

To: Council
Date: 15 July 2024
Report of: Head of Corporate Strategy
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 and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working
Corporate Priority:	All Oxford City Council strategic priorities
Policy Framework:	Corporate Strategy 2020-2024
Recommendation(s): That the Committee resolves to:	
1. Note the annual update report on the work of the Oxford Strategic Partnership.	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Oxford Strategic Partnership membership – June 2024
Appendix 2	Safer Communities Partnership Representatives

Introduction and background

1. The Oxford Strategic Partnership (OSP) founded in 2003 brings together senior representatives within Oxford from the public, business, community and third sector partners such as voluntary groups, which deliver services, help improve people's wellbeing and contribute to economic growth.
2. This partnership for the city promotes collaboration and openness and provides opportunities to access funding and share resources more easily. [A list of members is set out in Appendix 1.](#)
3. The OSP helps provide strategic input to inform decision-making for the city's future, respond to local priorities and engage more effectively with local concerns.
4. 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

5. 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

6. The OSPs aims are to;
 - Identify current major issues and concerns that will benefit from collective intervention
 - Identify and engage relevant partners, and facilitate their working together to develop and implement collaborative interventions
 - Empower partners and communities to take action
 - Evaluate outcomes to inform future issues and concerns.

OSP Steering Group

7. The OSP meets quarterly, and steering group members are drawn from the statutory services, private sector and others (Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, health, police, businesses, universities and community groups), to review and discuss topics of strategic importance.
8. Paul James – Chief Executive, [River Learning Trust](#) took on the role of Chair in October 2022.
9. The work of the OSP steering group is supported by the Policy & Partnerships Team, Oxford City Council.

OSP Sub-Groups

10. Since its inception in 2003 the OSP's emphasis on different themes has varied over time, guided by the Chair and the interests of members. To support its breadth of focus, it established four sub-groups that generally meet quarterly and work on:
 - Economic Development
 - Stronger Communities
 - Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership
 - Safer Communities.

Economic Development Steering Board sub-group

11. The Economic Growth Steering Board (EGSB) is the OSP's key forum to steer Oxford's Economic Strategy and collaborate on economic and business issues in Oxford.

12. Led by, and representative of, the diverse sectors of Oxford's Business community, the EGSB is supported by Oxford City Council's Regeneration & Economy Service.
13. Oxford's Economic Strategy (2022-32) is setting a new standard for economic inclusion in the city. Building on the unique strengths of Oxford as an impactful global city economy, drawing on the assets of its historical and cultural assets, the strategy and delivery plan seek to guide an evolving city economy in a way which recognises environmental limits and harnesses the opportunity of net zero carbon.
14. The role and purpose of the EGSB is central to fulfilling the effective delivery of the Economic Strategy in its role to provide oversight and governance.
15. The EGSB needs to fulfil this role in a way that is both cognisant and supportive of the county-wide spatial and economic strategies led by Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP, the former Growth Board), OxLEP and others aware of Oxford's county-wide, regional, national and international economic inter-relationships.

Stronger Communities sub-group

16. The Stronger Communities Board brought together key organisations, such as Public Health, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Association, and the Department for Work and Pensions.
17. These organisations contribute towards the development of stronger communities by addressing inequality and poverty, with an increasing focus on issues of health and wellbeing.
18. The Stronger Communities sub-group was supported by the Head of Community Services, who left the Council in February 2024. The future purpose and work of the sub-group will need to be considered alongside the Community Services review, which is currently being undertaken and is due to conclude in March 2025.

Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership sub-group

19. The [Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership](#) (ZCOP)¹, brings together Oxford's most influential organisations including both universities, the health trusts, both the Oxford City and Oxfordshire County Councils and large businesses such as BMW, Lucy Group, LandSec, SSEN and Unipart.
20. The purpose of the partnership is to work together to support the city in its journey to net zero carbon emissions by 2040, ten years ahead of the UK's Government's legal targets.
21. Following its formation, the partnership developed a science-based [Roadmap and Action Plan](#) with the Carbon Trust. It sets out a comprehensive and ambitious pathway to net zero carbon emissions for the city, with 5-yearly carbon budgets, sectoral roadmaps and 25 cross cutting actions required over the short and mid-term.

¹ Oxford City Council, 'Zero Carbon Oxford Summit'. Available from: https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20291/climate_emergency/1431/zero_carbon_oxford_summit

22. This work follows on from the mandate established by the Oxford Citizens Assembly on Climate Change held in 2019², and the Zero Carbon Oxford Summit in February 2021.
23. ZCOP is chaired by Cllr Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working, and supported by the Council's, Environmental Sustainability Lead.

Safer Communities sub-group

24. [Oxford Safer Communities Partnership](#) (OSCP) was established in 1998 and is the Community Safety Partnership for Oxford, a statutory requirement of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as amended.
25. The Safer Communities sub-group is supported by the Council's Community Safety Service Manager and brings together organisations to make Oxford a safer place by reducing the fear of crime, minimising the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime and by addressing community safety concerns to improve the lives of our residents, businesses and visitors.
26. To support the work of all partners, the OSCP produces an [action plan](#) that highlights what has been achieved in the previous year and what priorities there are for the coming year.
27. The OSCP Board reviewed the 2023/24 priorities and will agree those for 2024/25 at its meeting in June 2024.

Activity and achievements over last 12 months:

Economic Development

28. This group continues to contribute to the delivery of the [Oxford Economic Strategy](#) which was updated and adopted by Council and published in summer 2022 following extensive consultation in 2021.
29. The strategy covers the next 10 years and updates are reported to both the Economic Growth Steering Board (EGSB) on a quarterly basis and OSP annually. A work plan outlining key roles and responsibilities for the Economic Strategy delivery is in place along with a dashboard of measures and KPIs.
30. The [Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership](#) (OIEP) was established in March 2021 as a countywide partnership of organisations from the public, private and community & voluntary sectors that have come together to develop an inclusive economy agenda countywide. The OIEP's creation followed a seminar series hosted by the OSP and OxLEP in 2019/2020 on inclusive growth. The OIEP reports to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, is co-chaired by Baroness Royall and Jeremy Long, and is supported by an OIEP Manager.
31. The aim of the OIEP is to work together to create a more equal and sustainable region that creates opportunities and benefits for all people within Oxfordshire.

² https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20011/environment/1343/oxford_citizens_assembly_on_climate_change

32. There are 4 action focused working groups to deliver the OIEP vision – education, employment, social value and procurement and place shaping which are looking at working with projects across Oxfordshire that the partnership can support, grow or amplify their work as well as creating a repository of case studies, information and signposting related to the inclusive economy.

33. Delivery in 2023/2024 for focused working groups included:

Educational Attainment:

- Supported [ARCh – Assisted Reading for Children](#) to obtain grant funding to enable the recruitment of a volunteer coordinator so that they can reach more schools
- Continued to refer charter signees that pledge to support ARCh and promote through their networks
- Continued to work with health partners to identify funding for the school readiness programme, Growing Minds, to expand to Blackbird Leys.

Inclusive Employment:

Supporting Prison Leavers into Employment;

- Employers' day at Bullingdon Prison in September 2023, vacancies from attendees are now being placed with the prison employment hub
- Arranging a follow up employers' day at Bullingdon prison in the Autumn/Winter
- The OIEP Manager has been invited to be a representative on the Employment Advisory Board (EAB) at Bullingdon prison.

Supporting Refugees into Employment;

- Held the second HR Network seminar with speakers from Asylum Welcome, Aspire and the NHS
- Provided signposting to employment and advice organisations for Engaged with the Oxfordshire Hong Kongers
- Brought International Rescue Committee free online and in person job readiness training, for refugees and asylum seekers with the right to work, to Oxfordshire. Bringing together key stakeholders across the county to identify people who would benefit, and delivered the first in person training session 10th May.

Age friendly employers;

- Delivered an Age Without Limits communication campaign on LinkedIn week to link in with Age without Limits Day of action
- Implemented an [age friendly employer page](#) on the new [OIEP website](#) with links to resources/toolkits from the Centre for Ageing Better
- Future HR Network events will focus on military and military family and staff wellbeing
- Additional resources to develop this work have been provided to the OIEP by Oxfordshire County Council with 1 day a week of a graduate placement's time for 6 months.

Social Value and Procurement:

- An initial meeting delivered of Social Value and Procurement anchor sub-group, bringing together anchor organisations (the Council, ODS, Oxfordshire County Council, and University of Oxford) with the key aim is to deliver social value that meets local needs and supports the objectives of those organisations
- A communication campaign is currently being drafted to increase awareness and understanding of social value through procurement, as well as highlighted examples of best practice across the county.

Place-based:

- Developed a Theory of Change for the OIEP
- Successfully bid for Local Policy Lab researchers to look at the development of an evaluation plan to assess the impact of the work of the OIEP.

Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter:

- It has been a year since the OIEP launched the [Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter](#), calling on organisations and individuals in Oxfordshire to pledge to make positive changes to tackle inequality.
- Since then, nearly 100 organisations have pledged their support, including [Oxford City Council](#). The OIEP continues to share their inspiring stories, and celebrate the work that is being delivered across Oxfordshire to make it a better place to live and work for everyone, as well as working to increase the number of charter signees.

Stronger Communities sub-group

34. The Council's [Thriving Communities Strategy, 2023/27](#) (TCS) was adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework (January 2023).

35. This includes embedding the TCS principles across the Council's work and encouraging partners to do the same. Alongside, continuing to integrate the Council's services and seek out opportunities to better align its work with partner agencies, bringing partners and places together better to jointly grow and work.

36. An update on the TCS is due to be taken to the Cabinet in August 2024.

37. As mentioned in paragraph 19, the sub-group has not been meeting, and officers are currently reviewing the appropriate way forward for future working (i.e. purpose and Terms of Reference). In the meantime, the Council has continued to deliver a wide range of initiatives aligned with the sub-group's priority themes, which has involved many external partners.

38. Delivery in 2023/2024 included:

Provide support to children, young people and families:

- [You Move](#) funding has been confirmed to allow the project to be continued and for the expansion into early years support
- The Blackbird Leys Larder successfully moved to the Oxford Hub
- Work was completed with the John Henry Newman Foodbank to source period products from Superdrug

- Free open access youth clubs and sports sessions have been delivered for ages 11–19 in Blackbird Leys (Leys Youth Hub), Northway, Littlemore, Cowley, Barton, Rose Hill, and Wood Farm
- The Youth Ambition Team is engaging with secondary schools to build relationships with vulnerable young people who struggle in formal settings and encourage them to access youth sessions in the community
- Concessionary [leisure offers](#) have been maintained within the new leisure services contract.

39. Provide support to older people and vulnerable adults:

- [Move Together](#) funding has been confirmed for another year to allow the project to continue and to be extended to offer maternity support
- The [Health Walk programmes](#) continue to be expanded with further leaders trained and new walks developed
- Leisure concessions have been maintained in the new contract with the Council's leisure operator, with some plans to expand. These include discounted rates for over 65s, the Good Boost program at Barton Leisure Centre with plans to expand into the Ferry and Leys Leisure Centres, free memberships for people experiencing homelessness, and the Bonus Leisure Card.
- Support is being provided to help the Donnington Tenants and Residents Association and the 50+ group to sustain their activities, with help from health partners, and community gardening around the Donnington Community Centre.

40. Raise education attainment levels, increase access to training and access to employment:

- Live Well Oxfordshire [MECC training](#) (Making Every Contact Count), First Aid Briefings, Safeguarding Briefings and Physical Activity Awareness Training is offered to all volunteers
- In partnership with [CIMSPA](#) (Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity) a [Local Skills](#) Advisory Board is developing educational qualifications, inclusive recruitment and staff development and wellbeing within the Sport and Physical Activity sector (a new [leisure professional course](#) is starting in September 2024)
- A pilot scheme is in development to upskill leisure and community staff as well as community members to deliver mini health MoTs (height, weight, and blood pressure) as well as having associated Very Brief Advice (VBA) conversations for short, opportunistic interventions to support behavioural change/wellbeing/lifestyle choices, etc.
- The Council's new leisure operator has proactively linked with the City of Oxford College to offer free lifeguard training for all students both those enrolled on the new leisure course and those who are not.
- The Youth Ambition team are working in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions to help young people aged 16–24 who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) through the Youth Employment Hub at Rose Hill Community Centre. Support from partners includes Oxford Job Centre, OxLEP, ODS, Activate Learning, the County NEET team, Serco, and others.

41. Develop and deliver health improvement programmes:

- Move Together funding to support the expansion of Good Boost across the leisure centres to allow Move Together participants to access sessions at a discounted rate
- Active Lifestyles Commissioning Group to support the vision of Active Wellbeing Centres
- Continuous work with primary care and anchor organisations to deliver Health Promotion Events and Men's Health Workshops
- £25k of [grant funding awarded](#) to community groups in Barton, Rose Hill, Littlemore and the City Centre to support the recommendations from the [Community Insight Profiles](#)
- Receptionist video made to share the experiences of different communities and their relationships with Primary Care
- Vaccine engagement work extended to Shingles and MMR as well as supporting COVID-19 booster uptake.

42. Promote community engagement and public involvement in decisions that affect communities:

- Community consultation and focus groups held for all the Community Insight Profiles (The Leys, Barton, Rose Hill, Littlemore, City Centre, and Wood Farm)
- Regular stakeholder meetings with city clubs
- Focus groups held with a local primary school in Oxford city centre
- Continued good engagement with the Hinksey Outdoor Pool User Group and a plan to re-energise other leisure user groups or explore holding 'meet the manager' sessions as a way of involving leisure users and non-users
- Supporting regeneration colleagues to ensure meaningful community engagement, including youth voice and involvement, on projects such as the Cowley Branch Line and Blackbird Leys Community Centre Development.
- Teams are engaged in ongoing efforts with Cowley Road businesses, aiming to empower them to establish an association and a collective voice for addressing common issues moving forward.

Safer Communities

43. The OSCP work to address local community safety concerns and ensure that all partners tackle those crimes that affect the community. ([Appendix 2 Oxford Safer Communities Partnership representation](#))

44. Priorities for 2023-24 were:

[OSCP Rolling Plan 2023-24](#)

- Serious and organised crime, including county drug lines
- Alcohol-related violence
- Violence against women and girls, including domestic abuse
- Modern slavery

- Anti-social behaviour
- Neighbourhood crimes such as burglary, car crime and robbery.

Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership

45. Since its launch, ZCOP has delivered across numerous action areas by focusing on collaborative projects that accelerate city wide mitigation across sectors, businesses and communities.
46. Partners support progress in the city by championing and participating in a range of 'sprint groups' through contributions of time, expertise and funding.
47. A successful £265,000 bid from Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plans (LIDP) will expand on the initial Zero Carbon Oxford roadmap to create an industry specific roadmap and action plan.
48. The Council is leading the project on behalf of the ZCOP, and is working closely with partners from BMW, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Greentech, and Unipart. The project is underway and will run till December 2024.
49. The [ZCOP Action Plan](#) provides a clear initial direction and series of steps for the ZCOP to follow to set Oxford on a path to net zero by 2040. The [full report](#) sets out more detail on the concept, funding sources, implementation steps, owners, costs, carbon savings, dependencies, and risks of the actions. The Action Plans Roadmap has target 2025 review date.
50. The ZCOP is currently expanding to become an Oxfordshire based partnership by the start of 2025

Other OSP activities

51. Other areas covered by the OSP over the last 12 months include:



(Note: [OSP Website](#))

Forward Planning

52. Future workshop agenda items may include:



Financial implications

53. The OSP is funded and facilitated by Oxford City Council with a 2024/ 2025 assigned budget of £8,320. The contribution facilitates secretariat responsibilities for the partnership, and the agreed priorities and set objectives for specific areas of work.

Legal issues

54. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Level of risk

55. The report is simply providing an update to the Council on the work completed by the OSP and so it is not appropriate for an assessment of risk to be carried out.

Equalities impact

56. The structure and membership of the OSP and four sub-groups is intended to reflect a common commitment among participating organisations to equality. The areas of focus of the OSP and four sub-groups are very much focused on tackling inequality and building inclusivity.

Conclusion

57. It is intended that the OSP should continue to provide an important focus for Oxford City Council's strategic work with statutory, private and third sector partner's such as voluntary groups, support deliver services, help improve people's wellbeing and contribute to economic growth.

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Background Papers:
None

Appendix 1: Oxford Strategic Partnership Membership – June 2024

Paul James (Chair)	River Learning Trust
Cllr Susan Brown	Leader, Oxford City Council
Cllr Chris Smowton	Liberal Democrat Group Leader, Oxford City Council
Cllr Neil Fawcett	Oxfordshire County Council
Caroline Green	Chief Executive, Oxford City Council
Mish Tullar	Head of Corporate Strategy, Oxford City Council
Brendan Hattam	Chair of Town Team and General Manager of Westgate, Land Securities
Emily Lewis-Edwards	Co-Executive Officer, Community First Oxfordshire
Jeremy Long	Chair, OxLEP
Prof Simonetta Manfredi	Associate Dean for Research & Knowledge Exchange, Oxford Brookes University
David Munday	Deputy Director Public Health, Oxfordshire County Council
Vacant	Larger Business Representative
Bruce Riddell	Superintendent, Thames Valley Police
Peter Nolan	Chair and founder of OcQuila Therapeutics
Samantha Shepherd	Deputy Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Richard Venables	Senior Director, CBRE
Ian Green	Chair, Oxford Civic Society
Professor Alex Betts	University Local and Global Engagement Officer, Oxford University
Dr Olga Kozlova	Director - Innovation and Engagement, University of Oxford
Robin Rogers	Programme Director, Partnership and Delivery, Oxfordshire County Council
Lucy Cherry	Policy and Partnerships Officer, Oxford City Council

Appendix 2: Oxford Safer Communities Partnership representation

The Partnership comprises of representatives from

- Oxford City Council
- Thames Valley Police
- Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
- Oxford Brookes University
- Oxford University
- Adult Safeguarding Board
- Child Safeguarding Board
- Probation Services
- Oxford University Hospitals (NHS) Trust
- Integrated Care Board for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire
- Turning Point
- Oxfordshire County Council including:
 - Adult Social Care
 - Children's Social Care
 - Youth Justice and Exploitation Service
 - Fire and Rescue Service.

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