

**To:** Future Oxfordshire Partnership

**Title of Report:** Updated Terms of Reference for Future Oxfordshire Partnership Advisory Groups

**Date:** 13 June 2023

**Report of:** Beth Wilks, Future Oxfordshire Partnership Manager  
Kevin Jacob, Future Oxfordshire Partnership Senior Democratic Services Officer

**Status:** Open

**Executive Summary and Purpose:**

To consider updated draft terms of reference for the three existing advisory groups for housing, infrastructure, and environment, in addition to draft terms of reference for a proposed Planning Advisory Group, endorsed by the voting members (local authority leaders) of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP), at its meeting in September 2022.

**How this report contributes to the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision Outcomes:**

The advisory groups have a key role to play in providing strategic oversight and input into the development and delivery of key projects and programmes which support delivery of the [Oxfordshire Strategic Vision](#) in the areas of housing, infrastructure, environment, and planning, where the councils identify added value in collaborative working.

**Recommendations:** That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership:

1. Agree the updated terms of reference for the three active advisory groups as set out in appendix one, two, and three.
2. Agree the terms of reference for the proposed Planning Advisory Group as set out in appendix four.
3. Delegate authority to the FOP Director to make minor or typographical amendments to the terms of reference in consultation with the chairs of the advisory groups.

**Appendices:**

**Appendix 1:** Draft terms of reference for the Housing Advisory Group.

**Appendix 2:** Draft terms of reference for the Infrastructure Advisory Group.

**Appendix 3:** Draft terms of reference for the Environment Advisory Group.

**Appendix 4:** Draft terms of reference for the proposed Planning Advisory Group.

## **Refresh of the Terms of Reference for Active Advisory Groups**

1. It is good practice to regularly review the terms of reference for partnership groups to ensure they are current, and reflect updates to role, remit, and operation.
2. The previous terms of reference for both the Housing Advisory Group and Infrastructure Advisory Group (updated June 2022) were largely centred upon oversight and delivery of the Affordable Housing Programme and the Homes from Infrastructure Programme respectively, both key deliverables under the 2018 Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. There are two years of delivery remaining for the Homes from Infrastructure Programme, with progress updates reported on a quarterly basis to both the Housing and Infrastructure Advisory Groups.
3. Whilst updating on the Homes from Infrastructure Programme will continue to form a part of both the Housing and Infrastructure Advisory Groups work programme, the terms of reference for all three active advisory groups do not currently acknowledge and reflect the role of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision in providing strategic direction for the development and delivery of joint programmes of work, where the six councils identify added value through collaborative working across district boundaries. The terms of reference have now been updated to reflect the role of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision, with other minor changes made throughout. Updates have aimed to maintain consistency across the terms of reference for the advisory groups, with regards to content.
4. Members of the three active advisory groups and supporting officers have reviewed the terms of reference for their respective group, and feedback has been considered and incorporated as appropriate.
5. Revised terms of reference were endorsed by the respective advisory groups at their meetings in April 2023.
6. It is important to note the Housing Advisory Group has moved to a quarterly cycle of meetings; the advisory groups for infrastructure and environment continue to meet on a bi-monthly basis.

## **Proposed Planning Advisory Group Terms of Reference**

7. In August 2022, the five local planning authorities announced that they were unable to reach agreement on the approach to planning for future housing needs within the framework of a Joint Strategic Spatial Plan, such that the programme of work to develop the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 would cease. It was agreed that local plans for the city and district councils would provide the framework for long term planning across Oxfordshire.
8. At its meeting on 27 September 2022, [the FOP received a report](#) which proposed that in order to retain good communication between the councils on strategic planning matters, the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Group should be renamed to the Planning Advisory Group, and that its terms of reference be reviewed to set out a remit in which the group could be used as a forum for the

councils to update each other on their respective plans as they are prepared, and to enable discussion on strategic planning issues. The voting members of the FOP supported the recommendations as set out in the report.

9. Terms of reference have subsequently been produced for the proposed Planning Advisory Group, incorporating the endorsed principles for future joint working with regards to strategic planning, as outlined in the report. The principles are as follows:

- That we collectively seek to deliver the outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision
- That we ensure a smooth transition from the Oxfordshire Plan back to local plans
- That we continue to satisfy the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate
- That we continue to work cooperatively and constructively in developing our respective local plans and other strategies, assisted by statement(s) of common ground or memoranda of understanding where appropriate.
- That we continue to work together on the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS).
- That the understanding achieved of countywide and district issues and priorities, are utilised, where appropriate, to support the preparation of these plans and strategies.
- That the benefits and learning gained by the Oxfordshire authorities, through their long history of joint working and collaboration on planning and infrastructure matters, continue to be valued in seeking to achieve both common and individual goals.

10. The adoption of a constructive approach from the Oxfordshire councils for engaging with each other, and with other partners, on strategic planning matters, can help deliver the spatial ambitions of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision, and manage the impacts from the ending of the Oxfordshire Plan work programme.

11. Nothing contained within the draft terms of reference affects the primacy and legitimacy of local plan decision making. The individual district and city council(s) maintain sovereignty over the content of local plans through their own internal processes, as local planning authorities.

12. At present there is no active member Planning Advisory Group to review the draft terms of reference, however an officer group set up to support the proposed Planning Advisory Group, has reviewed the terms of reference; a balance of feedback has been incorporated to represent the general view of the officer group.

### **Financial Implications**

13. Support for the groups will be provided within existing resources allocated to the FOP and its wider arrangements.

### **Legal Implications**

14. None arising from the report.

## **Other Implications**

15. None arising from the report.

## **Conclusion**

16. Terms of reference for the existing advisory groups for housing, infrastructure, and environment have been updated, with terms of reference developed for the proposed Planning Advisory Group; the FOP is asked to consider these and associated recommendations.

## **Background Papers**

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# **Appendix 1 – Updated Terms of Reference for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Housing Advisory Group**

## **The Future Oxfordshire Partnership Housing Advisory Group Terms of Reference**

### **1. Purpose and Objectives**

- 1.1. The purpose of the Housing Advisory Group is to act in an advisory and consultative capacity to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership on county wide housing matters, providing strategic oversight in the development and delivery of key projects and programmes within its remit, which support delivery of the [Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for Long Term Sustainable Development](#). The Strategic Vision sets out the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's ambition for what the county will be like in 2050, and includes a commitment to energy efficient and affordable homes.
- 1.2. Whilst the Housing Advisory Group does not possess any formal decision making powers, it does offer a mechanism through which to work cooperatively and constructively in scoping, commissioning, and developing programmes of work and strategies, facilitating and catalysing partnership working in areas aligned to the outcomes of the Strategic Vision.
- 1.3. The Advisory Group will operate within the remit agreed by the voting members of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. The role of the Group is to:
  - 1.3.1. Work collectively to support delivery of the housing related outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision, identifying opportunities for joint working where it is agreed there is added value in collaboration across district boundaries. Opportunities to include those which could be taken forward in the short term, as well as in the longer term, as we progress to 2050.
  - 1.3.2. Offer recommendations and advice to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, aimed at delivering the housing related outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. Recommendations may relate to opportunities for joint working, wider linkages, strategy development, and the proposal of work programmes to support delivery of the Strategic Vision.

- 1.3.3. Broaden engagement and involvement of the constituent councils in key areas of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's work, and ownership of each constituent council's part in the delivery of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership programmes.
- 1.3.4. Provide a councillor forum in which to examine and discuss strategic housing issues in more detail, developing understanding and knowledge to support in identifying innovative, collective solutions, drawing on opportunities to co-opt and engage with wider partners and sector experts to inform the Future Oxfordshire Partnership programmes.
- 1.3.5. Work collectively to provide strategic oversight and advice in the development and delivery of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's programmes, helping to align cross cutting activities and priorities. This includes receiving updates regarding housing accelerated by the delivery of the Homes from Infrastructure (Hfi) programme, on a quarterly basis.
- 1.3.6. Horizon scan across the breadth of housing issues, enabling the identification of gaps in the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's approach to its housing related ambitions, advising on how to address those gaps.
- 1.3.7. Provide a councillor forum for innovative thinking, as well as the sharing of best practice and information on activity taking place within individual organisations and other partnerships of relevance to the Group, supporting collaboration where appropriate, and preventing duplication and wasted resource.
- 1.3.8. Monitor data as required by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, enabling progress against the outcomes of the Strategic Vision to be monitored.
- 1.3.9. Consider any additional matters that the Future Oxfordshire Partnership requires of them.

## **2. Membership and Appointments**

2.1 The Advisory Group will comprise of at least one executive member from each of the partner authorities which has relevant responsibilities, plus a chair appointed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. The partner authorities are as follows:

- Cherwell District Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Oxford City Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Vale of White Horse District Council
- West Oxfordshire District Council

- 2.2 The Chair of the Advisory Group will be drawn from the voting membership of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership; chairing arrangements are reviewed at the first Future Oxfordshire Partnership meeting of the municipal year.
- 2.3 Where a member is unable to attend the Advisory Group, each partner authority is required to send a substitute drawn from their Executive. The substitute member shall have the same rights as the member for whom the substitution is made.
- 2.4 Given the breadth of issues under the housing umbrella, it is expected that the Group will engage, and operate in partnership with, wider partners and experts as required; representatives of other relevant organisations will be invited to participate in meetings as the agenda requires.
- 2.5 Co-opted non-voting members may be appointed for specific items or a period of up to a year by the Advisory Group with the agreement of the voting membership of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
- 2.6 Where the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, but still wishes for it to progress, the Group may elect a Chair for that meeting only.

### **3. Role of the Chair**

- 3.1 The Chair must act in an independent and facilitative capacity to organise the Group's activities in support of the objectives of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. At all times, the Chair must use their discretion to act in the interests of Oxfordshire and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, and not of their own political group or local authority area.
- 3.2 The Chair will manage meetings in accordance with the Group's terms of reference, and provide leadership and direction to the Group in an open and transparent manner.
- 3.3 The Chair will report directly into the Future Oxfordshire Partnership on the work of their Group as agreed. In reporting to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, the Chair will present the views of their Group, and not necessarily their own views.
- 3.4 The Advisory Group is not a decision making body, and the Chair should aim to reach a consensus on matters under discussion. Where a consensus cannot be reached, the Chair shall present the split views of the Group to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

### **4 Role of Members**

- 4.1 In addition to contributing to the overall role of the Advisory Group, members will commit to be a proactive conduit between the work of the Group, other groups within the Future Oxfordshire Partnership arrangements, their respective council and/or the sectors they represent. This might include, for

example, providing regular updates to their own council on the work of the Group.

- 4.2 In the pursuit of developing its forward work programme, the Advisory Group should also be mindful of any work it may require of officers, and the impact this may have on existing priorities. Where it appears that there are resource implications beyond business as usual activity, the Officer Group supporting the Advisory Group will assess the impact and report to the Local Authority Chief Executives as appropriate.
- 4.3 Each partner authority agrees to support the purposes of the Group by ensuring that they collaborate and cooperate with one another in an open and accountable manner in the interests of the whole of Oxfordshire, whilst acting in good faith.

## **5 Meeting Arrangements & Structure**

- 5.1 The Advisory Group will meet in accordance with a schedule of meetings that satisfies the requirements of the relevant programmes of work.
- 5.2 Meetings may be rearranged, cancelled or additional meetings scheduled with the agreement of the Chair of the Advisory Group.
- 5.3 The quorum for a meeting shall be three members. Non-attendance of partner authorities shall not affect the legitimacy of an Advisory Group's conclusions. However, where the effect of a particular consideration could give rise to contractual or financial implications for a partner authority that is not in attendance, their views must be obtained and taken into account in the deliberations, before being reported to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
- 5.4 The Advisory Group will be supported by a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and Officer Group, with representation from the six councils.

## **6 Access to Information**

- 6.1 It is expected that the Advisory Group will have the right to see the same information as that of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership when advising on any given issue, in order that an informed view can be made.
- 6.2 The Advisory Group will meet in private, and the meetings will not be subject to the provisions of s100 of the Local Government Act (LGA) 1972 as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. However, the conclusions of the Advisory Group shall be conveyed in public to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership at each of its meetings, except in circumstances where the matter under consideration contains exempt or confidential information, as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
- 6.3 The Advisory Group's agendas and associated written reports will be circulated to the members of the Advisory Group, and the designated officer of the



respective partner authorities, at least three clear working days before the meeting. Nonadherence to this principal however will not invalidate a meeting.

- 6.4 Where possible the draft notes and actions from the meeting will be made available to Advisory Group members and officers three weeks after a meeting; notes will also be included in the agenda for the next Future Oxfordshire Partnership meeting, and shared with other Advisory Group Members and FOP Officer Groups to support join-up and information flow across the partnership.
- 6.5 The work of the Advisory Group will not be subject to scrutiny by the Joint Scrutiny Panel, although their notes will be available to Scrutiny to comment on as published reports to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

## **7 Work Plan**

- 7.1 The Advisory Group will establish a forward work plan of matters and items to consider, and the date at which they are to be considered; the work plan will be reviewed at each meeting.
- 7.2 The development and management of the work plan will be led by the Chair, having regard to the requirements of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, the wishes of the Housing Advisory Group, and the advice of the Executive Officer Group, and Housing Officer Support Group.
- 7.3 The Group may consider the full breadth of housing issues when developing its work programme, however, the Group must remain mindful of the work of the other Future Oxfordshire Partnership Advisory Groups and Scrutiny Panel, as well as those groups outside of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership arrangements, to avoid any duplication of work in areas of mutual interest.

## **8 General Principles**

- 8.1 The joint management of the Advisory Group will be conducted in such a way that no authority's capacity to deliver day to day services is disadvantaged more so than another through their commitment to the Group.
- 8.2 The normal rules as to declarations of interest will be applied to local authority members in accordance with the respective Council's Code of Conduct.
- 8.3 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership may amend these Terms of Reference or discontinue the work of the Advisory Group at any time.

## **Appendix 2 – Updated Terms of Reference for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Infrastructure Advisory Group**

### **Future Oxfordshire Partnership Infrastructure Advisory Group Terms of Reference**

#### **1. Purpose and Objectives**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Infrastructure Advisory Group is to act in an advisory and consultative capacity to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership on cross boundary infrastructure matters, providing strategic oversight in the development and delivery of key projects and programmes within its remit, which support delivery of the [Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for Long Term Sustainable Development](#). The Strategic Vision sets out the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's ambition for what the county will be like in 2050, and includes a commitment to net zero carbon, and transformed connectivity.
- 1.2 Whilst the Infrastructure Advisory Group does not possess any formal decision making powers, it does offer a mechanism through which to work cooperatively and constructively in scoping, commissioning, and developing programmes of work and strategies, facilitating and catalysing partnership working in areas aligned to the outcomes of the Strategic Vision.
- 1.3 The Advisory Group will operate within the remit agreed by the voting members of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. The role of the Group is to:
  - 1.3.1 Work collectively to support delivery of the infrastructure related outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision, identifying opportunities for joint working where it is agreed there is added value in collaboration across district boundaries. Opportunities to include those which could be taken forward in the short term, as well as in the longer term, as we progress to 2050.
  - 1.3.2 Offer recommendations and advice to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, aimed at delivering the infrastructure related outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. Recommendations may relate to opportunities for joint working, wider linkages, strategy development, and the proposal of work programmes to support delivery of the Strategic Vision.
  - 1.3.3 Broaden engagement and involvement of the constituent councils in key areas of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's work, and ownership of each constituent council's part in the delivery of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership programmes.

- 1.3.4 Provide a councillor forum in which to examine and discuss strategic infrastructure issues in more detail, developing understanding and knowledge to support in identifying innovative, collective solutions, drawing on opportunities to co-opt and engage with wider partners and sector experts to inform the Future Oxfordshire Partnership programmes.
- 1.3.5 Work collectively to provide strategic oversight and advice in the development and delivery of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's programmes, helping to align cross cutting activities and priorities. This includes receiving updates on deliverables as part of the Homes from Infrastructure (Hfi) programme, on a quarterly basis, and, acting as the member steering group for the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS).
- 1.3.6 Horizon scan across the breadth of infrastructure issues, including for example, energy, rail, roads, transport, sewage etc., enabling the identification of gaps in the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's approach to its infrastructure related ambitions, advising on how to address those gaps.
- 1.3.7 Provide a councillor forum for innovative thinking, as well as the sharing of best practice and information on activity taking place within individual organisations and other partnerships of relevance to the Group, supporting collaboration where appropriate, and preventing duplication and wasted resource.
- 1.3.8 Monitor data as required by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, enabling progress against the outcomes of the Strategic Vision to be monitored.
- 1.3.9 Consider any additional matters that the Future Oxfordshire Partnership requires of them.

## **2 Membership and Appointments**

- 2.1 The Advisory Group will comprise of at least one executive member from each of the partner authorities which has relevant responsibilities, plus a chair appointed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. The partner authorities are as follows:
  - Cherwell District Council
  - Oxfordshire County Council
  - Oxford City Council
  - South Oxfordshire District Council
  - Vale of White Horse District Council
  - West Oxfordshire District Council
- 3.2 The Advisory Group also includes the Chair of the Oxfordshire Strategic Transport Forum (OSTF), who is re-appointed on an annual basis, as a non-voting member.

- 3.3 The Chair of the Advisory Group will be drawn from the voting membership of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership; chairing arrangements are reviewed at the first Future Oxfordshire Partnership meeting of the municipal year.
- 3.4 Where a member is unable to attend the Advisory Group, each partner authority is required to send a substitute drawn from their Executive. The substitute member shall have the same rights as the member for whom the substitution is made.
- 3.5 Given the breadth of issues under the infrastructure umbrella, it is expected that the Group will engage, and operate in partnership with, wider partners and experts as required; representatives of other relevant organisations will be invited to participate in meetings as the agenda requires.
- 3.6 Co-opted non-voting members may be appointed for specific items or a period of up to a year by the Advisory Groups with the agreement of the voting membership of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
- 3.7 Where the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, but still wishes for it to progress, the Group may elect a Chair for that meeting only.

### **3 Role of the Chair**

- 3.1 The Chair must act in an independent and facilitative capacity to organise the Group's activities in support of the objectives of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. At all times, the Chair must use their discretion to act in the interests of Oxfordshire and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, and not of their own political group or local authority area.
- 3.2 The Chair will manage meetings in accordance with the Group's terms of reference, and provide leadership and direction to the Group in an open and transparent manner.
- 3.3 The Chair will report directly into the Future Oxfordshire Partnership on the work of their Group as agreed. In reporting to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, the Chair will present the views of their Group, and not necessarily their own views.
- 3.4 The Advisory Group is not a decision making body, and the Chair should aim to reach a consensus on matters under discussion. Where a consensus cannot be reached, the Chair shall present the split views of the Group to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

### **4 Role of Members**

- 4.1 In addition to contributing to the overall role of the Advisory Group, members will commit to be a proactive conduit between the work of the Group, other groups within the Future Oxfordshire Partnership arrangements, their

respective council and/or the sectors they represent. This might include, for example, providing regular updates to their own council on the work of the Group.

- 4.2 In the pursuit of developing its forward work programme, the Advisory Group should also be mindful of any work it may require of officers, and the impact this may have on existing priorities. Where it appears that there are resource implications beyond business as usual activity, the Officer Group supporting the Advisory Group will assess the impact and report to the Local Authority Chief Executives as appropriate.
- 4.3 Each partner authority agrees to support the purposes of the Group by ensuring that they collaborate and cooperate with one another in an open and accountable manner in the interests of the whole of Oxfordshire, whilst acting in good faith.

## **5 Meeting Arrangements & Structure**

- 5.1 The Advisory Group will meet in accordance with a schedule of meetings that satisfies the requirements of the relevant programmes of work.
- 5.2 Meetings may be rearranged, cancelled or additional meetings scheduled with the agreement of the Chair of the Advisory Group.
- 5.3 The quorum for a meeting shall be three members. Non-attendance of partner authorities shall not affect the legitimacy of an Advisory Group's conclusions. However, where the effect of a particular consideration could give rise to contractual or financial implications for a partner authority that is not in attendance, their views must be obtained and taken into account in the deliberations, before being reported to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
- 5.4 The Advisory Group will be supported by a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and Officer Group, with representation from the six councils.

## **6 Access to Information**

- 6.1 It is expected that the Advisory Group will have the right to see the same information as that of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership when advising on any given issue, in order that an informed view can be made.
- 6.2 The Advisory Group will meet in private, and the meetings will not be subject to the provisions of s100 of the Local Government Act (LGA) 1972 as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. However, the conclusions of the Advisory Group shall be conveyed in public to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership at each of its meetings, except in circumstances where the matter under consideration contains exempt or confidential information, as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

- 6.3 The Advisory Group's agendas and associated written reports will be circulated to the members of the Advisory Group, and the designated officer of the respective partner authorities, at least three clear working days before the meeting. Nonadherence to this principal however will not invalidate a meeting.
- 6.4 Where possible the draft notes and actions from the meeting will be made available to Advisory Group members and officers, three weeks after a meeting; notes will also be included in the agenda for the next Future Oxfordshire Partnership meeting, and shared with other Advisory Group Members and FOP Officer Groups to support join-up and information flow across the partnership.
- 6.5 The work of the Advisory Group will not be subject to scrutiny by the Joint Scrutiny Panel, although their notes will be available to Scrutiny to comment on as published reports to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

## **7 Work Plan**

- 7.1 The Advisory Group will establish a forward work plan of matters and items to consider, and the date at which they are to be considered; the work plan will be reviewed at each meeting.
- 7.2 The development and management of the work plan will be led by the Chair, having regard to the requirements of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, the wishes of the Infrastructure Advisory Group, and the advice of the Executive Officer Group, and Infrastructure Officer Support Group.
- 7.3 The Group may consider the full breadth of infrastructure issues, which includes roads, rail, active travel, water and sewage, digital connectivity, and energy when developing its work programme. However, the Group must remain mindful of the work of the other Future Oxfordshire Partnership Advisory Groups and Scrutiny Panel, as well as those groups outside of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership arrangements, to avoid any duplication of work in areas of mutual interest.

## **8 General Principles**

- 8.1 The joint management of the Advisory Group will be conducted in such a way that no authority's capacity to deliver day to day services is disadvantaged more so than another through their commitment to the Group.
- 8.2 The normal rules as to declarations of interest will be applied to local authority members in accordance with the respective Council's Code of Conduct.
- 8.3 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership may amend these Terms of Reference or discontinue the work of the Advisory Group at any time.

## **Appendix 3 – Updated Terms of Reference for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Environment Advisory Group**

### **The Future Oxfordshire Partnership Environment Advisory Group Terms of Reference**

#### **1. Purpose and Objectives**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Environment Advisory Group is to act in an advisory and consultative capacity to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership on county wide environment matters, providing strategic oversight in the development and delivery of key projects and programmes within its remit, which support delivery of the [Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for Long Term Sustainable Development](#). The Strategic Vision sets out the Future Oxfordshire Partnership’s ambition for what the county will be like in 2050, and includes a commitment to net zero carbon.
- 1.2 Whilst the Environment Advisory Group does not possess any formal decision making powers, it does offer a mechanism through which to work cooperatively and constructively in scoping, commissioning, and developing programmes of work and strategies, facilitating and catalysing partnership working in areas aligned to the outcomes of the Strategic Vision.
- 1.3 The Advisory Group will operate within the remit agreed by the voting members of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. The role of the Group is to:
  - 1.3.1 Work collectively to support delivery of the environment related outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision, identifying opportunities for joint working where it is agreed there is added value in collaboration across district boundaries. Opportunities to include those which could be taken forward in the short term, as well as in the longer term, as we progress to 2050.
  - 1.3.2 Offer recommendations and advice to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, aimed at delivering the environment related outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. Recommendations may relate to opportunities for joint working, wider linkages, strategy development, and the proposal of work programmes to support delivery of the Strategic Vision.
  - 1.3.3 Broaden engagement and involvement of the constituent councils in key areas of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership’s work, and ownership of each constituent council’s part in the delivery of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership programmes.

- 1.3.4 Provide a councillor forum in which to examine and discuss strategic environmental issues in more detail, developing understanding and knowledge to support in identifying innovative, collective solutions, drawing on opportunities to co-opt and engage with wider partners and sector experts to inform the Future Oxfordshire Partnership programmes.
- 1.3.5 Work collectively to provide strategic oversight and advice in the development and delivery of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's programmes, helping to align cross cutting activities and priorities. This includes, playing a leading role in the development and oversight of the Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan, which identifies carbon emission reduction targets necessary to achieve net zero by 2050, and broad delivery programmes to meet these targets.
- 1.3.6 Horizon scan across the breadth of environmental issues, enabling the identification of gaps in the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's approach to its climate and ecological ambitions, advising on how address those gaps.
- 1.3.7 Provide a councillor forum for innovative thinking, as well as the sharing of best practice and information on activity taking place within individual organisations and other partnerships of relevance to the Group, supporting collaboration where appropriate, and preventing duplication and wasted resource.
- 1.3.8 Monitor data as required by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, enabling progress against the outcomes of the Strategic Vision to be monitored.
- 1.3.9 Consider any additional matters that the Future Oxfordshire Partnership requires of them.

## **2 Membership and Appointments**

- 2.1 The Advisory Group will comprise of at least one executive member from each of the partner authorities which has relevant responsibilities, plus a chair appointed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. The partner authorities are as follows:
  - Cherwell District Council
  - Oxfordshire County Council
  - Oxford City Council
  - South Oxfordshire District Council
  - Vale of White Horse District Council
  - West Oxfordshire District Council
- 2.1 The Chair of the Advisory Group will be drawn from the voting membership of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership; chairing arrangements are reviewed at the first Future Oxfordshire Partnership meeting of the municipal year.



- 2.2 Where a member is unable to attend the Advisory Group, each partner authority is required to send a substitute drawn from their Executive. The substitute member shall have the same rights as the member for whom the substitution is made.
- 2.3 Given the breadth of issues under the environment umbrella, it is expected that the Group will engage, and operate in partnership with, wider partners and experts as required; representatives of other relevant organisations will be invited to participate in meetings as the agenda requires.
- 2.4 Co-opted non-voting members may be appointed for specific items or a period of up to a year by the Advisory Group with the agreement of the voting membership of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
- 2.5 Where the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, but still wishes for it to progress, the Group may elect a Chair for that meeting only.

### **3 Role of the Chair**

- 3.1 The Chair must act in an independent and facilitative capacity to organise the Group's activities in support of the objectives of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. At all times, the Chair must use their discretion to act in the interests of Oxfordshire and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, and not of their own political group or local authority area.
- 3.2 The Chair will manage meetings in accordance with the Group's terms of reference, and provide leadership and direction to the Group in an open and transparent manner.
- 3.3 The Chair will report directly into the Future Oxfordshire Partnership on the work of the Group as agreed. In reporting to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, the Chair will present the views of the Group, and not necessarily their own views.
- 3.4 The Advisory Group is not a decision making body, and the Chair should aim to reach a consensus on matters under discussion. Where a consensus cannot be reached, the Chair shall present the split views of the Group to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

### **4 Role of Members**

- 4.1 In addition to contributing to the overall role of the Advisory Group, members will commit to be a proactive conduit between the work of the Group, other groups within the Future Oxfordshire Partnership arrangements, their respective council and/or the sectors they represent. This might include, for example, providing regular updates to their own council on the work of the Group.

- 4.2 In the pursuit of developing its forward work programme, the Advisory Group should also be mindful of any work it may require of officers, and the impact this may have on existing priorities. Where it appears that there are resource implications beyond business as usual activity, the Officer Group supporting the Advisory Group will assess the impact and report to the Local Authority Chief Executives as appropriate.
- 4.3 Each partner authority agrees to support the purposes of the Group by ensuring that they collaborate and cooperate with one another in an open and accountable manner in the interests of the whole of Oxfordshire, whilst acting in good faith.

## **5 Meeting Arrangements & Structure**

- 5.1 The Advisory Group will meet in accordance with a schedule of meetings that satisfies the requirements of the relevant programmes of work.
- 5.2 Meetings may be rearranged, cancelled or additional meetings scheduled with the agreement of the Chair of the Advisory Group.
- 5.3 The quorum for a meeting shall be three members. Non-attendance of partner authorities shall not affect the legitimacy of an Advisory Group's conclusions. However, where the effect of a particular consideration could give rise to contractual or financial implications for a partner authority that is not in attendance, their views must be obtained and taken into account in the deliberations, before being reported to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
- 5.4 The Advisory Group will be supported by a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and Officer Group, with representation from the six councils.

## **6 Access to Information**

- 6.1 It is expected that the Advisory Group will have the right to see the same information as that of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership when advising on any given issue, in order that an informed view can be made.
- 6.2 The Advisory Group will meet in private, and the meetings will not be subject to the provisions of s100 of the Local Government Act (LGA) 1972 as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. However, the conclusions of the Advisory Group shall be conveyed in public to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership at each of its meetings, except in circumstances where the matter under consideration contains exempt or confidential information, as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
- 6.3 The Advisory Group's agendas and associated written reports will be circulated to the members of the Advisory Group, and the designated officer of the respective partner authorities, at least three clear working days before the meeting. Nonadherence to this principal however will not invalidate a meeting.

- 6.4 Where possible the draft notes and actions from the meeting will be made available to Advisory Group members and officers, three weeks after a meeting; notes will also be included in the agenda for the next Future Oxfordshire Partnership meeting, and shared with other Advisory Group Members and FOP Officer Groups to support join-up and information flow across the partnership.
- 6.5 The work of the Advisory Group will not be subject to scrutiny by the Joint Scrutiny Panel, although their notes will be available to Scrutiny to comment on as published reports to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

## **7 Work Plan**

- 7.1 The Advisory Group will establish a forward work plan of matters and items to consider, and the date at which they are to be considered; the work plan will be reviewed at each meeting.
- 7.2 The development and management of the work plan will be led by the Chair, having regard to the requirements of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, the wishes of the Environment Advisory Group, and the advice of the Executive Officer Group, and Environment Officer Support Group.
- 7.3 The Group may consider the full breadth of environmental issues, which includes air quality, water, woodlands and trees, agriculture, nature recovery, waste, transport, green space, carbon reduction, energy, retrofitting buildings, and, adaptation and resilience, when developing its work programme. However, the Group must remain mindful of the work of the other Future Oxfordshire Partnership Advisory Groups and Scrutiny Panel, as well as those groups outside of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership arrangements, such as the Local Nature Partnership and Oxfordshire Waste Partnership, to avoid any duplication of work in areas of mutual interest.

## **8 General Principles**

- 8.1 The joint management of the Advisory Group will be conducted in such a way that no authority's capacity to deliver day to day services is disadvantaged more so than another through their commitment to the Group.
- 8.2 The normal rules as to declarations of interest will be applied to local authority members in accordance with the respective Council's Code of Conduct.
- 8.3 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership may amend these Terms of Reference or discontinue the work of the Advisory Group at any time.

## **Appendix 4 – Terms of Reference for the Proposed Future Oxfordshire Partnership Planning Advisory Group**

### **Future Oxfordshire Partnership Planning Advisory Group Terms of Reference**

#### **1. Purpose and Objectives**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Planning Advisory Group is to provide a forum in which local authority members can discuss county wide strategic planning matters, to support delivery of the [Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for Long Term Sustainable Development](#), which sets out the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's long term ambition for what the county will be like in 2050.
- 1.2 Local Plans for the City and District Councils now provide the framework for long term planning across Oxfordshire; nothing contained in these Terms of Reference affects the primacy and legitimacy of Local Plan decision making. The individual councils maintain sovereignty over the content of local plans through their own internal processes, as local planning authorities. The Planning Advisory Group and wider Future Oxfordshire Partnership arrangements do not possess the ability or statutory footing to control the content within local plans, however they do offer a mechanism through which to work cooperatively and constructively in developing respective Plans and other key strategies.
- 1.3 The Planning Advisory Group will operate within the remit agreed by the voting members of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. The role of the group is to:
  - 1.3.1 Work collectively to support delivery of the outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision, identifying opportunities for joint working where it is agreed there is added value in collaboration across district boundaries. Opportunities to include those which could be taken forward in the short term, as well as in the longer term, as we progress to 2050.
  - 1.3.2 Provide a councillor forum for innovative thinking, as well as the sharing of best practice and information on activity taking place within individual organisations and other partnerships of relevance to the Group, supporting collaboration where appropriate, and preventing duplication and wasted resource.
  - 1.3.3 Provide a councillor forum in which to examine and discuss strategic planning issues in more detail, developing understanding and knowledge to support in identifying innovative, collective solutions, drawing on

opportunities to co-opt and engage with wider partners and sector experts to inform the Future Oxfordshire Partnership programmes.

- 1.3.4 Provide strategic oversight and advice in the development and delivery of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's programmes, helping to align cross cutting activities and priorities. This includes working collaboratively with the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Infrastructure Advisory Group on updates to the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS).
- 1.3.5 Broaden engagement and involvement in county wide discussions re: strategic planning matters, providing a councillor forum in which to examine and discuss relevant issues in more detail.
- 1.3.6 Horizon scan across the breadth of planning issues, offering recommendations and advice to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, aimed at delivering the outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. Recommendations may relate to opportunities for joint working, wider linkages, and work programmes.
- 1.3.7 Support the Duty to Cooperate (Localism Act 2011) - a legal test that requires cooperation between local planning authorities and other public bodies, in efforts to maximise the effectiveness of local plan preparation within the context of strategic cross boundary matters. Notwithstanding this support, each Local Planning authority retains its obligations under the Act.
- 1.3.8 Provide a forum for the Councils to update each other on their respective local plans and strategies as they are prepared.
- 1.3.9 Ensure that the benefits and learning gained by the Oxfordshire authorities, through their long history of joint working and collaboration on planning and infrastructure matters, continue to be valued in seeking to achieve both common and individual goals.
- 1.3.10 Monitor data as required by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, enabling progress against the outcomes of the Strategic Vision to be monitored.
- 1.3.11 Consider any additional matters that the Future Oxfordshire Partnership requires of them.

## **2 Membership and Appointments**

2.1 The Advisory Group will comprise one executive member from each of the partner authorities, plus a chair appointed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. The partner authorities are as follows:

- Cherwell District Council
- Oxford City Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council

- Vale of White Horse District Council
- West Oxfordshire District Council
- Oxfordshire County Council

- 2.1 Although not a Local Planning Authority, Oxfordshire County Council is recognised as a central partner in discussions regarding strategic planning across the county, as the mineral planning authority, waste planning authority and key infrastructure provider.
- 2.2 The Advisory Group also includes a representative from the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB), who is re-appointed on an annual basis, as a non-voting member.
- 2.3 The Chair of the Advisory Group will be drawn from the voting membership of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
- 2.4 Where a member is unable to attend the Advisory Group, each partner authority is required to send a substitute drawn from their Cabinet. The substitute member shall have the same rights as the member for whom the substitution is made.
- 2.5 It is expected that the Group will engage, and operate in partnership with, wider partners and experts as required; representatives of other relevant organisations will be invited to participate in meetings as the agenda requires.
- 2.6 Co-opted non-voting members may be appointed for specific items or a period of up to a year by the Advisory Groups with the agreement of the voting membership of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
- 2.7 Where the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, but still wishes for it to progress, the Group may elect a Chair for that meeting only.

### **3 Role of the Chair**

- 3.1 The Chair must act in an independent and facilitative capacity to organise the Group's activities in support of the objectives of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. At all times, the Chair must use their discretion to act in the interests of Oxfordshire and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, and not of their own political group or local authority area.
- 3.2 The Chair will manage meetings in accordance with the Group's terms of reference, and provide leadership and direction to the Group in an open and transparent manner.
- 3.3 The Chair will report directly into the Future Oxfordshire Partnership on the work of their Group as agreed. In reporting to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, the Chair will present the views of their Group, and not necessarily their own views.

- 3.4 The Advisory Group is not a decision making body, and the Chair should aim to reach a consensus on matters under discussion. Where a consensus cannot be reached, the Chair shall present the split views of the Group to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

#### **4 Role of Members**

- 4.1 In addition to contributing to the overall role of the Advisory Group, members will be a proactive conduit between the work of the Group, other groups within the Future Oxfordshire Partnership arrangements, their respective council and/or the sectors they represent. This might include, for example, providing regular updates to their own council on the work of the Group.
- 4.2 In the pursuit of developing its forward work programme, the Advisory Group should also be mindful of any work it may require of officers, and the impact this may have on existing priorities. Where it appears that there are resource implications beyond business as usual activity, the Officer Group supporting the Advisory Group will assess the impact and report to the Local Authority Chief Executives as appropriate.
- 4.3 Each partner authority agrees to support the purposes of the Group by ensuring that they collaborate and cooperate with one another in an open and accountable manner in the interests of the whole of Oxfordshire, whilst acting in good faith.

#### **5. Meeting Arrangements & Structure**

- 5.1 The Advisory Group will meet in accordance with a schedule of meetings that satisfies the requirements of the relevant programmes of work.
- 5.2 Meetings may be rearranged, cancelled or additional meetings scheduled with the agreement of the Chair of the Advisory Group.
- 5.3 The quorum for a meeting shall be three members. Non-attendance of partner authorities shall not affect the legitimacy of an Advisory Group's conclusions. However, where the effect of a particular consideration could give rise to contractual or financial implications for a partner authority that is not in attendance, their views must be obtained and taken into account in the deliberations, before being reported to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
- 5.4 The Advisory Group will be supported by a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and Officer Group, with representation from the six councils.

#### **6. Access to Information**

- 6.1 It is expected that the Advisory Group will have the right to see the same information as that of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership when advising on any given issue, in order that an informed view can be made.
- 6.2 The Advisory Group will meet in private, and the meetings will not be subject to the provisions of s100 of the Local Government Act (LGA) 1972 as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. However, the conclusions of the Advisory Group shall be conveyed in public to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership at each of its meetings, except in circumstances where the matter under consideration contains exempt or confidential information, as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
- 6.3 The Advisory Group's agendas and associated written reports will be circulated to the members of the Advisory Group, and the designated officer of the respective partner authorities, at least three clear working days before the meeting. Nonadherence to this principal however will not invalidate a meeting.
- 6.4 Where possible the draft notes and actions from the meeting will be made available to Advisory Group members and officers, three weeks after a meeting; notes will also be included in the agenda for the next Future Oxfordshire Partnership meeting, and shared with other Advisory Group Members and FOP Officer Groups to support join-up and information flow across the partnership.
- 6.5 The work of the Advisory Group will not be subject to scrutiny by the Joint Scrutiny Panel, although their notes will be available to Scrutiny to comment on as published reports to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

## **7. Work Plan**

- 7.1 The Advisory Group will establish a forward work plan of matters and items to consider, and the date at which they are to be considered; the work plan will be reviewed at each meeting.
- 7.2 The development and management of the work plan will be led by the Chair, having regard to the requirements of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, the wishes of the Planning Advisory Group, and the advice of the Executive Officer Group, and Planning Officer Support Group.
- 7.3 The Group may consider a range of planning topics, however, the Group must remain mindful of the work of the other Future Oxfordshire Partnership Advisory Groups and Scrutiny Panel, as well as those groups outside of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership arrangements, to avoid any duplication of work in areas of mutual interest.

## **8. General Principles**

- 8.1 The joint management of the Advisory Groups will be conducted in such a way that no authority's capacity to deliver day to day services is disadvantaged more so than another through their commitment to the Advisory Groups.



- 8.2 The normal rules as to declarations of interest will be applied to local authority members in accordance with the respective Council's Code of Conduct.
- 8.3 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership may amend these Terms of Reference or discontinue the work of the Advisory Group at any time.