

COUNCIL – 12 DECEMBER 2017

Annual Partnerships Update

Report by the Assistant Chief Executive

Introduction

1. Oxfordshire County Council is engaged in a range of local partnerships, some sitting within a statutory framework, others locally designed. The objective of each partnership is to facilitate join up across the public sector and with other local partners, and to add our perspective and organisational effort to that of other local bodies to address particular challenges.
2. Those partnerships recognised as particularly important to the overall outcomes for Oxfordshire report annually to Council, within a light touch framework which enables them to set out some of the key activities over the past year, and their aims and challenges for the year ahead.

The partnership landscape

3. The partnership landscape in which we operate is complex and becoming increasingly important with the growing move towards more collaborative, cross-organisational approaches to meeting the needs of Oxfordshire residents. The existing partnership infrastructure in Oxfordshire brings together key public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations to collaborate on health and wellbeing, safeguarding, safer communities and economic growth. The key partnerships are:
 - Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board (statutory)
 - Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (statutory)
 - Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (statutory)
 - Safer Oxfordshire Partnership
 - Thames Valley Emergency Services Collaboration (statutory)
 - Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance
 - Oxfordshire Strategic Schools Partnership Board
 - Oxfordshire Early Years Board
 - Oxfordshire Growth Board
 - Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
 - Oxfordshire Environment Partnership
4. Underpinning these formal partnerships is a network of informal and formal working relationships, sub-groups / working groups and contractual agreements that help to deliver services in line with partnership strategies and priorities.

5. There are also a number of key strategies developed by the various partnerships listed above, which focus on their specific areas of responsibility. These include (but are not limited to) the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Children's Plan, Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy, Oxfordshire Strategic Environmental Economic Investment Plan and various annual business plans.

Annual update report

6. This report provides an update on the Oxfordshire-wide partnerships and their key activities over the last year. Each partnership report provides the following information:
- The current focus for the Partnership;
 - The personnel (Chairman and supporting staff) of the Partnership
 - The Partnership's governance arrangements;
 - The Partnership's key achievements in the last year;
 - The aims for the Partnership in the year ahead;
 - The key challenges for the Partnership and how these will be addressed going forward.
7. Since the last partnerships report a new Thames Valley Emergency Services Collaboration has been established under the Policing and Crime Act in 2017 and information about this is included. This collaborative arrangement brings together Fire, Police and Ambulance services operating across the Thames Valley in the interests of greater efficiency and effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATION

8. **Council is RECOMMENDED to note the report.**

MAGGIE SCOTT

Assistant Chief Executive

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Background Papers: Nil

November 2017

Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board

Date of completion	26 October 2017
Chairman	Councillor Ian Hudspeth
OCC Lead Member	Councillor Ian Hudspeth
OCC Lead Officer	Jonathan McWilliam
Last Meeting Date	13 July 2017
Next Meeting Date	09 November 2017
Website Address	https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/health-and-wellbeing-board
Governance Arrangements	The Health and Wellbeing Board is a committee of the Council by virtue of the Health & Social Care Act 2012 and the Local Authority (Public Health, Health & Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013. The terms of reference ¹ set out the requirement to produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy plus additional responsibilities.

Current Focus of the Partnership

The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) meets 3 times a year and conducts business in the following main groups:

1. **Core business** includes the development of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Oxfordshire, which sets out the latest information on the population's health including: population change; a view of the determinants of health; inequalities issues; levels of disease; leading causes of death; and information on service use. This analysis is used by the Board to agree strategic priorities that are set out in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and is updated every year. The Strategy sets out ambitious targets which demonstrate progress in delivering priority work and which are monitored at every meeting.
2. There are **3 partnerships** that report to the Health and Wellbeing Board. Each of these partnerships leads on delivery of some of the priorities in the Joint HWB Strategy. The current focus for these partnerships includes
 - a. **The Children's Trust**
 - i. Revising the Children's Plan for Oxfordshire;
 - ii. Delivering the priorities set out in the Joint HWB Strategy;
 - iii. Working on the themes of Early Help and Early Intervention: Educational Attainment for vulnerable children and young people; Managing transitions into adulthood.
 - b. **The Joint Management Groups, overseeing the Better Care Fund and Adults of a Working Age pool**
 - i. Revising the Older People Strategy;
 - ii. Integration of the workforce in health and social care;
 - iii. Delivering Better Care Fund priorities to reduce transfers of care from

¹ https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/socialandhealthcare/health-and-wellbeing-board/Health_and_Wellbeing_BoardTOR.pdf

hospital.

c. The Health Improvement Board

- i. Driving the focus on Prevention initiatives by all partners;
- ii. Developing work on improving health through planning healthy housing developments, building on the learning from the Healthy New Towns in Barton and Bicester;
- iii. Ensuring that work is targeted to reduce health inequalities wherever possible.

3. **Overseeing delivery of the recommendations** made by the Health Inequalities Commission. There were 60 recommendations which highlight the need to focus on improving outcomes for particular groups of people within Oxfordshire.

<p>Key achievements in the last year</p>

The Children's Trust

The Children's Trust reported many achievements in 2016-17, including:

- Our aspirational target for breastfeeding rates is 63%. Current performance is 62.2%;
- High coverage rates for immunisations, including over 95% of children receiving their first dose of MMR vaccine (though some districts remained below 94%);
- A 34% increase in referrals to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Waiting times improved in the year and are better than the national figure;
- All secondary schools have a health improvement plan covering smoking, drug and alcohol initiatives, as well as access to school nurses;
- Pupils between key stage 1 and 2 for whom English is an additional language (EAL) make more progress than the same cohorts nationally;
- The number of young carers identified and worked with has substantially increased;
- Children's social care services are rated as "good" by OFSTED;
- The OFSTED Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of multi-agency response to abuse and neglect in Oxfordshire (2016), judged that Oxfordshire now has "a highly developed and well-functioning approach to tackling exploitation";
- Child Protection activity across all agencies including police, children's social care, and health has increased in Oxfordshire as well as nationally;
- At the end of March 2016, 87% of Oxfordshire schools were 'good' or 'outstanding' compared to 86% nationally. Over 76,500 young people attend good or outstanding schools, an increase of 9,000 since August 2013;
- Early years outcomes are now above the national average;
- In new performance measures for key stage 4, Oxfordshire performs above the national average.

The Joint Management Group

The Joint Management Group reported many achievements in 2016-17, including:

- Better Care Fund national requirements for closer working of health and social care in 2016/17 have been supported by the joint commissioning of reablement programmes, dementia support and services for carers;
- Oxfordshire is hitting national targets in terms of access and waiting times,

recovery rates for talking therapies, and for access to early intervention in psychosis;

- Oxfordshire has a range of services that support the management of mental health needs in the acute care pathways (Street Triage, ambulance triage, extended hours of psychiatric support in Emergency Department) and there has been a reduction in the use of police cells to assess people detained under the Mental Health Act;
- The number of people with severe mental illness in work or settled accommodation has increased;
- The percentage of the expected population with dementia with a recorded diagnosis has increased. The Dementia Support Service is working with practices to ensure all people with a diagnosis are known to the service.

The Health Improvement Board

The Health Improvement Board reported many achievements in 2016-17, including:

- The completion and return of tests from people are eligible for bowel screening nearly met the national target of 60%. In Oxfordshire, the latest figures show 59.1% people completed the screening (Q1 in 2016-17). Death rates from bowel cancer in Oxfordshire are similar to the national average;
- Targets were met for the number of people invited for NHS Health Checks and a steady increase in uptake was noted throughout the year. Latest figures show poorer uptake in the City and NE Oxfordshire;
- Estimated prevalence of smokers in Oxfordshire is now down to 15.5% (2015) but fewer people are quitting using the commissioned services. It is thought that use of e-cigarettes has had an impact on this. There are still twice as many smokers in “routine and manual” occupations than in the Oxfordshire population as a whole;
- Less than 8% of women are recorded as smoking during pregnancy, less than the national figure of over 10%;
- The numbers of people successfully completing treatment for drug use has improved markedly. Oxfordshire is now above the national rate;
- Between 2014-15 and 2015-16, the prevalence of obesity in Oxfordshire increased in reception year and declined slightly in year 6. In reception year, obesity increased from 6.6% to 7%, and in year 6, declined from 16.2% to 16%. There is variation in the percentages of children who are overweight or obese, with higher rates in some minority ethnic groups and in more disadvantaged communities.
- Oxfordshire continues to have high numbers of people who are physically active and the proportion that are inactive has fallen;
- The number of households in temporary accommodation fell by 29, to 161 from 190 in 2016-17;
- There were 3057 households presenting at risk of being homeless that were prevented from being homeless because of the efforts of district councils (compared to 2992 cases in 2015/16);
- The number of rough sleepers fell to 79 (from a figure of 90 in 2015/16);
- New contracts are to be let for housing related support based on a joint commissioning arrangement and pooled budget.

Aims for the Partnership in the year ahead

The details of the aims of the HWB are set out in the performance framework of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy includes 60 separate indicators. Each of these is reported at every HWB meeting and the responsibility for delivery lies with the 3 partnership boards as described above.

Some of the high level aims in addition to the details set out in the Joint HWB Strategy include:

- Development of a new Children and Young People Plan;
- Revision of the Older People Strategy;
- Delivering the Better Care Fund priorities;
- Developing a framework for Mental Wellbeing that illustrates the contribution of all partners;
- Delivering the recommendations of the Health Inequalities Commission;
- Reviewing the governance of the HWB in the light of potential change in the

Key challenges going forward

health and social care system.

The challenges to the HWB include the following:

- The growing and aging population of Oxfordshire and the pressure on services as a result. This issue is highlighted in the Director of Public Health Annual report and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Detailed information about the population enables partner organisations to respond to the challenge.
- The importance of preventing long term conditions and ill health so that the whole population can enjoy a good quality of life into older age. Embedding prevention initiatives into all partner plans is addressing this issue.
- Development of the health and social care system which are being driven nationally, such as discussion about Accountable Care Systems and the delivery of Sustainability and Transformation Plans. A review of governance to ensure the HWB can meet these challenges is to be proposed at the November meeting.

Overall, these challenges are addressed by building on the relationships and joint working arrangements that already exist. The Board benefits from a regular rhythm of needs assessment, priority setting, and performance management while also remaining flexible to address emerging issues. This is largely through the work of the partnership groups that report to it, and which cover a very wide range of issues between them.

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB)

Date of completion	31 October 2017
Chairman	Paul Burnett, Independent Chair
OCC Lead Member	Cllr Steve Harrod Cllr Hibbert-Biles
OCC Lead Officer	Tan Lea
Last Meeting Date	28 September 2017
Next Meeting Date	4 December 2017
Website Address	www.oscb.org.uk
Governance Arrangements	<p>The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) is led by an Independent Chair and includes representation from all six local authorities in Oxfordshire, as well as the National Probation Service, the Community Rehabilitation Company, Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, schools and Further Education colleges, the military, the voluntary sector and lay members.</p> <p>The Board meets 4 times per year and is supported by an Executive Group that meets 4 times per year.</p> <p>There are three area groups to ensure good communication lines to frontline practitioners. There are a further six themed subgroups.</p>

Current Focus of the Partnership

The OSCB remit is to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each agency on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Oxfordshire. This is done in two ways.

1. Co-ordination of local work by:
 - Developing robust policies and procedures;
 - Participating in the planning of services for children in Oxfordshire;
 - Communicating the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and explaining how this can be done.

2. Ensuring the effectiveness of that work by:
 - Monitoring what is done by partner agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
 - Undertaking serious case reviews and other multi-agency case reviews and sharing learning opportunities;
 - Collecting and analysing information about child deaths;
 - Publishing an annual report on the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Oxfordshire.

Additionally, the OSCB aims to fulfil its appropriate role within the partnership geography of the County. It is in essence, a scrutiny and challenge body and seeks to work alongside the relevant Scrutiny Committee to evaluate safeguarding performance.

The Independent Chair is a member of the Children's Trust is also responsible for:

- Attending two meetings of the Health and Well-Being Board;
- Ensuring appropriate alignments with Community Safety Partnerships to secure alignment between their strategic commissioning and operational delivery roles;
- Driving safeguarding improvements and effectiveness.

Underpinning this work is the aim to secure reciprocal scrutiny and challenge across these partnerships.

Key achievements in the last year

Partnership work: The partnership can demonstrate a range of good work. The OSCB meets all the statutory requirements of Working Together. Significant work has taken place to improve access to early help, and to support for families and professionals including a new threshold of needs matrix and early help assessment. To support this toolkits and resources have been collated in preparation for an online portal.

Serious case reviews have driven practice improvements that include a template for chronologies for children subject to child protection planning. Procedures have also been developed to ensure that professionals meet and consider cases without parents, if necessary, to try and clarify why and develop a plan accordingly. With respect to child sexual exploitation, partners have developed a new simpler risk assessment tool, introduced local champions and worked to secure successful prosecutions against perpetrators of child sexual exploitation.

Training: In 2016/17 the OSCB delivered over 150 free safeguarding training and learning events as well as online learning. The training reached over 9000 members of the Oxfordshire workforce. The OSCB delivered termly newsletters to over 4000 members of the multi-agency workforce and e-bulletins to educational settings across the county. Work has taken place to renew the set of online procedures to make them simpler and more accessible.

Learning and improvement: The OSCB has run four events over the course of the year. Each time, approximately 150 delegates have attended. They have covered:

- Safeguarding risks online;
- Relationships and identity;
- Working with children with disability;
- Working with neglect.

Communications: The OSCB website was kept updated and was used to promote key messages. The OSCB delivered termly newsletters to over 4000 members of the multi-agency workforce, an increase from last year. The OSCB Safeguarding in Education subgroup released termly e-bulletins for early years, educational and further education settings.

Safeguarding procedures: Work has taken place to update the online manual. It has a new look, making it easier to access and navigate.

Scrutinising the effectiveness of services: The OSCB reviewed the work that is

done to support vulnerable groups and held lead officers to account with respect to:

- Education, Health and Care plans for disabled children;
- Domestic abuse;
- Working with neglect;
- Children at risk of CSE.

Whilst there is much to celebrate, the Board remains concerned about the rise in the numbers of children with child protection plans and the number of those in care. In 2016/17 there was also a reduction in the numbers of children and families referred for early help and support. There has been a welcome increase in the numbers being referred for early help and support in the early part of 2017/18, but the Board remains vigilant and proactive in seeking to sustain the increase in the numbers accessing early help while reducing the numbers in protection and care.

Aims for the Partnership in the year ahead

The OSCB has the following three aims for 2017/18:

1. **Improving the effectiveness of the Board** by collaborating with Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) and engagement with local communities including the voluntary and community sector;
2. **Improving practice** in tackling neglect and safeguarding adolescents at risk of exploitation;
3. **Taking robust action** following learning to ensure continuous improvement and to assess risk and capacity across the partnership.

The annual report presents the following objectives for multi-agency work going forward:

- Ensuring good understanding of thresholds;
- Being vigilant to emerging pressure points and concerns (safety online; self-harm; modern slavery; transgender young people and the potential radicalisation of children);
- Managing and improving change (transitions) for young people;
- Long-term planning for children in a multi-agency context.

All challenges are identified in the Business plan. Board business is tightly driven through processes such as an action log, challenge log, risk register and exception reporting against the Business plan.

The Chair has developed local strategic relationships to ensure that safeguarding risks in the child protection partnership are understood and managed effectively at the highest level. A Safeguarding Summit held in partnership with the Adults Safeguarding Children Board will take place in November 2017.

The Board has set a clear schedule of reporting to ensure that key safeguarding issues are challenged and practice is improved. Partners must persist with addressing long term issues of neglect and better protect vulnerable adolescents at risk of exploitation. The workforce needs to know how to work effectively with families experiencing domestic abuse, parental mental health, and drug and alcohol issues. Going forward, partners need to keep a tight grip across the partnership on what is working well, where challenges are emerging, and ensure targets are monitored for improvement.

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The Board has a quality assurance programme in place led by a sub-group that tests how well learning from case reviews is embedded into practice across the safeguarding system via multi-agency audits, and also scrutinises how well partner agencies' safeguarding arrangements can show change. This year will focus on disabled children, neglect and perpetrators of crime.

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB)

Date of completion	2 November 2017
Chairman	Pamela Marsden (Independent Chair)
OCC Lead Member	Cllr Lawrie Stratford
OCC Lead Officer	Kate Terroni
Last Meeting Date	28 September 2017
Next Meeting Date	14 December 2017
Website Address	www.osab.co.uk
Governance Arrangements	<p>The Board includes members from all statutory agencies, including: Oxfordshire County Council (Adult Social Care, Public Health, Trading Standards and Fire & Rescue), Thames Valley Police, NHS England, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust, the National Probation Service, and the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. There are also members from CQC, AgeUK, Healthwatch, and the Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers.</p> <p>The Board has working relationships with other Boards and partnerships across the County detailed in the Joint Working Protocol covering the Health & Wellbeing Board, the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and the Community Safety Partnerships (district and county level). Safeguarding Adult Boards became statutory bodies on 1st April 2015 following the implementation of the Care Act 2014.</p> <p>Within OCC the Annual Report goes to Performance Scrutiny, the Health & Wellbeing Board, and an annual briefing for all Councillors. From 2018 it will also go to Cabinet.</p>

Current Focus of the Partnership

The purpose of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board is to create a framework within which all responsible agencies work together to ensure a coherent policy for the protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse and a consistent and effective response to any circumstances giving ground for concern/formal complaints/expressions of anxiety.

The OSAB aims to ensure that all incidents of suspected harm, abuse or neglect are reported and responded to proportionately, and in doing so:

- Enable people to maintain the maximum possible level of independence, choice and control;
- Promote the wellbeing, security and safety of vulnerable people consistent with their rights, capacity, and personal responsibility, as well as prevent abuse occurring wherever possible;
- Ensure that people feel able to complain without fear of retribution;

- Ensure that all professionals who have responsibilities relating to safeguarding adults have the skills and knowledge to carry out this function;
- Ensure that safeguarding adults is integral to the development and delivery of services in Oxfordshire.

There are six sub-groups which report to the Safeguarding Adults Board and have the following responsibilities:

- **Policy and Procedures:** To oversee the development, implementation and review of local policies and procedures that ensure:
 - the abuse of vulnerable adults is identified where it is occurring;
 - there is a clear reporting pathway;
 - there is an effective and coordinated response to abuse where it is occurring;
 - the needs and wishes of the vulnerable adult are central to the adult protection process.
- **Training:** To provide a comprehensive multi-agency programme to support single agency training in the areas of prevention, recognition and responsiveness to abuse and neglect. This is shared with the Children's Board
- **Safeguarding Adult Review.** To provide assurances to the OSAB that recommendations and learning from all relevant serious case reviews (with multi-agency characteristics) have been considered, and that the relevant learning and recommendations are being implemented.
- **Performance, Information & Quality Assurance:** To receive data on agencies' performance and to undertake audits to establish agencies' effectiveness in safeguarding adults at risk.
- **Vulnerable Adults Mortality Panel:** The formation of this group was in response to the concerns raised through the Mazars Report (and supported by central government) regarding how deaths of adults living with a learning disability were scrutinised. The group's first meeting was in Autumn 2016 and the role of the group is two-fold. First, the group will review the deaths of those with a learning disability that occurred between April 2011 and March 2015. Second, the group will act as the ongoing scrutiny panel for any new deaths of those with a learning disability, much the same as the Child Death Overview Panel operates in the Children's Board.
- **Executive Group:** This is made up of the statutory partners and meets between Full Board meetings to drive forward the work agreed at the Full Board meetings. It also has an oversight function of the work of the sub-groups and is presented with information from other partnership groups, such as the OSCB or the CSPs, which may have relevance to the Adult Safeguarding agenda.

Key achievements in the last year

Peer Review

A Local Government Association (LGA) peer review was held in 2015 and set a number of recommendations reported in last year's Annual Report (2015-16). In January 2017, the Peer Review team returned to Oxfordshire to assess our progress against the actions agreed. The review took place against a background of change

for the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board.

Progress against findings

Progress has been made against all the key findings. Of note were:

- The development and agreement of new Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) joint policies;
- The on-line referral process;
- The greater links between commissioning and contracting; and
- More involvement by all partners sharing leadership roles.

The Peer Review Report Conclusions

“The OSAB should be congratulated for the significant improvements that have been made across all areas of activity in a relatively short time...The Team felt this demonstrated that Oxfordshire has the key building blocks of clear leadership, commitment and energy to make improvements for the benefit of its population.”

The actions from the Peer Review Challenge Session have been incorporated into the Strategic Plan for 2017-18.

Multi-agency Training

The OSAB has launched multi-agency safeguarding training (bookable via the OSAB website). Though it is new, it appears that the training has a positive effect on the safeguarding concerns coming into the system. All courses are led by a Safeguarding Social Worker/Practice Supervisor so that professionals working at the frontline benefit from the vast experience and knowledge held by the Safeguarding Team members. Feedback from the courses has evidenced this view and satisfaction levels are currently above 98%.

The OSAB website is now in its second year and has added a training page to book the multi-agency training mentioned above. The Board’s website continues to host direct links to the Safeguarding Concerns Forms for professionals and members of the public. The thresholds and procedures documents are easily located. Feedback from professionals has been positive and responses to improvements have all been actioned in a timely fashion.

Aims for the Partnership in the year ahead

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board is a partnership committed to working together to ensure local safeguarding services are effective. Its remit is to lead the strategic development of adult safeguarding and to hold agencies to account for their safeguarding work. As such, the OSAB’s vision for Oxfordshire is as follows:

“Oxfordshire is a place where safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, where the OSAB partners work together to recognise and prevent abuse so that adults at risk from harm feel safe and empowered to make their own life decisions.”

Principles and Values

The Principles and Values of the OSAB include:

- **Prevention:** All organisations will have the necessary culture and structures in place to work to prevent abuse from occurring and that takes all concerns seriously, working transparently and enabling swift proportionate interventions at an early stage. There is active engagement with all sections of the local community so that everyone is well informed about safeguarding and related

issues.

- **Proportionality:** All staff and volunteers, in whatever setting, have a key role in working towards preventing abuse or neglect from occurring, and in taking prompt, proportionate action when concerns arise. All staff and volunteers will have the appropriate level of skills, knowledge and training to safeguard adults from abuse.
- **Empowerment:** Any intervention and support provided is person-centred and focused on the outcomes identified by the individual. People must be supported with dignity and respect and be in control of decision making as much as possible. This includes enabling individuals to safeguard themselves from harm and to be able to report any concerns that they have.
- **Governance:** There is a robust outcome focused process and performance framework so that everyone undergoing safeguarding procedures will receive a consistently high quality service that is underpinned by multi-agency cooperation and continuous learning. The Board and its partners are accountable for what agencies do and learn from local experience and national policy.

Following the principles and values above, the Board has agreed the following priorities for 2017-18:

Prevention - It is better to take action before harm occurs

- Developing a prevention and early intervention strategy

Proportionality - Proportionate and least intrusive response

- Championing the multi-agency approach to safeguarding

Empowerment - Presumption of person led decisions and informed consent

- Running Stakeholder events (including public, service users, grass roots organisations and staff);
- Gaining feedback from users of safeguarding services and involving them in the strategic development of safeguarding and at OSAB meetings.

Governance - Ensuring the Board is fit for purpose and working effectively

- Ensuring Making Safeguarding Personal is fully implemented across the partnership;
- Ensuring the data collected by the Full Board provides a full picture of safeguarding activities and issues;
- Ensuring that all partners are encouraged and enabled to take on a leadership role;
- Reducing the paperwork associated with the Board;
- Reviewing the operational changes within Oxfordshire County Council's safeguarding service.

Joint Working – working together with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board to ensure people are protected from birth until end of life

- Ensuring the work done with children transitioning to adult life is exemplary and offers them the best possible life chances, optimising opportunities;
- Ensuring domestic abuse services within Oxfordshire are fit for purpose and support victims and their dependents while ensuring high levels of prosecution of perpetrators;

- Ensuring the workforce within Oxfordshire undertake high quality safeguarding training that meets the needs of staff and volunteers, giving them the skills to work with safeguarding issues.

Key challenges going forward

In the context of significant organisational change, shrinking public sector budgets, the fact that several the issues are equally relevant to safeguarding vulnerable adults with care and support, and to reduce duplication, it was agreed that OSCB and OSAB would undertake an annual joint Impact Assessment on current pressures and activity by each member agency. Each agency would undertake this from a strategic perspective across their organisation and not as an individual member of either or both Boards. To ensure focus on the top priorities, each agency was asked to list their top three pressures. The key points raised by the impact assessment report were:

- **Managing Risk:** Individual agencies are effectively managing safeguarding risks within their service; however, in the current working context (greater demands, reduced budgets, recruitment and retention of staffing difficulties, and consequent levels of organisational change), we need to reinforce the agreed multi-agency approach to managing risk which views safeguarding collectively through the journey of the person rather than the response of the individual organisations. Where more than one agency is involved, risk levels should be assessed and managed collectively and not by an individual agency.
- **Rise in demand for services and activity pressure:** agencies identified three distinct increases in demand: 1) there are more safeguarding cases coming forward; 2) cases are more complex; and 3) there are greater expectations both from members of the public and from organisations themselves as they continue to learn more lessons about safeguarding. Many agencies indicated a rise in demand for particular client groups and in adult safeguarding concerns in particular.
- Most departments and organisations have **time-related targets** for dealing with different aspects of the safeguarding process which are increasingly difficult to achieve given this rise in demand. In the case of NPS (National Probation Service) - they need timely responses from CSC (Children's Social Care) in respect to same day reports to Magistrates and Crown Courts to ensure safe sentencing. In the case of OUH (Oxford University Hospitals), pressure to stick to the 4-hour emergency department rule can impair the quality of assessment in Emergency Departments. OHFT (Oxford Health Foundation Trust) also mention significant delays in authorisation of DOLs (deprivation of liberty safeguards) due to capacity pressures with potential adverse consequences for individuals. More complex cases are now being held in universal and non-statutory services, including the voluntary and community sector, as well as city and district councils.
- **Resources, staffing and restructure pressures:** Having a stable workforce is seen as an important safeguard for vulnerable people and families; however, most respondents talked about the staffing pressures that they were facing and the difficulty in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff. At least 8 of the 11 respondents also cited budget pressure or lack of resources as a key pressure on

safeguarding adults and children.

- **Workforce development and support:** In the context of changing roles and different organisations holding more complex cases, there is a need for more training and support for staff.
- **Housing:** Two distinct issues were identified relating to housing and homelessness. The first related to homelessness among children and families, including migrant families. The second related primarily to adults, the reduction of funding support, and the implications for people who do not meet the thresholds for social care.
- **Multi-agency responses and interdependency:** The responses to question 5, 'What do you need from your partners to address these pressures?', highlight the need for multi-agency involvement in the development and implementation of strategies for dealing with particular aspects of safeguarding. In particular, this includes attendance at joint meetings and, most importantly, sharing information in a timely fashion. Partnership engagement was also a key theme. For example, the Thames Valley Police described this as a willingness to provide evidence about domestic abuse perpetrators and of increased involvement of housing teams (South & Vale) in service redesign. OHFT also suggested full integration of Children's and Adults Boards with one work programme across safeguarding (with some sub-groups) to save time and maximise senior input. As we learn more lessons, there is increasing pressure to monitor more areas which takes time away from direct service provision.

In response to these challenges, the following actions were agreed:

- **Both Boards require rigorous scrutiny of activity:** Each Board to review its own arrangements to ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to check that partnership working remains effective and strong in the light of the increased activity, pressure on budgets, and limited pool of workers and levels of organisational changes.
- **Workforce Development and Support:** The Boards need to be reassured that training and support is robust and that partners are engaged with it as the complexity of cases, expectations, and activity levels all increase. As organisations and roles change, more complex cases are held in universal services and more support and training is needed for these services.
- **Housing and Communities:** The Boards need reassurance that the work of the Health Improvement Board and the Housing Support Advisory Group are picking up the issues related to both adults and children's homelessness, and that the housing action identified in the 2015 Impact Assessment has been followed up.
- **Frequency of Impact Assessments:** The Boards are recommended to continue to request an annual update of the Impact Assessments whilst these pressures remain across the partnerships and in the light of the rapidly changing landscape.

Safer Oxfordshire Partnership (SOP)

*Formerly the Safer Communities Partnership

Date of completion	November 2017
Chairman	Cllr Kieron Mallon
OCC Lead Member	Cllr Kieron Mallon
OCC Lead Officer	Chief Fire Officer Simon Furlong
Last Meeting Date	25 July 2017
Next Meeting Date	25 January 2018
Website Address	https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/safer-oxfordshire-partnership
Governance Arrangements	<p>The Safer Oxfordshire Partnership consists of an elected member-led Oversight Committee which provides support and challenge to an officer-led Coordination Group. The partnership delivers the statutory community safety requirements at the county level. The Oversight Committee meets twice a year, and the Coordination Group meets six times a year. Organisations represented on Safer Oxfordshire include the county and district councils, health, police, the national probation service, the community rehabilitation company, the prison service and the voluntary sector.</p> <p>The partnership works closely with the four city/district level Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), as well as alongside the other countywide partnerships including the Safeguarding Boards, Health & Wellbeing Board and the Children's Trust.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Oversight Committee attends the Oxfordshire County Council Performance Scrutiny meeting every year with the Chief Fire Officer.</p> <p>The terms of reference for both the Committee and the Coordination Group can be found on the partnership webpage.</p>

Current Focus of the Partnership

The partnership published its annual Community Safety Agreement in July 2017 which sets out the countywide community safety priorities. Partnership activities are prioritised to support the delivery of the *Police and Crime Commissioner's Thames Valley Police and Crime Plan 2017 - 2021*. The partnership receives funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) each year and is the only funding received by the partnership. This year the partnership managed a reduction in funding from the PCC of £85k (from £779k to £694k) so that the PCC could support more Thames Valley wide initiatives for domestic abuse, cybercrime and Female Genital Mutilation.

The current areas of focus for the partnership are as follows:

- Protect vulnerable people by reducing the risk of abuse and human exploitation through developing a draft accountability framework with questions that can be

asked of any new community safety concern;

- Reduce the risk of radicalisation and hate crime by engaging in a Home Office peer review and by responding to the recommendations in their report;
- Supporting the expansion of the local authority's role in preventing radicalisation through the Channel panel.

On-going activities include:

- Supporting the coordination of domestic abuse prevention activity across the county, including FGM, forced marriage and honour-based violence;
- Preventing crime and Anti-Social Behaviour through the district Community Safety Partnerships;
- Reducing re-offending by supporting the Thames Valley-wide *Reducing Reoffending Strategy*, supporting the delivery of the *Youth Justice Strategy 2016-17*, and other activity to reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drugs misuse, including ex-offenders;
- Developing and delivering the Preventing Radicalisation Agenda across the county.

Key achievements in the last year

Last year, the partnership allocated £778k of funding from the PCC to support the strategic objectives set out in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan. The following highlights some of the activities that were delivered using this funding:

- At the county level, preventing radicalisation was embedded into existing safeguarding processes and over 320 frontline staff (including schools) received face-to-face WRAP (Workshop to Raise the Awareness of Prevent) training. At the district level, each CSP developed and monitored the delivery of their own local Prevent plan. In addition, the Oxford CSP (supported by the countywide Prevent Implementation Group) coordinated a countywide template which provided quarterly updates on progress by all specified authorities (county and district councils, TVP, CCG, NPS, CRC etc) on how they were delivering against the new Prevent duty.
- The partnership has supported a range of domestic abuse activity which has included a strategic review that heard the voices of both adult and child victims, as well as perpetrators, with 9 recommendations now being implemented. In addition, support was provided for 217 high risk victims of domestic abuse and 104 new Domestic Abuse champions were trained (totalling 1135). Two Domestic Homicide Reviews were undertaken in South & Vale.
- Funding was allocated to the Child Sexual Exploitation sub-group to build resilience and reduce risky behaviours by young people vulnerable to CSE. This included outreach work to build resilience amongst at risk young people and confidential spaces for hard to reach boys/young men to discuss challenging issues such as radicalisation, honour based violence, substance misuse and positive families.
- Safety Partnerships delivered a broad range of youth diversionary projects to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour. They also delivered activities to prevent CSE (e.g. Hotel Watch), FGM, domestic abuse, reduce re-offending, as well as to support vulnerable people (e.g. Safe Places scheme) and safer town centres.

Further details can be found in the local CSP Community safety plans which are published on CSP websites.

- In 2016-17, the Drugs and Alcohol Service Commissioners in Public Health was awarded a grant that was spent in 2 areas of work: 1) reducing reoffending; and 2) reducing alcohol related harm. The Reducing Reoffending project supported the Refresh Café (on Cowley Road) which supported 81 ex-offender volunteers (exceeding its target of 35) over the year. In terms of outcomes, 25 completed an accredited Volunteering Training Programme, 10 moved into further training and 15 moved into paid employment. Alcohol Campaigns to reduce alcohol related harm were also funded through the PCC grant in 2016-17 which included supporting Dry January and the design and distribution of Alcohol scratch cards.
- Last year, the rate of reoffending for young people who work with the Youth Justice Service continued to fall. The Youth Justice Partnership promoted effective partnership working with agencies that meet cross cutting agendas,

Aims for the Partnership in the year ahead

such as risk management and victims.

The partnership's priorities for 2017-18 are to:

- Support a strategic and operational response to exploitation;
- Protect vulnerable people through reducing the risk of abuse and human exploitation;
- Reduce anti-social behaviour;
- Reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drugs misuse;
- Reduce the level of re/offending, especially by young people;
- Reduce the risk of radicalisation and hate crime;
- Support a countywide approach to tackle serious and organised crime;
- Provide support and challenge to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Key challenges going forward

The key challenges for the partnership moving forward are:

- **Developing a framework to support the response to exploitation and abuse of vulnerable people** – this is a new area of work which aims to improve our understanding of, and coordination between, the different community safety forums in Oxfordshire in support of the Joint Working Protocol agreed between the strategic partnerships. A framework is being developed to assure partners that there is clarity about how new risks (such as modern slavery, cuckooing, preventing radicalisation etc.) are being managed and promote better coordination at both the district and county levels.
- **Responding to the recommendations coming out of the Home Office Prevent Peer Review**, as well as preparing for the expansion of the local authority role in relation to supporting the Channel Panel. This work is being taken forward by the Prevent Implementation Group.
- **Supporting the response to the Louise Casey Review** on integration through

providing a report on local activity in line with the recommendations of the report to the Chief Executives Group for discussion.

- **Supporting the development of a Thames Valley wide strategy on tackling cybercrime to protect both vulnerable people and local businesses.** There is a need to clarify who will lead on this area of work and the role of the partnership moving forwards.

Thames Valley Emergency Services Collaboration

Date of completion	10 November 2017
Chairman	CFO Jason Thelwell (Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service)
OCC Lead Member	Cllr Judith Heathcoat
OCC Lead Officer	CFO Simon Furlong
Last Meeting Date	20 October 2017
Next Meeting Date	15 December 2017
Website Address	N/A
Governance Arrangements	The work of the Emergency Services Thames Valley Collaboration is overseen by the Thames Valley Collaboration Board who work to an agreed Terms of Reference. These are founded on the intention of all partners to demonstrate compliance with the duty to collaborate under the Policing and Crime Act 2017. Fire and Rescue Collaboration across the Thames Valley is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) created in 2015.

Current Focus of the Partnership

The introduction of the *Policing and Crime Act* in 2017 imposes a duty on emergency services to consider entering collaborative arrangements with other partners where to do so is in the interests of efficiency or effectiveness for those involved. The Emergency Services Thames Valley Collaboration partnership consists of the following bodies:

- Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority;
- Oxfordshire County Council;
- Royal Berkshire Fire Authority;
- Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner;
- South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

The *National Police and Fire Service Integration Working Group* has identified their intent, principles and road map going forward. The initial joint statement of intent is focused on: preventing harm; keeping people safe; delivering value for money; and 'thinking nationally, working locally'.

The partnership is focussing on several key projects (covered later in this report) where the greatest benefits from collaboration can be realised. This will build on the existing collaboration and develop collaboration in new areas.

Key achievements in the last year

Co-Responding and Cardiac Arrest

All three Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services provide an emergency medical response to support ambulances responding to the most urgent calls in certain areas. This provides better outcomes for communities with excellent examples that demonstrate where Fire and Rescue assets have been able to provide lifesaving interventions ahead of initial ambulance attendance. We also provide further

assistance in the form of response to cardiac arrest in all fire station areas. Cardiac arrest is a smaller sub-set of the most urgent calls where a timely intervention with a defibrillator will give a significantly better outcome for the patient when, quite literally, every second counts.

‘Effecting Entry (Breaking In)’ for Ambulance Service

All three Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services will ‘effect entry’ into a patient’s home for the ambulance service (which was previously provided by the Thames Valley Police). This brings multiple benefits as Fire and Rescue can provide a quicker support to Ambulance crews who need assistance gaining access to the casualty, and potentially incur less property damage because of the equipment carried on fire engines. This reduces demand on the Police, potentially providing other people with a quicker response to more urgent emergencies.

Specialist Capabilities for Multi-Agency Incidents

A project is under way across the emergency services in the South-Central region. This project will assess specialist capabilities across all emergency services to explore innovative ways of resourcing the requirements of incidents attended by all three emergency services (this may range from road traffic collisions to wide area searches). This project is being led by Assistant Chief Constable David Hardcastle.

Safe and Well Visits and Police Community Support Officers

Safe and Well Visits are carried out by the Fire and Rescue service with vulnerable residents. During the visits, firefighters can provide advice and support to reduce any immediate risk from falls, fire, flood, or power cuts. They can also provide advice on health and crime prevention. In some areas, this initiative has been taken up by Police Community Support Officers.

Shared Buildings and Estates

A range of solutions is being adopted to make the best use of existing emergency services’ estates, whether it is as simple as ambulance rest stations or multi-million-pound blue light hubs. This work also includes smaller projects to develop fire stations into joint fire-police facilities that will initially include Chipping Norton and Woodstock.

Emergency Response to fallen trees

Specialist Fire and Rescue crews will now respond to remove fallen trees where the situation is deemed to effect public safety. This means that roads and pathways can be cleared very quickly, reducing the effect on public highways.

Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services Collaboration Summary

The most significant piece of collaboration is the *Thames Valley Fire Control Service* which deals with emergency calls and the mobilising of fire and rescue assets across the Thames Valley from a single location. It is now in a steady state and providing the technical improvements expected, allowing for further collaborative work. The greatest example of this is the operational alignment work that is supported by the alignment of operational procedures, the procurement of fire engines and alignment of integrated risk management planning.

Completed and ongoing collaborations include:

- Joint emergency response operational guidance and assessment

programme;

- Cross-border assistance when responding to emergencies;
- Fire Investigation and Crime Scene Investigation;
- Shared procurement (most notably the procurement of fire engines across the Thames Valley);
- Technical fire safety guidance and training for Fire Protection Officers;
- Out-of-hours specialist fire protection enforcement advice;
- Joint Emergency Vehicle Driving Centre between Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

Aims for the Partnership in the year ahead

The partnership is formalising its governance and programme structure, and will ensure the necessary resources are in place to enable the successful delivery of future collaboration projects. It will explore where existing priorities overlap and then develop a programme of work prioritised on:

- Low complexity, high benefit;
- Low complexity, some benefit;
- High complexity, high benefit.

Six major projects have been identified and project scopes have been completed. The work is currently underway to identify the most suitable people to initiate and lead these projects. The aims of each are described below:

1. **Apprenticeships:** Develop a project to deliver a joint Thames Valley operational recruit course that fits with workforce planning and procurement requirements. New entrants are employed on an apprenticeship model.
2. **Recruitment and Selection:** Develop a single recruitment process for operational personnel across the Thames Valley.
3. **Operational Command – Brigade Manager Rota:** Create a single fire and rescue operational command Brigade Manager rota across the Thames Valley.
4. **Operational Alignment:** Align all operational policies, procedures and practices across the three fire and rescue services of the Thames Valley.
5. **Integrated Risk Mapping and Modelling:** Implement a single risk mapping and modelling methodology across the Thames Valley.
6. **Fire Protection Service:** Improve the service we provide to businesses in the Thames Valley by having a single fire protection function.

Key challenges going forward

As a collaboration, the most significant challenges to the partnership is aligning the priorities of the organisations involved. The framework that has been created will help to build the relationships and trust required to ensure success. Ultimately, this partnership must foster a positive culture of collaboration across all the services involved to ensure the best for the community of the Thames Valley by ensuring an open and honest approach.

It has also been identified that the programme will be challenging and will not be delivered without the correct resourcing. Several roles have been identified to support the partnership and establishing these will reduce this risk.

Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance (OSCA)

Date of completion	October 2017
Chairman	Rt Revd Bishop Colin Fletcher & Cllr Rodney Rose (pre-May) Cllr Mark Gray (post-May)
OCC Lead Member	Cllr Rodney Rose (pre-May) Cllr Mark Gray (post-May)
OCC Lead Officer	Maggie Scott
Last Meeting Date	28 June 2017
Next Meeting Date	26 October 2017
Website Address	https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-stronger-communities-alliance <i>(Public meetings - minutes are online)</i>
Governance Arrangements	The Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance (OSCA) brings together partners from public sector, voluntary sector support providers, faith groups, representatives of local councils, the NHS, military and police. The aims of the partnership are to build a sustainable voluntary, community and faith sector as well as a stronger and empowered community. OSCA Partnership meetings are held three times a year with the dates published on the website.

Current Focus of the Partnership

The current focus for the partnership has been to:

- Support those communities affected by changes in service provision, such as Children's Centres, Transport, and Day Services;
- Continue to work in partnership across the infrastructure organisations, avoiding duplication and sharing resources to manage capacity (ie. Charity Triage);
- Maintain the momentum of the new county wide Volunteering Strategy and put actions into practice.

This will be supported by Oxfordshire Community Voluntary Action, Community First Oxford and Oxfordshire Community Foundation along with other partners.

Key achievements in the last year

OSCA has continued to build capacity amongst the voluntary and community sector organisations it represents. It has been supporting more organisations that are experiencing financial difficulties and has been working with partners to build sustainability and capacity with a planned review of the Triage system. The past year has focussed on the restructuring of Children's Social Care and the move to an Integrated Children's Service. Many of the infrastructure organisations have been involved in supporting community groups to take on open access provision in their area.

The Children & Young Peoples Forum is proving popular and continues to grow, bringing a wider awareness to the sector, disseminating good practice, and providing

a platform to share each sector's requirements and service provision. The forum has heard from the Chair of the Children's Safeguarding Board and the Director for Children's Services. This has also been a useful forum for discussion around the future of open access Children's Services.

The partnership has been following the changes in relation to supported transport, where possible, helping to identify community solutions, supporting community transport schemes, and volunteer drivers. The review of Day Services provision has placed additional pressure on community transport with the withdrawal of transport services to voluntary and community sector day centres. Over half of the 47 centres were affected. Many of these have now found alternative solutions; however, there are a small number of clients and centres that are still struggling. With the introduction of the county wide Volunteering Strategy a new focus was given to raising the profile of volunteering and to improving the opportunities. Having experienced numerous difficulties with the Do-It system, it was agreed that a new system should be procured. *OxonVolunteers* was launched in September.

The partnership has also been keeping a watching brief on devolution in Oxfordshire and what this might mean for communities.

Aims for the Partnership in the year ahead

The OSCA will focus on the following in the forthcoming year:

- Raising the profile of volunteers and increasing their numbers;
- Evaluating what does and does not work with the sector as a result of service changes, such as Children's Transformation, Transport, and Day Services;
- Building resilience in communities;
- Working in partnership across the infrastructure organisations to better manage demand.

This will be supported by Oxfordshire Community Voluntary Action, Community First Oxford and Oxfordshire Community Foundation. The OSCA members continue to secure the maximum funding available for the county and will continue its strong links with the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Oxfordshire Community Foundation and other funders. OSCA will continue to be a 'critical friend' to public sector organisations implementing policy changes, providing advice and challenge in

Key challenges going forward

relation to the impact on the sector and the wider community.

Funding streams for the voluntary and community sector are continually being reduced at a time when there is an increasing demand for their services. OSCA will address this challenge by promoting access to new funding streams and closer partnership working.

As the public sector shrinks and the voluntary and community sector increases, demands on the infrastructure organisations' capacity also increase. The partnership will need to prioritise areas either geographically or thematically to avoid spreading resources too thin or failing to achieve outcomes.

Oxfordshire Strategic Schools Partnership Board (OSSPB)

Date of completion	23 October 2017
Chairman	Rebecca Matthews
OCC Lead Member	Cllr Hilary Hibbert-Biles
OCC Lead Officer	Lucy Butler
Last Meeting Date	27 September 2017
Next Meeting Date	November 2017
Website Address	N/A communications through <i>Schools News</i>
Governance Arrangements	The Board provides regular updates to the Schools Forum, to Education Scrutiny committee and to the CEF Directorate Leadership Team.

Current Focus of the Partnership

Oxfordshire's Strategic Schools Partnership Board (OSSPB) brings partners together to promote the development of sustainable school to school support across the county. The Board holds a small budget. Commissions are based on priorities identified by the Board in the context of Oxfordshire's *Education Strategy 2015 - 18* and *Equity and Excellence*, supporting the aspiration that all Oxfordshire schools should be good or outstanding.

After two years of working together, the Board has produced an annual report where several priorities were identified in September 2016. The Board agreed the following would be the focus of work over the first two years:

- Closing the performance gap between vulnerable learners and their peers;
- Improving achievement of those with SEND;
- Improving attendance;
- Supporting effective recruitment and retention;
- Encouraging higher quality alternative provision;
- Reducing fixed term and permanent exclusions;
- Supporting the development of leaders and managers in schools and settings.

It was agreed that the range of these priorities was too ambitious and the Board has not been able to address all of them. In September 2017, the Board will review its priorities for the coming two years once 2017 data is available and focus on a smaller number to ensure greater clarity and achieve robust outcomes.

Key achievements in the last year

The **Operational Group was developed** to promote communication between stakeholders and ensure a coherent and coordinated approach to the provision of support available for Oxfordshire schools. At each meeting, data and information such as Ofsted outcomes, are used to identify schools where support might be needed, in addition to requests for support received directly from schools. All discussions take place within an agreed data-sharing protocol. Potential support

packages are discussed, including identification of who might be best placed to provide the support, and funding streams for the support, are established.

Once the work is undertaken, its impact is assessed and reported back to the SSPB. The Operational Group also considers specific projects and funding opportunities that could benefit Oxfordshire schools. Thus, a number of Oxfordshire schools are benefiting from over £180,000 of funding from successful applications.

The University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University worked on an SSPB sponsored project to investigate issues around the recruitment and retention of teachers in Oxfordshire. They spoke at the Heads and Chairs briefings about this work and attended the Education Scrutiny committee. This has resulted in:

- More direct collaboration between the universities and the sector in their recruitment of new teachers;
- Understanding the needs of the region;
- The creation of the Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Association Job Board;
- The creation of the OTSA Get Into Teaching Programme;
- A joint OTSA and University of Oxford Secondary Recruitment Fair.

A new project has been launched with the aim to reduce rates of persistent absenteeism in Oxfordshire's schools and academies. It also aims to ensure schools understand the issues and trends of persistent absenteeism, both nationally and locally, and to share effective strategies that have reduced persistent absenteeism.

A new two-year action research project has been commissioned which responds to the priority to reduce fixed-term and permanent exclusions.

Aims for the Partnership in the year ahead

Success from the various commissions detailed above will be monitored to ensure that there is a positive and measurable impact. The Board will also continue to strengthen the ground-breaking work of the Operational Group. Additionally, the OSSPB will continue to prioritise the improvement of communication with the school community. Plans to consider a membership or subscription to the SSPB are under consideration.

Key challenges going forward

The viability and longevity of the Board will depend on the financial model that can be ensured for the future. This is a continuing challenge. The Board initially secured funding through the generous support of the OCC and Schools Forum. The Board's budget is now held by the Vale Academy Trust, which helps to ensure that the funds are protected for the work of the Board. The Operational group secures additional funding for specific projects, but there will be continuing pressures to find funds for commissions and for the small, part-time staff who service the Board.

The changing educational landscape has been a feature of education for many years. The proportion of maintained schools converting to academies continues with some pace in Oxfordshire. There are still 160 maintained primary schools in the county and the outcome of the recent consultation could help to shape the

developing role of the SSPB. The work of the Board supports all schools, regardless of status, but it will be incumbent on the board to be flexible in its approach for the future as the context continues to change.

The work to consider alternative structures for the Board for the future will require a significant investment in time and effort and will be dependent on the Board's determination to seek security for its future work.

Oxfordshire Early Years Board

Date of completion	November 2017
Chair	Sarah Steel
OCC Lead Member	Cllr Hilary Hibbert-Biles
OCC Lead Officer	Sandra Higgs,
Last Meeting Date	February 2017
Next Meeting Date	TBC
Website Address	https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/early-years-board
Governance Arrangements	The Early Years Board provides regular updates to Schools Forum, and to the CEF Directorate Leadership Team. It operates parallel to the Strategic Schools Partnership Board (SSPB).

Current Focus of the Partnership

The Early Years Board is in the process of being reshaped and as such as not met since February 2017. The scheduled meeting in the summer term (May 2017) was cancelled. It was agreed that the Early Years Board would be reviewed following the General Election and the restructure of the Early Years Team (since July there has been a much smaller team of Early Years advisors/officers in place).

Discussions with the Early Years Board in February focused on its core purpose; it was agreed that the refreshed Early Years Board should feature local Oxfordshire providers rather than national Early Years experts, but they could be part of a wider reference group.

Michelle Jenkins, Early Years Lead is working closely with the Nursery Heads and other local Leaders of Early Years to review and reshape the Early Years Board and it is hoped that a new constitution and group will meet in 2018.

Oxfordshire Growth Board

Date of completion	November 2017
Chairman	Chairman: Cllr Bob Price- Leader Oxford City Council Programme Manager: Paul Staines
OCC Lead Member	Cllr Ian Hudspeth
OCC Lead Officer	Bev Hindle
Last Meeting Date	31 October 2017
Next Meeting Date	30 November 2017
Website Address	https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-growth-board (Public meetings - minutes since 1/7/16 are currently online on Oxford's website. A commitment to develop a dedicated Growth Board microsite is being progressed.)
Governance Arrangements	The Growth Board is a Joint Committee with a core membership (with voting rights) comprising Leaders or Cabinet/Executive Members from each of the six Oxfordshire local authorities. The Board also includes non-voting members such as the universities, the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the Environment Agency. It is supported by an Executive of senior officers from the six member local authorities and colleagues from other partners. Growth Board meetings and chairmanship are administered and hosted on an annual rota basis and currently Oxford City Council is the host authority. Terms of reference are available on the Growth Board webpages.

Current Focus of the Partnership

The focus for the partnership at present will be the progression of the Oxfordshire Joint Spatial Plan (JSP). At the last meeting of the Board on 31st October, the Board endorsed a report proposing that all five district councils come together with OCC to develop a JSP. A business case, including a Gantt Chart showing a timeline for the completion of the project, was presented to the Board.

The Growth Board is also involved in discussions with several government departments concerning the possibility of a Place Based Deal between government and Oxfordshire where, in return for growth commitments, government would provide both funding and flexibilities to enable us to deliver our growth commitments. If the deal is agreed, the Board will prepare a delivery plan demonstrating how it will meet its agreed commitments.

Key achievements in the last year

- 1. The completion of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS), following consultation with the public and Stakeholders:** OxIS is a countywide strategy and evidence base that is designed to act as a supporting document for Local Plans. It does this by providing a collation and summation of growth and infrastructure decisions taken and a county wide base-line from which new growth and related infrastructure decisions could be based. This also allows

OxIS to fully integrate with the proposed development of sub-national planning (ex. the England Economic Heartland of England Alliance). OxIS aims to put Oxfordshire in the best possible position to ensure that its interests are explicit, up to date, presented in a way that is relevant to that sub-national work and with the most potential to influence its outcomes.

2. Alongside the Local Enterprise Partnership, **the continued oversight of the delivery of multi-million-pound City Deal and Local Growth Deal projects** and new Local Growth Fund project proposals, in particular, the potential housing programmes in each district and the strategic transport infrastructure needed to support growth.
3. **The completion of various work streams in the post-SHMA Strategic Work Programme**, where a programme of projects will be designed to identify and assess spatial options for accommodating Oxford's unmet housing needs with a view to agreeing a numerical apportionment of unmet need between the districts that they could then progress through their individual local plans as they deemed appropriate.

Key challenges going forward

The Growth Board publishes a Forward Plan of key decisions and actions and this is published on the Growth Board website, the address of which is at the top of this report.

Aims for the Partnership in the year ahead

The Growth Board will be central to the delivery mechanisms of any agreed deal with government and will need to respond to the challenges this brings. As part of this a review of its governance is planned.

Within this, the delivery of the JSP will present challenges to the Board as the timeline for its completion is challenging, reflecting the high priority the councils attach to this project.

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP)

Date of completion	14 November 2017
Chairman	Jeremy Long
OCC Lead Member	Cllr Hudspeth
OCC Lead Officer	Bev Hindle
Last Meeting Date	12 September 2017
Next Meeting Date	05 December 2017
Website Address	http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/
Governance Arrangements	OxLEP became a Company Limited by Guarantee on 1 April 2015. Cllr Hudspeth is a non-executive director of OxLEP limited. Oxfordshire County Council remain the accountable body for OxLEP.

Current Focus of the Partnership

The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) is focussed on leading, championing and developing the Oxfordshire economy. Its primary objective is to deliver the Oxfordshire vision:

'The Vision for Oxfordshire is that by 2030 Oxfordshire will be a vibrant, sustainable, inclusive world leading economy, driven by innovation, enterprise and research excellence.'

We describe below the current focus of our activities.

Housing & Growth Deal

OxLEP, working together with County and District Council partners through the Oxfordshire Growth Board, have been negotiating with Government to submit an ambitious and comprehensive package of infrastructure, housing, and economic productivity proposals for investment.

The National Infrastructure Commission has highlighted the potential to grow the high-value, knowledge-based economy along the Oxford-Cambridge corridor to enable it to compete on a global stage and boost UK plc. In addition to this, the National Industrial Strategy is developing a focused, place-based approach which has set out the importance of local geographies as being a key ingredient in driving economic success.

In that context, Government invited the partners in Oxfordshire to come forward with ambitious proposals for a Deal to secure investment for infrastructure, housing and economic productivity in return for confidence in the delivery of commitments. We aim to make the Deal the first stage in an ongoing discussion with Government about long term investment in Oxfordshire's potential.

Our priorities

The key priorities which frame our Deal discussions are to:

- Secure the critical investment in physical and community infrastructure that residents and businesses want;
- Ensure growth is sustainable and enhances quality of life;

- Make sure the right types of housing are built and in the right places;
- Keep a firm focus on productivity and skills - we want economic growth through being better and smarter, not just more of it;
- Take a long term strategic view so that individuals, communities, business and Government can engage in honest conversations and be confident about decisions taken.

As this is a deal process, Government will look for firm commitments and offers from Oxfordshire to ensure investments are properly geared towards delivering growth and achieving targets. To that end we can expect to be asked to offer:

- Firm delivery commitments;
- Delivery of a Joint Spatial Plan and shared transport vision for the long-term;
- Collective governance arrangements that bind the Oxfordshire partnership.
- More joint and commercial working (ex. closer working on public sector land and developing new vehicles to accelerate housing delivery);
- Strategic leadership and support for the Oxford Cambridge corridor and delivery of local industrial strategy.

What a Deal would mean?

For our residents, the Deal could secure investment in transport and other infrastructure needed to tackle existing congestion and to support a high quality of life into the future. This would help to ensure that new homes are delivered in the right places to help tackle affordability challenges. It could support investment in skills support for local businesses, thereby ensuring better and broader job opportunities in the future for local people.

For businesses, a Deal could support greater economic gain and unlock new opportunities through linkages established across the Oxford-Cambridge corridor. It could provide greater support for employers (many of which have an international footprint) to break down transport barriers that impact on recruiting and retaining the world-class talent they need.

A Deal could also help boost productivity across all sectors by better aligning businesses with education providers to support emerging sectors, particularly in high-tech areas. This is essential to delivering tomorrow's globally successful businesses, research centres and innovation hubs. This would also deliver improved career pathways for our young people. Crucially, it will also build resilience and enable growth for our local economy in the post-Brexit world.

A Deal would also support the work of the Growth Board on joint spatial planning in the context of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy through more robust joint planning and delivery.

Negotiations continue with Government and we hope to see announcements in the Autumn Budget Statement, with a commitment to finalise details of the Deal by early new year.

Local Growth Fund

OxLEP was awarded £24.16 million of Local Growth Fund 3 (LGF3) funding on top of the £174 million of City Deal and LGF funding already secured for Oxfordshire.

The new investment enables us to support multiple projects to benefit local people and businesses. Our key focus will be on developing skills to meet the needs of local employers, building on Oxfordshire's strengths in research and development, and opening up new commercial development opportunities. The projects are currently going through due diligence and legal agreement processes. Announcements of detailed projects are expected soon. The focus of the LGF is on maximising government investment into the county alongside ensuring we deliver against our existing c£2bn growth programme.

Sub-Group governance

OxLEP aims to establish and put in place clear governance arrangements for a number of sub-groups that will report to the OxLEP Board on various work streams. This includes: skills; innovation; environment and sustainability; visitor economy; and strengthening communications through a new website and increased social media presence.

Key achievements in the last year

Strategy

Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire 2016

Our updated SEP was launched in March 2017 at the Begroke Science Park.

European Structural Investment Funds

The ESIF programme can be most easily understood as being organised around three headline programmes that are now being delivered:

- **The Business Support Programme (£8.6m)**, which provides an integrated and coherent package of support to business across Oxfordshire to deliver growth through innovation;
- The Labour Market and Community Development Programme (£8.6m), which delivers a series of measures across the county to help our people enter and thrive in the local labour market, and to help local people and communities tackle some of their key economic, environmental and social challenges;
- The Rural Development Programme (£3m), that helps rural businesses develop, grow and increase tourism and local food processing activities.

Business support programme

OxLEP was awarded £1m ERDF (£2m with match) for a business start-up and support programme. The programme, Elevate, was launched in June. The *Elevate* programme will help businesses start-up and scale-up by offering a comprehensive package of measures.

University of Oxford, Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, and OxLEP (as the lead partner) has been awarded £2.6 million to run the *Innovation Support for Business Programme* (£5.2m with match). This programme is soon to be launched.

The Low Carbon Hub was successful in winning the £1.4m of funding for the low-carbon element of the business support programme. Their project, *OxFutures*, has now launched. The remaining £1.4m ERDF is allocated to projects that seek to support social enterprises in Oxfordshire and to provide support for SME's seeking finance.

Labour Market and Community Development Programme

Activate Learning launched the £1.2m three-year *Building Better Opportunities* programme in August 2016. The project aims to help Oxfordshire's long term unemployed residents access training and employment. As of July, 314 residents have been engaged in the project and 33 of these have gained evidenced jobs.

Back on Track is a £1m project run by *Activate Learning* and other delivery partners to help transform the lives of young people at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) or who have recently become NEET. There are 2 key workers in place and a project manager. *Activate Learning* have engaged with 26 secondary schools, with 122 referrals from schools and 20 registered on the programme. The team are working closely with OCC's EET team.

The £387,000 *Oxfordshire Community Grants Scheme* is run by Oxford City Council. The project seeks to provide grants from £5,000 to £50,000 to community groups across the county to help residents access training and jobs. The project was launched in October 2016 and will end on June 2018. So far there have been three funding rounds.

Rural development

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development was launched nationally in January. In Oxfordshire the focus is on:

- Business Development - £747,666
- Tourism- £747,666
- Food processing- £747,666

The grants are for capital items which will help the business grow and create jobs.

Delivery Plans

Sub-groups to take forward the *Strategic Environmental Economic Investment Plan* and the *Creative, Cultural, Heritage and Tourism Investment Plan* have been set up and work is underway to prepare detailed delivery plans that will be launched in early 2018. Details about the sub-groups and their membership will be published on the new OxLEP website.

Community Employment Plans (CEPs)

Community Employment Plans compel developers of strategic sites to provide training and job opportunities to local people. Currently, there are 4 CEPs in place: Westgate and Barton Park sites, NW Bicester Eco Town plus the City Towers. There are 2 imminent CEPs: Botley West Way re-development and Crabb Hill, Wantage. We have worked with all the local planning authorities to include policies for CEPs in their emerging Local Plans.

OxLEP Business

Our £2m *Elevate* programme will help businesses start-up and scale-up by offering a comprehensive package of measures including:

- **Network Navigators** who represent the key business and industry sectors in Oxfordshire, and are experts in their relevant fields. They will help businesses get connected to other key contacts in the relevant sectors or area, as well as showing them the support that is available both locally and nationally;
- New free workshops that will cover a variety of topics to help residents to start

and grow a business;

- Oxfordshire Business Enterprise (OBE), who offer free and impartial advice to help residents start a business. They provide support on a range of business issues including self-employment to forming a company, and from marketing to bookkeeping;
- Grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 to pre-start, start-up and growing businesses.

To the end of October, 22 workshops covering a wide range of subjects have been held.

University of Oxford, Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council and Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and OxLEP (as lead partner) has been awarded £2.6 million to run the *Innovation Support for Business Programme* (£5.2m with match). This programme will be launched later in 2017 and will support innovative Oxfordshire SMEs by:

- Assisting them to develop and commercialise innovations;
- Enhancing the research and innovation infrastructure in Oxfordshire;
- Promoting business investment in research and innovation; and
- Developing links between businesses and researchers.

Our Inward Investment team has been active in account management with businesses and working with our wider partners in the county and at the Department for International Trade on inward investment opportunities. Key achievements for 2017/18 to date include 95 inward investment enquiries from new or existing investors logged this year. Also:

- There are currently a healthy number of projects progressing through the pipeline with 146 live active enquiries of which 96 are potential Foreign Direct Investment (FDI);
- A total of 53 account management visits in Oxfordshire recorded by OxLEP and partners to date. These have been captured through the sharing of information by EDO's supported by the Evolutive shared CRM database;
- An enhanced collaborative approach to account management across the UKTI, EDO and Network Navigator network has been developed to better align account management intelligence and follow up;
- The OxLEP Business Investment Team have supported 22 inward investment successes to date, supporting 260 jobs (11 FDI of which 7 are higher value);
- Data on the 90 new investments at Westgate and 30 new investments/expansions at Bicester Village are currently being captured.

OxLEP Skills

The updated Oxfordshire Skills Strategy was launched in March 2017 and highlights 5 strategic priorities. OxLEP Skills works to support these priorities, which include training provision, apprenticeships, education business links, graduate retention and employability across all ages. Achievements in the last year include:

- Successful completion of a three-year city deal programme to promote and support apprenticeships;
- There are now 40 Oxfordshire schools signed up to the Careers & Enterprise Company's Enterprise Adviser Network and 28 Enterprise Advisers engaged;
- The Work Experience Service worked with 75% of Oxfordshire secondary schools;

- LGF funded skills capital projects opened (includes STEM Centre and Care Suite);
- Successful completion of Westgate Phase 1 CEP;
- Careers Fest delivered with 1500 students attending and over 50 exhibitors;
- Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards launched.

Aims for the Partnership in the year ahead

- **Maximise investment** into the County through emerging funding opportunities in a post-Brexit world;
- **Ensure delivery against existing funding agreements**, which will be mitigated by the robust performance management framework in place and the strategic oversight role of the Growth Board;
- **Housing & Growth Deal** – conclude the details of the negotiation with Government on each element of the deal (housing, infrastructure, productivity) and establish a clear programme of activity, working with our partners across business, academia and investors;
- **Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor** – the National Infrastructure Commission will publish its report into the potential of the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor in the autumn, alongside the budget statement. LEPs will be expected to lead on the development of an economic plan to capitalise on the potential of the corridor and establish proposals that can support key industries, business markets, and attract investors. OxLEP will be working closely with neighbouring LEPs including SEMLEP, BTVLEP and the Greater Cambridgeshire Combined Authority to build a strategic framework and vision to guide investment into the corridor;
- **Industrial Strategy** – the industrial strategy will be launched in the autumn following the budget statement and is an important policy development as it will chart the economic direction of the UK as we leave the EU. LEPs are expected to play a significant leadership role in the delivery of the strategy with the expectation that they will produce Local Industrial Strategies to identify how they will take forward key areas of economic potential and scale up existing strengths that build on their Strategic Economic Plans. OxLEP will aim to bring together our work on the Housing & Growth Deal, alongside our engagement in the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor, to harness the strategic economic assets which are located across Oxfordshire to attract further investment from both government and the private sector to support our infrastructure and business base.

Prepare and launch the:

- **Oxfordshire Energy Strategy**, funded via BEIS and Oxfordshire County Council, led by the Environment & Sustainability Sub-Group, to set out a route map for the transition to a low carbon economy;
- **One Planet Living Oxfordshire Project**, led by the Environment & Sustainability Sub-Group, to provide robust evidence to encourage more sustainable living and working;
- **Oxfordshire Farming Study**, led by the Environment & Sustainability Sub-Group, to position Oxfordshire and its rural economy favourably in a post-Brexit world;

OxLEP Skills future work includes development of a Skills Hub.

Key challenges going forward

- Ensuring delivery against existing funding agreements, which will be mitigated by the robust performance management framework in place and the strategic oversight role of the Growth Board;
- Maximising government investment into an already successful economy, mitigated through continued excellent relationships at senior official and ministerial levels;
- Ensuring we can respond positively and promptly, and be 'strategically opportunistic' as potential future funding opportunities emerge. This will be addressed by ensuring partners and stakeholders are fully engaged and aware of potential opportunities as they arise and by developing, as far as is practicable, a robust suite of business cases in advance of potential funding opportunities;
- Position Oxfordshire so that it takes up the opportunities, and tackles the challenges of a post-Brexit world.

Oxfordshire Environment Partnership (OEP)

*Formerly the Environment and Waste Partnership

Date of completion	07 November 2017
Chairman	TBC – changing in 2018 from Cllr Reynolds, West Oxfordshire District Council to Cherwell District Council
OCC Lead Member	Cllr Yvonne Constance
OCC Lead Officer	Victoria Fletcher/Andrew Pau
Last Meeting Date	03 November 2017
Next Meeting Date	09 March 2018 - TBC
Website Address	N/A
Governance Arrangements	Terms of reference available on request

Current Focus of the Partnership

The Partnership's terms of reference are to help coordinate shared action on Oxfordshire 2030 pledges relating to waste, energy, climate change, biodiversity and flooding, including the monitoring of commitments and actions outlined via:

- Climate Local Commitments;
- The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy;
- The Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Key achievements in the last year

Updates on the OEP's work on waste, energy, natural environment, and flooding since the last verbal update in July 2017 are found below.

Waste

Waste performance

Oxfordshire has long been one of the lead authorities in household waste recycling and composting. This is particularly important because it is more cost effective to recycle than to dispose of waste through incineration or landfill, and also better for the environment. Previously Oxfordshire has achieved a county wide recycling rate of over 60%. Last year (2016/17) we achieved a county wide rate of over 59%. Most of this decrease was attributable to changes in the way that recycling is measured.

Monitoring for April to August shows that recycling and composting performance has fallen at recycling centres and kerbside. Projecting the current levels of performance forward suggests that a county wide recycling rate of just over 58% will be achieved this year. Tonnages of recycling and composting are both down and the tonnage of residual waste is up. The Oxfordshire Environment Partnership and officers are currently working to better understand the fall in performance and how to address this. New contracts have now started at the recycling centres in West Oxfordshire and the exact impacts of these contracts are yet to be seen.

JMWMS – Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy

Introduced in 2008, The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy has formalised partnership working between district and county waste teams and helped

Oxfordshire move from a recycling rate of around 30%, to one approaching almost 60%. It has helped us introduce comprehensive kerbside collection schemes, including food waste, and procure innovative county technology to help increase our recycling rate while reducing the amount sent to landfill to under 5%.

The strategy is now approaching its second 5-yearly review, and while we have made great progress, there is still a lot we can do. Recycling rates across the country are stagnating, and waste analysis shows that around 60% of waste in residual bins could be recycled using current systems. Thus, helping residents to use the existing systems better will be a key focus. While difficult to measure, preventing waste from being generated in the first place helps to save residents money as well as reducing the impact on the environment. Campaigns such as 'Love Food Hate Waste' and 'Love your Clothes', along with promoting and enabling furniture reuse will help to lower our waste arisings. 'Circular Economy Principles' will be embedded throughout the document to reinforce our commitment to a different economic and consumption model, aiming to reduce our reliance on virgin resources, increase the amount of waste reused and recycled, and embrace new technology where needed.

OEP members are keen to address these issues. A consultation will be launched in the New Year to gather information from residents. This will be used to develop action plans under the strategy that reflect our ambition, and the resources available. Changes in Government policy – from the introduction of a deposit return scheme for bottles, to the implications of Brexit – will be monitored to determine their influence on Oxfordshire's reuse and recycling activity.

Food Waste Project – a Big Winner!

Oxfordshire authorities and Agrivert won the *Best Food Waste Reduction Award* from the Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association for the collective Food waste project undertaken via OEP. This involved rolling out plastic caddy liners across all districts (except Cherwell, who have a different collection service). These liners are less expensive, are shown to remove barriers to food waste recycling, and make the collection systems easy for people to use. OEP were pleased with the project as it is more user friendly, shows that we've listened to the feedback from the public, and has therefore driven up participation in food waste recycling.

WEEE funding (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment)

OEP in partnership with the CAG project have recently been successful in securing £25,000 to focus on electrical waste reduction, repair and recycling. The funding will be spent through CAG groups across the county, establishing reuse collection points for repair and reuse through organisations such as Bicester Green, 'Repair and Fix' cafés at local swap shops, professional training sessions for volunteer repairers, and the creation of 'how to' videos to guide residents through simple checks and fixes. The project aims to reuse over 9 tonnes of WEEE over the year.

CAGs

The Community Action Groups have had another very successful year. The 62 groups held over 2000 events and engaged with around 80,000 residents. Over £800,000 of funding and income generation was achieved and the groups estimate that activities have saved Oxfordshire residents over £120,000. An infographic on activities and impacts is enclosed in Appendix 1.

Energy

Oxfordshire Energy Strategy

In 2016 Oxfordshire Environment Partnership strongly supported the production of a county-wide energy strategy, looking at how we can take forward our collective low-carbon ambitions, as well as what action is needed to help us achieve our public commitments around energy.

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) has been awarded £40,000 by the Department for Business, Industry and Energy Efficiency to develop an energy strategy for the county. This work will build on the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy and other influential documents such as the Oxfordshire Low Carbon Economy Report to provide a strategic framework for energy investment across the Local Enterprise Partnership area.

All authorities in Oxfordshire sit on the board of OxLEP, and the strategy will also seek endorsement from the Growth Board. In developing the strategy, OxLEP will work collaboratively with authorities, other key partners, and stakeholders across the county to:

- Understand the energy opportunities and challenges for power, heat and transport across the whole LEP area (including meeting the needs for planned housing and economic growth);
- Set out energy demand and carbon emissions trajectories;
- Identify a pipeline of energy and low carbon projects;
- Assess the economic potential associated with this transformation;
- Determine how it will be delivered, including priorities and actions for the LEP and its partners.

An 'energy inventory' will set out what we already know, what has already happened, and what we have already achieved. A consultant will be appointed to engage stakeholders and draw together the county's wide knowledge base and expertise to identify gaps and future priorities.

By the end of March 2018, we will have a draft strategy which sets the framework for low carbon growth, and just as importantly, a pipeline of projects and investment opportunities. The strategy will be presented on a living web-based platform to reflect Oxfordshire's energy landscape. The project will be overseen by a steering group with representatives from the public, private, academic and community sectors.

Low carbon homes

OEP were particularly concerned about the lack of national policy drivers available to help us build energy efficient and low carbon homes, and are looking at ways that we can help all authorities share challenges and best practice around homes.

DIMES project

An ultra-efficient and ground breaking energy technology could power new homes in the Bicester Garden Town if a new study is a success. The DIMES (Distributed Integrated Multi-Use Energy System) project - a unique project for the UK - is looking at how a high-tech Fuel Cell system could heat, electrically power and provide hydrogen transport fuel for new developments. The Fuel Cell technology would cost effectively heat and power properties, and could bring millions of pounds into the local economy that would further create skilled employment for Bicester workers. It

would also help improve air quality and be part of a low carbon future.

The study has received £60,000 from Innovate UK and aims to show that the technology, potentially the first of its kind at this size in the UK, is a viable and clean energy source. The project is led by Fuel Cell Systems Limited alongside partners from the University of Oxford, Oxfordshire County Council, Cherwell District Council and Metropolitan Infrastructure Limited. The findings of the project will be published in November this year. *Link to press release:* <http://www.4-traders.com/news/Oxfordshire-County-Council-Bicester-energy-project-gains-momentum--25348897/>

Biodiversity & Natural Environment

AONB Management Plans.

There are three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in Oxfordshire - Cotswolds, North Wessex Downs and Chilterns. Each is required by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 to prepare Management Plans on behalf of local authorities to guide the activities of the AONBs and their partners. Management Plans are reviewed on a five-yearly basis. Whilst the individual AONBs take the lead on developing and reviewing these plans, the local authority partners' contribution is a formal requirement.

We are entering the period when the Management Plans of Oxfordshire AONBs are due for review. The Cotswolds Conservation Board Plan review has been underway for approximately one year and the first preliminary drafts have been circulated for initial consultation. The Chilterns Conservation Board's Plan review will be commencing mid November 2017. The North Wessex Downs AONB partnership's Plan review is likely to commence in approximately 6 months' time. Each Local Authority within an AONB may participate in the review processes. Once finalised, the Plans become a material consideration within the planning process.

Oxfordshire's State of Nature Report 2017

The State of Nature report was launched in March 2017 and has been well received. This gives an overview of national trends in biodiversity. Oxfordshire still has some of the rarest and finest grasslands in the Country. Headlines from the report include:

- Our rivers are much cleaner than they were 30 years ago, which has helped the recovery of local populations of threatened species;
- Long term declines in farmland and woodland biodiversity continue with some associated species in serious risk of extinction; however, the area of woodland recorded over the last 30 years has increased; and
- There is continuing fragmentation and loss of connectivity.

We need to:

- Create larger and more connected areas of high quality habitats ("More, Bigger, Better, Joined");
- Improve practical advice and support for communities and landowners;
- Better plan for blue and green infrastructure; and
- Put sustainable development at the heart of decision making.

Projects - Biodiversity Net Gain

Net gain is where development leaves biodiversity in a better state than before.

Policy support can be found in the National Planning Policy Framework for net gain. There are also some good examples of industry practice in this field (ex. Network Rail take a positive approach with all their development). Net gain approaches however, help to quantify biodiversity losses and gains within developments, and to better consider compensation (i.e. what the impacts of a development are and what can be done to offset this).

Local authorities in Oxfordshire all have access to specialist ecological advice in carrying out their planning functions and to ensure they are following the mitigation hierarchy (Avoid, reduce, mitigate, compensate). OEP strongly supported the principles of Biodiversity Net Gain and encourages its inclusion in local policy and implementation.

Oxford to Cambridge Natural Capital Investment Plan - Pilot Project

Natural Capital is the 'stock' of resources upon which society depends and includes ecological communities, species, soils, land, freshwaters, minerals, sub-soil resources, the atmosphere, and the natural processes that underpin their functioning. Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) have commissioned a partnership of Local Nature Partnerships within the Oxford - Milton Keynes - Cambridge growth corridor to develop an investment plan for the growth corridor's natural capital. Such a plan has not been developed before and this study is regarded as a pilot. The study is relatively small in scale and requires the willing participation of partners across the corridor to provide information and expertise. Oxfordshire does not have an active Local Nature Partnership. In the absence of an LNP, officers from the County Council, City Council and Cherwell District Council have formed the core of a working group that is engaging with the pilot study and are seeking to draw in, as far as resources allow, input from other partners within Oxfordshire. A preliminary local workshop is planned in November/December. The pilot study is expected to conclude its work by the end of March 2018. The report is not expected to have any statutory status but may inform further work on natural capital both locally and in the growth corridor.

Projects - Natural England Newt Pilot

Great crested newts (GCN) are a species that is relatively common in Oxfordshire but under threat nationally and internationally. As such, GCN have special protected status within the planning system. Developments that affect individual animals and populations of GCN require a licence from Natural England. The process of administering licences is complex and expensive for both the licencing authority and developers. In response to this Natural England are piloting several different schemes to streamline the licencing process whilst providing improved outcomes for the species.

In Oxfordshire, there is a pilot scheme that is being developed in conjunction with the Environment Bank and other commercial and conservation partners. This is known as the South Midland Great Crested Newt Project. The participating local authorities are South Oxfordshire District, Vale District, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council. In broad terms the scheme aims to identify and protect the most important populations of GCN and create new habitat for GCN in places where this is likely to be most successful rather than focusing on the protection of individual animals and small populations where habitats are less optimal. The pilot has reached the stage where population modelling for GCN in the study area is now well

advanced and attention is being given to the structures necessary to operate the licencing system locally.

Projects - Oxford's Swift City

Oxford has become the first 'Swift City' working in partnership with the RSPB to improve habitats for Swifts. During the construction of developments and renovations, new habitats will be built in (ex. there will be 20 new swift boxes for each of the 4 tower blocks currently being renovated). The project was formally launched in May to coincide with the arrival of the Swifts in the UK. Oxford are also assessing trees in the city to identify what value they provide (i.e. carbon benefits).

Local Flood Risk Management

Flood Toolkit

The Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit is online and is being used successfully by a range of stakeholders. The Flood Toolkit was created using a partnership approach and used experiences of other authorities. For example, Northamptonshire had grant funding and invested heavily in the development of a system to create a visually appealing website, giving easy access to information on what to do in advance of, during, and after flood events. This includes a rolling RSS feed to display real time news information.

OEP were given a demonstration of the website and the information available on it such as maps, flood alerts, 'How to' guides including how Communities can build their flood prevention and resilience, and what funding is available. The website provides a good source of information relating to the relationship between planning and flooding. The website promotes self-help, good guidance, and provides information which is commonly requested by the public.

Local Flood Risk Management Plan

OEP monitors the implementation of actions under the Local Flood Risk Management plan. The completion of the website means that all actions contained within the plan for local authorities are complete; a refresh of the plan is being considered for 2018.

<h3>Aims for the Partnership in the year ahead</h3>

Priorities for 2018 include:

Energy

- GHG emissions report for 16/17 & monitor local authority measures implemented;
- Workshop on low carbon homes;
- Electric vehicles in public sector fleet.

Waste

- Progressing the JMWMS refresh, including waste reduction strategy;
- Developing waste in planning guide;
- Continue to monitor waste performance, work in partnership and seek new initiatives.

Natural Environment

- Engaging on AONB management plan refreshes;
- Monitor uptake of biodiversity net gain approaches;

- Monitor implementation of the natural capital work along the Oxfordshire to Cambridgeshire Growth Corridor.

Flooding

Key challenges going forward

- Potential refresh of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

The following have been identified as the key challenges of OEP:

- The partnership remains without dedicated officer support, which presents resource challenges for the hosting authority;
- The partnership has no website;
- Air quality is rapidly moving up local and political agendas, and discussions are likely to be needed as to how Oxfordshire Authorities can coordinate action, and the best forum for that.

Appendix A

Oxfordshire Environment Partnership – Infographic: Activities and impacts of CAGs in 2016-17

The Community Action Group Oxfordshire Project Annual Report 2016-17

Best Community Project, OCVA Awards 2016

The CAG Network is made up of...

62 groups
taking action on climate change

housing energy waste food biodiversity
transport skill sharing recycling/reuse growing

Groups take action in various ways

2,104 events & activities across Oxfordshire

79,259 attendees

21,670 volunteer hours

Events included swap shops, bike workshops, food surplus cafes, thermal imaging programmes, film screenings, talks... and much more

This community-led climate action led to...

67 tonnes of waste prevented from going to landfill

62,811 energy savings (kWh)

52 tonnes Carbon emissions avoided

£126,105 of consumer cost savings

£5,596 local authority cost saving

£834,409 network fundraising and income generated from groups

£281,058 value of volunteer time

£1,247,169 is the total financial output of 2016/17

= 13:1 return on investment

The core CAG funding from Oxfordshire County Council is £92,000