

Oxford Strategic Partnership Steering Group

Minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2020

Attendees:

Jan Royall, University of Oxford, Chair
Joseph Barrett, Oxford City Council
Phil Clare, University of Oxford
Sara Fernandez, Oxford Hub
Ian Green, Oxford Civic Society
Dan Hodge, Oxford City Council
Joe Kidman, Thames Valley Police
Gordon Mitchell, Oxford City Council
Robin Rogers, Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Linda Smith, Oxford City Council
Tim Stevenson, Oxfordshire
Mish Tullar, Oxford City Council
Richard Venables, VSL and Partners
Jackie Wilderspin, Oxfordshire County Council
Shelley Ghazi, Oxford City Council

Apologies

Emily Lewis-Edwards, Community First Oxfordshire
Brendan Casey, Oxford Brookes University
Cllr Susan Brown, Oxford City Council
Hannah Iqbal, Oxford University Hospital Trust
Brendan Hattam, Land Securities
Frank Nigriello, Unipart Group
Cllr Gant, Oxford City Council
Cllr Hayes, Oxford City Council

1. Welcome and Apologies

2. Draft minutes of the last meeting & matters arising

Minutes of meeting held 22nd October (paper 1) were agreed as correct

There was a discussion on the care leaver's action from the last meeting. Joe Kidman clarified his vision of a project for care leaver's that would start from the age of 14 and onwards. The care leaver would be able to connect with an employer and mentor e.g. Unipart, which then becomes a long term relationship. The aim of the project would be to normalise the workplace for the care leaver by providing opportunities out of school hours to spend time in the workplace of their mentor. After they reached the age of 18 they may go into higher education, but for those considering work, the project could help with, for example, CV writing and interview preparation. Additionally a guaranteed interview would be part of the scheme, so if someone meets minimum criteria, they would be guaranteed interview.

Action – Circulate vision and bring key people together to have further discussion – Joe Kidman.

3. Growth Board update

Gordon Mitchell updated that little had changed on South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Local Plan position. Most recently the Secretary of State wrote a public letter outlining all powers he had at his disposal to bring the plan forward. SODC have asked to meet him and a decision will be made after the 31st January. [Update below.](#)

There is a connected piece on Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), the £212 million Didcot road/cycle lane where there is a condition that SODC proceed with the Local Plan. The second HIF bid aims to improve the corridor along M40 between Eynsham and Witney, here the Secretary of State agreed to progress to next stage.

In relation to the City Council Oxford Plan 2036 the Inspector found the plan sound with the rational on number of homes and location as correct, meaning that housing allocations to the other Oxfordshire districts is reasonable.

A report on the review of the Growth Board was to be considered the following week. A number of changes have been proposed including a clear proposition that the Growth Board should concentrate on strategic planning and economic growth and shift this work to embrace the low carbon world more than it currently is. *Details of the findings of the Growth Board review are available [here](https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/initial-findings-of-oxfordshire-growth-board-review/): <https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/initial-findings-of-oxfordshire-growth-board-review/>*

The informal feedback in light of general election and new Government on the Oxford to Cambridge ARC is that it will move rather quickly into a phase of action around planning, rather than talking. Discussions have taken place on co-producing governance arrangements of the ARC with regions, but if it does not move quickly enough the Government will step in. Therefore the Growth Board is key in terms of devolution of power as by far the most functional body in the ARC. There is now need to move swiftly in this area.

[Update post meeting – In March 2020, South Oxfordshire District Council confirmed to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government that it acknowledged his direction to progress the already submitted Local Plan 2034, and that it would prepare a timetable and ensure that adequate staff resources are in place in order to meet the requirements of the direction.](#)

[Growth Board report link here.](#)

4. Inclusive Growth update

Three seminars have now been held with the final seminar on 29th January 2020. The interim report attached with the papers sets out the content and suggested next steps with the focus of the seminar to agree what and how to take this work forward (see paper for further information). In a short discussion that followed Jackie Wilderspin highlighted that the place based approach and involving those working ‘on the ground’ needs to be top of mind in taking this work forward. It was also highlighted that the Government is due to publish White Paper on devolution which will set out what potential powers we may have.

The attached paper from the Economic Development Sub-Group gives further details of related work.

5. A process for reconciliation - HM Lord Lieutenant for Oxfordshire.

Tim Stevenson, HM Lord Lieutenant, gave a talk on the need for reconciliation following the Brexit debate. Tim highlighted initiatives outside the county and now within the county to address the issue. This was followed by a discussion on local issues and potential areas of action.

Tim highlighted the Oxfordshire Community Foundation report 'Oxfordshire Uncovered' which set out that Oxfordshire, although prosperous, had some significant issues around, for example homelessness and educational attainment. Together with others, including the Church, he had wanted to see whether a process of reconciliation would be a valuable process, with the aim to heal some of the post-Brexit wounds and to bring people together. Tim mentioned a [debate](#) in Maidenhead which brought different people from the community together to have an open conversation about how wounds could be healed and to build up hope and confidence in the political process. They are also inviting bids for community friendship grants for project to bring the community together. Already given £1,000. Tim also referenced the Oxford Diocese paper '[A Christian Response to Brexit](#)'

In the discussion that followed it was broadly agreed that while the initiative has the support of the OSP, the focus has more recently shifted more to climate change, and it may be also too early to make progress in this area considering that Brexit is not yet 'done'. The group also felt that it was important not to make assumptions around people's views or create a negative narrative around Brexit (e.g. that the outcome was a disaster) as that in itself was polarising. Feedback from Oxford City Council's Youth Ambition Programme is that young people were engaging in politics, debating and working out their differences, which was not seen before.

The City Council's 'We are Oxford' campaign, which celebrates our diversity and the strengths it brings, has similar objectives. As part of the campaign, funding is available for events that bring people from different communities together, not specifically EU citizen but the many different groups we have in the city. The events will be supplemented by a Community Heroes recognition programme, people who we think are doing great work. Nominations will be from communities themselves.

Joe Kidman added that statistics do not show spike in hate crime however there is concern from certain communities on what the impact of Brexit will be on their jobs, especially those in the informal economy.

Gordon Mitchell felt the best first thing to do is to encourage people to live well together in Oxford through such activities as social, sports, cultural events. A possible second stage could be more interventionist and challenging but certainly need more thinking around this first.

Nadeem Murtuja (Oxford City Council Director of Communities) said that community cohesion should be mainstream business and that alongside this we need to lead on areas such as community resilience. There is a risk that issue could exacerbated by for example calling it reconciliation. It is important what we do now to address issues, build on positives on the Brexit debate as well as a long term strategy based on where communities are now.

Action – Gordon Mitchell to attend next meeting and feedback to the partnership.

6. Stronger communities sub-group

Jackie Wilderspin, gave the annual Stronger Communities sub-group update (see paper attached). Jan then publically thanked Jackie, who is retiring at the end of March, for her years of incredibly valuable contributions to the Oxford Strategic Partnership, particularly in stepping in as Chair for part of 2019. All the partnership echoed their thanks and leaving gifts were presented.

Sara Fernandez (CEO Oxford Hub) and Joseph Barrett (Youth Ambition) gave an update on the Community Action Zone project (see paper attached).

Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Valley Police came together in 2018 to explore opportunities to work together, and deploy resources more effectively. Our common challenge was how might we create more opportunities for children and families in the 4 key wards to address intergenerational inequality?

The project had followed a bottom up response, building on skills in the community and what’s happening on the ground, and working with individuals to promote sense of agency. Progress has been made on community resilience, based on ideas that local people have and what they want to see. For example a public living room at the library where parents wanted to have support with English lessons has launched. A Lego club is starting and they’re supporting a mum who wants to set up a triathlon club as lots of children who grow up in poverty don’t know how to swim or cycle. There’s also an important element of a new service model, what it looks like to work across agencies more effectively, how to share power and not just look to the council to solve problems.

Jackie Wilderspin noted that this work would not have been possible without the long-term commitment of Oxford City Council who have invested in community development work in neighbourhoods. Without this type of approach we will not achieve an inclusive economy.

Action – Joseph Barrett to return with Community Impact Zone evaluation at a future date.

7. Forward Plan

At the April meeting there will be an education special, with additional attendees invited such as Heads of Academies. [Please note that this meeting has been postponed due to the current crisis.](#)

If attendees have other suggestions for agenda items later in the year please forward to Shelley Ghazi.

OSP Meeting Date	Key Agenda Items
<p>Mtg 2. Postponed 10:30-12:30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth Board update • Inclusive growth update • Sub group report - Safer Communities annual update Low Carbon Oxford six month, • Task & Finish update
<p>Mtg 3. TBC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth Board update

OSP Meeting Date	Key Agenda Items
10:30-12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive growth update • Sub group report - Economic Growth annual update & Stronger Communities six monthly update • Task & Finish update
Mtg 4. 13th October 2020 10:30-12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth Board update • Inclusive growth update • Sub group report - Low Carbon Oxford Annual update, Safer Communities six month update • Task & Finish update