

Notes

OF A MEETING OF THE



The Future Oxfordshire Partnership Planning Advisory Group

HELD ON FRIDAY 21 JULY 2023 AT 10.00 AM
HR TRAINING ROOM, WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL, WOOD
GREEN, WITNEY, OX28 1NB

Present:

Members: Councillor Andy Graham (Chair), Councillor Duncan Enright, Councillor Neil Fawcett, Councillor Dan Levy, Peter Redman, Councillor Dan Sames, Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson and Councillor Louise Upton

Officers: David Butler, (Oxford City Council), Chris Cherry, (Cherwell District Council), Becky Chesshyre, (Oxfordshire Partnerships), Susan Harbour, (South and Vale Councils), Chris Hargrave, (West Oxfordshire District Council), Kevin Jacob, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Giles Hughes, (West Oxfordshire District Council), Lucy Murfett, (South and Vale Councils), Nick Perrins (Oxfordshire County Council), Rachel Wileman, (Oxfordshire County Council), and Beth Wilks, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership).

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

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Carl Rylett, (West Oxfordshire District Council) who was substituted by Councillor Dan Levy. There were no declarations of interest.

The Chair welcomed members and supporting officers to the first meeting of the advisory group and introductions were made. He commented that he was committed to the building of a positive collaborative relationship focussing on areas where there were areas of common ground amongst the councils and stakeholders.

Councillors Upton and Enright indicated that would need to leave to leave the meeting early to attend other important commitments.

2 Planning Advisory Group Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the advisory group as approved by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership were noted.

With regard to the advisory group's forward work programme, it was felt there was some ambiguity around how this would be set. It was noted and agreed that although potential topics might be suggested by officers, the work programme in future would be set and agreed by the members of the advisory group.

3 The Role of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership & the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision

Beth Wilks, Future Oxfordshire Partnership Manager, gave an introductory presentation which set out the background of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, (FOP), an outline of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for Long Term Sustainable Development and how FOP supported its delivery, suggested roles for the Planning Advisory Group and a summary of work streams in progress within the other advisory groups.

In response to a question regarding the role of the advisory group in monitoring the delivery of the strategic vision outcomes, members were informed that in light of the significant amount of work to be delivered, activity programme trackers had been developed for each advisory group. These could be used to spotlight discussions, key changes and risks to programme delivery.

Officers acknowledged that there was a degree of cross-over between the group in terms of ownership of areas of work and strategic vision outcomes. This was felt to be inevitable to an extent as it was not possible for all the areas to be discretely managed although each advisory group did have areas of key focus. The risk of overlap and duplication could be mitigated by the sharing of information amongst officers and the members of the group themselves. In addition, the notes of an advisory group were copied to agenda of the other groups to support information sharing. Both members and officers were encouraged to contact their colleagues within the other groups.

It was also possible to arrange joint meetings of advisory groups were there would be value in doing so.

4 Identifying Areas for Collaborative Working

Beth Wilks, Future Oxfordshire Partnership Manager, gave a presentation on the process for identifying opportunities for joint working aligned to the outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. It was explained that the process had identified some 50 potential opportunities so far, but these would be filtered down with the aim of a refined list being considered by the FOP at an offline workshop on 26 September. Potential ideas for opportunities for joint working aligned to Planning Advisory Group were identified, but it was stressed they were made as an aide to prompt discussions only and were not recommended or agreed.

The Chair and members queried how they as a newly established advisory group could contribute to the process in terms of suggestion for additional ideas and in influencing the workshop selection process. It was explained that the members of all working groups would be invited to attend the workshop and there was still an opportunity for the Planning Advisory Group to add its input, potentially by using the next meeting on 15 September for a planning related discussion on ideas that could feed into the workshop.

A wide ranging discussion took place on potential areas for joint working within the planning space including the potential ideas summarised within the presentation. Matters discussed at a high level included the following, but no decisions were made:

- Energy planning systems, (including local energy plans, infrastructure and renewables)
- Land use principles
- NHS planning for future needs to support identification of the location of primary and secondary care facilities to support Local Plan processes.
- Housing need and affordability

The point was made by several members that it remained important for the advisory group not to stray into areas which in their view were matters for determination by the city and district Local Plans as the Future Oxfordshire Partnership did not have a remit to make decisions in this area. Resourcing and funding to support the group's work also needed to be considered carefully.

The Chair suggested that the approach would not be to duplicate or encroach on Local Plan matters, but there was an opportunity for the group to discuss and share valuable learning and best practice which in part might help inform and support individual council decision making mechanisms. With regard to resources, Beth Wilks responded that there was the potential to seek funding to support the advisory group's work from the Housing and Growth Deal Capacity Fund.

The update was noted.

Councillors Upton and Enright left at the conclusion of this item.

5 Update on Local Plan Progress

The Chair commented that this item was a useful opportunity for the members of the group to update one another on the progress of their Local Plan to support existing channels of communications. Members present with the support of officers provided a summary of the status of their Local Plans.

Themes emerging from the updates and discussion included:

- Each council's Local Plan development were at different points in the statutory process although some were closer than others.
- Although there were areas of common ground, individual councils would come to different policy positions on issues within their local plans and were at different stages of the Local Plan process which needed to be recognised in the context of opportunities for joint working in the planning space.
- Status and availability of Oxfordshire County Council policies such as the Minerals and Waste Plan and Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and evidential documents such as traffic modelling data such as the Oxfordshire Mobility Model and the relationship of these policies to Local Plan production.

It was suggested by Rachel Wileman that transport including the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan could be a future work programme item.

The updates were noted.

6 Chair's update from the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Meeting

Beth Wilks referred to the meeting of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership held on 13 June 2023 and the reference to a meeting with the three electricity Distribution Network Operators covering Oxfordshire regarding the challenges in planning for future energy needs. In addition, reference was made to work undertaken by officers supporting the Environment Advisory Group in developing suggested pointers for best practice with regard to considering solar farm applications.

7 Future Oxfordshire Partnership Advisory Group Meeting Notes - for information

The notes of meetings of the meetings of the Environment, Infrastructure and Housing Advisory Group were noted.

8 Dates of future meetings

The dates of future meetings of the advisory group were noted.

The Chair referred to future meeting arrangements and commented that his preference was for face to face meetings as on balance he felt they worked better, but that he understood that this would not always be possible for everyone all the time and therefore it was intended to proceed on the basis of hybrid capability, potentially moving the physical venue around the county.

A number of members commented on the advantages of on-line meetings with regards to reduced travel, environmental impact and that they could make attendance for members easier given diary pressure.

The Chair commented that he understood and noted these points and that he was seeking to arrive at a balance. Members were encouraged to feedback on how they felt the meeting had gone from a logistical basis.

The meeting closed at 12.00 pm