

OXFORDSHIRE

Local Area Assembly
Local Policy Priorities Statement 2024



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ABOUT THE THAMES VALLEY AND OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL AREA ASSEMBLY

We provide the independent voice of business for one of the UK's most consistently high performing, most productive and economically successful regions. We have a long and successful record of representing all businesses, whatever their size, and sit at the heart of a unique community of companies across all sectors doing business within the UK and around the world.

We are a respected voice of business for almost 80 years, with our opinions regularly sought by policy makers and Parliamentarian, providing purposeful regional leadership crucial to securing a thriving, green and healthy Thames Valley.



Oxfordshire, home to the world's leading university for the eighth consecutive year, consistently ranks among the UK's most productive locations, with Oxford retaining its position as the UK's top performing city*.

The strength of the local economy is reflected in the breadth and diversity of the established sectors, including Advanced Engineering, Health and Life Sciences and Space, alongside developing sector expertise in, for example, Fusion Energy and Quantum Computing.

Central to the continued future success of Oxfordshire's economy is being within the 'golden hour' of Heathrow, the world's most connected airport, the UK's largest port and only hub airport. Heathrow continues to be a key driver of foreign direct investment (FDI) and international trade activity and Oxfordshire is well placed to benefit given the right conditions.

**PWC Good Growth for Cities Report.*



AIM AND OBJECTIVE

Developed in consultation with the business community of Oxfordshire, this LPPS outlines the key policy priorities our members will be actively championing this year.

Our aim is to sustain the momentum and emphasis on assisting decision-makers and key stakeholders, look, learn, and gain insights into the business needs of Oxfordshire. Our objective is embedding trust, through effective, impactful partnership, that will secure the economic future and prosperity of the County.

Most especially, we invite participation in our work, and involvement in the LAA, to help shape the future prosperity of Oxfordshire.

LOCAL POLICY PRIORITIES

The Oxfordshire Local Area Assembly has identified the following local policy priorities:

- As designated Employer Representative Body, deliver the next stages of the Oxfordshire Local Skills Improvement Plan.
- Champion the key infrastructure proposals that
 - (i) are crucial to stimulating investment and boosting growth in the Oxfordshire economy, such as East-West Rail and the Western Rail Link to London Heathrow;
 - (ii) promote wider use and availability of public transport to key nodes, such as Heathrow;
 - (iii) provide smart multi-modal mobility & simple ticketing;
 - (iv) optimise the provision of low carbon alternatives.
- Continue to support existing exporters and help new businesses grow their trade activity, by identifying the inherent trade challenges facing our business community.
- Encourage proposals that can help secure the appropriate mix of development and the highest standard of urban design, planning, and infrastructure provision across Oxfordshire.
- Engage our key stakeholders and anchor institutions to help deliver the wider aims of our own, and their policy, economic and investment aims and objectives.
- Maintain our call for Local Plans and planning system to facilitate inward investment and businesses growth.
- Retain our focus on lobbying government and stakeholders to ensure there is sufficient power available to enable business to move toward zero emissions.
- Showcase the good practice and promote the initiatives being developed by TVCC's Sustainability Working Group to help business on their pathway to net zero, help SMEs navigate the ESG landscape and highlight where innovation can support transition.

- Support initiatives that will help re-imagine the County towns and attract the appropriate levels of investment to secure their future vitality, vibrancy, and employment opportunities.
- Work to help promote the County's key assets (e.g., Harwell) and centres of excellence (including the academic institutions) that will drive higher volumes and value FDI into Oxfordshire.

A LOCAL ENGAGEMENT, REGIONAL REPRESENTATION AND GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY

The priorities outlined by the LAA are a crucial component of our wider work programme and the commitment to regional leadership detailed in our [Business Manifesto 2024](#). These priorities encompass five key focal points, serving as the foundation for the policies and actions we will collectively focus on:

1

Infrastructure network resilience and adoption:

Promoting the opportunities of the technology and supporting investment that can future proof our region.

3

Shaping our future skills needs:

Implementing the next steps of the Local Skills Improvement Plans and shaping the future of the Thames Valley Skills Unit.

2

Pathway to net zero (and climate change):

Advancing the work around sustainability as outlined in our [State of the Region report](#).

4

Trade and Inward Investment:

Delivering services that enable high value and volumes of trade and inward investment continues to flow.

5

Delivering regional leadership, championing the Thames Valley:

Putting and representing businesses at the heart of stakeholder engagement and political decision making, ensuring they invest in success, and that we promote our wider sector and market strength.



PHIL SOUTHALL
Chair,
Oxfordshire Local Area
Assembly



PAUL BRITTON
Chief Executive,
TVCC

