

Cherwell District Council

Executive

9 January 2023

Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership's Charter

Report of Assistant Director - Growth and Economy

This report is public

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to introduce the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP), to engage the Council in its activities and to highlight the forthcoming launch of the OIEP's Charter on 24 January 2023.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To broadly welcome the work of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP).
- 1.2 To actively engage with the OIEP by delegating authority to the Corporate Director – Communities, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economy, to contribute to the OIEP Steering Group and Working Groups on behalf of the Council.
- 1.3 To authorise the Corporate Director – Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economy, to make appropriate pledges and to sign the OIEP's Charter to reflect the commitments contained within the Council's Delivery Plan (2022-2024).

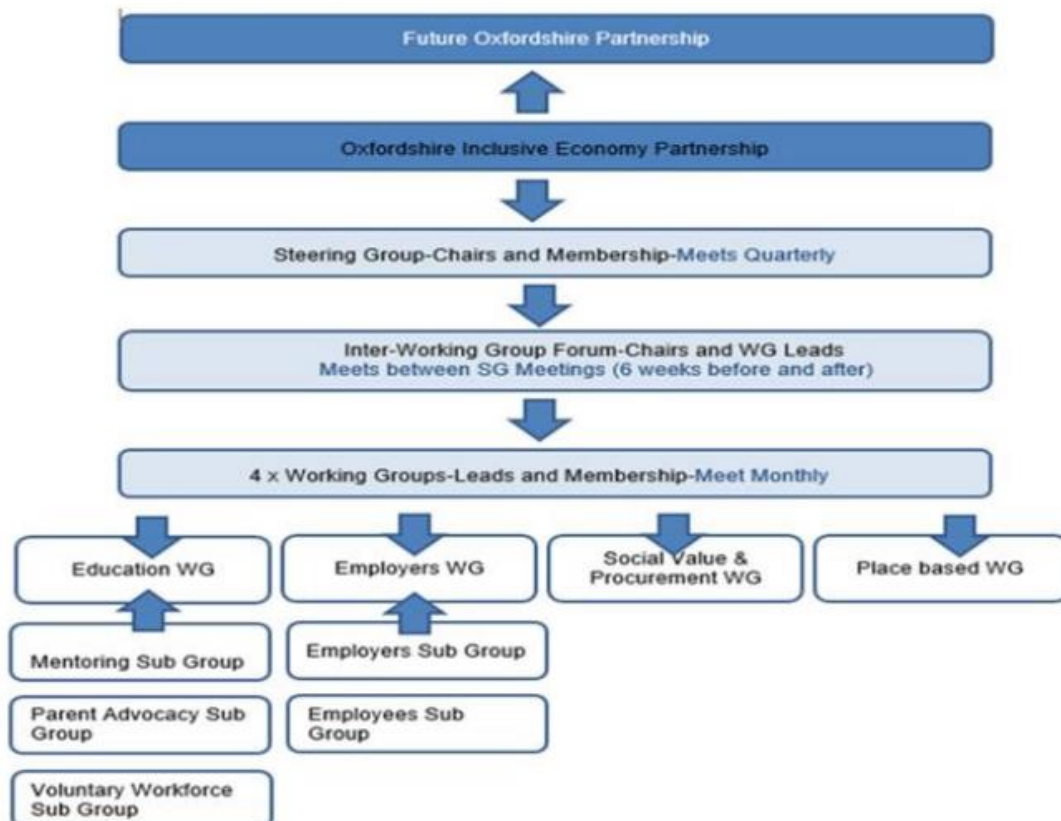
2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) is a county-wide group that brings together over one hundred organisations - employers, business, education, community groups and local government – to share knowledge, expertise and resources, and create links and added-value between different areas of work:
<https://futureoxfordshirepartnership.org/projects/the-oxfordshire-inclusive-economy-partnership/>

- 2.2 OIEP’s aim is to work together to create a more equal and sustainable region that creates opportunities and benefits for all people within the county. The focus is upon addressing matters that require attention, which will have impact and make a real difference by engaging everybody within Oxfordshire’s economy. OIEP’s Mission is to tackle some of our region’s biggest problems to create a fairer environment where everyone can contribute and share in its success.
- 2.3 Oxfordshire is home to significant inequalities. It is one of only three regions that contributes a surplus to the UK economy, yet despite its global position and perceived affluence, its wealth and opportunities are not evenly distributed. The juxtaposition of those strengths and weaknesses also provides a significant opportunity to engage all the resident population – especially those furthest from the labour market who lack skills or experience or require additional support.
- 2.4 In Cherwell, there are geographical concentrations of households suffering exclusion from the economy. This is often an inter-generational and multi-faceted problem. In response, the Local Strategic Partnership oversees the well-established ‘Brighter Futures’ partnership work focussing upon areas of Banbury which rank amongst the 20% most deprived in England. However, the problems arising from economic exclusion extend to households throughout the entire district where localised pockets of deprivation may also be found. The work of the OIEP will therefore bring additional resources through partnership to promote inclusion for all.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership (currently Chaired by the Leader of Cherwell District Council) oversees the work of the OIEP – as illustrated below:



- 3.2 At its Board meeting on 29 November 2022, the Future Oxfordshire Partnership agreed to support and promote the launch of the OIEP Charter, and to engage with local businesses and partners to commit to the pledges of the Charter.
- 3.3 The draft version of the Charter is shown as Appendix One. It is aimed at both individuals and organisations to pledge to for twelve months to demonstrate commitment to Oxfordshire's inclusive economy work. Towards the end of the document, the pledges are currently being developed and will be considered by the OIEP Steering Group on 12 December 2022.
- 3.4 The proposals will be reviewed and signed off by the OIEP Steering Group. Co-chaired by Baroness Jan Royall (Principal, Somerville College) and Jeremy Long (Chairperson, OxLEP), the Group contains partners from the private, public (district, city and county authorities) education, voluntary and community sectors.
- 3.5 The Purpose of the Charter is to:
- To mobilise support for an Oxfordshire inclusive economy - raising awareness and profile
 - To publicly state commitment - with individuals, businesses and organisations signing an online pledge
 - To set and raise standards around 'inclusive economy'
 - To encourage residents and businesses to work together to help the sustainable growth of Oxfordshire's economy - aiming to reduce money leaving the county whilst increasing prosperity for all
- 3.6 The four Working Groups contributing towards the Charter and its aims and mission explained in section 2.0 are:
- Education
 - Employment
 - Social value, and
 - Procurement & place shaping
- 3.7 The Working Groups seek to support, extend and amplify projects throughout Oxfordshire, as well as creating a repository of case studies, information and signposting related to the inclusive economy. The working groups have been established with individuals from broad backgrounds who have particularly relevant knowledge, interest and experience.
- 3.8 Action plans are currently being developing which will identify and build upon specific initiatives that are already successfully tackling inclusivity matters. They will consider how to expand the capacity, reach and impact through partners' support (whether in-kind, through funding, or by way of making connections). In September 2022, a full-time OIEP Manager also commenced in support of the groups and to provide secretariat and programme services, whilst encouraging the enactment of pledges.
- 3.9 Organisations and individuals are being invited to make pledges under the five broad headings explained in the Charter (Appendix One):
- Improve training and educational attainment

- Recruit inclusively
- Offer opportunities into work
- Support local and social economy
- Provide fair wages

- 3.10 Specific pledges will be decided upon at the discretion of each organisation or individual. The OIEP will offer examples of specific pledges under each grouping but partners are not obliged to sign-up to specific pledges and indeed can put forward their own pledges to demonstrate their own leadership.
- 3.11 Cherwell District Council may, therefore, wish to pledge to continue its own recruitment and training policies, its practical support for refugees to gain employment, its apprenticeships programme, its support for volunteering, etc.
- 3.12 Case studies of pledges will be published on the OIEP webpages – showing commitments for the next 12 months and illustrating the effect of that commitment. It is hoped that positive examples will encourage businesses and residents to sign-up to pledge further commitments.
- 3.13 The Charter will be publicly launched on 24 January 2023, 10am-2pm at the Old Fire Station in Oxford. By hiring the space at the Old Fire Station, OIEP is supporting a local charity and social enterprise that provides support to homeless people. Catering will be provided by Damascus Rose Kitchen, a social enterprise supporting refugee women in the city. It would be hoped that further events could be held in Banbury and elsewhere in Cherwell district to extend the geographical understanding of inclusivity issues and to engage additional resources for north Oxfordshire.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) has developed a Charter as a statement of shared commitment to creating a more inclusive local economy, reflecting the broad ambitions of partners from throughout the county to engage everybody in the creation of stronger, more sustainable communities.
- 4.2 Pledges towards the aims of the Charter are being sought. It is recommended that, once the Charter and proposed pledges are clear, Cherwell District Council's commitment reflects and promotes the policies, activities and commitments it has within its Business Plan and Delivery Plan (2022-2024). This will allow partners to understand this Council's approach and to develop co-operative activity to address matters of shared interest.
- 4.3 The Charter is due to be launched in January 2023 and it is recommended that the Corporate Director – Communities be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economy, to make appropriate pledges and to sign the OIEP's Charter to reflect the commitments contained within the Council's Delivery Plan (2022-2024).

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 Officers attended a series of workshops in 2019 that provided research and data to inform the identification of priorities now reflected by the OEIP's proposed Charter. Officers have also attended several OIEP Steering Group meetings and have specifically liaised with officers at Oxford City Council and the newly appointed OIEP Manager.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to engage with the work of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership and not to sign the Charter or pledge towards its delivery. This was rejected because it would miss an opportunity to reinforce its current work by working in partnership to extend the resources in Cherwell to tackle the significant issues being faced by residents who are not included within the local economy.

Option 2: To engage with the work of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership but neither sign the Charter nor pledge towards its delivery. This was rejected because it would suggest that the Council is not committed to the creation of an inclusive economy.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any costs will be met from within existing budgets.

Comments checked by:

Michael Furness, Assistant Director – Finance, 01295 221845,
Michael.Furness@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.2 There are no legal implications.

Comments checked by:

Helen Lolas, Team Leader, Legal Services, 07801 400 941,
Helen.Lolas@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Risk Implications

- 7.3 There are no significant risks arising from this decision. Local authority partners and other bodies in Oxfordshire are also being asked to sign the Charter. Any strategic risks arising through commitment to Pledges will be identified by the Corporate Director – Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economy. Local operational risks will be managed within service.

Comments checked by:
Shona Ware, Assistant Director - Customer Focus, Tel 01295 221652,
shona.ware@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Equalities and Inclusion Implications

- 7.4 There are no equalities issues arising from this report. The Charter is likely to enhance the Council's leadership on inclusivity matters.

Comments checked by:
Shona Ware, Assistant Director - Customer Focus, Tel 01295 221652,
shona.ware@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Sustainability Implications

- 7.5 The development of a more inclusive economy is likely to sustain and enhance employment and business opportunities available locally.

Comments checked by:
Ed Potter, Assistant Director - Environmental Services, 01295 221574,
ed.potter@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Human Resources Implications

- 7.6 There are no HR implications arising from this report and the pledges could promote existing HR policy.

Comments checked by:
Claire Cox, Assistant Director - Human Resources, 01295 221549,
claire.cox@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Wellbeing Implications

- 7.7 The Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership's Charter has the potential to positively impact on the inequalities currently felt by residents across the district and complements the Council's work to support communities throughout Cherwell.

Comments checked by:
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director - Wellbeing and Housing Services, 01295 221724,
nicola.riley@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

The work of the OIEP and the commitments contained within its emerging Charter support the strategic, corporate and local priorities contained within both the Council's Business Plan and Delivery Plan 2022-2024. This includes the 'Response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis', 'Support and facilitate a Vibrant local Economy', 'Promote individual Well Being & Healthy Communities', 'Work to prevent Homelessness', 'Deliver in Partnership', and 'Deliver for and with our communities'.

Lead Councillor

Councillor Ian Corkin, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economy

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- Appendix 1: The Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter with Pledges

Background papers

None

Reference Papers

- The Future Oxfordshire Partnership Board Papers (Tuesday 29 November 2022)
- Cherwell District Council's Business Plan and Delivery Plan (2022/24)

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