

**To:** Future Oxfordshire Partnership  
**Title of Report:** Future Oxfordshire Partnership Annual Report  
**Date:** 28 November 2023  
**Report of:** Andrew Down, Director of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership  
**Status:** Open

**Executive Summary and Purpose:**

This report provides an annual update on the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's work to deliver the nine outcomes of the Strategic Vision for Sustainable Development which was formally endorsed by the Partnership in March 2021 and subsequently approved by each of the Oxfordshire Councils. The update covers the period Aug 2022 – Aug 2023. Many of the workstreams that support the delivery of the Strategic Vision are ongoing; as such, this report is intended to provide a snapshot of these programmes rather than a comprehensive review.

**Appendices:**

- **Appendix 1:** Future Oxfordshire Partnership Update Report from the previous year: [Future Oxfordshire Partnership Annual report 2021-22](#)
- **Appendix 2:** [Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership Annual report 2022-23](#)
- **Appendix 3:** Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Annual report 2022-23 *(due to be published with the FOP agenda pack 21 November 2023)*
- **Appendix 4:** [Strategic Vision for Sustainable Development in Oxfordshire](#)

**Report Author:** *Becky Chesshyre, Communications Co-ordinator for the Oxfordshire Partnerships*

**Contact information:** [becky.chesshyre@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:becky.chesshyre@southandvale.gov.uk)

# Future Oxfordshire Partnership

## Annual report 2022-23

## Contents

Contents.....	3
Background.....	5
Strategic Vision.....	5
The nine outcomes of the Strategic Vision.....	6
Work programmes .....	6
Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan.....	6
Local Area Energy Planning .....	8
Buildings decarbonisation .....	9
Expand and scale up retrofit delivery .....	9
Scale up programmes to address the retrofit skills gap.....	9
Accelerate the roll out of publicly accessible EV charge points .....	10
Explore opportunities to enhance carbon sequestration through land use change, including targeted habitat restoration and creation.....	11
Explore new funding mechanisms to support delivery of net zero activity.....	12
Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) .....	12
Homes from Infrastructure Programme (Housing & Growth Deal).....	13
Best practice, knowledge transfer and information sharing .....	14
Existing council programmes of work overseen by FOP advisory groups .....	14
Supply and sustainability of energy .....	15
Meeting with Oxfordshire’s Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) .....	15
Submitting evidence to the government’s Environmental Audit Committee .....	15
Co-ordinating local activity to support net zero .....	16
Updates from longstanding work programmes.....	16
Rail connectivity.....	17
Other partnerships .....	17
Looking forward .....	18
Future plans.....	18
Further opportunities for joint working .....	18

Struture and governance .....	19
Process updates .....	22
Funding and resourcing .....	22
Communications support.....	22
Secretariat support .....	23
Appendices .....	24

## Background

The Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) is a joint committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire together with key strategic partners, focused on the delivery of the bold and ambitious outcomes set out in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for Long Term Sustainable Development. It does this by:

- Coordinating local efforts to manage economic, housing and infrastructure development in a way that is inclusive and maximizes local social and environmental benefits.
- Facilitating delivery of projects that the councils of Oxfordshire are seeking to execute collaboratively in the fields of economic development, strategic planning (including infrastructure and housing), and climate change.
- Working to secure funding in pursuit of the aims of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision.
- Representing Oxfordshire on matters of regional and national interest.

Its four current focus areas of environment, housing, infrastructure, and planning are informed by four corresponding Advisory Groups of lead cabinet members from each council, and four corresponding officer groups. The Partnership's work is reviewed by a Scrutiny Panel with 18 members, three from each authority, and is supported by a small team of specialist officers.

Each constituent authority retains all their non-executive and executive functions in relation to economic development, housing provision, strategic spatial planning, and strategic transport planning.

To effectively tackle county-wide challenges like the transition to net zero carbon, improved county-wide connectivity, healthy place-shaping, inequality, and improving the state of our natural environment, we need to collaborate with partners across district and organisational boundaries. The role of the FOP is to facilitate shared working and peer support to enhance the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of provision in these areas, and to co-ordinate monitoring to keep us on track to deliver our goals.

## Strategic Vision

The [Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for long term sustainable development](#), which was formally endorsed by the FOP in March 2021 and subsequently approved by each of the Oxfordshire Councils, sets out the FOP's long-term ambition for what the county could be like by 2050. The nine outcomes within the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision are ambitious - delivering them requires long-term collective commitment and investment by the partners that make up the FOP as well as a wider set of strategic stakeholders and partners who make decisions about investment and placemaking across Oxfordshire.

## The nine outcomes of the Strategic Vision



**Figure 1:** Graphic showing the nine outcomes of the Strategic Vision for Sustainable Development in Oxfordshire.

The Strategic Vision is a non-statutory document. It provides an overarching framework to inform a range of different plans, strategies, and programmes, to drive improvements in environmental, social, and economic well-being and further complements plans and strategies already in place and approved by the FOP and partner organisations.

## Work programmes

Each of these work programmes works directly to deliver the nine outcomes of the Strategic Vision above.

- Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan
- Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy
- Homes from Infrastructure Programme (Housing & Growth Deal)
- Best practice, knowledge transfer and information sharing
- Existing council programmes of work overseen by FOP advisory groups
- Supply and sustainability of energy

## Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan

To support the objective of a net zero Oxfordshire, the Future Oxfordshire Partnership commissioned the development of a route map and action plan for the county, intended to identify joint actions that the Oxfordshire local authorities can take together to provide a catalyst for positive action with regards to net zero, across the region.

The resulting Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan (City Science, 2023) details:

- The emission reductions necessary to achieve net zero by 2050

- The key milestones in 2025, 2030 and 2040
- Carbon budgets of maximum emissions that can be emitted to maintain this pathway
- KPIs to track progress
- Recommended areas for FOP members to work on jointly to accelerate action.

The plan identifies 14 actions to be implemented to help realise collective net zero ambitions. The collaborative action plan does not replace individual organisations' net zero strategy and workplans, or statutory documents and activity such as Local Plans or the Local Transport & Connectivity Plan.

At its meeting in March 2023, the Future Oxfordshire Partnership endorsed the Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan and phased delivery of the identified joint actions. Five action areas were prioritised. Officers and convening leads have been working together to draw up the next steps across the prioritised actions. A programme tracker has been set up to monitor progress. An update on countywide emissions and progress toward net zero targets will be provided to FOP and the respective advisory groups on an annual basis.

The prioritised actions from the Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan being taken forward as core FOP workstreams are as follows:

- Develop an on-going Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) function
- Accelerate the roll out of publicly accessible EV charge points
- Buildings decarbonisation:
  - Expand and scale up retrofit delivery
  - Scale up programmes to address the retrofit skills gap
  - Develop a collective purchasing approach that supports the widespread deployment of rooftop solar on existing buildings – on hold pending the development of the Future Fit One Stop Shop (FOSS); a feasibility study into this approach is being conducted by the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP).
- Explore opportunities to enhance carbon sequestration through land use change, including targeted habitat restoration and creation
- Explore new funding mechanisms to support delivery of net zero activity

The workstreams under the prioritised actions are focussed on supporting mobilisation of external investment. Delivery against joint actions is currently being met through existing resources, with additional funding agreed at FOP in March 2023, i.e., £150k to support development of a local area energy planning approach, and £100K for carbon sequestration activity.

Future resource gaps will be looked at through joint funding bids and efficiency savings from commissioning joint evidence – exploring funding mechanisms is one of the five core workstreams (see above). There is still some remaining capacity funding available from the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, such that there may be the opportunity to request additional funding to support the respective workstreams, depending on other FOP priorities.

## Updates from these workstreams

### Local Area Energy Planning

Local area energy planning is a data driven, whole system approach, which maps out the changes required to transition a locality's energy system to net zero carbon within a defined timeframe and includes consideration of the most cost-efficient technologies to achieve net zero for different carbon emitting assets and processes.

In March 2023, local authority and Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) representatives came together for an initial exploratory session to explore the role and need for local area energy planning in Oxfordshire, and considered different options regarding scales of delivery, and associated pros and cons.

Following this exploratory session, an Executive Steering Board and multi-agency working group is being established. These will bring together council representatives, Electricity Distribution Network Operators (DNOs), the gas distributor, and other key strategic partners to provide the strategic direction and practical support needed to embed the local area energy planning approach in Oxfordshire.

The Local Energy Oxfordshire (LEO) LAEP+ mapping tool developed through Project LEO provides key data and insight to inform local area energy planning, whilst insights from the various LEO asset and place-based trials offer ideas for innovative decentralised, local energy solutions, which can be incorporated.

LEO project partners have secured additional funding via the Strategic Innovation Fund for a 3-month feasibility study (April-June 2023) to further develop elements of Project LEO through LEO Neighbourhoods, which is considering how effective energy planning at the low voltage network can accelerate building decarbonisation. A bid for a further six-month study has been submitted.

Funding secured through the Net Zero Pathfinders Places competition supported further development of the LAEP+ data platform (including functionality to support development of local area energy plans). The project which started in April 2023 is led by Advanced Infrastructure and is being

delivered in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, Southern and Scottish Electricity Networks (SSEN), Dundee City Council, and Perth & Kinross Council.

The Future Oxfordshire Partnership has allocated £150,000 to local area energy planning workstream.

*The Infrastructure Advisory Group will oversee and input into the development of the workstream and provide updates to the FOP.*

## Buildings decarbonisation

### Expand and scale up retrofit delivery

Several retrofit programmes are already in place – for example:

- Homes Upgrade Grant (HUG): Energy efficiency upgrades & low carbon heating to households in fuel poverty in Oxfordshire without gas central heating – expected to upgrade at least 310 properties.
- Heat Pump Ready: Requirement to deliver minimum 25% heat pumps in defined areas (Rose Hill, Oxford and North-West Bicester, Cherwell).

Two projects are also underway in Oxfordshire exploring innovative cost-effective solutions to support the roll out of decarbonised buildings: Local Energy Oxfordshire – Neighbourhoods (LEON) and Future Fit One Stop Shop. The 'expand and scale up retrofit delivery' workstream of the Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan is looking to build upon this work.

#### *Next steps for the workstream*

- Establishing a working group to review and share existing evidence on barriers to retrofit and shared learning from innovation programmes. This will link into the ongoing FutureFit One Stop Shop/FutureFit Oxford(shire) bid development.
- Using Oxford as a test case to enable county-wide scaling up of retrofit through partnership working and effective engagement to achieve economies of scale.
- Agreeing joint governance model to retrofit based on defined quality standards (via FutureFit One Stop Shop/FutureFit Oxford(shire) and reliable, up-to-date baseline evidence.
- Capturing retrofit data outside of grant programmes.

*The Environment Advisory Group will oversee and input into the development of the workstream and provide updates to the FOP.*

### Scale up programmes to address the retrofit skills gap

- Hosted stakeholder workshops to discuss skills gaps and funding opportunities via FutureFit One Stop Shop (FOSS)

- £4million of capital funding via the government's Capital Growth Fund and OxLEP is being put into a new training and education centre (Retrofit Academy) in the sustainable construction sector across three sites, which will deliver 400 apprenticeships and serve 240 full-time students and 300 part-time students within the next five years.

*Next steps for the workstream*

FOP is currently looking to commission a provider to effectively lead the retrofit skills agenda in conjunction with the County Council, City and District Councils, and education providers. Under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), green skills have been identified as a key priority for all districts.

*The Environment Advisory Group will oversee and input into the development of the workstream, and provide updates to the FOP.*

### Accelerate the roll out of publicly accessible EV charge points

A Joint strategy (Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy) and Cross authority stakeholder working group (Oxfordshire EV Infrastructure Steering Group) are already in place. There are also several innovative EV infrastructure projects being delivered in partnership with the government's Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles and Innovate UK. Examples of these projects include:

- OxGul-e, piloting dedicated pavement cable gullies to residents without off-street parking in both rural and urban locations from a home charge point unit at the kerbside to their vehicle, with minimal disruption to dedicated parking provision and impact on the historic built environment.
- The completed roll out of 20 "hubs" of fast charging points across publicly owned car parks, with overnight charging facilities and free parking to nearby residents, as well as top-up charging to visitors and commuters during the daytime (£5.4 million).

*Next steps for the workstream*

Oxfordshire County Council are applying to the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) for Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) grant funding which will support the following next steps of the FOP's workstream:

- Working in partnership to use LEVI grant funding and private investment to meet predicted need for EV infrastructure and support decarbonisation of road transport, particularly in rural, car dependent communities.

- As part of the delivery of this funding, collaborate with town and parish councils on Community EV Microhubs to help reduce transport emissions in rural, car dependent areas.

*The Infrastructure Advisory Group will oversee and input into the development of the workstream and provide updates to the FOP.*

### Explore opportunities to enhance carbon sequestration through land use change, including targeted habitat restoration and creation

Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership (see ‘FOP representation on other partnerships’, below) will lead on the delivery of this workstream.

The progress to date includes:

- Ongoing engagement with businesses who are in a position to invest in land-based carbon sequestration. This has revealed that many businesses are interested in spreading risk across multiple types of carbon offsetting projects in Oxfordshire, including nature-based projects, solar and retrofit.
- A draft Nature Finance Strategy has been produced by Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership setting out the creation of a natural capital investment framework that will deliver environmental enhancement projects in alignment with the developing Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- £100,000 of funding has been allocated from the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Capacity Fund to take forward work on an area-based inseting investment model, and an offset market, to finance nature-based solutions in Oxfordshire, based on a multi-habitat approach to carbon sequestration.

#### *Next steps for the workstream*

- Define potential mechanisms, such as area-based inseting<sup>1</sup> or developer contributions through the planning system, that would allow investment in nature-based carbon offset projects in Oxfordshire.
- Develop a longer pipeline of investment-ready nature-based projects (based on the model set out in the Nature Finance Strategy) in the right places.
- Explore the establishment of an Oxfordshire Environmental Fund.

---

<sup>1</sup> Area Based Insetting (ABI) is an approach to stimulate investment in schemes that reduce carbon emissions. These can be retrofit, Photovoltaics (PV) or nature-based.

*The Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership will lead on the delivery of this workstream; the Environment Advisory Group will oversee and input into the development of the workstream and provide updates to the FOP.*

### Explore new funding mechanisms to support delivery of net zero activity

The Environment Advisory Group have had initial conversations about the use of green bonds to support the deployment of renewable energy technologies. In addition, Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership have established an innovative area-based insetting trial with Anthesis in Oxford to demonstrate that this would be another a viable means of attracting funding to deliver local carbon reduction projects which will provide opportunities for shared learning in this area.

*Next steps for the workstream include:*

- Convening a working group to review opportunities for new funding mechanisms to finance delivery of priority actions (e.g., green bonds and 'insetting') which could support the creation of a private finance stream into Oxfordshire's programmes.
- Exploring how we might take a green finance insetting model forward with a focus on districts and how they can plug into what Oxford City Council and Cotswold District Council have done.
- Developing a pipeline of investment ready projects through the Low Carbon Hub and others.

*The Environment Advisory Group will oversee and input into the development of the workstream and provide updates to the FOP.*

### Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS)

The original Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) was endorsed by the then Oxfordshire Growth Board in November 2017. OxIS has supported to secure significant investment for infrastructure in Oxfordshire, particularly for transport schemes being funded through the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (i.e., Homes from Infrastructure) and the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF).

As part of the Housing and Growth Deal, there was a commitment to update OxIS. The [OxIS Stage 1 Report](#) produced in March 2022 provides a strategic framework for the Oxfordshire Local Authorities, as well as key strategic partners, to support the prioritisation of proposed infrastructure scheme investment, as well as identify potential delivery and funding opportunities to 2040.

An OxIS Stage 2 report had been planned for 22/23, which would consider new proposals for strategic infrastructure required to meet Oxfordshire's needs in the period to 2050; it was due to be aligned with the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (OP2050). Cessation of the OP2050 brought a halt to the Stage 2 update of OxIS. As a result,

officers have engaged with stakeholders internally and externally to explore what the next stage of OxIS could look like, given that the original proposal for Stage 2 will not proceed as was originally planned in the context of OP2050.

Stakeholder engagement sessions have taken place with internal and external partners and have highlighted some common ground around ambitions for the next stage of OxIS, including that it should reflect both the Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan and the Strategic Vision, and aim to expand its scope to include energy supply issues, health issues, and green infrastructure.

The next steps are that a core working group of relevant officers will be drawn together to agree the final commission principles. Once agreed, the project will require resources to enable a contract to be commissioned, as well as ongoing procurement, legal and financial support to ensure its successful delivery.

## Homes from Infrastructure Programme (Housing & Growth Deal)

This programme to deliver strategic infrastructure to support the acceleration of already planned houses in Oxfordshire was allocated £150m of government funding. The final tranche of funding is subject to a number of government and reporting requirements set out in a letter from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) following the cessation of work on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 in August 2022.

Oxfordshire County Council is now accountable for delivery of the remaining programme; a Memorandum of Understanding sets out commitments to positive partnership working, with particular regard to consulting with partners over any proposed changes to the programme of infrastructure delivery.



**Figure 2:** Infrastructure schemes delivered and in progress and associated housing units delivered through the Homes from Infrastructure programme as of 31 March 2023.

## Best practice, knowledge transfer and information sharing

The partnership working of the FOP is an essential mechanism for sharing knowledge and best practice across the partner organisations. Recent examples include:

- **Graven Hill Visit** A site visit to Graven Hill, Bicester, offered members insight into local activity to accelerate self-build and custom-build properties; the visit follows on from a self-build report the group received from officers in April 2023.
- **Solar Farm Guidance** Members received a report which provides advice to help elected members and officers understand relevant best practice principles and guidance for the deployment of ground mounted solar farms. This report is now being shared across the advisory groups and local authorities.
- **Environment strategy map and project/programme tracker** The environment officer group supporting EAG has led on the development on an environment strategy map, and a partnerships and environmental programme tracker to support the sharing of best practice and prevent duplication. The strategy map considers national, county wide, and authority level strategy and policy, and in doing so enables an understanding of the different guiding documents and how these might interact. The partnerships and environmental programme tracker maps out the different environmental programmes of work taking place across Oxfordshire, as well as the partnerships (e.g., ZCOP and OLNP) working in the environmental sector.
- **Planning for health infrastructure** The Planning Advisory Group (PAG) is attended by a representative from Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB). This creates an opportunity to explore how the NHS planning and future needs process works and the relationship between Integrated Care Services and GP practices, to understand how planning colleagues can best support in resolving gaps in care provision.

## Existing council programmes of work overseen by FOP advisory groups

Several existing pieces of work currently in development have been identified as benefiting from inclusion within the work programmes of the advisory groups and the FOP as a mechanism for increasing broader member input and buy in at an earlier stage.

- **Infrastructure Advisory Group:** Strategies and delivery plans emerging from the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan including Local Area Travel Plans, Bus Service Improvement Plan, mobility hub activity, freight strategy, and

Vision Zero are now coming forward to IAG for update and broader member input.

- **Environment Advisory Group:** Work on climate adaptation and resilience, the Oxfordshire food strategy, and Climate Action Oxfordshire behaviour change campaign are now coming forward to EAG for update and broader member input.

## Supply and sustainability of energy

The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is uniquely positioned to amplify the collective voice of Oxfordshire's local authorities and co-ordinate advocacy work in support of the nine outcomes of the Strategic Vision.

In particular, the FOP has identified shared concerns across Oxfordshire that constraints in the development of the electricity grid have the potential to negatively impact upon the pace of delivery of net zero ambitions.

To achieve collective net zero ambitions while maintaining inward investment within the county, a sustainable, decarbonized energy system is required. However, grid constraints in both the transmission and distribution elements of the electricity network are resulting in delays to deliver renewable energy projects and decarbonization activity, which (including electric vehicle charger rollout and heat pump installation) whilst inhibiting inward investment within Oxfordshire.

### Meeting with Oxfordshire's Distribution Network Operators (DNOs)

Following written letters from FOP to the three Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) which cover Oxfordshire, in April 2023, Local Authority Leaders and OxLEP met with SSEN, National Grid Electricity Distribution, and UK Power Networks to understand the causes of infrastructure delays, reinforcement plans, and opportunities to work together to address ongoing challenges in the local energy network. The meeting highlighted the importance of local area energy planning and the need for local authority input into Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES). Local authorities can input into DFES on an annual basis. DFES map out the different growth projections for electricity distribution networks across the UK, through forecasting changing electricity requirements; in doing so DFES support network upgrade planning and direct investment.

### Submitting evidence to the government's Environmental Audit Committee

In June of 2023, the Future Oxfordshire Partnership responded to the government's Environmental Audit Committee's call for evidence on 'The sustainable electrification of the UK economy'. In its response the Future Oxfordshire Partnership highlighted:

- Severe concerns that it will not be possible to decarbonize the electricity grid in the timescales stated by National Government i.e., 2035, with significant grid connection delays preventing investment in the scaling up of renewables.

- RIIO ED2 determinations (price control period covering the five-year period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2028)<sup>2</sup> appear to largely confirm that there is minimal investment in grid infrastructure ahead of connection requests/agreements for the next 5 years, despite projections through Future Energy Scenario planning, and demands that future regulatory price control determinations must proactively enable anticipatory investment, informed by robust local data and insight, to support the transition to net zero.
- Concerns regarding the unknown scale of ‘zombie projects’ within the system, locking up capacity unnecessarily, and preventing renewable schemes which are ready to go from coming online. The FOP argued that there should be a national directive calling for the review of projects which have been within the system over a specified period, to identify and remove them as appropriate and prevent unnecessary and costly infrastructure upgrades.
- The importance of decentralized energy generation and distribution, including the development of mini grids, in supporting net zero ambitions, building on the learnings from Project LEO.
- Any grid development and/or reinforcement activity must factor in an understanding of the impacts of varying temperature increases, to ensure appropriate adaptation measures can be made in support of a resilient energy system.

[The full response to the call for evidence from the Future Oxfordshire Partnership has now been published online.](#)

### Co-ordinating local activity to support net zero

Whilst tackling national constraints in the electricity network will require significant investment and action by central government, Oxfordshire partners are working collaboratively to identify local solutions and activity which support in addressing network challenges. [A report submitted to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership in June 2023 outlines several key partnership projects and programmes of work within Oxfordshire, aimed at realising net zero ambitions, and/or supporting to tackle local grid constraints.](#)

As outlined above, as part of the Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan, a significant focus for the partnership moving forward will be exploring what a local area energy planning approach looks like for Oxfordshire, to ensure net zero ambitions can be reached.

### Updates from longstanding work programmes

In addition to those workstreams listed above, the FOP has delivered outcomes through established programmes of work.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/riio-ed2-final-determinations>

## Rail connectivity

A study undertaken on behalf of FOP is facilitating improvements to Oxfordshire's rail connectivity, supporting the delivery of the Strategic Vision outcomes.

The Oxford Station & Area Upgrade work currently underway will enable greener travel by providing better access to the station entrance, delivering extra rail capacity, getting more freight off roads and onto rail, and enhancing cycling, walking and bus infrastructure at the station. In addition, the planned re-opening of the Cowley Branch Line will improve Oxfordshire's rail infrastructure and transform our connectivity. Both of these projects were identified as a priorities thanks to the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study (ORCS) undertaken on behalf of the FOP.

The ORCS, published in 2021, provided a strategic vision for the proposed development of rail services in Oxfordshire, aligning major programmes of work on the rail network within the county. Recommendations from the ORCS were brought together in an overarching industry strategy for the county known as 'Oxfordshire Connect'.

## Other partnerships

The FOP works closely with other partnerships in the county and nationally to enable FOP members to engage with and influence these forums in support of the outcomes of the Strategic Vision.

FOP representatives are given a seat on the following partnerships:

- **England's Economic Heartland** - a sub-national transport body for the region stretching from Swindon across to Cambridgeshire and from Northamptonshire down to Hertfordshire which advised the government on the transport infrastructure, services and policy framework which will realise our region's economic potential while supporting the journey to net zero.
- **Oxford to Cambridge Partnership** – A group of leaders from local government, Local Enterprise Partnerships, the Arc Universities Group and England's Economic Heartland, with government, in a new pan-regional partnership for the Oxford to Cambridge area which collaborates to accelerate economic opportunities and achieve environmental enhancements and to unlock investment for inclusive, high quality sustainable development.  
<https://www.oxford-cambridge-partnership.info/>
- **Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership** - an organization of key partners working together to radically enhance nature, its positive impact on our climate and the priority it is given, helping to make Oxfordshire a county where people and nature thrive. While a discrete partnership which does not report into the FOP, the OLNP links in with the FOP on projects and programmes in support of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision – for example, the

OLNP is leading on the carbon sequestration workstream of the Oxfordshire Net Zero Route map and Action Plan. The six Oxfordshire councils contribute funding to the OLN. Please refer to OLN annual report for updates on the work of this partnership.

In addition, the FOP oversees the work of the **Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership**. The work of the OIEP is aligned to and supports delivery against the Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire, by working to enable a local economy which is globally competitive, sustainable, diverse, and inclusive. The six Oxfordshire councils contribute funding to the OIEP. Please refer to OIEP annual report for updates on the work of this partnership.

FOP also works closely with other partnerships in Oxfordshire, including the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) and the Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership (OBEP), to support delivery of the aims of the strategic vision.

## Looking forward

### Future plans

- A workshop to explore and discuss the focus of the partnership moving forward and how to best realise our ambitions as laid out within the Strategic Vision.<sup>3</sup>
- Maintaining momentum and delivery of substantial existing programmes of work (see 'Current work programmes', above).
- Tracking progress against the Vision - a key focus for future work will be the development of performance measures to enable the FOP to monitor the direction of travel against the Strategic Vision, and further integration of the Vision within relevant plans and strategies at both a local and regional level, to enable progression towards the nine outcomes.
- The FOP will continue to play an active role in representing a collective Oxfordshire voice on matters of regional and national interest, lobbying HM Government as the partnership deems appropriate, for the benefit of the county's residents, businesses, and the local environment.
- Improved engagement with key strategic partners to draw in and leverage support which helps to deliver the ambitions of the Vision.

### Further opportunities for joint working

The FOP is proactively seeking opportunities for joint working to deliver the nine outcomes of the Strategic Vision. In addition to those workstreams listed above,

---

<sup>3</sup> This workshop took place in September 2023, which is beyond the timeframe of this report which covers the period Aug 22-Aug 23. An update on the outcomes of this workshop will be brought to a future meeting of FOP.

most of which are long term, the partnership has been engaging with stakeholders to identify further work programmes.

High level ideas have been developed through:

- **Stakeholder engagement** Stakeholder engagement sessions with LA Chief Executives, Advisory Group Members, the FOP Scrutiny Panel, and officers supporting the FOP arrangements, including the Officer Support Groups.
- **Corporate Plans** Mapped activity within the six LA and OxLEP corporate plans against the nine outcomes of the Strategic Vision to help identify areas for potential collaboration which deliver the Vision as well as corporate plans.

In identifying additional opportunities for collaborative working, ideas focused on areas where joint working across organisations and district boundaries adds value, recognising that certain activity is more appropriately delivered at scale. Consideration was given to opportunities both now and into the future, given that the ambitions of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision take us to 2050.

Suggestions put forward included both new activity or programmes aligned to the outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision, as well as existing activity that currently sits outside of the FOP arrangements but which participants felt would benefit from increased collaboration and input from a wider group of Oxfordshire political members.

Over 50 opportunities for collaborative working aligned to the outcomes of the Strategic Vision were identified and captured through a combination of the corporate plan mapping exercise and stakeholder engagement. These ideas are currently being filtered and shaped by officers supporting the FOP alongside respective advisory group members; filtered ideas were brought to a FOP workshop in September for consideration. The workshop took place after the timeframe of this report and an update on its outcomes will go to a future meeting of FOP. It is anticipated a couple of projects will progress forward into delivery, supported by remaining funding from the Capacity fund.

The Strategic Vision engagement sessions also identified opportunities for the partnership to make several process improvements – for example, the we have introduced induction materials and a bi-monthly FOP highlights report, refreshed the Terms of Reference for the Advisory Groups, and developed work programme schedules to allow for longer term planning.

## Structure and governance

The Partnership meets six times each year, most often in a non-decision-making capacity, and it is supported by four Advisory Sub-Groups for infrastructure, environment, housing and planning), a Scrutiny Panel and a small team of officers

who are tasked with coordinating and/or delivering on elements of the Partnership's work programme.

Whilst voting rights are retained for local authority members only, the FOP's membership also includes the following co-opted Associate Members:

- Chair of OxLEP
- Chair of the Oxfordshire Skills Board
- Universities Representative (OxLEP)
- OxLEP Business Representative-Bicester
- OxLEP Business Representative-Oxford City
- OxLEP Business Representative-Science Vale
- Homes England Representative
- DEFRA Agencies Representative
- Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire Integrated Care System (BOB ICS) Representative (formerly Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group)
- When considering transport infrastructure matters, Network Rail and National Highways have the right to attend as associate members.

## The Future Oxfordshire Partnership

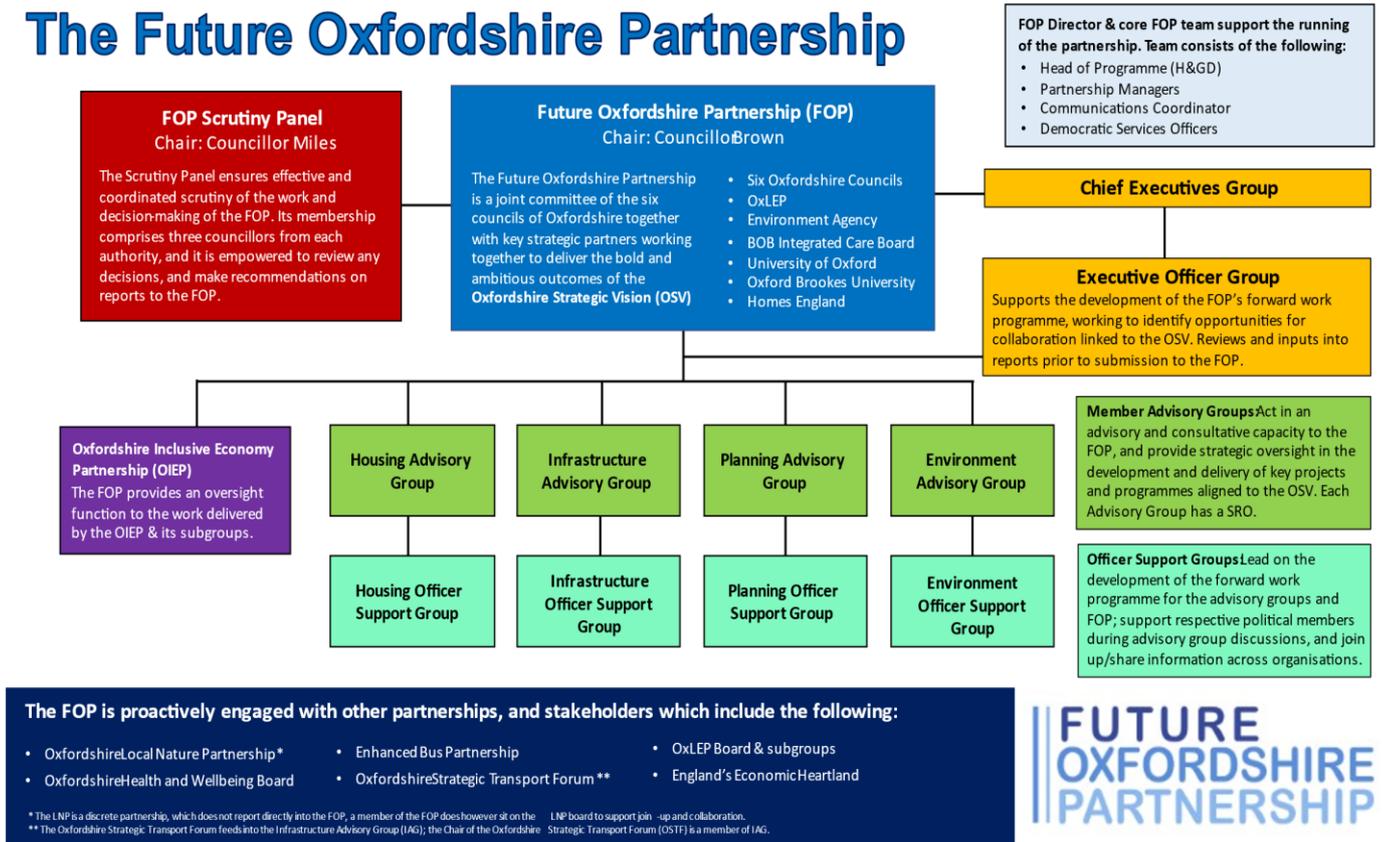


Figure 3: Future Oxfordshire Partnership structure chart

## Process updates

In June 2023 terms of reference were reviewed, updated, and endorsed for FOP, the FOP Scrutiny Panel and the Advisory Groups for infrastructure, environment, housing; the Memorandum of Understanding for the FOP was also updated. [More information is available via the FOP public reports pack June 2023, which includes the updates terms of reference for the respective groups.](#)

A new Planning Advisory Group has been introduced following the cessation of work on the joint Oxfordshire plan (OP2050) to support in identifying opportunities for collaborative working across the county which help to deliver the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision within the planning realm. Terms of reference for the Group are based upon the [principles outlined in the paper submitted to FOP in September 2023.](#)

Four officer support groups have been established to support the respective advisory groups for environment, housing, infrastructure, and planning, providing a forum in which the relevant local authority leads can discuss county wide matters as they relate to the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision and coordinate activity which supports delivery of the Vision's outcomes.

## Funding and resourcing

The FOP is funded by the six local authorities of Oxfordshire. This funding provides a core team of officers who work together to facilitate and co-ordinate delivery of its work. This includes the FOP manager, FOP director, FOP democratic services officers, and a communications co-ordinator. The team is managed by the Strategic Partnerships Manager based at South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Council.

## Communications support

The communications co-ordinator has led on the development of a new website for the partnership (due Oct 2023), which will allow FOP to effectively showcase its work and advocate for the Strategic Vision.

The FOP is a large partnership organisation with multiple complex and overlapping workstreams – in this context it is important that all the partners and officers supporting the partnership are kept up to date with progress. Communications support from the communications co-ordinator helps to achieve this – for example, through the production and distribution of a bi-monthly highlights report sent to officers and members.

Dedicated communications support also facilitates liaison between the communications teams of the individual partners, who can then use their internal and external platforms to inform stakeholders about the workstreams and outputs of the partnership. This communications support also facilitates the FOP's advocacy work -

for example, through co-ordinating input into and writing detailed and clear responses to government calls for evidence.

Through the the website and, where appropriate, press releases and social media content through FOP and partner channels, the communications co-ordinator works to highlight Oxfordshire's pioneering partnership work to deliver a better future for its residents.

### Secretariat support

The FOP's democratic services officers are essential to the proper functioning of the partnership. Together they provide a full suite of democratic support to the FOP and all subgroups, including providing advice and support to members and officers, scheduling, planning and delivering cross-county meetings, producing and publishing agendas and minutes, livestreaming meetings, providing background support and updating work programmes.

They provide this support for:

- Future Oxfordshire Partnership
- Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel
- Housing Advisory Group (HAG)
- Infrastructure Advisory Group (IAG)
- Environment Advisory Group (EAG)
- Planning Advisory Group (PAG)
- Executive Officer Group (EOG)
- HAG Officer Group
- IAG Officer Group
- EAG Officer Group
- PAG Officer Group
- Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership
- Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership

## Appendices

Appendix one: [Future Oxfordshire Partnership Annual report 2021-22](#)

Appendix two: [Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership Annual report 2022-23](#)

Appendix three: Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Annual report 2022-23  
*[\(due to be published with the FOP agenda pack 21 November 2023\)](#)*

[Strategic Vision \(full version\)](#)