

## **Divisions Affected - ALL**

### **CABINET 16 July 2024**

## **OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP – BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

### **Report by the Chief Executive**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
  - a) Endorse the appointment of Dr Olga Kozlova as a Board Director upon the resignation of Professor Patrick Grant
  - b) Endorse the appointment of Cllr David Hingley as a Board Director upon the resignation of Cllr Barry Wood

#### **Executive Summary**

2. This paper sets out the decisions taken at the OxLEP Board meeting on 11 June 2024 requiring Company Member endorsement.
3. The recommendations relate to the appointment of two new Non-Executive Directors (NED's) replacing existing NED's who have signalled their intent to resign.
4. The OxLEP Board is making these recommendations to Cabinet following the revision of the OXLEP Ltd Company Articles on the 1 April 2024. These changes gave effect to the Transfer of Functions and confirmed Sole Membership of the Company in favour of Oxfordshire County Council. The Articles of Association define specific Reserved Matters which are the Appointment of Directors, Approval of Business Plan and associated Budget.

#### **Background**

5. The government confirmed in August 2023 the responsibility for LEP functions would be transferred to upper tier local authorities. In February 2024 Cabinet agreed that the council would become the controlling member of OxLEP Board exercising its membership functions through Cabinet. This change in control was agreed by the OxLEP Board in March 2024 and came in to effect on 1 April 2024.

6. The change in ownership formed the basis of the first phase of a three phased approach to LEP transition.
7. The project team is now focused on the second phase of the transition which includes:
  - A review of purpose and economic planning, including updates to the Strategic Economic Plan
  - Developing a medium-long term business plan along with ongoing review of operational alignment with existing council economic and related functions
  - Reviewing the medium-term approach to business engagement and broader partnership bodies in-line with the new operating model and strategy
  - Alignment of policy and processes, ensuring optimum operational efficiency with the County Council
8. This work is being progressed and it is likely that this will result in revised governance structures to reflect the council's member status. These proposals will form the basis of a future Cabinet report.
9. As part of the transition process, the current OxLEP board has been asked to continue to serve to support the implementation process. In June 2024 the OxLEP Board considered a report regarding board appointments. As this is a Reserved Matter these recommendations require Cabinet approval.

## **Board Succession**

10. The OxLEP Board is made up of 18 Non-Executive Directors (NED's) and one Executive Director (ex-officio). The number and range of NED's was determined by the Board in line with government guidance. The current Board has representation from Business, Oxfordshire Local Authorities, Universities and a representative of the FE College sector. The NED's are nominated by their respective organisations, except for the business representatives who are subject to a fully transparent recruitment process overseen by OxLEP's Nominations and Personnel Committee.
11. Professor Patrick Grant, the representative from the University of Oxford has submitted his resignation from the OxLEP Board after five years of service. The University has nominated Dr Olga Kozlova as their representative on the Board to replace Professor Grant.
12. The OxLEP Nominations and Personnel Committee, in line with best practice and custom reviewed this nomination and recommended to the OxLEP Board the appointment of Dr Kozlova on the 11 June 2024.
13. In addition to Patrick Grant's resignation the recent Local Government election process returned a change of political control and therefore leadership in

Cherwell District. Cllr David Hingley, the new Leader of Cherwell District Council has been nominated as their Non-Executive Board Director.

14. The OxLEP Board are recommending to Cabinet that these nominations be endorsed.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

15. LEP transition aligns with the vision set out in the County Council's Strategic Plan to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. It also supports the priorities of:
  - Putting action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work
  - Tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire
  - Investing in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network
  - Working with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit

## **Financial Implications**

16. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

## **Legal Implications**

17. The recommendations in the report enable the appointment of new Directors to the Board of OxLEP. As a reserved matter this requires confirmation by Cabinet.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer,  
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## **MARTIN REEVES**

Chief Executive

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