

Cherwell District Council

Executive

3 July 2023

Pledges to Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership's Charter

Report of Assistant Director - Growth and Economy

This report is public.

Purpose of report

This report advises on the use of the delegated authority granted in January 2023 for the Council to make Pledges towards the implementation of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) Charter.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To re-confirm Cherwell District Council's commitment to the adoption of twelve pledges (Appendix Two) aligned with OIEP 2023-24 and to support delivery of the pledges through appropriate services areas
- 1.2 To delegate engagement with and membership of the OIEP Steering Group and Working Groups on behalf of the Council to Corporate Director – Communities, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The OIEP is a county-wide group that brings together over one hundred organisations - employers, businesses, education, community groups and local government – to share knowledge, expertise and resources, and create links and added-value between different areas of work.
- 2.2 OIEP aims to work together to create a more equal and sustainable county that creates opportunities and benefits for everybody. It forms part of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, as explained at:
<https://futureoxfordshirepartnership.org/projects/the-oxfordshire-inclusive-economy-partnership/>

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 At the meeting of Executive on 9 January 2023, it was resolved:

- (1) *That the work of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) be broadly welcomed.*
- (2) *That it be agreed 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.*
- (3) *That the Corporate Director – Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economy, be authorised to make appropriate pledges and to sign the OIEP's Charter to reflect the commitments contained within the Council's Delivery Plan (2022-2024).*

3.2 To engage the Council in OIEP's activities, the then Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economy, and an officer from the economic growth service, attended the launch of OIEP's Charter at a social enterprise in Oxford on 24 January 2023.

3.3 The Portfolio Holder and officer also attended the OIEP Steering Group on 17 March 2023. Officers have maintained regular contact with the OIEP Manager to begin to develop initiatives that will encourage other organisations, businesses and individuals in activities to promote inclusion within the local economy. Indeed, the Council has a key role to play, through setting an example, by encouraging others to implement inclusive policies on human resources, procurement, etc.

3.4 For the Council's own implementation, at the meeting of Executive on 3 April 2023, the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plans were discussed, and it was resolved:

"That the draft action plans for Inclusive Communities, Inclusive Services and Inclusive Workplaces be approved" and, amongst other detail, "That the addition to the Inclusive Communities plan of an action to "use our participation in the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter as a spur to further activities which promote equality, diversity and inclusion locally be approved."

3.5 Delegated authority was granted *"to the Council's Assistant Director for Customer Focus in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and the Chair of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working group, to make minor amendments to the agreed action plans and to update on a rolling basis."*

3.6 With the Council's external involvement in OIEP being led by the Corporate Director – Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, officers will ensure the co-ordination of inclusive activity through Council services as appropriate. Indeed, the proposed pledges to the OIEP Charter (Appendix One) are the result of co-operation between different service areas.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 The OIEP has developed a Charter as a statement of shared commitment to creating a more inclusive local economy, reflecting the ambitions of partners from throughout the county to enable everybody to be economically active within

stronger, more sustainable communities. To enact the Charter, partners are invited to make pledges towards it and this Council has led by example.

- 4.2 The Council's Inclusive Communities plan will ensure that the Council can commit to delivering its pledges in 2023-24. Those twelve pledges are shown in Appendix Two.
- 4.3 By implementing these pledges, the Council will demonstrate good practice and encourage other organisations and businesses through continuing its active participation in the OIEP.

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 Participation in the preliminary workshops, OIEP Steering Group meetings and the launch of the Charter has allowed the Council to engage with partners and to be informed of the issues and to identify potential collaborative actions.

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 pledge towards delivering Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership's Charter. This was rejected because it would suggest that the Council is not committed to the creation of an inclusive economy. By not gaining external recognition of its own inclusive policies, it would also miss an opportunity to encourage others to engage and would therefore restrict its ambition to tackle the significant issues being faced by residents who are not currently benefitting as fully as they might from any increasing prosperity within the local economy.

Option 2: To make alternative pledges to Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership's Charter. This was rejected because the Council should firstly identify pledges that are realistically achievable within existing resources. It is expected that in future years, additional pledges could be considered, subject to resource availability.

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 arising directly from this report.

Comments checked by:

Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer,
Shiraz.Sheikh@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk, 01295 221651

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 managed corporately and 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, including through cross-service collaboration.

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:

Jo Miskin, Climate Action Manager, 07900 227103
jo.miskin@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Human Resources Implications

- 7.6 There are no HR implications arising from this report and the pledges would 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 specifically aligns with the Brighter Futures in Banbury programme and health inequalities agenda. It 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 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 Donna Ford, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- Appendix 1 - Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership – Charter Pledges
- Appendix 2 - Cherwell District Council's Pledges to the implementation of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership's Charter

Background papers

None

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