

**To:** Council

**Date:** 5 December 2016

**Report of:** Regeneration, Economy and Partnerships

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

### Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:** To provide members with an update on the work of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership including its changing role, recent strategic developments, and impact on funding attraction and delivery.

**Report approved by:**

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Bob Price

**Policy Framework:** The Corporate Plan

**Recommendation:**

1. That the report be noted.

### **The role and context relating to the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership**

1. The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) is a Limited Company responsible for facilitating the strategic development of the Oxfordshire economy and is now well established as a key strategic partnership promoting economic growth. Chief Executive of the Partnership, Nigel Tipple leads a team of direct staff and seconded employees, who work closely with a network of Economic Development Officers, business representatives, and staff within further and higher education.
2. Jeremy Long was appointed as Board Chair in March, and has a wide-ranging background leading and developing businesses. He is currently CEO for Europe of the Hong-Kong headquartered international railway and property group MTR Corporation. Mr Long has worked extensively with both Westminster and local authorities, most notably with the London Development Agency and London Skills Board. Councillor Bob Price, Leader of Oxford City Council is the City Council's representative on the OxLEP Board and Oxfordshire Skills Board. Richard Venables, Managing Partner of VSL Ltd, is representative of the Oxford City business community, nominated by the OSP. Phil Southall, Managing Director of

the Oxford Bus Company, and Penny Rinta-Suksi, Partner at Blake Morgan are also Oxford based members of the Board.

3. City Council Officers meet with LEP officers on a regular basis to ensure the partnership is representing the city's economic interests. There is also ongoing officer involvement and engagement with the LEP through the Council's Regeneration, Planning, Environmental Sustainability, and Welfare reform teams. Key LEP related partnerships that have involved officers include:
  - a. The Strategic Economic Plan Steering group
  - b. Local Growth Funds Steering Group
  - c. Oxfordshire Skills Board
  - d. Oxfordshire European Structural Investment Funds Committee
  - e. Joint Oxfordshire Business Support group
  - f. The LEP Chief Executive also attends the City Council Economic Growth Steering Group.
  
4. **Strategic Economic Plan (SEP):** Officers have been closely involved in shaping this plan, which was also reviewed by Scrutiny, and discussed at CEB and Council. The Vision for the county's economy that is set out in the SEP is that 'By 2030, Oxfordshire will be recognised as a vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, world leading economy, driven by innovation, enterprise and research excellence.' It focusses on the key themes of research, innovation and business growth by delivering and influencing across four programme areas, connectivity, enterprise, people and place.
  
5. **Areas of joint working**
  - a) Coordination of the Oxfordshire Devolution submission
  - b) Influencing Government on a range of strategic issues in conjunction with the City Council, e.g. the National Infrastructure Commission's work on the Oxford to Cambridge Growth Corridor and the emerging National Industrial Strategy
  - c) Securing and allocating Growth Deal and European Structural Investment Funds
  - d) Collaborating on the provision and resourcing of business support that meets local business needs.
  - e) Collaborating on foreign direct and inward investment attraction, and trade promotion activity with Invest in Oxfordshire (part of the LEP)
  - f) Working on a shared approach to business engagement, to retain and create jobs, including a programme of employer meetings and a range of business forum events
  - g) Skills Strategy development and partnership working to deliver Community Employment Plans related to major local investments
  - h) Conducting research where required, including an ongoing review of availability and demand for innovation and incubation spaces for business
  - i) Refreshing the Strategic Economic Plan (due for publication shortly) and its various sub-strategies.
  
6. **Funding:** A key role of the LEP is securing and distributing resources for delivery of the SEP through a variety of means:

- a. In 2014 Oxfordshire was awarded £55.5m through the City Deal, this programme that is now well established across Apprenticeships, business support, infrastructure and innovation centres, focusing on the Oxfordshire 'Knowledge Spine' of Bicester – Oxford – Science Vale. Much of the City Deal work will complete between March 2017 and 2018. Enhanced funding for apprenticeships ceases in 2017.
- b. OxLEP is also still delivering a €19.3m Implementation Plan that sets out the process for the delivery of the priorities it articulated in the [Oxfordshire European Structural Investment Fund \(ESIF\) Strategy](#). This particular programme is overseen by the Oxfordshire ESIF Committee.
- c. Furthermore, OxLEP, through the current [Strategic Economic Plan](#), negotiated a £208.5 million [Oxfordshire Growth Deal package](#) for a range of transport/connectivity, business support and other projects to be delivered in the period to 2019.
- d. Local Growth Fund 3 bids have been prepared to ensure a pipeline of investment ready strategic economic projects is in place. Oxford has several projects including the Station and Osney Mead Knowledge Park that have competitive funding submissions. At the time of writing, officers were seeking an indication of the likely allocation from Government.
- e. The primary capital funding that has come forward since the last LEP update report in February 2016 was for city centre road works to re-align bus routes and support greater pedestrianisation in the city centre at Queen's Street
- f. Capital funds secured from Government for Oxford and surrounds, where delivery is ongoing include:
  - i. Northern Gateway -£6M
  - ii. Oxpens - £3.5M
  - iii. £15.2m go towards two innovation centres based at Oxford University: the Begbroke Innovation Accelerator at Begbroke Science Park (Cherwell) and the Oxford BioEscalator at the University's Old Road Campus.
  - iv. £26M towards the Western Flood Relief Channel and £0.6m Flood containment at Northway.
  - v. Access to Headington - £8.2m.
  - vi. Centre for Applied Superconductivity - £4.5m
  - vii. Oxfordshire Centre for Technology and Innovation - £4.5m
  - viii. Science Transit (Oxon wide) £35m.

**7. Impact:** OxLEP monitors and reports its impact to the OxLEP Board through a quarterly Operating Plan. In general terms, the LEP's work is now characterised by strategy, influence, coordination and delivery of programmes that directly or indirectly enable job creation/safeguarding/attraction, new homes or improvement of the support and innovation environment for business. Taken together, the projects and programmes the LEP is involved in have the potential to directly or indirectly support c10,000 jobs, c6,000 construction jobs and accelerated housing completions related to new infrastructure, going some way towards enabling the overall projections for job and housing growth in the Strategic Economic Plan.

**8. Partnership Function:** The LEP makes a collective effort to work in partnership with business, local authorities, education and other stakeholders, in what is relatively a complex environment. City council officers are working to help ensure this partnership continues to function well in the city's interests, particularly important as the LEP's role and staff resourcing has grown in recent months.

## **Financial Implications**

The City Council has not been required to make a direct budget contribution to the LEP, but there is a significant amount of resource in kind through member and staff time for attending meetings, coordination and communication of decisions, and matching existing staff costs of European Funded programmes related to business support. There are no additional financial implications as a direct result of this report

## **Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications.

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### **List of background papers:**

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

<http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/>