

**Notes of the Oxfordshire Environment Partnership Meeting
23 January 2008 10-12, Speedwell House, Oxfordshire County Council**

1. Attended

Robin Buxton	Chair
Tim Reeder	Environment Agency
Linda Watson	Oxfordshire Rural Community Council
Matt Jackson	BBOWT
Chris West	UK Climate Impacts Programme
Cllr David Harvey	West Oxfordshire District Council
Cath James	West Oxfordshire District Council
Mark Saunders	Vale of White Horse District Council
Michael Crofton Briggs	Oxford City Council
Cllr Caroline van Zyl	Oxford City Council
Ian Davies	Cherwell District Council
Lowelle Brian	South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr Roger Belson	Oxfordshire County Council
Chris Cousins	Oxfordshire County Council
Susie Ohlenschlager	Oxfordshire County Council
Rose Bailey	Oxfordshire County Council
Claire Phillips	Oxfordshire County Council (Partnerships Unit)

Apologies

Sally Wilson	South Oxfordshire District Council
Frank Nigriello	Oxfordshire Economic Partnership
Anna Robinson	South Oxfordshire District Council
Craig Woolhouse	Environment Agency

ITEM	ACTIONS
<p>2. Context and roles of the Environment Partnership (Robin Buxton)</p> <p>Robin Buxton introduced this item. This Environment Partnership has come about in the context of the Oxfordshire Partnership. This has a number of thematic partnerships which contribute to it – waste, health, education, housing etc. The purpose of this group is to create another thematic partnership to contribute to the Sustainable Community Strategy on environmental issues, where it has been weaker. This partnership replaces the Oxfordshire Environment Group which ended about a year ago.</p> <p>The Environment Partnership has a key role in acting as an interface between District Councils, the County Council and non-government organisations (NGOs). It will be important to work with existing partnerships, such as the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership and the Housing Partnership.</p> <p>The Oxfordshire Climate Change Partnership has been developing climate change themes for the Local Area Agreement 2 (LAA2) and there needs to be a strong relationship with that group in order that their views are represented by the Environment Partnership.</p>	

<p>Points raised during discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor David Harvey referred to a letter from Barry Norton, West Ox DC, which expressed a wish for memberships of partnerships to be inclusive and fair, and proposed that terms of reference should not be finalised up until the review of membership was completed. • Linda Watson mentioned that the Oxfordshire Voluntary Sector Partnership would also be electing a representative to the Environment Partnership. • This group would also need to address issues of finance to support projects and resource the partnership. 	
<p>3. Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement (Robin Buxton)</p> <p>The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) defines a small number of key strategic themes for the county – of which the environment is one. This forms the foundation for producing the Local Area Agreement 2 (LAA2), although LAA2 has had to be finalised sooner due to government deadlines. LAA2 is a set of 3-year targets agreed with central government. There are no targets proposed on flooding (issues of timescale) but some are proposed in the draft SCS.</p> <p>Proposals for LAA2 are to be submitted to the Public Service Board on 5 February – see timescale and current details at www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk The LAA2 targets are to be agreed locally and submitted to GOSE by 31 March, and agreed with central government in June. Initial proposals need therefore to be submitted by 28 January. Reward money is attached to the targets but less is available than in the first agreement, and will be allocated at the end of the period.</p> <p>Susie Ohlenschlager explained that the Oxfordshire Climate Change Partnership was formed initially to deal with government funding for climate change communication, but has been recently contributing to developing climate change target proposals for LAA2. There are three indicators relating to climate change, and a target proposal has been developed for each indicator:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Reducing CO₂ emissions from local authorities.</i> The Oxfordshire proposal has been widened to the public sector to include the Universities. The proposal covers procurement and working with supply chains and contractors, and eco-schools. 2. <i>Reducing per capita CO₂ emissions.</i> This covers working through the planning system and with local communities to reduce CO₂ emissions from domestic energy use, and reducing CO₂ emissions from business 3. <i>Adapting to Climate Change.</i> Performance indicators are still being developed, to include identifying vulnerabilities, considering risks, and developing strategies to manage the impacts of climate change. 	<p>Action – SO to circulate Oxfordshire Climate Change Partnership papers, and list of people involved in the partnership.</p> <p>All to liaise with OCCP members.</p>

<p>4. Climate Change Adaptation (Tim Reeder, EA Thames Region Climate Change Programme Manager) <i>'Climate Change and Flood Risk on the Thames'</i></p> <p>2 themes: 'look to the past' and "expect the unexpected"</p> <p>Historically, floods happen (1894 and 1947 were memorable extreme-flood years), but climate change makes them more likely. Summer 2007 floods were outside anything expected, making climate change a likely contributor. They caused £2.5bn losses, and damage to 43,000 homes and 5,000 businesses. Rain in Pershore, Worcestershire, was 1 in 1000 year predictability.</p> <p>Protecting critical infrastructure is important, especially making it resilient. Cost-benefit analysis and multi-criteria analysis determine where money will be spent on flooding. Resilience and managing floodplains is vital, not just building defences, as defending from and not storing flood water only moves the problem on. For increased resilience, we need to be better at forecasting, especially in rural areas where defence is difficult. Community groups could provide a way to increase flood resilience – 'stick and mobile phone' approach. ClimateXChange and other networks could be used.</p> <p>There are 3 key resilience themes: flooding, plus drought and over-heating.</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Circulate presentation</p> <p>Discuss local resilience projects at next meeting, to identify areas of joint working.</p>
<p>5. Climate Change mitigation – Housing and the role of this group in helping to reduce carbon emissions from housing and domestic energy consumption</p> <p>Chris Cousins introduced the discussion. There are two broad areas to consider:</p> <p>Existing Housing Stock: The challenge is to reduce emissions from existing housing, especially private housing. Brenda Boardman of the Environmental Change Institute has recently published a paper on reducing emissions by 80% by 2050 from existing housing stock.</p> <p>New Developments: District Councils can influence developments through the planning process; recently Policy planners from across the county met (with Liz Greenhalgh, UKCIP and Brenda Boardman, ECI) to see how to progress this work, and agreed a gap analysis would be useful. This group can contribute by reporting back to the Environment Partnership on progress, and contributing expertise and knowledge.</p> <p>Initial ideas, some of which are being developed in the LAA2 target proposal include :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use planning system to influence and control CO₂ emissions. 2. Work with contractors on what's available for homes. 3. Work with fuel utility companies: Oxfordshire-wide branded scheme to increase efficiency? E.g. insulation. 	<p>Action:</p> <p>Report back from policy officers' group to the next partnership meeting</p>

<p>4. Work in villages and local communities e.g. promoting 'low carbon zones'; awareness-raising with households.</p> <p>Discussion included the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Home Energy Conservation Act is being repealed. Local Authorities may see this as an opportunity not to pay attention to domestic energy consumption: the partnership could engage local authorities to keep this on the agenda. Good new-builds will have a knock-on effect on the rest of the housing market, and provide leverage with homeowners. • What is the extent of the Environment Partnership's influence? It was felt that the planning process is owned by local authorities but the partnership could influence this and use channels such as the media. The partnership could lobby government about planning guidelines for new build, and encourage local authorities to adopt certain planning policies. • The partnership could build relationships with developers. For example Kingerlee advertise their 'green credentials' and also monitor the use of buildings. 	
<p>6. Summing up and next steps (Robin Buxton)</p> <p>To sum up Robin concluded that the Environment Partnership will have a key role to play in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthening and promoting actions in the Sustainable Community Strategy and linking to the Oxfordshire Partnership • monitoring and reviewing LAA2 targets and reporting back to the Public Service Board. • linking to the wider environment sector • maintaining strategic links with other partnerships such as the Housing and Waste Partnerships <p>It was agreed that a map of partners and other organisations (e.g. climate change partnership, housing partnership, developers) and activities (e.g. LAA2, SCS) would be useful.</p>	<p>Action:</p> <p>SO to circulate map of partners and links</p>
<p>7. Any other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be useful to continue exchange of information for example the notes on the longer term flooding issues meeting which were circulated. • Functional agenda items e.g. resourcing the group should be included on the agenda 	<p>Action :</p> <p>SO</p>
<p>8. Date of next meeting</p> <p>TBC. 3 months time, to coincide with response time for SCS.</p>	