

Divisions Affected – ALL

CABINET 21 March 2023

Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership and Charter Launch

Report by Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development & Resources

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
 - a) Note that the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership has been established.
 - b) Note that the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter was launched on 24 January 2023.
 - c) Agree to become a signatory to the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter.
 - d) Agree to make four pledges to build on our commitment to an inclusive economy.

Executive Summary

2. This report provides an overview of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) including the development and launch of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter on 24 January 2023. The report recommends the council becomes a signatory to the charter and makes four pledges to demonstrate the council's commitment to an inclusive economy.

Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership

3. The Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership is a coalition of over 100 organisations from public, private and voluntary and community sector who have come together to develop an inclusive economy agenda for the county.
4. The OIEP was launched in March 2021, building on the learning of the Inclusive Growth Seminar Series held in 2019/20 that was initiated by the Oxford Strategic Partnership. The creation of OIEP, broadened the reach of the inclusive economy work that OSP had initiated so that it was countywide.

5. The work of the OIEP is overseen by a steering group which is co-chaired by Baroness Jan Royall, Principal of Somerville College, and Jeremy Long, Chair of Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP).
6. A series of working groups have been established to help deliver the partnership's vision. These are:
 - Inclusive Employment
 - Educational Attainment
 - Social value and procurement
 - Place-based outcomes
7. Each of the working groups is looking at projects across Oxfordshire that the partnership can support or grow and are developing a work programme and delivery plan.
8. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership provides oversight of the work of the OIEP. In June 2022 FOP reviewed and commented on the Charter and in November 2022 FOP agreed to support and promote the launch of the OIEP Charter.

Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter

9. The Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter has been developed by the OIEP and was launched at an event at the Old Fire Station in Oxford on 24 January 2023. The Charter is attached at Annex 1.
10. The purpose of the Charter is to:
 - Mobilise support for an Oxfordshire inclusive economy and raise awareness and profile
 - Publicly state commitment of individuals, businesses and organisations through the signing of an online pledge
 - Set and raise standards around the inclusive economy
 - Encourage residents and businesses to work together to help protect Oxfordshire's economy with an aim to keep money within the county.

Pledges

11. The Charter also contains pledges that an organisation may commit to making relating to the following themes:
 - Improve training and educational attainment
 - Recruit inclusively
 - Offer opportunities into work
 - Support local and social economy
 - Provide fair wages
 - Sharing resources, skills and assets

12. Grouped under these themes are examples of pledges that have been developed through the working groups as examples of the type of pledge that partners may wish to offer.
13. Each member of the OIEP is asked to sign up to the Charter and to make pledges to demonstrate its commitment to delivering a more inclusive economy for Oxfordshire.
14. Organisations are not expected to sign up to all of the pledges in the Charter, the suggested pledges have been developed to provide an example of the kind of commitments that organisations can pledge.

Signing up to the Charter

15. When signing up to the Charter organisations are asked to make a pledge, these can be one or several of the example pledges that have been developed, or an organisation can make its own pledge.
16. The Charter aligns with the council's strategic priorities, and the commitments that we have set out in the Social Value Policy, Digital Strategy, Armed Forces Covenant, Including Everyone, and Delivering the Future Together.
17. Through these commitments, the council is already meeting elements of the Charter, for example, donating laptops to Getting Oxfordshire Online and supporting employee volunteering. However, there is an opportunity to build on this and other existing work already underway within the council and provide additional focus for that work.
18. It is therefore recommended that the council becomes a signatory to the Charter and makes the following pledges:
 - As a buyer we pledge to assess and account for the social value that a supplier can offer the local community, alongside our assessment of the economic value/financial cost of the contract.
 - As an employer we pledge to commit to flexible job design (including access to agile ways of working, job share, part time working, school-friendly hours and flexibility around other care commitments).
 - As an employer we pledge to be a learning organisation, sharing our successes on EDI strategy and practical action, analysing setbacks to develop new ways of engagement and practical action
19. In addition, it is recommended that the council commits to the following stretch pledge:
 - As an employer we pledge to develop and embed practical processes so that potential candidates from disadvantaged groups can gain employment with our business, sustain their employment and thrive within both the workforce and wider society. For example, guaranteed interviews for care leavers, ex-military personnel and disabled candidates where essential

requirements are met. We will also explore targeted advertising, careers fairs or similar events in relevant locations across Oxfordshire.

20. By signing up to the Charter the council is demonstrating a shared commitment to creating a more inclusive local economy and supporting the work of the Partnership for the next calendar year by delivering on the pledges, after which the council will be asked to renew and update our pledges.

Monitoring and Reporting

21. Activities undertaken to support each of the council's pledges will be monitored. This will be undertaken on a quarterly basis via the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan. The Action Plan's quarterly reports will also accompany the Business Management and Monitoring Report which goes to Cabinet every other month, to ensure visibility and assurance at member level.

Financial Implications

22. There are no immediate budgetary implications for signing up to the Charter.

Comments checked by:

Bick Nguyen-McBride
Assistant Finance Business Partner
Bick.Nguyen-McBride@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

23. There are no immediate legal implications from signing up to the Charter.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant
Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officers
Paul.Grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Equality & Inclusion Implications

24. The equalities implications are positive – the OIEP supports an inclusive economy and is committed to improving all aspects of social mobility and increased prosperity for communities and residents.

Sustainability Implications

25. The OIEP aims to support the local and social economy which contributes to the council's sustainability commitments.

Risk Management

26. The risks have been considered and there is a reputational risk if we do not sign up to the Charter as we are a member of the OIEP and FOP.

CLAIRE TAYLOR: CORPORATE DIRECTOR CUSTOMERS, ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCES NAME

Annex: [Annex 1 - Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter](#)

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Chloe Taylor, Interim Head of Strategy
Chloe.taylor@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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