

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JOINT OSB /
 BUSINESS SUPPORT SUB-GROUP
 Tuesday 12th September 2023
 Microsoft TEAMS Virtual Meeting
 4:00pm – 6:00pm
 MEETING MINUTES**

PRESENT

NAME	POSITION AND ORGANISATION	MEMBERSHIP
Richard Byard	Director of Business Development, OxLEP	Chair
Helen Hall	UK Recruitment & Partnerships Director, Oxford Brookes University	Member
Richard Kennell	Chief Executive Officer, SOFEA	Member
Kate Berman	Director, Olamalu	Member
Bernard Grenville-Jones	Managing Director, Activate Apprenticeships	Member
Jo Lynch	Senior Partnership Manager, DWP, Berks, Bucks & Oxfordshire District	Member
Eddy McDowall	Chief Executive, Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers	Member
Prof Ewart Keep	Director, Centre for Skills Knowledge & Organisational Performance, Oxford University	Member
Mark Vingoe	Chief Executive Officer, The Engineering Trust	Member
Paul Jones	Apprenticeships Lead, Oxford Professional Education	Member
Cllr Susan Brown	Leader of Oxford City Council	Member
Mark Wood	Chief Operating Officer, Reaction Engines Ltd	Member
Su Copeland	Priddey Marketing	Member
Stuart Wilkinson	University of Oxford	Member
Stephen Clarke	Cherwell College	Member
Grant Hayward	OSEP	Member
Sarah Jaycock	High Spec Composites	Member
Pete Mols	Outside Ideas	Member
Peter McLintock	Mills Reeves	Member

IN ATTENDANCE

Anna Gration	LSIP Project Lead, TV Chamber of Commerce	Speaker
Jamie Kavanagh	Insight Analyst, OCC	Speaker
Ria Poliquin	Programme Manager, SOFEA	Speaker
Taraji Ogunnubi	Programme Manager, SOFEA	Speaker
Helen Brind	Growth Hub Manager	OxLEP Business
Sally Andreou	Skills Hub Manager	OxLEP Skills
Dianne Hankin	Social Contract Programme Administrator	OxLEP Skills
Susan Ledgard-Hoile	Enterprise Co-ordinator	OxLEP Skills
Sebastian Johnson	Head of Innovation and Inward Investment	OxLEP Inward Investment
Christina Rofique	Deputising for Paul Roberts	Aspire

APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Tagore Ramoutar	IOD Oxfordshire SME & Start Up Ambassador	Member
Chris Meah	Chief Executive Officer, School of Code	Member
Joanna Hart	Director, Space Partnership	Member
Alexander Brandham	Group Leader UK Apprentice Programmes, BMW	Member
Wendy Hart	HMT LLP	Member
Giles Orr	Oxford Brookes University	Member
Richard Rosser	B4	Member

Emily Manser	Dept of Business and Trade	Associate
Steve Clarke	Driftway Solutions	Member
Sarah Marlow	Deputy Skills Hub Manager	OxLEP Skills

PAPERS:

- LSIP Paper for Oxfordshire
- LMI and Business Churn Data
- LEP Review

1	RB	<p>Welcome, apologies, members' declarations of interest The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were noted. Meeting etiquette and protocols were highlighted, and attendees were advised that the meeting would be recorded for the purposes of minute taking.</p> <p>Declarations of Interest – Richard Kennell, CEO SOFEA which leads on the No Limits programme with partners at Aspire. Bernard Grenville Jones as Chair of SOFEA, Christine Rofique as CPO of Aspire.</p>
2	RB	<p>Previous minutes and matters arising The minutes from the meeting of 13th June 2023 were approved. The actions of the previous meeting were completed / followed up in this agenda.</p>
3	RB	<p>Chairperson's Update, Membership and Group Terms of Reference The Chair advised the SEP update would be covered later in the agenda.</p> <p>The Chair gave an update on the current position of the group, as previously it was agreed to update the Terms of Reference for the combined group. However, the LEP is in a significant transition programme and following discussions at SMT it was agreed to allow take a view on the form and function of this group to ensure we maximise the engagement and input across the business and skills landscape.</p> <p>The Chair invited SA to give an update of the Skills Bootcamps proposal to the Department for Education which she had earlier presented at the LSIP launch. OxLEP is finalising the proposal to DfE to potentially run 10 skills bootcamps, which are flexible courses of up to 16 weeks for adults aged 19+, covering Levels 3 to 5. These are based on the strategic needs identified by employers and OxLEP are working with employers to create courses to fill the identified skills gaps, as seen in the LSIP findings, which include ten key sectors: data analytics, Amazon Web Services, digital marketing, hospitality, green sustainability skills, green construction, engineering and manufacturing, health and life sciences and green bikes. The proposal is worth approx. £1.7 million and if approved by DfE will start in January 2024 running to March 2025.</p> <p>The courses are free for the unemployed or to reskill/upskill or for returners to work. The courses are flexible and can be used by large and small businesses for their own staff. Those who complete the course should get an interview by the employer or if already employed show some progression.</p> <p>The application should be submitted this week with a two-week response time. If successful we will develop the infrastructure to start delivery late autumn. This is DfE's flagship return to work initiative, focussing on those out of work but also those looking to retrain if in work. Employers pay a 30% contribution. The programme has been well received across the country, delivering excellent outcomes. From a business support perspective, there are opportunities for sole and micro traders to benefit, for example in digital marketing. It is hoped to report the proposal's success between meetings and bring a substantive item to the next meeting.</p>

4	RB	<p>OxLEP Update – LEP Review</p> <p>The Chair referred to LEP Review report and the current LEP review process, triggered by the Chancellor’s budget statement decision not to continue LEP funding beyond this financial year. A questionnaire was issued to key stakeholders on LEP effectiveness. In early August we received confirmation that the government are continuing with the Chancellor’s statement therefore government wishes LEPs to transition into local democratic institutions, linking to the devolution agenda, although keen for the functions of LEPs to continue. This is not the end of LEPs, and a transition process where Oxfordshire works with LA colleagues at County Council level to work through a Board Task and Finish group to look at direction of travel set against the backdrop of continuous reviews of LEPs moving forward. Our Board T & F group has reported back to our Board setting out future options and creating a transition group with county council colleagues and T&F group members to address transition.</p> <p>In anticipation of the above, we have been proactive as a LEP to keep ahead of developments, with a series of interventions aligned with our key priorities and we are open to work with colleague and have a balanced budget beyond the current financial year into future years. We are in a good shape to enter the transition process, with good working relationships with county colleagues. We will we continue to deliver functions on behalf of government for business support, skills interventions and internationalisation.</p> <p>We need to set out and develop a transition plan by the end of March with transition implemented as soon as practically possible. We are cautiously optimistic for the future, have a very good line of communication with LA colleagues and are very supportive of the direction of travel set out. Activities we deliver as a LEP, which subgroup members support the delivery of, are very much aligned to the strategic proprieties of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.</p> <p>We have been clear with colleagues and stakeholders on the background noise regarding the end of LEPs, but for Oxfordshire this is more of an evolution of core functions and locality will continue.</p> <p>In the meantime, the LEP will continue with its fantastic activities and maximize the collective engagement and enthusiasm we have across the wider subgroup family. The Chaired requested the group’s patience in forming the Terms of Reference during the transition.</p>
5	HB	<p>Business Support Group Update</p> <p>HB gave a presentation on the review of support provided through the Growth Hub and planned future activity. Slides will be circulated after the meeting.</p> <p>HB offered to share case studies of the organisations supported by the Growth Hub celebrated at the ERDF Celebration Event with members if requested.</p> <p>The Visitor Economy Support Scheme is expecting around £600k of applications against £250k available in grants. The grant panel meets on 5th October to consider applications. The Writing and Winning Grant Proposal workshop had 65 people signed up of which 20 were out of county, which raised the possibility of a commercial offer outside of county.</p> <p>HB highlighted backdrop of Growth Hubs funding being reduced by 50% from £462k last year to £231k, also losing the European funding this year. Total funding this year is £437k and we are still committed to providing business support to Oxfordshire businesses but under reduced cost envelope.</p>

		<p>An online business directory is in development where our clients can register and talk about their businesses with live links to their organisations for those seeking support. It is free to our clients, but we are considering a chargeable fee to outside enquiries.</p> <p>We are trying to make it easier for SMEs to access information on Net Zero challenges for Oxfordshire.</p> <p>The Chair thanked HB for her presentation. A question was raised on the definition of businesses covered by the Creative Growth Programme supporting Creative Industry organisations. HB subsequently advised a list will be provided once we know if we have been successful.</p> <p>RB gave an update on the creation of a new economic strategy for Oxfordshire, the last having taken place some years ago. Calls for evidence and workshops have taken place seeking views from a wide stakeholder group and SQW are creating the draft strategy. An update paper is going to LEP Board on 13th September and to FOP on 26th September, addressing the various challenges and opportunities in seeking to develop a narrative that supports the diverse community in Oxfordshire. We are now at the economic modelling stage recognising our physical assets and communities, supporting innovation across Oxfordshire, advancing Oxfordshire globally bringing investment in to tackle some of the world's biggest challenges. We will also be strengthening our communities. The Strategic Economic Plan will focus on the economy and aligned with the nine objectives of the FOP Vision.</p> <p>After presentation to FOP the report sign off is planned at the end of the calendar year with an implementation and action plan to follow. Business support continues through all levels of business. The recent news of BMW Mini's investment is most welcome, along with the smaller companies in the supply chain. Harwell is also receiving significant investment of half a billion pounds. All of this brings £1.2 billion investment into the economy of Oxfordshire creating and safeguarding employment and creating skills opportunities.</p> <p>The latest iteration of the strategy will be shared shortly with those participating in the workshops</p>
6	AG	<p>Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) Final Report</p> <p>The Chair introduced the update from Anna Gratton. The presentation slides will be shared with members after the meeting. The report was published in August and it is hoped the plan will have far reaching impacts and benefits for businesses and individuals in developing skills and opportunities going forward.</p> <p>The LSIP team will continue working with TV Chamber of Commerce and holding communications channels with the Thames Valley Workforce Development Partnerships, governed by DfE until the end of the project. The Chair thanked AG for the update on the positive work taking place and requested questions to be raised in the roundtable session.</p>
7	RB	<p>Priority Focus Introduction - All slides will be circulated after the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair referred to importance of Careers Pathways to the economy and being central to the priorities of the Skills Board, ensuring people have awareness of the labour market and the priorities of growth sectors. It is important that young people have such information to make the right choices. Skills bootcamps are part of those careers pathways.</p>

		<p><u>Careers Pathways and LMI Awareness – Jamie Kavanagh, OCC</u></p> <p>JK highlighted the Careers Coach tool for users to take an assessment allowing them to explore matched industries in different sectors. Members are invited to try the tool which has a link in the slide pack.</p> <p>The Careers Pathways newsletters should build a strong collaborative ecosystem between businesses and employers, training providers and educational institutions. Careers leaders can then access LMI data on job prospects and skills to advise young people pursue their developing careers following traditional and non traditional education paths and create outreach between students and businesses through the strong links created.</p> <p>The LMI research exploration provides information from several datasets and organisations, with the opportunity from ONS to be involved in various research projects. If there are any areas of interest from members of the board JK offered to take this back to the ONS and stakeholders to explore the potential of generating further analysis, assets and resources.</p> <p>Action: Any topics please pass on and we will collate and pass on to JK.</p> <p>Following the meeting JK provided an updated set of slides to be circulated for comment and questions.</p>
8	<p>SLH</p> <p>TU/ RP</p>	<p>Delivery Update <u>Teacher Encounters pilot</u> Susan Ledgard-Hoile gave a presentation on the background and development of the Teacher Encounters programme. The slides to be circulated after the meeting.</p> <p><u>No Limits and pathways</u> Taraaji Ugannubi gave an operational overview on progress of the No Limits programme. The programme has so far engaged with over 300 individuals, including 54 refugees. Impact is most pronounced in areas with centralised community hubs, e.g. community larders, community centres, where users develop trust through the No Limits programme. Various approaches help users find out where their strengths and interests lie. Interventions have helped many including an ex-offender finding work after a number of years of unemployment and a disabled user securing a position. The programme includes 16+ to over 60s, and SOFEA are looking forward to supporting the community, meeting weekly with users and giving consistent support which builds trust and shows the transformative support of the No Limits programme in getting people closer to the labour market.</p> <p>Ria Poliquin explained the launch by SOFEA of the pre apprenticeship programme for young people, the Powerhouse Pathway, delivered in partnership with a local charity, the Didcot Powerhouse Fund. It has three objectives: to support local employers to find and retain the right staff, to allow local young people to gain meaningful employment and local schools to offer progression to all students. This is allowing young people to spend 2 days a week at SOFEA working on employability skills, working 3 days with a local employer while getting paid and after a year they should be ready for an apprenticeship and this programme seeks to engage with the cohort currently missing out on other support. The programme is currently in pilot phase with roll out in September 2024.</p>
9	All	<p>Roundtable Discussion on Priority Focus</p> <p>JK was thanked for his in-depth presentation and the potential of what the information can be used for. A question was raised whether data is available for</p>

		<p>self employed people or sole traders. Although data lag may be a challenge it can be included going forward.</p> <p>Action: JK to include data on self employed/sole traders in the future.</p> <p>For the LSIP, it was suggested the relevant catapults are undertaking a catapults skills foresight exercise, which is generating a lot of data, eg the gene therapy catapult which has an array of training it provides to employers in scope which it would be useful to piggy-back onto. AG welcomed any contacts regarding this.</p>
10	RB	<p>Future Meeting dates, Members' Updates and AOB:</p> <p>The Chair welcomed feedback on any improvements on agendas and meetings going forward maintaining the balance between skills and business support in order to deliver what the group wants to achieve.</p> <p>The date of next meeting has been reinstated as 21st November 2023, 4.00-6.00 pm as a TEAMS meeting and views sought on a face to face meeting in March 2024.</p>

ACTIONS

Item	Details	Who	When
7.	Members to send any questions for Jamie Kavanagh on the content of the presentation or requests for further data. Noted the request to include data on self-employed/sole traders in the future.	All	After meeting

THE MEETING CLOSED: 6:03 pm