

**To: Council**

**Date: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

**Report of: Policy, Communication and Culture**

**Title of Report: The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership**

## **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** To inform members of the work of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and to answer questions about the work of the Partnership.

Report approved by:

**Finance:** Emma Burson, Business Partner

**Legal:** Lindsay Cane, Legal Services Manager/Deputy Monitoring Officer

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Bob Price

**Policy Framework:** The Corporate Plan

**Recommendation:**

1. Council is asked to comment on and note the contents of the report.

## **The role of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership**

1. 'The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is responsible for championing and developing the Oxfordshire economy. Working with businesses, academia and the public sector we are driving economic development across the county. Our overarching aim is to be the catalyst for realising Oxfordshire's economic and commercial potential'.

*Source: Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership web site*

2. Councillor Bob Price, Leader of Oxford City Council, is one of the two District Council representatives on the LEP (the other is Councillor Anne Ducker, Leader of South Oxfordshire). Cllr Price is also a representative on the Oxfordshire Skills Board. A full list of the LEP Board members is available in Annex 1.

3. The Board has appointed a Chief Executive, Nigel Tipple, who is supported by Oxfordshire County Council, Environment, Economy and Infrastructure, staff.
4. The LEP as a number of programmes of work including:
  - Increasing inward investment in Oxfordshire
  - Business support
  - Improving infrastructure for growth and jobs
  - Skills development
  - Economic development
  - Broadband
5. These programmes are delivered through a number of sub groups. Details of these are provided below.

### **Increasing inward investment in Oxfordshire**

6. 'Invest in Oxfordshire' supports existing companies to grow and helps potential investors, primarily overseas, to make informed decisions about locating to the county.
7. They offer an inward investment service to potential new companies to the area and an aftercare service to existing key companies.
8. They work closely with UKTI, the Government's national inward investment arm, and are their official partner for enquiries into Oxfordshire.
9. Current focus:
  - The need to raise awareness of the work being done by Invest in Oxford.

### **Developing business support services**

10. 'Support in Oxfordshire' provides links to specialist not-for-profit organisations that can give businesses in Oxfordshire information, advice and guidance on a range of issues, including: finance, recruitment, starting out, finding customers, legal responsibilities, training, planning, and more.
11. Current focus:
  - The Government Growing Places Fund – allocation of funding to support businesses.
  - Commitment to establishing a SME Loan Fund.
  - Development of a Business Hub.
  - Development of support to assist firms in accessing public sector grants.

## **Improving infrastructure for growth and jobs**

12. 'The LEP aims to ensure that infrastructure needs are fit for purpose. They aim to ensure that the planning system does not hold back economic growth while being sensitive to the needs of the environment.'

*Source: Oxfordshire Local Enterprise web site*

13. This is an area of work which the LEP oversees directly. However, clearly there are links to the Oxford City and the District Councils Local Development Frameworks and the County Council Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks.
14. The LEP has been successful in gaining £9 million from the Governments 'Growing Places Fund' for major infrastructure work.
15. Current focus:
- Developing an agreed plan and priorities for the spending of the Growing Places Fund.
  - Ensuring effective and transparent decision making on spend.

## **Skills development**

16. The Oxfordshire Skills Board brings together a wide range of public and private employers, secondary, further and higher education skills providers and stakeholder groups. The Board works closely with the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Their aim is to achieve improvements in the skills available to Oxfordshire's employers and the learning opportunities available to students, residents and workforce.
17. Oxfordshire Skills Board aims to develop a strategic and coordinated approach to skills development in Oxfordshire to:
- Ensure that all residents are able to develop the skills that enable them to successfully enter and remain in the workforce
  - Assist local employers to develop or access the training they require to equip their workforce with the skills they need
  - Enable all residents to make a positive contribution to their communities.
18. Current focus:
- European Structural Funds are now allocated through the LEP €16 million. (see below)
  - Development of the Oxfordshire Skills Analysis and 'Labour Insight'
  - Development and coordination of Apprenticeship Schemes
  - Development and coordination of work experience schemes
  - Development of a Framework for effective Education and Business Links

- Development of the skills element of City Deal

### **Oxfordshire European Structural Funds**

19. The funds available come from three sources: European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The allocation for Oxfordshire is allocation is €19.4 million.
20. The funding will be overseen by the LEP. The development of an Oxfordshire European Structural Fund Strategy is required. This will be closely aligned with City Deal. It will set out the thematic objectives and investment priorities.
21. The LEP has appointed a specialist consultant with experience of European funding bids to work with and consult with businesses, local authorities and the voluntary and community sector on the a draft Strategy. A high level steering group has been formed to oversee the development and delivery of the Strategy. A draft strategy will need to be submitted to government on 7<sup>th</sup> October with a consultation period running from November to December 2013.

### **Better Broadband for Oxfordshire**

22. The County Council and BT have reached an agreement to improve broadband connectivity across Oxfordshire. The County Council will invest £10million, £4million from the government's Broadband Delivery UK fund and contributions expected from the private sector.

### **Economic development**

23. The LEP aims to work alongside existing organisations and projects in relation to economic development, rather than replacing them. There are many economic development activities that relate to the work of the LEP, but which are not delivered by them. For example: Tourism, market towns, creative and cultural industries, retail (including Oxford City Centre Management), the West End Partnership and others.
24. Current issues
  - The LEP has been asked to contribute financially to an economic impact study of the effect of developing London Heathrow airport (£5K).
  - The LEP has been asked to input into the wider economic aspects of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment that is currently underway.

### **City Deal**

25. The City Council. County Council and LEP were invited to bid for a City Deal. Currently a detailed proposal is being developed. The focus is on

economic growth through the creation of innovation hubs that harness the knowledge and expertise of our world class universities and science facilities. Linked to this are the necessary transport and infrastructure, housing and skills. The proposal will be considered by Ministers in October/November 2013.

26. Current issues:

- The need to develop an agreed list of priorities, across Oxfordshire, for transport, housing and skill development priorities.
- The need to develop transparent governance, decision making arrangements.
- The need to consider the secretariat and staff support arrangements of the LEP and City Deal. This may include having management arrangement which is independent from the County Council.

**Resources**

27. The City Council has not currently committed any financial resources to the Oxfordshire LEP, although there is a commitment in terms of member and staff time for attending meetings and coordination and communication of decisions.

**Name and contact details of author:-**

**Name:** Val Johnson

**Job title:** Policy and Partnership Team Manager

**Service Area:** Policy Communications and Culture

**Tel:** 01865 0 252209 **e-mail:** vjohnson@oxford.gov.uk

**List of background papers:**

Further information can be found on the web site link below.

<http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/cms/content/about-oxfordshire-local-enterprise-partnership>

**Version number: 3**

## **Annex 1**

### **Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership**

#### **Board members**

***Adrian Shooter CBE Chairman*** Area of responsibility – Infrastructure  
A Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering, Institute of Mechanical Engineers and Chartered Institute of Transport

***Ian Wenman*** Vice Chairman      Area of responsibility – Finance  
Director Wenman Ltd

***Margaret Coles***      Area of responsibility – Broadband  
Chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses, Oxfordshire Branch

***Professor Steve Cowley***  
Director of Culham Centre for Fusion

***Sally Dicketts***  
Principal of Oxford and Cherwell College

***Councillor Ann Ducker MBE***  
Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council

***Nicolas Grant***  
Managing Director, Gas Corporate Markets (part of Centrica)

***Councillor Ian Hudspeth***  
Leader Oxfordshire County Council

***Paul Inman***      Area of responsibility – Communications  
Pro-Vice Chancellor and Dean of Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment, Oxford Brookes University

***Adrian Lockwood***      Area of responsibility – Skills  
Manager Director, Integration Technology Ltd

***Cllr Bob Price***  
Leader of Oxford City Council

***Philip Shadbolt***      Area of responsibility – Business support  
Zelta Consultants Ltd

***Professor Ian Walmsley***      Area of responsibility - Innovation  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, Academic Services and Collections,  
University of Oxford