosted their first cohort of interns from Activate Colleges in the Creative Industries <a href="https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/article/activate-interns-develop-creative-projects-on-japan-dante-and-ai">https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/article/activate-interns-develop-creative-projects-on-japan-dante-and-ai</a></p> <p>Experience Oxfordshire's Digital training programme <a href="https://www.experienceoxfordshire.org/partner/partner-benefits/experience-oxfordshire-events/">https://www.experienceoxfordshire.org/partner/partner-benefits/experience-oxfordshire-events/</a></p>	
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>Dates of next meetings:</b></p> <p>Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021 10.00-12.00 Teams</p> <p>Monday 28th February 10.00-12.00 Teams</p> <p>Mon 6th June 10.00-12.00 Teams</p> <p>Mon 12th September 10.00-12.00 Teams</p> <p>Mon 5th December 10.00-12.00 Teams</p> <p><i>Electronic invitations have gone out.</i></p>	