

# Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE



## The Future Oxfordshire Partnership

HELD ON TUESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 2.00 PM

THE LONG ROOM, OXFORD CITY COUNCIL, TOWN HALL, ST ALDATE'S,  
OXFORD, OX1 1BX

### Present:

**Members:** Councillor Susan Brown (Chair), (Oxford City Council), Prof Alex Betts, (OxLEP universities representative), Sian Carter, (Homes England), Councillor Andy Graham, (West Oxfordshire District Council), Angus Horner, (OxLEP business representative), Councillor Liz Leffman, (Oxfordshire District Council), Dean Lusby-Gordon, (Environment Agency), Peter Nolan, (OxLEP business representative), Councillor David Rouane (South Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Bethia Thomas, (Vale of White Horse District Council), Councillor Barry Wood, (Cherwell District Council) and Chris Wright, (Bucks, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire ICB).

**Officers:** Lorna Baxter (Oxfordshire County Council), Ian Boll (Cherwell District Council), Richard Byard, (OxLEP), Becky Chesshyre, (Oxfordshire Partnerships), Emma Coles, (Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership), Inga Doherty, (Oxfordshire County Council), Andrew Down, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Caroline Green (Oxford City Council), Susan Harbour, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Giles Hughes (West Oxfordshire District Council), Kevin Jacob, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Babatunde Ogundele (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Martin Reeves (Oxfordshire County Council), Helen Ryan-Wallis, (OxLEP) Paul Staines (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Nigel Tipple (OxLEP) and David Yates, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership)

**Guest:** Jeremy Long, Co-Chair, Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership

**Other councillors:** Councillor Katherine Miles, Chair of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel

### 41. Apologies for absence; declarations of interest and Chair's announcement

Apologies for absence were submitted by Professor Alistair Fitt, Emma Hill, (substituted by Dean Lusby-Gordan), Neil Hook, (substituted by Sian Carter), Daniel Leveson, (substituted by Chris Wright), Miranda Markham, Professor Irene Tracey, (substituted by Professor Alex Betts)

The apology of Hayley Beer-Gamage, Chief Executive of Experience Oxfordshire was noted in respect of item 10, Oxfordshire Visitor and Economy and Destination Management Plan.

There were no declarations of interest.

[It was noted that the meeting was being live streamed and that a recording would be available for a period of 12 months.](#)

## **42. Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

## **43. Public participation**

It was noted that on this occasion, no requests for public speaking had been submitted.

## **44. Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel update**

The Chair invited Councillor Katherine Miles, Chair of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel, to present the recommendations from the Panel's meeting held on 21 November 2023.

Prior to summarising the Panel's recommendations, Councillor Miles commented that she had become aware following the meeting that a number of those attending the meeting as guests had unfortunately been uncomfortable with some of the Panel's discussions. As Chair of the Panel, she apologised for this commenting that this had not been the intention of any member and the contributions made by guests at that meeting and all Panel meetings were very much valued.

Councillor Miles then outlined the Panel's recommendations and reasons for them:

- Vision Zero
- The Future Oxfordshire Partnership's developing Future Work Programme
- The Oxfordshire Visitor Economy Vision and Destination Management Plan
- The Community Employment Plans Evidence Paper 2023

The Chair responded that whilst it was her understanding that the constituent local authorities within the Future Oxfordshire Partnership would wish to support the aims and rationale of Vision Zero, the Partnership itself could not comment on the Panel's recommendations because Vision Zero did not fall within the Partnership's remit. It was therefore for individual authorities to act on the recommendations as they felt appropriate.

With regard to the Partnership's work programme, the Chair responded that the projects in the proposed work programme had already been through a process of filtering and that they had been discussed in detail at the workshop on 26 September and as noted in the report, individual projects were at different stages of development. It was agreed that projects should only proceed if demonstrable benefit could be achieved through collaborative working.

The Partnership agreed and supported the Panel's recommendations relating to the Oxfordshire Visitor Economy Vision and Destination Management Plan and Community Employment Plan. It was noted that the particular approach to supporting CEP policies within Local Plans was a matter for each individual Local Planning Authority to pursue as it saw fit.

Councillor Rouane spoke to the need for the Partnership to be clear about what it did and its remit, the matters that the County Council undertook itself, and the activities that Districts and the County Council cooperated on outside of the remit of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. He suggested that some additional clarity would be welcome on the rationale for an issue being considered at FOP level and that in case of information items, an email for informal briefing might be a more appropriate option than a formal meeting considering the cost of holding meetings.

The Chair endorsed these sentiments in relation to the Partnership and commented that it was also her understanding that clarification on the role and remit of the Scrutiny Panel had been requested from appropriate officers.

[A full copy of the recommendations and responses can be found on this link.](#)

#### **45. Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal: Update at the end of Quarter 2 2023/24**

The Partnership considered a report on the progress, spend and housing delivery for schemes included as part of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal including the Housing from Infrastructure (Hfi) programme and the Growth Deal Capacity Fund as of Quarter 2 2023/2024.

Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance for Oxfordshire County Council as the accountable body presented the report highlighting that:

- Spend of £9.2m had been incurred against forecast spend at the end of the financial year of £24.7m with a further £53.5m expected to be spent in 2024/2025.
- In light of the significant level of forecast spend in 2024/2025 capital grant funding would be prioritised towards schemes which were entering the construction phase to ensure grant funding deadlines would be achieved and deadlines for other sources of funding.
- Annex 1 set out the grant allocation to each individual scheme in the Hfi programme and the overall programme. The programme was currently over profiled by £2.96m compared to available capital grant funding which would need to be managed as part of the Hfi programme.
- Remaining funds within the Housing and Growth Deal Capacity Fund stood was £1.3m. Of this sum, approximately 50% had been committed to the production of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy, staffing costs and the Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan. Allocation of the remain balance would take place later in the financial year.

**RESOLVED:** That the financial position of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal as at the end of September 2023 be noted.

## 46. Future Oxfordshire Partnership Work Programme

The Partnership considered a report which sought endorsement of a proposed work programme for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and which set out the process by which projects were endorsed and might subsequently be prioritised. Where possible, indicative information was given about timelines and resource requirements. In introducing the report, Paul Staines, Head of Programme highlighted that:

- The report set out an update on progress in working up the Partnership's work programme following the Partnership Focus and Delivery Workshop held on 26 September 2023.
- Within the report, projects had been ordered to reflect the degree to which they had been worked up and developed. Some projects and schemes were already underway whereas some were at initial, in principle stage and consideration of issues such as collective added value through collaboration was yet to be fully considered and project milestones, resources, governance etc were yet to undertaken.
- The Partnership was asked to take stock of the updated proposed projects and to remove any projects it did not wish to pursue further.
- The Partnership was asked to reconfirm whether or not it wished to progress research around First Homes.
- The report set out how projects might be progressed further and indicative governance arrangements via the Partnership's advisory groups.

The Chair indicated that on the basis of discussions to date, it was not intended to take out any of the proposed projects at the current stage.

In discussion, a number of members of the Partnership spoke to the importance of avoiding duplication both within the Partnership's own structures and with other existing arrangements, at individual council level or other non-Partnership mechanisms for cross county co-operation.

Work around Net Zero and Local Area Energy Planning were identified as being potential examples where there was a risk of duplication between Partnership advisory groups. It was also suggested that other projects might more efficiently be considered directly by the Partnership itself rather than via the advisory groups.

The Chair commented that she agreed there was a need to be as streamlined as possible, for example that reports would only be presented to the advisory groups when necessary and would be as minimal as possible so as to minimise the burden on officers whilst still enabling appropriate discussions to take place. However, there could be value in joint work between groups depending on the nature of the issue.

In response to these points, Andrew Down, Future Oxfordshire Partnership Director commented that officers were also keen to avoid unnecessary duplication and as the work programme was worked up to the next level of detail thought would be given as to the appropriate governance forum for each project.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the report and its conclusions be noted.
2. That all the projects in the suggested programme set out in the report be agreed to be taken forward for further development.

3. For those projects approved for the Work Programme, the advisory groups, as project sponsors be asked to task officers in the working groups with the preparation of detailed project plans for their approval.

#### **47. Future Oxfordshire Partnership Annual Report**

The Partnership considered its annual report which set out an update on the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's work to deliver the nine outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for Long Term Sustainable Development during the period between August 2022 and August 2023. Becky Chesshyre, Communications Co-ordinator for the Oxfordshire Partnerships introduced the report.

**RESOLVED:** That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Annual Report for August 2022 to August 2023 be agreed.

#### **48. Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Annual Report**

The Partnership considered the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership, (OIEP) Annual Report. Jeremy Long, Co-Chair of the OIEP and Emma Coles, OIEP Manager attended the meeting and gave a presentation summarising the OIEP's objectives to create a more equal and inclusive Oxfordshire and an outdate on the delivery of its activities over the previous year.

Following the presentation, the Chair spoke to the importance of the OIEP's role and how impressive the range of skills and organisations supporting and contribution to its work was in seeking to reduce inequality in the county. She also paid tribute to the work of Jeremy Long and Jan Royall as Co-Chairs along with Emma Coles and all those taking part in and contributing to the OIEP.

Professor Alex Betts strongly echoed these sentiments on behalf of the University of Oxford and commented on how formative the OIEP had been to the University's own thinking on how it could engage local inequalities.

In discussion, other members of the Partnership commented on the wider strong connections between the OIEP work and wider health and wellbeing activity aimed at reducing inequality. Organisation were also encouraged to sign up to the OIEP Charter and consider adopting its suggested approaches for social value procurement if they had not already done so.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership notes the progress described in the annual report.
2. That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership notes the importance of continuing to support the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership, which helps to deliver several outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision.

#### **49. Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan - update**

The Partnership considered a report that set out an update on the steps taken to operationalise the actions agreed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership for inclusion in

first six month phase of the delivery of the Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan, (NZRMAP). Inga Doherty, Climate Policy & Programmes Team Leader, Oxfordshire County Council introduced the report. She highlighted that a green finance conference was planned for 11 January 2024 and decisions on a number of funding opportunities to drive the work forward were expected.

The Chair referred to the growing importance of green financing, particularly in responding to the challenge of retrofitting costs.

**RESOLVED:** The Future Oxfordshire Partnership noted the report and activity underway to implement the Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan.

## **50. Oxfordshire Visitor Economy Vision and Destination Management Plan**

The Partnership considered a report and the Visitor Economy Vision and Destination Management Plan, (DMP). The Partnership was asked to note the DMP and to endorse the proposed future governance arrangements for DMP activity within the Partnership.

Helen Ryan-Wallis, Programme Manager Strategy at OxLEP presented the report.

Andrew Down, Future Oxfordshire Partnership Director relayed the apologies of Hayley Beer-Gamage, Chief Executive of Experience Oxfordshire that it had been possible to attend the meeting, but that they had seen the report and were in contact with the OxLEP team with a further meeting planned in December to discuss the planned governance arrangements.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership notes the Oxfordshire Visitor Economy Vision and Destination Management Plan as a shared statement of intent to manage Oxfordshire as a destination over the next five years.
2. That the proposed future governance arrangements for DMP activity within the Future Oxfordshire Partnership be endorsed.

## **51. Community Employment Plans Evidence Paper 2023**

The Partnership considered a report on the Community Employment Plan, (CEP) Evidence paper 2023. This paper updated an earlier 2017 version and was designed to support planning policy teams within the local planning authorities to include CEP policies in Local Plans and/or within Supplementary Planning Documents. The Partnership was asked to endorse the updated paper with a view to continued support for community employment policies within Local Plans and OxLEP continuing its support to facilitate CEPS.

Richard Byard, Director of Business Development, OxLEP introduced the report and responded to member questions. He highlighted that CEPs were one of the levers available through local planning authorities to help support communities, developers and those in greatest need whilst increasing skills training and employment outcomes. A key role was to encourage all developers to maximise the learning and skills outcomes arising from major developments.

The Chair commented that her experience of CEPs within Oxford was that they were an invaluable tool, partly in helping to ensure developments were beneficial to local communities and being seen to be so.

**RESOLVED:**

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 remain published on OxLEP Skills website to provide context for the Built Environment industry.

**52. Advisory Group updates**

**(a) Infrastructure Advisory Group update**

**RESOLVED:** That the update be noted.

**(b) Housing Advisory Group update**

**RESOLVED:** That the update be noted.

**(c) Environment Advisory Group update**

**RESOLVED:** That the update be noted.

**(d) Planning Advisory Group update**

**RESOLVED:** That the update be noted.

**53. Future Oxfordshire Partnership Forward Plan**

Kevin Jacob, Future Oxfordshire Partnership Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the Forward Programme as set out in the Agenda.

**RESOLVED:** That the Forward Programme be agreed.

**54. Updates on matters relevant to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership**

No updates under this item were reported.

**55. Updates from key strategic partnerships supporting delivery of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision**

Councillor Liz Leffman provided an update on matters considered by England's Economic Heartland, (EEH). This has included a bus symposium looking at the pressures faced by the bus sector across the EEH sector and potential models around what action was feasible to support bus travel in the future across the whole region.

A successful conference had been held on sustainable modes of transport which had included a lively debate of how transport services could be improved looking at connectivity studies. Discussions were underway around improving the link between Oxford and Swindon and opening up the south of the county to with regard to rail travel. East West Rail was progressing.

Councillor David Rouane provided an update on recent meeting of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Integrated Care Partnership. The meeting had been provided a ranged of options around future care and his assessment of the views of colleagues from other councils across the area was that access to primary care services was a key matter of concern. A Primary Care Strategy was being developed which would be consulted upon and Healthwatch Oxfordshire were also currently holding a consultation.

The Chair commented that she thought this would be an area of work that the Partnership would wish to have sight of and there was a need to improve the links between the NHS and local planning authorities.

The Chair provided an update on the Oxford to Cambridge Pan-Regional Partnership, (PRP). A conference had been held with over 100 attendees from a broad range of groups including the Super Arc Cluster, Arc Universities Group, PRP Executive Board and PRP Non-Executive Directors, but also groups opposed to the PRP, including the Stop the Arc Group had been invited to attend.

The Executive of the PRP had now met on several occasions and had been looking at branding and its strategy moving forward including areas of focus. An important aim of that work was to seek to anticipate and avoid duplication with other organisations at a local government level and would add value.

Angus Horner commented that as member of PRP Economy Working Group he and a number of members of that group from Oxfordshire had a number of acute concerns that the emerging Investment Prospectus was not likely to show Oxfordshire or other parts of the PRP geography as the 'Rock Star' international investment opportunity that it was felt to be. The prospective lists of projects presented for further consideration was laudable, but lightweight in the context of what Oxfordshire had to offer. He commented that in his view, there was more work to do to decide what the area wished to present to the world as opposed to one another.

The Chair commented that her understanding was that this work was in its early stages and therefore there was still opportunity for influence and that her recollection had been that she thought Oxfordshire had come out well and the opportunities in Oxfordshire had been recognised. Councillor Leffman commented that she had gained the impression that there was an apparent bias within the prospectus towards sustainability and environment which was good, but there was also discussion around improving connectivity, including digital across the region.

The Chair asked that Councillor Leffman discuss the matter further with Angus Horner as it was important that the strengths of Oxfordshire's economy were recognised. Nigel Tipple, the Chief Executive of OxLEP informed the meeting there was still opportunity to build in the narrative around the strength of Oxfordshire's projects.

## **56. Dates of next meetings**

The dates of future meetings were noted.

The meeting closed at 3.10 pm