

# **Shareholder Committee (Cabinet Committee)**

**Tuesday 25 March 2025**

## **ADDENDA**

### **EXEMPT ITEMS**

In the event that any Member or Officer wishes to discuss the information set out in the annexes to Agenda Item 6 or 7, the Committee will be invited to resolve to exclude the public for the consideration of the Annex by passing a resolution in relation in the following terms:

"that the public be excluded during the consideration of the Annexes since it is likely that if they were present during that discussion there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below the item in the Agenda."

THE **ANNEXES** TO THE ITEM NAMED HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC AND SHOULD BE REGARDED AS '**CONFIDENTIAL**' BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS ENTITLED TO RECEIVE THEM.

### **6. Approval of Company Reserved Item (Pages 1 - 48)**

*Cabinet Member: Leader*

*Forward Plan Ref: 2025/048*

*Contact: Sadie Patamia, Corporate Governance Manager*

*([Sadie.Patamia@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Sadie.Patamia@oxfordshire.gov.uk))*

#### **Report by Director of Economy and Place (SC6)**

The information in this case is exempt in that it falls within the following prescribed categories:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The **annexes** containing exempt information under the above paragraph is attached.

**The Shareholder Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**

**Support the recommendations of the Enterprise Oxfordshire company board held on 25 March 2025 to:**

- a) Approve the Business Plan and Budget for 2025/26 (see Annex 1 and 2 respectively).**

## ENTERPRISE OXFORDSHIRE BUSINESS PLAN 25/26 - REDACTED TO REMOVE SENSITIVE FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### About us

Enterprise Oxfordshire is an Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) owned company. Our purpose is to support inclusive economic prosperity for Oxfordshire, its residents, communities and businesses.

Previously operating as Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) for over a decade we are an established and trusted economic development organisation that supports the Oxfordshire 'whole system' to deliver the following services;

- Skills programmes – apprenticeship support, co-investment with the Careers & Enterprise Company to help every young person find their best next step, adult skills bootcamps in a range of sectors with identified skills and labour shortages and labour market intelligence
- Socio-economic inclusion - our Social Contract programme developed to address inequalities, provides intensive support to help remove barriers to socio-economic inclusion to some of our most marginalized communities and to maximise apprenticeship levy retention locally.
- Business Support – helping our small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs to maximise their potential by offering a range of fully funded support for every stage of business, from start-up to growth.
- Business representation – enabling the voice of Oxfordshire's businesses to inform economic planning and strategy development
- Support Inbound Investment/Relocation and outbound Export/Trade for Oxfordshire Businesses alongside active management of a joint Department of Business and Trade (B&T) investor pipeline. Managing the Oxford Calling digital investment promotion platform for local, national and global markets and sectors – No B&T resource provided - currently funded through leveraged core/EZ funds
- Delivery of government programmes; in our case these are; Growth Hub – funded via Department of Business & Trade (DBT); Careers Hub - funded by OxLEP co-investment with Department of Education;

July 2024 saw a significant shift in the national political landscape with a new Labour administration having a clear focus on economic growth. In December 2024 HMG published the English Devolution White Paper, which taken alongside the government's Green Paper, Invest 2035: the UK's modern Industrial Strategy plot a clear direction for economic policy based on opportunities for greater devolution at local/sub-regional levels. Clearly devolution will present several new opportunities, potential new partnerships and the opportunity to potentially deliver services across a wider area. Whilst Oxfordshire has signalled its intent to engage in 'fast-track' devolution discussions it is unlikely that new arrangements will be in place before 2026/27 at the earliest so our business plan focuses on the immediate 'pre-devolution landscape' and can be amended and updated as required.

Our new Business Plan responds to the clear direction from our new Member, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) following the Transfer of Functions and Governance changes adopted on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. It has been prepared with the guidance of the Transition Working Group (TWG) chaired by the County Council Chief Executive and supports the agreed Strategic Objectives of the Council.

Our approach sets out our core service offer – the activities necessary to provide an effective baseline service across our prioritised functions to our residents, communities and businesses whilst responding to budgetary pressures locally and nationally. This approach follows our previous business plans where we have set out our 'core service offer' whilst being alert to new funding opportunities as they arise – ERDF, UKSPF and Skill Bootcamps for example

In doing so we have responded to the clear direction of OCC and its Cabinet to focus our activities on the extant OCC Strategic Priorities listed below. Whilst these are likely to be reviewed in the summer of 2025 following local elections and changes in the national policy landscape its unlikely to result in significant deviation – we will keep these under review on an annual basis with engagement from OCC.

*SP1 - Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work*

*SP2 - Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire*

*SP3 - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents*

*SP9 - Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit*

With a new government policy landscape, we would expect our business plan to be flexible and responsive to new priorities, policies and opportunities as they emerge.

### **National and local policy context**

April 2024 saw the previous national administration formally end its support for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) with core functions being transferred to upper tier authorities – in our case to our new Member Oxfordshire County Council. Transition has been delivered in many ways across the country, many LEPs having either been integrated into upper tier authorities/Mayoral Combined Authorities, or new local solutions adopted to reflect local circumstances and priorities. Government expects the following LEP functions carried out under previous LEP funding agreements to now be exercised by upper tier local authorities:

- Business representation – Business Voice

- Strategic economic planning
- Delivery of government programmes; in our case these are; Growth Hub – funded via Department of Business & Trade (DBT); Careers Hub - funded by OxLEP co-investment with Department of Education; managing strong DBT investment pipeline for Oxfordshire (no funds received)

Oxfordshire County Council and partners took a pragmatic approach to transition that saw the OXLEP Ltd company retained as an arms-length 'teckal' company, and rebranded to Enterprise Oxfordshire, working to support the delivery of Oxfordshire's and the County Council's strategic priorities.

Operating as an arms-length 'teckal' company provides OCC with a unique opportunity to build on the strong foundations and experience developed over a decade by OxLEP, to which OCC, the City and District Councils have been founding members and directors alongside University, FE College and importantly Business representation. This enabled the company to operate in a professional, agile and responsive way with a strong reputation for delivery across government, business and communities. The company structure allows OCC to capitalise on this capability through;

- the ability to operate in a more commercial manner than most local authority departments whilst maintaining full control
- the opportunity to explore traded services in support of OCC priorities
- the ability to move at pace and respond to funding and business development opportunities that are aligned to our business plan and OCC priorities
- being internally aligned with strong governance and oversight whilst having credible and trusted external reach
- building upon the extensive corporate knowledge, expertise and capability of the team
- leveraging the investment (of time, commitment and funding) of partners to shared deliver priorities
- an experienced, credible, innovative and "fleet of foot" team that knows Oxfordshire, has a strong national connections and track record of delivery – including complex EU programmes, has the 'ear' of many stakeholders, Government departments & agencies, delivering at pace and to budget
- robust project and programme management experience underpinned by successful delivery, risk management and programme compliance

Government have set a clear ambition for sustainable place-based growth supported by devolution of programmes and powers to localities. With a strong track record of delivery, significant specialist knowledge, experience, 'corporate'

memory and expertise we are well positioned to support the devolution of programmes aligned to our key service areas – for example devolved Adult Skills Budgets, employability support and greater flexibility in the use of Apprenticeship Levy.

For many years we have demonstrated our ability to deliver at pace, to pivot activities to meet identified needs, garner significant funding and leverage co-investment. We have a track record of delivery – for example successfully delivering Oxfordshire’s c£20m 2014-2020 ESIF programme – to time, budget, outcomes and with exceptional audit compliance performance.

That track record has also seen us successfully deliver complex skills and training programmes for DfE, DWP and other government departments, including our European Social Fund ‘Skills for Business’ campaign. Our performance enabled us to successfully tender for the delivery of Oxfordshire’s inaugural £1.7m Skills Bootcamp (wave 5) programme, with a similar sized wave 6 tender planned for 25/26.

We have been engaged, along with County colleagues, in early stage devolved skills budgets workshops with DfE and MHCLG. It is apparent that both departments have very specific requirements associated with the systems, infrastructure and capacity necessary to devolve responsibilities – we expect updated guidance as the process evolves. We remain keen to harness our experience, knowledge and capabilities in the potential devolution of skills budgets and other areas though we are unable to provide an accurate forecast of funding required to support this until we have further clarity from Government Departments. Should skills funding be devolved limited operating costs may be drawn from the overall budget – alongside an expectation of match funding from localities – including in kind support such as agreed staffing costs.

As an established company we have the experience and ability to rapidly respond to new opportunities (such as Skills Bootcamps, UKSPF programmes), and to expand or contract teams' capacity to manage programme demands in an efficient and effective manner; whilst that maximising delivery capability cost-effectively.



We then leverage our core capability with an additional mix of fixed term recruited and 3<sup>rd</sup> party specialisms to deliver complex, high impact and often ground-breaking programmes, such as our Apprenticeship Levy and No Limits initiatives (part of our Social Contract programme delivery). These programmes together with multiple grant and business support recovery programmes, during and post Covid-19 pandemic period made a significant difference to communities and businesses across the County, helping Oxfordshire maintain its position as one of only four County areas who are net Business Rate contributors to UK PLC.

We also developed, managed and delivered of several highly successful capital programmes, including City Deal, multiple Local Growth Fund (LGF) and Getting Building Fund (GBF) programmes, attracting government grant totalling £116m and enabling additional public and private funding that is expected to reach a minimum of £850 m by 2030, leading to safeguarding and supporting additional local employment of more than 10,000 jobs and an additional 3,300 local learners aligned to the evidenced need of our economy.

We successfully led Oxfordshire's two Enterprise Zone (EZ) submissions which between them have the potential to generate c£0.46bn of retained business rates (RBR) that can be used to fund economic development priorities across the County area. EZs are clearly a strategic asset that can be used effectively to support economic priorities, EZ1 runs to 2038; EZ2 to 2041 so between them provide consistent and stable revenue funding over the mid to long term.

With our previous boards' endorsement, a significant amount of EZ1 funds were allocated to support the repayment of County Council prudential borrowing supporting delivery of major infrastructure projects identified in City Deal Programme– this infrastructure created a more attractive investment environment in and around EZ1 which in turn is generating increased levels of RBR for the County.

Since EZ's inception we have been responsible, supported by a small team of South & Vale District Council Officers delivering strategic management, co-ordination and reporting of EZs performance, maximising and accelerating investment and bringing forward increased levels of RBR's and high value job creation.

### **Devolution and Regional Landscape**

The Devolution White Paper has the ambition of delivering universal coverage of Strategic Authorities across England– made up of a number of councils working together, covering areas that people recognise and work in. Many places already have Unitary Authorities which together form Combined Authorities that serve this role.

As stated earlier in the business plan Oxfordshire is keen to engage in fast-track devolution negotiations with Government. Within that context of the Devolution White Paper proposals Oxfordshire will need to work more closely with neighbouring areas to maximise the benefit of devolution. County Cabinet are committed to progress at pace towards devolution and explore the creation of a Mayoral Combined (Strategic) Authority for Thames Valley geography. We (Enterprise Oxfordshire) have a track record of cross boundary regional working with numerous stakeholders and partners across the Thames Valley and Oxford-Cambridge Partnership area supporting business resilience, skills development, inward investment and maximise economic impact of economic sectors such as fusion energy, advanced engineering, life sciences, space and satellite applications. We are therefore well placed to support any new structures.

### **Pan Regional Partnerships (PRPs)**

The Oxford-Cambridge geography represents a globally significant area stretching between Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge which supports a population of over 3 million people, home to over 2 million jobs and contributes around £110bn to the economy each year (pre-COVID). Whilst Government funding for PRPs is likely to end in April 2025, the potential of the area remains strong, we will continue to explore how we maximise the value of closer collaboration across this strategically significant geography.



## Our role moving forward

Throughout the transition process we have reviewed our priorities to ensure we are closely aligned to the strategic priorities of the County Council – our new ‘owner’, alongside the priorities identified in the

SEP and through our extensive reach into Oxfordshire’s business community – which is greater than the memberships of Oxfordshire’s business representative organisations combined. We recognise and value the importance of partnership and building trusted relationships in the work we do. Our commitment to partnership working is reflected in the membership of our previous Board of directors, thematic sub-groups and in our collaborative operational programmes. With our partners across Oxfordshire, we will continue to operate a ‘Whole System’ approach bringing together Public, Private, Academic and Third Sector organisations to support our businesses and communities, seeking out opportunities to innovate, collaborate, improve productivity and reduce duplication – thus delivering enhanced impact and value to the public purse.

We aim to be at the forefront of conversations that matter to our businesses and communities, to implement new activities that reflect our role post transition and that support our local democratic institutions to deliver against collective priorities.

Within this context we have seen a greater shift towards a more inclusive, fairer and greener local economy – with community wealth building (CWB) at its heart. We aim to build on the wealth of experience and knowledge that sits within the company and partners, ensuring we continue to actively contribute to the delivery of these ambitions – many of which we have led or been significantly engaged in, albeit not explicitly badged ‘community wealth building’ heading – for example our £5m eScalate programme had a focus on social enterprise and community-based businesses. As we move into a new business planning cycle, we will continue to embed the following principles of CWB into programme delivery:

- *Plural ownership of the economy - developing and growing small enterprises, community organisations, co-operatives and municipal ownership is important because they are more financially generative for the local economy – locking wealth in place.*
- *Making financial power work for local places - increase flows of investment within local economies by harnessing and recirculating the wealth that exists, as opposed to attracting capital. This includes redirecting local authority pension funds and supporting mutually owned banks.*
- *Fair employment and just labour markets - anchor institutions have a defining effect on the prospects of local people. Recruitment from lower income areas, paying the Living Wage and building progression routes all improve local economies.*

- *Progressive procurement of goods and services - develop dense local supply chains of businesses likely to support local employment and retain wealth locally. these include SMEs, employee-owned businesses, social enterprises, co-operatives and community businesses.*
- *Socially productive use of land and property - deepen the function and ownership of local assets held by anchor institutions, so that financial and social gain is harnessed by citizens. Develop and extend community use – public sector land and facilities as part of "[the commons](#)".*

In our approach to achieving our strategic priorities and objectives we focus on...

### **Leadership**

Influencing decision-making at all levels by bringing forward a range of evidence and business intelligence, alongside our advocacy harnessing the 'voice of business' for Oxfordshire

### **Delivery**

Whether supporting our delivery partners or delivering services directly we aim to maximise impact for Oxfordshire

### **Brokerage**

Collaboration and co-ordinating partners, stakeholders and projects to maximise investment from public and private sources whilst reducing duplication

### **Facilitation**

Working closely with partners and stakeholders, including local authorities, private and third sector organisations, universities, Further Education colleges and others through our sub-groups to implement our plans and strategies

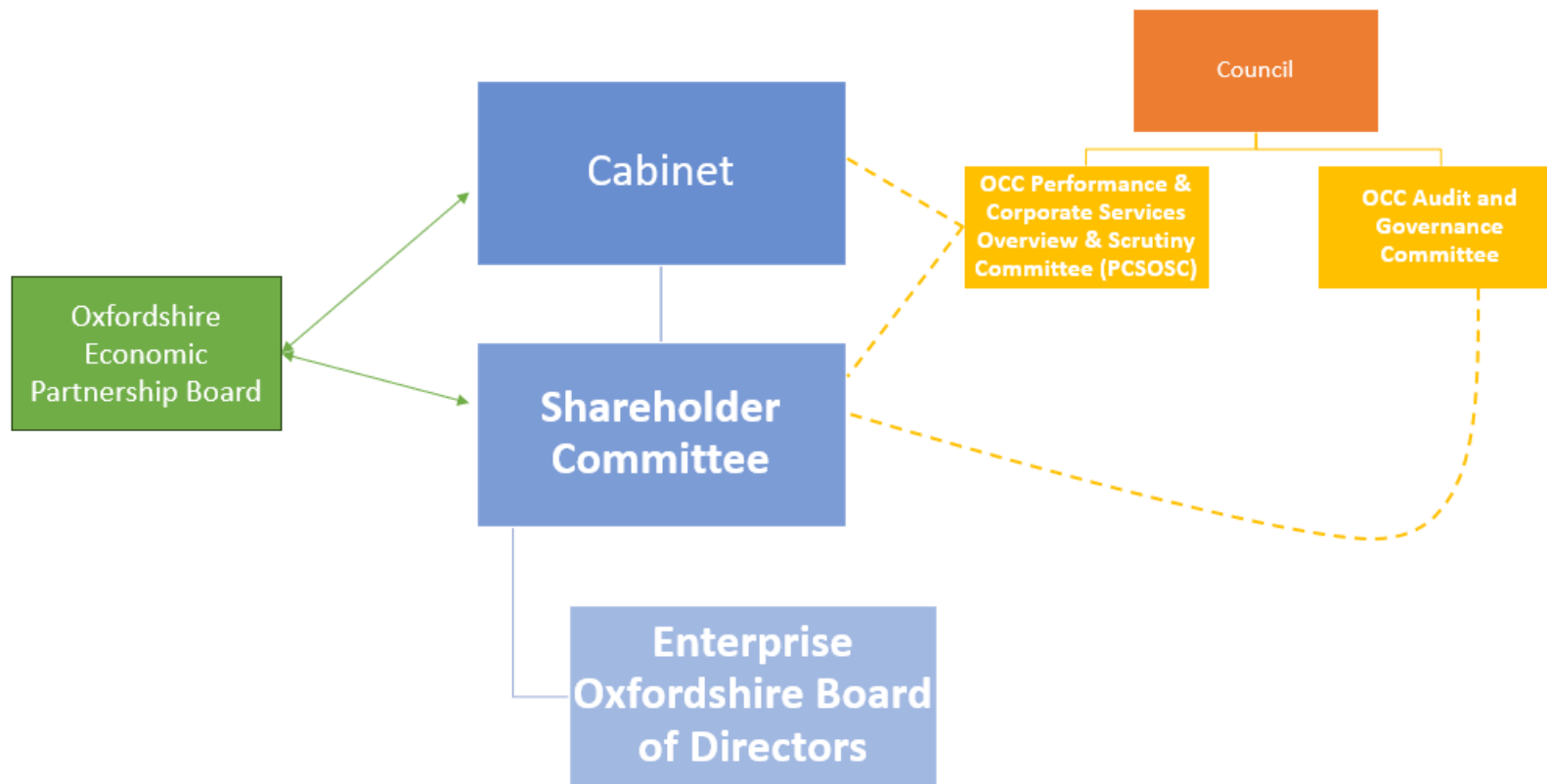
Whilst the policy landscape – inter/nationally and locally may have shifted, the socio-economic evidence points to a continued delivery focus on:

- ***Skills*** – *supporting our communities, employers and training providers to build and maintain the skilled workforce that Oxfordshire's employers need today and into the future. We have the capability to respond to any potential devolution opportunities working with partners to maximise impact.*
- ***Business support*** – *providing a range of business support to help our SMEs to accelerate transition to net zero, supporting a more diverse range of businesses to start-up, grow, thrive and innovate so they continue to contribute to and share the benefits of Oxfordshire's economy*

- **Inward Investment** – supporting existing businesses to access new markets and maximise the benefits for communities from new overseas investments into the area
- **Strategy** – support partners in the creation, implementation and oversight of economic strategies aligned to the areas shared ambitions and priorities
- **Communications** – ensuring we continue to maximise international awareness of the world leading/game changing assets that call Oxfordshire home and increase awareness of and engagement with programmes that drive socio-economic benefits for communities. As an organisation that needs a consistent flow of 'customers' engaged in the plethora of programmes we deliver – some place based, some sector specific, some county wide, having a well-established, customer facing and fleet of foot communications function is fundamental to our (and therefore Oxfordshire's) success.

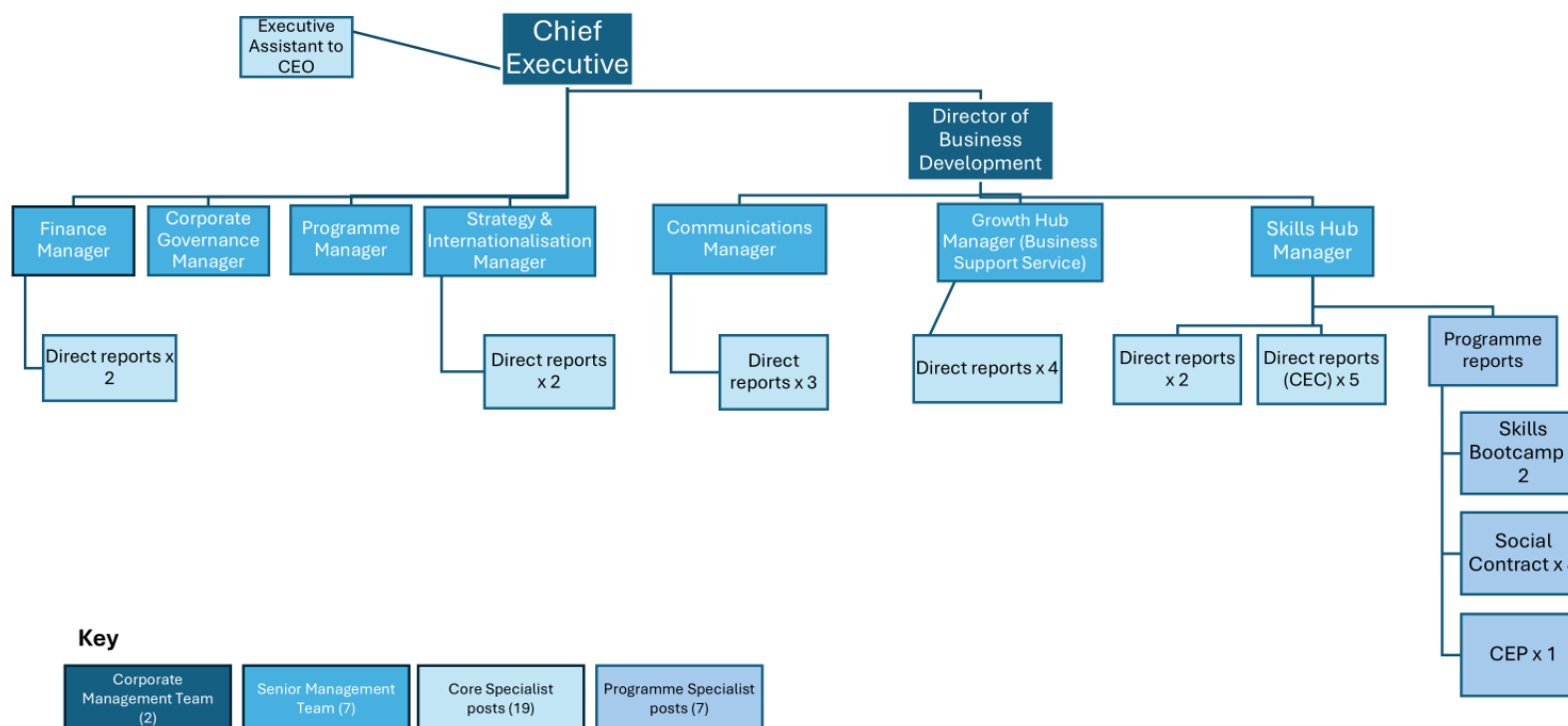
### Our Governance

As part of the second phase of the transfer of LEP functions, we have reviewed how our governance structure should change to support Government's requirements for ensuring an effective "business voice" whilst ensuring effective control and direction of the company by the Council's Cabinet. The diagram below demonstrates how the Cabinet, through a "Shareholder Committee", will set the strategic direction, aims and objectives for the company, as well as providing oversight of the company affairs and responsibility for Reserved Matters, business planning, budget setting, the appointment of company directors and external auditors. Appropriate assurance and scrutiny is supported through OCC's existing governance structures.



## Organisational structure

The following diagram provides details of the structure required to deliver our core level service proposal, with a headcount of 35 posts, 28 posts constituting the core organisation and service range, and 7 posts already in place to support the ongoing delivery of directly funded programmes, including Skills Bootcamps and Skills Social Contract continuation.



## Operational activities

The next sections provide more detail of each operational service areas priorities. In doing so we assume that the communications functions are maintained at current levels which is essential to support the ongoing delivery of core services across print/digital media, web/social media, marketing, events and strategic documentation. This assumption is based underpinned by the evidence of over a decade's experience of managing complex, multi-partner programmes, external contracts and ongoing HMG reporting requirements which we foresee continuing throughout this business plan cycle.

All strategic and operational delivery requires appropriate levels of communication support to drive customers to our core offers, to generate interest in activity and engagement/ awareness of new priorities or programmes such as community wealth building or generating business focussed messaging to amplify the voice of business in ongoing economic strategy and policy development.

Any new contracted delivery outside of core will increase the need for additional communications resource – for example delivering an 'accelerating SME transition to net zero' grant scheme would require a dedicated communications campaign to generate awareness and engagement at the front end, whilst additional corporate services support will be needed to support due diligence, grant contracting, defrayal and evaluation reporting – a key requirement for the transparent handling of public funds. As a limited company we can expand operations quickly to meet critical programme cycles with additional resources factored into new programme development costs.

### Maximising engagement and delivery

Our 30-hour working week pilot was introduced in April 2023 against the backdrop of rising salary levels across the country (as benchmarked in 2023), significant labour shortages experienced nationally and by many Oxfordshire employers and the highest inflation rate for decades. As an SME in a niche service area, we recognised the need for innovative ways to help retain expertise, reduce absence, improve staff wellbeing and deliver our employer of choice ambitions. Our operational performance has been strong, is actively managed and regularly reported to board against agreed KPI's. Through new and innovative digital solutions, we ensure our customers have access to our services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year using the [business support tool](#) and web platform, our primary customer access points out of normal working hours.

Alongside this, our third-party contracts covering skills and business support enable customer facing access across 6 days per week, and occasionally 7 days per week recognising that flexibility is vital when engaging SME's and communities, and to meet programme delivery deadlines – we have been operating this approach for over a decade.

**Service area – Communications:** overarching aim; ensuring our key messaging and priorities are accessible to a wide range of stakeholders and partners and supporting programmes to ensure successful delivery – including expanding on our approach to harness business input into strategic economic planning per HMG transition requirements.

Our communications function provides a dedicated, responsive and experienced 'corporate' function that supports our business plan priorities, the delivery of funded programmes, business engagement, stakeholder engagement, events, social media, web-based communications and international marketing. It is a vital, Business to Business as well as customer facing function that provides a range of services to support our teams, and wider stakeholders. It is a core function and as such the team are agile and responsive to the needs of the business, our stakeholders and partners – ensuring we reach new audiences using a range of digital platforms and supporting events. The core functions carried out by the team include strategic and tactical communications, print/digital content creation, marketing and campaigns, media engagement, stakeholder management and events delivery locally and nationally.

We have an excellent relationship with the OCC communications teams and are working with senior comms leads in developing operational protocols that reflect our 'arms-length' status whilst ensuring that County colleagues contribute to communications and key messaging is landed as appropriate. As our relationship with County matures, we will regularly review organisational priorities, resources and consider where we might better align messaging moving forward – providing a more direct route for OCC business targeted messaging than is currently the case.

Our KPIs have shown significant and consistent higher than industry standards growth in recent years including customer retention and engagement rates.

Historically the team has delivered priorities using a mix of internal core funded staff alongside external communications agency support. Following a recent strategic review of functions, we have focused resources on our 'in house' capacity and reduced external support significantly. This approach ensures the capacity, expertise and flexibility to provide a comprehensive range of support aligned to the delivery of functions set out in this plan – with external support used to meet specialist requirement. Any new programme or commissioned operational requirements will need to be covered from the respective funding programmes.

One of Governments primary requirements of transition is to ensure the voice of local business is fully engaged in the development and delivery of economic development strategy – including embracing business representative organisations (BROs) – Chamber, IoD, FSB and in our case B4. Each of these BROs have been engaged with our activities at differing levels for several years and we have strong relationships with each – though levels of engagement vary depending on their respective operational resource.

Our core funded communications function supports the delivery of a wide range of business facing/programme engagement. By optimising our approach to communications, business engagement, labour market intelligence, account management and events we can deliver enhanced business engagement, harnessing significant business intelligence/data that can support and influence policy development and operational service delivery.

Our approach to harnessing the voice of business includes continuing to provide co-ordination and facilitation across the business community – the ‘secretariate function’ that maximises the engagement and input from Oxfordshire’s BROs, sector groups, networks, scaling companies, social entrepreneurs and major employers – thus garnering business views from multiple channels including;

- Building upon our innovative business support tool (BST) to identify the key issues and challenges that matter to our businesses. The BST is effectively Oxfordshire’s largest real time business survey that captures the issues that matter to businesses and has c3000 unique SME users
- Extending our business intelligence reporting drawn from local stakeholders, businesses, Local Authority Economic Development Officer network, BRO’s, professional trade press, social media and sector intelligence at local/regional level
- Building upon our key account business intelligence gleaned from regular engagement and Client visits
- Utilising our existing network of former non-executive directors and our wider ‘family’ of c120 key stakeholders involved in our operational sub-groups and task and finish groups.
- Reposition the series of workshops, networks, events and webinars we deliver (> 100 annually with more than 1000 businesses engaged) to ensure we capture the key issues that matter to business and associated data – see networks and events overview below;

Activity	Average attendance	Frequency
Apprenticeship Awards	150	Annual
OxLEP Annual event	180	Annual
Market Place and Awards	c150	Likely to be annual
OxBOoST	25	Monthly



Women in Business	35 - 50	¼ly
Events/workshops	15-35 each event	Approx 10 per month
WODC SPF	200	Ongoing to 31/3/25
Cherwell SPF	130	Ongoing to 31/3/25

We have a robust track record of co-ordinating and engaging with diverse groups at all levels – including many years’ experience of managing a diverse mix of board and sub-group engagement to meet HMG regulated and audited diversity requirements

**Service area – Skills;** overarching aim - supporting our communities, employers and training providers to build and maintain the skilled workforce that Oxfordshire’s employers need today and into the future. We have the capability to respond to any potential devolution opportunities working with partners to maximise impact.

**Our service offer is:**

Support for the skills sub-group and Training Provider Network (TPN). Deliver 3 TPN events (c24 of the main providers active in the area) to promote information share, training needs and labour market intelligence, develop strategy, funding programmes and community learning.

Deliver our co-invested Careers & Enterprise Company Careers Hub focussing on;

- *Skills for young people - Supporting young people to understand workplace skills and the different pathways to rewarding careers e.g. Apprenticeships*
- *Skills for schools and colleges - Connecting educators to local businesses and their skills needs through our national network of Careers Hubs*
- *Skills for the economy - Supporting employers to close skills gaps and shape their future workforce through high quality education outreach*

Maintain and improve our labour market intelligence to support employers, training providers, communities and investors to make informed decisions based on labour market data, trends and job demand

Maximise the take up of apprenticeships building on Oxfordshire Apprenticeships track record of delivery – including the delivery of 20 Apprenticeships Ambassadors, the annual Oxfordshire Apprenticeships Awards and ongoing promotion of apprenticeships as a quality career option

Optimise the community benefit of major development through supporting EDOs across the County in the delivery of Community Employment Plans (CEPs), providing local people with to access job and training alongside wider business and procurement opportunities – at both development and end use phases as appropriate (subject to funding confirmation)

Deliver 'Wave 5' Skills Bootcamp programme that delivers more than 130 new (mainly level 3) qualifications in sectors such as life sciences, hospitality and green skills; submit wave 6 submission

Work with stakeholder to co-ordinate the delivery of increased levels of Green Skills outcomes identified in PAZCO report – including the ongoing evaluation of relevant skills infrastructure (c£7.5m) aligned to skills needs

**Social Contract;** aligned to identified priorities of our 2019 Local Industrial Strategy, the £1.7m Social Contract programme has been developed to tackle inequalities, to provide intensive support to help remove barriers to socio-economic inclusion to some of our most marginalised communities and to maximise apprenticeship levy retention locally. To date the programme has supported the over 400 residents – proving them with the help, confidence building and support required to move closer to the labour market, and the retention of over £3.6m of apprenticeship levy that is supporting over 225 new apprenticeships – with over a third in the health and social care sector – another strategic priority for the council.

The programme is funded through OCC's Covid19 COMF allocation and without question has been a resounding success, has massively over delivered and is a model that could be rolled out nationally.

Prudent budget management has seen the programme extended multiple times within the original budget allocation – now topped up by piecemeal SPF allocations from each district, however we risk losing this support from Sept 2025 unless additional funds are found.

We have an established, well regarded team that has built up the trust of the communities it serves which takes significant time. Continuity is key, for our communities that the programme supports, but also operationally to avoid loss of expertise that has been developed over time.

Given the critical important of this programme and its absolute alignment with the Councils inclusive and fairer economy priorities we recommend that Social Contract is treated as a core activity.

We plan to submit funding applications to The National Lottery's 'Reaching Communities' Fund, future SPF allocations and are alert to other funding opportunities as they arise

Continuation of the Social Contract programme will:

Building on the profound impact of the original Social Contract programme SC2 will work with apprenticeship levy payers to retain a minimum of £1.5m Apprenticeship Levy annually to support a minimum of 100 new apprenticeships particularly in sectors with skills shortages. SC2 will seek to further maximise yet to be announced levy flexibilities expected as the newly formed Skills England develops its priorities

No Limits – utilising the community ladder and other community hub networks to support 400 residents (including refugees) furthest from the workforce into employment and training – including identifying and addressing barriers such as digital deprivation and travel costs. 60 supported into employment

OxGROW virtual mentoring platform - support >100 people per year to reduce the number of economically inactive residents through person centred employability support. Engage c30 business mentors to support service users

**Service area – Strategy:** overarching aim – *support partners in the creation, implementation and oversight of economic strategies, investment and sectoral programmes aligned to Oxfordshire’s shared ambitions and priorities*

**Our service offer is:**

Supporting the delivery of the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan / Local Growth Plan providing leadership, co-ordination of partners and stakeholders, identifying areas for collaboration and leading/supporting funding opportunities aligned to priorities. Ongoing development/evaluation of Industrial Strategy/LGP initiatives ensuring programmes and activities assessed using a range of evaluation tools including Doughnut Economics evaluation methodologies.

- Lead/support the development and ongoing management of Oxfordshire wide strategies and programmes
- Oversee the delivery of the Green Investment Pipeline & Prospectus that identifies 5-10 investable propositions
- Provide private sector input into the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and ongoing project development
- Destination Management Plan leadership and co-ordination of our 2 Local Visitor Economy Partnerships

- Ongoing HMG outcome reporting and evaluation of major capital programmes (City Deal, LGF etc) in line with government requirements (to 2030)
- Ongoing management, delivery and HMG reporting for Oxfordshire's two Enterprise Zones
- Continued PRP engagement (subject to Governments review) and wider "whole system" stakeholder management
- Re-purpose the Culture & Visitor Economy Steering Group through integrating current members into Growth Hub's Ambassador Scheme

**Service area – Inward Investment;** *supporting existing businesses to access new markets and maximise the benefits for communities from new overseas investments into the area*

**Our service offer is:**

Working closely with DBT and local partners to manage the DBT foreign direct investment pipeline to secure a minimum of 34 successes annually that create and/or safeguard 600 jobs. Investment value c£500m

Develop an updated International Inward Investment strategy that aligns nationally to emerging Industrial Strategy and locally to priorities such as skills, job creation, improved productivity and living standards for residents

Maximise Oxfordshire's Global visibility, Sectoral Strengths and Innovation Ecosystem by further developing Oxford Calling – a new interactive digital platform that promotes Oxfordshire's assets, investment and key sector strengths on behalf of a wide range of partners to attract high value investment, jobs and capability into Oxfordshire

Enhanced commercial partner relationships; Collaborate with key developers, business and science parks and commercial property agents - keeping abreast of the local property market to provide up-to-date advice and identify locations for investors to establish new operations in Oxfordshire – further embedding the team Oxfordshire approach by supporting Developer/Investor forums

**Service area – business support:** *overarching aim - providing a range of business support to help our SME's to accelerate transition to net zero, supporting a more diverse range of businesses to start-up, grow, thrive and innovate so they continue to contribute to and share the benefits of Oxfordshire's economy*

**Our core offer is:**

Use the [business support tool](#) as first point of entry and support in excess of 500 local businesses and partners for environmental, economic, and social benefit through the delivery of;

- 30 Business focussed webinars annually covering areas such as transition to net zero, winning new contracts (including public sector), innovation and accessing new markets
- 3 Start up bootcamps annually
- 3 Foundations to Growth cohorts annually

Manage a client base of c7500 businesses signposting to funding opportunities, networking, new programmes and support

Align the Oxfordshire Business & Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) and OxLEP Business services, building on successful programmes, simplifying support available, maximising capacity and reducing duplication under the DBT funded Growth Hub 'banner' to present a single point of entry for SMEs. BIPC branding and British Library relationships will be retained and OxLEP Business team and business advisors to have a presence in the BIPC where practical. From an external customer viewpoint little will change.

Continue to facilitate and lead 4 Joint Oxfordshire Business Support (JOBS) group meetings that brings together EDO's and other key economic development stakeholders to maximise engagement, collaboration and co-ordination of business support activities across the area

## Measuring success

Our established approach to performance monitoring has been developed to align with Board oversight, National and Local Government reporting requirements and programme level requirements, all subject to regular scrutiny. These are a combination of funded programme targets – for example the ‘number of Careers Hub schools reporting improvements in Gatsby Benchmarks’, or local targets such as ‘number of businesses supported that survive beyond 6 months.

People KPI's	Target Output
Number of schools/college engaged in careers education	53
Gatsby Benchmarks achieved by our careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) Careers Hub	5
Number of businesses and business volunteers	200
Optimise level of engagement of Higher Education, Further Education and independent training/education providers on the local labour market and skills	3
Value of retained Apprenticeship Levy in Oxfordshire in £Millions. Original target £1.3million	1.7
Number of businesses engaged in unlocking/accessing the Apprenticeship Levy	240
Business KPI's	Target Output
Number of jobs created (direc and supported) and safeguarded	40
Number of businesses supported light/medium touch	1250
Hours of support provided to SME's	1450
% of businesses satisfied with event attended or the quality of the support received	0.8
Number of referrals to other programmes, including ERDF and skills.	250
Investment & Internationalisation KPI	Target Output
Number of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects in Oxfordshire	34
Value of FDI projects (investment into Oxfordshire in £m's).	480
Total jobs supported	640
Communication KPI's	Target output
Increase number of collective followers, across all OxLEP social media channels, by 2% quarter on quarter, reaching 27,500	27000
Ensure all LinkedIn lead generation paid activity maintains a cost per click score of £2.50 or below	2.5
Ensure that the average OxTalks podcast episode download averages 50 downloads across the first 90 days of release	50
Achieve at least a 3% engagement in organic (non paid) social media posts	3
Score an average monthly YouTube click-through-rate of at least 5% or more per month for all OxLEP-generated content.	5

Naturally our current KPI's align with our extant business plan priorities, and once this business plan is agreed and adopted, we will develop an updated suite of KPIs that meet our collective needs for agreement with our board. We will regularly review these targets and as programmes evolve or new responsibilities arise then these will be updated both operationally and strategically, agreed with our board noting the exact timing and process will be informed by the new governance and controls reporting adopted.

It is also worth noting that as the company responds to the Councils priorities, the medium-term Business Plan and associated KPI's will reflect those priorities. We will also consider additional reporting on the outcomes and impacts of project specific criteria such as those delivered through our Social Contract, Skills Boot Camp and future Connect to Work Programmes as these also support educational priorities such as those identified in the SEND Transformation Plan, Circular Economy and Community Wealth Building strategies. It will be important to show how such activity impacts, for the better, the lives of our communities and addresses the inequality we see in society irrespective of age, gender or ethnicity. This very much reflects the commitments identified in the County Health and wellbeing Strategy and Marmot ambition.

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