



**Report on
Oxfordshire Futures workshop for the Oxfordshire Partnership
and district LSPs**

**Wednesday 12th September 2007
The Oxford Centre**

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Introduction

During 2007 the Oxfordshire Partnership is developing its sustainable community strategy, the over-arching strategic vision for the county with key priorities for action which will inform development of targets for our next Local Area Agreement. This is a wide-ranging and collaborative project involving all our partners and stakeholders.

A series of overview workshops open to all stakeholders were held in July 2007, with a further one for the business sector in September to debate the key trends and issues facing Oxfordshire in the next twenty to twenty five years that the sustainable community strategy should to address. The paper 'Oxfordshire Futures' was produced to inform these debates.

Individual partnership groups and organisations produced a series of 12 thematic briefing papers that describe the main issues under each theme and the work already underway in current plans. The papers propose options for the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The summary paper, 'Review of DRAFT Issues and Options for Oxfordshire's Sustainable Community Strategy' was prepared for current stage in the process – the review of draft issues and options. It presented some of the key trends and issues affecting Oxfordshire's future, the output from the July workshop discussions and the thematic briefing papers and proposed a set of draft issues and options for debate at this workshop.

This workshop was held for members of the Oxfordshire Partnership Board and was well attended with over thirty people.

Role of the strategy

Following an overview presentation on the process to develop the strategy participants were then asked to discuss the following question on their tables,

What is the critical function of the county sustainable community strategy?

The following points were highlighted in the subsequent feedback and plenary session and represent a summary of main areas of discussion on each table.

Geographical coherence

Voice to government

Not just about money

Note the locality issues – urban/rural differences

Framework that everyone agrees with appropriate actions attached– linking process

Bottom up
Urban core of the county needs acknowledgement
South East Plan is a given
Boundaries do not necessarily reflect areas of interest
Sustainable communities
Tactical
Opportunity to face partnership problems and big issues
One population with common causes (recognising local differences)
Opportunities of economies of scale
Two tier and democratic challenges
Tension of Government/local and town/countryside
Skilled (affluent)/unskilled (poor) split
Vision for the whole area - Add value to what's already happening

Confirming or challenging the key themes

Following a presentation on some of the highlights of the data collected through thematic papers delegates were asked to consider the options for action presented in the draft issues and options document. People were invited to add to these lists where they felt further options had been missed out. Following this initial exercise participants were asked to prioritise their three highest priorities for action under each theme using sticky dots. **The following list summarises how participants prioritised the issues under each theme.** The long list of all actions identified and the prioritisation given to them through the dot exercise is at Annex 3.

- **Economic competitiveness**

Infrastructure especially transport
New solutions to affordable housing
Skills

- **Mitigating/adapting to climate change**

Energy production and demand
Flood risk
Carbon footprint
Local employment

- **Thriving communities**

Facilities and access for young people
Community facilities in new developments
Cycle of deprivation
Affordable housing in villages
Community led planning

- **Vulnerable people**

Skills

Housing and transport

Prevention

Community led solutions

Partnership approaches

Delivering the strategy

Tables were asked to discuss the following questions with regard to the various potential levels of governance in the county i.e. community, theme, district, county, partnership, government;

How will delivery of the SCS work – what are the statutory agencies going to deliver?

What is the offer to communities? What could communities be doing for themselves?

The following list is a summary of the key points raised in the discussion groups

- County should focus on themes and the districts on the geographical communities
- OP can help with alignment
- Targets rather than actions
- Creativity and long term thinking needed
- Trust and collective responsibility
- Unifying values – strength in difference
- Create space for community led action
- Leadership, facilitation/empowering – subsidiarity
- Clarity on targets/outcomes
- Can't work in simple themes
- OP step up to be the accountable body – give leadership on the issue of skills
- OP help to rationalise structures around housing particularly on affordability
- Community engagement –constructive support for the Voluntary and community Sector

Feedback

Feedback from the event was positive overall with many constructive comments for the next stage of development of the strategy. Nineteen responses were received.

People responded positively to the event, the opportunity to debate the issues with a wide range of people from different organisations. The growing sense of understanding and sharing common values was particularly welcomed.

Delegates were asked what could have been better about the event. Comments included the involvement of more people in the discussions and more time to debate the issues. Some partners felt that there was a presumption of understanding of all the issues which shouldn't be assumed from all partners. There was a call to focus on specific places as well as looking at the themes.

To the question 'What is the most important thing that those responsible for the Sustainable community Strategy should consider?' there were many constructive comments which included the call for genuine partnership working and the challenge of how to link work up. The importance of cross-cutting issues was emphasised and the importance of effective communication across the partnerships and partner organisations. Effective engagement with the communities of Oxfordshire and ensuring the resources to deliver the priorities was highlighted.

Further feedback highlighted the difficulty of long term planning when partner organisations only have short term resources to commit. The question 'What happens to the important things that don't make it into the strategy?' was posed. Clarity over the proposals was noted as important prior to consulting with the public about the strategy.

Annex 1: Programme

Oxfordshire Futures



Sustainable Community Strategy Overview Workshop

Wednesday 12th September 2007 – Oxfordshire Partnership – The Oxford Centre
9.00 – 13.00 followed by lunch

Purpose

To identify long term priorities for Oxfordshire's Sustainable Community Strategy and ways of aligning these with other planning processes.

Specifically

To clarify the function of the Sustainable Community Strategy
To consider the findings emerging from theme papers and consultation events
To identify the key themes that should be addressed by the Strategy
To prioritise the critical actions under these themes

- 9.00 Registration and refreshments
- 9.30 Welcome - *Cllr Keith Mitchell, Chairman Oxfordshire Partnership*
An explanation of the journey travelled to date and a reminder of what the Sustainable Community Strategy is for - *Claire Evans, Oxfordshire Partnership Manager*
What is the critical function of a county Sustainable Community Strategy? - *discussion*
- 10.10 Presentation of a summary of the theme papers - *Margaret Melling, Data Consultant*
Presentation on the findings from the stakeholder workshops held in July 2007 and possible themes and actions for the strategy – *Claire Evans*
- 10.45 Confirming or challenging the key themes:
Economy, Climate Change, Thriving Communities, Reducing Inequalities.
Prioritising actions under the themes for the strategy
- 11.15 BREAK
- 11.30 Small group discussion on what contribution the different levels of planning and implementation could make.
- 12.15 Review
- How will delivery of the SCS work – what are the statutory agencies going to deliver?
 - What is the offer to communities? What could communities be doing for themselves?
- Next Steps – *Cllr Keith Mitchell, Chairman Oxfordshire Partnership*
- 13.00 Lunch and close

The meeting will be facilitated by
Jeremy Spafford

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Annex 2: Delegate list

Name	Organisation
Alison Baxter	Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action
Cllr Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council
Catherine Hitchens	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
Clive Baynes	Cherwell District Council
Dave Woodwark	Oxfordshire Partnership
Cllr David Rundle	Oxford City Council
Cllr David Wood	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
Dennis Evernden	Thames Valley Police
Di Morrish	Government Office for the South East
Fred Hucker	Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust
Helen Couperthwaite	Cherwell District Council
Huw Williams	Cherwell District Council
Jackie Wilderspin	Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust
Joanna Simons	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr John Goddard	Oxford City Council
John Jackson	Oxfordshire County Council
Rev John Robertson	Vale Partnership (Oxford Diocese)
Jonathan McWilliam	Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust
Cllr Keith Mitchell	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Kester George	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
Linda Watson	Oxfordshire Rural Community Council
Lorna Edwards	Vale of White Horse District Council
Miranda Markham	Value Retail
Peter Couchman	Oxford Strategic Partnership (The Midcounties Co-operative)
Richard Dudding	Oxfordshire County Council
Robin Buxton	Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum
Sarah Maxfield	Oxford Inspires
Stephen Capaldi	Oxfordshire County Council
Steve Billcliffe	Abingdon and Witney College
Toby Warren	Vale of White Horse District Council
Tony Williamson	South Oxfordshire Partnership

Annex 3: Detailed outcome of the prioritisation exercise

Individual actions/issues have been clustered together by subject area under the four overarching themes here in order to show at a glance how issues were prioritised. The number to the right indicates how many dots were attributed to each action.

Maintaining economic competitiveness		
Transport/ infrastructure	Ensure adequate infrastructure is provided to support the economy and population particularly transport infrastructure	18
	Improve air quality by reducing the need to travel	1
Housing	Develop new solutions for increasing the amount of affordable housing	17
	Ensure a mix of good-quality new homes are built	1
	Homeshare scheme	1
Skills/ attainment	Continue to raise skills levels and qualifications expectations in schools and encourage creative learning	9
	Encourage (housing, jobs, social infrastructure) to be close together: reducing congestion, pollution, need to travel and CO2 emissions	1
	Skills: we need a lead in this very complex area with accountability for delivery. A business lead would be advantageous	9
	Develop a better understanding of skills needs – what individuals need and businesses want; hard to reach groups	4
	Provide more flexible opportunities to train and opportunities to build confidence – the voluntary and community sector is well placed to help in this process.	3
	Support for apprenticeships	4
	Join up initiatives that address attitudes to learning.	2
	Invest in continuous training (not limited by age) and better careers advice in and out of school	1
	Encourage entrepreneurship (all ages young people – 50+)	1
	Create more work opportunities for the 60+ (inc voluntary)	
Economy	Build on links with leading educational and research establishments.	

	Use the Quadrant to strengthen Oxfordshire global competitiveness	5
	Developing higher technology businesses in county	3
	Develop Oxfordshire's tourist industry and cultural tourism	4
Environment	Enhance Oxfordshire's character of built and natural heritage	4
	Need to protect the character of market towns and villages in Oxfordshire without destroying them with vast housing development	
Resources/ waste	Reduce demand for water and encourage water use efficiency	3
	Reduce production of waste – support the Waste Management strategy	1
	Ensure that businesses e.g. supermarkets reduce amount of packaging used in their products or try to only use packaging that can be recycled	
Inequalities/ support	Start at the very bottom: the very young, Children's Centres, Sure Start (=reduce teenage pregnancies)	1
	Inequalities issues important here	3
Mitigating and adapting to climate change		
Leadership/ vision	Develop climate change as a unifying theme in the strategy	7
	Imaginative/creative solutions	
	Empower local leaders	2
	More ambition	
	Maintain Oxfordshire's position as county leader in – low waste per head, high public transport and high recycling	
	Make the city West End project iconic for Oxfordshire	3
	Follow principles of sustainable development	5
Initiatives/ policies	Business initiative to be leaders in climate adaptation/mitigation products (biofuels, construction techniques, nuclear fusion)	5
	Promote small changes e.g. car sharing	2
	Set target for reducing CO2 emissions and ecological footprint by each major organisation	
	Increase awareness of changing eco-systems and widen access to environmental data	1
	Initiative aimed at schools/next generation awareness	1
Housing/ development	Reduce carbon footprint of new and existing housing	11
	Make all new housing examples of low carbon footprint	

	Drive to insulate and promote renewable energy in existing housing stock	
	Affordable housing needed close to city employment	
	Plan employment areas into housing developments not at a distance	10
	Reduce work travel by homeworking (task not time orientated work)	2
	Land use plans – agriculture	2
	Councils to protect the urban environment by discouraging the concreting over of front gardens to provide parking spaces	
Energy	Promote more sustainable forms of energy production and reduce energy demand	22
	Need for climate change strategy for Oxfordshire including continuation of renewables	1
	Strategy for reducing global warming – particularly electricity generation	
	Stimulate microgeneration	
	Persuade authorities to have footway and street lighting switched off during late night/very early mornings	
Risk mitigation	Countywide strategy for reducing flood risk etc	12
Inequalities	Essential to make sure activity doesn't worsen inequalities	3
Supporting and developing thriving communities		
Infrastructure/facilities	Promote places and spaces for community facilities in new developments – encourage community engagement in developing these from the start	7
	Encourage communities to work together to meet their needs e.g. sharing facilities, cluster villages/towns	1
	Strategies to protect local activities/services e.g. shops and encourage homeworking	
	Protection of existing rural infrastructure e.g. small schools	
Engagement/involvement	Extend support to community-led planning and implementation	6
	Develop a strategic approach to encourage volunteering	4
	Join up work of agencies to reduce barriers to involvement	
	Promote corporate social responsibility	7
	Use cultural activities to encourage community	

	participation (e.g. Oxfordshire 2007)	
	Allow discretion in the implementation of legal constraints for small voluntary bodies	
	We should recognise that we start from a position of strength – 90% population are positive the communities in which they live	1
Community safety	Develop a multi-agency approach to address Community Safety issues, for example the link between unemployment, lack of housing and re-offending	2
	Reduce crime and the fear of crime	4
	Promote a sensible alcohol drinking culture	
	Promote responsibility of major outlets to reduce underage drinking	
Access/ transport	Promote and extend mobile services	
	If no off road facility for car – no car	2
	Improve access to the countryside and green spaces	2
	Addressing transport needs	1
Healthy communities	Improve access to local health services e.g. community hospitals	1
	Change title to healthy and thriving	5
	Shift to emphasis on prevention is a whole population issue	1
	Encourage physical activity	
	Impact of demographic change – older people	
Inequalities	Need to improve position of disadvantaged rather than inequalities	
	Target inequalities issues on all topics	3
Children and Young People	Breaking the cycle of deprivation affecting children and families	12
	Specific reference to meeting needs of young people (esp adolescents)	7
	Developing and creating opportunities (& facilities, leisure etc) for young people and access to them	9
Leadership	More devolution to districts, Areas, Parishes and their constituent neighbourhoods	1
	Develop community leadership, motivation and agreement	1
	Identify and promote leaders	
	Celebrate and showcase good examples	
Housing	More affordable housing in rural villages	9
Reducing inequalities and meeting the needs of vulnerable people		

Strategy	Inequalities issues should cross-cut all themes	6
	Develop a joint partnership approach to inequalities, map and share information	8
	Get up-to-date statistics for population change and outputs of effort – target the most deprived	
	Improve information on where to get help	1
	Support the development of strong communities and promote community-led solutions	8
Health	Shift emphasis to prevention of health problems	13
	Emphasis on prevention should be in “healthy and thriving communities” theme	
Support/ involvement	Build capacity of voluntary groups to support people (including carers)	6
	Build on potential for the private sector to invest in social well-being	1
	Encourage inter-generational work	2
	Involve young people	
	Support development of parenting skills – targeted to those excluded	6
	The ageing population issue should be part of thriving communities. We need a positive attitude and an emphasis on a community based approach with people continuing to live independently and successfully	3
Aspirations/ skills	Reduce teenage pregnancy	
	Address skills gaps – reduce sense of exclusion	14
	Engage larger employers to take responsibility for sharing the challenge of skills gaps. Low skill = low pay.	
	Raise aspiration of young people by focusing on celebrating/encouraging successes other than/as well as academic	4
	Strengthen support for black and minority ethnic (BME) and poorly performing ‘majority’ groups	1
Housing/ transport	Address specific housing and transport needs of young people and the elderly and low income families	12
	Transport needs for all	7
	Reduce income and housing inequalities	
Values	Find ways to spread tolerance – a feature of good schools	
	Be sensitive to other faiths requirements	1

Annex 4: Feedback

What was good about today's event?
Good process especially the sticky dot exercise Small group discussion allowed detailed thinking Focus on high level issues Mix of organisations Structure and facilitation and well prepared pre-reading Different points of view Teamwork Organisation Outcomes Increasingly clear shared values and objectives Tolerance Sharing We were invited
What could have been better?
Taking certain issues as case studies when talking about implementation Planning and implementation needed a fuller introduction More people attending More time Time to mix with other attendees Information about the finance available from the SCS Not sure the four themes are the best and how these relate to the key issues identified Involvement of key players Not so many loose statements assuming understanding Recognition of the crucial role of the south east plan Less paperwork Mix on tables should be arranged to be varied Some discussion of the needs of specific places not just themes Statistics could be more up-to-date Possibly an executive summary of the theme papers A little less to do in the short time available
What is the most important thing that those responsible for the sustainable community strategy should consider?
Framework for joined up working Life is about more than skills, transport, housing – the SCS is about vision not just action at a county level. How to achieve alignment Genuine partnership working Let's not be bound by convention and existing practice – see innovation and inclusion Convert abilities into competencies Long-term view

Housing and Climate change

Values as a key part of the strategy

Delivery machinery must fit the objectives

Key partnerships need to ponder how far/high we can drive change

Communities – outcomes for the diverse range of people in Oxfordshire

Keep the partnership process together

Look for similar issues listed in more than one theme and add them together as they may have votes in several places

Using a format that the average person can understand by cutting out the jargon

Focus on the spatial dimension – appropriate approach for different parts of Oxfordshire

Gaining commitment to alignment of resources to achieve long-term outcomes not just short-term

Engagement with the community

Coherence and clear communication

Agreement to sign up to and progress the issues within a timeframe

Anything else?

Concern that the SCS leaves out of account material that is not specified in it which could potentially undermine the strategy e.g. threat to small schools mentioned in learning theme undermines the sustainability of rural communities

Why so few people – why didn't partners meet with elected members?

Difficulty of long term planning when funding is short-term

Need for local government to understand and build on strong views of interest groups

Mix up tables as the session goes on rather than stick at the same one

Before public consultation need to be clear about the specifics to support the generalities

Sources of all statistics

Thank you