

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE



The Future Oxfordshire Partnership

HELD ON TUESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 2.00 PM

COUNCIL CHAMBER, CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL, BODICOTE HOUSE, BODICOTE, BANBURY, OX15 4AA

Present:

Councillor Barry Wood (Chair), (Cherwell District Council), Claire Burnett, (Homes England), Professor Alistair Fitt, (Universities representative), Jonathan Fleming, (Environment Agency), Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, (Oxford City Council), Angus Horner, (OxLEP business representative - science vale), Councillor Liz Leffman, (Oxfordshire County Council), Daniel Leveson, (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & West Berkshire ICB), Councillor Dan Levy, (West Oxfordshire District Council), Jeremy Long, (OxLEP - Chair), Miranda Markham, (OxLEP business representative - Bicester), Councillor David Rouane (South Oxfordshire District Council) and Councillor Emily Smith, (Vale of White Horse District Council).

Officers: Lorna Baxter, (Oxfordshire County Council), Ian Boll (Cherwell District Council), Andrew Down, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Caroline Green (Oxford City Council), Susan Harbour, (South and Vale Councils), Giles Hughes (West Oxfordshire District Council), Kevin Jacob, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), John McLauchlan, (Oxfordshire County Council), Babatunde Ogundele (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Yvonne Rees (Cherwell District Council), Rosie Rowe, (Oxfordshire County Council), Paul Staines (Oxfordshire Growth Deal Team), Mark Stone, (South and Vale Councils) and Nigel Tipple (Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership).

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

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

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillor Susan Brown, Oxford City Council, (substituted by Councillor Alex Hollingsworth), Councillor Andy Graham, West Oxfordshire District Council, (substituted by Councillor Dan Levy), Emma Hill, Environment Agency representative, (substituted by Johnathan Fleming), Iain Littlejohn, Chair Oxfordshire Skills Board, and Catherine Turner, Homes England, (substituted by Claire Burnett).

There were no declarations of interest.

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

16. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership held on 13 June 2022 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

17. Public participation

At the beginning of the item, the Chair commented that full [written responses](#) to public speakers as submitted would be provided in due course, but that the points raised would be taken into consideration as part of the Partnership's discussion of the substantive agenda items they related to. A summary of the submitted questions is presented below:

Ian Green, on behalf of the Oxford Civic Society, made an address setting out several recommendations relating to the ending of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 programme. He commented on the achievements made during the preparation of the Plan and suggested that the Partnership agree to the holding of public discussions on making the best use of this work.

The Oxford Civic Society recognised that in order to update the Local Plans of the district and city council, some form of agreement would need to be reached regarding both distribution and an Oxfordshire growth rate – this will be necessary as part of the legislative requirements of the Duty to Cooperate. As it is also important to continue to seek to optimise strategic infrastructure investment, Mr Green recommended that the Partnership publicly identify the strategic transport implications of each local authority establishing its own rate, pace, and distribution of housing growth. He also proposed that the Partnership agree that there should be a public debate on how the council's separate Local Plans could be coordinated, synchronised, and integrated into Oxfordshire's strategic plans.

Finally, because an Oxfordshire spatial plan would have been a useful tool to optimise strategic investment and achieve economic, social, and environmental goals, the Partnership was asked whether the ending of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 programme was a mistake which could send a negative message to HM Government and private sector investors.

Suzanne Mclvor, on behalf of Need Not Greed Oxfordshire (NNGO), referred to the preparation of Oxford City Council's Preferred Options document for its Local Plan 2040 which was due to go for public consultation at the start of October. As part of these activities, Oxford City had signalled its intention to commission work to establish its housing need using a methodology agreed with as many of its neighbouring authorities as possible. Mrs Mclvor expressed NNGO's view that Oxford City did not intend to adopt the standard method of calculating housing need but were instead attempting to find an alternative method which would result in higher levels of housing. In addition, Oxford City would also be looking to other districts to help with the housing needs that could not be met within its own boundaries.

The Partnership was also informed that independent planning consultants commissioned by the Cherwell Development Watch Alliance had, after a review of the Oxfordshire

Growth Needs Assessment, concluded that based on projections from the Office for National Statistics there was an argument that a lower housing need figure could apply in Oxford City. In light of these issues the Partnership was asked if it:

1. Agreed that the Duty to Cooperate was not a duty to cater for the growth ambitions of any particular local authority.
2. Agreed that, given the fact that the OGNA was heavily criticised by a wide range of parties:
 - a. It would not be appropriate to use the same consultants in taking forward preparation of an evidence base for any of the emerging Local Plans
 - b. The tendering process for any such consultants should consider the amount of work they carry out for developers.

Professor Richard Harding, on behalf of CPRE Oxfordshire, referred to the end of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 programme and the concerns of the CPRE given its support for spatial planning within Oxfordshire. In their view it was unfortunate that the councils pursuing what the CPRE regard as an aggressive growth agenda could not be persuaded that this would be in conflict with the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. The Partnership was asked:

1. How the public could be provided with a transparent and clear explanation as to where it had been possible through the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 programme for councils to reach agreement and where it had not, including reasons.
2. If, as had been indicated, the inability to reach agreement had related to housing need alone, was it not possible to move forward with a broad spatial strategy that could guide development
3. That there had been a number of strong emerging policies such as zero carbon that logically would best be applied at Oxfordshire level. Had these policies been agreed to, and if so, how could they now be taken forward. If they had not, how could they be agreed through a Local Plan based approach?
4. How could policies on renewables to taken forward?

Councillor Charlie Hicks, Oxfordshire County Council, had submitted a written question relating to the application of County Council policies – as set out in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) – to the criteria used for the review of the Homes from Infrastructure programme (Hfi). The Partnership was asked whether officers had been guided by the policies agreed at the start of the Housing and Growth Deal or whether references in past papers which suggested that the LTCP should be aligned to the work of the Partnership were correct. Councillor Hicks stated that if it was determined that Oxfordshire County Council policies did have weight for decisions relating to the Hfi, in his review the current review of that programme would have to be rerun.

Dr Alison Hill, on behalf of Cyclox, made an address in relation to the review of the Homes from Infrastructure programme (Hfi). In their view, higher priority had been given to road schemes which Cyclox consider would increase road traffic than to those projects which would promote and encourage active travel. Dr Hill expressed particular concerns regarding the suggested changes to the Woodstock Road scheme (which would have created the first safe cycling infrastructure along any of Oxford's roads and had been developed following extensive stakeholder engagement) and the cost of the proposed Oxpens Bridge scheme (which is in the view of Cyclox in the wrong location). Overall, it was felt that the process leading up to the consideration of the proposals had been

opaque, had not involved stakeholders and had failed to address the policies of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP).

Robin Tucker, on behalf of the Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel (CoHSAT), made an address in relation to the review of the Homes from Infrastructure programme (Hfi). CoHSAT requested that the Partnership take into consideration that, although not part of the Hfi programme, these schemes funded by the national Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF1) process were already contrary to the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and the climate policies of Oxfordshire County, Vale of White Horse District and South Oxfordshire District Councils.

CoHSAT were also of the view that the impact of cost increases to capital works had fallen most heavily on sustainable transport with the proposed deletion of the Milton Heights project and significant reductions to the Woodstock Road scheme. In addition, they have concerns regarding both cost and location of the Oxpens Bridge proposal.

Councillor Lawrence Fouweather, Oxford city Council, asked several questions regarding the review of the Homes from Infrastructure programme (Hfi). He expressed concerns regarding the decision-making process and commented that there was a danger of it being seen as decisions being made behind closed doors without oversight, scrutiny, or public engagement.

Councillor Fouweather also asked whether members of the Partnership had taken the opportunity to reevaluate the proposals in view of the concerns expressed about the Oxpens Bridge scheme and went on to enquire if they had considered the cost benefit of this project compared to that at Milton Heights. He also wanted to know whether the Partnership had been able to properly factor in the various ways of using funding to support active travel on the Woodstock Road (including the scheme already paid for through the Housing and Growth Deal) and whether consideration had been given to how the impact of the large development in the North of Oxford might be supported.

18. 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 meeting held on 20 September 2022 which had been circulated in advance.

Councillor Miles outlined that the Panel's recommendations related to the two substantive items on its agenda, the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 update, and the review of the Housing from Infrastructure programme (Hfi).

In considering the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 update, the Panel had noted the ending of the programme and expressed concerns that the councils might not go beyond their legal obligations under the Duty to Cooperate (thus resulting in the loss of the valuable work already undertaken). They, therefore, strongly supported recommendations two, three and four of the report concerning how a Local Plan approach might be taken forward and the creation of an Oxfordshire Planning Advisory Group.

With regard to the review of the Hfi, the Panel found the late receipt of the slides relating to this item to be unacceptable and expressed serious concern regarding the prioritisation criteria used within the review.

Update on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Programme

1. That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership agree the principle that the district, City and County Councils should continue to cooperate and collaborate on county wide future spatial planning matters related to the former Oxfordshire Plan 2050 work programme, with the support of a planning advisory group. In doing so, they should aspire to achieve policy coherence and coordination in respective local plans. These topics for collaboration should include, but are not limited to, the Green Belt, carbon reduction, nature recovery, housing density and proximity of housing to employment sites, and active travel infrastructure connecting housing to urban centres.

Review of the Housing from Infrastructure Programme

2. That the Partnership respond to the concerns of the Panel and requests for further information as set out above.
3. That in addition to the consideration of the housing units accelerated by a particular scheme within the period of the Housing and Growth deal, the Partnership give higher priority to consideration of Active Travel factors, as a theme to determine the revised Hfl programme. This is to ensure in the absence of existing infrastructure, there is the creation of new safe walking and cycling infrastructure linking developments to nearby settlements.
4. That where a scheme is proposed to be removed from the Hfl programme and linked development has already taken place (e.g., Milton Heights), the Partnership reconsider its prioritisation weighting to include it in the Hfl programme or else do all it can to encourage and facilitate the identification of replacement funding.

19. Housing and Growth Deal Reports

(a) Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Progress Report - Year 5, Quarter 1, 2022/23

The Partnership considered a report updating them on the progress of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal at the end of the first quarter of the fifth and final year (2022/23) – it also incorporated the position at the end of 2021/22.

Paul Staines, Interim Head of Programme, informed members that the data showing the delivery for the Homes from Infrastructure programme (Hfl) at the end of 2021/22 was below target for the first time during the Deal period (albeit when measured against the original five years).

RESOLVED: That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership notes the progress as at the end of the first quarter of the fifth year, June 2022 of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, incorporating the update as of the end of Quarter 1, 2022/2023.

(b) Update on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Programme

The Partnership considered a report which provided an update following the announcement of the cessation of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 programme and the transition to a process focused upon Local Plans.

Giles Hughes, Senior Responsible Officer for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, referred to the statement issued by the city and district council leaders about the cessation of the

programme. This had explained that unfortunately it had not been possible to reach a consensus position on an approach towards housing and as a consequence it had not been possible to continue with the development of the Oxfordshire Plan.

Nevertheless, as set out in the report, there were many areas where there was a broad agreement between the councils. It was, therefore, important that this work should be taken forward in a way that was both compatible with a Local Plan based process and which went beyond the Duty to Cooperate. Consequently, the report lists detailed principles about how this could be achieved. The councils also remain committed to the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision 2050 and taking forward the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy. A key recommendation is that the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Group should be renamed and refocused to facilitate this.

Councillor Smith commented that as the Chair of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Group she echoed Mr Hughes remarks. She also welcomed the Scrutiny Panel's support of the report's recommendations. While Councillor Smith had been disappointed that it had not been possible to agree on a process to determine housing need, she emphasised that a lot of good work had been achieved through the Plan process which they should be proud of including in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision.

If the Partnership agreed to the recommendation to continue with a reamed and refocused advisory group, Councillor Smith commented that the county would still be able to work together and undertake strategic planning discussions on cross-boundary issues. It was also felt that this would contribute to mitigating some of the concerns expressed by the public speakers at the meeting.

In discussion, Councillor Leffman spoke to the importance of integrating the work around the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy into the work of the revised advisory group because of the need for an Oxfordshire wide strategy.

Councillor Hollingsworth, whilst commenting that it was a matter of regret that the Oxfordshire Plan 2020 would not continue, stated that a lot of valuable collaboration had taken place. He supported the recommendations as an opportunity to take forward the best of the Plan work. Other parts of the country had worked together on spatial planning issues and there was value in shared policy and evidence base collection.

The Chair echoed the comments made, emphasizing that there was value to be gained by a collaborative approach on Oxfordshire wide matters. Whilst the Duty to Cooperate did not mean a duty to agree, close working was vitally important (for instance through mechanisms such as Statements of Common understanding).

Councillor Rouane commented that the money spent in the development of the Plan had delivered many pieces of good work that would continue to be valuable. He supported the refocussing of the advisory group and highlighted the opportunities for joint working on issues such as solar farms.

RESOLVED: That Future Oxfordshire Partnership:

1. Notes that Local Plans for the City and Districts will provide the framework for the long-term planning of development in Oxfordshire.

2. Supports the principles set out in paragraph 16 of the report outlining how the partners will take forward the Local Plan based approach.
3. Notes that the end of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 work programme requires a review of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Group's name and terms of reference.
4. Request that Officers develop draft terms of reference for a refreshed Planning Advisory Group of all six principal authorities for consideration at a future meeting.

(c) Review of Homes from Infrastructure Programme Part 2

The Partnership considered proposals which represented the outcome of a joint approach across all local authority officers to seek to rebalance the Homes from Infrastructure programme (Hfi). John McLauchlan, Head of the Infrastructure Planning Office, Oxfordshire County Council, commented that:

- The concerns expressed by the Scrutiny Panel regarding report process were acknowledged. Because of the joint and collective approach to the development of the proposals there had been a degree of additional complexity to the sign off process which had unfortunately delayed circulation of the proposals to the Panel. This was regretted and lessons would be learnt.
- A review of the Programme was required because it had become imbalanced resulting in a need for a net reduction of £6.495m.
- While the criteria used to review the individual schemes within the programme had sought to recognise nuances around issues such as active travel and connectivity, a key part of the assessment criteria was the acceleration of housing as stipulated within the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. Other considerations included the protection of external funding already allocated within the Oxfordshire system.
- Proposals to remove schemes from the programme or to reduce the Hfi funding allocated to them did not mean that they were no longer regarded as vital infrastructure projects within the county. It remained a collective priority to seek to find alternative funding for those schemes.
- Unfortunately, as a result of the significant inflationary pressures facing the construction industry, the original programme was no longer deliverable and it was felt that that current proposals was the most balanced programme that could be achieved.

Councillor Leffman, commenting on the proposals as both Leader of Oxfordshire County Council (the responsible authority for the Hfi programme) and as the Chair of the Infrastructure Advisory Group, stressed to the Partnership that the proposals before them represented the best available outcome of a programme review based on a total funding envelope of £150m. Nevertheless, it was important to highlight that if HM Government did not make the final expected instalment of £30m (which had been expected in September) it would be necessary to revisit the review based on a budget of £120m. It also had to be recognised that there were significant inflationary cost pressures which were likely to persist in the medium term.

Councillor Leffman appreciated and understood the concerns raised by the public speakers and the Scrutiny Panel in relation to active travel, but while its promotion remained a key objective, the Hfi had not been designed with it as a key criterion. Officers from across the county would still, however, continue to look for potential alternative funding mechanisms – including the possible application of S106 funding.

The Chair echoed Councillor Leffman's comments regarding the objectives of the Hfl programme. It had been designed and agreed with the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal as a housing investment fund to support the acceleration of housing delivery and was not a transport fund. There was, nevertheless, a need to be ready to be able to bid at short notice for any extra sources of funding that might become available.

Councillor Levy agreed that the situation was unfortunate and acknowledged that given the circumstances the proposals represented the best available outcome. He stated that in his opinion, active travel and housing were inextricably linked and reminded the meeting that all of the local authorities represented were committed to the promotion of sustainable, healthy alternatives to the car – road schemes, therefore, did not need to be at the heat of housing delivery.

Moreover, while Councillor Levy acknowledged that the proposals had been considered by the appropriate body in the shape of Infrastructure Advisory Group, he, nevertheless, stated that in his view it was not entirely clear how the choices and decisions had been arrived at because the details of the assessment working had not been made available.

Councillor Smith stated her discomfort with the decision before the Partnership. While she understood and appreciated the acute time pressures, if the matter was before her own council, she would have expected additional information to have been made available regarding the proposals – thereby, allowing the public to understand the decision being made. Councillor Smith also made reference to the Scrutiny Panel's query regarding the identity of the final decision makers (the Partnership or Oxfordshire County Council). In addition, she expressed the view that if there were to be deals in the future with HM Government to fund infrastructure over several years, there should be an insistence that the budget be index-linked.

Councillor Smith acknowledged that the Hfl programme was intended to provide infrastructure to accelerate and unlock the delivery of the 100,000 new homes agreed too. Therefore, in looking at the proposals the main consideration was housing and the importance of protecting funding that would bring forward the largest numbers of homes (for example, Lodge Hill junction and Witney). While recognising this fact, she was, however, unclear about the reasoning behind some of the changes to other schemes – in particular, the reduction in the allocation for the proposed Milton Heights bridge which would not only have unlocked 70 additional homes, but also enabled residents from Milton Heights to walk and cycle to Milton Park in line the ambitions contained with the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. Notwithstanding these specific concerns, Councillor Smith understood the need for schemes to be deliverable within a short time scale and also recognised the objective of not losing funding. Therefore, on balance, she was prepared to support the proposals, but reiterated that removal of funding through the Hfl programme did not mean the scheme was not considered to be important and officers would work with others to achieve this.

The Chair, in summing up, commented that his understanding was that the proposals had to be endorsed by the Partnership, but that their implementation rested with Oxfordshire County Council as the accountable body. He did, however, recognise that there was merit around considering how similar type of issues might be considered in the future to improve processes. With regard to the consideration of the index linking of the Housing and Growth Deal budgets, this was a valid point, but when it had been originally negotiated, inflation had been at historically low levels.

RESOLVED: That the changes to the Home from Infrastructure Programme as set out in the circulated presentation be endorsed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

(d) Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Financial Report Quarter 1, Year 5

The Partnership considered a report that set out the financial position of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. The report covered the various funding streams within the Deal at the end of Quarter 1 2022/23 – it also incorporated the position at the end of 2021/22.

Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance, Oxfordshire County Council, in presenting referred to the risk to the Homes from Infrastructure programme (Hfl) resulting from the delay in the receipt of £30m from HM Government. The actual spend to date for the Hfl programme stood at £110m at the end of March 2022, with a further £5.5m spend in the first quarter of 2022/23. Considering the receipt to date of £120m of the expected Hfl funding and that confirmation of the final £30m was still awaited, it was necessary to come to a view on when a pause to any further contractual commitments would be required.

The Partnership was informed that the capacity fund element of Deal funding had been received in full. While there was not a requirement to repay any of that funding, part of capacity fund had been to support the delivery of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. An update on the use of the remaining funding related to the Plan would be provided at the next meeting.

In addition, the Partnership was reminded that the financial data set out in Appendix 1 to the report represented the financial position prior to the changes to the Hfl programme agreed under the previous item.

RESOLVED: That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership note the financial position as of end June 2022 incorporating the position as at the end of 2021/2022.

20. Update following the Joint Workshop between the Health & Wellbeing Board and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership

Members considered a report updating them on actions to address the common areas of concern identified at joint workshop between the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board. Rosie Rowe, Healthy Place Shaping Lead, Oxfordshire County Council, in presenting commented that the areas of concern identified included: obesity, access to green space, active travel, air quality, retrofit of housing, promotion of behavioural change in support of climate change, engagement with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Integrated Care System, (BOB ICS), Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership and social prescribing.

The report had originally been written for the Partnership's meeting in July and, therefore, following its cancellation there were now several additional updates to bring to the attention of members.

In relation to the engagement of the new ICS with climate action, a lot of activity was underway as part of the Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PaZCO) workstream to produce actions that would set out detailed and specific deliverables to achieve Net Zero targets.

A paper on social prescribing was scheduled to go to the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board in due course. This would set out a strategy for Oxfordshire designed to

help people with health needs that could be addressed through activities within their own community. It would also demonstrate the link between health and place.

The Partnership was also informed that as the local ICS started to mature, the intention was for there to be more place-based working (with the potential for further joint workshops as part of the ICS Place Partnership).

Professor Fitt stated that he had been unsure what the long term future of Health and Wellbeing Boards were in the context of the wider policy developments but commented that they had been useful forums for the sharing of knowledge amongst partners. Ms Rowe responded that her understanding was that Health and Wellbeing Boards would continue and that the Integrated Care Partnership Strategy would be based upon their plans. Dan Leveson, Oxfordshire Director of Place, commented that the work around the development of places had begun within the ICS and that he intended to avoid unnecessary duplication and work within existing strategies wherever possible.

Councillor Rouane thanked Ms Rowe for the report, stating that he had found the joint workshop very useful in stimulating creative thinking and that as a result he had followed up on several issues concerning South Oxfordshire.

The Chair welcomed the report and commented that it was very important that the necessary routes existed for the NHS and local authorities to work together for the benefit of resident's health and wellbeing – the need to plan for access to green space and encourage its use by the public being one example. Councillor Leffman also referred to the importance of green space and the need to focus upon a prevention agenda by both local authorities and the NHS. Further joint meetings could be useful.

In relation to the retrofitting of housing, the Chair referred to the workforce shortage of people with appropriate retrofitting skills and knowledge to really address the scale of the issue. Ms Rowe commented that this could in part fit into the work that the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership was developing. However, some measures and support to assist people with their energy costs were quite straightforward, for instance the advice service funded by Oxfordshire local authorities.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and Oxfordshire's Health & Wellbeing Board note the action being taken to address common areas of concern.
2. That the Boards note that they will continue to discuss common issues of concern either through specific joint workshops or through potential future Integrated Care System structures established to support place working in Oxfordshire.

21. Advisory Group Notes

(a) Infrastructure Advisory Group update

Councillor Leffman referred to the notes of the Infrastructure Advisory Group held on 25 May 2022.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

(b) Housing Advisory Group update

The Partnership considered the notes of the Housing Advisory Group held on 19 April 2022 and 5 July 2022.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

(c) Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Group update

Councillor Smith referred to the notes of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Group meeting held on 16 June 2022. These outlined both the time pressures relating to the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and the concerns expressed by several members that an early draft of the Plan did not reflect the ambitions of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision.

Although the Advisory Group had also held a meeting in July, after the ending of the Oxfordshire Plan 20250 programme the notes from this had yet been approved. Officers would, therefore, be consulted regarding a mechanism for agreeing these following the earlier decision to refocus and rename the Advisory Group.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

(d) Environment Advisory Group update

Councillor Rouane, in addition to referring to the notes of the Environment Advisory Group meeting held on 21 June 2022, also provided a verbal report of the meeting held on 20 September 2022. He mentioned the five workshops relating to the PaZCO (Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire) workstream – as set out within the notes – and commented that action plans were now in place for all of the tasks arising from them.

Members of the Partnership were also encouraged to consider attending or sending a representative to the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership Forum scheduled for 12 October 2022. It was agreed to circulate appropriate details.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

22. Future Oxfordshire Partnership Forward Plan

Kevin Jacob, Senior Democratic Services Officer, presented the Partnership's Forward Plan.

The Chair commented that it was important that the Programme both reflected the commitments that the members of the Partnership had made in respects of working together and took account of the nine outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision.

In discussion, it was proposed that it could be helpful to adapt the existing Oxford to Cambridge Arc update into a broader item that would reflect/cover developments relating to all the different organisations that had Partnership representation (for example, England's Economic Heartland and the Local Nature Partnership).

Councillor Smith suggested the addition of an item relating to the proposals for a new reservoir south of Abingdon – if the project went ahead, it would have implications far wider than that of the Vale of White Horse. Given the expectation that the public consultation on the project would start in November, officers were asked to reflect on how best the Partnership could consider the issue.

Jeremy Long, Chair of OxLEP suggested the addition of an item providing an update on the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership.

RESOLVED: That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Forward Programme and suggested additions be noted.

23. Confirmation of the re appointment of a representative from the Oxfordshire Strategic Transport Forum to the Infrastructure Advisory Group

The Partnership considered the recommendation of the Infrastructure Advisory Group that a representative of the Oxfordshire Strategic Transport Forum be re-appointed as non-voting co-opted member of the Group for the 2022/2023 year.

RESOLVED: That a representative of the Oxfordshire Strategic Transport Forum be re-appointed as a non-voting co-opted member of the Infrastructure Advisory Group for the 2022/2023 year.

24. Updates on matters relevant to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership

Nigel Tipple, Chief Executive of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, provided an update on the joint work (between the local authorities, OxLEP, the universities and other stakeholders) that was about to commence on refreshing the economic baseline data relating to the Local Industrial Strategy and the Economic Recovery Plan. The outcomes of this exercise would be brought back to the Partnership for engagement in due course.

Work was also in progress concerning the new Employer Representative Bodies who are due to take on the responsibility for Local Skills Improvement Plans.

25. Dates of next meetings

The Partnership noted the date of future meetings as set out in the Agenda.

The meeting closed at 3.31 pm