

Oxfordshire City-Region Enterprise Partnership Local Enterprise Partnership

Author: Martin Tugwell

Tel: 01865 815113

Email: martin.tugwell@oxfordshire.gov.uk

AGENDA ITEM NO:

5

SPIP Administration Contact:

Joanna Rödel / Amanda Jacobs

Economy, Spatial Planning and Climate Change

Oxfordshire County Council

Environment and Economy, Speedwell House, Speedwell Street OX1 1NE

Email: espcc@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01865 816025 / 01865 328781

Purpose of Report

1. This report is to update the Partnership on the Oxfordshire City-Region Enterprise Partnership.

Oxfordshire City-Region Enterprise Partnership

2. The proposal for the Oxfordshire City Region Enterprise Partnership has been successful. It was one of 24 partnership proposals endorsed by the Government on 28 October.
3. The Partnership will provide a level of strategic leadership from the business community, the public sector and academia the like of which has not been realised in the past. It will:
 - Shape and articulate a vision for the long term future of Oxfordshire's economy;
 - Promote the rebalancing of the economy from the public to private sector;
 - Support existing organisations to realise their full potential through better support and co-ordination;
 - Promote investment in skills development that supports growth in our key sectors (low carbon and green technologies; advanced materials and engineering; space and other high value R&D science based sectors);

- Remove barriers to business start up and growth, actively facilitating innovation and entrepreneurship.
4. The Partnership's initial focus will be on:
- Addressing skills deficiencies;
 - Supporting innovation and growth, including access to finance;
 - Business support provision;
 - Securing investment for infrastructure priorities.
5. It will focus its work on the key spatial priorities in Oxfordshire:
- Science Vale UK – where we will build on its designation as a national science and innovation campus;
 - Bicester – where we will use the eco-town proposal to act as a focus for delivering an international exemplar of sustainable development;
 - Oxford – where we will continue to invest in supporting the work that already, makes this a world-class centre of education, research and innovation.

Establishing the Partnership

6. Building upon the framework set out in the proposal, the focus of activity at present is centred on three key areas.
- **Establishing the Enterprise Partnership Board** – we are working with the Shadow Chairman of the Board (Martin Dare-Edwards) with a view to having an initial meeting of the Board before the end of the calendar year. Board members will act as 'champions' for the Partnership, with a commitment to work on its behalf in supporting the ambition to secure sustainable economic growth. It is anticipated that initially the Board will meet on a monthly basis.

Members of the wider Partnership forum will act as 'ambassadors' promoting the Oxfordshire City-Region in support of that ambition. The initial meeting of the Forum will be held early in the New Year.

- **Taking forward the priority areas** – the added value of the Partnership is its ability to bring individuals and organisations together in order to address barriers to growth. The Partnership will be able to engage with Government and its agencies in new ways of collaborative working, ensuring that local needs are reflected in national decisions.

Work already underway in regard to the Partnership's (initial) four areas of focus includes:

- a) Addressing skills deficiencies – review of existing skills groups is underway: we will need to take into account forthcoming Skills Strategy (due mid-Nov) in shaping this work.
- b) Supporting Innovation and Growth (IGT) – the current IGT is exploring opportunities to secure funding to continue beyond March 2011.
- c) Business support provision (including inward investment) – working with SEEDA and UKTI to identify how relationship with LEP might be taken forward.
- d) Securing investment in infrastructure priorities – working through the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership to take forward work on infrastructure planning, and in particular methods for securing developer contributions.

In taking these activities forward we are building upon existing work wherever possible: this includes that previously championed by the OEP where this clearly is relevant to the work of the Partnership.

The focus for the Partnership will change over time as issues are identified and then resolved. In this regard the Forum will play a key role in providing the opportunity for issues to be raised through the Partnership.

- **Regional Growth Fund** – the Partnership will have a key role to play in encouraging and supporting bids to the newly established Regional Growth Fund.

The first round of bidding for funding is now open with a deadline for bids of 21 January and is intended for proposals that are an advanced stage of planning. The fund is open to applications from the private sector and public/private partnerships.

With securing investment in infrastructure priorities as a key area of activity, the Partnership is well placed to provide encouragement and support for bids coming forward. It will also have a role to play in improving the alignment of proposals put forward with investment made through other funding mechanisms, both public and private sector.

Recommendation:

7. That the SPIP notes this report