

## **Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) Update to Vale of White Horse District Council 23 October 2024**

In June 2024, Cabinet considered a paper regarding the future remit of FOP. A recommendation from that paper was to seek engagement from all councillors on that remit in order to assist the Leader in representing the Council's views in any proposed changes to FOP.

A FOP "summit" was held on 29 July 2024 where local authority leaders met to discuss informally the future of FOP.

Since then the discussion on devolution has overtaken FOP structure and further work is being undertaken to look at what form of joint statutory committee would be appropriate in the light of any devolution deal. Until any changes are proposed and as part of improving openness and transparency with all members around FOP activity, the Leader has requested that regular reports will be brought to Council on FOP activities.

The current FOP structure comprises of:

- A main partnership board, a joint committee of Oxfordshire's six councils (voting membership) alongside co-opted associate members from OxLEP, Environment Agency, University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board.
- Four advisory groups made up of a wider group of the relevant portfolio holders, each chaired by a Leader, covering: infrastructure, housing, the environment and planning.
- A FOP Scrutiny panel (the scrutiny panel has a non-statutory scrutiny function, as that remains vested in each council's individual scrutiny function, the panel is made up of three members from each authority), which is empowered to review and scrutinise plans, proposals and decisions to be taken and actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's, functions and the delivery of the agreed Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.
- An Executive Officers' Group (EOG) which is the officer advisory group bringing together Environment and Place Directors and other key stakeholder partners and acts as the executive for the board.
- An officer support team providing secretariat, communications support and some programme management capacity to FOP as well as the Local Nature Partnership, the Oxford Inclusive Economy Partnership and the Enhanced Bus Partnership.

## Future Oxfordshire Partnership Board

The main partnership board, is a joint statutory committee of Oxfordshire's six councils (voting membership) alongside co-opted associate members from Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Environment Agency, University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board.

Since the last Council meeting, the FOP Board has met formally on two occasions.

At the meeting on **30 July 2024**, the following items were considered:

- Election of Chair and Vice-Chair – Council Liz Leffman (OCC) was confirmed as chair and Councillor David Rouane (SODC) as Vice-Chair.
- A verbal update on the “summit” of Leaders held on 29 July 2024
- Agreement of appointments to chairs of advisory groups to FOP, namely Housing Advisory Group (Councillor Susan Brown – Oxford City), Environment Advisory Group (Councillor David Rouane - SODC), Infrastructure Advisory Group (Councillor Liz Leffman – OCC) and Planning Advisory Group (Councillor Andy Graham – WODC)
- Councillor David Rouane (SODC) was appointed as the FOP's district representative on England's Economic Heartland
- Councillor David Rouane (SODC) was confirmed to continue as the FOP representative on Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership by virtue of his position as Chair of the Environmental Advisory Group.
- Quarter 4 Year 2023/24 progress report for Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal –it was confirmed at construction for Lodge Hill, Abingdon and Steventon lights was due to start in October 2024. The financial position of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal as at Quarter 4 2023/2024 was noted.
- Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Update Report – report set out an update on progress against OIEP priorities. Report was noted.
- Update on the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy– report set out an update on the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and plans for public consultation. Report was noted.
- Updates from the Advisory Groups two of the advisory groups had met. The Infrastructure Advisory Group on 12 March 2024 – to consider an Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy, Homes from Infrastructure update, a Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan Progress overview, EV Infrastructure workstream from the Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan and budget for Oxfordshire Local Area Energy Plans. It met again on 6 June 2024 – to consider the Local Area Energy Planning Business Case. The Planning Advisory Group had met on 15 March 2024 – to consider viability assessments and receive a presentation Salt Cross Garden Village. The updates from the advisory groups were noted.

At the meeting on **3 October 2024**, the following items were considered:

- Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal – update at the end of Quarter 1 2024/25. Confirmation of Wantage Link Road completion for November 2024,

Lodge Hill, Abingdon and Steventon Lights are both due on-site October/November 2024. Update was noted.

- Social Brokerage Platform Business Case - a business case for use of Housing and Growth Deal Capacity Funding to address the challenge of increasing the amount of social value delivered through procurement activity across the county using Social Value Brokerage. £90,000 was agreed to be allocated to the business case.
- Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership Update – annual report 2023/24 which presents an overview of the OLNP and highlights progress from August 2023 to August 2024. Update was noted.
- Advisory Group updates, the only advisory group that had met in the period was the Planning Advisory Group on 13 September 2024 where it considered a briefing paper on the development of health infrastructure in Oxfordshire. Update was noted.

A copy of the FOP Forward Plan presented to the October meeting is attached.

The next FOP Board meeting is 26 November 2024 when the Board requested a paper on a revised FOP.

### **Scrutiny Panel**

The FOP Scrutiny Panel was due to meet on 25 September 2024. Unfortunately, due to the meeting not being quorate the meeting did not take place.

Suzanne Malcolm

Deputy Chief Executive - Place