

Economic Growth Sub-group Report to OSP

OSP sub-group theme: Oxford Economic Growth Steering Board

Date: 2nd July 2019

Date of previous update: June 2018

1. Brief overview statement

The Oxford Economic Growth Steering Board represents a broad range of private, public and non-profit sectors, effectively engaging with and providing a consistent voice for Oxford employers and the business community. Based on the 2018 terms of reference, the vision is to collaborate to enable Oxford to fulfil its role as a world-leading city that supports sustainable and inclusive, innovation-led economic growth region-wide; aligning with and complementing the strengths of the city-region. Their views and concerns will be fed into city (OSP), county-wide, national economic policy discussions and guide economic growth.

Peter Nolan, former Chief Business Officer of Oxford BioMedica and bio-tech consultant, is the Chair of the Board, aligning with his role as an OxLEP Director. Members represent the public sector (Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council), OxLEP, B4 and Oxfordshire Voice, Oxford's two universities, key industry representatives such as Experience Oxfordshire, and a wide-range of private sector leaders. As we embark on a range of economic initiatives (see below), we are actively recruiting additional private sector engagement.

2. Achievements since last report

The Group has played a role in shaping and initiating the following key areas of work related to economic growth initiatives;

- The group provided input and supported the development of the OxLEP Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) from an Oxford perspective (to be published in July 2019).
- Drafted an updated Oxford Business Guide, to be published in 2019.
- Supporting Business in Oxford (led by B4 as a Board Member) become a bigger, more effective annual business engagement, information and networking opportunity with over 900 delegates.
- Launching Oxfordshire Voice and participating in key issue forums and BIO 2019.
- Delivering an ongoing programme of 'Oxford Business Forum' events to debate issues of importance, with the support of OxLEP and Oxfordshire County Council.
- Established an inclusive employer task and finish group, which has now created and launched the Oxford Inclusive Recruitment Charter with Aspire. It has also supported efforts to promote the Oxford and Real Living Wage and plans for an inclusive growth seminar series in 2019.
- Smart Oxford (with ERDF funding) has run a series of workshops and started to build a group of local SMEs to address the key well-being aspects of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and the Oxford 2050 Vision. It is also working with MobOx to enable and support the LIS Living Labs (Health, Energy, Mobility) 'pillar'.
- Supporting the Business Visitor Economy (BVE) feasibility study led by Oxford Brookes University which examined the demand and opportunities to expand and invest in new business visitor venues in Oxford.
- Drafted an RfQ for new economic development and city centre strategies, and established support for this effort across the Council and EGSB.
- Provided significant input to Oxford Local Plan 2036 to inform the economy policies within it.

3. Areas of focus for the next 6-12 months

The Group has agreed the following areas to focus on:

- To lead a refreshed Economic and City Centre Strategy and Action Plan for the city, to define the economic role of the city and guide the city's economic development actions and priorities within the context of the Oxfordshire sub-region, and in response to the LIS and Ox-Cam Arc. The EGSB will be a primary stakeholder, working closely with the city officers and the consultant (to be selected) to deliver a new economic strategy. The new economic strategy will include a new focus on triple bottom line impacts of policies and investments to reflect the Council's priorities for economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and social equity/inclusive growth.
- Actively participate in City Council initiatives to support a more Inclusive Economy. This includes at least three key elements:
 - Promote Oxford as a Living Wage City, including the promotion of the Oxford Living Wage, completing a plan to submit to the Living Wage Foundation, and adding more private sector partners.
 - Organise and deliver a series of Inclusive Growth seminars over the next 6 months, consistent with the LIS recommendation to establish an Inclusive Growth Commission led by OSP.
 - Continue to develop the Inclusive Recruitment Charter and increase the number of participating employers.
- To facilitate more coherent communication and lobbying on local business needs, for example, working to communicate the economic importance of bringing forward planned West End and rail station development.
- Maturing and supporting the success of Oxfordshire Voice
- Provide input for next steps on tourism and visitor economy initiatives such as the May 2019 Business Visitor Economy (BE) study and the Cabinet's response to the tourism scrutiny review.
- To support to work of the newly formed City Centre Task Force, which will align with the OSP and this group, and the new city centre strategy.
 - This also includes supporting High Street grant funding applications for the Covered Market and other city centre opportunities.
- Through Smart Oxford, delivering the innovation support for business 2 program in conjunction with a wide-range of partners.
- Continue to look for opportunities to add new enterprise and innovation space across the city, and expand on business engagement.

4. Requests for OSP support/advice/action/intervention (if required)

Ask that the OSP Board lends support and influence on the following initiatives pro-actively where required:

- Engages with the process of developing a refreshed Economic Strategy
- City Centre Task Force initiatives (this covers a number of areas in addition to Economic Growth).
- The Inclusive Economy Task & Finish Group. This will need input from OSP members, given its targeting of anchor employers and institutions, as well as engagement to establish an Inclusive Growth Commission (as recommended in the LIS), complete an Inclusive Growth seminar series to guide the direction of Inclusive Growth policy interventions, advance the Oxford Living Wage initiative, and expand the Inclusive Recruitment group of employers in Oxford.