

Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework and Partnership Agreement

DRAFT
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Introduction:

This document sets out the Governance Framework and Partnership Agreement for the Oxfordshire Partnership the local strategic partnership for the county of Oxfordshire.

The purpose of this document is to set out the partnership's aims, objectives and priorities, and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of its members.

The Governance Framework is intended to:

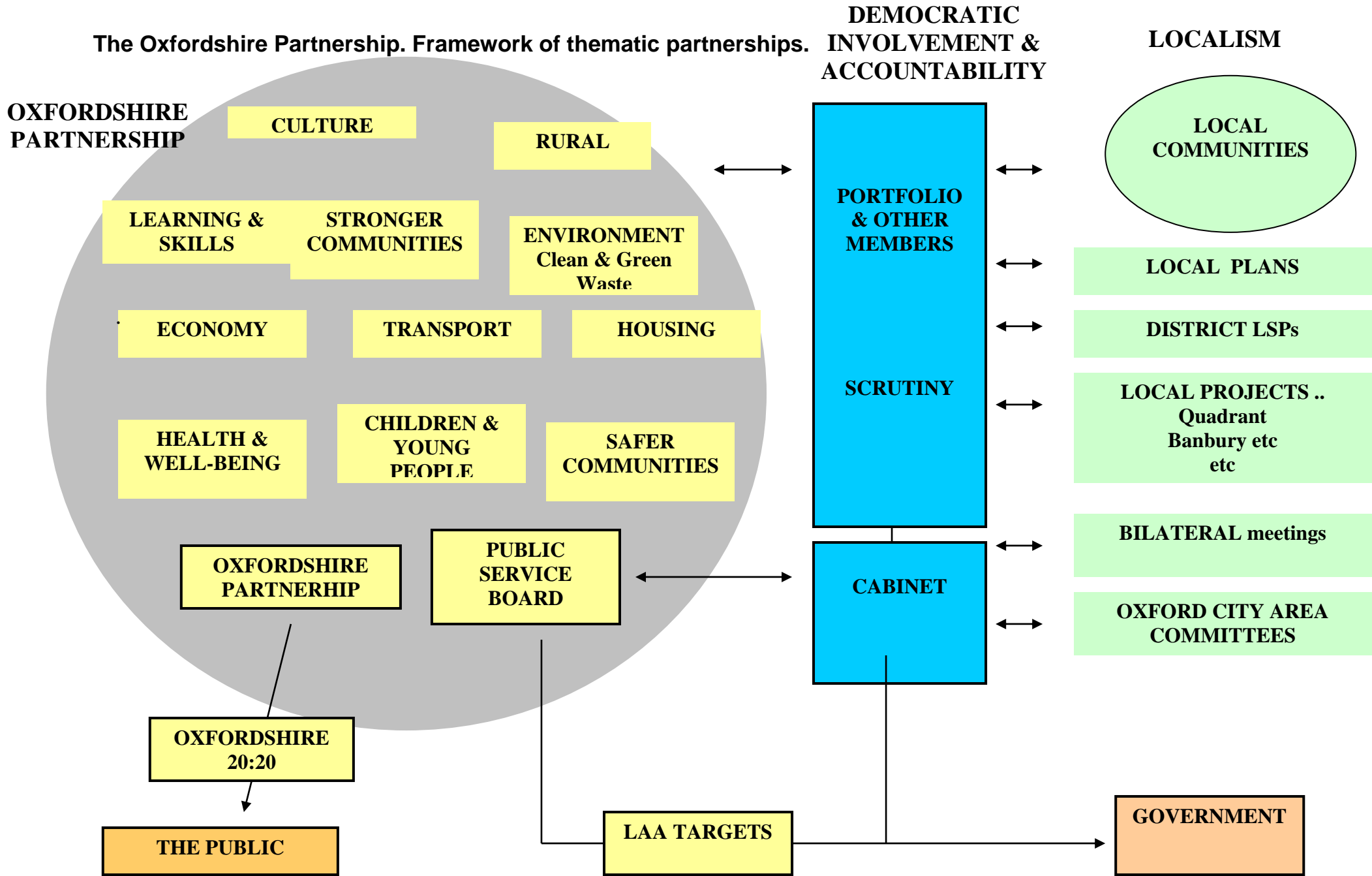
- Bring together the different parts of the public sector as well as the private, community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together to improve the quality of life of all who live and work in the area
- Simplify and where possible reduce the number of separate partnerships in which partners are engaged, since the same key partners are likely to be involved in a number of different partnerships
- Improve the links between partnerships so that they know how they fit into the wide picture and enhance rather than cut across the achievement of one another's objectives
- Integrate new work which would benefit from a partnership approach; and
- Ensure that the people of Oxfordshire are able to enjoy a high quality of life by working together to promote and support issues and projects relating to:
 - Safer and stronger communities
 - Children and young people
 - Healthier communities and older people
 - Economic development and enterprise
 - Environment and sustainability issues; and
 - Other issues as they arise and are agreed

The agreement is not a binding contractual agreement but does demonstrate a strong commitment by the signatories to improve the quality of life for all those who live in, work in or visit Oxfordshire.

Within the framework the constituent bodies are identified as:

- The Oxfordshire Partnership
- The Oxfordshire Public Service Board
- Oxfordshire wide thematic partnerships (LAA thematic groups)
- Oxfordshire Partnership annual event

The Oxfordshire Partnership. Framework of thematic partnerships.



Purpose of the Oxfordshire Partnership:

The Oxfordshire Partnership is the over-arching strategic partnership for the county and provides the forum for setting the strategic vision for the county and for capturing the vision in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Aims of the Oxfordshire Partnership:

- To agree a vision, key priorities and actions to tackle economic, social and environmental concerns for Oxfordshire
- To work together as equal partners and with the community to prepare the Sustainable Community Strategy
- To bring together local plans, partnerships and initiatives for service providers to work together with the community to meet local needs and priorities
- To work together to avoid duplication, additional costs, conflicting strategies and consultation fatigue
- To liaise, where appropriate, with neighbouring Local Strategic Partnerships where there is a mutual benefit

Objectives of the Oxfordshire Partnership:

- To promote equality and diversity and improve the quality of life for everyone who lives in , works in or visits Oxfordshire
- To strengthen partnership working to ensure that everyone is working in the same strategic direction, sharing resources, information and expertise to address key issues and local priorities
- To develop a Sustainable Community Strategy for Oxfordshire
- To improve consultation methods across the county

All of the below apply to the constituent partnerships of the Oxfordshire Partnership:

Partnership Principles:

Partners agree to work together actively and as equals to achieve the aims of the framework on the basis of:

- Visible commitment and ownership at appropriate levels by the various member organisations and individual representatives
- Mutual trust and respect
- Openness and transparency
- Shared ownership of resources where appropriate
- Combined expertise
- Identification and sharing of good practice
- Equality of access and opportunity
- Clear purposes and agreed targets for action
- Effective decision making

- Shared mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating, reviewing and reporting on performance, progress and success

Accountability:

Partners are responsible for ensuring that they:

- Are open and transparent in their reasons for making certain decisions and are clear about when their individual roles are in conflict
- Inform the partnership when they are unable to deliver agreed actions through their organisations
- Recognise and understand the different levels of accountability for partners
 - For example: the police commander reports to the chief constable and through him to the police authority and home secretary therefore partnership working needs to recognise these accountabilities
 - The partnership as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that a strategy is developed for the community and that the targets identified are delivered
 - Elected members are accountable to the local electorate through the democratic process
 - Community and voluntary sector representatives are accountable to the community and groups/bodies they are representative of

Conduct: general principles:

The following principles should apply to all members of the constituent bodies of the Oxfordshire Partnership both individually and collectively:

- Honesty and integrity
- Objectivity – making decisions on merit
- Accountability – to the public for actions and the way responsibilities are carried out (co-operating with scrutiny as appropriate)
- Openness
- Respect for others
- Duty to uphold the law
- Leadership – promoting and supporting the principles of the partnership (s) by leadership and by example, acting in such a way that secures and preserves public confidence

Access to Information:

Rights to attend meetings:

Members of the public may attend all meetings of the Oxfordshire Partnership by notifying the Partnership Officer. However, the public may be excluded from meetings if it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, that confidential information would be disclosed.

However, there is a presumption of openness that requires any meeting to be held in public unless there are compelling grounds for excluding the public.

All Partnership meetings shall be posted on the Partnership website.

Access to agendas and reports before the meeting:

Papers will be available 5 days before the meeting and can be obtained from the Partnership Officer or from the Partnership website:

www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk

Access to minutes after the meeting:

The Partnership will make available copies of the meeting and these will be available on the Partnership website www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk or from the Partnership Officer.

Confidentiality:

Partnership meetings may occasionally receive information which is not in the public domain, often relating to individuals or commercially sensitive matters. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that this information remains confidential to the meeting, unless prior authorisation has been given by the chair for this to be discussed elsewhere.

Conflict of Interest:

It is acknowledged that many of those involved in any partnership will, due to its nature, have an interest of some sort at some time. However, such interests must not be allowed to result in actual or perceived undue benefit and consequently to unsound decision making.

Where a conflict of interest exists, or potentially exists, a declaration of interest should be made to the Chair of the appropriate meeting.

A declaration of interest may disbar a member from participating in a partnership project, or any constituent partnership, action group or forum if it is judged that the interest declared is prejudicial to the aims, objectives and spirit of the partnership, or, that such an interest can reasonably be judged to be mostly to the benefit of the individual or organisation making the declaration rather than mostly to the benefit of the partnership.

The potential types of conflict of interest include:

- Where an individual or a connected person stands to gain financially from a decision made by the constituent body, either directly or indirectly. For example, where a project approval or decision on the letting of a contract would benefit an individual directly or an organisation or company the individual was involved with

- Where individuals have multiple roles. Many individuals “wear more than one hat”, i.e. some residents in decision making positions may also be employees of potential beneficiaries and some partner representatives may be employees of member organisations bidding for funds or contracts etc.

This can be a confusing area so if in doubt please clarify with the Partnership Manager before the meeting.

Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion:

The constituent bodies of the Oxfordshire Partnership shall operate on the basis of principles which actively value diversity and which ensure fair treatment in service delivery, in terms of both equal access to and equal outcomes from local service delivery, which is designed to meet local needs.

Each constituent body will seek to inform, support, involve and give a voice to all sections of the community, with particular emphasis on minority ethnic groups, faith communities, those with disabilities, women, older people and children and young people. They will also seek to ensure an appropriate gender balance in their membership, so far as is practicable.

Communication:

The Partnership shall follow the objectives set out in the communications strategy which are:

- The Oxfordshire Partnership will meet quarterly with meeting dates set 12 months in advance
- The chosen method of communication will be by e-mail
- The Partnership website will be kept up to date by the Partnership team and will host all meeting papers and relevant documents
- Communication is the responsibility of all partners. Communication means internally with all members of the partnership and externally to the organisations they represent and by the partnership as a whole to the people of Oxfordshire and more widely.
- We aim at all times to use communication that is clear and free of jargon and abbreviations
- It is the responsibility of all partners to facilitate an effective two-way flow of information by consulting with their organisation or network on the work of the partnership and communicating decisions and achievements to them.

Key Principles of Public Consultation:

The five principles of consultation which the Partnership shall adhere to are as follows:

- **Keep an open mind** and never decide the outcome before a consultation exercise is completed
- **Ensure all relevant parties are consulted**, that they are as representative as possible and are well informed of the parameters surrounding the consultation
- **Ensure the consultation process is** conducted openly and honestly
- **Ensure that all views expressed are taken into account** when decisions are made
- **Communicate these decisions widely** to the public and those who took part in the process

Evaluation:

The work of the Partnership shall be evaluated via:

- The Local Area Agreement review (6 and 12 months)
- Comprehensive Area Assessment
- An annual partnership event that will form the basis of an annual review
- The partnership shall make use of its website to invite comments and feedback on the sustainable community strategy process.
- The partnership shall produce an annual update reports
- The partnership shall conduct an ongoing evaluation where partners will be encouraged to evaluate their perception of success or otherwise of the partnership. External facilitation may be used as appropriate to help develop the partnership.
- The partnerships team shall work with other LSPs in the county, through the countywide LSP offices group, to develop a consistent approach to monitoring, evaluation and partnership working.

Reviewing the Governance Framework and Agreement:

It is the responsibility of all partners to promote the principles within this framework and to measure the effectiveness of the agreement in contributing to the improvement of services and facilities in Oxfordshire.

The Partnership shall review and amend the Governance Framework annually for the purposes of ensuring:

- The agreement is fit for purpose as a governance framework for the operation of the partnership
- That changes in government policy, legislation, funding and scrutiny are reflected in the governance arrangements

Members Roles and Responsibilities:

Generic roles and responsibilities:

- Receive and read papers regarding Oxfordshire Partnership and its sub-groups
- Attend Oxfordshire Partnership meetings
- Develop effective working relationships with others, and the members of the constituent partnerships
- Assist in developing appropriate ideas and concerns for the attention of Oxfordshire Partnership and play an active part in developing and delivering policies, programmes and action
- Ensure an up to date awareness of issues affecting residents in Oxfordshire
- Liaise with other board representatives as appropriate
- Take part in consultation, training or events as necessary or appropriate

Role Description: Chairman

The chairman of the Oxfordshire Partnership shall seek to develop the work of the Partnership and its members by offering leadership, commitment and vision within the terms of the Governance Framework and the sustainable community strategy.

The Chairman shall:

- Chair meetings of the Oxfordshire Partnership in an effective and open manner and in line with the agreed agenda
- Report on Oxfordshire Partnership business to the executive of the Oxfordshire County Council
- Ensure all partners have a fair and equal opportunity to participate in partnership debate and decision making
- Summarise information and decisions at appropriate points
- Ensure meetings achieve their objectives within the allocated time
- Seek to progress partnership business by consensus, but, when necessary, determine arrangements for voting in partnership meetings by a simple majority. In these cases, the chairman will have a second or casting vote
- Act impartially
- Act as spokesperson on behalf of the partnership as required

Role Description: Vice Chair

The Vice Chair of the Oxfordshire Partnership shall support the Chairman in developing the work of the partners and its members by offering leadership, commitment and vision within the terms of the agreed constitution and the sustainable community strategy.

The vice chair shall not be from the same organisation as the chair and will:

- Substitute for the chair when he/she is unavailable and act in accordance with the chair's role description whilst doing so

Role description: Public Sector representatives

The representative shall:

- Report on Oxfordshire Partnership business to the organisation, forum or sector they represent
- Represent the interests of member organisations on Oxfordshire Partnership
- Provide feedback and information about Oxfordshire Partnership and its work to member organisations

Role Description: Private Sector Representative:

The representative shall:

- Report on Oxfordshire Partnership business to the organisation, forum or sector they represent
- Seek to contribute actively to meeting wider social and environmental improvement goals of the area recognising that the achievement of these is also in the interest of local firms and the wider economy in the long run
- Assist local businesses and business support agencies in developing appropriate ideas and concerns of the local businesses and business networks into the partnership
- Ensure the Partnership takes into consideration the views and concerns of the private sector during discussions and decision making

Role Description – Elected members

The representative shall:

- Report on Oxfordshire Partnership business to their political groups and any committees which they attend
- Provide feedback and information about Oxfordshire Partnership and its work to the appropriate council

Role description - Voluntary and Community Sector

The representative shall:

- Report on Oxfordshire Partnership business to their organisation, forum or sector which they represent

The Structure of the Partnership

The Oxfordshire Partnership comprises a number of partnerships and forums each responsible for discharging particular statutory and non-statutory duties and making progress on outcomes and priorities for Oxfordshire agreed locally. These are:

Partnership	Responsible for:
Oxfordshire Partnership	Development of the Sustainable Community Strategy Countywide vision
Oxfordshire Public Service Board	The executive arm of the Oxfordshire Partnership in the delivery of public services.

Statutory Partnerships

The Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Partnership
The Oxfordshire Health and Well-being Partnership
The Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership

Other Thematic Partnerships:

TO BE DEVELOPED:

Oxfordshire Economic Partnership
Stronger Communities Partnership
Environmental Forum Partnership
Learning and Skills Partnership
Culture, leisure, tourism Partnership

The Oxfordshire Partnership: Terms of Reference:

The Oxfordshire Partnership is the over-arching strategic partnership for the county and provides the forum for setting the strategic vision for the county and for capturing the vision in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Terms of reference:

The Oxfordshire Partnership is responsible for the following:

Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a Sustainable Community Strategy – a single strategic vision for Oxfordshire.
Monitoring of outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To monitor the outcomes of the Strategy and recommend remedial action.
Horizon scanning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise awareness of, and debate on, the major emerging issues likely to affect the quality of life of people living in, working in or visiting the county.
Raising the profile of Oxfordshire regionally and nationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To lobby, campaign and champion the issues that are important to Oxfordshire to regional and national government and the media. To communicate the priorities, activities and achievements of the Partnership (this includes the achievements of the thematic partnerships) to the public and across the wider partnership. To have clear links and communication with the major thematic / delivery partnerships.
Consultation and data sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To bring together, where possible, strategic consultation exercises. To promote the use of the Oxfordshire Data Observatory and ensure that the partners share data and information and that data sharing protocols are in place.
Relationship management, inclusion and equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work closely and supportively with the statutory / public sector service providers. To maintain the best possible communication and understanding between the partners and sectors. To ensure that the partnership is accessible.
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that the Partnership's activities are accessible to the public. To ensure strong governance and partnership agreements are in place and that these are reviewed annually.

Membership:

Organisation / sector	Members
County Council	Leader of the Council – Chairman for first 2 years.
Health	Chief Executive, Primary Care Trust
Thames Valley Police	Thames Valley Police Assistant Chief Constable
District Councils	Leaders of Oxford City, Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse District Councils.
District LSPs	Chairs of the Oxford, Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse Local Strategic Partnerships.
Parish / Town Council	Up to 5 representatives.
Learning, skills, education	Executive Director Learning and Skills Council Thames Valley Oxford Brookes University Oxford University Chairman of the Learning Partnership
Private Sector	Chairman of Oxfordshire Economic Partnership Editor Oxford Times A member who is a senior representative of a large business.
Government Office for the South East	GOSE Locality Manager for Oxfordshire (Thames Valley)
SEEDA	Area Director
Voluntary, Community and faith sectors.	2 senior representatives to be nominated by the county voluntary sector forum.
BME Sector	Director, Oxfordshire Racial Equality Council.
Culture, Tourism & Leisure	Further consultation is required with the sector to clarify representation.
Environment	Further consultation is required with the network of forums and partnerships in this area to clarify representation.
Rural communities	Director of the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council.
Total	Up to 33 members
Others who attend as required / by invitation.	
County Council Health Other ...	County Council - Chief Executive. District Chief Executives Director of Public Health Chairs of the thematic partnerships – for example: Children and Young People’s Partnership. Purpose is to link these partnerships with this Board and report on LAA and other strategic targets and emerging issues.
Support Team	Partnership’s Unit, Chief Executives Office, Oxfordshire County Council

- Any member of the partnership may resign by giving not less than one months notice, in writing, to the partnerships team and to the key sector partnership/organisation they represent. The sector partnership and/or organisation concerned will put in place arrangements for determining a new representative as quickly as possible.
- Any member of the partnership who is unable to attend a meeting may nominate a named deputy/substitute to represent the key sector partnership/and or organisation. If a deputy is used more than 3 times in a year, the member sending the deputy shall automatically cease to be a member of the partnership. If a member is removed then their key sector partnership/organisation shall appoint a new member to the partnership board
- When a deputy/substitute is appointed the member should
 - Ensure that the deputy receives the appropriate agenda and associated papers for the meeting
 - Ensure that the deputy receives a full briefing
 - Arrange a debriefing with the deputy following the meeting
- The Partnership Board may resolve to remove any member of the board who fails to attend for three consecutive meetings.

Reviewing the membership:

The membership of the partnership shall be reviewed annually by each sector involved in the partnership. With the exception of the offices of Chair and Vice-Chair, the number of years that a person may service is not limited and is at the discretion of the partnership.

Selection of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Partnership

It is recommended that the person chairing the Partnership will do so for a period of 24 months and that the position will then be rotated amongst the public, private and community sectors as follows. However, Oxfordshire County Council will need to approve chairmanship as noted in the Local Government White Paper.

	24 months from 2007	24 months thereafter	24 months thereafter	24 months thereafter
Chairman	Public Sector County Council	Private Sector	Community Sector	Public Sector
Vice Chairman	Private Sector	Community Sector	Public Sector	Private Sector

Nominations for the chair and vice-chair shall be proposed by the sectors that are due to provide the chair and vice-chair. For example if the voluntary and community sector are due to take the chair they shall propose the candidate and so on.

Frequency of meetings:

The Partnership will meet a maximum of 3 times a year with a wider partnership event taking place annually.

The Oxfordshire Public Service Board

The public service board will:

- Bring together the key public service decision makers to improve partnership working and to deliver improvements to public services in the county
- Oversee the development of the LAA
- Reports back regularly to the Oxfordshire Partnership

The Public Service Board is responsible for:

Performance and risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level performance and risk management of cross-public sector and LAA targets. • Remedial action to maintain progress on targets.
LAA negotiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation with Government on future LAA targets.
Resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify resources to deliver LAA targets. • Propose policy on budget pooling and alignment.
Communication and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work closely and supportively with the Oxfordshire Partnership Board. • To have clear links and communication with the thematic partnerships responsible for delivery of LAA and other targets.

Membership:

Organisation / sector	Members
Chairman	Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet member
County Council	Chief Executive
Health	Primary Care Trust Chief Executive and the Director of Public Health
Thames Valley Police	Thames Valley Police. Oxfordshire BCU Commander,
District Councils	5 representatives. 1 nominated by each District Council.
Voluntary & Community Sector	1 representative from the Stronger Communities Partnership (senior representative of the voluntary / community / faith sectors).
Learning, skills, education	Executive Director Learning and Skills Council, Thames Valley
Government Office for the South East	GOSE Locality Manager for Oxfordshire (Thames Valley)
SEEDA	Area Director
Total	14
Others who attend as required / by invitation	Chairs of the Local Area Agreement Thematic Partnerships Officers responsible for performance and risk management reporting. Other Government agencies.
Support Team	Officers from the Partnership's Unit, Chief Executives Office, County Council

The Oxfordshire Thematic Partnerships

The thematic partnerships are in relation to each of the following:

- Safer and stronger communities (safer is Statutory)
- Children and Young People (Statutory)
- Healthier Communities and Older People (Statutory)
- Economic Development and Enterprise
- Environment

It is acknowledged that the thematic partnerships will each have their own specific terms of reference. However, it is suggested that each Partnership incorporates the following 'core' terms of reference to support their broader role within the broader Oxfordshire Partnership Framework.

Core terms of reference:

- Develop and deliver appropriate action plans to support and contribute to the overall vision for Oxfordshire
- Monitor and manage the overall performance of the thematic partnerships and its associated projects, through the application of programme/project management principles
- Provide annual progress reports to the Oxfordshire Partnership and "exception" reports when necessary
- Deliver the appropriate block of the LAA
- Commission thematic research and consultation to seek community views on priorities, encourage involvement in identifying solutions and underpin the development and delivery of the thematic action plans.

Signatories to the Governance Framework and Partnership Agreement:

Oxfordshire County Council

Signed

Name

Position in organisation

Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust:

Signed

Name

Position in organisation

Thames Valley Police:

Signed:

Name:

Position in organisation:

South Oxfordshire District Council:

Signed:

Name:

Position in organisation:

West Oxfordshire District Council:

Signed:

Name:

Position in organisation

Vale of White Horse District Council:

Signed:

Name

Position in organisation

Cherwell District Council:

Signed:

Name:

Position in organisation:

Oxford City Council:

Signed:

Name:

Position in organisation:

Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector representatives:

Signed

Name:

Position in organisation:

Signed:

Name:
Position in organisation:

Oxford Strategic Partnership:
Signed:
Name:
Position in organisation

Cherwell Community Planning Partnership:
Signed:
Name:
Position in organisation

South Oxfordshire Partnership:
Signed:
Name:
Position in organisation:

Vale Partnership:
Signed:
Name:
Position in organisation:

West Oxfordshire Partnership:
Signed:
Name:
Position in organisation

Parish/Town Council
Signed:
Name:
Position in organisation:

Learning and Skills Council:
Signed:
Name:
Position in organisation:

Oxford Times
Signed:
Name:
Position in organisation

Oxfordshire Economic Partnership:
Signed:
Name:
Position in organisation:

Government Office for the South East:
Signed:

Name:
Position in organisation:

South East England Development Agency:

Signed:
Name:
Position in organisation

Oxfordshire Racial Equality Council:

Signed:
Name:
Position in organisation

Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

Signed;
Name:
Position in organisation:

Culture and Environment to be added

For further information:

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www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk