

Notes

OF A MEETING OF THE



The Future Oxfordshire Partnership Infrastructure Advisory Group

**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY 2024 AT 10.00 AM
VIRTUAL VIA MSTEAMS**

Present:

Councillors: Liz Leffman (Chair), Sue Caul, Councillor Donna Ford, Councillor Judy Roberts and Louise Upton

Officers: David Calonge, John Disley, Kevin Jacob, Valerie Lambrechts, Patrick Lingwood and Mark Saunders.

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

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillor Pieter-Paul Barker, South Oxfordshire District Council and Councillor Charlie Maynard, West Oxfordshire District Council.

There were no declarations of interest.

102 Notes of the previous meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 4 September 2023 were agreed to be an accurate record of matters discussed.

103 Forward work programme

John Disley spoke to the list of potential future items for scheduling and suggested that the Bus Service Improvement Plan, (BSIP) refresh be added to the 1 July work programme in light of work being undertaken within the Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership and following new HM Government guidance on BSIPs.

Councillor Leffman commented that an interesting challenge to address was how the good work on bus services that was taking place within the City of Oxford, (such as new electric vehicles) could be expanded to the rest of the county.

The advisory group noted the forward work programme as set out in the agenda subject to the addition of an item on the BSIP being added to the July meeting.

104 Homes from Infrastructure Programme Update

The advisory group received a presentation from Valerie Lambrechts, Infrastructure Portfolio Manager, Transport & Infrastructure, Oxfordshire County Council which provided an update on the Homes from Infrastructure Programme elements of the Housing and Growth Deal covering:

- Delivery progress over the previous six months
- Intended progress on unchanged schemes
- Identified pressures and recommendations with the Housing and Growth Deal allocations and decisions required

Councillor Leffman commented that the confirmation of additional funding for the A34 Lodge Hill scheme was particularly welcome.

The updated was noted.

105 Active Travel Programme Update

The advisory group received detailed presentations from David Calonge Active Travel Officer and Patrick Lingwood, Oxfordshire County Council, on:

- The updating of the Oxfordshire Cycling and Design Standards and Oxfordshire Walking Design Standards in light of revised HM Government guidance
- The Oxfordshire Strategic Travel Active Travel Network
- The central Oxfordshire Greenways project

In discussion, members of the advisory group raised the following queries and points:

- Cycling and walking design standards were very important but had to be implemented and enforced to be effective. The advisory group was informed that district councils could be included, perhaps by way of a technical note. Once adopted by the County Council the standards would involve legal powers and although the standards set out a palette of possible options, they would be easier to enforce. This would be in parallel to the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, (LTC) as standards that must be met rather than guidance.
- A member commented that whilst it was hoped that the new standards would be applied wherever possible, there were occasions such as routes over historical bridges where it would be impossible to apply current standards. Officers clarified that in this type of circumstance it would be necessary to depart from standard process, but the aim would be to adopt the highest level of standard possible. The aim was to look at a route end to end and act to improve the standard of the route overall using best practice approaches used in Holland.
- Members commented on the importance of officers engaging with local councillors as part of the process of planning, assessing and consulting on cycle and walking routes as local councillors knew their wards well and had relevant information and knowledge. The point was also made that liaison with district licensing teams should also be engaged.

- Members of the advisory group welcomed the Greenways Project within Oxford as a model of a segregated cycling and walking network that could potentially be replicated across the county. The project had been jointly funded by the County Council, Oxford City Council and the NHS and similar scheme had been delivered in Cambridge.

The advisory group noted the presentations.

106 Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan (NZRMAP) Progress Overview

Members noted the progress of delivery of the two actions within the Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan attributed to the Infrastructure Advisory Group: delivery of an ongoing local area energy planning function and collaboration with town and parish councils to

accelerate the roll out of publicly available electric vehicle charge points.

107 Local Area Energy Planning Update

The advisory group received a presentation update on Local Area Energy Planning, (LAEP) within the county from Mark Saunders, Energy Systems and Investment Manager, Oxfordshire County Council.

It was highlighted to the advisory group that there was a commitment by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership to develop a strategic Local Area Energy Planning approach covering the county, taking a systems wide view of grid capacity, planned growth and Net Zero. Development work had started in 2023 to put in place an appropriate governance structure that would feedback through the advisory group and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

The update also included how the county council had been increasing LAEP resource capacity within its climate team, expected timelines and the scope of tendering exercise for the appointment of specialist consultants to take the LAEP Plan forward and consultation with stakeholders including district councils.

In discussion, members of the advisory group commented on the importance of local area planning to the future of energy supply within the county and achievement of Net Zero. Engagement with the districts would be an important part of this. It was also flagged that it would be necessary to recognise that there could be some priorities that might conflict in terms of energy planning, for instance around balancing economic growth and low carbon. Officers responded that these issues would be considered.

Members also stressed the importance of local area energy planning linking to the planning system at district level given that significant proposals for new energy generation schemes such as solar farms had already been submitted in the county in the absence of a strategic approach. Officers responded that local area energy planning would complement the planning process by providing a mechanism and resource for local planners to check applications against in the pathway to net zero and highlight the best areas for schemes. For this reason, it was important for district planners to be part of the process of the LAEP's development. At present, Local Plans through the Distribution Future Energy Scenarios consultation process only set out to Distribution Network Operators, (DNOs) what development was planned. Local authorities that did have a LAEP would be at an advantage.

It was stressed to the meeting that LAEP went beyond simply increasing grid capacity as this alone would not be enough and innovative, flexible community-based solutions were also needed.

The Chair and officers spoke to the capacity issues DNOs had in addressing connection issues and spoke to the potential through LAEP to set up local schemes and micro grids, for instance through the approach of the Local Energy Oxfordshire – Neighbour Project.

The Chair commented that future updates should be provided, and the advisory group noted the report.

108 Horizon Scanning

John Disley referred to the recent announcement by HM Government of revised Bus Service Improvement Plan, (BSIP) requirements.

109 Chairs Update From FOP

The Chair reported back on the meeting of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership held on 28 November 2023. Items considered had included:

- Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan – update
- Oxfordshire Visitor Economy Vision and Destination Management
- Plan

It was felt that there was a link between the Destination Management Plan and the remit of the Infrastructure Advisory Group given the need to consider the affect of visitors on the road network and other modes of transport.

110 Future Oxfordshire Partnership Advisory Group meeting notes

The notes of the Environment Advisory Group from 9 November were received.

111 Dates of future meetings

The dates of future meetings were noted.

The meeting closed at 11.50 am