

A transition period – the opportunities and challenges for partnership working in Oxfordshire

Partnership Review

Background

We have a strong ethic of partnership working in Oxfordshire. We have effective partnership structures, good relationships and an agreed vision/set of priorities in place.

The Oxfordshire Partnership framework has been operating for a number of years. In 2009 we undertook a review of partnership working to ensure it was fit for purpose. Overall we have created the framework and conditions for people and organisations to work together on shared priorities

However, things have moved on considerably and we now need to consider what works for Oxfordshire.

No specific Government statements have been made on the future of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), in terms of their role and responsibilities. However, many LSPs are in the process of reviewing their sustainable community strategies to meet difficult challenges ahead, and will be looking for ways of making savings through closer joint working with partners, shared asset management, and possible workforce integration.

Following the formation of the new government there have already been a number of announcements that have already affected the statutory nature and functions of some partnerships – and these have been summarised in annex 1. There is also the localism bill that is due in November that will need to be considered.

Partnership Review

The Chief Executives (Councils, Police and Health) have been leading this work and have proposed that it is premature to do a detailed review due to continuing uncertainties about the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review and emerging Government Policy and Guidelines.

Work is being undertaken across partnerships on reviewing their roles and remits. However, partnerships are in a period of transition and they still have work to complete. We recognise the changes in partnerships that have been set out by Government and these are summarised in Annex A.

In order to take this work forward it is proposed that a set of principles are agreed. These include:

- That we need to be clear about what the priorities are for Oxfordshire. Once we are clear on the priorities the required structures will more naturally emerge.

Oxfordshire Partnership

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- That we should build on the communication and trust that has been established through partnership working but that, with reduced capacity, this has to be made more efficient.
- That we should continue to work from the same evidence base
- That an overarching Framework for joint working is still required, to address those difficult and challenging issues which require joint working across mainstream services.

In the New Year we will reflect on what the priorities are for Oxfordshire and will reflect these in the relevant partnership.

October 2010

Summary of changes to current partnership environment: Oxfordshire Partnership 1st December 2010

Partnership	Changes emerging from Government	Comments
Oxfordshire Partnership Board	Local Strategic Partnerships may continue if they wish. Local decision.	Propose that the Oxfordshire Partnership Board remains in place as a county-wide information sharing and consultative body that helps to set high level strategic objectives for joint action.
District Local Strategic Partnerships	As above	District Local Strategic Partnerships to be reviewed locally.
Public Service Board	Government announced the end of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and there is now no requirement to report back on targets.	<p>Oxfordshire 2030 remains our joint vision for Oxfordshire and the LAA was only part of the delivery of this strategy.</p> <p>There are currently no plans to formally disband the Public Service Board. It may meet again in 2011 if circumstances require it to do so. For example, Total Place/Place Based Budgets is evolving as Community Budgeting –there may be some need for a group to have an overview of public sector resources.</p> <p>The Oxfordshire Chief Executives and Leaders group continues to meet.</p>
Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP)	<p>The Regional Development Agencies will be abolished and there is no longer a requirement for local authorities to set housing targets.</p> <p>There are substantial changes proposed to the planning system.</p> <p>To date there has been no proposed changes to the role of the Homes and Communities Agency.</p>	As the new Local Enterprise Partnership is being set up these arrangements and inter-relationships will be reviewed.
Oxfordshire Economic Partnership (OEP) and Oxfordshire Learning &	The Government has asked for proposals to form Local Enterprise Partnerships. Oxfordshire's bid has been successful.	

Skills Partnership		
Children's Trust	There is no longer a statutory requirement to have a Children's Trust or Children's Plan. Schools no longer have a duty to cooperate with a Children's Trust.	Proposed that the existing structure is maintained until government guidance is clearer.
Health and Well Being Partnership	There a number of government proposals to broaden the role of local authorities in public health have been consulted on These are likely to require joint : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ needs assessments ▪ integration of services and partnership arrangements ▪ commissioning of services and pooled budgets ▪ And the public scrutiny of those involved 	Proposed that the existing structure is maintained until government guidance is clearer.
Environment and Waste	There will be a need to focus more on climate change and carbon reduction in the future.	Further conversations will take place in the Oxfordshire Chief Executives and Leaders group
Safer Communities Partnership	Government have cut many community safety grants.	Thames Valley Police is currently undergoing a restructure. Implications of consultation on directly elected police commissioners, and the future role of community safety partnerships. Further conversations will take place with the police in the Oxfordshire Chief Executives and Leaders group
Stronger Communities Alliance (OSCA)	The voluntary, community and faith sectors are expected to play a large role in delivering the 'Big Society'. However there is no funding being made available and a lack of clarity over what this means.	OSCA are in the process of developing a new business plan to address these issues. .
Local Area Agreement Steering Group	n/a	Already disbanded
Comprehensive Area	n/a	Already disbanded

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Assessment Group		
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