

**Spatial Planning & Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP)
Full Partnership Meeting
1 March 2010**

MINUTES

Attendee:	Organisation:
Cllr Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council
Mary Harpley	Cherwell District Council
John Hoad	Cherwell District Council
Cllr Ian Hudspeth	Oxfordshire County Council
Huw Jones	Oxfordshire County Council
Dave Waller	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Barry Norton	West Oxfordshire District Council
Andrew Tucker	West Oxfordshire District Council
Mel Barrett	Oxford City Council
Cllr Bob Price	Oxford City Council
Mark Jaggard	Oxford City Council
Lily Langlois	Oxford City Council
Cllr Tony de Vere	Vale of White Horse District Council
Cllr Angela Lawrence	Vale of White Horse DC (OHP lead)
Anna Robinson	Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr Dorothy Brown	South Oxfordshire District Council
Chris Farthing	Government Office for the South East
David Ashworth	Homes & Communities Agency
David Edwards	Homes & Communities Agency
David Doughty	Oxfordshire Economic Partnership
Paul Robinson	Highways Agency
Warren Ralls	SEEDA
Cath Rose	SEEPB
Sue Janota	SEEPB
Catherine Mountford	Oxfordshire PCT

Apologies:

Cllr Ann Ducker (SODC) – Cllr Dorothy Brown attended

1. Minutes of Meeting Held 2 February 2010

AGREED: The minutes of the meeting were agreed with a correction to the attendance list: it was noted that Ann Ducker should be listed as representing South Oxfordshire District Council (not OCC).

2. Matters arising – there were no matters arising.

3. HCA Update on Local Investment Agreement (LIA)

David Edwards (HCA) made a presentation on the current position in respect of Single Conversation process and procedures. He highlighted the next steps in completion of the

Local Investment Plan (LIP) and the expectations in respect of a LIA. *The PowerPoint presentation is attached to the minutes.*

It was specifically noted that HCA saw the main advantage of continuing with Single Conversation work early, through the pilot exercise, as being the 'head start' this gave the Oxfordshire area on clarity of priorities and organisation and preparation for future negotiations about funding. This would be particularly important in respect of a difficult public sector funding round following the general election.

The target date for completion of the LIA was now set for 30 June 2010, by which time the funding position for the next few years would be better understood.

A number of points were raised in discussion:

- The meeting identified a need for SPIP to involve local registered social landlord (RSL) partners in the discussion about the LIP and the LIA. The best way to achieve this would be to share information about the LIP. This could be done via the Oxfordshire Housing Partnership (OHP) network as a follow up to the recent OHP Forum event.
- It was recognised that there was a need for greater understanding of the future method for funding RSLs under the National Affordable Housing Programme. It was unclear how RSLs would be involved and also how decisions would be influenced by the LIP/LIA and partnership arrangements. All concerned were keen to ensure that there was continued flexibility and that the market engagement process previously operated would not be completely lost. However, there was also a consensus that the local authorities should have a greater say in which RSL schemes were funded.
- HCA should make all partners aware of the likely funding levels and allocations to the Oxfordshire area at the earliest possible date.
- Account should be taken of the suggested need to better link National Affordable Housing Programme funding and future infrastructure planning and spend. HCA were asked to advise further on this through the LIA work. In particular, it would be useful if the relationship between HCA and other government spending departments and agencies could be clarified.
- HCA referred to an example of co-ordinated investment between local authorities and HCA which might provide a model for Oxfordshire. This was an initiative by Hampshire County Council to make council-owned land available for specific, guaranteed site releases where a system-build approach would be applied.

AGREED:

- The Partnership confirmed its commitment to continuing with the pilot (Single Conversation) process. However, it requested that HCA take note of the need for a LIA which recognised the importance of inherent flexibility over funding levels and adjustment to circumstances.
- David Edwards would reply formally to the Chairman's letter on behalf of the HCA Chief Executive. He agreed to include reference to the key points from his presentation and to stress the benefits of the pilot exercise for Oxfordshire.
(This reply has been received and a copy is attached)

4. Local Investment Plan (LIP) Sign Off

Mark Jaggard updated on additional work now completed for the LIP. The final parts of the documents to be agreed by the Partnership were:

- LIP Priority Schemes/Top Priority Schemes Lists
- Appendix 4 Strategic Infrastructure 20 Year Template

The position on finalisation of the long list of priority schemes and the higher priority items identified was explained and clarified. It was noted that some further officer work was needed to refine the list and improve presentation. In particular a clear distinction would be made

between current 'deficit' infrastructure requirements and new infrastructure requirements linked to the housing development projects in the LIP.

The Chairman updated on his own work with Leaders to finalise the prioritisation criteria section of the LIP. *The final wording for this part of the document is attached to the minutes for information.*

AGREED:

- The new parts of the document presented (as listed above) were agreed for inclusion in the final LIP, subject to a delegation to officers to complete drafting of the document and finalise detail and presentation.
- The final draft of the LIP document would be completed by officers and circulated for information and final check by local authority leaders at their meeting on 18 March 2010. Following that meeting the final document would be prepared in consultation with the Chairman and circulated to all members of the Partnership by 31 March 2010.
- Officers were asked to ensure that the final drafting of the document recognised the importance of the 'Supports Economic Growth' objective. In particular, it was noted that the document should emphasise the potential for Oxfordshire to grow in line with the aspiration to achieve 'world class economy' status. This could be achieved without compromising environmental and infrastructure constraint factors.
- Officers were also asked to ensure that the LIP wording made it clear that the Priority Lists included were to be regarded as a current 'best state of knowledge' position. It was important to indicate the need for the listings to be viewed as capable of change once funding priorities were clarified and also in response to future opportunities. The document should be regarded as a 'living document'. This aspect of the LIP had previously been discussed by the Chairman and local authority leaders. *The proposed wording on this aspect of the LIP is attached to the minutes for information.*
- Officers were asked to include a risk issues statement in the document which would indicate that there were uncertainties in respect of development prospects for some of the housing schemes and infrastructure proposals listed in the LIP (this would apply to a number of sites, but particular mention was given to the Central Oxfordshire 4000 Dwelling Allocation, the Oxford and Northern Gateway Scheme and the Cogges Link Road in West Oxfordshire).

5. Economic Assessment

Dave Waller (OCC) introduced the report, explaining that the new County duty to prepare an Economic Assessment was being applied early in Oxfordshire. He noted that the papers presented to SPIP will need to be finally approved by the County Council but there was an opportunity for an early influence through this Partnership consideration. It was particularly important to note that the papers had already been considered via various local authority officer meetings and through the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership.

The next steps in the process for Economic Strategy review and update were considered. The County Council was proceeding on the basis that the Economic Assessment would inform commissioning of the new County Economic Development Strategy. The Partnership expressed the view that under its Terms of Reference it was the body which should approve the commissioning of the new Strategy. It was noted that the current 'status quo' position was that the Strategy itself would be prepared by the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership. It was suggested that it would be helpful if both Partnerships could consider and agree a 'Pre-Strategy' briefing document which identified the key themes arising from the Economic Assessment and set out the terms of reference for the Strategy.

There was some discussion of the definition of Oxfordshire as a functional economic sub-region. The County Council view was that this was now a settled issue. However, there was some comment that spatial differentiation within the Economic Assessment was not fully covered. There were significant differences in economic issues in different parts of the county. Government Office commented that the wider geographical context should be

considered and explored in the Assessment. There appeared to be too narrow a focus on immediately adjoining county areas. Comparative analysis was also needed in a global or international context. This would be necessary to back up any consideration of the 'world class economy' aspiration. SEEDA pointed out that there was a need for careful consideration of the Economic Assessment with various sectorial interest groups (major employers, small business sector, education sector, tourism interests, defence were all mentioned). It was also noted that particular attention should be given to sectors which might offer significant growth prospects in the next ten years.

AGREED:

- Progress on the Economic Assessment was noted.
- SPIP should prepare and approve a Pre-Strategy briefing document and commission the Strategy work by Oxfordshire Economic Partnership (this work should be done in summer 2010 after the general election).
- OEP would be invited to present their emerging thinking on the Strategy to SPIP within a similar timescale.
- All members of the Partnership were invited to submit their feedback on the Economic Assessment directly to the County Council but to copy their input to the SPIP secretariat. (The Chairman noted that he would offer some specific feedback of his own).

6. Regional Strategy review and request for evidence / advice - update from South East England Partnership Board (SEEPB)

Cath Rose from SEEPB introduced the report. *The PowerPoint presentation is attached to the minutes.*

SEEPB is keen to progress Strategy review despite the current political uncertainties in respect of future regional governance. It was felt that there was a need for some strategy development work which, whatever the future held, would be useful to partners. The current evidence collection exercise is primarily technical but the 'bottom up' input of partners is regarded as vital. One of the objectives is to create good-quality area profiles reflecting local understanding of issues for the future. There will be future stages of the process which will allow more specific political comment and input.

AGREED:

Officers were instructed to prepare and submit an initial response to the request for evidence. The final submission would be made in consultation with the Chairman and would be reported to a future Partnership meeting (it was subsequently agreed that an additional Partnership meeting would be needed in late April – see AOB). The submission would be informed by the Partnership's work on the LIP.

7. Planning Agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

John Hoad presented the report which had been prepared in response to the request at the previous meeting. The report was primarily for information but a number of suggestions were made about how the Partnership could address the emerging issue of the CIL.

AGREED:

- The Partnership recognised the central role of the Local Development Framework process in creating a statutory Infrastructure Plan for each of the Districts. This was noted as forming the basis of any CIL Charging Schedule.
- The Partnership would wish to use the completed work on the Single Conversation LIP and LIA as a basis for advice (including quantitative need and indicative costing) to the Oxfordshire Local Planning Authorities on:

- Development related infrastructure needs for local government functions, particularly County Council services
- Development related infrastructure needs for other providers

This would inform local Planning Authority decisions on infrastructure planning in LDFs and the basis for the possible introduction of CIL.

- The issue of development viability was central to work on CIL Charging Schedules. The Partnership should consider whether it can introduce and inter authority/inter agency procedural protocol for consideration of all viability issues affecting planning obligations and CIL charging. Such a protocol would be advisory only but could be used to establish good practice in balancing the costs of infrastructure investment against the need to encourage development.
- A further report on the possibility of Partnership protocols should be considered in June 2010 by which time the result of the general election and future government policy in respect of CIL will be known.

8. National Indicator Performance Report

John Hoad introduced the Report, drawing specific attention to the need for the Partnership to organise a process for consideration of performance information before central reports were made to the Public Service Board (PSB). It was noted that the previous report on SPIP performance had been incomplete in that information from the Partnership secretariat had not been included.

AGREED:

- The Partnership noted the specific performance information on affordable housing delivery, which reflected a high level of achievement in difficult circumstances, due to the District Council partnership working with RSLs and use of public sector land and capital. This information should be reported to the PSB at its next meeting.
- The Partnership secretariat was instructed to prepare a timetable for co-ordinated reporting of performance information to PSB via Partnership meetings. In future this might necessitate some adjustments to the sequencing of meetings.

9. Any Other Business

- I. The Chairman drew attention to the expectation that there would be a Government announcement on proposals for the High Speed Railway (known as HS2) from London to the Midlands and North during March. This was a matter which had previously been considered by SPIP.

AGREED: This issue should be listed for a future agenda. Once the announcement is made HS2 should be invited to explain the proposals direct to the Partnership.

- II. In view of the additional business envisaged for future meetings and timescales involved it was agreed that a further meeting should be arranged for late April.

SPIP Partnership Meeting Dates:

22 April Additional full Partnership meeting: 10am at Oxford City Council Chamber
28 June 1.00pm-4.00pm, Council Chamber, Bodicote House

* **REVISED WORK PROGRAMME AND MEETING LIST ATTACHED** *