Oxfordshire is an "innovation engine", one of the most significant and best connected centres of research and enterprise in the UK and Europe. From all over the world, each year, we attract new businesses and enterprises; investment from public and private sources; and the brightest and best students and researchers. We convert the energy that they bring into a constant flow of new products, businesses and scientific breakthroughs. We are able to attract major ideas and investment because we have nurtured a dynamic innovation ecosystem within a beautiful and historic environment.

In that context, of history and modernity, of urban and rural, of commerce and education, we stand ready to take the innovations that have been nurtured here in Oxford for many years and take them to the next level.

Professor Steve Cowley, Leader, South Oxfordshire District Council

Councillor John Cotton, Leader, Vale of White Horse District Council

Councillor Sir Barry Norton, Leader, Cherwell District Council

Councillor Bob Price, Leader, Oxford City Council

Professor Ian Walmsley, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), University of Oxford

Professor Martin Mansfield, Chief Executive, Oxfordshire LEP

Professor Louise Richardson, Chair, Oxford AHSN

Professor John Womersley, Chief Executive, STFC

The Very Revd Professor Martyn Percy, Oxford University

Professor William James, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources), Oxford Brookes University

Professor Alistair Fitt, Vice-Chancellor, Oxford Brookes University

Professor Andrew Harrison, Chief Executive, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Professor John Womersley, Leader, Oxfordshire County Council

With that focus on the future in mind, where do we envisage this engine will propel us over the next twenty years? How do we seconstrue an Oxfordshire that is even more dynamic and offers us even better quality of life?

In recent months, regional partners have come together in a spirit of cooperation to address these questions. We do not claim to have all the answers, or agreement on all points. However, it is important that we keep asking the questions and debating the answers. To that end, this Oxfordshire Green Paper sets out some thoughts on a shared future, so that we can begin to unpack in a wider dialogue about what Oxfordshire may look like.

We explain in the final section how you can contribute your thoughts and ideas to the debate.

Our starting point

Oxfordshire has many strengths on which we can build our future. As the ‘innovation engine’ report notes, Oxfordshire is a region of the world that is truly distinctive in the intensity, diversity and quality of its research and development activity. We are not merely a centre for academic research, but as a model of collaboration involving voluntary and community organisations, local businesses and national and international scientific institutions. Together, we have created a fertile ‘Social Innovation Region’ which is world-leading in its social-research activity. 2

We are celebrated as a place for entrepreneurs, and the best educated regional economy in the UK, the best educated workforce, a unique cluster of big science and research facilities including the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy, bluebells in Wytham Woods, the Uffington White Horse.

Front: Oxford city skyline, left, world-class Radcliffe Hospital, Bristol-Myers Squibb - Oxford University Hospitals, right, Lego, a personality capacity - Oxford University;

Back: Wendover Weston laboratory, Harwell Science & Innovation Campus, quantum technology hub - Oxford University, bluebells in Wytham Woods, the Uffington White Horse, national synchrotron science facility at Harwell, Magdalen Bridge, JET - Culham Centre for Fusion Energy, bluebells in Wytham Woods, the Uffington White Horse.

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Vision

Let’s look ahead, twenty years from now. What do we want our county to be like then?

The starting point for the partners who have developed this paper is simple: we want Oxfordshire to be a world leader in academic excellence, economic growth and social cohesion. It will have a knowledge based economy, in which the high-tech, knowledge-intensive businesses that are net positive contributors to the local area are at the forefront and fulfilling their potential. We cannot take our future for granted. Staying at the forefront and fulfilling our potential requires commitment and investment.

We will still have the best educated workforce in the UK, and aim to have closed the gap in attainment between the ages of 0 and 16. We will attract global leaders to a place where their ideas can be supported and their spin-outs demanded.

We will have delivered the goal, set out in the Strategic Framework for the LEP area, that 80% of children in Oxfordshire will travel into work, but use technology to avoid travel where possible. This is a key element of what we believe is a world leader in academic excellence, economic growth and social cohesion.

We will need to ensure that the development of new housing and commercial space is sustainable and supports local development. We will attract global leaders to a place where their ideas can be supported and their spin-outs demanded.

We will still have the best educated workforce in the UK, and aim to have closed the gap in attainment between the ages of 0 and 16. We will attract global leaders to a place where their ideas can be supported and their spin-outs demanded.

We will need to work closely with our neighbouring rural areas, We will need to invest in letting the whole world know what we have to offer and be seen as an important world player in our areas of specialism. None of these challenges can be tackled by one organisation alone. The answers will come from institutions at all, but from social enterprises, voluntary organisations and businesses. We will need to work in partnership and collaborate where appropriate.

To share your views, please email info@oxfordshirelep.com

Shaping the discussion

First, please take a minute to have a discussion about our future and how we want to act it.

Although we have a number of ideas about what Oxfordshire needs to be and what we think we need to do to develop our county further, collectively, our plans are not finished yet. In fact, and we would be delighted to hear from you. We need to put forward a plan that is visionary, yet feasible.

What should be included in the plan?

What challenges will we face as we develop our future?

What do we make it all happen?