

**Future Oxfordshire Partnership response to recommendations of the Partnership Scrutiny Panel made on 23 July 2024**

The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is requested to provide a response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel for decision at its meeting on 30 July 2024.

Recommendation	Comment
<p><u>Update on the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, (LNRS)</u></p> <p>The Panel strongly supports the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. However, it acknowledged that there are many issues of public concern flagged as part of its public consultation, such as water quality, that sit outside of the scope of the LNRS and suggested to officers that it was important that there be suitable communications to the public to explain where issues could not be considered in the context of the LNRS so as to seek to ensure that the public did not feel their concerns were being ignored.</p>	
<p><u>Scrutiny Panel work programme</u></p> <p>The Panel noted the work being undertaken at an Oxfordshire level around devolution and changes to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. The Panel considered that this could have a material impact on the future and role and remit of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel. The Panel requests that it be</p>	

consulted in advance around devolution and proposed changes to the Partnership and its scrutiny arrangements.

Assuming there is at least a medium-term value in retaining the Panel, two areas of support will help. First consideration of Scrutiny Training similar to that arranged by individual Councils. Second, an organised schedule of FOP Advisory Group Chairs updating the Panel on progress. Indeed, the FOP Chair could also present.

### Oxfordshire Local Area Energy Plan, (LAEP)

The Panel wished to highlight the following to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership:

- Funding and district council resources: -The Panel had concerns regarding officer capacity at a district level to support the LAEP process. The Panel was pleased and reassured to note options to mitigate this built into the proposals as set out in para 16 of the covering report, including the intended go/no go stage gates after at Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the procurement process and support from Oxfordshire County Council with clienting duties. The Panel regards these mitigations and the flexibility of districts to proceed at different speeds as of high importance.
- Impact of LAEP process on individual district Local Plans: The Panel had concerns that the LAEP process could delay Local Plan adoption timelines, but noted the response from officers that the proposals should not interfere with the Local Plan process.
- Use of consultants and building of 'in house' LAEP expertise – the Panel noted that there was a need in the short term to procure consultants to assist the LAEP development but was

strongly of the view that in the longer-term in-house expertise needed to be developed on cost and resilience grounds.

- That in seeking to encourage the delivery of more local energy generation capacity within Oxfordshire, everything possible be done to ensure that any profits from projects come back to the local communities.

After a thorough discussion, the Panel on balance, supported the recommendation that **Option Four** of the outline business case be agreed. It also wished to place on record its thanks to the LAEP officer team for a comprehensive and well written report.