

**Notes of Partnership Special Interest Group meeting
Friday 26 October 2007, 8.00am @ County Hall**

Present: Frank Nigriello (FN)
Jean Mitchell (JM)
Dave Waller (DWa)
Keith Slater (KS)
Keith Mitchell (KM)
Martin Towers (MT)

John Knights (JK)
Dene Robson (DR)
Ann Tweeney (AT)
John Hoad (JH)
Philip Wootton (PW)

1. Apologies

Richard Dudding, Toby Warren, Elaine McKechnie

2. Minutes and actions

The minutes were agreed as accurate and correct.

- i. JM to contact all organisations mentioned above and discuss proposals.
- ii. DW to update tabled document to reflect headings discussed at the meeting.
- iii. JM to ask Economy and Enterprise Delivery Group to develop plans for the LAA 2.
- iv. All to consider how the proposed Learning and Skills Partnership and OEP focus groups should be formed, funded and managed.

All actions were either completed or taken forward in the agenda.

3. OEP Website

The group agreed that the minutes and papers from the SIG could be posted on the OEP website once they had been agreed by the group as fair and accurate.

Action: JM to ask Elaine to post agreed minutes and papers from SIG

4. LAA2 - Process & priorities

DW introduced the LAA2 process.

The themed papers will act as an evidence base for the development of the priorities for the County articulated in the Community Strategy under the headings: World class economy, Environment and Climate Change and Healthy and Thriving Communities.

The development of high level priorities has been fairly straightforward. The development of projects which have the right time scales and metrics is more difficult. Thus a long list of proposed projects is needed which will be honed down.

A high level paper went to the Oxfordshire Partnership this week. The OEP would want more influence into the development of the LAA2 with agreed priorities being ratified by the membership of constituent bodies.

FN led an exercise based on the paper circulated (LAAc), this involved prioritising a list of factors and then indicating what influence we might have on these. Skills, Housing and Transport came out as the top three for important factors to business, however of these skills was the only one that we felt could be significantly influenced locally.

Although it was agreed that long-term goals were necessary and that the first few steps could then be included in the LAA2, it was clear that within the confines of the LAA2, focus was needed on something that impacted the bottom line and that we have influence over.

It was agreed to put significant effort into skills particularly for the LAA2. This would be fed back to the Oxfordshire Partnership. Skills are, however, an enormous subject in themselves and the 3 top issues/problems need to be identified, agreed by our constituents and addressed. The group was clear that this should be done at an Oxfordshire level - not MKOB. It was agreed that this message should be fed back

to SEEDA. Although if there is a strong lead, focus and buy in on skills at an Oxfordshire level it would be unreasonable to try to work with a different geography.

Action: DW to feed discussion into LAA2 process and priorities.

Action: Feedback to Oxfordshire Partnership the outcome of our discussions on skills and its high priority. FN letter to KM as Chair.

5. Learning and Skills Partnership / Workforce Skills

Two models were circulated prior to the meeting. See below. These were discussed and it was agreed that there benefits and issues with each.

- Infrastructure for L&S in Oxfordshire needs to be robust
- Strong lead needed
- Engagement between educationalists and economists
- Joined up
- Focus on outcomes, customer driven
- LAA2 should be used as a lever to bring people and agendas together
- Thriving County requires more and better engagement with learning and skills
- Outcomes need to be delivered

Having discussed both models it was agreed that the Learning and Skills Partnership should have a business person as chair and a strong business representation. However, it was also key to ensure buy-in from representatives of schools, colleges and other education professionals. The focus of the L&S Partnership must be on outcomes rather than processes.

it was agreed that a workshop was needed to bring together the key stakeholders and get the necessary buy-in from all, on:

- The structure of the Learning and Skills Partnership and the people/organisations that need to be involved
- The analysis – based on evidence from numerous sources – of the key issues that need to be addressed
- The work – both projects and processes – that needs to be put in place to resolve the problems that have been identified
- The outcomes that need to be achieved (and that will feed into the LAA2).

An evidence base needs to be brought together to understand the priorities and issues. From this analysis top level problem statements need to be agreed that might include a) Basic and life skills, b) adult skills especially numbers of NEETs (not in education, employment or training),and c) school attainment .

Workshop key attendees would be:

- LSC - Bob Walding, Sarah Rusby
- FE Colleges - Sally Dicketts, Theresa Kelly
- Oxfordshire County Council - Education - Janet Tomlinson, Mike Simm, 14-19 Partnership project manager,
- Oxfordshire County Council - Adult skills,
- Connexions
- Oxfordshire Partnership - Keith Mitchell
- Oxfordshire Economic Partnership - Frank Nigriello
- SEEDA - Jeff Alexander, John Parsonage, Poul Christensen
- Business - representatives from a wide spectrum including Business & Education SIG etc
- Fred Hucker, Chair of PCT (Health & Social Care representative).

The marketing message would be around the scoring and priority of learning & skills to Thriving Oxfordshire. Invitation letter from FN & KM.

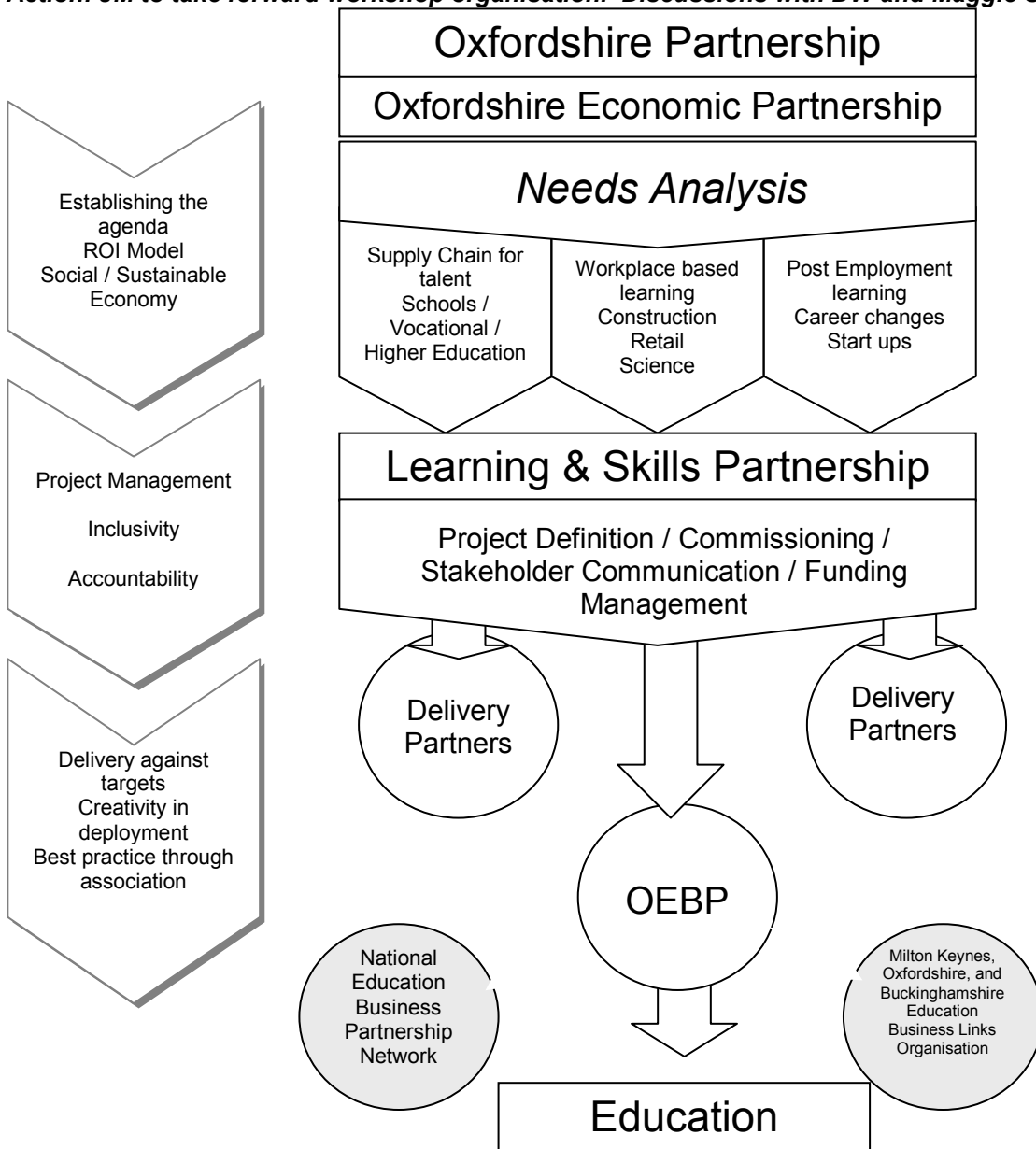
Outcomes from workshop:

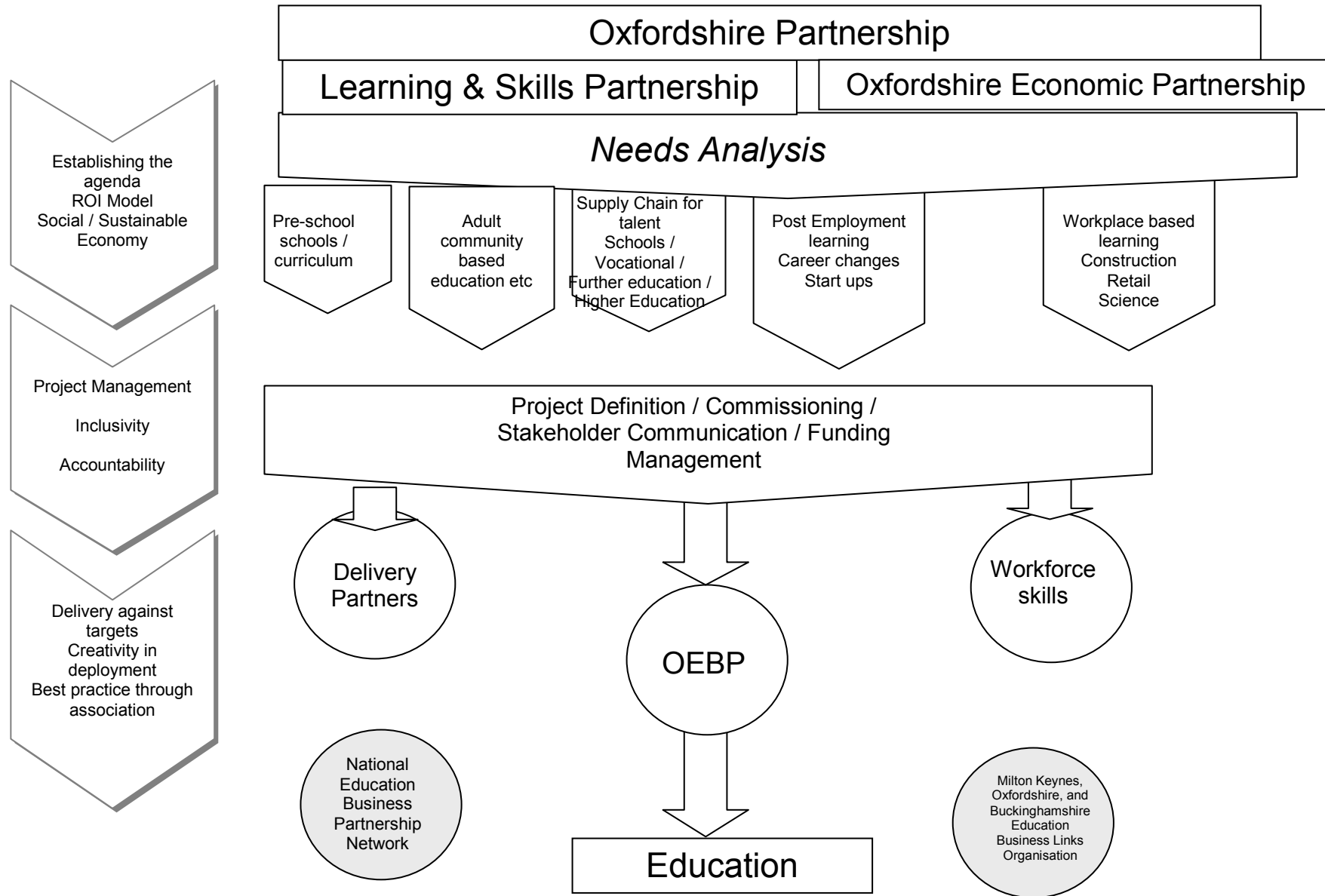
- Universal acceptance that skills and learning is a priority for Thriving Oxfordshire
- Agreed partnership structure
- Agreement of the problem statements
- Agreement of the outcomes to be achieved and that will form the basis for identifying LAA2 targets
- Agreement of the individuals and organisations who need to be involved
- Agreement of the processes and projects that need to be put in place (or continued) in order to deliver the agreed outcomes

Next Steps

OEP to lead on organising the above workshop at earliest opportunity (end November?).
 Maggie Scott to provide help from Oxfordshire County Council

Action: JM to take forward workshop organisation. Discussions with DW and Maggie Scott.





6. Framework areas - OEP lead

Planning was identified as a key issue for the economy. The interface with the planning authority and the dialogue between economic development and planning is crucial. There are currently barriers of language and understanding.

The Oxfordshire Chamber has an active Property and Planning group which could take this forward. The process would be to explain how this has been identified as a key issue and discuss with the group if they would be interested in being the lead body. They would need to own the issue. Consideration would need to be given to the constituents of the group and how the issue could be taken forward. The group would feedback to OEP.

Action: JM to write briefing on issues to start dialogue with the Chamber group

Retail was also identified as an issue as a high proportion of employment in Oxfordshire is in the retail sector. Good examples were cited as Bicester village with excellent customer facing service. The aim would be to establish Oxfordshire as a world-class retail County.

- Oxfordshire Town Chambers Network was cited as an organisation that might take this on.
- Miranda Markham of Bicester Village was also noted as a possible champion.
- Witney was noted as a town where there had been a balanced development integrated into the town and that this was a "thriving community".
- Engage larger retailers: Debenhams, Next - how do we engage with them and what are their issues.
- Business Link is involved with an ESF bid on Market Town retail. PW agreed to inform the group about this.

The discussion on retail would be continued at the next meeting.

Action: JM to add retail to agenda for next meeting.

7. Next steps

Organise Learning & Skills Workshop
Continue discussion on retail at next meeting.

8. Summary of Action Points

- i. JM to ask Elaine to post agreed minutes and papers from SIG
- ii. DW to feed discussion into LAA2 process and priorities.
- iii. Feedback to Oxfordshire Partnership the outcome of our discussions on skills and its high priority. FN letter to KM as Chair.
- iv. JM to take forward workshop organisation. Discussions with DW and Maggie Scott.
- v. JM to write briefing on issues to start dialogue with the Chamber group
- vi. JM to add retail to agenda for next meeting.