



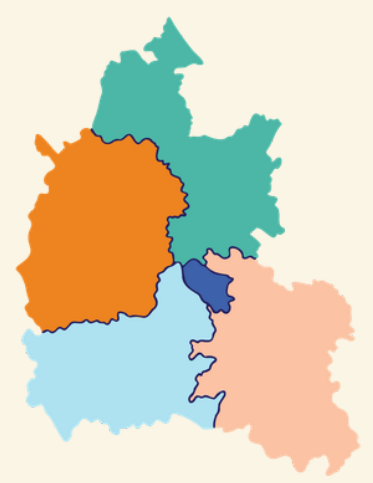
**ENTERPRISE  
OXFORDSHIRE**  
An Oxfordshire County Council-owned company

# Annual report 2024/2025



*Reflecting on our last year  
operating as OxLEP Ltd.*

# Welcome



On behalf of Enterprise Oxfordshire, we would like to welcome you to our annual report for 2024/2025.

We are sure many of you – and particularly those who may have previously had an ‘arm’s length’ association with our work – will have immediately picked up from this introduction that there has been a significant immediate change, namely an updated company name.

We will explore this in more detail within this publication, but essentially, 2024/2025 marked the final 12 months that saw our organisation ‘trade’ as the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) – aligned to local enterprise partnership policy shifts announced by the previous Government in March 2023, which sees Oxfordshire County Council become our 100% shareholder.

Throughout this period, we have continued to offer impact, value and delivery for Oxfordshire businesses and communities.

We have overseen the delivery of a comprehensive set of business, skills, investment and trade support services, as well as supporting a variety of strategies backing Oxfordshire’s economic potential to be delivered in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

Right across the publication, we will outline just how we have achieved this, playing a pivotal and positive role for many businesses, entrepreneurs and wider groups across the county and beyond.

As is the nature with such publications, we can only touch on a few, in-depth case studies to showcase our support – it goes without saying, we encourage you to visit our various websites to discover at first-hand some more of the very many businesses and people our support has positively impacted.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

**Enterprise Oxfordshire.**



***We continued to maintain a visible and active presence across Oxfordshire.***

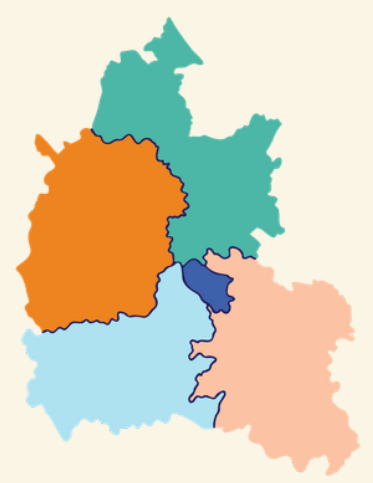


***Through a network of trusted partners, we have delivered programmes right across Oxfordshire.***

***Our online presence, campaigns and activity has grown, ensuring more people know about our role than ever before.***



# The changing face of LEPs



The past 12 months presented arguably the biggest set of operational changes to Local Enterprise Partnerships since their introduction across England in 2011.

In our case – throughout 2024/2025 – we have been working to establish a fresh arrangement, following a commitment made by the previous Government in March 2023 to create local mechanisms that would see the economic development functions, previously delivered by local enterprise partnerships, fall under the responsibilities of respective upper-tier authorities.

As of 1 April 2025, we will operate under the guise of ‘Enterprise Oxfordshire’, with the change marking the completion of a two-year process and set of negotiations between us and Oxfordshire County Council – the upper-tier authority for our area.

This new arrangement with Oxfordshire County Council is one that has been implemented previously by a number of local authorities, creating a structure for companies to operate in fields such as health care, adult social care and other public services.

A Teckal company – also known as a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) – are companies wholly-owned by a local authority, set up to operate certain services or functions.

The introduction of Enterprise Oxfordshire mirrors many new arrangements to have been confirmed across England over the past 24 months.

Depending on the frameworks developed between respective local authorities and former LEPs, areas in England now have a variety of arrangements in-place, each suited to support their own local economic development activity and priorities.

Some former LEPs have been fully integrated into upper-tier authorities, some continue as independent organisations with a governance link in-place with their authority, whilst others have been closed permanently.

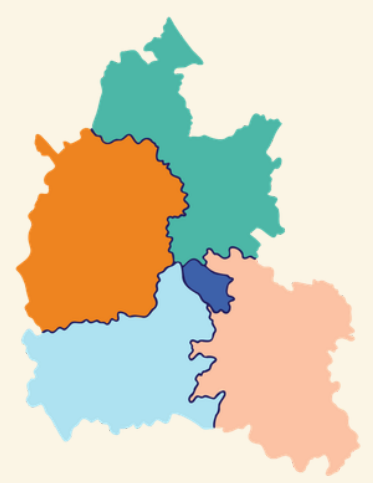
The creation of Enterprise Oxfordshire is a specific arrangement for this county and our new identity represents an exciting future not only for us, but also those businesses, entrepreneurial individuals, communities, education providers and many other groups who have historically sort OxLEP's backing and support.

**The old...**

**... the new!**



# Value to Oxfordshire



We are proud to share another year providing exceptional value – both literal and social – to Oxfordshire’s businesses and wider communities

Across 2024/2025, we have continued to champion Oxfordshire’s entrepreneurial spirit, strengthen our own digital infrastructure and provide valuable pathways to opportunities for individuals and businesses alike.

Some of the standout value that we have provided includes:

## **West Oxfordshire and Cherwell Business Spark and Accelerator programmes:**

Delivered in partnership with local councils and funded via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, these programmes have provided real value to both pre-start entrepreneurs and established businesses via a mix of in-person and online sessions, providing new skills, inspiration and direction to many.

Key value has included:

- Recruiting **43** entrepreneurs in West Oxfordshire to the Business Spark programme, providing **501.5** hours of support.
- Offering **806.5** hours of support to **118** established businesses from West Oxfordshire via the Business Accelerator programme.
- Welcoming **50** Cherwell-based participants to the Business Spark programme.
- Offering **1,028** hours of support to **115** Cherwell-based businesses via the Business Accelerator programme.

***“Businesses that engage with support, survive and grow better than others”***

## Social Contract programme:

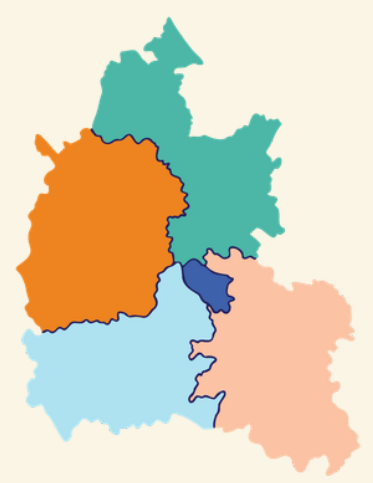
Our Social Contract Programme – funded initially by the Government’s Contain Outbreak Management Fund and now via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, has continued to tackle barriers to employment and training across Oxfordshire.

Strategic partnerships with SOFEA, Aspire Oxford and Connectr have enabled tailored support and social value for underrepresented groups and those furthest from the labour market.

Key highlights delivered across the entirety of the programme include:

- At the end of the financial year, our activity securing apprenticeship levy funds from our larger businesses seeing them pledged to our SMEs had hit over **£5million**, initiating over **500** apprenticeship openings.
- Our No Limits programme successfully supporting **62** individuals across the year – **11** have progressed to employment and **40** are ready to move into work.
- No Limits also supported over the past year **36** individuals with digital devices, plus **3** with travel bursaries.





## Enhanced online support for our SME community:

Our digital offering to SMEs has expanded significantly over the course of the past year, providing accessible, practical tools for resilience and growth.

Investment in this area includes:

- **'Code Red'**: A pilot business resilience programme helping SMEs prepare for shocks such as flooding or cyber-attacks. It trialled SMS alerts and launched a dedicated resource hub in collaboration with the Oxfordshire Joint Resilience Team.
- **Net zero resources**: A new online portal – launched in November 2024 – consolidates all net zero support for SMEs, including webinars, case studies and carbon planning tools.
- **Online business directory**: Our evolving online directory continues to connect SMEs with local opportunities and support, creating – in-turn – valuable collaboration and growth opportunities. It currently showcases around **120** businesses.

## Business Support Tool:

Our online Business Support Tool has enabled **thousands** of businesses to receive tailored action plans, with insights driving programme adaptation and delivery.

It continues to shape our Growth Hub's offer and ensure responsive, data-led support for Oxfordshire's SME community.

***“The fact that all of this advice is free to me is just invaluable.”***

## Find Your Future:

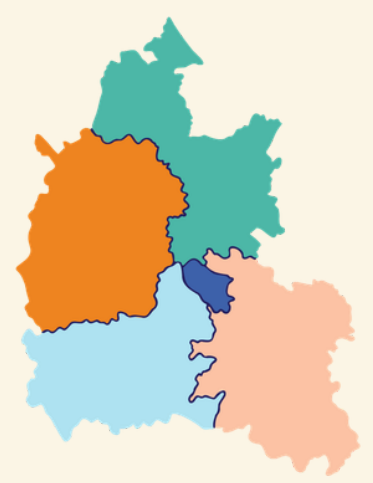
Acting as a digital 'shop window' for young people keen to understanding Oxfordshire businesses and their respective roles, the Find Your Future platform has become a cornerstone of our digital careers and business engagement activities.

It has:

- Featured over **100** interactive pods showcasing Oxfordshire businesses and providers.
- Been available **24/7** to online users with the platform offering virtual tours, employer videos, vacancies and sector insights.
- It supports students, jobseekers and career leaders with resources on CV writing, interview skills and local labour market trends.



# Fat Squirrel Outdoor Case Study:



Fat Squirrel Outdoor offers individuals, families, groups and businesses a chance to escape the 'day-to-day' routines, providing woodland experiences across three locations in the Cotswolds – two of which are in Oxfordshire at Westwell, near Burford and Asthall Manor near Witney.

Activities include axe throwing, campfires and campfire cooking allowing a space for people and companies to unplug, relax and have fun outdoors.

Fat Squirrel engaged with OxLEP Business via our West Oxfordshire Business Accelerator programme, delivered on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council, with the project funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Through a package of enhanced and accelerated support for established and small businesses, the programme aimed to provide tangible and actionable support for participants, supporting sustainable growth and even help to create new jobs.

Founder Kate Drewett joined the Business Accelerator programme at a critical time for this experience-led business, that – like many businesses – were impacted by a visitor economy sector still finding its feet following the Coronavirus outbreak in 2020.

Kate said: "Post-Covid, the tourism market was changing dramatically by the week and just knowing where to focus with the business was becoming really difficult.

"We just weren't certain who are audience, going forward, was going to be.

***"The webinars were dynamic - it has really refocused my attention."***

“The Accelerator programme came along at the right time for us. It gave time for me to take a step back and refocus on who our future customers were really going to be, where the growth potential was and how did I could make Fat Squirrel more sustainable moving forward.”

With support delivered both in-person and online via a range of business advisors and trainers, Kate found the programme to be both energetic and thought-provoking, helping to steer her focus in the right direction.

Kate added: “The webinars were dynamic, really interesting and had lots of expert advice – it has really refocused my attention.

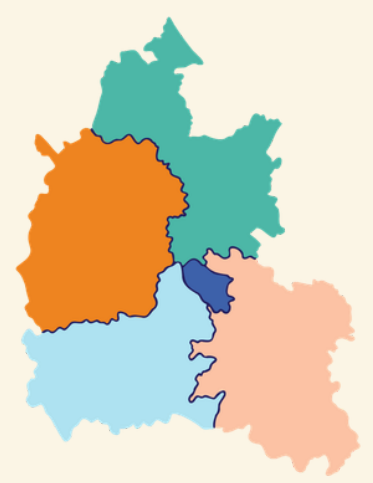
“We’ve attracted a lot more businesses into the ‘woods’. The programme acts as a point to go back and relook at what you are doing – revisiting some of things that you have done in the past and put that back into practice.”

## Kate Drewett

Founder,  
Fat Squirrel  
Outdoor



# Delivering for Oxfordshire



In a year defined by major transformation, we once again proved impact is the cornerstone of our work.

Throughout 2024/2025, not only have we supported Oxfordshire's businesses to thrive but we have created meaningful opportunities for communities across the area.

Whether via supporting driving inward investment into Oxfordshire securing and safeguarding jobs, helping to ensure we have a strong labour market and championing opportunities via apprenticeships, plus seeing the ongoing impact of a high-value capital programmes role that has secured millions of pounds for the county, our activity has been significant.

Here are just some of our notable achievements:

- Supporting over **600** students to have an experience of the workplace, right across the academic year.
- Engaging over **850** parents and carers through a special apprenticeships webinar, held in February.
- Training over **50** employers to become more inclusive.
- Supporting over **300** young people with SEND to attend our Aspirations Fair.
- Supporting **944** businesses to meet their ambitions.

***“The team are fantastic at pointing you in the right direction for your business.”***

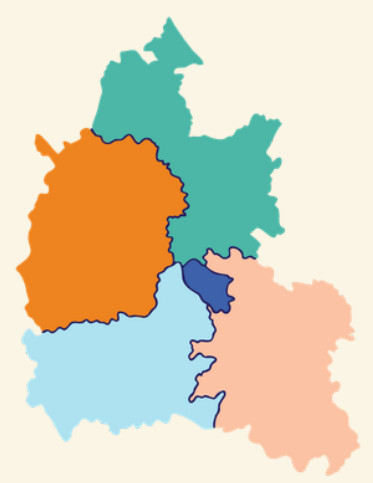
- Working with **235** pre-start-up businesses.
- Backing **382** start-up businesses on the next stage of their journey.
- Supporting **102** growing businesses.
- Partnering with **224** established businesses and supporting their future plans.
- Securing **£1.7million** of funding for Skills Bootcamps programme – addressing skills gaps identified by Oxfordshire employers.

**Did you know?** Growth Hubs across our region between April 2020 and March 2025 supported 92,000 businesses.

**Read the Growth Hub Cluster Report .**



# Impact for Oxfordshire



As well as delivering an impressive number of outcomes for Oxfordshire, our impact has continued to be felt strongly across the county too in the form of inclusive opportunities, continued positive affect of capital programme investment, the impact of funding for our rural communities and our ability to make an impact by bringing people together through our Growth Hub.

## Capital programmes:

Our historical capital programme investments continue to transform Oxfordshire's economic landscape and wider infrastructure.

Through a multi-million-pound programme, our collective impact has strengthened clinical trials, green skills, vaccine manufacturing and rural connectivity.

Across six **Getting Building Fund** projects, by the end of 2025, we will have helped to:

- Create **619** new jobs
- Safeguard **256** jobs
- Assist **383** businesses
- Support **507** new learners

Via the **Local Growth Fund** programme, by the end of 2025, the projects will have collectively:

- Created **9,700** new jobs
- Supported **2,800** new learners
- Developed **1,800** new homes
- Enabled at least **£850 million** of further funding

## Cherwell Rural Grant Scheme:

Delivered by OxLEP Business – in partnership with Cherwell District Council – the Cherwell Rural England Prosperity Fund Business Grant Scheme provided grants of £5,000 to £20,000 to eligible businesses.

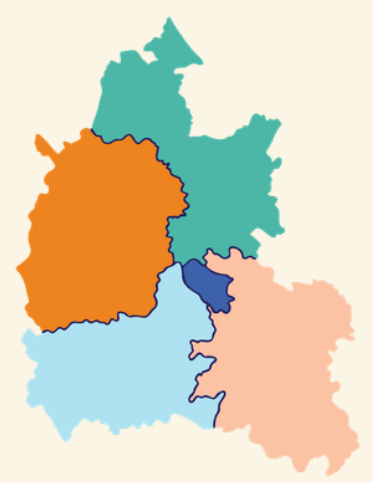
Priority sectors included; community-serving retail, farm diversification, food and drink production, hospitality and leisure, and manufacturing

The scheme supported capital investments aligned with themes such as green economy, rural resilience and business growth. It complemented the Cherwell Business Spark and Accelerator programmes, ensuring a holistic support offer for rural entrepreneurs.

Key impacts included (as of March 2025):

- **13** jobs created
- **34** jobs safeguarded
- **5** businesses have carried out a diversification project and **7** have diversified into new markets with two increasing export capacity
- **40** increases in R&D and product development
- **4** transitions of business operations to net zero and lower carbon footprint
- **11** adoptions of new to firm technologies





## Community Employment Plans:

Our Community Employment Plans (or CEPs) continued to maximise employment and training opportunities linked to major developments in Oxfordshire.

Key achievements set to be delivered over the next five years include:

- An estimated added value of around **£754,000** to local communities.
- Support for **297** apprenticeships
- Development of **210** meaningful work experiences,
- Over **147** employment experiences to be created for those furthest from the labour market.

## Connecting Oxfordshire's business community:

We continue to deliver a vibrant calendar of networking events that impacts on collaboration, inspiration and the ability to build a solid community of people driven by enterprise and social value:

- **OxBOoSt:** Offering monthly sessions offering pitch opportunities and peer-to-peer support for SME.
- **Women in Business:** Our Women in Business sessions engaged **121** businesses led by women, including a successful International Women's Day Afternoon Tea attended by over 70 entrepreneurs.
- **Marketplace and Celebration Event 2024:** Held at the University of Oxford's Examination School in September 2024, this highlight event brought together over 150 businesses, showcasing the breadth of Oxfordshire's SME ecosystem and the success of our support.



**Our Marketplace and Celebration Event creates a vital, celebratory platform for Oxfordshire businesses.**

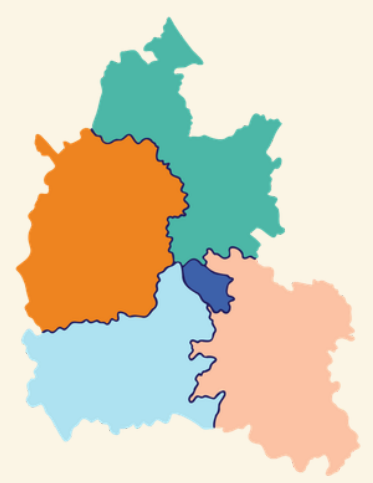


**Our Code Red service highlighted the need for resilience and business continuity.**

**Mini TESA: Just one of our Getting Building Fund projects that continues to have major impact.**



# Championing Oxfordshire



Our success is not accidental – it is the result of a highly experienced team, deep-rooted local knowledge, and a relentless drive to deliver.

We remain the go-to organisation in Oxfordshire for those looking to start, grow or transform their business, those seeking to inspire new careers and skills development and those aiming to build business roots in Oxfordshire, by investing in the county.

Our work continues to be shaped by the needs of Oxfordshire's communities and we remain a standout champion of what Oxfordshire has to offer businesses, young people, communities, investors from around the world and central government too.

We have championed Oxfordshire and our economy across several areas, including:

## **Invest Oxfordshire – our inward investment service:**

Our Invest Oxfordshire service both championed the county and delivered significant inward investment results for the county during the past year, including:

- **21** foreign direct investment projects with **7** categorised as high-value 'A' band investments.
- **£1.3 billion** in total investment value achieved from inward investment activities.
- **979** jobs supported overall, making a significant impact on the county's labour market.

***“Oxfordshire will continue to garner significant international interest.”***

## **Oxford Calling:**

Launched in April 2024, Oxford Calling is a content-led platform showcasing Oxfordshire's innovation ecosystem, including:

- A cluster map of science parks, networks and institutions
- Sector-specific investment content
- SEO-led content and targeted digital campaigns for international audiences

The platform strengthens Oxfordshire's global profile, highlighting its leadership in transformative technologies and entrepreneurial talent.

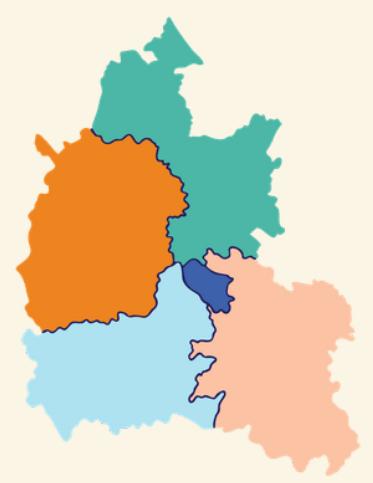
## **UKREiiF – championing Oxfordshire nationally:**

At the UK Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum (UKREiiF) in May 2024, we played a key role as part of the Oxford to Cambridge Pan-Regional Partnership, reinforcing Oxfordshire's position as a destination for talent, innovation and investment.

Collectively, we:

- Launched a new regional investment prospectus
- Showcased Oxfordshire's science and technology strengths
- Engaged investors, developers and policymakers to support sustainable growth and infrastructure investment





## **Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards:**

Held at WilliamsF1 in May 2024, the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards brought together over 180 guests to champion excellence in work-based learning.

It delivered:

- Its most entries ever – including **85** current or recent apprentices, **46** employers and **37** training providers.
- A total of **26** sponsors and supporters from the Oxfordshire business community.
- Significant social media activity, generating **39,000** social media impressions on LinkedIn alone.

It continues to be the stand out apprenticeship event on Oxfordshire's business calendar, elevating the value of apprenticeships across sectors.

## **Careers Fest:**

Careers Fest 2024 welcomed thousands of students, parents and educators to the Kassam Stadium, with over **80** exhibitors including BMW, Blenheim Palace and the University of Oxford inspiring close to **3,000** teenagers.

Organised by OxLEP Skills and the Oxfordshire Careers Hub, the event championed young people's potential and the opportunities that exist within the county too.

***“The Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards provides a significant platform like no-other.”***

## It delivered:

- A hands-on engagement with employers and training providers.
- 'Twilight sessions' in the evening for families to explore post-16 and post-18 pathways.
- A platform helping young people in Oxfordshire to find their best next step.

## OxTalks podcast:

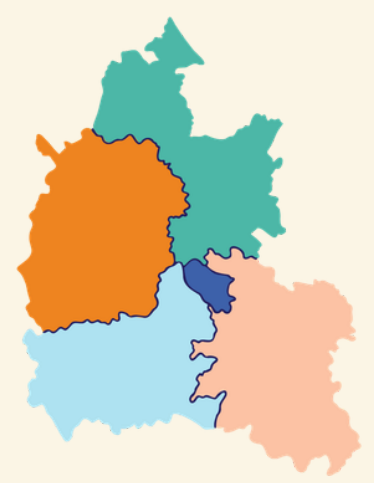
Our OxTalks podcast – hosted by broadcaster Howard Bentham – continued to grow in reach and relevance, showcasing many key people behind the Oxfordshire economy. Six episodes were produced during 2024/2025, with topics featured including the challenges for rural business, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and embracing people who operate on a part-time basis.

## Stand-out achievements include:

- The podcast sitting comfortably within the **top 50%** of the most-listened to podcasts worldwide.
- OxTalks being listened to in at least **25** countries.
- One podcast related post alone making over **275,000** impressions across social media.



# Our governance and finance overview



Given our role supporting the Oxfordshire economy and our communities, we prioritise transparency, accountability and value for money in our decision-making.

With our partners across Oxfordshire, we continue to operate a 'whole system' approach bringing together public, private, academic and third sector organisations to support our businesses and communities, seeking out opportunities to innovate, collaborate, improve productivity and reduce duplication, thus delivering enhanced impact and value to the public purse.

We aim to be at the forefront of conversations that matter to our businesses and communities, to implement new activities that reflect our role post transition and that support our local democratic institutions to deliver against collective priorities.

During the past 12 months, our governance structure has changed to reflect the new arrangement with our 100% shareholder, Oxfordshire County Council – this has included the disbanding of our previous set of Board of Directors and withdrawal of our committees and sub-groups, which fed into our decision-making process.

At the conclusion of the 2024/2025 financial year – and moving into the 2025/2026 financial year – a new governance structure has been put into operation.

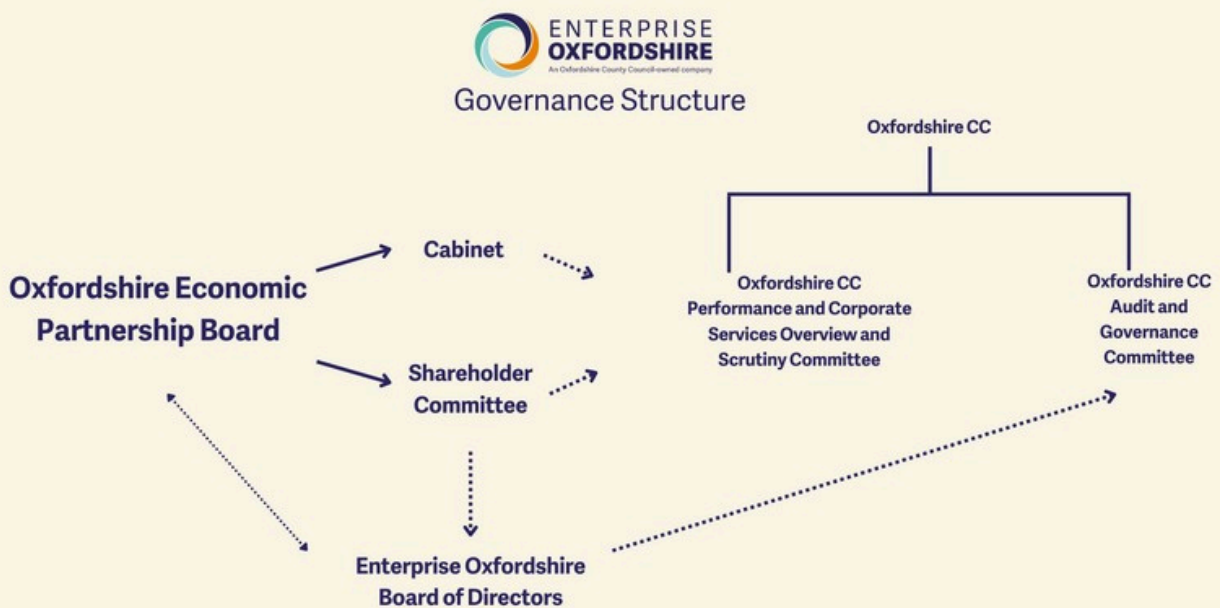
In its simplest terms, our governance arrangement is overseen by Oxfordshire County Council's Shareholder Committee, to which the Enterprise Oxfordshire Board reports.

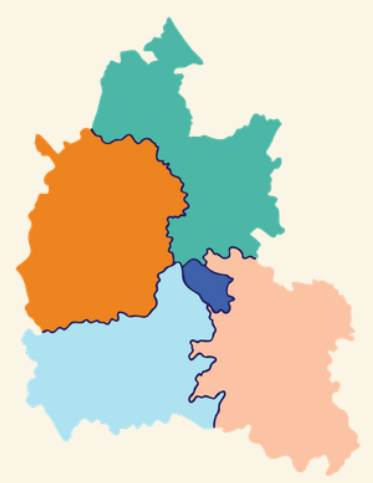
***“We prioritise transparency, accountability and value for money in our decision-making.”***

The Oxfordshire Economic Partnership Board, an advisory business board, supports the Cabinet and Shareholder Committee groups with economic strategy and county's business voice engagement.

Through this arrangement, we are well-positioned to deliver a comprehensive set of business, skills, investment and trade support services, as well as supporting a variety of strategies backing Oxfordshire's economic potential to be delivered in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

**Here is an overview of our positioning within decision making bodies:**



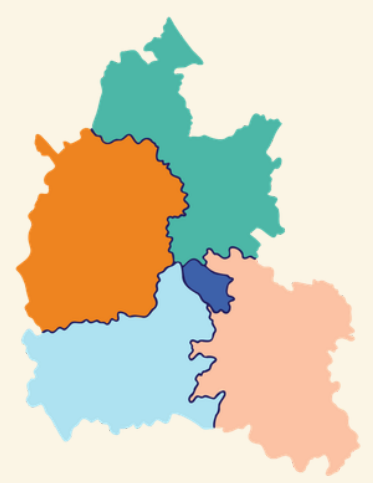


## Financial statement for 2024/2025:

The following provides details of OxLEP Ltd's income and expenditure totals for the 2024/2025 financial year. This financial statement was registered with Companies House by the required filing deadline of 31 December 2025.

	2024/25	2023/24
<b>Income:</b>	£	£
Grant and subsidies	399,296	377,117
Core and enhanced funding	1,940,149	1,866,096
Earned income	1,424,330	2,006,345
	<b>3,763,775</b>	<b>4,249,558</b>
<b>Expenditure:</b>		
Staff costs	2,045,667	1,927,636
Office, administrative and communications	286,246	467,545
Specialist, legal and professional services	1,363,456	1,186,654
Project costs and grants	112,369	720,292
	<b>3,807,738</b>	<b>4,302,127</b>

# In summary



Thank you for taking the time to review this annual report for the activity of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, looking back on the achievements and impacts made between April 2024 and March 2025.

The organisation is now trading as Enterprise Oxfordshire, reflecting the major operational change regarding the provision of economic development services in England, led by Local Enterprise Partnerships for close to 15 years.

This report speaks of impact. Impact through performance and its associated numbers but – and perhaps more importantly – the real and genuine impact OxLEP’s work had on businesses and communities right across Oxfordshire.

As we move into a new financial year, we are thrilled to enter a new chapter which reflects both what has already been achieved and our bold commitment to go even further to help the local economy thrive and grow, putting enterprising people at the heart of our vision.

Much has been achieved since Enterprise Oxfordshire was owned by Oxfordshire County Council – we’ve been actively improving the provision of workforce skills needed to drive growth and innovation in the local economy, backing capital projects and delivering inward investment.

Through a solid business support programme and set of interventions contributing towards a really effective local labour market, we are supporting a solid stepping stone to take Oxfordshire – via our diverse, expert, innovative companies and individuals – to the next level.

We look forward to flying the flag as Enterprise Oxfordshire into the future, whilst recognising the major legacy created through the Local Enterprise Partnership.

**Enterprise Oxfordshire.**



**Winners and finalists from the 2024 Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards.**



**Skills Bootcamps upskilled dozens of Oxfordshire residents.**

**The OxTalks podcast continues to engage new guests from the county's business community.**





**ENTERPRISE  
OXFORDSHIRE**

An Oxfordshire County Council-owned company

**Enterprise Oxfordshire oversees a comprehensive set of business, skills, investment and trade support services, with a track record of delivering for our communities and businesses alike.**

This annual report reflects the work of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), prior to the organisation trading as Enterprise Oxfordshire on 1 April 2025.

The following contact details reflect our new trading name:

**Tel:** 0345 241 1196

**Email:** [info@enterpriseoxfordshire.com](mailto:info@enterpriseoxfordshire.com)

**Website:** [www.enterpriseoxfordshire.com](http://www.enterpriseoxfordshire.com)

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Speak to our team today...

