

Notes

OF A MEETING OF THE



The Future Oxfordshire Partnership Housing Advisory Group

**HELD ON TUESDAY 5 JULY 2022 AT 6.30 PM
VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM**

Present:

Members: Councillors Susan Brown (Chair), Robin Bennett, Nick Mawer, Judy Roberts, Geoff Saul and Linda Smith

Officers: Babatunde Ogundele (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Dave Scholes (Oxford City Council) and Paul Staines (Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Team)

30 Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes; declaration of interests; Chair's announcements

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillor Pete Sudbury, Oxfordshire County Council.

Councillor Liz Brighthouse substituted for Councillor Pete Sudbury.

There were no declaration of interests.

The Chair welcomed Members and Officers present at the meeting.

31 Notes of the previous meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 19 April 2022 were agreed to be an accurate record of matters discussed.

The Chair informed members to get in touch with Paul Staines directly if there were any questions about the Lessons Learnt Report circulated.

32 Update on Community Led Housing

The Advisory Group was provided with a briefing note by Paul Staines, Interim Head of Programme, on Community Led Housing (CLH). The briefing note pointed out that the promotion of CLH was one of the specific ambitions highlighted in the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and after that, the then Growth Board had commissioned a report on invigorating CLH that had several recommendations endorsed by the Board

One key recommendation was for partners to consider if they could enable Community Led Housing groups to access finance to bring their projects forward, particularly Early-Stage Finance. The report proposed that councils could as one example describe a business model in their budgets to access borrowing that is then lent on to CLH groups on commercial terms

Paul Staines confirmed he was in touch with Oxfordshire County Council in the first instance to enquire if there was any appetite for considering a county wide finance model for Community Led Housing on behalf of the partnership for the year 2023 and beyond. It was pointed out that Members representing Oxfordshire County Council have been briefed on this proposal and have indicated they would wish to understand the proposal in more detail, more detailed work was being completed with the hope that this could form a business case and budget bid later in the year.

Paul Staines confirmed he would be developing this business case in collaboration with officers from Oxford City.

Councillor Robin Bennett confirmed that South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils Officers have shown interest to help with developing this business case.

Councillor Nick Mawer pointed out that to his knowledge there was not a huge demand for Community Led Housing in Cherwell District Council other than Hook Norton. It was also pointed out that officers are concerned with the amount of time and resources from the various departments that this programme might lead to for this work. It was confirmed that a financial model that seeks to 'wash its own face' including any necessary admin costs would be the starting point for any business case.

Members queried if Housing projects would consider disabled accessibility and parking. It was confirmed that Oxfordshire County Council have made it clear that for projects to be considered they will need to align with the priorities of the council e.g., Environmental Sustainability

Members pointed out the need to look at the core issue of young people leaving care as this is an important issue due to the cost of housing making it difficult to achieve this.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Chair thanked Paul Staines for providing the Advisory Group with the briefing note.

33 Growth Deal Update

The Advisory Group was provided with a presentation by Paul Staines, Interim Head of Programme on an update on the Growth Deal. The presentation focused on the Homes from Infrastructure Programme and the Affordable Housing Programme.

Paul Staines highlighted the need to deliver targets within the 5 years of the hfl programme and only take up the two-year extension if required.

Paul Staines pointed out that due to national issues there is a slowdown in schemes as several tenders are coming back with highly inflated cost from builders reflecting the inflationary increase in labour and materials.

Members expressed concerned with increase in costs and pointed out that this should be monitored and the highlighted the need for cabinet members to be kept informed by Officers in the respective councils.

Councillors expressed the need for a framework agreement for councils to save money suggesting West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxford City to investigate any joint commissioning work that can be done to bring costs down.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Chair thanked Paul Staines for his presentation.

34 Dates of future meetings

- 06/09/2022
- 01/11/2022
- 10/01/2023
- 28/02/2023
- 18/04/2023
- 04/07/2023

With respect to future agenda items, it was agreed to add an item that investigates support that can be provided to the District Councils in Oxfordshire in setting up a Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm