

**Draft minutes of the OxLEP Enterprise Zone Sub-Group Meeting
held on 24th August 2022, 11.00-13:00**

1.	<p>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</p> <p>Cllr Bethia Thomas, Deputy Leader of Vale of White Horse DC (who was deputising for Cllr Emily Smith, Leader) and Robert Curtis, Cities and Local Growth Unit/BEIS/DLUHC were welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were noted from Cllr Emily Smith and from the Officers Group, Simon Hewings and Susan Harbour.</p> <p>Penny reported that David Kingham has resigned from the Sub Group because of his other priorities in the fast-growing business Tokamak Energy. David stated in his resignation note that “Tokamak Energy has been a significant beneficiary of the Enterprise Zone initiative and we will remain pleased to participate in any EZ publicity”. David was thanked for his commitment, support and input into the Sub Group and Sebastian has written to him to formally thank him. David will continue to support OxLEP’s work with DIT on the High Potential Opportunity promoting Fusion Energy investment and trade.</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest however it was noted that the HIF1 item is an area of responsibility of the County Council and David and Bethia as County Councillors are therefore involved.</p>
3.	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting held on 10th February 2022 were agreed.</p> <p>Nigel gave an update on HIF1, reporting that positive progress has been made in securing funding and that work is ongoing on design. It was noted that the project is fully funded but costs generally in construction are escalating. It was agreed that we invite a County Council officer to a future meeting to provide an update.</p>
4.	<p>Progress Update and Development Review</p> <p>Andrew reported on changes to the staffing team at South and Vale resulting in Sean moving into the role of EZ Partnership Manager. Toby Warren has now left to take a policy role at Suffolk Chambers of Commerce linked to the Suffolk Devolution Deal. Andrew was asked to write to Toby to thank him for all his work relating to the EZs over the years.</p> <p>Sean provided an update as detailed in the paper circulated with the agenda. Key points to note were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of the end of June 2022, 2,614 new jobs have been created within the Enterprise Zones (EZs). This is an increase of 108 over the figure reported for the end of March

2022 (17 jobs reported this quarter plus an additional 91 identified in the annual survey not already counted).

- Preparation of an update to the Milton Park Local Development Order (LDO) is progressing at pace. Philip thanked Vale DC staff for their work on this so far.
- Planning approval was granted at the end of June for the proposed 'Zeta Building' south of Thomson Avenue at Harwell Campus. A planning application was submitted at the beginning of July for the proposed 'Dexter Building' north of Thompson Avenue at Harwell Campus.
- Due to concerns over reporting of backdated retained rates income in data received from the contractor, Capita, it has not been possible to produce an updated Enterprise Zones business rates forecast that we can be confident of, to share at this time, meaning that the new forecast will be reported at the next Enterprise Zones sub-group meeting on 15th November. Sean reported that the issue will be resolved, and Capita are aware of the problem so it will not be repeated.
- The EZ team's marketing activity focuses on the benefits of the Enterprise Zones and the Science Vale area as a whole. Regular meetings are held with marketing colleagues at Culham Science Centre, Harwell Campus, Milton Park, OxLEP and South and Vale to make sure that marketing activity is complimentary.

A discussion took place about performance against targets as gathering data on job numbers is proving a challenge. Actual jobs reported as gained to the area in 21/22 are well below the target set. However, it is likely that for EZ1 this is attributable to the cohort South and Vale DC were able to survey, rather than the jobs not being created. For the first time, we attempted an annual survey of all businesses within the Enterprise Zones and received responses from 17% of those businesses. The Officer Group was tasked with finding new ways of gathering and/or estimating data on job numbers for 2022/23.

Sean provided a detailed presentation on sites and developments across the EZs which has been shared with the Group. Issues and challenges with power infrastructure linked to developments (in particular data centres) was raised as an area where input is required. Sean is looking into this with the Future Oxfordshire Partnership as a Countywide issue and will report back to the Sub Group in November.

5. EZ2 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Update

Lyn and Andrew reported that we are now at final draft stage and that the MoU will be coming to the Sub Group meeting in November for review. Delays had occurred due to capacity challenges in legal and corporate services in both South and Vale DC and OxLEP.

6. Emerging principles – EZ2 Retained Business Rates

Sebastian presented an outline of considerations and emerging principles for use of EZ2 retained business rates. Ideas suggested in the meeting included active travel schemes and pump-priming for energy infrastructure with the District Network Operator based on the earlier discussion.

It was agreed that the Officer Group will continue to develop the principles and a Task and Finish Group from the EZ Sub Group will be formed to help finalise proposals.

7. Membership and Draft Forward Plan

	<p>Following David Kingham’s resignation it was agreed that an invite would be made to the Brookfield Management Team at Harwell to fill the role as one of the independent business representatives on the Sub Group – Action Sebastian Johnson.</p> <p>It was also agreed that the OxLEP Board be asked to agree to amend the Terms of Reference on membership to from “2 x independent business representatives” to “Up to 4 and no less than 2 x independent business representatives”. This allows us to add if willing and/or appropriate volunteers appear in the future.</p> <p>The draft Forward Plan was reviewed and agreed with the following additions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 2022 meeting to include item from Sean on power infrastructure • February 2023 meeting to include update on HIF1 from County Council
8.	<p>Future Meeting Dates</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 15th November 2022, 09:00-11:00 (MS Teams). Dates for 2023 are being set and will be shared, with one meeting to be face to face kindly hosted by Milton Park.</p>

Attendees

Members:

- Penny Rinta-Suksi, OxLEP Board Member (Chair)
- Cllr David Rouane, Leader, South Oxfordshire District Council
- Cllr Bethia Thomas, Deputy Leader, Vale of White Horse District Council (deputising for Cllr Emily Smith)
- Angus Horner, OxLEP Board Member
- Nigel Tipple, Chief Executive, OxLEP and OxLEP Board Member
- Philip Campbell, Commercial Director, Milton Park (MEPC)

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
- 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
- Ross Burton, Area Lead for Oxfordshire, CLGU/BEIS
- Robert Curtis, Deputy Area Lead for Oxfordshire, DLUHC