



Report to:	Council	13 July 2023
Lead Cabinet Member:	Cllr Bridget Smith	
Lead Officer:	Liz Watts, Chief Executive	

Oxford to Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership

Executive Summary

1. Proposals for a locally led Partnership for the Oxford to Cambridge region have been formally approved by government.
2. Since the last report to Council the Oxford to Cambridge Partnership has appointed two key roles, a Managing Director and a Chair.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that Council notes the report.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. South Cambridgeshire District Council supports partnership-working locally, across Cambridgeshire, and beyond as there are real benefits to be achieved through potentially more efficient working, effective delivery at scale as well as access to additional funding, and strength in working with and influencing central Government.
5. The Oxford to Cambridge region is an area of economic success and will continue to be so. It has been the consistent view of the Council to try its best to positively influence that growth and seek the greatest benefits for our communities. By working with other sector partners, as well as key stakeholders who directly influence that economic growth but who also seek to gain benefits for our local natural environment, we can benefit from sharing best practice, learning and also engage directly with those who have the most influence on our places and people.

Details

6. Appointments of Chair and Managing Director

7. On 29 June Dipesh Shah OBE was appointed as Independent Chair of the partnership. Mr Shah has extensive experience as chair of a number of bodies ranging from energy transition, digital transformation, water/waste and transport.

8. Dr Richard Hutchins was announced as Managing Director for the partnership and has already started in his role. Richard brings extensive experience working with regional boards and large-scale partnerships, having held senior leadership roles at the University of Warwick and the West Midlands Growth Company, as well as recent NED and strategic adviser roles for Higher Education, not-for-profit and public sector organisations.

9. Work Programme

10. Work continues in a number of the environment and economy workstream projects.

Environment

- Adding capacity to assist nature recovery actions, through regional coordination to support more efficient local delivery
- Developing regional and joint approaches to develop best practice in minerals planning, delivery, restoration and management to deliver significant biodiversity gains (using the RSPB's Ouse Fen as a potential exemplar project)
- Scoping projects for regional water and energy strategy, looking at best practice approaches, standards and tools.

Economy

- Appointment of a consultancy firm (ekosgen) to assist in the development of an Investment Atlas to unlock international and private sector investment for the region's innovation-led economy, underpinned by environmentally sustainable and inclusive growth
- Data Observatory. Scoping out the region's needs for an evidence base to inform future priorities and avoid duplication of data creation by multiple partners

Implications

11. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

Financial

12. The Oxford to Cambridge Partnership has funding from government of £2,500,000 over the next two financial years, subject to business case being agreed. As part of accessing this funding local contributions are required, both in officer time and in cash contributions. Last financial year's contribution was £4,000. This contribution has been provided for within the Council's 2023/24 proposed budget.

Legal

13. Cabinet formally confirmed its membership of the partnership at its May 2023 meeting.

Risks/Opportunities

14. The partnership offers the Council the opportunity to work at a regional level to shape and influence strategy and ensure that the voice of residents is kept at the forefront of policy and projects as they emerge. The cost to the Council of being in the partnership is relatively small (when considering both financial cost and officer time) and the risk of being part of the Partnership is therefore low.

Climate Change

15. The priorities of the Partnership are focussed on supporting delivery of clean, green and inclusive economic growth as well as delivering increased environmental gain and benefits from this growth for our communities now and in the future. The implications of supporting the Partnership would be to benefit from a wider, strategic approach to delivery of its sustainable, climate impact reducing priorities.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Growing local businesses and economies

16. This is a key workstream of the PRP.

Being green to our core

17. This is a key workstream of the PRP.

Background Papers

The partnership's website can be found here: [OxCamPartnership \(oxford-cambridge-partnership.info\)](https://oxcampartnership.oxford-cambridge-partnership.info)

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