

**OxLEP Board Meeting
13th September 2022
5:30pm – 8:30pm**

VENUE

Jupiter Room, Catapult Satellite Applications, Harwell Campus. OX11 0QR

MINUTES

Board Directors Present:	Jeremy Long (Chair - JL), Nigel Tipple (NT), Alistair Fitt (Deputy Chair - AF), Angus Horner (AH), Penny Rinta-Suksi (PRS), Phil Southall (PSO), Miranda Markham (MM), Jacqui Canton (JC), Cllr Emily Smith (ES), Cllr Susan Brown (SB), Cllr Liz Leffman (LL), Ariana Adjani (AA), Cllr David Rouane (DR), Patrick Grant (PG)	
Board Directors Apologies:	Barry Wood (BW), Wendy Hart (WH), Andy Graham (AG), Peter Nolan (PN), and Jayne Norris (JN)	
Minutes:	Sadie Patamia (SP)	
In attendance:	Richard Byard (RB), Rob Panting (RP), Sarah Watson (SW), Sebastian Johnson (SJ), Ian Littlejohn (IJ), Lyn Davies (LD), Lorna Baxter (LB)	
Item		Action/Responsible
Item 1 – Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest		
Apologies were accepted from Barry Wood (BW), Wendy Hart (WH), Andy Graham (AG), Peter Nolan (PN), and Jayne Norris (JN)		
Item 2 – Minutes		
Items for Decision – Confidential Papers for approval as detailed Committee/Sub-Group recommendation (Exempt Information¹)		
Item 3 - Corporate Governance (LD)¹		
a. Board recruitment update		
b. Transfer of responsibilities from PSG to FAC		
Item 4 – Financial (LD/NT)¹		
a. Approval of Audited Financial Statements 2021/22		
b. Q1 2022/23 Outturn		
c. Financial Regulations review and update		
Item 5 – Capital Programmes – Accountable Body Year-End Report 2021/22 (LB)¹		
Item 6 – Programme Sub-Group Update Presentation (PRS)¹		
a. Progress presentation		
b. Change control		
c. Project evaluations - review and approval		
Item 7 - Plan 2050 status update		
Public Invited to Join the Meeting		
AGM 19:15 – 19:30: See separate Minutes		
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 – 9a. Chief Executives Report (NT)		

- **Annex A -Team Updates presentation**
- 9b. Internationalisation Update Paper (SJ)**
- **Annex A Internationalisation Plan**
- 9c. Skills Advisory Panel Briefing (RB/IL)**

9a. NT gave a presentation that updated the Board on the current work being undertaken by the teams.

The presentation included details about changes within the Comms team and the engagement of a new agency – Liquid, who will be helping to deliver key campaigns, highlighting the work being undertaken to develop our digital strategy, and recent comms successes.

He also highlighted the current grant programmes being administered by the Growth Hub, including the Cherwell Business Adaption Fund and the Visitor Economy Grants.

The presentation also highlighted the recent Oxfordshire Creative Industries Showcase which had taken place after a 2-year gap due to the pandemic and progress with the Visitor Economy Renaissance Programme, launched with the support of Experience Oxford and Cotswold Tourism.

NT then highlighted the intention to refresh the Economic Strategy and associated Economic Data following the EU Exit and Covid Pandemic. This was important not just to support the growth of our economy but also to support the Local statutory planning process which was continuing despite the Plan 2050 no longer proceeding. MM asked whether the Visitor Economy would be a feature of the refreshed plan, NT stated that it would as part of the overall economic baseline assessment and future actions to support economic recovery. JL stated he felt this should be done as soon as possible to allow us to respond to policy initiatives noting the programme assumes completion by early 2023. Again NT confirmed that the refresh would be completed in stages with each stage being able to support programme mobilisation should it be necessary.

Recommendation

That the Board notes:

- **The operational progress outlined in this report and detailed at annex A**
- **The need to refresh the Economic Strategy and associated base line economic data outlined in paragraph 5.**

Noted

9b. SJ gave a presentation highlighting the work of the Investment and Internationalisation Team. He commented on the Foreign Direct Investment figures for 2021/22 which were above the average baseline. He stated that although Oxfordshire remained a 'Science Superpower' retail and food and drink were also both performing strongly. SJ commented that there had been a decrease in Chinese investment in recent years but noted an increase in that from India and the importance of European and US Markets.

SJ highlighted our FDI performance had been recognised by the DIT and recently in the Financial Times rankings. He also drew attention to the High Potential Opportunities in the county highlighting fusion energy as being particularly high on the national agenda. He noted the importance of focusing upon trade opportunities alongside investment as we move forward post EU Exit and Covid Pandemic, Oxfordshire has demonstrated

consistently in importance of our Research and Development expertise both on a national and global stage.

SJ commented that in addition to investments into business, there had also been considerable investment into Real Estate with various sites in the county now being sold at double expected values; values commensurate with central London. He also highlighted the success story of Siemens expanding into a new R&D facility in Bicester and the importance for the UK of that decision.

SJ noted the refresh of the Internationalisation Plan as a critical step in continuing to build on our strengths globally for the benefit of the UK's recovery.

JL stated this was very impressive work and that the team should be thanked.

SB stated she found the land values achieved extraordinary, but that it was important to ensure HMG recognised the need to support such strong economic growth with investment into affordable homes and skills and infrastructure to ensure our communities were able to take up the jobs being created.

Recommendation

That the Board:

- **notes the achievements and progress made in 2021/22 and the ambition and aspirations of the refreshed and updated Internationalisation Plan**
- **notes the collaborative approach to the ongoing development and delivery of the Internationalisation Plan**
- **endorses and agrees the refreshed and updated Internationalisation Plan to 2025 at Annex A**

Noted

Noted

Endorsed

9c. RB introduced Ian Little John who has taken over from Adrian Lockwood (AL) as the Chair of the Skills Sub-Group and Advisory Panel. IJ stated he wished to place on record his thanks to AL for all the years of service he had committed to the LEP and Skills Sub-Group and Board. He commented that current workstreams for the Skills Sub-Group included meetings with DfE to discuss T Levels and exploring how best to help companies to utilise their unspent Apprenticeship Levy.

IJ explained to the Board that following changes by government to the skills landscape, new Employer Representative Bodies (ERB's) would be established effective from April 2023 and they would be responsible for the development of Local Skills Improvement Plans. This was seen as a positive step in ensuring the active engagement of employers though it was important to build on the strong work already undertaken in Oxfordshire. The new ERB's are being led by Chambers of commerce, the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce in our case but we will ensure strong linkages the Skills Sub-Group strategically and operationally.

RB then gave a short presentation on the work currently being undertaken by the Skills Team, particularly highlighting the launch of the Social Contract Programme. This will address the impact of Covid 19 on unemployment, barriers to work, education and training and aims to help those furthest away from the job market.

He also commented on the Apprenticeship Levy programme and progress unlocking unspent funds. Currently only 40 out of the 280 businesses that pay the levy are utilising it effectively. Our social contract programme seeks to help companies use it effectively and where appropriate release unspent funds to support a range of other apprenticeship schemes across the county.

JC commented that FE skills providers also needed support with delivering apprenticeships, they had a shortage of experienced lecturers to support training and that was constraining growth in programmes leading to people being turned away from full courses. It was agreed to explore the situation further and report back.

RB also highlighted Careersfest 2022 which took place over the summer. It was well attended with excellent feedback. Next year it will be expanded to be a 2-day event supporting both our learners and parents/carers .

SB commented that it was great to see this event back.

JL closed the meeting by thanking the Board and OxLEP staff for their continued work

Item 10

The meeting closed at 8:30pm