



OxLEP Board Meeting
21st March 2023
5.00pm – 8.00pm

VENUE
MS Teams

MINUTES

Board Directors Present:	Alistair Fitt (Chair - AF), Nigel Tipple (NT), Penny Rinta-Suksi (PRS), Phil Southall (PSo), Miranda Markham (MM), Cllr Susan Brown (SB), Cllr Liz Leffman (LL), Ariana Adjani (AA), Cllr David Rouane (DR), Cllr Barry Wood (BW), Cllr Andy Graham (AG), Peter Nolan (PN), Jacqui Canton (JC), Cllr Bethia Thomas (BT), Angus Horner (AH) Stephen Gifford (SG), Alexander Reip (AR), Jennifer Schivas (JS), Rachel White (RW) and Jayne Norris (JN)
Board Directors Apologies:	Wendy Hart (WH), Patrick Grant (PG)
Minutes:	Sadie Patamia (SP)
In attendance:	Richard Byard (RB), Rob Panting (RP), Sebastian Johnson (SJ), Lyn Davies (LD), Lorna Baxter (LB), Sarah Watson (SW), Helen Brind (HB), Sally Andreou (SA), Ross Burton (RBu), Helen Ryan- Wallis (HRW, <i>present for part of meeting</i>), Robert Curtis (RC), Christine Doel (CD, <i>present for part of meeting</i>) and John Hoy (JH, <i>present for part of meeting</i>)
Item	Action/Responsible
Item 1 – Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
Apologies were accepted from Wendy Hart (WH) and Patrick Grant (PG) AF welcomed the new NEDs (BT, SG, AR, RW and JS). He also explained that an AOB had been added to the agenda in order to update the Board on the recent Budget announcement.	
Item 2 – Minutes	
Items for Decision – Confidential Papers for approval as detailed Committee/Sub-Group recommendation (Exempt Information¹)	
Item 3 - Capital Programme Update (SW)¹	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Progress update presentation b. LGF Programme Change Request – GigaHubs c. City Deal Match Funding Change Request 	
Item 4 – SEP Update Presentation (NT/SQW)	
Item 5 – VERP Update (HRW/JH)	
Item 6 - Corporate Governance (LD) ¹	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Nominations & Personnel Committee Assurance Update b. NED appointments and Annual Performance Review (APR) Process c. Board Forward Workplan 	
Item 7 - Financial & HR (LD) ¹	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Finance and Audit Committee Assurance Update b. Outturn report c. Forecast Cashflow and Bank Deposit Proposal d. 4 Day Week pilot – preparation update (presentation) 	
Public Invited to Join the Meeting	
Board Meeting Part Two – Items for Decision/Information	

**Item 8 – Questions from the public arising from the Agenda
(Max 3 mins per question – notified in advance in writing)**

There were no questions received from the public.

Item 9 – Chief Executives Report (NT)

• **Annex A -Team Updates presentation**

NT gave a presentation on the operational team’s updates.

He drew attention to the Podcast series that the Comms team have produced. He stated that these had been well received and that new audiences are being reached. NT commented on the increased profile on social media that had been achieved recently. Comms are also concentrating on getting information out about our 4DW Trial.

NT presented the strong KPI reporting from the Business Team. He stated this showed a significant reach across a very wide programme, including the support that was being given to the Cherwell Business Adaption Fund and the Investment Readiness Support.

NT drew attention to the work carried out by the Skills team delivering the Social Contract programme and the great successes they had achieved to date. He also highlighted the work that our work with the Careers and Enterprise Company Partnership had achieved, including Careersfest that would be taking place this week.

NT highlighted the Annual Apprenticeship Awards timetable, due to take place in May. This is an important event across the County and is significantly supported by business both operationally and in terms of sponsorship funding for the event.

He noted the positive Foreign Direct Investment figures as per the end of February 2023, which does not include the Moderna announcement associated with the ARC Harwell Campus. Finally noting the performance of the team in supporting inbound investment and recent extension of the Internationalisation Fund programme which had been successful in Oxfordshire.

NT reflected upon the importance and scale of the challenge we have in respect of power infrastructure, distribution and supply in Oxfordshire and its negative impact on existing and future employment investment in the county. Noting that this was a national issue and linked to regulation, it was nevertheless a barrier to investment and retention of business.

AG stated he felt this was a really interesting report that showed a great deal of achievements. He asked if any mapping had been done to reflect the ambitions of the culture, heritage, and arts industry? He stated that there was a real opportunity to develop this sector. NT responded that this was being covered as part of the Foundational Economy focus of the SEP. He highlighted the previous Creative Industries event as an example of the work we undertake to promote and highlight the sector. He stated there was an intention to continue to promote the Visitor Economy as well as the creative sector.

SB stated she agreed that this was highly relevant now and was high on the departmental agendas. She also agreed with he comments on the power infrastructure issue. She stated it was an issue across the country but that it was positive that it was recognised in Oxfordshire.

Noted

Recommendation

That the Board notes:

- **The operational progress outlined in this report and supporting documents: Annex A -Team Updates presentation**

Item 10 - Update from EZ Sub-Group

PRS began the presentation on the Enterprise Zones. She highlighted the history and location of the Enterprise Zones (EZ) in Oxfordshire.

PRS explained how the EZs are managed via Board sub-group that reports directly into the Board. There is also a EZ Team employed by South and Vale DCs. She reminded the Board that the responsibility for all decisions, investment and expenditure is vested by formal agreement with the Board supported by MOUs covering the operational details.

SJ expanded on the sites included in the Zones noting how EZ1 and EZ2 interacted geographically. Highlighting the focus of EZ2 which is primarily based around Didcot power station site, adjacent commercial/industrial parks and Milton Park. He reiterated the issues previously mentioned about the power infrastructure which could cause delivery delays on the EZ's.

SJ explained that business rates achieved on the EZs were retained to be reinvested within Oxfordshire. Businesses were incentivised to come to the EZs by simplified planning and business rate relief for the first 5 years of the EZs.

LD demonstrated how the retained business rates had been used. She stated it was a long-term programme and therefore prudence was important when considering future spending commitments, as it was unlikely that we would be able to use borrowing to advance infrastructure investment, as had been done for the first round of the EZ1 investment programme. She highlighted that the (OxLEP) Board is responsible for making decisions about how the EZ retained business rates are used and illustrated this with previous examples of supporting transport projects, EZ site development and the Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 programme.

SJ stated that a five-Year Strategic plan was being developed, noting impact so far, to consider where the forward focus should be and how EZ investment could support the LEP's wider investment priorities. The plan will set out clear targets for the next 5 years and be monitored through the Sub-Group with regular reporting to Board. This plan will be presented to the EZ Sub-Group in draft in June.

BT stated that South and Vale DCs consider the EZs to be very important geographically and that infrastructure investment was important.

Item 11

The meeting closed at 8:00pm