Clean Growth Sub-Group Minutes of the Meeting

Monday 24th May 2021, 11:30 – 13:30

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present:

Jayne Norris, Edgars Ltd (Chair)

Ahmed Goga, OxLEP

Rachel Wileman, Oxfordshire County Council

Mish Tullar, Oxford City Council

David Hartley, Oxford Brookes University

Steve Hornblow, A2Dominion

John O'Brien, LCMB Building Performance

Barbara Hammond, Low Carbon Hub

Lewis Knight, Bioregional / Oxfordshire Greentech

Giles Brockbank, Ridge and Partners

Alexandra Capata, OxLEP

Stephen Brown, OxLEP

Harriet Waters, University of Oxford

Joe Tah, Oxford Brookes University

Martin Gibson, Earthly Gains

Sarah Haywood Price (guest) – Advanced Oxford

Andrew Baud (guest) - TALA

Welcome, Introductions and Review of Minutes of meeting of 1st March 2021

Introductions has been made at the beginning of the meeting.

AG mentioned that we are looking to arrange a Clean Growth Board Briefing and the group agreed with the Board briefing in October to report on the Clean Growth Sub-Group activity.

Action: AG and JN to discuss the agenda and content for the Board meeting with the chair of the OxLEP Board. The discussion will be extended to all group members and a meeting will be arranged in that context.

Links to the updated projection from Cambridge Econometrics on the economic forecast as well as the Economic Recovery Plan has been circulated in the chat bar.

AG mentioned that GB is participating in the development of a local nature partnership (LNP) which will aim to look at how natural capital and other environmental assets can be advanced as part of the wider net zero agenda.

RW also added that the Environment Advisory Group is set up to support the growth board and will be complementary to the Local Nature Partnership.

JN reported that she and DH have been involved in a meeting with WODC in regard to the Living Lab action plan. It was mentioned that there is a lack of understanding about Living Lab meaning.

DH – based on meeting in July we can convene a group to look at this item and see what is possible in the new circumstances.

Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire – Lewis Knight and Ahmed Goga

AG presented the context for this report. In 2014 there was a ground-breaking work – which was a low carbon economy report that was led by the Environment Change Institute at the University of Oxford and set out for the first-time opportunities around a low carbon economy. That work was very important because it helped provide the basis for the future forecast that informed the energy strategy that also set out the pathway to net zero by 2050. Twelve partners have now come together recognizing that the policy landscape evolved - we have a climate change emergency declared across the whole of the County, the government has published new ambitions to move towards net zero sooner and we have the COP26 Summit coming up in Glasgow at the end of the year as well. Hence, the result led to commission the ECI to revisit a number of the assumptions that were made in 2014 but also to reflect on where we are in terms of the new policy landscape and to set out a framework for how we can achieve the net zero ambition before 2050.

The report produced is independent and it will be finalised in the following two weeks – the group will be updated. The official launch of the report will be on the 29th of June. There will also be a dedicated session on the 19th of July Growth Board meeting.

LK - Summarised the structure of the report. The reporting structured in three parts. Firstly, it provides an overview of the progress made locally towards achieving climate goals and reduce emission by 50% by 2030.

Secondly, the report looks at four future scenarios for Oxfordshire economy out of 2050: net zero by 2050, societal transformation, technological transformation and Oxfordshire leading the way.

Thirdly, the report provides reflections on the process of engaging with local stakeholders in some key areas – around transport, biodiversity and land use. There is a chapter which is around low carbon innovation. Finally, within third section, it provides recommendations and conclusions.

AG - There will be a summary document that will sit alongside it that will be published. We want to be able to get a clear position around things like land uses. For example, there is a very important section on that in the report that really addresses some previous peak preconceptions about what you can do and actually what you can actually do in light of what the land science says and what the opportunities as well.

JN – Suggested to explore the Ox Prop event on the 9th of September as well.

BH – Made the observation that the climate changed really significantly. It is very important how we work with people with using this report.

AG - Each chapter is led by someone who is an expert in that specific space and a good mix of senior academic expertise.

MG - We need a good all-round biodiversity approach that will help to reduce carbon.

MT - How we manage what is in apparent mismatch in terms of timelines with the 2050 date and the 2040 date set for the Oxfordshire vision and the ARC vision.

AG - What we are trying to do is all reports to contribute some sensible thought through propositions that then help inform policy decisions and discussions. Is very important to frame those in the context of how it lands in the wider society as well, not just within policy speak. Hence, this report challenge peoples to think about how we frame these arguments and how we aim to achieve the objectives in real ways as well.

Energy Pathfinders and proposals for involvement in the COP26 Climate Change conference – Andrew Baud (guest)

AB - Given that we have been advised there will be thousands of applications to COP26 we need to demonstrate the scale of options ambition and socialise these ideas with the energy team and the DiT team who are part of the decision-making process.

Each of the EOIs cover every one of the four different venues and formats that are offered through the UK government-controlled spaces in Glasgow:
- Life challenge debate
- The Billion Tone Drop - 30-minute interactive session
- Blowing Hot and Cold - planetarium event
- Touch It, Feel It – public exhibition area

Energy Pathfinders is a competition that was kicked off joint between OxLEP and Oxfordshire Green Tech last year with the aim to position the county at the forefront

of energy and innovation, clean growth and promoting the pioneers by engaging innovators, influencers and investors. There are 3 categories:
- Category One – Built Environment and Communities
- Category Two – Transport and Infrastructure
- Category Three – Energy Efficiency & Demand Reduction

AG - We encourage everyone to push, promote and share any examples of activity that's taking place.

JO - How do we raise the visibility of what is on the slides as well as all the working on across Oxfordshire.

Action: AB to share the link to the EOIs. ALL if possible, to share that forward.

Green Economy Businesses and Case Studies – Sarah Haywood Price (guest)

Aims:
- Understand the industrial landscape of innovation-based companies within the Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and Services
- Shine a spotlight on the great science and technology development across Oxfordshire
- Explore whether innovation-based companies will contribute to a Green Recovery

There is a very strong policy environment at the local and regional level to support this agenda. We have fantastic strengths in our universities, and we have got some great clusters.

We decided that we do some work to map the landscape of innovation-based companies. We found around 160 companies that we have incorporated into a business directory.

Key findings:
- Nearly **nine in ten** companies (88%) agree or strongly agree Government's focus on the green recovery is an opportunity for them
- The **majority** of pre-revenue companies expect to be revenue generating within one to two years
- Hiring to meet anticipated demand will see head count rise across innovation-based companies in the next three years (range 10%-500%)
- **Three in four** companies expect to be raising more funds to fuel growth over the next three years
- 80% name **investment**, and 50% cite access to **skilled employees** and **grant funding** as key growth enablers.
- 60% name **investment** and 40% say **uncertain markets** and **protecting IP** are key barriers to growth

We are planning an event now with OxLEP Skills which is scheduled to take place on the 15th of June.

JN - Be interesting to see what happens with a lot of empty space that we are probably going to see across.

SHP – Cowley branch line is critical for the Oxfordshire ecosystem.

BH - Whereabouts in the pandemic timeline this piece of work produced, because one of the things I think that Oxford City and Oxfordshire in general could really win on is that sort of smart combination of work done with people and work done at home.

SHP - The work took place between July and November 2020. We started it as companies were still under lockdown. Many of the companies have still been operating in real manner, particularly those that are reliant on laboratory science or manufacturing type of activities because those cannot be done remotely, and they cannot be done by from home.

The types of companies that flagged the interest in city centre space, where the kind of companies that you would think would be most appropriate for a more blended type of working approach.

RW – Wondering if digital connectivity was a barrier. Linking into what you were saying on public transport, particularly rail and bus access in the connectivity between modes, we are very keen to promote rail connectivity with bus connectivity.

I would be interested in your thoughts around proximity to public transport hubs. And please do get involved in our local transport plan which will be developing over the summer.

SHP - There is a demand for more transport hubs. The workforce is distributed throughout Oxfordshire and beyond. We see companies within our membership - people living at quite some distance. We did some work on quality of life, which the data collection was at the end of 2018. There are needs for more distributed transport system.

Digital connectivity across Oxfordshire was flagged before as something that needed to be developed and improved just to support productivity of working and that was pre pandemic and before any of us anticipated that we might be relying upon it so heavily.

RW - Perhaps a future item on this agenda we could bring in presentation around digital and take some feedback from this group.

DH – Any insight into what kind of accommodation were the companies looking for – would they have been looking for coworking space or private offices?

SHP - My sense is that they were looking for private offices because they were all companies that were scaling. That doesn't mean that they that they wouldn't be looking at individual offices within innovation centres which provide useful amenities and opportunities to network with other companies.

AOB & Subgroup Workplan – Jayne Norris

SB - The work plan that was presented at the last Sub-Group meeting was well received; some updates have been made in red and essentially shows where we got to reflecting the amount of activity that is going on, including pulling together case studies and things so they reflect the activity within today's meeting agenda and also the previous meeting:

- collaboration with other OxLEP sub-groups and local authorities to reflect the nature of government funding initiatives that are now shorter term as well as a longer-term government program
- success with the public sector decarbonization fund and opportunities to drive new supply chains and markets
- a sustainable approach to place - focus being on collaborations simulation of case studies and activity across many different sites and locations across different networks around the county
- promoting Oxfordshire as a sense of a clean growth business and activity
- in terms of planning policy, facilitating creating growth, we have updated the situation with the Oxford Plan 2050

Action: SB to circulate the updated Working Plan.

JN - On the Living lab is there any sort of landing page that we can use for case studies like that?

AG - One of the things I think we need to make sure we do is make sure that the group collectively is pushing various opportunities through their networks and their channels as well so that we are redeveloping the conversation.

DH – There was an interesting debate at the PAZCO Steering Group around Living Labs and how they would be defined. We dug up some definitions and realized that it was a very broad church, and I won't say that almost anything could qualify, but it is a variety of things that relied on a community scale base. We felt that answering the question that most people ask about what a living lab is something that it is quite challenging when it incorporates so many broad things. The other point to make on this is that having focused our attention on the West Oxfordshire site and given that there were uncertainties about that site and how it was being developed, we thought that maybe we should look for a wider range of sites and find ones that were more adaptable or more prepared for this. I think we can look at different sites and we could also see what is appropriate to that site rather than to impose a living lab framework on top of it when the Living Lab framework is very broad.

JN - I don't know whether Greencore would be able to contribute towards that sort of living lab because it is obviously very embedded in what they've been doing.

There's lots of other projects coming forward in Oxfordshire, so maybe David with Ian and Lewis could pick out what we might be able to do that can actually move that forward.

MG – Proposed to create a MS Teams channel for the group.

Action – AC to look at options to create an MS Teams channel for the CGSG.

AG - I think there is some important work to do in making sure that these activities are visible and not lost - maybe is getting leaders more visible on some of this stuff.

RW - The visibility around what we are doing, particularly with events happening over the summer (eg. COP26) showcasing what we are doing and being able to point to good examples would be really good.

Any Other Business. Dates of the next meetings (Microsoft Teams)
- 26th of August, 10:30am-12:30pm
- 16th of November, 10:30am-12:30pm