

## **SPATIAL PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE PARTNERSHIP (SPIP) – TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Aim and Objectives**

- To provide a liaison forum on spatial planning, economic development, housing, transport, and general infrastructure issues arising at regional and sub regional level.
- To lead and co ordinate the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) “single conversation” process on regeneration and housing issues and contribute to any related interaction with Government agencies
- To be accountable for the delivery of LAA targets owned by the partnership
- To advise partners on matters of collective interest in the fields of activity listed above.
- To seek agreement on local priorities and targets in the fields of activity listed above.
- To seek agreement on alignment between national and regional and local funding streams in the fields of activity listed above.
- To ensure that regional policy development, the Local Transport Plan and joint working through the Oxfordshire Partnership and District Local Strategic Partnerships on service planning and community development is appropriately linked to the decision making role of the Local Planning Authorities on Local Development Frameworks and related infrastructure planning.
- To assist in the establishment of detailed arrangements for integration between spatial, infrastructure and public service planning activity in appropriately defined localities.

### **Purpose**

Specifically the Partnership will:

- share information and analysis on spatial planning, economic development, housing, transport, and general infrastructure issues at regional and sub regional level;
- share information and analysis on cross administrative boundary spatial planning, economic development, housing, transport, and general infrastructure issues, including in areas adjoining the Regional boundary;
- monitor, consider and advise on partner progress and delivery against any Local Area agreements or similar arrangements with Government – including relevant national and local targets;

- develop and communicate consensus views that seek to inform, assist and influence Government, Government agency and Regional institutions / bodies in their policy formulation and decision making roles;
- develop and communicate consensus views that seek to inform, assist and influence sub regional and local agencies that operate across local authority administrative boundaries;
- advise economic development, housing, transport, general infrastructure funding and providing partners on how to ensure appropriate research, policy and resource input to the statutory Local Development Framework process;
- make links with the work of the Oxfordshire Housing Partnership (Housing Authority led) and commission delivery work that assists partnership working on housing;
- make links with the work of the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership (business led) and commission economic assessment strategy and delivery work that assists partnership working on economic development .

### **Accountability and Working Methods**

The Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership operates by Member consensus. Through that consensus it is accountable to the Oxfordshire Partnership and Public Service Board and to constituent District Local Strategic Partnerships and all the organisations that are members of those partnerships.

The Partnership will report to the Public Services Board on its progress in delivery of any agreed objectives.

The Partnership will be assisted in achieving agreed objectives by the following delivery bodies/agents:

- Economic Development

Oxfordshire Economic Partnership (OEP), through its Board of Directors and their core development group

The partnership will work closely with OEP and co-operate on delivery priorities and funding and other issues of mutual interest.

The local authority representatives on the OEP Board / core development group (1 County / 2 District) are charged with maintaining co-ordination and co-operation on delivery tasks and reporting back through the Partnership on OEP plans / progress.

- Housing

Oxfordshire Housing Partnership (OHP), through its Officer Steering Group (led by District Council Housing Authority function rotating in alphabetical order).

Following the creation of Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Partnership, OHP will operate primarily at local authority officer and agency official level. Local authority Member involvement will be through Oxfordshire Housing Partnership “Forum”

meetings held approximately 6 monthly and these will be designed to engage a wide range of private, voluntary and RSL sector partners in the housing field.

- Transport/Access to Services

Oxfordshire County Council through its officer level joint working arrangements on transport.

The Partnership will receive reports on and provide input to the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan. There will be a strong reporting and delivery link to transport planning studies and projects developed for specific localities to feed into District led, (Local Planning Authority), work on LDFs.

- Spatial and Infrastructure Planning

District Councils and District LSPs working through LDFs, supported by the Oxfordshire Chief Planning Officers Group to pick up common and cross boundary issues.

## **Partnership Principles**

The Partnership is constituted as a “thematic partnership” under the *Oxfordshire Partnership Governance* Arrangements. It is committed to working to the general principles and procedures established by Oxfordshire Partnership (summarised below with specific reference to the role of this Partnership and detailed at Annex 1):

- Visible commitment and ‘ownership’ by the various member organisations and individual representatives
- Mutual trust and respect
- Openness and transparency
- Effective communication and accountability
- Removal of barriers to equality of access and opportunity
- Effective decision making

The Partnership is a forum for liaison and information sharing and the development of consensus views on matters of mutual interest.

Consensus views will be used to advise and influence the relevant decision making bodies including:

- Government and its agents (including Government Office for the SE)
- National agencies particularly Homes and Communities Agency and Highways Agency
- Regional Planning Body and other regional level bodies / agencies (through the region wide local authority co ordination systems as established for preparation of the Integrated Regional Strategy)
- The District Councils as Local Planning Authorities
- The District Councils as Housing Authorities
- The County Council as Highway Authority
- The County and district councils as general service providers
- The District LSPs (as the primary locality based co-ordinating partnership)

- The Oxfordshire Economic Partnership (business led)
- Other infrastructure and service providing bodies and partnerships that are affected by, and can influence, local economic development, housing, transport, general infrastructure and spatial planning activity

The Partnership will work closely with other Oxfordshire based partnerships where there are cross over issues. It will work with District LSPs and other locality based partnerships where it is appropriate that a more detailed level of partnership working is undertaken on areas covered by the terms of reference.

## **Membership/ Chairman and Deputy Chairman**

### Partnership Lead and Chairman

Local authorities will take the roles of Chairman and Vice Chairman on an annual rotation as follows.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Vice chairman</b>
2009/10	Cherwell District Council	Oxfordshire County Council
2010/11	Oxfordshire County Council	Oxford City Council
2011/12	Oxford City Council	South Oxfordshire District Council
2012/13	South Oxfordshire District Council	Vale of White Horse District Council
2013/14	Vale of White Horse District Council	West Oxfordshire District Council
2014/15	West Oxfordshire District Council	Cherwell District Council

### Core Members

- **Leader or other Cabinet / Executive Member from each council** (with named substitute giving potential to substitute in the Cabinet Member with most appropriate portfolio for items under discussion at any particular time). There is full discretion to member councils in terms of review or length of membership of their representative.

Government Office SE (GOSE); Locality Manager

South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)

Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)

Member Representative Oxfordshire Housing Partnership (nominated by OHP lead Council)

### Invitees:

Chairman Oxfordshire Economic Partnership

Chairman Environment and Waste Partnership

Regional Planning Body representative

Highways Agency (HA)

Environment Agency (EA)

Natural England (NE)

Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust (OPCT)

Thames Valley Police (TVP): Area Commander for Oxfordshire

Supporting officers:

- OCC – 1 nominated senior officer

- District Councils – 1 nominated senior officer

Project Officer and support staff (see Secretariat below)

Specialist officers as required by business on agenda

**Roles and Responsibilities of Partnership members**

Roles and responsibilities are indicated below:

Core Members will be responsible for sharing information from and the views of the body they represent and for reaching and acting on any consensus agreements or decisions.

Invitees are asked to assist the core members in their deliberations by invitation, offer advice to them and communicate the views of the Partnership back to their organisations.

Senior Officers will prepare and present appropriate reports and offer direct advice to core Members.

Project Officer and Support Staff are responsible for meeting administration including preparation / co ordination of some reports (especially target and project monitoring).

Specialist Officers will only be required to assist with specific items on the agenda where additional depth of support is required in the meeting

**Meetings**

The Partnership will meet four times a year at times to best suit the Forward Plan. Additional meetings may be called if workload justifies.

Meetings will be notified in advance and open to the public.

Partnership information will be published on the Oxfordshire Partnership web site. This will include:

- Information about the Partnership including its terms of reference and any agreed plans, programmes, projects and targets
- Links and contacts
- Meeting agendas and papers

The Council responsible for leadership of the Partnership will provide information for the website. Maintenance of the website and publication of information on the site is the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council.

### **Equalities and Inclusion**

The Partnership gives high priority to equalities issues. It will rely on the equalities impact work and publications of its constituent bodies to provide awareness and analysis of relevant issues. Senior officer participants in meetings are responsible for flagging any specific issues that arise and that require detailed consideration by the Partnership itself.

### **Secretariat**

Secretariat support will be the responsibility of the lead council. A Jointly resourced Partnership Project Officer is managed by the lead Council.

The Partnership is also be supported informally by established local authority officer and partner liaison arrangements (primarily the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership Development and Special Interest Groups, Oxfordshire Housing Partnership working groups, Oxfordshire Chief Planning Officers and Planning Policy Officers Groups). Those involved will ensure the linkages are made between inter-related policy initiatives and the activities of relevant bodies and partnerships. They will undertake a co-ordinating role in responding to matters raised by the Partnership.

### **Determination of and Termination of Partnership Involvement**

Membership of the partnership and representation at meetings is as listed above, or is by additional special invitation from the Chairman as needs dictate.

Membership can be terminated by notice to the Chairman and Secretariat.

## **Oxfordshire Partnership Principles**

### *General principles*

The Partnership is committed to working to the general principles established by Oxfordshire Partnership:

- Visible commitment and ‘ownership’ by the various member organisations and individual representatives
- Mutual trust and respect
- Openness and transparency
- Effective communication and accountability
- Removal of barriers to equality of access and opportunity
- Effective decision making

### *Status of the partnership*

- As the upper tier authority the County Council is required to ensure that a strategic partnership framework is in place (the Oxfordshire Partnership) to improve outcomes for local people.
- The Spatial Planning & Infrastructure Partnership operates within the framework of the Oxfordshire Partnership but does not assume, or take precedence over, the statutory decision-making and public accountability roles of elected members of local authorities, or of health services and the police.
- The partnership is not a legally constituted body but is freely entered into to meet collectively agreed objectives and consensus.

### *Principles of decision making*

- Organisations participating in this partnership are expected to work collaboratively to deliver better outcomes for local people
- Decisions will be made by consensus. All public sector bodies share the “duty to co-operate” in strategic partnership and are expected to do so. The Chairman may ask Core Members present at a meeting to indicate a preference for one course of action or another but the vote will be indicative of views in moving to reach consensus and it cannot overturn the formally adopted policy of any of the constituent organisations – particularly those with a relevant statutory duty to discharge. Therefore the Partnership will support and influence accountable bodies but does not replace their decision making powers.

### *Transparency of decision making*

- All meetings will be open to the general public except when there are confidential items to be discussed (guidelines for this are set out in the terms of reference of the Public Service Board).
- Meeting dates, agendas and minutes of meetings will be published on the Oxfordshire Partnership web site.

### *Consultation*

- When partnerships agree strategies and plans it is expected that all those agencies affected will have been adequately consulted and the agencies responsible for delivering elements of the strategy are in agreement and are clear about the resources required.

### *Conflict resolution*

- Where a conflict arises within or between partnerships this shall be resolved by following the procedure recommended in the Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Handbook 2009.