

**To:** Future Oxfordshire Partnership  
**Title of Report:** Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) Update  
**Date:** 13 June 2023  
**Report of:** Emma Coles, OIEP Manager  
**Status:** Open

**Executive Summary and Purpose:**

To consider a paper setting out an update on the progress of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) priorities and the launch and uptake of the OIEP Charter.

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

The OIEP contributes to the delivery of the following outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision:

**Outcome: Our residents will be healthier and happier, and overall wellbeing will have improved** The outcomes of the planned work of the OIEP will contribute to this priority enabling people to have better skills and education attainment to access employment opportunities etc.

**Outcome: Our local economy will be globally competitive, sustainable, diverse and inclusive:** The aim of the OIEP is to create an environment and communities that can adapt to change, a region that is resilient in the face of shocks in the economy and a workforce that responds to different needs and different kinds of work in the future. The education and inclusive employment working groups will contribute to this priority.

**Outcome: Our vibrant historic and cultural offer will be rich, diverse and enhanced**

The OIEP's aim is to work together to create a more equal and sustainable region that creates opportunities and benefits for all people within the county.

**Recommendations:**

That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership notes and comments on the update report

**Appendices:**

Appendix A –Draft OIEP Delivery Plan 2023-24

Appendix B – Draft OIEP Strategy 2023-2026

## Introduction

1. The Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership is a county-wide group that brings together employers, business, education, community groups and local government – to share knowledge, expertise and resources, and create links between different areas of work. Our aim is to work together to create a more equal region that creates opportunities and benefits for all people within the county. Our focus is on tackling areas that really need attention, which will have impact and will really make a difference.
2. Our Mission: ‘The Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership is working together to create a more equal region that creates opportunities and benefits for all people within the county. We are working to tackle some of our region’s biggest problems to create a fairer environment where everyone can contribute and share in our success’
3. Oxfordshire is home to significant inequalities. It is one of only three regions that contributes a surplus to the UK economy, but despite its global position and perceived affluence, its wealth and opportunities are not evenly distributed. According to the 2019 English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Oxfordshire contains 17 (out of 407) LSOAs (Lower-layer Super Output Areas) within the 2 most deprived IMD deciles – deciles 1 and 2. They are mostly contained within 10 wards – 1 in Abingdon, 3 in Banbury and 6 in Oxford<sup>1</sup>. The IMD focuses on seven domains of deprivation: income, employment, education, skills and training, health and disability, crime, barriers to housing and services and living environment. The city of Oxford is the second most unequal place in the UK (source: [Cities Outlook 2022 | Centre for Cities](#)) in terms of income, housing, affordability and life expectancy.
4. The OIEP is working together in partnership to tackle these inequalities and are working to create opportunities for all people in Oxfordshire, making use of everyone’s potential, so that we can all benefit from Oxfordshire’s success.
5. We have set up 4 action focused working groups to deliver our vision:
  - **Educational attainment** – focusing on early years education and support, educations attainment and better links between business and education links to shape career choices
  - **Inclusive Employment** - focuses on both employers and employees. Looking at how organisations can create better pathways into work whilst understanding the barriers people face to accessing employment.
  - **Social value and procurement** - we are looking at how we can grow the amount of money that is spent within our county, for our county. We are also looking at how the businesses that benefit from this are investing into our local communities, through jobs, training or improving our environment.
  - **Place shaping** – ensuring we invest in places that need it most. Communities need to be part of our work to ensure that money spent in our county helps address some of our biggest challenges – health, environment, housing – we need to ensure that we can answer these questions - what are

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<sup>1</sup> Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – Oxfordshire’s 10 most deprived wards – January 2023

the benefits that can be created for local people? How are the benefits of economic activity and growth shared locally?

6. We are working with projects across Oxfordshire that the partnership can support, grow or amplify their work as well as creating a repository of case studies, information and signposting related to the inclusive economy.
7. Our focus is on tackling areas that really need attention, which will have impact and will really make a difference.
8. The working groups seek to find, and build upon, specific initiatives or specialist organisations who are already successful in tackling some of the issues of inclusivity. These initiatives are most likely to be focused on how we can grow capacity or reach of such programmes by gaining support (whether in kind, in funding, or by way of making connections) of our Membership, and others.
9. The partnership is co-chaired by Baroness Jan Royall and Jeremy Long with input from countywide partners from the private, public (including district, city and county authorities) education and Voluntary and Community Sectors.

#### 10. Governance

The governance of the OIEP is set out below, with the Future Oxfordshire Partnership providing oversight to the work of the OIEP:

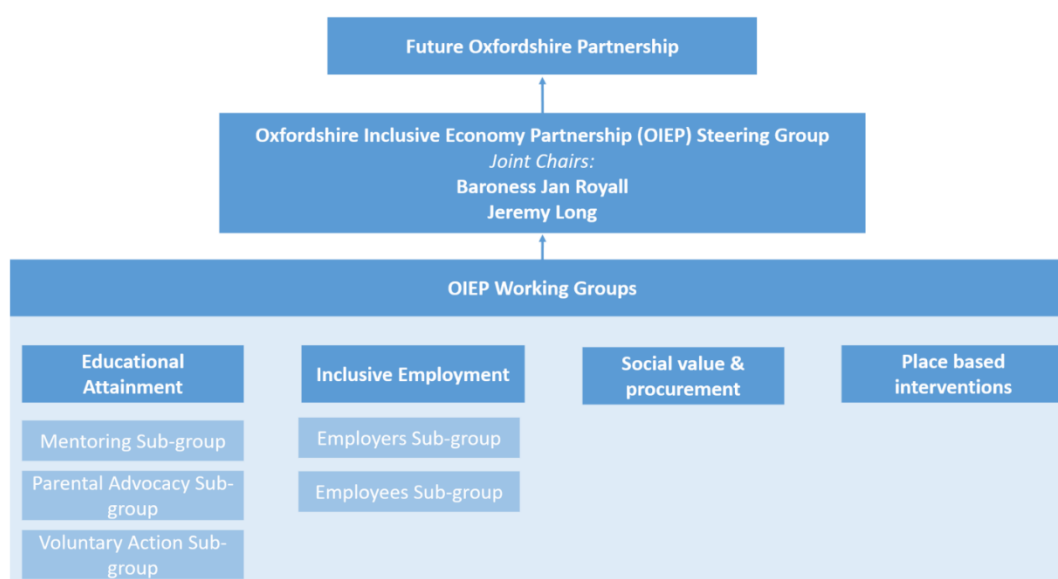


Figure 1 Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Governance Structure

#### 11. OIEP Strategy 2023-26 and Delivery Plan 2023-24

12. At the December OIEP Steering Group the Educational Attainment, Inclusive Employment and Social Value & Procurement working groups submitted proposals for projects they will focus on over the next 12 months. All of the proposals were agreed and now form part of the Draft OIEP Delivery Plan 2023-24 (Appendix A)

13. The ambition of the OIEP goes beyond these proposals and to deliver our vision will require a long-term focus on the key areas identified by the working

groups. Therefore we have drafted an OIEP Strategy 2023-26 (Appendix B) which sets out the partnerships long term vision and how we will reach our goals and objectives

14. Both the draft OIEP Strategy 2023-26 and draft OIEP Delivery Plan 2023-24 are being worked on by the partners and will be submitted to the next Steering Group 2<sup>nd</sup> June for agreement.

15. Progress to date against the OIEP Delivery Plan 2023-24:

- Educational Attainment:
  - ARCh – (Assisted Reading for Children) assessing funding opportunities including applying for a Step Change grant and setting up a Spacehive Crowdfund campaign. 9 organisations that have signed the charter have pledged to provide ARCh volunteers and one has also pledged funding.
  - Parent Power – feasibility study drafted for the implementation of Parent Power in another area of Oxfordshire.
- Inclusive Employment
  - Establishing an OIEP HR network to engage with HR leads in businesses across the county to share information and case studies on specific inclusive economy topics and provide opportunities to network
  - Prison leavers – OIEP will be holding the first HR network in July on the recruitment of prison leavers followed by a jobs fair. This will be held in Banbury. In September there will be an in prison open day for employers at Bullingdon Prison with a chance for them to see the training centre, workshops and employment hub as well as meet some men who are in the last 12 weeks
  - Working with partners to develop an employment framework for refugees
- Social Value and Procurement
  - Feasibility project applying for funding for a social value brokerage system for use across Local Authorities
- Place Shaping
  - Working with each of the other working groups to provide data and insight for targeted approach to projects

## **16. Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter**

17. On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 the OIEP launched the inclusive economy charter for Oxfordshire at the Old Fire Station. It was attended by over 120 delegates who learnt about the charter and how to get involved as well as hearing from organisations that have implemented inclusive initiatives.

18. Keynote speakers were Professor Irene Tracey, Vice-Chancellor of University of Oxford, Marjorie Glasgow BEM, Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire and Darren Burns, Director of Diversity and Inclusion at Timpson Group and Head of Timpson Foundation.

19. The Charter is a statement of a commitment to work towards a more inclusive local economy, and to reflect the ambitions of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership. By signing the Charter organisations across the county

can demonstrate their commitment by committing to actions they will take to make workplaces fairer and contribute directly to their local communities.

20. The Charter sets out a set of pledges that organisations can choose from.

These are grouped into the following categories:

- Support local and social economy - Using collective buying power to support the local economy and maximise 'social value' (the positive ways organisations can 'give back' to society)
- Opportunities to work - Supporting those furthest from the labour market on their journey towards secure employment, understanding the barriers people face in accessing employment and what employees can do differently to remove these barriers.
- Recruit inclusively - Making jobs accessible for all residents and hiring from diverse communities through internal inclusive recruitment practices which enable people to gain employment, sustain their employment and thrive within the workforce and wider society.
- Improve training and educational attainment - Creating workplaces where employees can thrive and grow and supporting educational programmes for children
- Sharing resources, skills and assets - Practical ways to ensure goods and services are accessible through things such as offering your staff the opportunity to volunteer, offering work experience to a student or financial or practical support to a local charity or foodbank
- Provide fair wages - Ensuring employees have a fair and decent wage and are properly rewarded for the work that they do

21. The Charter is aimed at organisations to pledge for 12 months to demonstrate their commitment to Oxfordshire's inclusive economy work.

22. To date almost 50 organisations have either signed or are in the process of signing the charter, equating to approximately 600 pledges. This includes pledges to transfer unused apprenticeship levy to help grow apprenticeships in Oxfordshire, pledging employee time to volunteer for a variety of community projects and mentoring, donating devices to Getting Oxfordshire On-line as well a variety of pledges focussed on how to improve employment pathways for people through changes to recruitment and HR policies and procedures.

23. OIEP will work with each organisation throughout the 12 months providing support with the implementation of pledges dependent on requirements, this could be signposting to relevant information or buddying with an organisation that has already implemented that pledge.

24. At the end of the first 12 months the impact of the charter and the pledges for employers, employees and the community will be developed into annual report.

25. OIEP continues to promote the charter through a variety of methods with businesses across the county and across the partnership networks.

**26. Fundraising**

27. The OIEP will need to seek additional funds to enable the implementation of the actions set out within the delivery plan and strategy. A fundraising working group has been established with the overarching aims to:
- Fund and scale the work of the OIEP
  - Ensure the OIEP is sustained as an effective partnership with appropriate secretariat and management resource
  - Seek a variety of funds most appropriate to local needs
  - Seek an element of investment and recyclable funds

## **28. Communications**

29. The OIEP is in the process of procuring a new website, this will enable a bespoke approach to how we present and share information for the OIEP and will create a more interactive experience for users.

## **30. Financial Implications**

31. For 2022/23 and 2023/24, a Partnership Manager and communications support is provided through contribution from a shared Partnership budget.

## **32. Legal Implications**

33. There are no immediate legal implications associated with the content of this report.

## **34. Other Implications**

35. There are no other immediate implications associated with the content of this report

## **36. Conclusion**

37. The OIEP has successfully established its structure, membership and governance as a partnership and has now moved into delivery and implementation. We will continue to promote the charter and the work of the OIEP to build momentum across the county to create a more equal and sustainable region that creates opportunities and benefits for all people within the county.

## **Background Papers**

1. [Any background papers you are relying on to support your recommendations must be listed and direction provided to where those documents can be accessed by the public].

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