

# **Draft notes of the Oxford Economic Growth Steering Group Meeting Held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

## **Attendees:**

Cllr Bob Price, Oxford City Council (Chair)  
Richard Venables, ProOxford Group and VSL & Partners (Vice Chair)  
Dr Phil Clare, University of Oxford  
Simon Cox, Centrica  
David Edwards, Oxford City Council  
Dr Tom Flanagan, Oxfordshire County Council  
Ian Francis, City of Oxford College  
David Hartley, Oxford Brookes University  
Robert Hetherington, Oxford City Council  
Giles Ingram, Experience Oxfordshire  
Sebastian Johnson, Oxford Strategic Partnership  
Jonathan Riggall, Peter Brett Associates  
Richard Rosser, The In Oxford Group / B4  
Barbara Hammond, Low Carbon Oxford  
Anne Augustine, Low Carbon Oxford  
David Hawes, Federation of Small Businesses

Apologies were received from:

Robyn Bourne, Federation of Small Businesses  
Michael Crofton-Briggs, Oxford City Council  
Tom Morris, Oxford City Council  
Nigel Tipple, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)  
Dave Waller, Oxfordshire County Council (Invest in Oxfordshire) and Oxfordshire LEP  
Dr Stuart Wilkinson, University of Oxford

Bob Price welcomed all and highlighted some recent data charts based on new census data that may interest the group relating to commuting (net inflow of over 30,000 a day) and centres and sectors for employment in the city. The charts (produced by Mark Fransham, Social Policy Officer at Oxford City Council) will be circulated and all members will be added to the mailing list for the monthly chart.

Bob also highlighted the bulletin on labour market information recently published by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's Skills Board - <http://www.oxfordshireskillsboard.org/news/oxfordshire-labour-market-information-available-now/>

Bob reported that a group of people from Oxford and Oxfordshire are taking a trip to Cambridge to look at enterprise/innovation development and science park development – this is a follow up to the publication of the Oxfordshire Innovation Engine report. Bob will report back at the next meeting.

## **1. Notes of the last meeting and matters arising**

The notes of the last meeting were agreed and the following updates were given as matters arising.

## 1.1 Terms of Reference

Sebastian presented the revised Terms of Reference for the Group and these were agreed.

*Note: Following on from the meeting, Richard Venables suggested that we should include under Role that the Group should promote an annual business exhibition in Oxford for the furtherance of communication between local government and businesses.*

## 1.2 Oxford Smart City Vision

Sebastian reported that the Partnership Project Board has made progress and the University of Oxford has kindly agreed that Dr Hugh Aldridge, Director of Development – Corporate can commit time until the end of the year to act as Project Director. Hugh was previously at Berkeley and was involved in developing the vision and strategy for San Francisco. Consultants to work alongside the Board in developing the vision are being recruited.

## 1.3 Oxford Economic Growth Strategy Refresh

Robert reported that the refresh will be going ahead but will be started in the new year after the conclusion and announcement of successful bids in the second round of Local Growth Fund (LGF2). Robert confirmed that Northern Gateway is the priority for funding from LGF2.

A discussion about how better to clearly and simply communicate successes, priorities and bids took place and it was agreed that Richard Venables and Robert will liaise with Mandy Scruby at the Local Enterprise Partnership who leads on PR and comms.

Bob Price reported that the Growth Board has been established and this is the body that will be delivering the City Deal.

## 2. Low Carbon Economy

Anne Augustine presented the findings of the Low Carbon Economy report (presentation attached) and reported that there will be a formal launch of the report at the end of October 2014.

Key findings indicate that Oxfordshire's low carbon economy is worth > £1.15bn per year in sales, which is 7% of the County's GVA. The sector employs nearly 9,000 people in more than 570 businesses. There is 'cluster' expertise in building technologies, alternative fuels / alternative fuel vehicles and renewable electricity. The report states that private / public investment of £100m per year in the low carbon economy could create an additional 10,000 jobs and contribute ~ £1bn annually to Oxfordshire's economy by 2030.

The presentation was well received and the following key points were made in discussion:

- FSB offered to assist with the dissemination of information and links to small businesses – Anne to pick up with Robyn
- SMEs entering buildings with poor energy ratings will soon require upgrade and refurbishment – need to be aware of this and ensure we keep these businesses in Oxford rather than lose them to other cities. This may lead to an opportunity for Oxford to lead on low carbon and heritage
- Tom Flanagan stated that he was hoping that the report would be more of a "localised mini Stern Report" that focused on the decisions needed to be taken to deal with the big challenges locally

e.g. flooding and mass rapid transit. He expressed concern that key imperatives haven't come out and felt this may be a lost opportunity. This raised the applicability of these things globally – be leader and develop answers and solutions that can be applied and sold elsewhere by Oxford businesses.

- Simon Cox offered Centrica's help in joining up work in this area – Anne and Simon to discuss separately
- There is an opportunity to market an innovation centre – Anne tasked with speaking to Inward Investment colleagues at Invest in Oxfordshire

Anne and Barbara Hammond were thanked for their time and the presentation. It was agreed that the Steering Group will be kept up to date with respect to the launch and that a short update be available for a future meeting.

### **3. Business Engagement**

#### **3.1 Business in Oxford 2015 Update**

Richard Rosser confirmed that Business in Oxford (BiO) 2015 will be taking place at the Said Business School on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015. It will be a whole day split into a morning session (7.30am – lunch) and afternoon session (2pm – 7.30pm). A range of Pods will take place in both sessions with some repeats from last year e.g. Big Brands. There will be more time for refreshments and networking than in 2014.

Sponsorship opportunities are available with confirmed sponsors including Oxford City Council, Oxford Strategic Partnership and Oxfordshire LEP. City of Oxford College are working with Richard again to supply volunteer helpers.

It was noted that there will be a Gaming pod – Ian Francis reported that City of Oxford College is unable to meet demand for places on gaming development training and courses. 2000 jobs in the gaming sector exist in Oxfordshire

Further updates will be provided at future meetings.

Richard also highlighted an event taking place on 28 October, 11am – 3pm at British Gas which will include a tour of their building which is BREEAM rated A+

#### **3.2 Proposal for an Oxford Enterprise Week of events**

Robert Hetherington outlined possible plans for a week of enterprise and business events in 2015, starting with BiO2015 and ending with Venturefest 2015 (8<sup>th</sup> July). The idea was well received and the following suggestions were made and support offered:

- Smaller seminars - repeating pods from BiO at different venues
- Apprenticeships
- Early stage finance
- Business in the Community – links with schools and businesses – by next summer evidence of how this is working – theme around education and business might be good
- Badge as Oxford Enterprise Week – get key media support
- Phil Clare suggested a conversation with the new Chair of Venturefest

An update will be provided at future meetings

#### **4. Transport Update**

Tom Flanagan provided an update (presentation attached for information). He reported that in the last 18 months considerable amount of funding has been brought in. Key projects for Oxford include:

- Access to Headington – funding in place
- North Oxford –
  - Roundabouts – asked if these will be future proofed for Northern Gateway, Tom commented that he was confident that the measures in place would be fit for that purpose
  - Oxford Parkway Station (and park and ride) – expanded number of lanes in and out of site. Improvements will take place before station opens
- City centre – Frideswide Square, Station, Botley Road bridge, The Plain

The County Council will be producing the Oxford Transport Strategy which will be launched for formal public consultation in 2015. The Strategy will run from 2015 to 2031.

In addition Tom reported on other initiatives including a pilot for driverless cars taking place in Oxfordshire and the discussions and opportunities for mass rapid transit connecting the knowledge spin (Harwell – City – Bicester). And also possibilities for the eastern arc and into city centre

The following points were made in discussion:

- It was noted that 60% sustainable travel mode in Oxford, this compares to 30% in other cities and the rest of the County – this figure is trending upwards in Oxford, down in other cities
- Plans in Headington need to encourage people away from cars – greater capacity to be got out in certain areas, e.g. buses, but in road capacity we are getting close to full physical limits. Therefore, step changes needed
- Tom confirmed that thought into timing and phasing has been given in an attempt to minimise disruption and work on alternative routes and plans are underway. A campaign to promote Oxford as open for business during the works will be undertaken. Giles Ingram to discuss further with Bev Hindle at the County Council about the open for business campaign and funding available to support the campaign

#### **5. Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) update**

Bob Price and Richard Venables provided a short update on the current work and focus of the LEP:

- Three big areas – skills, infrastructure and transport
- Skills strategy – developed by the Oxfordshire Skills Board - commitment to expand number of apprenticeships to 550 – any interest in developing apprenticeships please talk to Richard Byard at the County Council
- Infrastructure: Business Rate increment from Enterprise Zone - pre-committed to number of projects – access to Harwell and Milton Park. Debate in last meeting of how much money will be available and whether money may be available for other projects. Work still to be done.
- LGF2 – bidding as discussed earlier - prioritised by autumn to go into government

- Housing – City Deal agreement accelerated 7.5k homes. More recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment has produced new, higher numbers. Delays on local plans at Districts. Work in progress – significant changes won't occur until plans agreed. City Council is launching a route map and paper on housing growth which include options for Urban Extensions – Paper to be circulated with notes

Nigel Tipple, Chief Executive of the LEP will be asked to provide a detailed report on the LEP and its work at the next meeting in December.

## **6. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 10.00 – 12.00. If any organisations would like to host the meetings please let Sebastian know.

Dates for 2015 will be set and circulated.

The meeting closed at 12.00.