



ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

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Contents

1.1. Background to OxLEP	2
1.2. Purpose of Assurance Framework	2
1.3. Executive Summary	3
1.4. Details of OxLEP	5
Part Two: Governance, Accountability and Decision Making	7
2.1. Governance Relationships: The Board and its Committees	7
2.2. Government scrutiny	11
2.3. The Role of the Accountable Bodies	12
2.4. Overall Scheme of Delegation.....	14
2.5. OxLEP Staff Salaries.....	14
2.6. Audit and Accounts	15
2.7. Risk Management.....	16
2.8. Overview and scrutiny	16
Part Three: Communication and Joint Working	18
3.1. OxLEP Website.....	18
3.2. Communications and Engagement	18
3.3. LEP Network.....	18
3.4. Future Oxfordshire Partnership (formerly Oxfordshire Growth Board).....	18
3.5. Social Value	19
Part Four: Transparency, Policies and Procedures	21
4.1. Conduct Assurance and Conflicts of Interest	21
4.2. Gifts and Hospitality and Directors' expenses	21
4.3. Freedom of Information	21
4.4. Complaints.....	22
4.5. GDPR.....	22
4.6. Anti-fraud and Corruption/Anti-bribery	22
4.7. Whistle-Blowing	22
4.8. Equality and Diversity.....	23
Part Five: Value for Money: Programme Prioritisation, Appraisal and Management	24
5.1. Programme Sub-Group.....	24
5.2. Capital Project Prioritisation	24
5.3. Capital Programme Management and Delivery	25
5.4. Output and Outcome Evaluation	25
VERSION CONTROL	27

Part One: Introduction

1.1. Background to OxLEP

111. As the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), it is our role to champion Oxfordshire's economic potential, acting as a catalyst and convener to drive a dynamic, sustainable and growing economy.
112. Formally launched by the Business Minister, Mark Prisk MP, in March 2011, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) is a business led strategic body with members and stakeholders from the business community, further/higher education, local authorities, and other sectors. By working with these partners, OxLEP plays a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertakes activities to drive forward sustainable economic growth and create new jobs across the county.
113. Initially established as a partnership with the local authorities, businesses and education sector in the area, OxLEP was incorporated as a not for profit company limited by guarantee on 31st March 2015. The decision to incorporate OxLEP was taken to improve the governance arrangements of the organisation by formalising roles and responsibilities and establishing a clear, decision making structure. As a company OxLEP Ltd is bound by the requirements of private sector accounting and accountability and its Board members are Directors as defined in the Companies Act. This places additional governance requirements on the Directors as individuals and as part of the wider Board.

1.2. Purpose of Assurance Framework

121. The Assurance Framework provides a structured means of identifying and mapping the main sources of assurance in an organisation, and co-ordinating them to best effect. It also allows our Accountable Body, Oxfordshire County Council, to ensure we have adequate controls in place over the use of public funds and are complying with them. LEPs are required to develop their own Local Assurance Framework based on Government requirements and guidance.
122. This document sets out our Assurance Framework for the management of OxLEP's risks and explains the governance framework in place to support our operations and decision making. It is important that stakeholders are clear as to how decisions are made, projects are planned, and resources are managed effectively. We are committed to developing and implementing an Assurance Framework that will provide a systematic and consistent delivery approach to meeting local economic development priorities.

123. The purpose of this document is to provide assurance to all involved in programme, project delivery and the management of strategic and operational issues, as well as all our stakeholders, that:
- governance is in place for delivering economic development programmes through our Board and Future Oxfordshire Partnership (formerly Growth Board) structures;
 - effective programme and project management tools are being used to assure the standards of our decision making;
 - approved Financial Regulations and Schemes of Delegation are in place and are complied with;
 - risks are captured according to agreed processes, are regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure the mitigation is effective;
 - resources are appropriate which will allow us to carry out our obligations effectively; and
 - all members and partners are informed of all decisions and updates accordingly.
124. This document will be used by the Board, Corporate Management Team, our Accountable Body and partners to identify, monitor and evaluate strategic risks to funded projects. We also ensure that third parties who provide services to the OxLEP are aware that their conduct should be consistent with the standards set for OxLEP, as documented in this framework.
125. This framework reflects the mandatory requirements as set out in the [National Local Growth Assurance Framework](#) on governance, accountability and transparency as a minimum and aligns to accepted best practice, wherever practicable. The Framework will be reviewed annually to ensure any mandatory updates or best practice guidelines are incorporated. A review of OxLEP's operations will be assessed against this Framework annually to ensure compliance with the requirements as set out below.

1.3. Executive Summary

131. Our achievements and impact are set out in OxLEP's latest [Delivery Plan](#). This plan acts as a synthesis of activity of OxLEP and informs stakeholders what we do, what we have achieved and what we are going to do.
132. The Assurance Framework guides OxLEP's delivery of a multi £bn Investment Programme which includes the City Deal, Local Growth Fund, Getting Building Fund, European Funds and other initiatives.
133. Launched jointly with the UK Government in September 2019, the ambition for our trailblazer [Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy](#) (LIS) is to position the county as one of the top-three global innovation ecosystems by 2040, highlighting our world-leading science and technology cluster and to be a pioneer for the UK and our emerging transformative technologies and sectors. The LIS is one of three core strategies which will guide Oxfordshire's long-term development plans alongside the emerging Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and refreshed Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy. Together,

these documents provide the framework for complementary strategies and investment priorities, as well as our engagement with the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

134. In September 2020 – backed by our public, private and education sector partners – we published the next stage of the strategy, the [Oxfordshire Investment Plan](#). The Investment Plan translates the ideas and aspiration of the Local Industrial Strategy into a coherent programme of delivery over an initial 10-year period, up until 2030, worth c£4.3billion and includes a public sector investment ask of £1.1bn which, in turn, will leverage almost £2.6bn of private sector funding into projects, alongside committed public sector infrastructure funding of £0.7bn. The plan provides the next generation of projects which will support Oxfordshire’s economy. The LIS and Investment Plan provide the long-term strategic framework for Oxfordshire’s economy.
135. In light of COVID-19, we worked with Oxfordshire partners to prepare an [Economic Recovery Plan \(ERP\)](#), which aims to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on the county’s economy and support businesses and local communities to rebuild jobs, infrastructure, investment and careers which have been disrupted. The ERP comprises over 60 projects and is focused on an initial 24-month horizon, seeking to accelerate planned investment and making better use of resources within the system which Oxfordshire partners can repurpose or redirect to tackle the economic challenges which have been created. The ERP complements the longer-term aspirations of the LIS.
136. To advance the delivery of our Vision through the LIS – and to build on the progress we have already made in pursuit of the objectives set out in our [Strategic Economic Plan](#) (SEP) – we will now focus delivery around our 3 thematic objectives:

Place-Making: provide the quality environment needed to support growth and build upon our exceptional quality of life, vibrant economy and the dynamic urban and rural communities.
Productivity: Deliver and attract specialist and flexible skills across all sectors, with full, inclusive employment and encourage innovation-led growth.
Connectivity: Allow people to move freely, connect easily and provide the services, environment and facilities needed by a dynamic, growing and dispersed economy.
137. Our approach to supporting implementation of the ERP, LIS and other strategies will focus on:

Leadership: Influencing decision-making processes at all levels by representing the 'voice of business' from Oxfordshire.
Delivery: Where there is no natural partner, we will take on responsibility for directly delivering key activity.
Brokerage: Linking partners and projects with each other and helping access funds through Central Government to deliver the objectives of the LIS.

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

1.4. Details of OxLEP

141. OxLEP covers the geographical area of the county of Oxfordshire, which includes Oxfordshire County Council and the five district councils of Cherwell, West Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire and Oxford City Council.
142. Oxfordshire is notable for the excellence and scale of innovation, enterprise and research within the county, and for the dynamism of its economy. The 2020/21 financial year saw a significant increase in activity and momentum for our business. As the profound impact of Covid-19 started to take hold, our steadily growing local economy was turned on its axis and every assumption we had made for our business year ahead was challenged. We have responded at pace to major increases in demand for new and existing services across our Business Support, Skills, Investment, Capital Programmes and Policy areas of our work. We have helped Oxfordshire businesses and other partners to “respond, recover and renew”, channelling our focus through an Oxfordshire Economic Recovery Plan, developed and launched during the pandemic. Alongside, we have incorporated EU Exit support, preparing our local economy for leaving the “EU Single Market”.
143. We also saw an acceleration in the ambition of government to establish a greater collaborative focus on the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, an opportunity to raise the collective potential of this new geographic focus. To support this, we have worked in partnership with 30 Local Authorities, two other LEPs and a Mayoral Combined Authority and Business Board to launch an Economic Prospectus and a governance structure within which to shape future activity.
144. Alongside our Local Authority partners, we have assimilated and deployed an array of new government initiatives aimed at supporting our local economy. We have also pivoted our existing programmes, including EU-funded business and skills support, to reflect the fast changing economic and operational circumstances. We have supported local businesses through an enhanced Growth Hub support service and diagnostic toolkit and delivered grant funding to assist individual local businesses to respond, pivot and survive the impact of the pandemic and the lockdown measures. We are confident that our local economy will recover and thrive, and our communities will benefit from this economic reset, as we focus on Oxfordshire’s significant potential to build an inclusive local economy and be an enabling force for the national economic recovery in 2021/22.
145. Significant progress has been made in delivering many of the objectives set out in our Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), published in 2019, and LIS Investment Plan. All key strategies and publications, including our Economic Recovery Plan (ERP), our Delivery

Plan and our Innovation, Energy and Skills strategies, are published on our [website](#). These set out the role and impact we make as the Local Economic Partnership for Oxfordshire.

- 14.6. We aim, with partners, to harness Oxfordshire's unique combination of assets to ensure that by 2031, the county's economy is recognised to be:

Vibrant: a place where ambitious businesses and people thrive; and where young people choose to build their careers and their lives

Sustainable: environmentally (considering patterns of resource use, climate change, carbon emissions, heritage assets), socially (reflecting the needs and character of communities) and economically (with businesses and others choosing to re-invest)

Inclusive: where all residents and businesses have a real stake and voice in determining the county's future economic narrative and contributing fully to it

World-leading: recognised globally for its dynamic innovation ecosystem, founded on world class research and fuelled by enterprise, all within an environment of the highest quality.

Part Two: Governance, Accountability and Decision Making

2.1. Governance Relationships: The Board and its Committees

- 2.1.1. Ultimately accountable for our strategic direction is the Board of Directors which reflects the geographic and sectorial interests of Oxfordshire. The [governance structure](#) including the Board, its Committees and Sub-Groups is published on our website. OxLEP meet the relevant legislation governing companies, as well as considering corporate governance best practice.
- 2.1.2. All Board Directors sign the [Code of Conduct](#) to evidence their compliance. As well as setting out their specific OxLEP roles and responsibilities, the document identifies the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan principles, which underpin this framework. OxLEP commit to these principles to ensure that Directors and staff are upholding the highest standards of conduct and operating according to these seven principles and are ensuring robust stewardship of the resources they have at their disposal.
- 2.1.3. The Board meets quarterly and considers direct agenda items as well as referrals from its Sub-Groups and Committees. The dates of upcoming meetings, along with relevant agendas and minutes, are published on OxLEP's website as well as past meetings dating back 12 months. We use the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012 and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as our guideline for determining whether certain records and documents should be classified as confidential. We hold our AGM as a public meeting and hold a public session at each Board meeting.
- 2.1.4. The Board keeps records which demonstrate they meet all their legal obligations and all other compliance requirements placed upon them ensuring these are accessible if requested.
- 2.1.5. Our [By-Laws](#) set out the structure and terms of office and resignation arrangements for the Board which include Directors representing:
- **Oxfordshire County Council and District Councils:** (6 Nominated Directors) Since the incorporation of the company (OxLEP Ltd) Oxfordshire's six local authorities have consistently chosen to nominate their Leaders to sit on our Board, demonstrating the political importance of economic development in the region.
 - **Higher and Further Education:** (3 Nominated Directors) Our engagement with our local education sector is vital to the development of Oxfordshire's economy. The University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University and Oxfordshire's FE colleges nominate a representative to sit on our Board. This ensures we can reflect the skills and education priorities of the County at Board

level and through our work programmes.

- **Private Sector:** (10 Appointed Directors). Appointments are subject to a fully transparent recruitment process including interview and panel discussion overseen by our Nominations and Personnel Committee: and
- **OxLEP: Chief Executive Officer**

With the support of the Nominations and Personnel Committee, our Board actively reviews the succession cycle for Board Directors. The retirement and recruitment process for Directors is also set out in the company's By-Laws.

- 2.16. Induction of Board Directors and staff is critically important. OxLEP continues to support the LEP Network with their review of induction and training of Board Directors, ensuring consistency of approach across the sector. Recommendations arising from the wider LEP review will be adopted once published. OxLEP has an established process of 1:1 briefing and familiarisation led by the CEO for each new Board Director.
- 2.17. **Chair:** Always a Private sector representative, the Chair is appointed following an open and transparent recruitment against a person specification set out by the Board and Nominations and Personnel Committee. The Chair serves for an initial period of three years, and their responsibilities are set out in the By-Laws of the Company. These are principally to lead the strategic direction of the organisation through the Board of Directors and to support the CEO in the day-to-day operations of the Company.
- 2.18. **Deputy Chair:** The Company has an appointed Deputy Chair who, as well as supporting and deputising for the Chair, chairs the Nominations and Personnel Committee.
- 2.19. **Vice Chair:** The Company also has a Vice Chair who is appointed *ex officio*, being the Chair of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (formerly Oxfordshire Growth Board).
- 2.1.10. **Chief Executive Officer (CEO):** Management and leadership on a day-day basis is devolved to the CEO, the most senior full-time, paid employee in the company. This role is responsible for OxLEP's performance, as directed by the Board's overall strategy and direction. The main function of the CEO is to direct and control the work and resources of OxLEP so that it achieves its purpose, within the limits of their delegated authority. Employed directly by the company, the Chief Executive has specific delegated powers and directs our front-line staff to deliver the work programmes determined by the strategy and policy objectives set by the Board and its Committees. The key responsibilities of the CEO are to:
- Maintain an ongoing dialogue with OxLEP's Chair and provide strategic advice and guidance to the Chair and Board;
 - Lead, recruit and retain well-motivated and trained staff;

- Oversee the accounts of the company and ensure their approval by the Board;
- Prepare, implement, monitor and publish an annual Delivery Plan to ensure that the LEP achieves its objectives as cost-effectively and efficiently as possible to report progress;
- Establish and maintain effective formal and informal links with stakeholders and key decision-makers, to exchange information and views;
- Maintain a research function to ensure that the LEP makes evidence-based decisions and achieves Value for Money in its interventions;
- Prepare and monitor the implementation of the annual budget;
- Develop and maintain an effective communications strategy to explain and promote OxLEP's role and to advocate for Oxfordshire.
- Develop and direct the implementation of policies and procedures to ensure that the LEP complies with all statutory regulations and the National Assurance Framework;
- Ensure that appropriate standards of behaviour, conduct and process are observed by the our Board, our non-Board Sub-Group members, our staff, our specialist service providers and in our work with partners.

2.1.11. **The Corporate Management Team**, led by the Chief Executive Officer, manages the day-to-day operations of OxLEP. The Chief Executive is supported by the Directors responsible for Business & Skills, Strategy and Programmes and Corporate Services. Regular meetings of these senior officers allow for timely sharing of information and development of programmes to maximise our contribution and effectiveness. The Corporate Management Team also leads on communication, both internally to staff directly and through the Senior Management Team, as well as externally. Regular, content rich communication with stakeholders is vital to ensure the wider community is aware of the work we are undertaking and how it impacts on them.

2.1.12. **Finance and Audit Committee:** The Board has a Finance and Audit Committee to provide internal challenge and scrutiny to the financial processes and procedures within the organisation. The Committee is chaired by the Board Chair and includes three other Non-Executive Directors. The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) of our Accountable Body (Oxfordshire County Council) is invited to attend all meetings along with relevant OxLEP staff involved in processes within the Committee's remit.

The responsibilities delegated to the Finance and Audit Committee are set out in the Committee's Terms of Reference. The Committee determines the operational budgets for the company for recommendation to Board and routinely reviews its financial performance. The Committee sets and reviews financial regulations and procedures to ensure a sound control environment is in place and receives and considers reports from both internal and external auditors on their independent assessments of that control environment. The Committee also sets and reviews the company's risk management policy and routinely reviews the status of our strategic risk register.

All items considered by the Committee, any delegated decisions taken, and any recommendations taken to Board are recorded in meeting minutes held by the company. These minutes are not published on our website due to the confidential nature of the items discussed. All key findings and recommendations are reported to the Board and recorded in Board minutes appropriately.

- 2.1.13. **Nominations and Personnel Committee:** The Board has a Nominations and Personnel Committee which is responsible for supporting recruitment and retention of Board directors and staff. The Committee is Chaired by our Deputy Chairman and includes three other non-executive directors.

The responsibilities delegated to the Nominations and Personnel Committee are set out in its Terms of Reference. The Committee is responsible for overseeing the succession planning, recruitment and performance of the Board of Directors and the operation of our governance functions, alongside the company's HR matters, including staff remuneration and welfare. Committee delegations include the consideration and approval of annual staff pay reviews and performance-related payments, where those sums can be met from budgets already agreed by the Board.

The Committee reviews the policies and procedures associated with recruitment, selection, retention and remuneration of our Board Directors and our staff; including the Chief Executive. Any proposed changes outside of the delegated functions are reviewed by the Committee and referred to Board for final decision.

All items considered by the Committee, any delegated decisions taken, and any recommendations taken to Board are recorded in meeting minutes held by the company. These minutes are not published on our website due to the confidential nature of the items discussed. All key findings and recommendations are reported to the Board and recorded in Board minutes appropriately.

- 2.1.14. **Sub-Groups:** OxLEP Board has seven Sub-Groups, with responsibility for the oversight and development of different work programmes forming part of our overall remit. Membership of our Sub-Groups includes key stakeholders from across Oxfordshire business, skills and other expert communities and include detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) approved by our Board. Our Sub-Groups are chaired by individuals nominated for their experience in the field, providing us with a means of engaging with key stakeholders and gaining from their experience and advice. Each group works with our staff to develop a workplan addressing their ToR scope and reports back on progress to our main Board at regular intervals:

- [Skills Sub-Group](#): as The Group acts as Oxfordshire's Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) to meet requirements set by the Department for Education (DfE). SAPs are local partnerships that strengthen the link between public and private sector employers, local authorities, colleges, universities, and independent training providers. SAPs adopt a local leadership role on skills and are expected to identify

skills priorities for the area based on high-quality analysis. SAPs are expected to uphold and support national governmental skills initiatives such as apprenticeships and T levels.

- [Programme Sub-Group](#): The Group makes recommendations to the Board regarding submissions for external funding for capital programmes and projects to drive the economy of Oxfordshire. The Sub-Group monitors the implementation and evaluation of these capital programmes and has delegated authority to approve changes to individual projects of up to £1m.
- [Innovation Sub-Group](#): The Group is charged with developing a strategic and coordinated approach to innovation activities, supporting and driving forward Oxfordshire's economic growth ambitions, as articulated in the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy.
- [Business Support Sub-Group](#): The Business Support Sub-Group is charged with developing a strategic and coordinated approach to business support activities, aligned to Oxfordshire's economic growth ambitions, as articulated in the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and Economic Recovery Plan (ERP).
- [Enterprise Zone Sub-Group](#): The group is charged with the oversight and economic development of the two Oxfordshire Enterprise Zones collectively known as Science Vale UK and making infrastructure and investment recommendations to OxLEP Board to drive growth in the Enterprise Zones and across Oxfordshire.
- [Culture and Visitor Economy Sub-Group](#): The Group is responsible for developing a strategic and coordinated approach to activities that will strengthen, future proof, and grow the culture, creative industries, and visitor economy sectors in Oxfordshire.
- [Clean Growth Sub-Group](#): The Group is concerned with developing the clean growth sector's economic growth using clean technology and promoting sustainable development. It has been formed to help deliver the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy and key elements of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy.

2.2. Government scrutiny

- 2.2.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) work together in several ways, through the work of the Cities and Local Growth Unit (CLGU), to gain assurance over OxLEP's effectiveness in the management and use of our various capital and operational public funding allocations, by:

- **setting national standards** for LEP’s conduct, governance, openness and transparency and government branding in a National Local Growth Assurance Framework;
 - **securing direct assurance** via monitoring information, based on quarterly reports submitted by us on spend and other lead indicators;
 - **securing direct assurance** through an Annual Performance Review that assesses our performance against the National Assurance Framework and other service/programme critical success factors, covering the full scope of our activity under three assessment groupings - Strategy, Governance and Delivery.
222. The National Local Growth Assurance Framework (2019) requires the nomination of a local authority within Oxfordshire to act as our Accountable Body. Oxfordshire County Council acts as OxLEP’s Accountable Body (AB). The national assurance framework emphasises the AB role as an essential assurance role in overseeing the proper administration of financial affairs within a LEP when those affairs relate to public funds. These aspects are overseen and scrutinised by OCC’s Director of Finance – the Section 151 Officer. Public funds allocated to OxLEP are paid to our AB by Government.
223. Although the exact relationship with our AB is determined locally, our AB is required to ensure that the usual local authority checks and balances apply to the awards of public funding directed by OxLEP Board. OCC cannot use OxLEP funding for its own purposes or allocate our funds without a clear mandate from OxLEP.
224. As well as submitting details of our achievements against agreed plans and targets, each year the Annual Performance Review requires:
- OxLEP’s Board Chair and Chief Executive to complete an assurance statement covering the status of our governance and transparency, including any overview and scrutiny function undertaken by our Accountable Body;
 - OCC’s Section 151 Officer to provide a report to the Annual Performance Review on their work for OxLEP over the past twelve months, and their opinion on governance and transparency, with a specific requirement to identify any issues of concern;
 - OCC’s Section 151 Officer to confirm by direct letter to MHCLG’s Accounting Officer that the financial affairs of the LEP are being properly administered. The LEP’s Local Assurance Framework is compliant with the minimum standards as outlined in the latest National Local Growth Assurance Framework.

2.3. The Role of the Accountable Bodies

231. Fundamental to the delivery of our work programmes is the relationship we have with our Accountable Bodies (ABs). As outlined in Section 2.2, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) acts as our overall Accountable Body. The Vale of White Horse District Council

acts as the AB for our two Enterprise Zones. We work closely with both ABs to exchange information for financial monitoring, reporting and governance purposes. Formal Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) define the roles and responsibilities of OxLEP and our Accountable Bodies and related governance arrangements. These MOUs are reviewed and audited regularly to ensure they remain effective ([Memorandum of Understanding.](#))

232. As our Accountable Body, OCC oversees the delivery of our capital and operational programmes. It receives and distributes all our capital grant funding on our behalf. All expenditure incurred on our behalf by OCC is subject to their policies, procedures, and regulations. The use of resources is subject to the usual local authority checks and balances – including the financial duties and rules which require Councils to act prudently in spending. These are overseen and scrutinised by OCC’s Director of Finance – the Section 151 Officer.
233. As our Accountable Body, OCC also initially receives most of our operational funding on our behalf and releases these funds to OxLEP under pre-agreed and formally recorded processes and procedures, subject to meeting OCC’s standard checks and balances.
234. We work closely with OCC’s officers to undertake regular monitoring of our capital programmes and our operational activity. Monitoring outcomes are reported at every meeting of our Finance and Audit Committee and our Board, with OCC’s Section 151 Officer in attendance.
235. As well as providing financial oversight and scrutiny described in this section, OCC delivers a range of operational services to OxLEP under a formal Service Agreement, including ICT, legal and internal audit.
236. An effective working relationship has been established between the company and OCC, to deliver on the shared goals and ambitions for infrastructure development in Oxfordshire.
237. OCC’s Director of Finance, who is the S151 Officer, attends all Board and Finance and Audit Committee meetings and provides advice and challenge. As a result, our main Accountable Body is fully involved in our decision-making processes and can be confident we are acting in accordance with relevant laws and regulations. We have also considered the role of the S151 Officer against the five principles developed by CIPFA. These set out the S151 Officer’s expectations for LEPs to instil good and proportionate financial governance. The roles of the S151 officer, and the overarching Accountable Body, is therefore critical in ensuring effective governance and decision making within OxLEP, as well as providing key advice and support services to enable us to operate effectively.

238. As Accountable Body, OCC is ultimately responsible for the proper disbursement of funding received on our behalf under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. Consequently, OCC can prevent what it considers to be inappropriate or unapproved commitments or expenditure. Our MoU with OCC as Accountable Body includes dispute resolution procedures to ensure any dispute between us can be resolved promptly. This includes a final escalation to OCC’s Cabinet and OxLEP’s Board when escalated matters cannot be resolved between the Council’s Section 151 Officer and our Chief Executive.
239. Funds related to our Science Vale UK Enterprise Zones (EZ1 and EZ2) are administered by Vale of White Horse District Council (Vale) as our Accountable Body for Science Vale UK. Under EZ rules, OxLEP is obliged to establish clear governance, management and delivery arrangements for the EZs and to be open and transparent in decision making and use of data. Certain business rates funds collected by the relevant collection authorities are eligible to be retained by OxLEP under these EZ governance arrangements. These sums are held, managed and invested by Vale in accordance with their financial regulations and controls. OxLEP Board decides on the allocation of funds to support OxLEP’s economic priorities and ensure that EZ business rates growth is reinvested locally and in a way that supports overall economic growth, development and enterprise and, for EZ2 specifically, to support the further development of the EZ and neighbouring areas. Funds allocated by OxLEP Board are transferred by Vale to OCC, as our overall Accountable Body, for disbursement by OCC under their usual financial procedures and controls.

2.4. Overall Scheme of Delegation

241. The table at Appendix A describes our arrangements for the financial control and risk management of our company and our activities. It explains how our key decision making and assurance processes are delegated across our governance structure, together with the checks and balances in place alongside.
242. In addition to these overall financial, assurance and decision-making delegations, we operate an internal Scheme of Financial Delegation that forms part of our company Financial Regulations. This sets out detailed cost commitment and expenditure authorisation limits for each senior executive role across the company, together with bank payment authorisation limits, including those requiring Board Director authorisation. Compliance with this Financial Scheme of Delegation is routinely monitored and controlled through our financial systems and procedures.

2.5. OxLEP Staff Salaries

251. OxLEP considers it important to be open and transparent about what we pay our staff. Current (1st September 2021) salary bands and numbers of staff are set out below.

Salary Band	Number of staff paid within this band
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£23,000 - £29,999	9
£30,000 - £49,999	18
£50,000 - £69,999	4
£70,000 - £99,999	3
£100,000 +	1

2.6. Audit and Accounts

- 2.6.1. All financial transactions relating to our capital programmes are carried out by OCC as our Accountable Body, under the direction of OxLEP Board. Funds received and expenditure incurred and are included in OCC's annual statement of accounts. The [financial statements](#) are audited by the Council's external auditors, currently Ernst and Young LLP, and are publicly available through the OCC website.
- 2.6.2. The operation of key financial procedures and systems, together with the roles and responsibilities set out in our MoU with OCC, are subject to bi-annual Internal Audit scrutiny by the Council. Internal audit findings and agreed management actions are reported to our Finance and Audit Committee.
- 2.6.3. Our Accountable Body's financial statements are subject to independent external audit. As well as ensuring the accurate recording of transactions relating to OxLEP's funding, appropriate disclosures are included regarding funding received and expenditure incurred by OCC on behalf of OxLEP, to ensure that the full range of our activities is clear to stakeholders.
- 2.6.4. Those transactions processed by our company directly, together with relevant third-party disclosures, are set out in OxLEP's annual accounts which are examined by our external auditors, as part of our annual independent audit. Our audited accounts are approved by our Board each year at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and subsequently filed with [Companies House](#), as well as being available on our [website](#). Appointment of our external auditors is subject to regular competitive tendering and the nature and scope of each external audit is agreed by our Finance and Audit Committee. The Committee also assesses the profile and capability of the proposed audit team. Richardsons are our appointed auditors and we work with them to ensure an efficient and effective audit process, in accordance with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- 2.6.5. In addition to the audits of financial information and governance arrangements, most of the projects and programmes we manage and/or deliver are subject to external scrutiny by the funding bodies. These project/programme audits are an invaluable tool for designing future services, to ensure we continue to improve our service delivery and governance.

2.7. Risk Management

- 2.7.1. All our activities are affected by risk to a greater or lesser degree, and it is the responsibility of the Board to ensure those risks are managed effectively. Our Risk Management Policy is approved by our Board and aims to ensure that our strategic, programme, financial and operational risks are adequately and regularly assessed and reviewed.
- 2.7.2. The organisation has drawn up a Risk Management Policy and captures the risks at a strategic, operational and programme level in a risk register. Mitigation strategies are identified and built into the operational conduct of the company to significantly reduce the likelihood and/or impact of specific risks. Risks associated with programme and project delivery are developed for each individual project or the overall delivery plan and are reported separately alongside the delivery plan.
- 2.7.3. Whilst ultimately our Board is responsible for the management of risk, the Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring the risk management process operates effectively. In line with our Risk Management Policy, our strategic risk register is reviewed regularly by the Corporate Management Team under the oversight of the Finance and Audit Committee. Significant changes are reported to our Board and our strategic risk register is reviewed by the Board at least annually.

2.8 Overview and scrutiny

- 2.8.1. As well as the internal scrutiny provided by the Board, various Committees and working groups, our activities are subject to external scrutiny through the Accountable Bodies and local authority stakeholders. For example, our ERP was reviewed by all the district councils, the city council and the county council's [Performance Scrutiny Committee, as well as the Future Oxfordshire Partnership governance process](#), to ensure there was adequate, robust challenge. In addition, the Performance Scrutiny Committee of the Accountable Body receives an annual report from OxLEP for information and challenge.
- 2.8.2. OxLEP also participates in sector wide Peer Review exercises convened through the LEP Network.
- 2.8.3. Outside of the "Corporate" scrutiny and review, we report alongside the S151 Officer regularly to the Accountable Body Performance Scrutiny Panel chaired by an independent County Councillor. This is also the route through which we report operational progress to Cabinet and Full Council as required. We attend and present to other District/City Council, Committees, Cabinets and Full Councils as requested on an annual basis to ensure transparency.

2.8.4. We have appointed a dedicated resource within the Corporate Services Team as Operations and Compliance Manager. This role will reinforce our compliance arrangements and keep them under regular review.

Part Three: Communication and Joint Working

3.1. OxLEP Website

3.1.1. Our website is the key vehicle for communicating the progress and delivery of our programmes. Details of all the projects approved under LGF schemes, their budgets and intended outcomes are there for stakeholders to review along with the Board, Committee and Sub-Group agendas and minutes setting out the decision-making process. Details contained on the website to include other key documents along with a version of the Operating Plan showing progress to date against existing projects. Where information is commercially sensitive we endeavour to make as much information available to the public while protecting the integrity of the projects. The website also links through to our partner organisations who hold their own information on the work they are doing with us.

3.2. Communications and Engagement

3.2.1. Engagement with stakeholders is fundamental to the work we undertake. We have previously used a variety of channels, such as the work of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, Sub-Groups, public consultations and regular engagement with local authority colleagues and Business Representative Organisations. Our [Communications and Engagement Strategy](#) sets aims to ensure that there is a joined-up and comprehensive approach to communications across all of OxLEP's 'functions' – whether this is OxLEP as a corporate entity, OxLEP Skills or OxLEP Business.

3.3. LEP Network

3.3.1. Wherever possible we seek to work with other LEPs to reduce duplication while maximising impact and use of resources. As well as being active contributors to the [LEP Network](#), sharing of Best Practice, we are part of the OxfordCambridge Arc partnership and various sector based/thematic partnerships such as 'The Oxfordshire Transformative Technologies Alliance SIA' alongside five other LEPs which focussed on 4 large scale, disruptive technologies, for which the UK has great need and world class strength.

3.3.2. We are also involved in Motorsport Valley UK along with the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley, Coventry and Warwickshire, Leicester and Leicestershire and the South-East Midlands LEPs to promote investment and development of the high-performance technology driven automotive industry in the regions.

3.4. Future Oxfordshire Partnership (formerly Oxfordshire Growth Board)

341. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is a joint committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire together with six non-voting Business Board Directors with observer status. It has been set up to facilitate and enable joint working on economic development, strategic planning and growth. It does this by overseeing the delivery of projects that the councils of Oxfordshire are seeking to deliver collaboratively in the fields of economic development and strategic planning.
342. It also oversees the delivery of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal agreed with the Government in April 2018. A key component of this includes the Oxford Local Industrial Strategy, led by the OxLEP Board. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership also provides advice on matters of collective interest, seeks agreement on local priorities and influence relevant local, regional and national bodies.
343. Future Oxfordshire Partnership meetings are open to the public, who are encouraged to participate through a structured process. All agendas, papers and minutes are publicly available via the [web site](#). The Partnership has developed specific scrutiny oversight for its work, which strengthens overall transparency.

3.5. Social Value

351. The Social Value Guide defines Social Value as “the additional benefit to the community from a commissioning/procurement process over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes”. Much of this is being driven by the Public Services (Social Value) Act, which came into force on 31st January 2013 and requires those who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits.
352. We embrace opportunities that arise under the Social Value Act, and through procurement processes, and will work with partners and key stakeholders to promote and develop this across the county. However, we have developed strategies that go far beyond its compliance obligations to maximise its investment funding and activities to create Social Value. It takes a leading role across the county, working innovatively with key partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries to open up and create additional Social Value, through environmental, employment, health and wellbeing benefits and improvements.
353. Our Vision, originally set out in our Strategic Economic Plan and now refreshed in Local Industrial Strategy, sees Oxfordshire as a vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, world leading economy, driven by innovation, enterprise and research excellence. Threaded through each of these elements are opportunities to create and add Social Value. As an example, one of the ten themes within the Innovation Strategy is Innovation for Social Good. This focuses on building strength in social enterprise by linking social innovators and encouraging sustainable businesses for social good. Our eScalate programme has a clear focus on strengthening the breath, scale, reach and impact of our social enterprise community to ensure they are well positioned to maximise opportunity.

354. OxLEP lead and collaborate with local partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries and maintain a strong partnership of leaders and organisations from all sectors in Oxfordshire driving innovation and growth. It is well-positioned and well connected to lead and influence adding Social Value for improved social impact and environmental conditions. As an example, we work closely with Oxfordshire Social Entrepreneurship Partnership www.osep.org.uk, which supports and promotes Social Enterprise across the county. Working with OSEP and other key stakeholders we helped to establish Oxfordshire as the first Social Enterprise County under the Social Enterprise UK “Place” programme.

OxLEP collaborates outside the county through the Social Enterprise Place programme, strong national networks, and relationships with central government. We and our key partners will continue to work with people, organisations and regions pioneering this theme elsewhere around the country and even internationally. For example, local support of national campaigns like Social Enterprise UK’s Buy Social campaign

Part Four: Transparency, Policies and Procedures

4.1. Conduct Assurance and Conflicts of Interest

- 4.1.1. We actively recruit people to our Boards and Committees who have an interest in developing the Oxfordshire economy. The skills and experience these individuals bring is invaluable in helping shape decision making and developing the projects and schemes that will help us achieve our stated vision.
- 4.1.2. Individual Non-Executive Director and Corporate Management Team interests are declared annually. Specific declarations and conflicts are managed at each Board, Committee and Sub-Group meeting to ensure no inappropriate influence is exercised or advantage is offered to individuals or organisations. In line with “best practice” all Board Directors on appointment are required to declare any interests they have. This information is used to make sure those individuals are not placed in compromising situations. At the same time all decision makers are made aware of the need to declare interests when they arise and remove themselves from situations where they could be deemed to have a conflict of interest.
- 4.1.3. Registers of interests for all Board Directors, the Corporate Management Team and Accountable Body Section 151 Officers are held, reviewed, and updated. These electronically signed declarations are published on our website.
- 4.1.4. OxLEP Board Non-Executive Directors are also required to sign a copy of and adhere to our [Code of Conduct](#). Copies of these signed documents are kept alongside our Register of Interests.

4.2. Gifts and Hospitality and Directors’ expenses

- 4.2.1. We maintain a policy on the accepting and offering of gifts and hospitality which covers our staff. The Code of Conduct sets out the rules and procedures for Board Directors for offers of gifts and hospitality. All offers of gifts and hospitality are recorded and are available for scrutiny by our internal and external auditors. Guidance is given to all staff on the appropriateness of accepting or declining gifts and the need to do so in a transparent manner. OxLEP maintains a [Gifts and Hospitality Register](#) which is updated six monthly and is published on our website. We also publish a register of Directors’ Expense which can be found [here](#).

4.3. Freedom of Information

- 4.3.1. As a limited company we are not subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2005 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. However, we will always seek to make information sought from us under these regulations, wherever possible. In addition, on our behalf as our Accountable Body, Oxfordshire County Council processes and records all our capital funding and expenditure and

most of our other public funding receipts. These are subject to FOI rules and regulations and are covered through our [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with them.

4.4. Complaints

4.4.1 We take all complaints very seriously. We have a published [Complaints Procedure](#) on our website for dealing with complaints from stakeholders or other interested parties. Depending on the nature of the complaint we may either involve the Accountable Body in addressing the complaint or inform them of the outcome to ensure they are aware of the issue and any learning points we have taken on board.

4.5. GDPR

4.5.1 OxLEP maintains a [GDPR \(privacy policy\)](#) and we are committed to ensuring the security and protection of the personal information that we process, and to provide a compliant and consistent approach to data protection. We have always had a robust and effective data protection program in place which complies with existing law and abides by the data protection principles. However, we recognise our obligations in updating and expanding this program to meet the demands of the GDPR. We aim to continue to improve our processes for safeguarding the personal information we hold and to ensuring our data protection regime remains compliant, effective and fit for purpose.

4.6. Anti-fraud and Corruption/Anti-bribery

4.6.1 Dealing with public money requires the highest levels of financial probity and accountability. We maintain a robust system of financial control, monitoring and reporting to ensure transactions are transparent and scrutinised. However, we would always encourage staff who have concerns over our financial arrangements to raise those concerns, so we can be sure those systems are working effectively.

4.6.2 Our procedures ensure that any suspected fraud, irregularity, or financial impropriety can be reported directly to our Chair, who also Chairs our Finance and Audit Committee. These details are included in our [Anti-Fraud statement](#). Our Chair will then request our Accountable Body, Oxfordshire County Council, undertakes an initial investigation. On conclusion of their work the findings will be reported to the Finance and Audit Committee who will take a judgement on what action to take and will report findings and outcomes to our Board.

4.7. Whistle-Blowing

4.7.1 As well as the routes outlined above in terms of registering complaints and concerns, we maintain a [Whistle Blowing framework](#). Where staff, stakeholders or suppliers have serious concerns they can report those confidentially through this policy without

fear of repercussions.

4.8. Equality and Diversity

- 4.8.1. When recruiting to the Board, its Committees and Sub-Groups, consideration is given to ensuring that Directors bring the best mix of skills and experience for assuring the delivery of our strategic priorities and objectives. Where not filled by ex officio or nominated individual, Director appointments are made following an open and transparent recruitment process. The composition of the Board and appropriate succession planning is reviewed regularly by the Nominations and Personnel Committee to ensure our Board is representative of the local business community and supports the implementation of strengthened diversity. Our [Equality and Diversity Statement](#) is also published on our website.

Part Five: Value for Money: Programme Prioritisation, Appraisal and Management

5.1. Programme Sub-Group

- 5.1.1. Our Programme Sub-Group (PSG), chaired by a Board Director, has oversight and management of Oxfordshire's Government funded capital programmes, operating to a high level of transparency, ensuring the active involvement of local and regional representation including our Accountable Body. The [PSG Terms of Reference](#) are published on the OxLEP website.

In recognition of the increased scale of programme responsibility and operational delivery, we have strengthened our Programme Sub-Group oversight with the ongoing responsibility for reviewing progress, programme development and consideration of project change requests in support of project delivery. To maximise the effectiveness of the Sub-Group we have delegated programme change responsibility within agreed levels (<£1m) to the Programme Sub-Group, where these are within existing project budget approvals. The group chaired by a Board Director and supported by the executive team report quarterly to our Board on progress and seek the Board's agreement to project change requests or variations outside of these delegation limits.

5.2. Capital Project Prioritisation

- 5.2.1. Our Programme Sub-Group oversees a robust project assessment process for all capital projects funded through our programmes, based on government's recommended good practice guidance on appraisal and evaluation.
- 5.2.2. The group uses a good practice prioritisation framework to assess a range of project types, reflecting the breadth of Oxfordshire's ambition aligned to our latest strategic objectives, currently expressed in our Local Industrial Strategy and Economic Recovery Plan themes. This framework is aligned with HM Treasury Green Book and ensures we prioritise projects based on their strategic fit, deliverability, value for money, and impact.
- 5.2.3. These criteria have been developed with reference to recommended good practice in economic appraisal outlined in the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) appraisal guide. The framework provides a transparent peer review process for assessing projects, and interrogating projected outputs, viability, and deliverability. The Programme Sub-Group oversight ensures that, as a minimum, strategic fit, value for money, deliverability, environmental and social/distributional impact are the factors taken into consideration.
- 5.2.4. For transport projects we utilise the DfT's good practice guidance, including modelling, appraisal and social and distributional impacts of projects as well as determining their value for money.

525. Assessing the value for money of all candidate projects is a key factor in our assessment and selection process. Taking advice from staff and Sub-Groups, the Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring value for money (vfm) and the Programme Sub-Group oversees this aspect in their assurance role.
526. Calls for project bids are advertised openly. In all cases candidate project business cases are assessed by appropriately skilled personnel, drawing on external expertise as required. The Programme Sub-Group oversight assures that all candidate project business cases have been subject to adequate scrutiny and assessment before recommendations are made to our Board.
527. As part of its work the Programme Sub-Group requires the project sponsor to secure match funding from other sources to contribute to the overall investment in the project. This is to ensure that the burden of economic development does not fall solely on the public purse and that all beneficiaries contribute towards Oxfordshire's economic growth.

5.3. Capital Programme Management and Delivery

531. We follow "Good Practice" programme and project management guidance. Stakeholders, professional advice and the requirements for each project will differ project by project but the principal structure remains consistent.
532. On a quarterly basis we report back to central government, to the Programme Sub-Group, and to our Board on the progress we are making, this includes the LGF and GBF data capture spreadsheet. We also report progress through the government's Annual Performance Review process.
533. We seek to minimise programme risk in all our working arrangements. All funded projects are required to maintain a Risk Register specific to the project. Programme risk receives more intensive management by the Programme Manager where larger budgets and a greater number of, or complexity of, schemes exist.
534. We do not release funding until a claim is made in accordance with the funding agreement requirements, signed off by the Project lead. All capital payments are processed through our Accountable Body's financial systems, following its procedures and controls.
535. The Programme Manager acts as the key point of contact for any queries by the Sub-Group and Board Directors between meetings. Details of our completed and in-flight capital funded projects are published on the [website](#).

5.4. Output and Outcome Evaluation

- 54.1. All our projects deliver outputs and outcomes. Whilst these terms are often used interchangeably, they are not the same thing. Outputs are those results that are achieved immediately as a result of the project; for example, where a college centre has been built, the outputs would be the building itself and any staff employed for it. Outcomes are those results that are achieved in the mid-term; in this example this could be number of new learners assisted, who will arrive as a result of the project's completion, but this will take longer to quantify.
- 54.2. Expected outputs and outcomes are included in the funding agreement for each project, as are the monitoring requirements for project managers and delivery partners.
- 54.3. Quarterly returns are completed by each project manager and sent to our Programme Manager for review and inclusion in relevant reporting, such as LEP Operating Plan for the Programme Sub-Group as well as LGF and GBF data capture spreadsheet reporting for Central Government. This allows us to capture outputs and outcomes and track against the targets we have set.
- 54.4. Following completion of a project an evaluation will be completed. We work with other LEPs and Central Government representatives to ensure agreed standard procedures for project and programme evaluation.

VERSION CONTROL

VERSION	DATE	DETAIL
1.3	28 JANUARY 2022	Updated links to Articles and By-Laws
2.0	14 September 2021	Revised version approved by OxLEP Board
1.1	February 2021	Version 1 reviewed as current
1.0	March 2019	Board approved Local Assurance Framework with updates following National Local Growth Assurance Framework (January 2019).



ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

January 2022

VERSION DRAFT 1.3

APPENDICE A

OXLEP LTD

OVERALL SCHEME OF DELEGATION



Overall Scheme of Delegation

Governance Forum	Forum Authority	Checks and balances
Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall responsibility for financial control, risk management & decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declarations of interests requested at every meeting, alongside published DOI statements, reviewed annually Accountable Body provides scrutiny and financial controls Board constitution is defined in company Articles and By-Laws Meeting quorum for decision making requires a defined mix of Public, Private and Education (Non-Executive) Directors, as well as a minimum number All corporate governance and corporate compliance documentation are approved by Board, including Local Assurance Framework, Delivery Plan and Annual Report All strategic planning and documentation are approved by Board
Finance and Audit Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitors operational budget performance and financial status of funded revenue programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meeting cycle Declarations of interests requested at every meeting, alongside published DOI statements, reviewed annually

Governance Forum	Forum Authority	Checks and balances
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegated financial authority to approve operating budget changes and spend, within Board approved budget limits • Appoints external auditor • Approves annual external audit engagement scope and approach, assures independence and capability, considers any major findings, and assures appropriate management response • Commissions and oversees non-audit services provided by the appointed external auditor, ensuring that this provision does not impair the external auditor's independence or objectivity • Commissions and monitors an annual independent internal controls review, including procedures in place for the prevention and detection of fraud and financial crime • Approves and monitors internal audit reviews, considers any major findings, and assures appropriate management response • Reviews the operation of the Financial Regulations and recommends changes to Board • Reviews strategic risk register quarterly and assures adherence to approved risk management policy • Monitors and reviews compliance with the Assurance Framework • Assures the company's arrangements for its employees to raise concerns, in confidence, about possible wrongdoing in financial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointments to the Committee are made by the Board • Committee terms of reference require at least three Committee members that are Board Non-Executive Directors • Accountable Body S151 Officer attends all meetings and provides scrutiny and challenge of decision making • Committee minutes are reviewed by Board at each Board meeting • The internal and external auditors, and any other independent legal and/or professional advisers, attend Committee meetings to present their findings/reports • Annual internal controls review outcomes are reported to Board • Audited annual accounts are approved and adopted by Board • Operational budget monitoring is reported to Board at quarterly intervals • Our Anti-Fraud and Corruption/ Anti Bribery Policy states that all suspected frauds, irregularities, or financial improprieties can be reported directly to Board Chair • Our latest Financial Regulations require the Committee to present a full risk report to Board at least twice in each financial year.

Governance Forum	Forum Authority	Checks and balances
	<p>reporting or other matters and the independent investigation of such matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the authority to obtain outside legal or independent professional advice, the cost of which shall be borne by the company. 	
Nominations and Personnel Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaired by Deputy Chair of Board • Oversees the nomination, appointment, and remuneration of Board Directors • Appoints selection panel for recruitment of Board Directors and Corporate Management Team executive roles • Delegated authority to determine the policy and management of staff remuneration and benefits • On recommendation from the Board Chair, sets and assures the annual performance management arrangements for the Chief Executive Officer • Oversees the Board's Diversity Policy • Regularly reviews corporate governance and HR-related policies • Regularly reviews in-scope strategic risks • Delegated financial authority to spend up to £1,000 per Board appointment in the furtherance of its duties. • Makes recommendations to Board on the membership of the Finance and Audit Committee, in consultation with the Committee Chair. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly meeting cycle • Declarations of interests requested at every meeting, alongside published DOI statements, reviewed annually • Appointments to the Committee are made by the Board • Committee terms of reference require at least three Committee Members that are Board Non-Executive Directors • Committee minutes are reviewed by Board at each Board meeting • All Board Director appointment decisions are taken by Board, based on Committee recommendations

Governance Forum	Forum Authority	Checks and balances
Programmes Sub-Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaired by Board Director • Delegated financial authority of up to £1m for change control approval on Board approved capital projects only • Recommends to Board financial support for new capital projects/ programmes • Assures compliance of capital programme management reporting • Assures capital programme and pipeline selection processes • Assures project/programme evaluation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly meeting cycle • Sub-Group terms of reference require at least three Sub-Group Members that includes the Sub-Group Chair • Declarations of interests requested at every meeting, alongside published DOI statements, reviewed annually • Accountable Body Deputy S151 Officer attends all meetings and provides scrutiny and challenge of decision making • Accountable Body S151 Officer prepares and presents a half-yearly financial report to Board on actual and forecast spend on all capital programmes • Capital project funding agreements with Delivery Partners are signed by Accountable Body S151 Officer • All capital public funding is received directly and retained by the Accountable Body • All payments to Delivery Partners are made in arrears based on an evidenced claim process and are authorised and processed by the Accountable Body using its Scheme of Financial Delegation

Governance Forum	Forum Authority	Checks and balances
Enterprise Zone Sub-Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaired by Board Director • Oversees the development and progress of the Science Vale enterprise zones • Recommends to Board projects and initiatives to be funded from Retained Business Rates growth • No financial delegated authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly meeting cycle • Declarations of interests requested at every meeting, alongside published DOI statements, reviewed annually • Accountable Body Deputy S151 Officer attends all meetings and provides scrutiny and challenge of decision making • Separate Local Authority Accountable Body provides oversight and additional layer of controls for Enterprise Zone activities • S151 Officer for EZ Accountable Body and the business rates collecting authorities attends all meetings and provides scrutiny and challenge of decision making • Progress report to each Board meeting
Other Sub-Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees the development and progress of in-scope programmes and initiatives • Recommends new strategies, programmes and initiatives for Board approval • No financial delegated authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declarations of interests requested at every meeting • Sub-Group Terms of Reference and membership are scrutinised by Nominations and Personnel Committee • Board approves Sub-Group Terms of Reference and membership • Regular Board reporting cycle presented by Sub-Group Chairs on workplans and progress