

SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE

14 July 2026

COMPANY MEMBERSHIP AND STRUCTURE OF ENTERPRISE OXFORDSHIRE

Report by Director of Economy and Place

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Shareholder Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to

- a) **APPROVE** the establishment of an Enterprise Zone (EZ) Advisory Board (and its scope and purpose) as a formal sub-committee of the Enterprise Oxfordshire Board.
- b) **AGREE** to establish a county-wide Skills Board (and its scope and purpose) as a formal sub-committee of the Enterprise Oxfordshire Board.
- c) **AGREE** in principle the extension of company membership of Enterprise Oxfordshire to local public sector partners
- d) **AGREE** to receive further proposals on governance and the composition of the EZ Advisory Board, Skills Board, and Enterprise Oxfordshire Board to include members from across the county's public, private and higher education sectors
- e) **INSTRUCT** officers to develop detailed governance proposals, including recommendations for the establishment of further sub-committees as appropriate.

Purpose

1. This report seeks Shareholder Committee approval to establish both an Enterprise Zone (EZ) Advisory Board and a Skills Board a sub-committees of the Enterprise Oxfordshire Board. Establishment of sub-committees is a reserved matter, per the company's Articles of Association.
2. It also seeks agreement in principle to extend company membership of Enterprise Oxfordshire to include core partners to be agreed from across the county, subject to their formal agreement.
3. In addition, if these proposals are agreed, the report asks the Committee to instruct officers to undertake the further work required to develop detailed governance arrangements, including processes, amendments to the Articles of Association, Terms of Reference, and membership structures.

Executive summary

4. Enterprise Oxfordshire plays a key role in delivering economic development priorities across Oxfordshire.
5. Given Local Government Reorganisation and the potential to evolve the company, there is a need to strengthen governance arrangements to ensure appropriate oversight of Enterprise Zone activity, to broaden strategic ownership across the county, and to reflect the partnership nature of local economic development.
6. The proposals set out in this report are intended to support these objectives by establishing a dedicated Enterprise Zone Advisory Board and Skills Board to provide focused oversight and expertise in these areas, and by expanding company membership, thereby aligning governance arrangements with key delivery partners.
7. Taken together, these changes will help ensure that Enterprise Oxfordshire remains fit for purpose, collaborative, and well-positioned to deliver long-term economic outcomes.

Background

8. Enterprise Oxfordshire is a Teckal company wholly owned by Oxfordshire County Council. It operates as a key delivery vehicle for economic growth and place-based investment.
9. The roles and responsibilities of the various parties regarding the Enterprise Zone are summarised as follows:

Party	Summary of roles and responsibilities
Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)	Owner and sole member of OXLEP Ltd, trading as Enterprise Oxfordshire, second stage of approval, funding agreements, manage prudential borrowing, consolidated forecasting & monitoring of retained funds and expenditure agreed to be funded from those and agreement of principles for the use of retained funds so that there are sufficient funds to manage financial risks including changes to the level of business rates income, recovery of misused funds.
Enterprise Oxfordshire	First stage of approval, make recommendations to OCC for the use of retained business rates, ongoing programme management, co-ordinate reporting
Vale of White Horse District Council	Accountable Body for receipt and correct use of EZ1 & EZ2 funds in line with set economic priorities, billing/collection for sites in Vale of White Horse, liaising with developers and promoting growth in the enterprise zones, forecasting and updates on retained business rates held at the end of each financial year.
South Oxfordshire District	Billing/collection for EZ2 sites in South

Council	Oxfordshire, transfers funds to Vale of White Horse District Council
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10. Enterprise Zones represent a significant long-term investment programme, which have already committed significant sums of money to transformational infrastructure. Ongoing successful delivery requires robust governance, clear strategic alignment, and effective partnership working across local authorities and stakeholders. Moreover, with work now underway to improve transport infrastructure around the Science Vale, there is an opportunity to put the structures, systems, and processes in place to enable both long-term planning, and a focus on prioritising and delivering near-term interventions – both of which will be more impactful with input and support from across the county.
11. More broadly, as Enterprise Oxfordshire continues to mature, it is appropriate to review and strengthen its governance arrangements to ensure they reflect the scale, complexity, and collaborative nature of its work. This means considering both the membership and structure of the company.

Re-establishment of an Enterprise Zone Advisory Board

12. It is proposed that an Enterprise Zone Advisory Board be re-established as a formal sub-committee of the Enterprise Oxfordshire Board.
13. The Advisory Board would provide strategic oversight and advice in relation to Enterprise Zone activity, supporting the development, prioritisation and delivery of investment programmes, and ensuring alignment with wider economic and spatial priorities across Oxfordshire. It would also provide a structured forum through which relevant expertise and stakeholder perspectives can be brought to bear. In these respects, it will operate on a similar basis to OxLEP’s previous Enterprise Zone Advisory Board (terms of reference at Annex A).
14. While the Advisory Board may operate with delegated responsibilities where appropriate, accountability for all decisions would remain with the Enterprise Oxfordshire Board.
15. The re-establishment of the Advisory Board is expected to strengthen governance and transparency, enable more focused scrutiny of Enterprise Zone performance, and support timely, well-informed decision-making.

Re-establishment of a county-wide Skills Board

16. As *Oxfordshire Works* and the recent work on economic strategy has demonstrated, there is a clear need for stronger coordination, strategic oversight, and partnership working across the skills and employment system in Oxfordshire.
17. It is therefore proposed that a county-wide Skills Board be re-established as a formal sub-committee of the Enterprise Oxfordshire Board.
18. The Skills Board would provide strategic leadership to support the development of a cohesive, future-focused skills system. Its role would include aligning skills provision with current and future labour market needs, supporting inclusive access to employment opportunities, and ensuring that investment in skills is targeted to maximise economic and social impact across the county. In doing so, the Skills

Board is expected to strengthen coordination across the skills system, improve responsiveness to employer demand, and support the delivery of sustainable and inclusive economic growth across Oxfordshire. In this way, it is expected to operate on a similar basis to OxLEP's previous Skills Board (terms of reference at Annex B).

Extension of Company Membership

19. Reflecting the shared role of partners in economic development and recognising the importance of aligning governance arrangements with the delivery partnerships that underpin Enterprise Oxfordshire's work, it is proposed that membership of Enterprise Oxfordshire is extended to include core partners to be agreed from across the county, subject to their formal agreement.
20. This would strengthen collective ownership and accountability and support closer collaboration between strategic and local priorities.
21. Any such extension would be subject to formal agreement by partners, as well as agreement on appropriate governance arrangements and representation which will be a reserved matter for the Shareholder Committee.

Next Steps

22. Should the Shareholder Committee agree to the proposals set out in this report, further detailed work will be required to enable implementation.
23. This will include formal ratification of new members, should local public sector partners confirm their desire to join as company members.
24. It will also include the development and agreement of Terms of Reference for the Enterprise Zone Advisory Board and Skills Board; the definition of membership and appointment arrangements to the Board, and consideration of its composition to include representation from across the county's public, private and higher education sectors; the establishment of appropriate governance and reporting processes; and the preparation of any necessary amendments to the Articles of Association. All changes will need to be developed in line with legal and governance requirements.
25. It is anticipated that appointments to the Enterprise Oxfordshire Board will ultimately be approved by the Shareholder Committee, while appointments to the sub-committees will be made by the Enterprise Oxfordshire Board.
26. Detailed proposals will be brought back through the appropriate governance channels for approval as required.

Financial Implications

27. There are no financial implications arising directly from the proposals in this report. Any future financial implications arising from a change to the company membership will need to be considered once those are developed.
28. Any resource requirements associated with implementing governance changes will be managed within existing budgets where possible or brought forward for consideration

through future reports if necessary.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

29. As a “Teckal” company, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Limited (Enterprise Oxfordshire) is wholly owned by the Council. To retain its Teckal status, company membership can only be extended to include other public sector bodies. The public sector members must have the power of decisive influence over both the strategic objectives and significant decisions of the company. The proposed changes to company membership and governance arrangements will require legal review and may necessitate amendments to the Articles of Association.

30. The creation of formal sub-committees of the Board, and changes to company membership, are reserved matters for decision by Shareholder Committee per the company’s Articles of Association.

31. All changes will be implemented in accordance with the company’s Articles of Association, relevant company law, and local authority governance requirements.

Comments checked by: Jayne Pringle, Principal Solicitor (Contracts)

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Staff Implications

32. There are no further staffing implications arising from this report.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

33. There are no further implications arising from this report.

Robin Rogers
Director of Economy and Place

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