



## **Clean Growth Sub-Group Minutes of the Meeting**

**Tuesday, 16th November 2021, 10:30 – 12:30**

### **Microsoft Teams Meeting**

#### **Present:**

Jayne Norris, Edgars Ltd (Chair)  
Joe Tah, Oxford Brookes University  
Steve Hornblow, A2Dominion  
John O'Brien, LCMB Building Performance  
Lewis Knight, Bioregional / Oxfordshire Greentech  
David Hartley, Oxford Brookes University  
Rachel Wileman, Oxfordshire County Council  
Ahmed Goga, OxLEP  
Alexandra Capata, OxLEP  
Emily Cashen, DLUHC  
Ross Burton, DLUHC  
Michael Esvelt (guest) – Oxford Brookes  
Andrew Baud (guest) – TALA  
Nigel Tipple, OxLEP

#### **Apologies:**

Mish Tullar, Oxford City Council  
Barbara Hammond, Low Carbon Hub  
Giles Brockbank, Ridge and Partners  
Harriet Waters, University of Oxford  
Martin Gibson, Earthly Gains

**Welcome, Introductions and Review of Minutes of meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2021**

Introductions and apologies received at the beginning of the meeting.

Minutes of the meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May have been circulated and actions of the meeting followed up.

**Community renewal fund – Michael Esvelt, Oxford Brookes**

Michael Esvelt and Oxford Brookes put forward a proposal under the call for the Community Renewal Fund, which is a pilot fund to test some of the thinking that the government had around the emerging shared prosperity fund, which is to replace the European funds that have been in Oxfordshire for the last 7-8 years.

The only project that secured funding in Oxfordshire was this initiative that ME shared details as per below.

**ME:** This initiative is to continue from OxFutures and Energy Solutions which are providing support to SMEs in the form of energy assessment.

We put together the bid in May with an idea of an 8 eight-month project that would start in August and end in March. We heard the outcome on the 3rd of November but unfortunately didn't receive any other information since then.

What this project will do was to offer up to four days of support to any organization. We will include an optional energy assessment, but we've also included two further uses of that time: implementation support and installation support.

The targets set with the original 8-month project were to help 70 organisations with four days of support across any sector.

The key missing bits of information are if this is a project that is expected still to end in March of 2022 and whether it's a full eight months or a shorter project and what kinds of risks from unspent funds would be if we don't reach targets.

**Actions:**

ME to produce a one pager that sets out what the offer of the ESOx project is which can be socialised through the networks to start raise the visibility of the project and it's opportunities.

**EC:** There has been a confirmed extension on the delivery time frame, so you will have three more months to deliver them until the end of June.

**RW:** The County Council have a contract with BEIS to deliver Green homes, grant retrofit for domestic properties mainly properties that are in the worst fuel, poverty or the worst performing energy ratings. We are on track to complete that by the end of March. Due to challenges with installations and the supply chain we've gone back to BEIS to ask if we can extend the program

**Action:** RW to share the paper on the report of the first wave and the Cabinet paper setting out the intention for the next wave as part of sustainable Warm Fund.

You can download the SUSTAINABLE WARMTH FUND paper from [here](#).

### **LEP Update and Spending Review – Nigel Tipple, OxLEP**

NT offered an update as to where LEP is organisationally as well as where the policy landscape is.

There is a clear organisational remit that looks out to March 24 through the existing investment landscape – the working we are doing around each of the working sub-group, building on the back of the work led on COP26 and other innovation ambitions.

We will anticipate the LEP review will run a similar timetable with the Levelling Up White Paper which is going to be pushed back to Christmas. We will crystalize around a reaffirmation on the broad areas that we already operate within – the business, skills, internationalisation, work for the support for the policy landscape, particularly looking at how we can contribute to net zero and how we can build on the very successful work that was done last year around local industrial strategy.

In regard to the Arc, there is resource that has been agreed through the budget process for the next phase of development but it is much more likely now to be locally LED, which means our continued advocacy and leadership is going to be even more important.

We have got significant work coming off the back of EP50, COP26, innovation and science innovation audit and we are seeing that work translate into projects and programmes.

Our financial strategy will be launched in the Corporate Plan that takes us out to 24<sup>th</sup> in December with the Board and then more formally in the new Year.

**CGSG Delivery plan priorities and deliverables for coming 6 months – Lewis Knight**

Oxford Brookes and OxLEP appointed Cambridge Cleantech and Bioregional to offer consultancy support to the Clean Growth Sub-Group by working to deliver key elements of the work between now and the end of March 2022. The team, led by Lewis Knight have been working over the course of October with Jayne, Ahmed, David and others in assembling a proposition and the work plan that will form the basis of the work over the course of the next four or five months.

LK mentioned that the team role is to work with the Chair and members of the CGSG to support the CG Delivery Plan. In addition to that, some time have been allocated around providing ad hoc support more widely to OxLEP around policy responses, briefing notes and more in-depth research element with Oxford Brookes that is exploring deployment of knowledge and research assets in the growing clean growth sector.

Done since October:

- Revisited and refined the purpose of this group
- Reviewed the existing workplan
- Provided high-level progress update
- Working with Chair and OxLEP to explore priorities for coming 6 months
- Begun to identify discrete deliverable that this group can “own” and take forward

A quick progress of the existing work plan has been presented. There were some real successes that the group have been involved in, particularly around the delivery of the OxFutures programme, supporting the delivery of a number of the projects within the Energy Strategy delivery plan, Project Leo as well as the key role of the group around the clean growth pathways report. There has been progress around events and workshops as well, particularly through the Green Tech event but also through another network such as Advanced Oxford. There was also some progress around planning policy and Clean Growth in relation to the West Oxfordshire Zero Carbon Toolkit as well as the formation of the Oxfordshire Zero Carbon Homes Initiative that was also presented a couple of sessions previous.

**Actions:**

Lewis to arrange a working session with Barbara, John, Steve and Rachel to shape the key deliverables of the group workplan.

LK to set up sessions with the group members interested to discuss and agree on the deliverables and the priority areas the group should focus over the next 6 months.

LK to keep the work plan up to date.

LK to distribute before Christmas the work plan with the deliverables and assigned tasks confirmed.

Key priorities for the next 6 months:

1. *Focus on facilitating sustainable construction*

Deliverables for this group discussed:

- "In real Life" Sustainable Construction / Net Zero Buildings Event (Oxfordshire leading the Net Zero hosted at Elmsbrook
- Standalone University of Oxford retrofit webinar (Edgars/CE)
- Explore the opportunity to undertake a development site visit to OBU at which the Estates Dept could highlight their built environment sustainability requirements and innovators and corporates can showcase their solutions. This could lead to a Cranfield style Scale Up project.
- Site visit tour to Springfield Meadows and others
- Work with OZCHI to raise the conversation and profile of the Net Zero agenda within LAs and the Growth Board

**JO:** My immediate response would be to focus in on the toolkit and the dissemination of innovation from both Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University. These would be the areas where I would feel you would get more impact in terms of uptake in real world outcomes.

**BH:** Alot of the work that we're doing is about how you bridge from business as usual to business as it needs to be, and one of the big blockers is the planning system. So strategically, this group has to be about linking up the planning system with potential ways of doing it, which take really sophisticated understanding of the difficulties of viability test in the current planning process. If we could build something around that I think it would take us along way forward.

**SH:** The timing is very good.

**JN:** In terms of zero carbon for the new houses, at Salt Cross, Grosvenor were objecting to that policy because it doesn't align with the national planning policy framework. We haven't heard what the inspectors conclusion on that is but there is a gap between national policy and what local authorities are actually really promoting. There is also a gap there in terms the large amounts of heritage properties there are within the county and the significant amount of carbon emissions they contribute. There really needs a shift in the mindset relating to how we deal with heritage assets and the balance that we attach to

carbon zero in judging whether or not proposals should go forward.

*II. Focused support for clean / green businesses*

Deliverables for this group discussed:

- Build on the recent Growth Hub events explore opportunity for future support activities. Link with the recent attitudes survey.
- Delivery of an "Access to Finance" series of events, with a specific focus on SMEs in the clean growth sector.
- Build on the upcoming "post COP26 event" with follow up events with OCC (practical advice to businesses to take their 1st steps in this arena).
- Link with emerging "Carbon Monsters" programme/discussion "How can we enable more business towards Net Zero" - 3rd March tentative date

**JO:** I would be interested to contribute to this discussion because we are a clean growth business and we have been learning how to do this over the last three to four years and we have got some strong users to what works and doesn't work.

**AG:** There's two roles that Lewis and his team are doing. One is facilitating this work plan and these meetings, and then the other is specific areas that they are delivering on where their primary resource time will be allocated and that is the balance we should always take into account when looking at the work plan.

*III. Profiling, promotion and post COP26 thinking*

Deliverables for this group discussed:

- Billion Tonne Drop follow up networking opportunities
- Link to OxLEP's Connecting global programme
- Support and delivery of UK wide Cleantech Venture day (through Oxfordshire Greentech)
- Explore continuation of the Energy Pathfinders project to showcase best practice and innovation
- Creation and delivery of Future Focus events with a emphasis on University innovation and spin out (link with OUI)
- Explore Ox Cambs Green Arc events and showcasing with SEMLEP and Arc authority

**Abingdon & Witney Green Construction Skills Centre - Edward Collet**

Jacqui Canton, the Principal for Abingdon and Witney College came to the Group a few months ago to set the scene on the Green Construction Skills Centre that the College is now taking forward. This is an aprox. £3 million project that received a substantial injection of cash from OxLEP through GBF programme and is one of a number of initiatives that we are working on to support the Clean Growth Agenda.

The College are tasked with not just getting provision in place for young people (16–19-year-old) as part of their work to develop a more responsive curriculum but also to start to develop a facility that can respond to the challenges around the supply chain and workforce that can help deliver a number of improvements and accelerate delivery of clean growth activity across the sector.

**EC:** Green Construction Skills Centre based on Abingdon campus is working to provide training in green construction skills but mainly focused on school leavers, adult re-trainers, existing professionals that we need to retrain with skills required to carry out retrofitting, working with suppliers in the sector and offering support to the local community as well.

Reason for investing:

- strategically important for Oxfordshire
- short skill shortage in industry
- interest from students around the college around the sustainability agenda
- supports and complements the work that we do already through our Construction Skills Centre opened in Bicester in February

In terms of Oxfordshire, we are in a little bit of an unusual situation in terms of the fact that the number of construction workers in Oxfordshire is 2.3 times the national average. Construction sector provides the highest GPA contribution in the local regional economy, the second highest number of enterprises in the county, and the highest proportion of self-employed workforce. N

The Skills Strategy highlights at fifth of all hard to fill vacancy in skilled trades such as construction.

What will the centre offer:

- core construction skills training taught with a green focus

**Actions:**

JO to schedule a session with EC and constructing excellence team to discuss about proposals of skills sets that could go in the project curricula.

- full-time / part-time qualifications and apprenticeships
- school engagement programmes

In addition, that work for existing professionals that need to retrain and re-skill will cover subjects such as air source, ground source, heat pumps, solar thermal photovoltaic, rainwater harvesting and awareness of environmental technologies. Within the centre there will be exhibition and teaching demonstration space for suppliers and employers to showcase products and share best practice.

Next steps:

- curriculum development and design
- identifying opportunities for sponsorship and partnership work
- setting up an employer forum and the general business development work
- marketing of new offer
- making sure that as many local businesses are aware of what's available
- capital build finished March 2022, followed by internal fit out of the renewables facility by Bicester apprentice
- fully open for new starters in September 2022

**JO:** In terms of curriculum - the bigger piece that maybe need thinking about this is the smart buildings piece in terms of the application of the digital solutions to sustainable buildings. What we are finding is that the integration and use of AI machine learning at nonstandard control systems, BMS systems, wireless sensing is becoming much more important, and it is probably going to explode over the next 5 to 10 years as a skill set. It just wonders whether there's an opportunity to think about drawing those things into the curriculum.

**NT:** There is a real opportunity as part of the work that the skill group are doing building the next phase of skills planning work to start giving some real tangible input to that and to identify what are those skill sets, who can provide the training, how can we link that with Edward and colleagues, so that we can start to develop a syllabus that respond to market need.

**BH:** There is a need of skills set between building managers and between the techies who really understand how to join up the kit to get the smart system that we need as well as people who really understand data protocols.

**Any Other Business – All**

Congratulatory news to Ahmed Goga who is moving into another role and will be leading CBI's regional policy work on clusters, which includes levelling up agenda.

AG last day with OxLEP will be 17<sup>th</sup> of December, hence this is his last CGSG last meeting.

NT will be overseeing the sub-group in the transition period.

Dates for 2022 sub-group meetings:

- 3rd of March, 10:30am - 12:30pm
- 9th of June, 10:30am -12:30pm - TBC
- 8th of September, 10:30am - 12:30pm
- 8th of December, 10:30am - 12:30pm