

<b><u>Subject: Governance and Transparency Review</u></b>	
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<b>Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Ltd:</b> <b>Business Centre, Jericho Building, City of Oxford College Campus, Oxpens Road, Oxford</b> <b>OX1 1SA</b>	

### 1.) Summary

The report sets out the actions we have taken as a Board and company to meet the requirements of the guidance issued by HMG following the conclusion of the Mary Ney review conducted over the last quarter of 2017. Recognising the importance of good governance and transparency we had already embarked on a review of our Board and sub-Group activity, web site and operational policies. This included a refresh of our 2017 Assurance Framework, Accountable Body MOU and initiated a Board Away-Day to explore our priorities for 2018/19 including a focus on the Legal Obligations & Duties of Company Directors, Board effectiveness, transparency and succession planning. The 2018 Assurance Framework is attached at Annex 1.

### 2.) Recommendation

**That the Board:**

- **Note the report and actions taken to ensure, good governance, transparency and compliance with the published HMG Guidance**

### 3.) Mary Ney Review

Following the publication of the Mary Ney Review and subsequent guidance issued to LEP's Nationally, we have undertaken a thorough review of all operational policy documents, processes and governance procedures to ensure we meet the letter of the guidance. This exercise has now been completed and the document at annex 1 provides in a matrix format the proposed change and our response to each.

This exercise was running concurrently with our Board and sub-Group review, NED Board Director review and recruitment exercise along with the development of our new Web site designed specifically to improve transparency and ease of access to information.

In addition, we have undertaken a full review of our Board Director (NED) Declarations of Interest, including the additional declarations in respect of Beneficial Interests held by the

Director or immediate family. To demonstrate our commitment to this review we have included in this requirement our Corporate Management Team and partner Accountable Body Section 151 Officers.

As a phase 2 exercise, to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, we have also extended this review to include all Board Sub-Group and Committees where not already covered by the existing declarations.

The Board will also recall the requirement to ensure we publish all Board Agendas and papers where decisions are being made 5 days before the Board meeting and minutes/meeting notes within 5 days of the meeting taking place. Again, we are fully committed to meeting and exceeding this requirement by publishing all papers not covered by Commercial confidentiality, Legal Privilege or deemed to be Exempt Information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended. Information in relation to the Schedule 12A is available via our web site.

#### **4.) Ministerial LEP review**

In the Industrial Strategy White Paper Government committed to a review of LEPs' roles and responsibilities, leadership, governance, accountability, financial reporting and geographical boundaries, such that they have a clearly defined set of activities and objectives.

In order to take external advice on the review, Ministers Jake Berry (MHCLG), Lord Henley (BEIS) and Robert Jenrick (HMT) have convened an advisory panel. The panel provides a broad perspective from leading figures in business, local government, academia, business representative organisations and LEPs. The panel has met in December 2017 and January 2018.

The advisory will panel consider a number of key principles that are summarised below, and will be used to guide further policy considerations:

- That clarifying the mission of LEPs is integral and that this must be kept simple.
- Strong business leadership and effective partnership working is a key determinant of a successful LEP.
- LEPs need to have arrangements that enable them to set a strategy for long term change and economic improvement.
- LEPs must have clarity on their roles and responsibilities, and on how to effectively measure their output and impact.
- More must be done to ensure LEPs have a small number of targeted objectives rather than an expansive list of activities.
- The review could consider increasing the proportion of private sector representatives that sit on LEP boards and that promoting a diverse and representative private sector voice in LEPs is essential to their success.
- The review should agree approaches for promoting effective leadership, including fixed terms for chairs.
- That LEPs must be clearly distinct and that the review should explore in detail how local government provides support to LEPs, such that LEPs are able to provide a strong and independent private sector voice.

## 5.) Assurance Framework

The Board will be aware that we have produced an annual Assurance Framework document for the last 2 years within which we agree with our accountable Body and Government. This sets out our operational approach, governance and commitment to transparency in the work we do, it also defines how we work with our accountable body and is required to be signed off by the Section 151 Officer as part of the overall assurance process. These documents are live on our web site, form a key aspect of our Annual Conversation with government and ensures regular review of our operations to give assurance to the Board and Government that we have met all governance requirements. Our revised 2018 Assurance Framework is attached at annex 1.