



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

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021, 10am-12noon**

**Virtual via Microsoft Teams**

**Draft Minutes**

**Present:**

John Hoy, Hoy Consultancy (Chair)  
 Ahmed Goga, OxLEP  
 Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, OCC  
 Ruth Taylor, Artswork  
 Miranda Markham, Bicester Village  
 Lucinda Whiteley, Novel Entertainment  
 Hayley Beer Gamage, Experience Oxfordshire  
 John Newbiggin OBE  
 Laura Elliot, Oxford Playhouse  
 Paul Hobson, Modern Art Oxford  
 Helen Ryan-Wallis, OxLEP  
 Dr Victoria McGuinness, Humanities,  
 University of Oxford

Lesli Good, Oxfordshire County Council  
 Richard Bellamy, National Heritage Lottery  
 Fund  
 Alexandra Capata, OxLEP  
 Gilane Tawadros (part only)  
 Claire Cumberlidge (part only)

**Apologies:**

Lucy Shaw, GLAM, University of Oxford  
 Paula Redway, Oxford City Council  
 Peter Heslip, Arts Council England  
 Dr Peter Lugosi, Oxford Brookes University

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Introductions and welcome</b></p> <p>JH opened the meeting and welcomed Paula Redway, Culture and Community Development Manager at Oxford City Council; Chris Jackson, Cotswolds &amp; West Oxfordshire Tourism; and, Lesli Good, Assistant Director, Cultural Services at County Council who is replacing Kate MacLeod has has now left the County Council.</p> <p>JH thanked Kate MacLeod for her contribution to the group.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Minutes</b> from the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 were accepted as a true record of that meeting.</p> <p>The updates on matters arising are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Festival 2022 – no updates currently</li> </ul>	

<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>Economic Recovery Plan and OxLEP Updates</b></p> <p>AG gave a verbal update:</p> <p>The Oxfordshire Economic Recovery Plan went to the OxLEP Board Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> February, with the Visitor Economy being profiled. Also featured was support for town centres, and the ‘Meanwhile in Oxfordshire’ project. It is hoped that the ERP will be available within the next couple of weeks.</p> <p><b>Action- Share ERP once released.</b></p> <p>A key component of the Oxfordshire ERP is a new Business Investment Fund, to be launched via OxLEP Growth Hub on 2nd March. It is a £2.1m capital grant fund to support businesses to accelerate investment into their operations to strengthen business performance, drive technology and innovation adoption and increase sales and market share.</p> <p>It will offer co-investment grants ranging from £25k-£100k, with businesses required to cash match 50% for capital projects that deliver tangible outcomes aligned to driving economic recovery, growth and job creation.</p> <p>Both JH and JN are on the Task and Finish Group setting up this fund to ensure its suitability for all sectors.</p> <p>For further details: <a href="mailto:CapitalGrant@oxfordshireLEP.com">CapitalGrant@oxfordshireLEP.com</a></p> <p><b>Action - all to disseminate once launched to encourage uptake by arts, culture, creative, and, visitor economy organisations.</b></p>	<p>HRW</p> <p>ALL</p>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Working Group – OXiA</b></p> <p>MM fed back:</p> <p>There are still two potential partners, with one partner positively moving forward (confidential presently). They are looking to secure an alternative land option on the strategic edge of Oxford.</p> <p>All are supportive of the potential site and partner.</p> <p>VM queried the size and scope of the performance space at the planned facility as the type of space will mean different requirements in relation to kit required.</p> <p>Plans are still at a formative stage and market potential will help inform the outcomes.</p> <p>It is agreed that this will be a catalyst for investment and a great asset for the county.</p> <p><b>Action - ascertain OxLEPs means of support going forward:</b> possibly assistance in socialising the plans when in the public domain, supporting the planning process with regards evidence and need for such a facility.</p> <p><b>Action - HRW to arrange a meeting with the partner and the OXiA working group.</b></p>	<p>HRW/MM</p> <p>HRW</p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Working Group - The Visitor Economy</b></p> <p>HRW fed back:</p> <p>Two groups have been convened into one, THRIVE and the new Visitor Economy Working Group, to drive forward the Visitor Economy Renaissance (part of the wider Oxfordshire’s Economic Recovery Plan: The ERP Action Plan)</p> <p>The final version of the VE Renaissance will be shared once finalised. Key Objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To attract visitors and ensure that Oxfordshire maintains its position as one of the UK’s most desirable visitor destinations for both national and international visitors</li> <li>• To build capability (with a focus on digital) in Oxfordshire’s Visitor Economy businesses and ensure that they can remain competitive</li> <li>• To ensure that Oxfordshire is a safe place to visit that is responding to changing health and social distancing requirements</li> </ul> <p>Developing a suite of projects amounting to £1.5m which will include:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxfordshire-wide marketing campaign</li> <li>• Rolling out a digital health check survey for businesses Oxfordshire-wide</li> <li>• Delivering Digital Training Programmes</li> <li>• Rolling out of the 'Good to Go' accreditation</li> <li>• Providing capacity to Oxford Pass to onboard partners and raise profile</li> <li>• Improving physical infrastructure to better support Oxfordshire's destinations</li> </ul> <p>HBG updated the group regarding the sector:</p> <p>2021 is all about survival - with 2022 being about recovery. London going into Tier 4 had an immediate impact on Oxfordshire's visitor numbers in December. Lockdown 3 has mean businesses being mothballed/closed making it hard to reach them to try and support. Economically, 6 out of 10 of the areas worst impacted fell within the visitor economy sector which included food and beverage, creative arts and entertainment, tourism accommodation, and tourism operators. District Council grant programmes were well received, and well managed, yet businesses not being open meant many didn't apply. Can these grant funds be open longer for when businesses reopen?</p> <p>Lobbying for VAT reduction for another year, continuation of furlough for effected sectors, business rate holiday for impacted businesses another year, and, a review of the VAT rates.</p> <p>Impact of Brexit is not apparent just yet due to businesses being closed and staff being furloughed.</p> <p>Visit England 'We're good to go' is being extended which is good for the sector.</p> <p>Experience Oxfordshire took part in a virtual "Meet England" event with regards to attracting international business visits and events (i.e. China, USA markets). They are also receiving Q3/4 2021 enquiries and there is a lot of demand for 2022 onwards. The Vaccine has also brought worldwide attention to Oxford. Other active campaigns are England Originals and Escape the Everyday.</p> <p>2021 - the focus remains on the domestic market (yet there are questions about UK loyalness to domestic). There is also talk about there being Vaccine Passports which will begin to reopen international travel.</p> <p>CJ fed back that in the rural parts of West Oxfordshire, there is a desire and readiness to reopen and forward bookings for the summer are looking strong. The weddings and business markets are facing more challenges. A digital survey which gained 130 responses has assisted priorities for Cotswolds Tourism DMO with regards support for VE businesses – most required help with digital elements.</p>	
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Working Group – Arts and Culture</b></p> <p>PH fed back:</p> <p>An exploratory meeting had taken place to refine the terms of the group. A key objective was to forge better connections between city and county and to ensure further solidarity and support amongst partners. Also, an aim is to map the impact of COVID gathering intel that is already out there into a more strategic document.</p> <p>A zoom consultation of stakeholders is to be held towards the end of March to gather intel with regards the impact of COVID and the needs and priorities of the next 12-18 months whilst forging better working partnerships.</p> <p>A review of Bob Price's initial paper is to then follow, updating it post COVID, whilst also connecting in the equity work being carried out by the Oxford Cultural Partnership, and environmental sustainability.</p>	

	<p>All of the above will help inform the actions of the group.</p> <p>There is a need to ensure linkages to the actions of all the working groups.</p> <p><b>Action: HRW and JH to ascertain best way to ensure awareness of activities of all groups.</b></p> <p>JH welcomed wider connections and membership of the working groups to meet aims and objectives.</p>	<p><b>HRW/JH</b></p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Working Group - Creative Industries</b></p> <p>JN fed back:</p> <p>Currently unclear for service-based industries. Some sectors (gaming) are doing particularly well.</p> <p>The group felt stimulating career opportunities in the creative industries is important. Also, to keep abreast of national priorities and connecting into these.</p> <p>AG mentioned the Business Investment Fund could provide a good vehicle for support in virtual and immersive tech perhaps linked to audience engagement.</p> <p>There are to be two events – (1) a Creative Festival (online in May 21), and (2) a second version of the previously successful Creative Industries Showcase (hybrid/physical in January 2022). Both are being planned with Oxford Brookes but will require all members and their connections to engage to ensure success.</p> <p>Exploring alliances with other neighbouring LEP areas, such as Buckinghamshire, as their chair Andrew Smith is the number 2 at Pinewood.</p> <p>Also, the group discussed connecting into current projects underway which include Meanwhile in Oxfordshire and the planned Cultural and Creative Hub (Cave St); the OxLEP Skills scheme– ‘Find Your Future’ &amp; Kickstart Scheme; and, expressed a wish to ensure linkages to the Arts and Culture group.</p> <p>VM also highlighted that the Creative Industries was a major priority at TORCH.</p> <p>Delivering objectives will also require wider membership of the working group.</p> <p>JH thanked all the chairs for feeding back, and all members of the new working groups for taking part.</p> <p><b>Action – HRW to share link to OxLEP Find your Future digital careers platform for all to highlight and share with connections.</b></p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>HRW</b></p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Invited Speaker – Gilane Tawadros, Chief Executive of DACS and Clare Cumberlidge</b></p> <p>JH welcomed both GT and CC to the meeting.</p> <p>GT described DACS and how they support over 100,000 artists worldwide in gaining financial stability. Then introduced:</p> <p><b>Re-set, Re-Imagine and Renew: Think and Do Tank</b> is a pilot programme that will place artists in the heart of towns, suburbs, city centres and villages to imagine a different future collectively. 50 artists will be paid a living wage for a year-long programme of work in five different geographical locations to make a meaningful contribution to the renewal of society post-Covid 19. RRR Think and Do Tank will work in partnership with local communities, commercial, cultural and public sector partners and local politicians.</p> <p>The project is seen to help with renewal, enliven high streets and engage local people.</p> <p>JH asked what was the selection criteria are for the 5 areas?</p>	

	<p>CC responded that they wish a combination of locations representing different conditions, alongside an ability to develop a 'ecosystem' to support artists.</p> <p>Next steps will be to invite partners to participate which would require some local investment. Local artists will be engaged alongside artists from outside of that area.</p> <p>PH described the initiative as fantastic, and welcomed a further discussion with GT and CC and the Arts and Culture WG. He also queried as to how the scheme is to be funded? Also, how can one secure clarity of tenure for artists in spaces?  <b>Action – invite GT and CC to the next Arts and Culture Working Group</b></p> <p>GT – Partners are to invest (approx.£160,000 and vacant properties (with a view that return on that investment would be £250,000)). A bid to Arts Council will cover the artist wages and venue hire. Also, they are looking to utilise the Government Kickstart scheme to support young artists.</p> <p><b>Action - GT to share business case.</b></p> <p>MM raised that a similar, smaller scale, project was running in Bicester and welcomed information on their model and how it could work longer term for artists.</p> <p>LW asked what the definition of a visual artist was?  GT described it as including film, performance, physical objects and interventions. LW also enquired as to whether the pilot had engaged the broadcaster yet as she would be happy to try and offer support.  <b>Action: HRW to connect LW and GT</b></p> <p>JH asked for key dates. Summer 21 is the start for the programme. A call for EOIs will be available shortly, and the launch of the scheme will be run jointly with Arts Council.</p> <p>PH also raised that within Oxfordshire, the market for buying artists work was undeveloped, and there are opportunities to improve this.</p> <p>GT and CC left the meeting.</p>	<p>PH/HRW</p> <p>GT</p> <p>HRW</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>LLG mentioned Oxfordshire County Council's submission of an Expression of Interest to the Business Libraries early last year to join the national network was successful. They were also fortunate to receive funding to support the development/implementation of a new business support service in the county library initially as the 'hub' of the Oxfordshire network in 2021 and a 'spoke' library (location to be determined) in 2022.  <b>Action – LG to update more on this at the next meeting.</b></p> <p>HRW updated the group with regards Kickstart Round 2 Funding for VE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circa £305k Funding Awarded to Oxfordshire SMEs over both rounds, for VE and Wider economy</li> <li>• Round 2 generated a higher percentage of eligible Visitor Economy applications</li> <li>• 48 VE Businesses Benefiting from a Kickstart Grant (33 Round 1 and 15 in Round 2) amounting to approx.</li> <li>• £80k (grants awarded at £1k-3k level)</li> <li>• Consulting services were the most popular expenditure comprising 53% of all eligible funding requests (expenditure on Marketing, Business/ Strategy, Finance/Accounting, IT)</li> <li>• More SMEs wanted support to access advisory services in Round 1 than in Round 2</li> </ul>	<p>LG</p>

	<p>AG highlighted that the 'Peer to Peer' network was being extended which has provided support for visitor economy, creative, and arts and cultural organisations/ businesses.</p> <p>RT again highlighted the need to ensure cross-linkages across working groups.</p>	
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Dates of next meetings:</b></p> <p>Monday 7th June 2021 10.00-12.00 Teams or OXLEP Boardroom tbc</p> <p>Mon 6th September 2021 10.00-12.00 Teams or OXLEP Boardroom tbc</p> <p>Mon 6th December 2021 10.00-12.00 Teams or OXLEP Boardroom tbc</p> <p><i>Electronic invitations have gone out.</i></p>	