

To: Council
Date: November 2021
Report of: Chief Executive
Title of Report: The Oxford Strategic Partnership

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To note the annual update on the Oxford Strategic Partnership
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member with responsibility:	Councillor Brown, Leader
Corporate Priority:	All Council Strategy priorities
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2020-24
Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:	
1. Note the annual update report on the work of the Oxford Strategic Partnership.	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	OSP Membership
Appendix 2	Terms of Reference

Introduction and background

1. The Oxford Strategic Partnership (OSP) was founded in 2003 and brings together senior representatives within Oxford from the public, business, community and voluntary sectors. The OSP helps to provide strategic input to help inform decision-making for the city's future, respond to local priorities and engage more effectively with local concerns. This partnership for the city promotes collaboration and openness and provides opportunities to access funding and share resources more easily.
2. The OSP is an influencer, not an operational entity. It brings organisations together to work in partnership, identifying strategic city challenges that will benefit from collaboration, and prioritising them based on where the partnership can add most value. Its remit is determined by its chair with input from its members.

OSP Vision

3. The OSP seeks to facilitate, through effective collaboration between local agencies and partners, a thriving city and surrounding area where everyone enjoys a good quality of life - environmentally, economically and socially, and where long standing inequalities are addressed.

OSP Aims

4. The OSP's aims are;
 - a. identify current major issues and concerns that will benefit from collective intervention
 - b. Identify and engage relevant partners, and facilitate their working together to develop and implement collaborative interventions
 - c. Empower partners and communities to take action
 - d. Evaluate outcomes to inform future issues and concerns

OSP Steering Group

5. OSP Steering group members are drawn from the statutory services (Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Health and Police), businesses, universities and colleges and community groups. A list of members is set out in Appendix 1
6. Baroness Royall (Jan Royall) Principal of Somerville College, Oxford, took on the role of Chair in October 2018. Jan stepped down in July 2021 and the post is currently vacant but being actively recruited to. Caroline Green is the interim Chair.

OSP Sub-Groups

7. Since its inception in 2003 the OSP's emphasis on different themes varies over time, guided by the Chair and the interests of members. To support its breadth of focus, it established four sub-groups working on: Economic Growth and Regeneration; Stronger Communities; Low Carbon City; and Safer Communities. All of these have been active over the past year.

Economic Growth Steering Board (EGSB) sub-group

- A city region focus to deliver the Oxford Economic Growth Strategy Action Plan and feed into, and support, the OxLEP (Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership) SEP (Strategic Economic Plan) and Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) delivery. Chaired by Peter Nolan, Chairman of OcQuila Therapeutics Ltd.
- Continue to drive and co-ordinate business engagement through the EGSB's business engagement framework.

Stronger Communities sub-group

- Brings together key organisations that contribute towards the development of stronger communities through addressing inequality and poverty, and increasingly focuses on issues of Health and Wellbeing. Chaired by David Munday, Consultant in Public Health, Oxfordshire County Council

Low Carbon Oxford sub-group

- This sub-group is being transitioned to the new Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership <https://zerocarbonoxford.com/> that was launched following the Zero Carbon Oxford Summit in February 2021. It is chaired by Cllr Tom Hayes, Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford.

Safer Communities sub-group

- Led by the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP) that was established in 1998 it works to address local community safety concerns and ensure that all partners tackle those crimes that affect our community. Chaired by Superintendent Bruce Riddell, Commander for the Oxford Local Policing Area.

Activity and achievements over last 12 months:

Economic Growth Steering Board -

8. This group provided guidance and oversight for the development of a new Oxford Economic Strategy now out for consultation (November 2021). The strategy, which has been in preparation since before the COVID pandemic, has been adjusted to ensure alignment with the Oxfordshire Economic Recovery Plan, which is coordinated by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
9. There has also been continued focus on promotion of the Oxford Living Wage with a more than doubling of the number of certified employers in the city - from 20 to 55 - paying their employees over £10 per hour.

Stronger Communities

10. The main focus of the sub-group has been the work delivered by the County's Health & Wellbeing Partnerships (H&WBP). There are 5 localities which have an H&WB partnership in some format. These are Barton, Rose Hill, Wood Farm, the Leys (includes both Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys (Northfield Brook)) and Littlemore. Northway doesn't have a H&WB Partnership, but has a Community Partnership and H&WB is part of the agenda. The partnerships are focused on specific wards, whereas the Council's Locality Hub delivery model works across ward boundaries.
11. In 2021 the sub-group undertook a review of the various partnerships across the localities to align with the City Council's continuation of the Hub model across the localities, set up originally as a response to COVID. The sub-group has met with each Hub lead and there has also been consultation with members of the Health & Wellbeing partnerships and the Community Partnerships as to how they prefer the structure of the partnerships ongoing;
 - Barton: will continue with separate H&WB and Community partnership groups
 - Rose Hill: the H&WB partnership now includes the Community partnership and there is a separate resident led Community Network-
 - Wood Farm: will continue with 2 separate groups,
 - The Leys- the H&WB partnership members have expressed a preference to remain as a separate group. The Community partnership members are being consulted.
 - Littlemore: this was 2 groups, but H&WB is now incorporated in the Community Partnership. The group is currently planning to increase partner membership and develop H&WB priorities
12. Each partnership has identified the H&WB priorities to take forward within their area. These are based on the data that we have for certain health indicators, but also on local stakeholder insight of opportunities, issues and needs. The partnerships work

on an asset-based approach, building on what's happening in the area and collectively adding value. The partnerships are each currently taking 2 priorities and setting up task and finish sub groups with members volunteering to participate in the sub groups in order to take forward some identified actions.

Low Carbon Oxford / Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership

13. The Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) was launched in February 2021 and brings together universities, hospitals, councils, and large businesses and third sector organisations to support the city in its journey to net zero carbon emissions. ZCOP partners have signed the Zero Carbon Oxford charter which commits to working collaboratively with the ambition of achieving a net zero Oxford by 2040.
14. A Zero Carbon Oxford Roadmap and Action Plan was commissioned from the Carbon Trust which forms a science-based report, approved by the partnership, which outlines the actions required for the decarbonisation of commercial and residential buildings, industry and transport to enable Oxford to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2040, ten years ahead of the UK's Government's legal targets.
15. Following the timelines identified in the science-based roadmap it is predicted that by 2040, action will have reduced Oxford's carbon emissions by 88% from 2018 levels. If any residual emissions remain in 2040, they would be offset to meet the net zero target.
16. The roadmap outlines key milestones for each sector and maps a timeline of 'what needs to happen, and by when' for Oxford to stay on-track to achieve net-zero by 2040.
17. The Strategic Net-Zero Roadmap diagram below looks at the city's emissions as a whole. There are five subsequent roadmaps which divide the city's emissions into sectors, in line with guidance from the Government Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. Those sectors are: Domestic, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, and Transport.

Safer Communities

18. The Safer Communities sub-group has been focused primarily on the response to the COVID pandemic, enforcement of lockdown restrictions while these were in place and then subsequently, providing support and assurance to businesses and communities around adaptation to the lifting of those restrictions.
19. In particular Thames Valley Police has reported a significant increase in violent crime - including knife crime - over recent months. Police intelligence points to many being linked to drugs gang-related activities, many involving young people. As a result, the Oxford Police Commander authorised additional stop and search powers in the city on a number of occasions. The Police has also run knife amnesties as part of Operation Sceptre.

Current OSP theme - Inclusive Economy

20. The former chair of the OSP, Baroness Royall introduced an overarching theme for the OSP focused on achieving a more inclusive economy which the partnership has developed and promoted over the past few years through a number of work streams.
21. The OSP hosted an [Inclusive Economy Seminar Series](#) across autumn 2019 – spring 2020, with the support of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

(OxLEP). While the COVID pandemic created a hiatus in the work being taken forwards, a report was published with findings and recommended actions from the seminar (report is [here](#)) and a report was taken to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (formerly Oxfordshire Growth Board) to consider next steps. As a result a new Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership was established in March 2021. This is a countywide partnership of over 100 organisations from the public, private and community & voluntary sectors which have come together to develop an inclusive economy agenda countywide. It is co-chaired by Baroness Royall and Jeremy Long, Chair of OxLEP, and is supported by Clayton Lavallin, Principal Regeneration & Economic Development Officer with oversight from Future Oxfordshire Partnership (Formerly the Oxfordshire Growth Board).

22. The partnership has developed an Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter and Pledge scheme to mobilise awareness and action on an inclusive economy alongside the formation of a series of interrelated inclusive economy projects all aligned within a wider programme working to achieve the shared outcome of embedding a countywide Oxfordshire inclusive economy initiative through 4x working groups:

The 4 working groups are led by the following representatives:

- **Educational Attainment**, led by Jeremy Long of OxLEP and Bernard Grenville-Jones of Activate College, focusing on attainment of GCSE English and Maths as this can create a barrier to moving forward into the next level (Level 3) of skills development.
- **Social value and procurement**, led by Rick Mower of RAW Workshop and Grant Hayward of OSEP focusing on spending money locally, initially from public sector organisations like our councils and our universities, to put money back into the local economy and creates opportunities for local businesses – we are looking at how we can grow the amount of money that is spent within our county, for our county. We are also looking at how the businesses that benefit from this are investing into our local communities, through jobs, training or improving our environment.
- **Place based initiatives**, led by Rosie Rowe of Public Health Oxfordshire County Council and Sara Fernandez of Oxford Hub and focusing on targeted investments into the areas of the county that need it most. The group feels that communities need to be part of our work to ensure that money spent in our county helps address some of our biggest challenges – health, environment, housing – we need to ensure that we can answer the questions of- what are the benefits that can be created for local people? How are the benefits of development shared locally?
- **Inclusive Employers**, led by Mark Beard of Beard Construction and Phil Southall of Oxford Bus Company Working with employers to be accessible and inclusive. How companies recruit, looking at what's in it for employees? How can we help people to understand the opportunities and how can we prepare them for work? Confidence and skills. Matching people to employment through: Apprenticeships, Work placements and work on Recruitment policies within companies.

23. The Partnership is proposing to become a work stream of the **Future Oxfordshire Partnership** and the timeline of the Partnership is to launch the Educational Attainment and Social value and procurement working groups in 2021, followed by the Place based initiatives, Inclusive Employers and the formal launch of the Charter and Pledge Scheme in 2022.

Current OSP theme – educational attainment gap

24. Linked to its focus on establishing a more inclusive economy, the OSP has also been focused on the issue of the significant gap in educational attainment experienced among disadvantaged households in the city. In October 2020, the OSP held an Oxford [Education Summit](#), which involved over 40 senior representatives involved in education in Oxfordshire at a local, regional and indeed national level. It considered how to add value to educational attainment work across the city and set out a number of actions and work streams.

25. Educational attainment challenges in Oxford includes;

- Underperformance, with some of the city's schools rated as inadequate - despite the improving trend in overall education standards in Oxfordshire over the past three years.
- Growing attainment gap among disadvantaged children – those in receipt of free school meals, those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and Black Asian and minority ethnic children. With the closure of schools for several months due to COVID19 there is some evidence that this will have further widened the attainment gap and the need for action more pressing.
- An increasingly centralised education system, accountability is fragmented and remote. Oxfordshire County Council, the local education authority, has stepped in to offer more support to struggling schools in the city, but it has neither the authority nor the means to make significant interventions in academy trust schools, which most state schools in Oxford are.

26. Those involved in the Education Summit included Oxfordshire County Council education officers, Anne-Marie Canning, Chair Bradford Education Opportunity Area, Dame Kate Dethridge, Regional Schools Commissioner, MAT leaders and head teachers, and other senior people involved in the universities, further education, skills and apprenticeships, and early years settings.

27. At the summit the following actions were discussed:

1. Develop a lobby for an Education Opportunity Area in the city
2. Look at learnings from Bradford and other Opportunity Areas to see if there are measures that could be run anyway
3. Extended the programme of computers for schools and wider community
4. Improve the Oxford University Access programme – through wider promotion, linking with Trinity College; and extend the Somerville College/New College initiatives to twin with schools and children in the city
5. Expand skills training and mentoring for teaching staff and seek to pool expertise across Oxford Brookes, Oxford University, Oxfordshire Teaching Schools and Oxfordshire County Council. With potential to create a bigger funding pot to help meet costs of backfill in schools.

6. Expand involvement in Community Impact Zone in east of the city
 7. Set up a working group comprising a manageable number, and of the most effective participants to map more of what is going on, but then looking at how to better communicate this, and tackle whatever emerges as critical gaps.
28. Some of the above actions – 2, 3, 4 and 7 – have already been implemented. The last of these has seen the creation of a sub-group of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership, the OIEP Educational Attainment Working Group to ensure a longer term strategic approach to narrowing the attainment and skills gaps that remain within the city among disadvantaged households. It is co-chaired by Jeremy Long and Bernard Grenville-Jones, Executive Director, Activate Learning.
29. The OIEP Educational Attainment Working Group’s remit is to pursue *‘more targeted investment in better educational attainment, skills-based training, and access to jobs in the new economy’* – talent development and the ability to empower local residents to gain the skills needed to compete and access new forms of employment are critical to opening up opportunities. This should include support at every stage of learning, including early education interventions, with an effective pathway into employment requires a more dynamic skills and education system with more engaged business leadership. There is a challenge to develop awareness of opportunities in new sectors for young people – whether that be technology or services, and targeted initiatives to help people excluded from the workforce to overcome barriers to jobs are being considered.
30. The OIEP Educational Attainment Working Group is working on the following potential priorities:
- Close literacy and numeracy gap in early years
 - Use evidence and research to remove barriers to learning
 - Close the aspiration gap
 - Close attainment gaps in schools - every 16 year old should be level 3 ready
31. The OSP will consider how it can continue to support the work of the OIEP and the Educational Attainment Working Group.

Other OSP activities

32. Other areas covered by the OSP over the last 12 months include:
- Input into the development of the Economic Development Strategy and City Centre Action Plan
 - Input into the Covid recovery plan for the city
 - Review of the Thames Valley Police action to tackle crime in Oxford

Resources

33. The work of the Oxford Strategic Partnership Steering Group is supported by the Policy & Partnerships Team.
34. The four sub-groups are supported by a Champion and City Council Officer as shown below.

- Economic Growth and Regeneration Champion Cllr Susan Brown, Oxford City Council. City Council Officer Lead Matt Peachey, Economic Development
- Safer Communities Champion Superintendent Bruce Riddell, Thames Valley Police. City Council Officer Lead, Richard Adams, Community Safety
- Stronger Communities Champion David Munday, Public Health, Oxfordshire County Council. City Council Officer Lead Dani Granito, Policy and Partnership Team Manager
- Low Carbon City Champion Cllr Tom Hayes, Oxford City Council. City Council Officer Lead Mish Tullar, Head of Strategy (Environmental Sustainability)

Financial implications

35. The OSP is funded by Oxford City Council.

Legal issues

36. There are no legal implications.

Level of risk

37. Not applicable.

Equalities impact

38. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not applicable. However, the structure and membership of the OSP reflects a common commitment among participating organisations to equality. And the areas of focus of the OSP are very much focused on tackling inequality and building inclusivity.

Conclusion

39. Over the past three years under Baroness Royall’s chair, the Oxford Strategic Partnership has been energetic in working to reduce inequalities in the city and has created important new bodies to take forward work at countywide level on a more inclusive economy and on narrowing the educational attainment gap. A new Chair is being sought to take forward the OSP with a refreshed agenda and an active programme of work in the new year. It is intended the OSP should continue to provide an important focus for the City Council’s strategic work with statutory, private and third-sector partners.

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Background Papers: None