

Oxford Strategic Partnership Steering Group

Minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2021

Attendees:

Jan Royall, University of Oxford, Chair
Gill Aitken, University of Oxford
Cllr Susan Brown, Oxford City Council
Brendan Hattam, Land Securities
Lydia Igweh, Oxford Brookes University
Emily Lewis-Edwards, Community First Oxfordshire
Gordon Mitchell, Oxford City Council
Peter Nolan, Chair, Oxford Economic Growth Steering Group
Robin Rogers, Oxfordshire County Council
Mish Tullar, Oxford City Council
Richard Venables, VSL and Partners
Caroline Green, Oxford City Council
Cllr Hayes, Oxford City Council
Helen Carstairs, University of Oxford
Kevin Gordon, Oxfordshire County Council
Clayton Lavallin, Oxford City Council
Eunan O'Neill, Oxfordshire County Council
Jessie Dobson, Oxfordshire County Council
Jeremy Long, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
Phil Southall, Oxford Bus Company

Apologies

Cllr Corkin, Oxfordshire County Council
Frank Nigriello, Unipart Group
Ian Green, Oxford Civic Society
Stuart Wilkinson, University of Oxford
Phil Clare, University of Oxford

1. Welcome and Apologies

2. Draft minutes of the last meeting & matters arising

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as correct.

3. Oxford City Update

Gordon spoke about the rising unemployment in the city and high street closures. Also of interest was progress on the OSP/OxLEP inclusive economy work with a paper taken to the Oxfordshire Growth Board in November to promote the recommendations to the Board itself and County and District Councils. The Growth Board whole heartedly supported it and endorsed recommendations for officers across the county to come together to help push the commission forward.

The Local Plan South Oxfordshire District Council is now agreed, and we have some specific sites on south and east of city that will come forward.

The City Council has been involved in pushing the station development over the line and we are anticipating the approval from Secretary of State about phase 2 - increased track and services - which will improve capacity across the county.

Locally, following on from the Oxford Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change, some of the proposed initiatives that had been temporarily delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic are now back on track. For example, one of the main recommendations was engaging with organisations who are the biggest carbon emitters and bringing them together to agree what more can be done to reduce carbon emissions and Oxford City Council is hosting a Carbon Summit on 4 February.

The City Council introduced an anti-racism charter last year and a number of organisations have already signed up.

To counter balance some of the closures in the city centre, is approval of the redevelopment of Boswells, an exciting project coming forward for a hotel on pivotal corner. Lastly the City Council and OxLEP are supporting a Meanwhile project that will see a number of empty commercial properties in the city brought back into use on attractive short lease arrangements for start-ups and other enterprises.

Brendan Hattam added to Gordon's comments that the city centre is in a state of "deep freeze." No one is sure what will happen and what restrictions there will be when we come out of lockdown. It certainly won't be business as usual so probably will still have some form of tiering. He expects that there will be less people using Oxford City Centre for employment workspace or services over the coming months and that the rest of this year will be very much affected by COVID. In Westgate, quite a lot of retailers aren't paying rent. Some have closed and many are in CVA (see [here](#) for definition). Of the retail and hospitality staff in the centre of town – 90% are on furlough at the moment and a lot will lose their jobs.

Jan offered the Partnership's thanks to Gordon Mitchell for his many years of work supporting the city in the Council and the OSP. She also welcomed Caroline Green as incoming CEO for Oxford City Council.

4. Education summit update

Jan gave an update on the Education Summit work. It seems clear that the educational attainment gap will have been exacerbated over the past year with many of those in disadvantaged groups not accessing as much education as their peers. Digital exclusion is one factor, and many schools reported that while take up of Key Worker in-school places was high, the take up of places for vulnerable children (other than Looked After Children) was low. So the overall issues the Education Summit discussed have not gone away. However, it is perhaps understandable that with both Councils and Schools under huge pressure to respond to COVID, the increase in cases and the latest lockdown – it has not been possible yet to advance much of what was discussed in October. However we will be taking forward the following areas:

- Develop a lobby for an Education Opportunity Area in the city –The current position is that there is no further extension of the EOA fund to bid into. However, we plan to

do a small piece of scoping work initially with partners to frame what we want. Kevin Gordon was keen that Oxfordshire County Council was involved.

- Look at learnings from Bradford and other Opportunity Areas to see if there are measures that could be run anyway (point made by Paul James) - This links to the above point and we will engage with Paul James and River Learning Trust to ascertain if there are things we could import from Bradford outside of a EOA.
- Computers for schools + wider community – Adrian Sell, Oxfordshire Community Foundation had offered to take a lead working with Jessie Dobson, Oxfordshire County Council. Nadeem Murtuja, Oxford City Council highlighted the broader issue of Digital Poverty and committed the Council's support to the programme to identify families in need, as well as donated hardware. During the second Lockdown, schools have been able to apply for IT kit, but don't have a clear view of who needs what in which household.
- Oxford University Access programme – Hannah Roley (Trinity College) is leading the work to widen the existing links that are in place – eg. between New College and Wood Farm Primary School. Somerville and other colleges are keen to participate and they will seek out other schools in the city and the wider county.
- Work on skills and mentoring for teaching staff – suggestion to pool expertise – Brookes/Oxford/Oxfordshire Teaching Schools/County (suggested by Mary Wild and Paul James at the Summit). With potential to create a bigger funding pot to help meet costs of backfill in schools etc (Suggested by Bernard Grenville-Jones)
- Invitation to wider involvement in Community Impact Zone in east of the city (call by Sara Fernandez – but also links with what Maria Godfrey of County Council was saying) – This will come to a future OSP meeting.
- Proposal from Jeremy Long: 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? – With Jeremy Long leading we will take this group forward over the next few months.

5. Inclusive Growth Seminar update

Clayton Lavallin (Oxford City Council) highlighted the summary key findings of the inclusive growth seminars (now inclusive economy) as well as potential next steps.

To advance Oxfordshire's Inclusive economy agenda, OSP and OxLEP plan to engage in a number of action-oriented work packages in 2021. Including:

1. Work with City, County & District councils and partners to form an Inclusive Economy Commission or group to clarify purpose, scope and help carry work forward.
2. To establish the Commission, we will research similar efforts in other parts of the UK to learn how they have formed commissions
3. Support the initial work of the Inclusive Economy Commission and help engage with partners to develop more specific initiatives, projects and policies to start implementing inclusive economy priorities.
4. Initiate a Task & Finish group (or similar) on local procurement spending and social value with anchor institutions.
5. Work with partners to undertake community engagement to bring more voices and perspectives into this initiative.

In the discussion that followed Jeremy Long was keen to see social value work done and happy to take this away and help identify further people to take this forward.

Caroline Green set out that it would be powerful to reconvene people to help think this through. One of the points is that if this is seen as a local authority pushing it may lose its power. What we're not looking for is to repeat process of identifying the problem more what actions already happening that we can build upon. Also wanted to add, reflecting on the slides, it does seem to me that some of those these that came out of the discussion, we may want to refine in the context of COVID (e.g. Brendan's point on impact of COVID on retail & hospitality sector) in access to new economy. What do we think will be the structural changes in the economy, and how can we incorporate this into the work of the inclusive economy.

Jan suggested regrouping of core group to look at issues raised in post-COVID to be set for March.

Cllr Tom Hayes highlighted that the City Council is working with CLES (the Centre for Local Economic Strategies) regarding procurement spend locally and countywide that will help with the data set. Also looking at how this work overlaps with fairness commissions happening elsewhere and what we can learn. The third sector could be the place to spread this work and inclusive economy approach.

Robin Rogers reiterated the support of the County in relation to the ambitions of the inclusive economy proposals and that it was in line with their work for example around digital inclusion.

Jan asked if there was any work regarding skills and employment following on from the education summit and that the University is doing some great work around apprenticeships. Gill Aitken added that work is going on to establish new apprenticeships in addition to what they already do.

Brendan Hattam highlighted that Westgate has employed apprentices and others on different schemes through Aspire.

Jessie Dobson said that she and Sally Andreou (OxLEP) are doing some work around incentives to employers to recruit apprentices and it would be good to touch base with Brendan on this.

Action – discuss potential actions or support with OxLEP (Sally Andreou) – Mish Tullar

6. Forward plan

OSP Meeting Date	Standard Agenda Items
<p>Mtg 2. 27th April 2021 2:00-4:00pm</p> <p>Join Microsoft Teams Meeting Learn more about Teams Meeting options</p>	<p>Sub-group updates (papers by 16th April)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger Communities update • Zero Carbon update
<p>Mtg 3. 13th July 2021</p>	<p>Sub-group updates (papers by 2nd July)</p>

OSP Meeting Date	Standard Agenda Items
<p>2:00-4:00pm</p> <p>Join on your computer or mobile app</p> <p>Click here to join the meeting</p> <p>Learn more Meeting options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Economy update • Safer Communities update
<p>Mtg 4. 19th October 2021</p> <p>2:00-4:00pm</p> <p>Join on your computer or mobile app</p> <p>Click here to join the meeting</p> <p>Learn more Meeting options</p>	<p>Sub-group updates (papers by 8th October)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger Communities update • Zero Carbon update