



Draft Minutes of OxLEP Enterprise Zone Sub-Group 5 September 2023 MS Teams

1 **Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Peter Nolan – the new chair of the sub-group, introduced himself.

The chair introduced Emily Manser, Oxfordshire’s new area lead at the Department of Business & Trade

Apologies noted from Lyn Davies & Sebastian Johnson

Monika Zemla joined the meeting from item 6

2 **Declarations of Interest**

None

3 **Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 7th June 2023 were agreed.

Matters Arising:

- Additional independent business representatives - Sean updated on potential new business sub-group member recommendations. The group noted the recommendations but wanted to encourage more diversity.

ACTION: Officer Group to develop a short open ‘recruitment’ plan with a view to concluding ‘recruitment’ by November meeting

4 **HIF 1 Update**

NT & AD updated that following County’s Planning Committee’s decision to refuse the recent HIF 1 planning application the decision had now been ‘called in’ by DHLUC with a planned hearing date of 8 December with 8 days allocated. The decision has significant impact on potential EZ investments and retained business rates.

5 **Progress Update**

Sean presented the quarterly performance paper with key points to note:

- As of the end March 2023, at least 3089 new jobs have been created within the Enterprise Zones (EZs) – an increase of 423 from previous reporting due to being able to capture data from a larger cohort businesses
- 136 businesses were trading on the Enterprise Zones as of the end of 2022/23, 11 less than 2021/22

6 **Half year reporting**

- Sean provided an overview of site development across both EZ areas. The group noted significant progress across numerous sites but also that a number of developments were reporting significant delays which impact income forecast.
- Sean provided an overview of projected income forecasts highlighting the potential impacts HIF1 refusal will have on developments – particularly in EZ2. Current forecasting ***assumes HIF1 going ahead***

- He further reported that national average rateable values have risen with this being reflected locally. Increased RV's positively impact forecasting and to some extent offset income reduction due to development delays
- He further highlighted a forecasting error related to the Diageo site in EZ2 modelling. He and Simon Hewing are reviewing the model to ensure similar erroneous reporting is avoided in future forecasts
- Kathy updated on EZ forecast income and commitments.
For EZ1 she reported an increase in uncommitted spend at £16.8m – a rise of c£10m largely due to 2023 revaluation and adjustments for backdated actual income relating to pre-2023 developments which have now entered the ratings list
- For EZ2 she reported an estimated retained balance of c£7m by 24/25.

The group **agreed** that;

- EZ1 – no further commitments made beyond existing borrowing and future operational commitments already in place.
- EZ2 – no funding is committed at this stage due to reduction in forecast balance previously reported and ongoing work to review modelling. This situation will be kept under review.
- That work continues to develop an EZ2 funding process that is open and transparent aligned to OXIS.

ACTION: Officer group to continue work on EZ2 funding process; for review at next meeting

7 **EZ Strategy**

Sean updated on progress with the EZ Strategy highlighting significant amends since the last meeting – the majority of which concerned EZ marketing. Andy Roberts from the S&V marketing team supported discussions.

Marketing – the group discussed the marketing of the EZ's and the wider Science Vale area. It **was agreed** the need to ensure we have the core 'place shaping and community messaging' at the heart of refreshed messaging. NT & RB suggested that alongside the place shaping narrative we must ensure we have a route to global market positioning, sector segmentation and target marketing.

ACTION: Officer group to develop concise, costed marketing plan that covers the short/mid term (12-24 months) that addresses the priorities and challenges raised

8 **Strategic Economic Plan**

NT provided a progress update on the strategic economic plan highlighting the latest iteration is being presented to LEP board and FOP meetings in September with the document being finalised in autumn

9 **Power & energy challenges**

AD updated on the lack of grid capacity being a major constraint for investors and developers – with some projects being delayed consequently. He updated that conversations have taken place with the distribution network operators (DNOs).

DNOs require better intelligence and awareness of requirements via distribution future energy scenarios. Secondly local area energy planning can help mitigate risk with work being progressed currently.

10 **LEP transition**

NT provided an update on LEP transition explaining that OxLEP was anticipating the announced ministerial and budget announcements. OxLEP is working with County of a transition plan recognising guidance requires upper tier authority 'control'. There is flexibility within the guidance on impact to EZ governance and delivery. Full guidance can be found [here](#)

11 The group agreed to review meeting timings. Papers should be taken as read and meetings should last no longer than 90 minutes moving forward

Next meeting 29 Nov, 2pm on MS Teams

Attendees

Members:

Peter Nolan, OxLEP Board Member (Chair)
Cllr David Rouane, Leader, South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr Bethia Thomas, Leader, Vale of White Horse District Council
Angus Horner, OxLEP Board Member
Nigel Tipple, Chief Executive, OxLEP and OxLEP Board Member
Philip Campbell, Commercial Director, Milton Park (MEPC)
Monika Zemla, Director, Brookfield (Harwell)

In attendance:

Kathy Wilcox, Asst S151 Officer, Oxfordshire County Council
Andrew Down, Deputy Chief Executive - Partnerships, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
Susan Harbour, Strategic Partnerships Manager, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
Simon Hewings, S151 Officer, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
Sean Thornton-Mills, Enterprise Zones Partnership Manager, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
Andy Roberts – Communications Manager, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
Jon Palmer, Enterprise Zones Project Support Officer, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
Richard Byard, Director of Business Development, OxLEP
Emily Manser, Area Lead for Oxfordshire, CLGU

