

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE



The Future Oxfordshire Partnership

HELD ON TUESDAY 30 JANUARY 2024 AT 2.00 PM

THE LONG ROOM, OXFORD CITY COUNCIL, TOWN HALL, ST ALDATE'S,
OXFORD, OX1 1BX

Present:

Members: Councillor Susan Brown (Chair), Sian Carter, (Homes England), Professor Alistair Fitt, (OxLEP Universities representative), Councillor Andy Graham, (West Oxfordshire District Council), Angus Horner, (OxLEP business representative), Councillor Liz Leffman, (Oxfordshire County Council), Daniel Leveson, (Bucks, Oxfordshire and West Berks ICB), Dean Lusby-Gordan, (Environment Agency), Miranda Markham, (OxLEP business representative), Peter Nolan, (OxLEP business representative), Councillor David Rouane, (South Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Bethia Thomas, (Vale of White Horse District Council), and Councillor Barry Wood, (Cherwell District Council).

Officers: Ian Boll (Cherwell District Council), Becky Chesshyre, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Andrew Down, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Caroline Green (Oxford City Council), Giles Hughes (West Oxfordshire District Council), Kevin Jacob, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Amber Lyford, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), David Munday, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Martin Reeves (Oxfordshire County Council), Rosie Rowe, (Oxfordshire County Council), Paul Staines (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Nigel Tipple (Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership) and David Yates, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership).

Other councillors: Councillor Katherine Miles, Chair of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel.

57. Apologies for absence; declarations of interest and Chair's announcement

Apologies for absence were submitted by Emma Hill, (substituted by Dean Lusby-Gordon) and Neil Hook, (substituted by Sian Carter).

It was noted that Councillor Bethia Thomas was joining the meeting remotely and therefore did not count towards the meeting's quorum.

There were no declarations of interest.

[It was noted the meeting was being live streamed and that a recording would be available for a period of 12 months.](#)

58. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

59. Public participation

Ian Green on behalf of the Oxford Civic Society submitted the following written address, but was not present at the meeting.

The Planning Advisory Group

The Oxford Civic Society notes that, in discussion, a number of members of the Scrutiny Panel expressed significant concerns and scepticism around the role and additional value that the Planning Advisory Group could bring by seeking to look at matters at Future Oxfordshire Partnership level, over and above existing informal and formal arrangements around planning cooperation which it was felt would still happen whether the advisory group existed or not.

This was felt to be particularly important within the overall context of the general pressures on council budgets and resources and that the case for Future Oxfordshire Partnership level work on planning related matters needed to be compelling.

May we suggest that the most obvious compelling need is the establishment of a spatial development plan for the county which provides a foundation for good growth in the county to 2050 and beyond. This would require the PAG to consider ways in which the reasons for the failure of the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan can be overcome.

It could also assess the value of a spatial development plan oriented to 2050 and beyond, in terms of how it would enable integrated infrastructure development planning linked to the distribution of employment and housing growth across the county. This, surely, is highly compelling.

The PAG would not need to address this compelling need alone – there are many potential private sector, academic and third sector collaborators who would be willing and eager to work with the PAG on this. The Oxford Civic Society has a Group called the Oxfordshire Futures Group which is dedicated to this and we will be more than happy to meet the PAG to discuss it further.

In the absence of Mr Green, the Chair indicated that a written response would be provided to him.

Response

Thank you for your comments on this issue.

The work programme for the Planning Advisory Group is still under development, as this is a relatively new group. The focus will be on covering issues where this group can add value to the work of individual Councils.

Local Plans are the key vehicle for spatial planning in Oxfordshire. I would encourage the Oxford Civic Society to engage in the Local Plan processes of the various Councils.

60. Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel update

The Chair invited Councillor Katherine Miles, Chair of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel, to present the recommendations from the Panel's meeting held on 22 January 2024.

Councillor Miles explained that the Panel's meeting had focussed on two areas with five associated recommendations:

- A report on Healthy Place Shaping update and the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Oxfordshire prior to its consideration by the Partnership.
- The role and remit of the Scrutiny Panel following the Partnership's response to the Panel's previous recommendations and the consideration of Monitoring Officer advice.

In its consideration of the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy the Panel had focussed its efforts on how the Strategy as approved would be implemented and delivered. The Panel made recommendations related to its monitoring and evaluation framework, financial and commissioning structures, the importance of Street Design Codes, coordination between councils and the NHS regarding social care and expressed concern regarding what was felt to be a lack of provision of primary health care facilities to support healthy placemaking.

Regarding the Panel's discussions regarding its role and remit, Panel members had expressed a diversity of opinions based on a broad or more narrow interpretation of the Panel's Terms of Reference in the context of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. It had been felt that a review of the Panel's Terms of Reference did need to be undertaken prior to the new municipal year in May.

Councillor Miles brought up the previous recommendation around Vision Zero and reiterated the recommendations and strongly held reasons the Panel provided regarding implementing Vision Zero into the work of the Partnership through the Infrastructure and Planning Advisory Groups.

In response to the recommendations, the Chair responded that the Partnership was happy to accept and support the Panel's recommendation to endorse the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and noted the Panel's additional comments.

The Partnership also welcomed a review of the Terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Panel as it agreed that clarification of the Panel's scope and remit was needed.

The Partnership had not changed its previous view about Vision Zero. Although individual members of the Partnership might support the aims and aspirations of Vision Zero and that the County Council would work in partnership with district councils, this did not mean that it was part of the work of the Partnership itself. It was felt important not to confuse lines of governance.

[A full copy of the Panel's recommendations and the Partnership's response to them can be found here.](#)

61. Healthy Place Shaping Update and the new Health & Wellbeing Board Strategy for Oxfordshire

The Partnership considered a report that provided an update on healthy placemaking across Oxfordshire and the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Oxfordshire. Rosie Rowe, Head of Healthy Place Shaping and David Munday, Deputy Director of Public Health, Oxfordshire County Council gave a detailed presentation summarising the report and strategy.

In summary, members of the Partnership raised the following issues:

- That it was appropriate that the Partnership be a primary partner for facilitating the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. It was important that this was a strategy that was delivered on the ground not just drafted.
- As referred to in Paragraph 11 of the report, the lack of capacity of the NHS to engage with planning authorities on estate issues and problems in bringing forward primary care facilities including GP surgeries across the county was a matter of serious concern, particularly engagement with the current round of Local Plan reviews. This needed to be addressed in the future.
- It was noted the Planning Advisory Group, (PAG) was looking into the issues around planning for health infrastructure and had at its December meeting received presentations on planning for health from a public health perspective and from representatives from the BOB Integrated Care Board setting out from its perspective, the challenges, and constraints in providing primary care infrastructure.
- The emphasis within the basic building blocks of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy on prevention of ill health and in supporting people to live longer in their homes was acknowledged and welcomed. Comment was also made that this did impact on local planning considerations as issues such as easy access to doctors, access to green space etc were all related and interconnected.
- The reference to the principles of 'Start Well', 'Live Well' and 'Age Well' within the Strategy were acknowledged and welcomed, but it was suggested that there was tendency from a local government place making perspective to focus upon the Live Well aspects and perhaps not consider enough issues related to Starting Well and Aging Well. Ensuring children started out well in life was known to be particularly important for their future health and wellbeing and challenges included child poverty, overcrowding and access to quality green space – all planning related issues.
- Members commented that emphasis was also needed on preparing for palliative and end-of-life care.

Dan Leveson on behalf the BOB Integrated Care Board referred to the links and joint working between the Integrated Care Strategy, the ICB Five Year Forward View and Health and Wellbeing Strategy in terms of access to services. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy would provide the references to hold the NHS to account for delivery and attention was also drawn to the draft Primary Care Strategy.

Responding to the point on NHS engagement with the planning process he stated the ICB was doing all it could to engage on planning issues and he commented that it would not be possible to build new GP practices where existing ones existed. Adapting and developing GP practices for modern models of service delivery, finding ways to share estate and developing digital health systems would be important.

In conclusion, the Chair commented that it was clear that the issue of planning for health infrastructure was crucial and access to GP services remained an outstanding issue of significant concern to residents, particularly in light of new housing growth across the county. It was therefore very important that local authorities worked closely with the health system in order to plan in adequate health facilities and access to health. She asked that the results of further discussion at the Planning Advisory Group around planning for health continue to be feedback to Partnership and that the issue be pursued as a priority.

As Chair of the Planning Advisory Group, Councillor Andy Graham responded that he was happy to take this forward and to seek to come back to the Partnerships after further discussion and work by officers.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership endorses the new Health & Wellbeing Board Strategy for Oxfordshire.
2. That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership continues to support healthy place shaping as a strategic priority in enabling the regeneration of existing communities and the development of new communities which promote health and wellbeing.

62. Advisory Group updates

(a) Environment Advisory Group update

Councillor David Rouane referred to the notes of the Environment Advisory Group held on 9 November 2023 as included in the agenda and provide a verbal update of the meeting held on 18 January 2024. Councillor Rouane highlighted that the group had considered reports relating to:

- Monitoring the progress of the Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan, (NZRMAP).
- The Local Nature Partnership and the role of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy in delivering networks of nature recovery and introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain obligations for developers.
- County wide CO₂ emissions – transport emissions were a major proportion of overall emissions, but local councils had little or no influence on major roads such as the M40 and A34.
- Domestic retrofit – it was disappointing that many new homes were still being built to insufficient standards and would require retrofitting, but building standards were set nationally.
- Climate Change and Health – and the positive impact that access to quality green space could have on people’s mental and physical health.
- Green Finance and the 100 Together: Financing Oxfordshire’s Green Future

At the invitation of Councillor Rouane, Martin Reeves, Chief Executive of Oxfordshire updated the meeting on the first annual [100 Together: Financing Oxfordshire's Green Future](#) conference which had taken place on 11 January 2024. The conference had been very well attended and had brought together attendees from a broad range of sectors including academia, green practitioners, investment banking and politics to debate how Oxfordshire could lead nationally and internationally on ways of rethinking and reimagining the types of financing that would be required for a safe transition to Net Zero. Feedback on the event had been positive and the focus now was to move to delivery focussing upon existing partnerships.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

(b) Planning Advisory Group update

Councillor Andy Graham provided a verbal update on the meeting of the Planning Advisory Group held on 15 December 2023.

Councillor Graham highlighted that the group had considered reports relating to:

- Presentations on planning for health infrastructure, (as touch upon during the Place Shaping and Health and Wellbeing Strategy item)
- Biodiversity Net Gain, (BNG) – the advisory group had considered proposals for joint working between the councils around the introduction of planning BNG requirements.
- The monitoring of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, (LTCP) and its relationships with Local Plans.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

(c) Infrastructure Advisory Group update

Councillor Liz Leffman provided a verbal update on the meeting of the Infrastructure Advisory Group held on 17 January 2024.

Councillor Leffman highlighted that the group had considered reports relating to:

- Homes from infrastructure Programme – delivery of the programme of schemes was progressing well and the confirmation of additional funding for the A34 Lodge Hill junction improvement had released funding for use on other schemes within the programme in north Oxford. The recently completed Cassington Link Road upgrade was an example of the type of scheme being delivered.
- Oxfordshire Strategic Travel Network including the Oxford Green Ways Project which aimed to find ways of linking new developments, particularly though the city centre using green rather than concrete pathways.
- Monitoring delivery of the electric vehicle, (EV) infrastructure and energy planning workstreams of the Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan – It was felt that progress to date on EV infrastructure need to be accelerated.
- Local Area Energy Planning – this included investigating ways in which electricity could be generated, distributed and stored within the county, moving forward and building on [Project LEO](#) whilst taking account of issues such as difficulties in projects obtaining grid connections.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

64. Future Oxfordshire Partnership Forward Plan

Kevin Jacob, Future Oxfordshire Democratic Services Officer introduced the Forward Programme as set out in the Agenda.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Programme be agreed.

65. Updates on matters relevant to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Integration

Nigel Tipple, Chief Executive of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, (OxLEP) and Martin Reeves, Chief Executive of Oxfordshire County Council provided a verbal update on preparations for the transfer of functions from OxLEP to the county council following HM Government's announcement that the functions of all local enterprise partnerships would pass to upper tier authorities.

It was noted that it was expected that a framework for the proposed future governance arrangements would be considered by County Council's Cabinet in February with a further report to the Partnership in March.

Professor Alistair Fitt, the Chair of OxLEP referred to the power and effectiveness of the current OxLEP board and the need to retain board members throughout the transition process. Councillor Leffman referred to the objective of building on what already existed, but to also broaden thinking in terms of the county's [Strategic Economic Plan](#).

Place Narrative for Oxfordshire

Councillor Leffman and Martin Reeves provided a verbal update on the development of a place narrative for Oxfordshire. Points raised included:

- Thinking Place – the consultants commissioned had undertaken an extensive programme of consultation and engagement around what Oxfordshire meant as a 'place' from the perspective of all the key stakeholders. Thinking Place had reported they had received some of highest levels of consultation and engagement feedback of any such exercises they had undertaken before.
- Next steps were to work through the feedback and for the working group set up to govern the process to start to consider what the evidence was indicating and what would be the emerging key chapters of the place narrative. The group would also consider how a document for public consumption could be put together.
- It was expected that the next stage of the process would take around six weeks and outputs considered the Partnership's Executive Officer Group initially before being shared more formerly.
- It was anticipated that by the start of the new municipal year, this stage of the work would be completed and important conversations around how the products of the exercise could begin.

Professor Alistair Fitt commented that as member of the steering group he had been impressed by the innovative nature of Thinking Place's approach to the consultation and engagement process. Angus Horner echoed these comments and added that consideration of how to obtain endorsement of minority and hard to reach groups was being considered to ensure that as the place narrative was developed further all residents felt this was being done with them and not to and at them. In his view, this was an important area for the Partnership itself.

RESOLVED: The updates were noted.

66. Updates from key strategic partnerships supporting delivery of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision

Oxford to Cambridge Pan-Regional Partnership, (PRP)

Councillor Susan Brown provided an update on a meeting between members of the PRP and Lord Harrington around foreign investment. Lord Harrington had previously been commissioned by HM Government to undertake a review of the government's approach to

attracting direct foreign investment. Lord Harrington had indicated that he had found it useful to learn about the regional perspective on foreign investment.

The meeting's discussion had included the potential for foreign investment within the Oxford to Cambridge PRP's geography, what might be done to attract investment/ engage with foreign governments and investors, what any investments might be used for and any limits on that use.

Professor Alistair also provided an update on meetings of the PRP Universities Group:

- Dipesh Shah, the Chair of the PRP was shortly to visit the area to learn more about the Oxfordshire system.
- It was expected that the Oxford to Cambridge PRP would have a presence at [UKREiif 2024](#), which was the UK's real estate investment and infrastructure forum.
- Consideration was being given as to how the PRP could work with together with other organisations such as the Universities Group, England's Economic Heartland, East West Rail etc to deliver at scale collectively.
- The PRP was considering how it might engage with potential future decision makers.

Councillor Rouane spoke to the importance of protecting intellectual property in the event of inward foreign investment and whether this had been reflected in Lord Harrington's review. The Chair responded that attracting foreign investment to grow a company would be the focus of activity rather than investment that resulted in a company being taken over and the loss of intellectual property.

England's Economic Heartland, (EEH)

Councillor Liz Leffman provided a verbal update on recent meetings of England's Economic Heartland. Issues considered had included:

- East West Rail – this was on schedule to connect to Oxford by the end of 2024, early 2025.
- First Mile/Last Mile journey – consideration across the EEH system and how it could work with local authorities.
- Mobility Hubs – work to support local councils to bring forward mobility hubs considering work undertaken on supporting buses, particularly in rural areas and in home to school transport using a range of tools including single ticketing. A paper was expected in September 2024.
- Direct train services between Oxford and Bristol were due to restart on a trial basis in early 2024. If successful, this could impact positively on other initiatives such as provision of a station at Grove.
- Freight Strategy and freight routes, including movement of freight from roads to rail.

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership, (ICP)

Councillor David Rouane provided an update on a recent meeting of the ICP. A key focus for the meeting had been the draft Primary Care Strategy. Physical access to primary care services had been a major focus of the meeting, but discussion had also considered access to systems such as appointment booking.

67. Dates of next meetings

The date of the next meeting was noted.

The meeting closed at 3.45 pm