

Agenda Item 9 - Annex 3

# Equality and Diversity Statement

## Introduction

To deliver significant growth and productivity gains we aim to remove all barriers to achieving economic performance, resulting in tangible economic benefits to our businesses, residents, visitors, workforce and diverse communities. Our diverse communities will benefit from strong economic growth and no community will be excluded from full participation in economic life and progress.

The competitive advantage arising from local diversity will be harnessed to drive growth. We aim to integrate equality into all that we do, and the work that others do on behalf of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

## What is equality and Diversity?

Equality is ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are not treated differently or less favourably, based on their specific protected characteristic, including race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and age.

Diversity aims to recognise, respect and value people's differences to contribute and realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for all.

Diversity and equality issues impact everyone in the OxLEP area, hence we are committed to removing barriers that might restrict people and continue to work towards positive change.

## Our commitment

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership is dedicated to supporting a fully inclusive culture. We recognise that we have a role in promoting diversity and eliminating discrimination and seek to do this in the way we conduct ourselves and our business.

This policy reinforces our commitment to providing equality and fairness to all those who wish to work with or for us and will not act less favourably on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, or sex and sexual orientation. We are opposed to all forms of unlawful discrimination.

OxLEP and Oxfordshire County Council, in undertaking its role as the Accountable Body to OxLEP, shall comply with their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010

The Board is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in the delivery and accessibility of its services. OxLEP will look to ensure diverse representation at Board and sub-group level which is reflective of the local business community (including geographies, sectors and protected characteristics). OxLEP is committed to providing a safe environment free from unlawful discrimination and harassment both in employment and service delivery.

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OxLEP shall have due regard in the exercise of their roles and responsibilities to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization and any other conduct prohibited under legislation;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

### What we will do

The LEP will engage with all stakeholders and be inclusive and transparent in all communications. Our priorities and objectives mostly deliver an equality impact, for example, by targeting key sectors, priority groups, and local communities. In addition, we will work with our partners to ensure that all project development, commissioning and tendering procedures support the following principles:

- Advancing equality of opportunity;
- Showing our commitment to support those with a protected characteristic into enterprise and employment;
- Ensuring the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.