

## OXFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP - 25 NOVEMBER 2009

### OXFORDSHIRE DATA OBSERVATORY ANNUAL REPORT

#### 1. Introduction

- a) This is the first annual report by the Oxfordshire Data Observatory to the Oxfordshire Partnership. It reports on the progress made over the last twelve months and outlines the challenges for next year.

#### **About the Oxfordshire Data Observatory**

The Observatory was set up in 2004 as an Oxfordshire Partnership project to develop an evidence base for the county and to make data accessible.

The purpose of the Observatory is to provide the data and information for evidence-based strategy and service planning. Benefits include:

- Joint data purchase, data sharing and analysis saves partners' money (recent examples are given in this report).
- The Observatory website ([www.oxfordshireobservatory.info](http://www.oxfordshireobservatory.info)) is a portal for policy makers, analysts, and the public to access a wide range of local information and statistics with links to other data.
- The Observatory provides advice for data users, briefings and training on using data.
- An annual Data Forum brings data users together to address topical data issues.

- b) At present, Oxfordshire County Council provides the massive bulk of financial, analytical and 'in kind' support for the Observatory. The small Observatory secretariat (1.5 FTE) is supported by the council's Research and Intelligence team. This year the county council is contributing an additional £105,000 for technical development of the Observatory. This will fund a Local Information System for the benefit of all partners.

- c) Annual partner contributions are as follows:

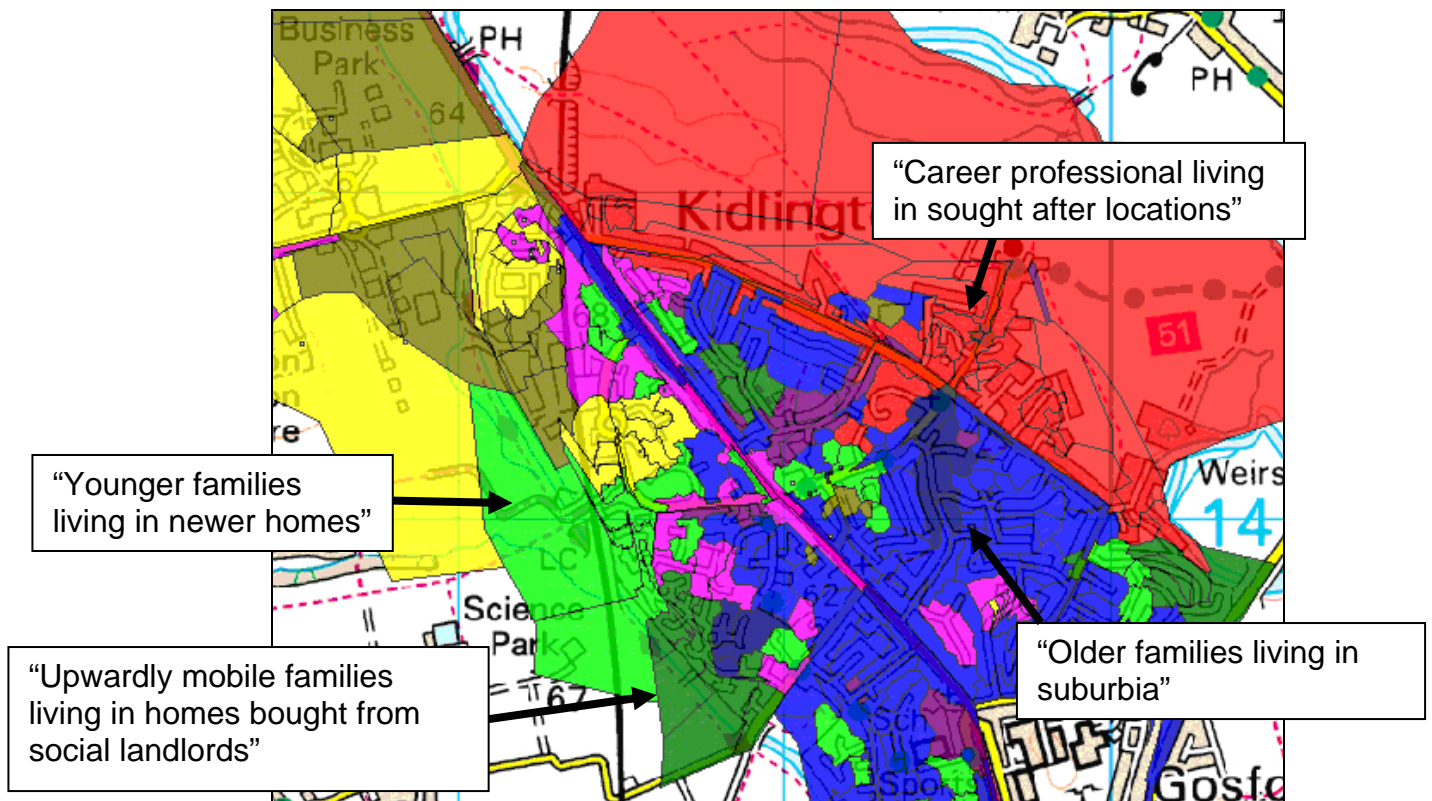
<b>Strategic Board partner</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Oxfordshire County Council	£20,411
Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust	£7,144
Cherwell District Council	£5,103
Oxford City Council	£5,103
South Oxfordshire District Council	£5,103
Vale of White Horse District Council	£5,103
West Oxfordshire District Council	£5,103
Thames Valley Police	£0
Oxfordshire Rural Community Council	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£53,070</b>

2. Achievements over the last 12 months

- a) **Ongoing funding committed.** In October 2008, county and district Chief Executives confirmed ongoing Base funding for the Observatory.
- b) **Stronger governance.** Chief Executives also agreed that the Observatory should be steered by senior managers with a corporate perspective. A Strategic Board is now in place and meets quarterly.
- c) **Improved access to data.** The business case for technical development of the Observatory has been approved. The County Council has offered £105,000 funding for the development work which will produce a web-based “Local Information System” to enable us all to manage and interpret complex data at much lower cost.
- d) **Joint data purchase.** The Observatory purchased lifestyle (Mosaic), income and ethnicity data from Experian on behalf of partners. This saved approximately £200,000 compared to individual partners buying this data separately.

These datasets provide detailed information about the types of people who live in the county. The Observatory is packaging the information into useable formats such as the map in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** Main lifestyle types in different parts of Kidlington



- e) **Data used to inform and create evidence based strategies.** Observatory data has been used to inform more robust and effective strategic analysis. Examples include the draft Local Economic Assessment, the Children and

Young People's Plan, the Quality of Life section of the progress report to the Oxfordshire Partnership, and analysis of issues related to Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation.

- f) **Data used to improve service delivery.** Observatory data has been used to target service delivery. Examples include selecting the optimal site for a recycling centre, investigating arson reduction, targeting people with possible care needs, improving the reputation of the County Council and analysing illegal trading and doorstep crime.
- g) **Tailored enquiry support and advice.** The Observatory has provided significant support to Oxfordshire Partnership organisations and the public, improving efficiency and saving sizable consultancy fees. Common areas for requests for data and advice are on the economy, population and deprivation.

### 3. Looking ahead: providing evidence and improving access to evidence

- a) **Strategic direction.** The Strategic Board will review the Observatory's strategic direction, priorities and funding to drive its continued development.
- b) **Support the evidence needs of thematic partnerships.** The Observatory is exploring how to better support the evidence needs of the thematic partnerships, attending the Partnership Development Group in November as a first step.
- c) **Technical development.** The Observatory will look and feel different as we move to a Local information System. The Observatory will be supporting the learning that will be required by all data users and bedding in new ways of working with data as well as making a concerted effort to get high quality cleaned data into the system.
- d) **Further data purchases.** The Observatory has saved the partnership hundreds of thousands of pounds since it was set up in negotiating joint data purchases. Decisions will be needed on funding datasets on a longer term basis, such as the customer insight data illustrated above.

### 4. Conclusion

Many organisations are working in partnership to deliver better outcomes for Oxfordshire. The evidence base for this work relies on sharing our information, using best practice to turn that information into real intelligence, and communicating the key messages that result. The role of the Data Observatory is to support this process.

Comments on this report and on the Data Observatory are welcome.

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