

**Draft minutes of the OxLEP Enterprise Zone Sub-Group Meeting
Held on 15th November 2022, 09:00-11:00**

1.	<p>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were noted from Nigel Tipple (Sub Group Member) and Ros Burton (CLGU/BEIS). Kathy Wilcox was able to join for Item 5 only.</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
3.	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting held on 24th August 2022 were agreed.</p> <p>Sebastian reported that the Brookfield Management Team at Harwell have accepted the invitation to fill the role as one of the independent business representatives on the Sub Group and will attend the next Sub Group meeting in March 2023.</p>
4.	<p>EZ2 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)</p> <p>Lyn and Andrew presented the EZ2 MoU which had been circulated with the papers highlighting the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The MoU is explicit about making payments to S&VDC for the operational costs - Involves both South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council but with Vale of White Horse District Council as the Accountable Body - Process is that the MoU goes through both District Councils Cabinets for approval and then through OxLEP Board for approval at the December Board meeting <p>The Sub Group recommended agreement by OxLEP Board subject to satisfactory South and Vale DCs Cabinet approvals</p>
5.	<p>Half Yearly Report on Actual and Forecast EZ Business Rates Income and Spend Commitments</p> <p>Sean presented the Forecast paper noting that this is the delayed forecast from last quarter and that the concerns over reporting of backdated retained rates income in data received from the contractor, Capita, has now been resolved.</p> <p>EZ1 Headlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accelerated development timelines at Harwell Campus and Milton Park, along with additional development at Harwell and newly identified EZ properties, drive an increase in forecast retained rates during the latter part of the project. - However, these increases are partly offset by project delays at both sites over the next 5 years, resulting in forecast total retained rates for EZ1 of between £95.18m and

£153.83m for the lifetime of the project, the upper range of which is an increase of £11.92m when compared with the previous forecast.

- The dip in Actuals following 21/22 is as a result of the backdated rates added in as a one off

EZ2 Headlines:

- Delays in development timelines at the CloudHQ, Didcot A and Milton Interchange sites drive a decrease in forecast retained rates for the next 4 years.
- However, once these developments come online, the addition of a newly identified Milton Park development brings annual forecast retained rates back above the previous forecast until the end of the project.
- This results in forecast total retained rates for EZ2 of between £42.27m and £226.75m for the lifetime of the project, the upper range of which is an increase of £0.17m when compared with the previous forecast.

Kathy presented the paper on Spend Commitments on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council as accountable body for OxLEP with the following key headlines:

- EZ1 - Excluding the pipeline income, the majority of the retained funding for EZ1 will be needed to meet existing commitments. The position has improved since the last report with adjusted closing balance at just under £8.5m but it is important that the anticipated secured income is realised to ensure that those commitments are funded with Kathy recommending monitoring of this going forward before any further decisions are made on this
- EZ2 – only commitment against EZ2 is S&VDC operational costs. The estimated retained balance at the end of 2022/23 is £4.087m with Kathy recommending that no further commitments are made until a larger total is held and there is more certainty on the conversion of the pipeline forecasts.

6. **Progress Update**

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

- As of the end of September 2022, 2,627 new jobs have been created within the Enterprise Zones (EZs). This is an increase of 13 over the figure reported for the end of June 2022
- Preparation of an update to the Milton Park Local Development Order (LDO) is progressing with process for resolving S106 requirements currently being resolved with the County Council. Aiming for adoption of LDO in February 2023
- Milton Bioscience Centre at Milton Park – out to tender for operator
- Zephyr Building at Harwell – question with BEIS over discounts and occupancy which may be brought back to the Sub Group in the future
- The EZ team's marketing activity focuses on the benefits of the Enterprise Zones and the Science Vale area as a whole. As of 30th September, the Science Vale website has had 4,924 new users since its relaunch in June 2020 and 432 new users in the quarter from July to September. The Twitter account now has 873 followers and 749 impressions in the quarter. The LinkedIn account has 127 followers and the Facebook account has 57 followers. The focus on increasing LinkedIn and Facebook followers is continuing and numbers are gradually increasing.
- Performance against targets on floorspace is RAG rating green with targets being met
- Performance against targets on jobs is RAG rating amber based on available data as discussed at the last Sub Group meeting. Sean reported that going forwards it is hoped

that he will have access to the FAME database which will enable end of year reporting on job numbers which we may be able to use to provide better data on jobs created

The Data Return to HMG for period to 30/9/22 was shared and will be submitted to HMG by Sean and Sebastian by the end of the week.

7. Power Infrastructure Update

Sean is working with Beth Wilks of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) on identifying challenges across the county and drafting a letter from FOP to SSEN outlining challenges and requesting meeting with SSEN at senior level. Specific challenges within the EZ noted with possible requirement for letter to Ofgem. STM to keep Sub Group briefed.

Philip suggested that specialist input should be considered to look at and understand the issues and start to identify possible solutions. Susan reported that this is being looked at by FOP and the wider Oxfordshire partners alongside Area Energy Plans. Andrew added that there is a meeting of interested parties to explore this and a collective approach going forward.

It was agreed that a further update be provide at the next Sub Group meeting.

8. Economic Strategy for Oxfordshire

Richard provided an update on the plan to develop a new Economic Strategy for Oxfordshire. A Tender has been developed in consultation with partners and this will go live shortly with the aim to complete the Strategy by June with initial draft by March. Other plans and strategies will feed into this work including Oxfordshire Strategic Vision, OXIS, Energy, Pathway to Net Zero and Internationalisation Plan. There will be some open stakeholder consultation sessions during the development process to enable input from stakeholders

Richard added that the scoping document for use of EZ2 Business Rates will be developed alongside the Economic Strategy using the latest set of economic narrative and baseline to guide thinking about use of EZ2 monies. The assessment framework that has been developed for OXIS will be used and adapted as required and we will bring back to this Sub Group the proposal on how projects will be assessed.

Andrew Down expressed a view that if money is available and schemes in the EZ area are good to go, it shouldn't necessarily be that we need to wait for the economic strategy, which will address wider county priorities, to discuss funding for these projects. Emily and David expressed their wish to see cycle schemes come forward.

9. Forward Plan and Future Meeting dates

The next meeting will have the following as agenda items:

- Half yearly/interim forecast EZ business rates growth income based on development plans and review of spend commitments
- Jobs and development update; and Marketing update
- Economic Strategy update and use of EZ2 Business Rates framework
- Update on HIF1 from County Council
- Power infrastructure issues and update

Dates have been confirmed for 2023 as follows:
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 7th March 2023, 14:00-16:00 (MS Teams)- 7th June 2023, 14:00-16:00 (In person, Milton Park)- 5th September 2023, 14:00-16:00 (MS Teams)- 29th November 2023, 14:00-16:00 (MS Teams) |
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Attendees

Members:

- Penny Rinta-Suksi, OxLEP Board Member (Chair)
- Cllr David Rouane, Leader, South Oxfordshire District Council
- Cllr Emily Smith, Leader, Vale of White Horse District Council
- Angus Horner, OxLEP Board Member
- Philip Campbell, Commercial Director, Milton Park (MEPC)

In attendance:

- Kathy Wilcox, Asst S151 Officer, Oxfordshire County Council (for item 5)
- 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
- Richard Byard, Director of Business Development, OxLEP
- Lyn Davies, Director of Corporate Services, OxLEP
- Sebastian Johnson, Head of Innovation and Inward Investment, OxLEP
- Robert Curtis, Deputy Area Lead for Oxfordshire, DLUHC