

**To: City Executive Board**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup>. March 2014**

**Report of: The Scrutiny Committee**

**Title of Report: Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan**

**Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** To report the comments and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee.

**Key decision? Yes**

**Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Gill Sanders**

**Executive Lead Member: Councillor Bob Price**

**Recommendation(s):** For the City Executive Board to say if it agrees or disagrees with the following recommendations.

**Recommendation 1**

**For all members to see the finalised Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan as submitted to Government and kept in touch with the outcomes from this bid.**

**Recommendation 2**

**To provide a “governance structure” below the Board Member representative on the Local Strategic Partnership that can deliver on the aim of keeping all members of Council informed and engaged in the detail of progress against selected projects and the likely outcomes for the City and its residents.**

**Recommendation 3**

**The Board Member and Officers to do all they can to reflect the City’s ambition of reducing inequality in strategic planning for all themes.**

**Recommendation 4**

**The Board member and Officers to do all they can within the Innovative Place theme to produce excellent links to schools at a very early stage to support good quality advice on educational choices and career planning.**

## **Introduction**

1. The Scrutiny Committee considered the report outlining progress towards submitting the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). They were supported in their debate by Robert Hetherington and David Edwards, the Committee would like to thank them for their time and advice.
2. The Committee made a number of comments and recommendations which are presented below.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

3. The Committee heard and understood the status and hopes for this document and the partnership timetable for submission to Government. Concern was expressed that the Plan, or a summary of it, was not available for scrutiny and that the City Executive Board is asked to give formal support and delegation without sight of the document.
4. Officers had a draft executive summary of the Plan which had been agreed that day by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and agreed to circulate this to scrutiny members. The Committee accepted this but expressed their desire to see proposals in more detail and be able to judge what actions mean in practical delivery terms.
5. Committee discussed broad outcomes as expressed in the report and whilst being supportive of the ambition raised a number of issues concerning the “fragility” of proposals if good quality co-operation between partners does not exist. Highlighted in particular was co-operation around housing and the provision of improved utilities infrastructure such as sewage and electricity. The broad view of the Committee was that these proposals should not in any way make Oxford worse for current residents. With this in mind the Committee asked to see a structure beneath the Board Member representative on the LEP that allowed all members to be in touch with the detail of progress against selected projects and the likely outcomes for the City and its residents.
6. Members highlighted the Council’s focus on reducing inequality in the City and expressed disappointment that this Plan was likely not to mention these ambitions. Officers advised that schemes funded through the European Structural Funding Programme would have a focus in this area. The Committee welcomed this but asked officers to do whatever they could through the LEP to see our ambitions in this area linked into the SEP document.
7. Linked to reducing inequality and our ambitions for young people in the City the Committee want actions in the Innovative Place theme to produce excellent links to schools at a very early stage to support good quality advice on educational choices and career planning.

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**Comments from the Director and Board Member**

The recommendations are positive and I am happy to accept them.

**Name and contact details of author:**

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**List of background papers: None**

**Version number: 1**

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