

**OxLEP Board Meeting**  
**6<sup>th</sup> December 2016**  
**17.00 – 19.00**  
**Activate Learning, City of Oxford College**

**MINUTES**

<b>Board Directors Present:</b>	Jeremy Long (Chair) , Adrian Lockwood (Deputy Chair), Cllr James Mills, Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Alistair Fitt, Richard Venables, Cllr Bob Price, Cllr John Cotton, Sally Dicketts, Andrew Harrison ,Cllr Matt Barber, Cllr Barry Wood, Phil Southall, Penny Rinta-Suksi, Ian Walmsley Joined the meeting at 18:30 – Nigel Tipple
<b>Board Directors Apologies:</b>	Bob Bradley, Phil Shadbolt
<b>Minutes:</b>	Rebecca Harrhy
<b>In attendance:</b>	Lorna Baxter, Maggie Scott, Bev Hindle (OCC) Diarmid Swainson and Hannah Rignell (Cities and Local Growth Team) Richard Byard, Rob Granger (OxLEP) Caroline Green (Oxford City Council) Mark Stone (South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils) Sue Smith ( Cherwell District Council) Joined the meeting at 18:30 – Peter Clark (OCC) and Peter Sloman (Oxford City Council)
<b>Item</b>	
<b>Action</b>	
<b>Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b>	
Apologies – apologies were noted as above	
Declaration of Interest– Sally Dicketts declared a potential interest regarding the Growth Fund item.	
The chair welcomed Hannah Rignell and Diarmid Swainson from DCLG.	
<b>Minutes of Board meeting / AGM meeting / Finance and Audit Committee Meeting</b>	
AGM – the board approved the minutes of the AGM	
Board minutes –Cllr Price noted there is reference to the innovation subgroup, however there is no reference in the minutes regarding their work. Richard Byard updated the members that the subgroup meetings are being arranged with the subgroup responsible for overseeing delivery of the Innovation Strategy.	
Finance and Audit Committee Meeting – The chair brought the Board’s attention to the actions arising from the last meeting on 15 <sup>th</sup> November specifically around audits and introduced our new Head of Corporate Services Rob Granger.	
<b>Items for Decision</b>	
<b>Draft communications strategy</b>	

<p>The chair introduced Heather Power (HP) our account director at CubanEight who delivered a presentation on the first draft of the communications strategy.</p> <p>Heather presented a review of CubanEight’s work to date and recommendations for developing a more strategic approach to communications moving forward. She confirmed that the purpose of the strategy is to ensure have the right level of resource for teams to run their own media channels, but to integrate them more closely into the OxLEP communication platform.</p> <p>HP noted the need for developing brand guidelines and key messaging – including a shared elevator pitch for OxLEP.</p> <p>Adrian Lockwood mentioned the SEMLEP database, and for OxLEP to look at the model which SEMLEP use. AL mentioned that the councils could help with contact lists however the issue of data consent was raised.</p> <p>It was agreed that Cuban Eight present the finalised communications strategy to the March 2017 Board meeting.</p> <p>Action: Add to the March agenda</p>	<p>RH</p>
<p><b>Strategic Economic Plan ( SEP) Refresh</b></p>	
<p>Dawn Pettis updated the board on the updated SEP, stating it was informed by a series of workshops which engaged approximately 300 attendees, as well as on-line consultation.</p> <p>Cllr Cotton stated South and Vale are supportive of the document however there are still a few areas of concern which he will raise more directly with Nigel and Dawn when they meet in January.</p> <p>Cllr Price suggested the document could be updated to reflect recent policy announcements such as Autumn Statement and national infrastructure</p> <p>The board approved the SEP document for production and release.</p> <p>Members thanked Dawn for the hard work which has gone into producing the SEP</p>	
<p><b>Items for Information</b></p>	
<p><b>CEO’s update report</b></p>	
<p>Richard Byard presented the paper of behalf of the CEO.</p> <p>He advised the Board that OxLEP attend MIPIM UK in October with other Thames Valley LEP’s, advising on the success and outlined the opportunity to promote the Oxfordshire growth ambition to a wider audience.</p> <p>We are currently approaching the final quarter of the city deal programme. Oxfordshire Apprentices staff contracts are extended for an additional 12 months. As part of this refresh we are launching Oxfordshire Apprenticeship awards.</p> <p>He noted that Oxfordshire Business Support was successful in securing £2m ERDF funding and that the contract is now signed. He stated a further £5.2m innovation bid was being finalised for submission in January.</p> <p>He provided an update on the revised team of 9 Network Navigators, 6 funded through</p>	

<p>ERDF.</p> <p>Action: Circulate the contacts and information regarding Network Navigators</p> <p>RB advised we had been successful in our Science Innovation Audit submission – one of 13 now approved. Our SIA focuses on four sector areas with significant global potential and points of intersection; “Digital Health”, “Space-led Data Applications”, “Autonomous Vehicles”, “Technologies underpinning quantum computing”.</p> <p>These areas reflect OxLEP’s Strategic Economic Plan ambition underpinned by innovation-led growth. Although at different stages of maturity and market penetration, these areas are complementary and face similar challenges/opportunities. These are emerging, disruptive technologies that could transform their specific sectors as well as the wider economy.</p> <p>Autumn statement – from an Oxfordshire perspective this is generally positive with potential opportunities as further detail emerges around the various programmes and funding streams the Chancellor announced.</p> <p>National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) Report – much of the NIC report detail was confirmed in the Autumn Statement, this is positive news for Oxfordshire as it includes funding awards for the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway ( £27m) and further commitment to the East – West rail project ( £110m).</p> <p>DS noted that the process for securing funding following the Autumn Statement announcements was yet to be published but that DCLG will keep LEPs informed as more details emerge.</p> <p>The chair welcomed the East – West corridor announcements and noted a potential conflict of interest regarding EWR because of his substantive role with MTR.</p> <p>Lorna Baxter updated the Board on the financial information detailed at Annex 2. She noted that the City Deal/LGF allocations are allocated by financial year and we are required to spend this in full in 16/17. This has been possible to date due to the scale and flexibility in the capital programme. We would keep this approach under review.</p> <p>Borrowing profile – There is an agreement to vary the capital borrowing requirements within agreed tolerances at the last board. The phasing of this draw down has been amended to reflect the latest agreed position.</p> <p>We are awaiting an update on the EZ 1 Business rate income, actual and forecast. We expect a report to the Board in March confirming the position.</p>	<p>RB to provide info for RH to circulate</p>
<p><b>AOB</b></p>	
<p><b>LGF update:</b></p> <p>The chair reminded the board that we made a submission of over £380m into a fund of £1.8bn available nationally. The pot was 4 times oversubscribed across the country with areas that were moving towards a devolution deal potentially receiving enhanced allocations.</p> <p>DS explained CLG heard the disappointment across all the country and explained the reasoning.</p>	

RB noted that we had received an indicative allocation of around £15m – £20m originally. This and other indicative allocations triggered robust challenge from LEP’s in the south east. Our allocation was subsequently confirmed at £24.16m.

The LGF steering group have been reviewing the allocation against the programme and had developed an LGF funding proposal for use of these funds. It was noted that given the allocation we were unable to consider funding for transport projects but that these may be able to bid for pinch point funding, EZ Business Rates and other funding opportunities that are flagged in the Autumn Statement.

Cllr Cotton raised his concerns about the outcomes and whether these projects will happen with fewer funds. He remains concerned that the original bid was too ambitious.

RB responded to output that the figures listed are at 100% funding allocations per project and that we’d begin discussion with project sponsors on what is achievable within the reduced funding envelope. This would commence once the LGF allocation and funding profile was confirmed by government.

Cllr Price would like to record our disappointment that Oxfordshire has not received a larger allocation.

**Devolution and Local Government Reform Update – this item was taken last due to the late return of colleagues from the CLG meeting**

Sue Smith ( SS) updated the board of the districts devolution position reminding the board that it was over 12 months since the initial devolution bid was developed and that effectively we now had a new government.

SS noted government had agreed the first two tier devolution bid in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough which will:

- Generate £20m p.a. for 30 years
- £100m housing income for 5 years

She stated that CEO’s have been leading the devolution work collectively with support from OxLEP. Going forward district’s believe we need to develop the ‘collective pitch’ to government and set out how to deliver savings and improve services through transformation. All Districts have committed to seeking formal support for devolution based on the creation of new unitary authorities.

SS referred back to the minute from the growth board and the agreed statement from the group which is: *‘Following the publication of the PwC and Grant Thornton reports on local government in Oxfordshire it is clear that there are several areas where joint working may help us realise significant savings and improvements of public services. A working group should be established including Chief Executives and Leaders of local authorities, CCG and LEP to explore how these transformational changes can be progressed in areas including, but not exclusively: infrastructure, skills, economic development, strategic spatial planning, public assets, business rates, health and social care. The working group will investigate, but will not be restricted to reviewing the future function of the Oxfordshire Growth Board and to consider feasibility of establishing a combined author for Oxfordshire’.*

**Update from County – Bev Hindle and Maggie Scott**

BH referenced that the SOS is keen to see proposals for Oxfordshire, a position signalled in a letter to the County Leader in October 16.

BH and MS presented their case for Local Government reform stating that both the PwC and Grant Thornton reports confirmed that current structures are sub-optimal and both confirmed that stronger decision making is needed. The County council are proposing a single unitary council with five area executive boards.

In terms of devolution OCC are committed to find a solution that works for all. County have concerns whether a Mayor is the right model for Oxfordshire as this could potentially be adding an additional tier of governance.

Action: BH to provide County presentation for circulation with the minutes.

**BH to action**

**Update from DCLG meeting this earlier today**

Nigel Tipple, Peter Clark, Peter Sloman had attended a meeting with Paul Rowsell (DCLG), Frank Wilson ( West Ox) and David Hill ( South & Vale). There were a number of issues discussed;

1. Devolution deals must support enhanced economic growth
2. Devolution and local government reform are separate processes and not mutually exclusive
3. Ref Mayor – any significant devolution deal must include a Mayor. The Mayor must have significant powers.
4. A number of the devolution deals in the last few months have failed as local councils have not been able to reach an agreed option.
5. Government are only interested in developing devolution deals where everyone is committed to it.

It was confirmed by Officials that DCLG will be providing guidance on devolution in January 2017.

Cllr Price queried the powers of the Mayor. Noting that this was an issue discussed with Officials they had made it clear that in all of the orders put in place to date, there is a requirement that any decision of the combined authority must have Mayoral approval. Cllr Wood noted that Oxfordshire performs well and we are not seeking to address a failing economy and that DCLG Officials may want to reflect on the difference a deal here could make.

Ian W endorsed the points made by Cllr Price and Cllr Wood that Oxfordshire is not a place failing to deliver, however, he reminded the Board that time was not on our side and we needed action.

Action: It was agreed that OxLEP would support our Local Authority partners in developing a devolution proposal for Oxfordshire predicated upon establishing a mayoral combined authority. The next iteration will be presented to OxLEP board in March.

In parallel, it was noted that the County Council would continue to develop its proposal for a single unitary authority for Oxfordshire, as these were not mutually exclusive.

Cllr Hudspeth suggested it is unfortunate that the local government reform updates hadn't been given enough time for discussion and that there was a big decision to be made.

The chairman closed discussion suggesting we charge our respective officers with responsibility to develop the revised devolution deal over the next two/three months with the next iteration due in March.

**All**