

## **Draft notes of the Oxford Economic Growth Steering Group Meeting**

Venue: Said Business School, Park End Street, Oxford OX1 1HP

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016

### **Attendees:**

Cllr Bob Price, Leader Oxford City Council

Richard Venables, VSL & Partners and Oxford Business Representative on OxLEP Board (Vice Chair)

Andrew Baxter, Oxford Brookes University

Matt Peachey, Oxford City Council

Peter Reynolds, City of Oxford College

Jonathan Riggall, Peter Brett Associates

Nick Scott-Ram MBE, Oxford Academic Health Sciences Network

David Edwards, Oxford City Council

Tom Morris, Oxford City Council

Anthony Mtitimila, Oxford University and OxLEP

Dr Phil Clare, University of Oxford

Sir Andrew Dilnot, Nuffield College

Lynn Shepherd, Executive Chair of Venturefest Oxford

Professor Ian Walmsley, Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Oxford

Nigel Tipple, Chief Executive Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP)

Sebastian Johnson, Oxford Strategic Partnership

Laurie-Jane Taylor, City Centre Manager

Llewelyn Morgan, Oxfordshire County Council

### **1. Welcome and apologies**

Cllr. Bob Price welcomed everyone. Apologies had been received from Anne Augustine (OxLEP), Simon Cox (Centrica), David Hartley (Oxford Brookes University), Richard Rosser (B4 / The InOxford Group) and Dr Stuart Wilkinson (University of Oxford)

### **2. Scenario Planning – Draft Oxfordshire Green Paper**

Professor Ian Walmsley (Pro-Vice Chancellor, Innovation and Research, University of Oxford) provided a presentation on the background to the preparation of the Green Paper. The University were assisted by consultants (Shared Intelligence) who helped to facilitate both 'internal' and 'external' workshops with key stakeholders. The motivation for the University to produce this paper was a recognition that it had a presence on the global stage and therefore it was important to articulate its vision for the next 20 years to provide clear direction for the University itself and to understand how that fits in with the ambitions for Oxford and its key partners / stakeholders. Recent experience with the City Deal and the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) has highlighted the importance of partnership working to deliver shared ambitions for Oxford. The University consider that one of its key aims is to develop its role as a global leading research centre. The development of research and

innovation at the University is subject to three key priorities: global reach, interdisciplinary, and ensuring impact.

**Innovation and partnership:** It does appear that there is an alignment already with the LEP and SEP refresh, together with the publication of the Innovation Strategy. This provides an opportunity to consider what the sub-region will look like in the future. On the global stage the big three are well established, namely Silicon Valley, New England and South California; but there is now a real opportunity for Oxford to fulfil its potential. Isis Innovation now have a new CEO and new sources of capital regional funding for spin-outs.

**Future research profile:** There has been increased research activity and greater opportunity for exploiting knowledge. The infrastructure needed to deliver growth includes more space, better transport connections throughout the 'knowledge spine' and more housing to retain and recruit staff.

**City Deal and Knowledge Spine:** Innovation is already happening, but more incubators and science park facilities would help to realise this growth potential.

**Dynamic reason:** The key is to ensure that the level of economic growth needed by the sub-region does take place but is carried out in a way that properly respects the environment.

**Realising the vision:** To ensure that Oxford continues to develop as a world-class centre for research and that this work makes its contribution to the economic growth of both the region and nation.

#### **Discussion:**

The following key comments were made to inform the discussion:

- Space and opportunity for Innovation Strategy to feed into the SEP refresh. This is timely given the public consultation that is going live tomorrow. There are also future investment strategies, including the need for more start-up and grow-on space (Nigel Tipple).
- It is important to have an understanding of what we mean by 'quality of life' (Professor Ian Walmsley)
- The SEP refresh will help to broaden its scope looking at the role of culture, heritage and tourism within the economy and the impact of growth on the environment. There is a lot happening at the moment such as 'devolution' proposals, the preparation of a new Local Plan 2036 seeking 'radical change' to address some key issues, such as housing, transport and student numbers. A new City centre strategy will be developed to provide a spatial dimension to the Local Plan proposals (Cllr. Bob Price)
- How planning is taken forward requires careful engagement and consultation (Professor Ian Walmsley)

- Strategically is Oxfordshire's voice large enough? The work being done with industry does make the area special (Nick Scott-Ram)
- Need to consider how relationships with Government are used. David Willetts has provided some helpful engagement, his view sees Government's view on Oxford as 'crowded-in'; so money ploughed in will not bring benefits. (Professor Walmsley)
- The 'Fast Growth Cities' partnership is perhaps the way ahead, to ensure recognition for smaller, yet strong economic contributors. We can make a case collectively with others to rival Northern Powerhouse, Midlands Engine etc. (Matt Peachey)
- There are two key elements at work, firstly macro-government, through a joined-up group. Secondly at the 'micro-level' how we provide more space going forward will be key; given the challenges facing local authorities, not least some of those from planning limitations (Richard Venables)
- A 'shared vision' is still required, whilst the signatories of the Green Paper were doing so on a personal basis. The University of Oxford does already have plans for expansion in the future on campuses involved with medical science, Osney, ROQ, Science Area are all key to the development of R and D (Professor Walmsley)
- In a broader sense regardless of what we all do GVA will increase and population growth continue. The key however will be working together with partners to understand better how this economic growth can be encouraged through collaboration. Nuffield have entered into a 'joint venture' arrangement with the City Council to realise these ambitions through the development of some key sites such as the Island site, Jam Factory and Oxpens (Sir Andrew Dilnot)
- The City Council fully support this collaborative approach to bring forward these development sites to drive economic growth (Cllr Bob Price)
- In relation to Oxpens the City Council are working with Nuffield to look at opportunities for delivery of this site, which has strategic importance in the West End. There is support in principle for the development of a Masterplan for Osney Mead, and potential for exploring funding from Government. Westgate is already happening and is planned to open in October 2017. Devolution discussions with neighbouring local authorities are taking place, although these are difficult. But Oxford must do what it can within its own boundaries. The Government however will want certainty of delivery, similar to the City Deal, so a 'strategic case' needs to be made; transport is an issue which we need to do better at (David Edwards)
- Important to develop a clear 'narrative' to go alongside the 'devolution' discussions (Nigel Tipple)
- Need to understand how the 'Green Paper' and the University Paper on Innovation can be taken forward and key elements included within the SEP refresh. Then should be put to Government.
- There is a need for the expected growth to be linked directly to an 'infrastructure plan' that will help to make out the case to support development (Jonathan Riggall)

- The Innovation Strategy together with the broad ambitions of the Green Paper together with the stakeholder feedback from the consultation will help to give new direction to the SEP refresh. An Investment Plan will then be developed similar to that of the City Deal. Infrastructure requirements will be a key focus of the devolution discussions that will support the key development sites to be taken forward. (Nigel Tipple)
- The final draft of the Innovation Strategy available tomorrow. The scope however will be promoting innovation for any project not just focused solely on R & D knowledge sector. (Dr. Phil Clare)
- Over the next six months Government need to be made aware that economic growth in Oxfordshire is already taking place and with significantly more to come. The Green Paper provides a good start to setting out the University's ambitions and how these can be aligned with those of partners. The 'vehicle' for taking this forward should be OxLEP together with an approach to local MP's such as David Cameron and Nicola Blackwood. (Cllr. Bob Price)

**Action: To invite an officer from Planning Policy to attend the next OEGS Group Meeting and provide a presentation on the preparation of the Local Plan 2036. This should include some advice and guidance on how partners, such as the University of Oxford can engage with the City Council as part of the Public Consultation stage and the need to ensure key messages from the Green Paper, Innovation Strategy and SEP refresh will be used to help inform the policy content of the new Local Plan. (Planning Policy Team)**

### **3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

The notes of the last meeting which had already been circulated and were agreed as accurate with no amendments made.

**3a) European Capital of Innovation Bid:** Oxford was short-listed within the last nine cities, but did not win on this occasion. However the video was very well received by the audience and it is understood that the Panel were impressed by the bid from Oxford. First place was awarded to Amsterdam, second Turin and third to Paris. The European Commissioner was invited to visit Oxford and see some of the innovative work already being undertaken first hand. Overall the experience was positive with good partnership working on the bid and excellent contacts made in Brussels, which will be important for a future Capital of Innovation bid and other bids for European funding.

**3b) Start-up / Grow on space:** Matt Peachey reported that the 'Start-Up and Grow-On Space' Group had now met on two occasions to discuss the issue whether there was a shortage of space for start-ups and grow-on businesses within the City centre. The view of those partners attending the meeting confirmed that there was a shortage of office space and each representative reported on what they were doing to address it. Oxford Innovation now manage a number of start-up units in the Town Hall; the Oxford Centre for Innovation

(OCI) in Macclesfield House have recently consolidated their uses within the building and released the basement for a co-working area which is now in operation. The Oxford Trust has recently purchased a site in Headington Quarry, which will shortly be subject to a planning application for the redevelopment of the site to create some new purpose made accommodation for grow-on businesses, releasing some space from OCI. The City of Oxford College are actively pursuing the use of some spare office / lab accommodation that is going to be refurbished and let to a new occupier, discussions are underway. The University of Oxford are investigating the use of some of their vacant premises for 'pop-up' short-term leases.

**Action: To update the Steering Group as necessary as and when further progress is made on this project.**

**Action: Nuffield College to be invited to the next meeting of the Start Up and Grow on space group.**

**3c) Osney Mead Update:** Phil Clare reported that there were some legal challenges about letting the space to those not directly connected to the University (Act 1925), such as some sites within the Osney Mead area. Nuffield suggested that there could be some potential for start-up and grow-on space to be incorporated within the Island site. Phil Clare confirmed that some recent Innovation Districts have been set up in other countries that promote innovation uses as part and integral to a greater mix of uses including residential, so people can really live close to their place of work.

**3d) Skills and Community Plans:** Tom Morris reported that the Community Skills Plan Technical Advice Note (TAN) had now been agreed with the Growth Board, which seeks to obtain agreement amongst all Oxfordshire Local Authorities about the need for planning officers to secure Skills Plans from developers and landowners on major sites. Within the City there are three currently being delivered or agreed, Westgate (secured), Barton (agreed in principle) and there is one being developed for the Tower block refurbishment in Blackbird Leys.

**4. Fast Growth Cities Group:** Cllr Bob Price briefly reported on the launch of the Fast Growth Cities Growth Group comprising Oxford, Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Swindon and Norwich. The Fast Growth Cities perform strongly on a range of economic indicators, including productivity and share of knowledge-based jobs. The Fast Growth Cities Report published by Centre for Cities had been circulated prior to the meeting. The report looks at the economic contribution of the Fast Growth Cities to the UK, highlighting their shared and distinctive economic characteristics that make supporting these cities important. It also examines the key barriers to growth the cities are increasingly facing, and that need to be overcome to allow these cities to continue to contribute to the UK economy at the rate they have been.

**Action: To provide a regular update on the work being undertaken by the Fast Growth Cities Group and circulate any key findings. (Matt Peachey)**

**5. Update from the OxLEP and SEP Refresh:** Nigel Tipple reported that the public consultation on the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) refresh would formally go live tomorrow on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016. At the end of the consultation period a report will be prepared summarising the key points made and the response from officers. This together with a covering report and the amended SEP will be taken to Cabinet for approval.

**Action: The OxLEP to provide a future update to the Group on the comments received from the Public Consultation stage and explain how these have influenced the content of the final version of the SEP. Produce a 'road-map' to show how the SEP refresh together with the Green Paper and Innovation Strategy will be taken forward to seek support from local MP's and key partners to lobby central Government.**

**6. Business in Oxford Update:** This event will be taking place tomorrow on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016, and there were still opportunities to attend if any member of the Steering Group had not already booked their place.

**Action: To provide a brief review of this event. (Richard Rosser and Sebastian Johnson)**

## **7. Next meetings**

The dates for the next meetings in 2016 were confirmed for the following:

- 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 10-12, Room JHB202, John Henry Brookes Building, Oxford Brookes University, Headington, Oxford OX3 0BP
- 8<sup>th</sup> September 2016, 10-12, venue to be confirmed
- 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016, 10-12, venue to be confirmed