



Subject: Local Industrial Strategy Trailblazer Update	
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Summary

This paper provides the Board with a briefing on the updates made to the draft Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), as part of the formal approval process with Government. It seeks Board approval of the draft strategy, with delegation for final sign off to the Chairman and Chief Executive under written procedures.

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Recommendation

That the Board:

- **notes the changes and updates made to the draft strategy since the March Board**
- **delegates final sign off of the strategy to the Chairman and Chief Executive, under written procedures**

1. Key Changes Since March Board

Since April, officials have reviewed our revised draft document submitted before Easter and have sense checked this with individual departments and senior policy leads across the areas we have prioritised in our LIS. Listed below are the key changes which have been introduced by officials and are reflected in the latest document.

- ***Structural***

The strategy now follows a more visible format based around the five foundations of productivity which were detailed in the National Industrial Strategy (Ideas, Business Environment, Infrastructure, People, Places). In addition to this, officials have sought all LIS's to be identifying which of the four Grand Challenges within the National Strategy (Mobility, Ageing Society, AI & Data, Clean Growth) are to be featured in the published document.

Our original submitted document had strong and clear rationale for each of these areas but was laid out across our own defined three strategic pillars and the skills foundation pillar. The

adjustments in the revised document, therefore, are structural rather than one of content, with the vast majority of our policy proposals remaining in the current draft.

- ***Oxford – Cambridge Arc Chapter***

A key development in the revised LIS is an additional chapter setting out the economic context of the Oxford – Cambridge Arc. This provides the rationale for the Arc and its wider economic potential, and will be a common component in each of the four individual LIS's across the region. The content draws on the Economic Vision document developed by Arc partners which is also based on the overall ambitions detailed in the individual LIS's. It also restates Government's commitment to the Arc, reflecting on the position paper published by HMG alongside the Spring Statement in March.

- ***Policy Commitment Changes***

The latest draft retains the majority of the content of our technical document, with changes being mainly around language which departments feel able to commit to; this is consistent with our experiences from previous HMG negotiations we have held with City Deal and the Housing & Growth Deal. Each of the 20+ policy areas we set out in the technical document across the three strategic pillars and foundation skills pillar remain within the HMG Draft.

In addition to these existing interventions, the latest draft also now includes an explicit commitment within the LIS to look at the challenges of delivering inclusive growth across Oxfordshire. We know that the benefits of economic growth haven't been evenly felt by everyone. We want to understand why that is and what can be done differently, to ensure that in future, those benefits are more fairly distributed. The updated policy proposal will aim to convene local leaders, academic experts, businesses and community organisations to form an *Inclusive Growth Commission* to consider how we can ensure that the benefits of a world leading innovation ecosystem can be equitably shared and reach all communities, learning from other global ecosystems. Following discussions with local and civic leaders, it is proposed that this initiative will be sponsored through the Oxfordshire Growth Board. Details on how this will be rolled out are in development and will be set out shortly.

- ***Oxford – Cambridge Arc Commitments***

As part of its strategic commitment to the Oxford Cambridge Arc, Government have encouraged partners during the negotiating process to identify common policy areas across each of the four individual LIS's which can be delivered at scale. It is proposed that these would then be presented as a common set of proposals in the final published document.

The areas which are being explored with departments and officials at an Arc level are as follows:

- *Skills* – specifically, potential flexibilities under the Apprenticeship Levy which can enable local areas to support apprenticeship and skills priorities which meet economic priorities
- *Internationalisation Plan* – developing a joint investment and delivery plan with the Department for International Trade to position Oxfordshire and the Arc in key strategic international investor markets, support export market potential and accelerate major capital investment opportunities
- *Arc Business Investment Fund* – explore the potential of an Ox-Cam Investment Fund to provide financial resource for high growth businesses to scale up and accelerate job creation. This would involve investment through the British Business Bank and matched by private capital

funding – this model would draw on existing funds already approved by Government for Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine

- *Digital Investment Plan* – a key requirement across each of the four LIS's had been the urgent need for significant investment and upgrade in existing digital infrastructure which can allow for the rapid deployment of 5G and next generation mobile telecommunications. We have consistently made clear to Government of the criticality of building a dynamic 'digital spine' which can provide and harness the capacity for data and new technology expansion across both Oxfordshire's world leading innovation ecosystem and the wider Arc. Officials within the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport are reviewing existing policy commitments within the LIS's which could form the basis of a joint commitment with Government in the final published documents

Next Steps

The proposed target date for publication of the LIS is 22nd July. Work has been undertaken on the detailed language in the document and this will continue in the next two weeks with sense checking with HMT, so we anticipate further revisions before a planned deadline of w/c 1st July to 'lock in' the final document before being submitted for Ministerial sign off.

The key remaining milestones set out by officials are as follows:

- w/c 17th June – submission of draft final document to HMG
- 25th June – OxLEP Board meeting to review and approve, in principle, draft final LIS
- w/c 1st July – final departmental reviews and discussions with HMG on changes and preparation of LIS for ministerial approval
- w/c 8th July – final circulation and lock down of LIS
- By 22nd July – formal joint publication of Oxfordshire LIS