

Regional Planning Update July 2022

Future Oxfordshire Partnership	Notes
Notes from FOP's meeting of 13 June 2022	
Service matters and Public Q&As <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Leader of Cherwell Council Cllr Barry Wood was elected as Chair for 2022/23, with Oxford Council Leader Susan Brown as Deputy. - The DLUHC has agreed that the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 could be amended and submitted before the end of 2023. - The Partnership are considering running a 3rd Regulation 18 consultation! 	
Oxford to Cambridge Arc Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A report was presented for approval to set out the process for appointing Partnership members to any potential partnerships working in the area known as the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. - This was proposed with a potential collaboration board forming across the area. - The report confirmed that the Government are now viewing the Arc as a "pan-regional partnership" similar to the Western Gateway and Thame Estuary. No top-down governance will be imposed. - Government funding could still be available via locally led collaborations, as long as match funding from each Growth Board are happened. Some dedicated resources would be made available in these cases. - The collaboration is currently planned to be solely the current Chair of the FOP Partnership. 	
Response to Scrutiny Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concern over the withdrawal of Growth Deal funding from two Housing from Infrastructure Hfl) active travel schemes was not indicative of a change of leadership in active travel but was triggered by the ability of these schemes to accelerate the delivery of housing within the short period the Deal runs. - Government have confirmed there will be no uplift in the Homes from Infrastructure Programme given the significant extra inflationary costs projects are experiencing. - The decision by Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership to include Oxfordshire-wide examples of inequalities within the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Charter was welcomed. 	
Oxfordshire Economic Recovery Plan (ERP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over £4 million has been secured for this work. - The ERP Task Group supported programme submissions for Levelling Up Fund Round 2 (LUF2) applications. This resulted in a coordinated package of project submissions including infrastructure, public realm and business and skills support. - Existing key projects have been developed, funded and are ready for delivery but some remain unfunded. - Unemployment for Oxfordshire was 2.4% as at March 2022 with job vacancies, particularly among the visitor and logistic economies at record highs. 	See here for list of ERP projects
Housing and Growth Deal Reports	

Homes from Infrastructure (Hfi) Programme

- Oxfordshire received £150 million to advance at least 6,549 homes.
- The first 5 year package committed £30 million for road, rail, cycle routes, footpaths and some social infrastructure such as schools. Covid has led to this programme being extended by 2 years.
- Inflation is having a serious effect on project finances with energy, the legacy of the pandemic, increased trade and shipping costs related to Brexit, labour resource shortages and the removal of red diesel from construction equipment.
- Examples of schemes now at need of extra funding were given and the likely impact on housing delivery noted – almost 1,000 homes in Cherwell alone.
- Funding was withdrawn from two schemes, Woodstock and Banbury Road Corridors, it was agreed to reallocate the funds across other schemes to compensate for inflation.
- A Change Report will be delivered to FOP to assess pressures on existing and new schemes.

[See here for report details.](#)

Hfi – Lessons Learnt

- While successes have been made, a review of projects that had not done so well showed:
 - o The project had to start before the governance structures were in place
 - o There was little scope to engage with partners such as developers
 - o No resources were made available for the District and County Councils to scale up their teams ahead of the start of the programme
 - o The early choice of projects had to be rushed; some were picked as quick wins, rather than giving the most value, as the Growth Deal is time limited
 - o There would have been value in linking projects across initiatives, such as Hfi linking to the Affordable Housing Programme.
 - o A central Team and start up period of 6 months would work better for any future similar initiative.

Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Group

- A presentation was given showing the different spatial and housing requirement options arising from the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation. This included key issues and concerns raised within the consultation (this does not seem to be available).
- Members requested that the commentary was linked to the demographics of the consultees to help decision makers know how to put the commentary into context.
- A joint workshop had been held between members of the OxPlan2050 Advisory Group and LPA Leaders. This would be followed up with officer and councillor meetings including further joint workshops to talk through options.
- Positive discussions had been held with DLUHC civil servants on extending the OxPlan 2050 timeline. A revised timeline would be produced.
- Members expressed the view they wished to ensure they could have liaison meetings with planning officers within their own LPAs to discuss the OxPlan matters.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A revised timetable for the OxPlan 2050 will be produced alongside a framework document that shows the Plan’s intended scope. 	
<p>Environment Advisory Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was intended to advertise for the voluntary Chair of the new Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership, and a businessperson to join the Partnership’s board. - An online tool has been launched by OCC to allow people to understand their own carbon footprint among other things – see Climate Action Oxfordshire. - A consultation had been launched using County’s resources to gauge the public’s understanding of work across Oxfordshire on the climate emergency. Several videos will be made available to explain the emergency and the proposed strategy. - It was intended that a contractor to help deliver a Zero Carbon Route Map and Action Plan would be appointed by the end of May. Stakeholder consultation had taken place on the draft route map; progress to date has been made through the Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PAZCO) report. - Oxfordshire Treescape Project – a report was given on the mapping of the nature recovery plan across Oxfordshire. Via a map-based scheme, the best places are indicated potential rewilding locations. Reports can be made for local areas indicating where tree scaping will work – these are being offered for free. Parish Councils should engage with Oxtrees via their own nature recovery plans, it is landowners who were being encouraged to work with them. This could be significant as just 26 landowners own 25% of the County, and 172 own half. 	<p>Oxtrees work can be found here.</p>

Glossary

Homes from Infrastructure (Hfi)	This is a Government funded scheme that allows local authorities to bid “on a highly competitive basis” for funds to provide infrastructure that will unlock housing sites. The scheme acts in 2 ways: to plug gaps in viability of up to £10 million by providing the final piece of infrastructure required for an advanced scheme; or to provide forward funds, or the even the first funding up to £250 million to provide market confidence for a scheme.
Oxfordshire Economic Recovery Plan (ERP)	A County and system-wide approach to tackle the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. It is led by OxLEP and an Economic Recovery Task Group composed of chief officers from each Oxfordshire Council, the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, both Universities and the Government’s Cities and Local Growth unit. The ERP group draws on experts who work in the visitor economy in Oxfordshire, which is worth around £2.4 billion.
Oxfordshire Treescape Project (Oxtrees)	Oxtrees is a not-for-profit initiative co-ordinated by Grow Green Carbon, with support from all 6 Oxfordshire Councils. It aims to build a means of achieving nature recovery in the County.
OxLEP	Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. This is the body set up to champion Oxfordshire’s economic development. It seeks grants, establishes partnerships between business, academia and the public sector and aims to attract and grow inward investment.
Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PAZCO)	The University of Oxford’s Environmental Change Institute, Bioregional and the Councils produced this OxLEP-backed report which should act as an evidence base to support the planning and implementing of the steps required to meet zero-carbone targets. The report demonstrates three routes: 1) societal transformation, from the grass routes; 2) technological transformation which requires minimal change by individuals; 3) Oxfordshire leading the way, which combines cultural and behavioural change. Impact on / opportunities for the economy are considered.
Regulation 18 consultation	This is the earliest stage in plan making for a strategic land use plan. It is often referred to as the scoping, or issues stage, where what should be included within a plan is decided.