

To: Future Oxfordshire Partnership

Title of Report: Community Employment Plans Evidence Paper 2023

Date: 28 November 2023

Report of: Richard Byard – Director of Business Development, OxLEP

Status: Open

Executive Summary and Purpose:

Community Employment Plans can be a planning requirement – either through planning conditions or S106 agreements. The Community Employment Plan (CEP) Evidence Paper 2023 updates the 2017 paper to support planning policy teams across Oxfordshire to include CEP policies in Local Plans and/or within Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). Currently, all Local Plans are being updated and progressing through the consultation process; this paper intends to provide further evidence for these policies.

The first CEP Evidence Paper 2017 was endorsed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board in July 2017 where it was resolved; that the Paper should be published on the OxLEP website; and that OxLEP continue its work with each Local Planning Authority to facilitate the implementation of CEP policies and to request CEPs as a condition on development sites which meet the proposed threshold via supplementary planning documentation as appropriate.

We request that the Future Oxfordshire Partnership considers and endorses the updated paper with a view to continued support for Community Employment Policies within Local Plans and to OxLEP continuing its support to facilitate CEPs.

How this report contributes to the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision Outcomes:

Community Employment Plans aim to connect training and employment opportunities resulting from development with local communities that are furthest from the labour market. Plans consider training or employment initiatives such as apprenticeships, traineeships, Sector-Based Work Academies or meaningful work placements. These training and employment initiatives support Oxfordshire to manage its tight labour market and provide training/employment opportunity to groups furthest from the labour market.

Plans also consider how development can support local education networks including local schools, further education colleges, local training providers and universities. This can be achieved through provision of careers and guidance information for schools, delivery of skills/workshops within schools, opening development for site tours and/or creating resources which can be shared across education networks. Many of these activities support local schools and colleges to enhance their careers offer and meet the Gatsby Benchmarks, which define good standards for career provision within education.

Plans also outline activities and measurements to promote the use of local labour, local supply chains, social enterprises and volunteering. Activities to support these themes can be evidencing fair pay initiatives,

The outcomes from Community Employment Plans principally support the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's aim to achieve a local economy that is globally competitive, sustainable, diverse and inclusive. They also support good growth by maximising construction training or insight into sustainability and renewables; overall this enables good growth by providing an equipped local workforce with knowledge and experience of green skills linked with the construction industry.

Recommendations:

1. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership endorses the Community Employment Plan Evidence Paper 2023, and that Local Planning Authorities support CEP policies within Local Plans which are being updated.
2. The updated paper remains published on OxLEP Skills website to provide context for the Built Environment industry.

Appendices:

Community Employment Plan Evidence Paper 2023

Introduction

1. OxLEP has championed the use of Community Employment Plans for major development projects since 2014 and supported Local Planning Authorities to include CEP policies within Local Plans and/or Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). The first CEP Evidence Paper 2017 was endorsed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board (now Future Oxfordshire Partnership) where it was resolved that OxLEP should continue its support to Local Planning Authorities to implement CEPs on sites which met recommendations.
2. Community Employment Plans support overarching aims of the strategic vision of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership to create a more diverse and inclusive economy by providing training or skills initiatives for groups that are furthest from the labour market with the view to employment.
3. Training and employment support across the County is complex and there are many organisations operating in the landscape with different agendas and purposes including our local schools, training providers, further education providers, employment charities, universities, national services such as JobCentre Plus and the National Careers Service as well as industry specific bodies such as the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB).
4. OxLEP has invested in its CEPs programme by appointing a Community Employment Plan Advisor within its OxLEP Skills team as part of the Social Contract Programme. The advisor supports economic development teams and developers to navigate the complexities of the skills landscape and create Community Employment Plans as well as connecting any resulting initiatives to the local skills/education infrastructure and employment network.
5. Activities from CEPs aim to maximise training and employment outcomes resulting from development and to connect with communities and groups which are furthest from the labour market. Considering local information on deprivation indices, there are stark differences across Oxfordshire with 15 LSOAs ranked within the 20% most deprived in England for education, skills and training deprivation. 9 LSOAs are ranked within the 20% most deprived for employment deprivation. These places can be found across the county in the City of Oxford, Vale of White Horse and Cherwell Districts. CEPs aim to link up initiatives, where possible, to the education and employment agencies that serve these areas.
6. From our knowledge and available information, OxLEP Skills has calculated that over the next five years, CEPs have the potential to support 219 apprenticeships, 98 employment experiences with groups furthest from labour market and 199 work placements.

Financial Implications

1. None directly arising from the report however, OxLEP does currently fund a Community Employment Plan Advisor who supports all economic development teams to develop plans and move into the delivery phase. This position is funded until September 2023.

Legal Implications

2. None arising from this report however, Community Employment Plans can be part of S106 agreements which are managed by the Local Planning Authority.

Other Implications

3. None known

Conclusion

4. Community Employment Plans are a tool for managing Oxfordshire's tight labour market and generating additional social value for local communities through employment and training initiatives. Work to support delivery of plans and improving outcomes is underway and we would hope to continue building on the work in the future which will support wider ambition in the Strategic Economic Plan.

Background Papers

5. The Community Employment Plan Evidence Paper 2023 is attached to this email and is publicised on the OxLEP Skills website.

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