

# Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE



## The Future Oxfordshire Partnership

HELD ON TUESDAY 13 JUNE 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), Professor Alistair Fitt, (OxLEP Chair), Councillor Andy Graham, (West Oxfordshire District Council), Angus Horner, (OxLEP), Councillor Liz Leffman, (Oxfordshire County Council), Lucy Manzo, (Environment Agency), Peter Nolan, (OxLEP), Councillor David Rouane, (South Oxfordshire District Council), Councillor Bethia Thomas, (Vale of White Horse District Council), Professor Irene Tracey, (OxLEP Universities representative), Catherine Turner (Homes England) and Councillor Barry Wood

**Non-voting members:** Ian Boll (Cherwell District Council), Becky Chesshyre, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Emma Coles (Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership), Bill Cotton, (Oxfordshire County Council), Andrew Down, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Caroline Green (Oxford City Council), Susan Harbour, (South and Vale District Councils), Giles Hughes (West Oxfordshire District Council), Kevin Jacob, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Alex Jeffery (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Babatunde Ogundele (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Martin Reeves (Oxfordshire County Council), Paul Staines, (Oxfordshire Growth Deal Team), (Nigel Tipple (Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership) and Beth Wilks (Future Oxfordshire Partnership)

**Guests:** Jeremy Long, (Co-Chair, Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership) and Professor Jan Royall, (Co-Chair, Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership).

**Other councillors:** Councillor Katherine Miles, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel Chair)

### 1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for the 2023/2024 year

Kevin Jacob, Senior Democratic Services Officer for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership opened the meeting and welcomed those present before calling for nominations for the office of Chair.

Councillor Bethia Thomas proposed Councillor Susan Brown as Chair of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership for the year 2023/2024 and this was seconded by Councillor Liz

Leffman. There being no other nominations this was confirmed by the voting members of the Partnership present.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Susan Brown be elected as Chair of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership for the 2023/2024 year.

Councillor Brown took the Chair at this point and proposed that Councillor Liz Leffman be elected as Vice-Chair of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership for the 2023/2024 year and this was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham. There being no other nominations this was confirmed by the voting members of the Partnership present.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Liz Leffman be elected as Vice-Chair of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership for the 2023/2024 year.

## **2. Apologies for absence; declarations of interest and Chair's announcements**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Emma Hill, Environment Agency, (substituted by Lucy Manzo), Dan Leveson, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB, Iain Littlejohn, Chair of the Oxfordshire Skills Board and Miranda Markham, OxLEP.

There were no declarations of interest.

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

## **3. Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership held on 20 March 2023 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

## **4. Public participation**

[The full text and final written response to the questions below can be found here.](#)

**Ian Green, Chair of the Oxford Civic Society** stated that the Society had been delighted to see the draft Terms of Reference for the Planning Advisory Group on the Agenda but had a number of comments and suggestions. The role of the advisory group as a forum for Oxfordshire wide strategic planning matters was welcomed, but it was suggested that more emphasis needed to be placed on the provision of a wider ranging strategic planning forum.

In the view of the Society whilst the ability of the advisory group to work with and invite other relevant organisations to its meetings was welcomed, it was unnecessarily qualified to specific individual meetings. It was also felt that meetings of the advisory group should be held in public.

With regard to the advisory group's future work programme, it was suggested that one of the gaps in Oxfordshire's strategic planning related to infrastructure investment planning and that the advisory group should examine the issue through a sub-group looking at innovative funding sources. This would be consistent with Partnership's own suggestions

and the Society's own report relating to the importance of integrated development planning published in July 2022.

Finally, the Partnership was challenged to examine the reasons why it had not been possible to progress the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and to satisfy itself that the proposed Planning Advisory Group Terms of Reference addressed them.

In response, the Chair indicated that a full written response would be provided but commented that the Oxford Civic Society's support for a strategic planning forum was welcomed. The proposed Terms of Reference for the Planning Advisory Group made clear that Local Plans for the City and District councils now provided the framework for long term planning across Oxfordshire. Individual councils retained sovereignty over the content of local plans through their own internal processes, as local planning authorities. The advisory group would provide the mechanism for councils to work cooperatively and constructively in developing respective plans and strategies.

None of the Partnership's advisory groups were decision making and all met in private so as to provide an opportunity for the cabinet member representatives from each local authority to come together along with expert witnesses when appropriate. This approach was felt to have been a useful way of operating and the provisions within the Planning Advisory Group were consistent with the other advisory groups.

## **5. 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 6 June 2023.

Councillor Miles summarised the Panel's recommendations as circulated to the Partnership but expressed concern on the Panel's behalf that it had not had opportunity to comment and express its views on the Developing a Place Narrative for Oxfordshire report on the basis that at the time of the Panel meeting the report was not ready. The Partnership was urged not to take any binding actions concerning place narrative proposals without them first being considered by the Scrutiny Panel.

[The Chair thanked Councillor Miles for her introduction and commented that the Partnership's full response to recommendations would be given in writing.](#)

With regard to the Place Narrative item the Chair responded that she wished to reassure the Scrutiny Panel that the proposals were not related to Local Plans and these would remain within the sovereignty of the City and District councils. The paper in its current form was an initial explanation with a second more detailed report due to come back to a later Partnership via the Scrutiny Panel if the principle of further work was supported at the meeting.

The Chair commented that the Panel's recommendations relating to the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) would be passed onto the respective Chairs of the OIEP subgroups so that they could be taken into consideration as the OIEP's strategy was delivered.

The Panel's recommendation regarding the importance of considering the needs of future generations as part of current policy setting and delivery was welcomed. The Partnership

was also happy to look at examples of best practice related to Green Finance and specific points around local area energy planning and the wider delivery of the Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan.

## **6. Updates to Future Oxfordshire Partnership Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding**

The Partnership considered a report and attached appendices which set out proposed revisions to the Partnership's Terms of Reference and the Memorandum of Understanding in place between the six Oxfordshire principal local authorities. Andrew Down, Future Oxfordshire Partnership Director informed the meeting that the proposed adjustments were required in response to changes within the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and also to make explicit reference to the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision and to remove references to the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

**RESOLVED:** That the revised Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding be endorsed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. These will take effect following approval by each local authority Cabinet.

## **7. Updates to Future Oxfordshire Partnership Advisory Group Terms of Reference**

The Partnership considered a report and attached appendices which set out proposed amendments to the terms of reference of the three existing advisory groups, housing, infrastructure and environment, in addition to draft terms of reference for the proposed Planning Advisory Group. Andrew Down, Future Oxfordshire Partnership Director introduced the report.

The Chair thanked officers for their hard working in drafting the suggested changes.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. the updated terms of reference for the three active advisory groups as set out in appendix one, two, and three be agreed.
2. the terms of reference for the proposed Planning Advisory Group as set out in appendix four be agreed.
3. authority be delegated to the FOP Director to make minor or typographical amendments to the terms of reference in consultation with the chairs of the advisory groups.

## **8. Future Oxfordshire Partnership Appointments 2023-2024**

The Chair proposed and it was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham that the following appointments be made en bloc for the 2023/2024 year.

1. Housing Advisory Group Chair – Cllr Barry Wood
2. Environment Advisory Group Chair – Cllr David Rouane

3. Infrastructure Advisory Group Chair – Cllr Liz Leffman
4. Planning Advisory Group Chair – Cllr Andy Graham and;
5. To note that the Oxford to Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership Board nomination will continue to rotate with the Future Oxfordshire Partnership’s Chair. (In the event that the Chair is unavailable or is a member of the collaboration board in another capacity, the Vice-Chair should be the FOP’s representative.)
6. To note that the England’s Economic Heartland Strategic Transport Forum nomination will continue to rotate with the Future Oxfordshire Partnership’s Chair.
7. To note that the Partnership’s representative on the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership will continue to be the Chair of the Environment Advisory Group.

**RESOLVED:** That the following Future Oxfordshire Partnership related appointments be made for the 2023/2024 year:

1. Housing Advisory Group Chair – Cllr Barry Wood
2. Environment Advisory Group Chair – Cllr David Rouane
3. Infrastructure Advisory Group Chair – Cllr Liz Leffman
4. Planning Advisory Group Chair – Cllr Andy Graham and;
5. To note that the Oxford to Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership Board nomination will continue to rotate with the Future Oxfordshire Partnership’s Chair. (In the event that the Chair is unavailable or is a member of the collaboration board in another capacity, the Vice-Chair should be the FOP’s representative.)
6. To note that the England’s Economic Heartland Strategic Transport Forum nomination will continue to rotate with the Future Oxfordshire Partnership’s Chair.
7. To note that the Partnership’s representative on the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership will continue to be the Chair of the Environment Advisory Group.

## **9. Progress Report from the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership**

The Partnership considered a report setting out an update on the progress of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership, (OIEP) priorities and the launch and uptake of the OIEP Charter. A copy of the draft OIEP Delivery Plan 2023/2024 and draft OIEP Strategy 2023/2026 were attached for information.

[Emma Coles, OIEP Manager gave a presentation summarising the main points of the report.](#)

Jeremy Long, Co-Chair of the OIEP thanked the Partnership for the contribution of its members towards the funding of the OIEP Manager post in the previous 12 months and to Emma Coles personally for her hard work and dedication over that period.

He commented that it was important to continue the momentum and progress made into the next 12 months. He paid tribute to the University of Oxford for its financial contribution towards the work of the OIEP and to Professor Irene Tracey for the establishment of a post which incorporated engagement with local communities. The OIEP Charter and pledges remained an effective way to communicate the aims and objectives of the OIEP and he was grateful for the activity of City and District council economic development officers for their continued assistance in sharing and promoting the OIEP.

The Chair commented that the Partnership was delighted to see the progress made to date with results already beginning to be realised. It was important therefore that the OIEP's work continued at pace.

Jan Royall, Co-Chair added that assistance of local authorities in supporting the OIEP was gratefully received, but that in addition to this every effort was being made to engage with the business community and with voluntary groups as it was recognised that the partnership needed to be wider than local councils alone and that budgets were finite. The need for action around economic inclusivity was something demonstrated and evidenced in all its meetings and work and the aim of the OIEP was to build upon and not duplicate the already excellent work on inclusivity within the county.

In discussion, Councillor David Rouane referred to the scaling up of activity and then asked whether there was a sense of how much current activities in the inclusive activity programme should and could be scaled up in order to make a real and measurable impact or alternatively, would the onus be on the promotion of demonstrator type projects that others would implement. Members were informed that the OIEP was in many cases building on existing best practice, but that it was fully recognised that it was necessary to shift the dial around inclusivity as a result of making a real impact. This was necessary because Oxfordshire economy was not yet inclusive and as a result, both people and businesses were suffering. As an example of the OIEP's activity, it was assisting the Growing Minds project in seeking to raise around £100k. This could only be achieved through partnership working but was just the beginning of what could be achieved.

A number of members of the Partnership spoke to work being undertaken by the OIEP in partnership with others to promote pathways into work for ex-offenders leaving prison such as the planned open day for employers at Bullingdon Prison and the potentially significant mutual benefits to ex-offenders, employers, and society, in particular in light of the high rates of vacancies within the county.

The work of the OIEP in supporting the delivery of early years provision was also very important and it was pleasing to note that a number of organisations which had signed up to Charter Pledges were also releasing their staff to act as volunteers. Councillor Liz Leffman commented that it was important that this resource was prioritised into the areas of the county with the highest need. Jeremy Long responded that the OIEP had coordinated a map for the ARCh that showed areas with vacancies for readers so resource could best be matched with need.

With regard to the challenge of scaling up activity in order to make a real impact, Jeremy Long stressed the importance of further communications to further promote awareness of the Charter and pledges. Experience to date suggested that when communications was undertaken it was effective, but often feedback from organisations was that they were committed to supporting economic inclusivity and recognised the benefits to their own organisations of doing so, but did not know where to look to offer their support.

Professor Irene Tracy highlighted the contribution that the universities could make and referred to the Continuing Education Department of the University of Oxford which was celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> year. There was a potential opportunity for lifelong learning, education, assisting people back into the workplace and discussions were taking place as to what assistance could be provided.

**RESOLVED:** That Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership update report be noted.

## **10. A Place Narrative for Oxfordshire**

The Partnership considered a report which set out an initial explanation of the opportunity to develop a place narrative for Oxfordshire, an early-stage view of the project and its purpose and an invitation to the Partnership to engage further.

Bill Cotton, Corporate Director for Environment and Place, Oxfordshire County Council introduced the report and answered members' questions. It was highlighted that the project was one of overall placemaking. Whilst there was a strong established vision for Oxfordshire, there were lots of projects, strategies, plans etc. It was a complex picture that could be a challenging story to communicate and to explain to potential investors, HM Government, and indeed local communities. Oxfordshire was a very diverse county, with an impressive range of businesses and organisations located within it but had challenges. The purpose of place narrative piece was to develop a powerful shared story for the county which everyone could support and which could be communicated to investors and HM Government so as to secure investment focussed on the county's needs. A facilitated approach would be used to create the narrative with input from all sections of stakeholders using as many images and graphical information as possible.

It was stressed that the proposed place narrative was not an attempt to create additional strategies or policies. Nor was it a bid for an Oxfordshire unitary council and it was not linked to Local Plans or spatial planning.

The Partnership was informed that it was intended that Oxfordshire County Council would lead on the commissioning of consultants to assist in the process and it was hoped that members of the Partnership would become involved in the various groupings that would be established and as conduits about the work with their own local communities and stakeholders.

A detailed discussion of the paper took place with a number of technical questions around the proposals asked of officers, including what the differences would be between the proposed work and that already undertaken as part of refresh of the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan, (SEP) and whether case study examples existed of the benefits of a place narrative existed. Bill Cotton responded that the work was intended to build upon the SEP work and gave examples of counties that followed such an approach.

Councillor Liz Leffman referred to a discussion held by the Infrastructure Advisory Group around the need to be more optimistic around future funding opportunities for infrastructure including looking at inward investment and the need to be proactive in preparing for bidding opportunities. It was important to have a vision for the infrastructure that was needed and to be able to articulate that vision constantly in all external funding bids. Oxfordshire needed to be in a position of setting the narrative around its overall infrastructure requirements rather than simply reacting to specific HM Government bidding

opportunities on an individual basis which were not always successful or successful only in part. To create healthy places for residents to live with convenient access to transport there was a challenge around funding without relying on developer contributions or HM Government funding and a need to take the initiative.

Whilst supportive of the principal of a place narrative and needed for such an approach, Councillor Bethia Thomas expressed concern over the pace with which the proposals were being brought forward and that whilst the current report set out an initial proposal there was still a significant amount of detail around the proposals that was not clear, for example whether it was focussed on public health or infrastructure or whether the narrative would be more closely related to a marketing strategy. In the absence of sufficient information that there would be improvement to lives of residents it was difficult to commit to use of officer resources and time.

Councillor David Rouane echoed the concern expressed by Councillor Thomas regarding the commitment of finite officer resource. Based upon the information within the current report he was not fully clear as to whether the purpose of the proposals was to create a document that was essentially a marketing tool for the county, whether it was a strategy document or whether it sought to set out the current situation or future ambitions of what Oxfordshire could be. Whilst acknowledging the assurance that the work was not related to a unitary governance position, the links to place narrative work in other counties had in the case of Hampshire been used in a subsequent unitary bid.

Professor Irene Tracey referred to the need and advantages to be gained by presenting a coherent outward facing narrative around Oxfordshire's ambition and vision. It was likely that in the future there would continue to be national focus towards investment outside of the Southeast and therefore it was particularly important to have a compelling narrative if future funding opportunities were to be secured. In addition, there was a need for coordinated and strategic approach to securing private sector investment from leading companies which there was opportunity for the University of Oxford to assist with through its significant convening influence.

Councillor Barry Wood commented that from his experience major employers often approached local councils as local planning authorities directly to seek their advice and as points of contact. He expressed concern that there was a risk of duplication if this was not mitigated against as part of the development of the proposals.

Angus Horner welcomed the proposals as needed but agreed that the report needed to continue to be developed further and duplication avoided. He commented that since the renaming of the Partnership there had yet to be a strategic level debate looking forward 25 years, let alone into the next century around the impact that current changes would mean and the impact on Oxfordshire's place narrative. By way of example, the population of Oxford had grown significantly over the previous 100 years and consideration needed to be given to the impacts of future population growth and Oxfordshire's other ambitions set out in the Oxfordshire Vision for Long Term Sustainable Development.

Giles Hughes, Chief Executive of West Oxfordshire District Council and Caroline Green, Chief Executive of Oxford City Council both referred to the importance of developing further detail in a future report, but that in their view there was benefit of progressing the proposals. Caroline Green commented that this would allow for the consideration and input from senior officers via the Partnership's Executive Officer Group.



At this point, the Chair suggested that in light of the points made during the discussion and breadth of the ideas discussed, the report be noted on the basis that a more detailed report would be presented at the July meeting. Before then, further stakeholder engagement should take place around the contents and detail of the report including discussion at the Executive Officer Group.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a further report setting out further details and intended outputs be presented to the Partnership in July.

## **11. Delivering the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for Long Term Sustainable Development**

Beth Wilks, Future Oxfordshire Partnership Manager gave a presentation as set out in the Agenda which set out progress in developing opportunities for joint working to support the delivery of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for Long Term Sustainable Development. Key points included in the presentation included:

- Mapping and engagement work to identify potential opportunities for collaborative working undertaken and planned.
- To date some 50 additional opportunities for collaborative working had been identified. The majority of these ideas together with existing workstreams were to be taken forward to an assessment and filtering stage involving officer input and steering to identify a number of impactful projects with an offline workshop anticipated in September 2023.
- A number of workstreams such as the scoping of the next phase of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure were to be taken forward into delivery.

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

## **12. Key Partnership Activity and Delivery in the Energy Space**

The Partnership considered a report which set out overview of key partnership activity and programmes of work within the Oxfordshire Energy space which aimed to realised net zero ambitions and/or support to tackle local grid constraints. Beth Wilks, Future Oxfordshire Partnership Manager gave a presentation setting out the key highlights of the report.

The Chair referred to a recent meeting between representatives of the councils and representatives of three Distribution Network Operators, (DNOs) covering Oxfordshire. During this meeting it had become apparent that the DNOs were only able to plan on the basis of developments that had already been granted planning permission whereas as local planning authorities, the councils were aware of likely upcoming developments in their local area which had yet to reach the start of the formal planning process. In addition, the trend towards decarbonisation of energy whilst welcome was likely to increase future demands on the electricity and therefore it was very important that councils were able to feed into the grid planning process given the long lead in time for the approval of grid projects.

**RESOLVED:** That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership agrees to:

1. Notes the report and takes advantage of opportunities to proactively raise awareness of activity currently underway in the energy space within Oxfordshire, to support collaboration and join-up, and prevent duplication.
2. Ensure respective organisations are actively engaged in work alongside key stakeholders to develop and deliver a local area energy planning approach for Oxfordshire, to support in realising net zero ambitions, as outlined in the endorsed Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan.
3. Ensure respective organisations are contributing to annual Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES), to ensure Distribution Network Operator (DNO) modelling of generation, storage, and demand, takes into account planned housing and business development, as well as decarbonisation plans and ambitions.

### **13. Advisory Group updates**

#### **(a) Infrastructure Advisory Group update**

Councillor Liz Leffman referred to the notes of the Infrastructure Advisory Group meetings held on 27 February 2023 and 17 April 2023 as included in the Agenda.

At the February meeting, a key aspect emerging from the advisory group's discussion was the need for a wider definition of infrastructure that would include consideration of energy and water issues and a greater consideration of rural infrastructure needs.

It was highlighted that an update was expected from England's Economic Heartland as to outcomes of its connectivity study on the Oxford to Swindon corridor. This was important because scope of the study included projects such as the Cowley branch line.

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

#### **(b) Housing Advisory Group Update**

Councillor Susan Brown as the outgoing Chair of the Housing Advisory Group referred to the notes of the Housing Advisory Group meetings held on 28 February 2023 and 18 April 2023.

Councillor Brown referred to the paper and the advisory group's discussion at its April meeting regarding Housing Revenue Accounts, (HRA). Unfortunately, it appeared that there was currently no practical pathway for district councils to re-establish HRA accounts should they wish to do so. Councillor Brown indicated that this was an issue that she would continue lobby about.

It was brought to the Partnership's attention that it was intended that members of the Housing Advisory Group visit the Graven Hill self-build develop site in Bicester in July.

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

#### **(c) Environment Advisory Group update**

Councillor David Rouane referred to the notes of the Environment Advisory Group meeting held on 2 March 2023 and 20 April 2023.

Councillor Rouane also commented on the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership Annual Forum which had taken place on 6 June 2023. Discussions had centred around the development of an Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy from the perspective of different habitat types.

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

#### **14. Future Oxfordshire Partnership Forward Plan**

Kevin Jacob, Future Oxfordshire Partnership Democratic Services Officer referred to the Forward Programme as set out in the Agenda and highlighted that in light of the anticipated workshop provisionally scheduled for 26 September it was intended to keep the Partnership agenda for that date as light as possible.

In addition an item on the development of place narrative for Oxfordshire would be added to the Forward Programme.

#### **15. Updates on matters relevant to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership**

No issues were raised under this heading.

#### **16. Verbal reports from key strategic partnerships supporting delivery of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision**

Professor Alastair Fitt commented on the progress of the establishment of the Oxford to Cambridge Pan-Regional Partnership. Recruitment for a number of key posts had already been undertaken or were in progress and the standard of candidates applying for all the roles had been impressive.

Dr Richard Hutchins had been appointed as Managing Director of the Pan Regional Partnership and was now in post. A preferred candidate had been selected for the role of Chair of the Partnership and it was hoped that further details of that appointment could be announced in due course.

Interviews had also been held for non-executive directors and it was expected that it was possible that it would be possible to appoint to more than two of these posts. He commented that it was particularly welcome that so many candidates had expressed an interest in becoming non-executive directors as these roles were not remunerated.

Councillor Liz Leffman provided an update as acting Chair of England's Economic Heartland on its recent meeting which had included an update from East-West Rail on their proposed route plan. A key point of the update had been the importance of solving issues around the London Road Level Crossing in Bicester.

In addition, East West Rail had been challenged around their initial plans for the use of diesel trains on the Oxfordshire end of the route, but East West Rail had undertaken to their utmost to not use diesel trains. As the redevelopment of Oxford station was currently on schedule it was expected that East West Rail services would commence from Oxford station at the end of 2024.

The Partnership was also informed that EEH was looking at the issue of the promotion of active travel across local authority boundaries within the EEH area to ensure join up of infrastructure such as cycle ways.

Finally, Councillor Leffman informed the Partnership that she had suggested that the EEH host a bus workshop to explore as a region how services could be improved and different ways of working with bus companies be explored.

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

## **17. Dates of next meetings**

The dates of future meetings as set out in the Agenda were noted.

The meeting closed at 4.00 pm