

**To:** Council

**Date:** 29 September 2016

**Report of:** Councillor John Tanner, Board Member for Clean and Green Oxford

**Title of Report:** Oxford Environment Partnership

## Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:** To inform members of the work of the Oxford Environment Partnership.

**Policy Framework:** The Corporate Plan

**Recommendation:** Council to

1. Note the content of the report.

## **Background**

1. Oxfordshire Environment Partnership has operated since 2008. It is a meeting of Cabinet members and officers of the six local authorities in Oxfordshire, with other groups, that have responsibility for the environment to share best practice, review performance and discuss policy.
2. Waste and recycling issues were incorporated into the Oxfordshire Environment Partnership as the result of the dissolution of the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) in April 2015. The dissolution of the OWP was a move away from a formal, binding and funded partnership to an informal model based on collaboration and cooperation.
3. The partnership meets three times a year at locations across the County.

## Terms of Reference

4. The Oxfordshire Environment Partnership focus of the priorities identified by the Oxfordshire 2030 Strategic Plan, and the delivery of commitments based around the following themes:
  - Reduce carbon emissions and improve water and energy efficiency across public sector organisations, and encourage residents and business to do the same
  - Reduce waste and increase reuse and recycling by householders and business
  - Minimise the effects and risk of flooding
  - Ensure new development is built to high standards of sustainability
  - Support individuals, communities and business to respond to climate change
  - Keep Oxfordshire Green and Clean
  - Protect and enhance the biodiversity of the County
  - Reduce the gap between the best and the worst off by targeting our work appropriately
5. Terms of reference were discussed by the partnership at a meeting in October 2015. The partnership agreed to concentrate on waste, biodiversity and best practice.
6. Membership is elected representative from each authority and the Chair rotates with three meetings a year.
7. The Partnership has previously sought to deliver the commitments of Climate Local, an LGA initiative on climate change, supported by the Environment Agency, however this programme ended in March 2016.
8. The ending of the Climate Local initiative was marked with a report ([Climate Local annual report 2015/16 \(PDF\)](#)) on activities across England. This report noted the co-ordinated work in Oxfordshire between partner authorities. It also noted that local authorities are facing barriers to action on climate change which was “*unsurprisingly, given the funding cuts that local authorities currently face*”.
9. The report went on to note that local authorities “*identified ways to work around these challenges, for example by working in partnership with other organisations...more councils are likely to have adopted creative examples to help deliver climate related actions in the face of continued public spending constraints.*”

## Activities in the last 12 months

10. The Oxford Environment Partnership has over the past twelve months continued to seek out and learn from best practice both within the county and beyond. The past year has seen a wide range of best practice presentations including the following:

Title	Presentation by
Grid Capacity in Oxfordshire	Low Carbon Hub
Heat Network for Bicester	BioRegional/Cherwell District Council
Energy from Waste	Oxfordshire County Council
Flood Risk Management Strategy	Oxfordshire County Council
Oxfordshire Woodlands	Oxfordshire County Council
Local Nature Partnership	Oxfordshire County Council
Food and Garden Waste Processing	Agrivert
Courtauld Commitment	WRAP
Recycling in flats	Oxford City Council
Recycling incentivisation	Oxford City Council
Foodwise Commercial Food Recycling	Oxfordshire County Council
Countywide Carbon Emissions	Aether
OxFutures	Oxford City Council
Sustainable Energy Action Plan	Oxford City Council
Local Energy Mapping	Oxford Brookes University

11. The partnership also received performance reporting information on waste and recycling along with carbon emissions reductions on a county wide basis.
12. As a result of the Partnership, Oxford City Council has worked with others to examine grid capacity issues, signed up to the Courtauld Commitment 2025, developed work on heat networks in the city, and continues to review ways to reduce carbon emissions across the city.

## Forward work programme

13. The forward programme is set at each meeting. Items that are due to be discussed in 2016 include:
- Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit
  - An update on food waste project
  - Assessment of recycling promotion campaigns
  - Evaluation of the impact as a result of the loss of the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership officer post.

## Legal issues

14. The partnership has no formal decision making powers. Any implementation actions are determined by individual authorities.

**Financial issues**

15. The partnership draws on 'in kind' resources from member authorities but holds no commissioning budget.

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