

**Future Oxfordshire Partnership Update to Vale of White Horse District Council  
13 July 2022**

The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is a joint committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire together with key strategic partners. It was set up to facilitate and enable joint working on economic development, strategic planning and growth. It does this by overseeing the delivery of projects that the councils of Oxfordshire are seeking to deliver collaboratively in the fields of economic development and strategic planning. This includes monitoring and implementation of the Housing and Growth Deal.

**Future Oxfordshire Partnership**

- At the last FOP meeting Cllr Barry Wood (Cherwell DC) was confirmed as Chair, and Cllr Susan Brown (Oxford CC) as vice-chair. There were no changes to the subgroup chairs.
- In Jan FOP wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to raise concerns about the growing number of small, fragmented funding pots which local government have to apply for to access infrastructure funding. These are overly complex and challenging to administer and FOP partners agreed that the intensification of these funding pots is consuming resources unnecessarily, creating disintegrated and siloed working, and hindering the strong local energy we have to collaborate and bid for larger grants that address a range of economic, social and environmental initiatives.
- Our council has secured funding via the FOP for two affordable housing schemes; eight affordable homes being build in partnership with Oxfordshire Community Land Trust in Cumnor, and the building of Poppy Meadows, a new 80 bed Extra Care Living development on Didcot's Great Western Park is progressing at speed.
- At the last meeting a discussion about the future of OxCam Arc concerns were raised about the lack of democratic input in to the propose new structure for the Arc Leadership Group, with a resolution that if the Arc Leaders Group continues that the FOP would request 2 seats (as opposed to the 1 currently proposed)

**Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Subgroup**

- The Subgroup has been meeting monthly.
- Members have been frustrated about the lack of visible progress and communication about the work being undertaken by the Plan team – both with councillors from across the districts and city, but also the public.
- A steer was given that an additional regulation 18 consultation on preferred policies to include housing numbers and spatial options should be conducted and a revised timetable that works with the Vale and SODC Joint Local Plan was endorsed. The timetable is incredibly tight, and the plan will only remain on track if the five planning authorities can agree a shared position on rates of growth and housing numbers.
- The Vale, along with SODC, continues to argue for an approach to housing numbers and spatial options that are in line with the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision

that all six councils signed up to. This includes treating the need to tackle the Climate Emergency and to enhance the county's biodiversity as priorities. The approach to spatial planning should also reflect the approach in the County Council's emerging Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and its emphasis on reducing the need to travel.

- At the last meeting a very draft version of the Plan was presented for early member input. Cllr Hallett and others raised importance of the plan relating to the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision.

### **Affordable Housing Subgroup**

- The agenda of the July meeting of the Subgroup included reports on Community Led Housing and a general update on housing delivery under the Growth Deal
- The development of Community Led Housing was meant to be one of the major benefits of the Growth Deal. Unfortunately most of the schemes that we initially proposed did not come to fruition. The one scheme that is going ahead is the building of 8 units for affordable rent in Dean Court, by the Oxfordshire Community Land Trust, in conjunction with the Vale. These units are being built to very high environmental standards. The intention is to set rents at levels comparable with the Local Housing Allowance for the Oxford BRMA.
- In broad terms, the local councils are on target to deliver the 100,000 additional homes across the county during Growth Deal period. The Growth Deal funding will have helped to deliver 1,300 approx. affordable housing units within that total.

### **Environment Subgroup**

The last meeting of the Environment Sub-group discussed a number of issues:

- Solar Panel strategy / location and planning, chair to take to OxPlan2050
- PAZCO next steps focus on -1. Rural travel 2. Freight 3. Domestic retrofit 4. Finance and Local Models of Finance 5. SME support to decarbonise and the role of FOP partner
- Good Food Oxfordshire (GFO) presented and next focus is on 1. Tackle food poverty and diet-related ill health 2. Build vibrant food communities 3. Grow our local food economy 4. Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains 5. Improve the health and sustainability of institutional catering.
- GFO (above) - In terms of what the group could do and what members could take to their Councils to have the greatest influence, identifying pockets of land for community growing but also establishing and supporting community gardens by commitment of resources were recommended by Fiona Steel (GFO). Growing initiatives can be supported in community centres by resourcing and supporting cooking tutors by means of recruitment and compensation. Finally, encouraging local institutions such as schools and hospitals and social care institutions to buy from local farmers. Follow up in 6 months and chair to take to OXPlan 2050.
- Latest CCC / IPCC report stresses urgency - 1. The Councils should consider a more urgent approach towards messaging on climate change. 2. That as Chair of the advisory group he should write to the Future Oxfordshire

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Partnership and ask that the other work groups continue to give significant weighting to climate change in their discussions/recommendations.

**FOP Scrutiny Panel**

The Panel elected a new chair (City Councillor Katherine Miles) at their last meeting.

Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships and Place