Net Zero Oxford

2020 – 2025 action plan

Foreword

Our climate problem is a problem of time. Our present carries in it the entirety of our past, the totality of human-created emissions.

The world has seen a warming trend stretching back many decades. Surface temperature records have shown around 0.9C warming since 1970, a warming rate of about 0.18C per decade. The signs of an acceleration in warming are clear. 2020 was the hottest year on record so far, closing the hottest decade worldwide.[1] Six of the planet's warmest years ever occurred in the last decade. September 2020 was the warmest month on record worldwide.[2]

The world has been too slow to respond to the extreme dangers we have been creating for the integrity of the planetary climate balance that is essential to the survival of civilisation.

The next decade is vitally important, a lot rests on it and on our shoulders.

Our future must carry in it the totality of our collective emissions reductions. In October 2018, in a report which collated the best available science, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) set out the dire consequences for humanity of failing to limit warming to 1.5˚C – for our health, for our economy and for our lives. Oxford scientists are leading the global investigation into the causes and effects of our warming planet and seeking new ways to reduce emissions, with three IPCC report writers, including Oxford City Council's Scientific Adviser, of the University of Oxford's Environmental Change Institute and a contributor to the assessment report coming from Oxford Brookes University.[3]

Our time horizon for meaningful action is shrinking. Our climate and ecological emergencies are accelerating faster than expected, threatening humanity and the world's natural ecosystems. We are seeing an increased frequency and magnitude of extreme weather events from heatwaves, droughts, flooding, winter storms, hurricanes, and wildfires.[4] Effectively, the IPCC report said that the world had just 12 years to get a grip on the problem or face irreparable damage.

Our climate problem is a problem of fairness. The children and young people of today have contributed the least to climate change, or what some are describing as climate breakdown. As the impact of climate change intensifies, it is the children and young people of today who will face the worst effects, although they have fewer rights and opportunities to participate in the decision-making processes that impact on them.

Climate impacts are felt globally, but wherever we are, our ability to cope will depend on our ability to build resilience, expand our resources, and strengthen our networks. Climate

[1] Ibid
[2] https://www.cnbc.com/2020/10/07/climate-change-september-2020-was-the-hottest-on-record-worldwide-.html
[3] Three members of the Environmental Change Institute were report writers (Frederick Otto, Lisa Schipper, and Nick Eyre) and Henry Abanda Fonbeyin from School of the Built Environment at Oxford Brookes University was a contributor to the fifth assessment report. Please see https://www.eci.ox.ac.uk/news/2018/0409.html and https://www.brookes.ac.uk/templates/pages/staff.aspx?uid=p0075437.
[4] https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/climate-change/facts-about-climate-emergency#:~:text=The%20facts%20you%20need%20to,average%20global%20temperature%20on%20Earth.

change, therefore, affects rich and poor communities unequally. Its impacts will continue to create unprecedented challenges for millions of people already burdened by poverty, hunger, and the risk of conflict.

Already, millions of people are being forced to flee their homes and countries due to extreme weather and drought.[5] Most displaced people are from the global south and have contributed the least to the climate and ecological emergency.

Our climate problem is also a problem of cooperation and community. Shared problems such as the climate and ecological crisis, and the displacement that it creates and inequality that it magnifies, have worsened. The values of liberal society are stalled and democracy has eroded, nationalist populism has grown across the West and continues to promote prejudice and intolerance. Free trade and globalisation are now widely questioned. International cooperation and a values-based climate policy has become harder to achieve.

No country or community is immune from climate change. Most of us recognise we have a role to play. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy tracks public attitudes to the environment and in March 2019, 86% of those surveyed agreed that "if everyone does their bit, we can reduce the effect of climate change." This belief is not always reflected in everyday behaviour, though, and the barriers that can make climate action feel huge, global, distant, overwhelming, and even isolating.

We know that Oxford cannot continue on the current path without contributing further irreparable damage to our planet. We also know that economic growth, environmental sustainability, and health and wellbeing are intrinsically linked. When we prioritise only one, progress comes at the expense of the others.

In January 2019 Oxford City Council declared a climate emergency in recognition of the threat posed by increasing carbon emissions and their effect on global temperatures, and the desire to foster action at an individual and community level which can be empowering and impactful in making a difference.

Echoing the findings of the IPCC, the Council convened a Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change on the basis that the UK Government's current targets to reach climate neutrality by 2050 are not sufficiently ambitious if we are to avoid damaging rises in global temperatures. The Citizens' Assembly explored the question of whether Oxford should proactively seek to exceed this national target and answered in the affirmative by an overwhelming majority.

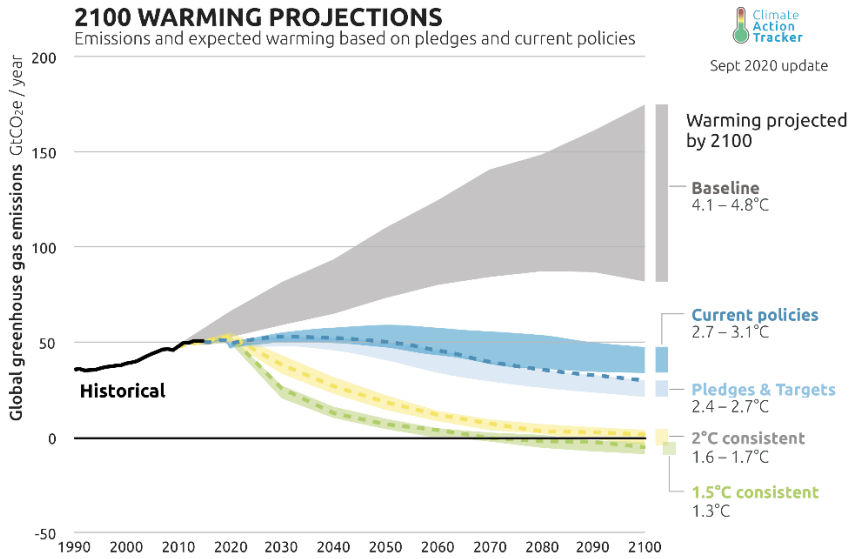
In February 2021, Oxford City Council convened a Zero Carbon Oxford Summit, involving leaders from all of the major institutions to map the city's journey to net zero. Those gathered were at the same time both associated with a significant proportion of emissions in the city, and also taking a lead in helping plan for a zero carbon future. They signed a Charter setting a clear ambition to help deliver net zero carbon Oxford by 2040. The Summit also launched the Zero Carbon Oxford partnership – a natural successor to Low Carbon Oxford. Over time, I am confident ZCOP will grow to involve many more organisations across our city committed to take action to help us achieve carbon neutrality by 2040.

This action plan is intended to help support that ambition.

[5] https://friendsoftheearth.uk/climate-change/climate-refugees

Part 1: Why does Oxford need to act?

Figure 1: 2100 warming projections (source: Climate Action Tracker)[6]



The UK's response to the climate and ecological emergencies

The world is in the midst of a climate and ecological emergency, which is accelerating faster than expected, threatening humanity and the world's natural ecosystems.

In 2015, the UN Climate Conference finalised the Paris Agreement which commits nearly every country in the world, including the United Kingdom, to keep global temperatures "well below" 2C above pre-industrial levels and to "pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5C". While there is no "safe" level of climate change, scientists say that 1.5C is associated with less devastating impacts. In 2019, the global average temperature was 1.1C above the pre-industrial period, leaving a rapidly narrowing window for action.

More detail on the expected impacts on the UK and Oxford of the climate and ecological emergencies can be found in Appendix 1

On 1 May 2019, Parliament approved a motion to declare a climate and environmental emergency. All Oxfordshire Members of Parliament who voted on the Government's law opted to support its passage, ensuring a cross-party backing majority. And on 27 June 2019, the UK became the first major economy in the world to pass laws to end its contribution to global warming by 2050. The target requires the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, compared with the previous target of at least 80% reduction from 1990 levels.

The Committee on Climate Change has said additional measures will be needed to close the policy deficit and establish a credible internationally-leading position ahead of the next UN

[6] https://climateactiontracker.org/global/temperatures/

Climate Conference, in particular policies to reduce emissions from buildings and surface transport.[7] Despite this – progress has been made. From 1990 to 2019, UK emissions fell 41% while the economy grew 78%.[8]

Scheduled to take place in November 2021 following its postponement because of the onset of Coronavirus, the COP26 UN Climate Conference will be hosted by the United Kingdom. The UK's climate leadership will be on show and the world will be watching a summit which is supposed to close the gap between the aspirations of the Paris Agreement (keeping global heating to 1.5C) and the targets to which countries have so far committed (which would deliver warming of 3C or more).

More detail on the UK Legal Framework for climate action can be found in appendix 2

Local responses to the Climate Emergency

In response to the rising concern over the urgent need for action, on 28 January 2019 Oxford City Council declared a climate emergency. As of October 2020, 74% of UK councils including all six Oxfordshire local authorities have declared a climate emergency with many going even further by announcing a target of carbon neutrality by 2030.[9]

Subsequently, the Councils linked with other major countywide partners in a statement of common endeavour to respond to the climate emergency. In 2020, the Oxfordshire Growth Board, a joint committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire together with key strategic partners, held formally adopted addressing the climate emergency as one of its core aims. Under the terms of its Statement of Principles, by 2050 Oxfordshire will already be carbon neutral, and will be moving towards a carbon negative future, in which the County is removing more carbon than it emits each year.

The Growth Board will finalise its vision for Oxford over the next year, which will influence the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 – and through that, future development across the whole county. It also hoped that partners and stakeholders across Oxfordshire will sign up to the vision, and use this as a tool to strengthen and improve their own climate emergency action plans.

The Climate Emergency declarations made by Oxford City Council (2019) and Oxfordshire County Council (2019), and the statement of principles on the Climate Emergency by the Oxfordshire Growth Board (2020) can be found in Appendix 4

[7] Committee on Climate Change, Reducing UK emissions, Progress Report to Parliament, June 2020
[8] Ibid Page 16
[9] A full list is featured on the Campaign Against Climate Change website, the link to which is below: https://www.campaigncc.org/councils_climate_emergency

Part 2 Local action to address a global challenge

Globally, cities contribute significantly to the problem of climate change. While occupying a small percent of the world's landmass, they have an enormous carbon footprint.

The city of Oxford is no different. It has a relatively dense population and role as a centre of commerce, culture and world class teaching, research and innovation. This means Oxford has the opportunity to play a key role in efforts to deal with the climate emergency.

Decisions made involving the community are better decisions. The full flourishing of our communities relies on responsible stewardship of the resources we have, including our public spaces, clean air, wildlife and greenery, and our environment.

In September and October 2019, Oxford City Council held a Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change; the first UK city to do so. The Oxford Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change involved a randomly-selected representative sample of 50 Oxford residents who learned about climate change and explored different options to cut carbon emissions through a combination of presentations from experts and facilitated workshops. In response to the key question asked of them, the 90% of Assembly members felt that Oxford should aim to achieve 'net zero' sooner than 2050.

In February 2021, Oxford City Council convened a Zero Carbon Oxford Summit, involving leaders from all of the major institutions – public sector bodies, universities, businesses and other organisations – to map the city's journey to net zero. Those gathered were at the same time both associated with a significant proportion of emissions in the city, and also taking a lead in helping plan for a zero carbon future. They signed a Charter setting a clear ambition to help deliver net zero carbon Oxford by 2040 and launched the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) – a successor to Low Carbon Oxford.

A detailed carbon roadmap has been commissioned provide expert advice on five yearly carbon targets for the city and the changes that will be needed in each sector for those to be achieved. The aim of this Action Plan is to consider the actions the Council can take to support the Partnership, other stakeholders and Oxford's citizens in helping to achieve the zero carbon Oxford by 2040 ambition. It defines the framework for a single, simple work plan, for Oxford City Council to up our ambition to reduce our own carbon footprint, lead the city to effective action, and explore the practical ways that people's attachments to their own local areas can be galvanised to create meaningful and inclusive community-led climate action.

More information on the organisation of the Oxford Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change and its findings are in Appendix 4

Opportunities and challenges facing Oxford as we seek to deliver climate action

While Oxford City Council and the wider city have already established a strong track record for delivery on actions to address climate change, the current, unique, circumstances we face in 2021 presents clear challenges, together with some opportunities.

a. Legacy of the coronavirus pandemic

The spread of the coronavirus COVID-19, and its seismic impact on the economy and our way of life is likely to have a lasting influence on how we address climate change.

One rare positive to emerge from the periods of lockdown in 2020 and 2021 has been a drop in global greenhouse gas emissions and improvements to air quality, primarily because of a significant reduction in transport. Many groups have set themselves up to imagine the future and determine the "new normal". The Government has committed to 'build back better'.

UK local leaders have been fast-tracking measures to improve conditions for walking and cycling, including reallocating road space to create new cycle lanes and wider pavements.

In Oxford, changes to the way we work, and travel will pose challenges and opportunities as we transition to net zero. More home working will mean lower emissions from road transport, but higher emissions from our homes, as we heat and cool many different working spaces over the summer and winter months. Increased walking and cycling will bring many benefits to the environment and public health, but a shift from public transport to private cars could have a negative impact.

Rather than dampen support for climate action, a survey of a representative sample of Oxford's residents in January 2021 in the midst of the pandemic has revealed continued clear support for action on the climate and ecological emergency and measures to encourage cycling and walking.

The fundamentals of any discussion about what the new normal may look like should take account of what Oxford's response to COVID-19 tells us about how communities can unite to take action. The experience of lockdown in Oxford has demonstrated how multiple organisations can work interdependently, creatively, and caringly to address shared challenges. Alongside our statutory services, civil society has wrapped its arms around people, catching them as they fell, so that they did not lose out on the support that they needed.

In its response to the Citizens' Assembly, this Council stated its ambition to respond to the climate crisis by enabling community-led change.

Progress may be halting. Research indicates that just 3-5% of global Covid-19 stimulus funds have been directed towards a green recovery. The significant economic, health and environmental benefits of green investment are clear, but there is insufficient investment following suit.[10] Rebuilding the economy after the 2008 financial crash resulted in global carbon emissions rising by 6% year-on-year. As the economy responds to the far more significant impact of coronavirus, there is a risk that the world could follow a similar growth-at-all-cost model.

[10] https://www.c40.org/green-and-just-recovery-benefits

b. Availability of resources, financial and otherwise, to meet the climate crisis

Local government itself has seen a very significant impact on its finances as a result of additional costs and lost income throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Oxford City Council has seen a sharp increase in expenditure to support those in need, together with a sharp reduction in income from leisure centres, town hall room hire, car parks, rents from commercial premises, and earnings from its wholly owned companies Oxford Direct Services Ltd (ODS) and Oxford City Housing Ltd (OCHL). The overall adverse impact on the Council's general fund, in the 2020-21 year alone, is estimated at around £9 million, with a further £15 million over the following four years. As a result, we will have less to do more, including driving forward action to meet the climate and ecological emergency. Therefore it will fall to Government to take the lead in grasping the opportunity to stimulate economic recovery through large-scale investment in the low and zero-carbon economy.

Nevertheless, there is much the Council can do with the resources at its disposal, beyond the funds directly allocated to carbon reduction. There is an opportunity to ensure that all of its investments – to enable an inclusive economy, support thriving communities and deliver more, affordable housing – all deliver environmental co-benefits.

Co-benefits could also help to ease public concerns about some of the changes to the way they live which may be necessary to meet carbon reduction targets. Not all these changes will be popular and the costs, potentially seen as strictly to address the climate and ecological emergency, may be higher than people are prepared to absorb. However, demonstrating the co-benefits of environmental action can help to win hearts and minds in the transition to a zero carbon society and economy.

Oxford City Council itself seeks to benefit from sustainable and low carbon revenue streams and there will be new opportunities to work with the Government and private sector on pilot projects, crowdfunding, grants and loans or joint projects.

Part 3: Building on success and bringing everything together

Climate and the City

Oxford is an outward facing city, working collaboratively within national and international networks of cities to take climate action. Oxford City Council is a signatory to the Fossil Fuel Free Streets Declaration by the C40 group of cities, a clear commitment by major cities to raising the bar and giving a signal to the private sector to make greener investments.[11] The Council is also a signatory to the Principles of the C40's Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force to rebuild cities and economies in a way that improves public health, reduces inequality, and addresses the climate crisis.[12]

Closer to home, Oxford City Council is a member of UK 100, which is a network of local government leaders, who have pledged to secure the future for their communities by shifting to 100% clean energy by 2050. UK100 is targeting energy, not climate change per se, although the switch to clean energy will help to address climate change emissions.

With world-class universities, a wealth of science and research facilities, a history of looking outwards, a strong tradition of engineering and more than a century of car-making at what is now BMW's Mini plant in Cowley (where an electric Mini is in production), Oxford is well-placed to be a global climate leader.

The city is home to innovative organisations such as the Low Carbon Hub, originally set up by Oxford City Council, which is working in partnership with the universities, the Council and others on Local Energy Oxfordshire (LEO). The £40 million Project LEO could help provide a scalable solution to the challenge of constrained electricity networks. This project and the £41 million Energy Superhub Oxford (ESO) project, involving the installation of the world's largest hybrid battery system (50MW) to support the rapid charging of electric vehicles in the city, both address local challenges while also providing nationally and internationally relevant solutions as the world transitions to net zero. Driven by Oxford City Council in partnership with local businesses and the universities, Oxford is a centre for low carbon innovation and research, and a hub for trials and new technologies. All this benefits our citizens, with cleaner air, green space, and opportunities to expand the number of sustainable, green jobs. At the same time, Oxford is providing solutions that can be used and scaled up nationally and internationally to the benefit of current and future generations.

Oxford at net zero – a vision

In 2018, Oxford City Council developed an Oxford 2050 vision for the city with very extensive input from citizens and organisations. When asked similar questions about how they would wish the city to be, many of those in the Citizens' Assembly, painted a very similar picture: Oxford will be a hub for clean technology and innovation. Many of its streets will be car free, with clean air and more cycling and walking. Nature will be thriving, with more trees and healthy green spaces. Our homes will be warm in winter, cool in summer, with lower energy bills all year round. We will energy much more efficiently and what we do use will be largely locally produced.

The Oxford2050 Vision can be found here: https://oxford2050.com/

[11] Here is the link to the text of the declaration and the list of current signatory cities: https://www.c40.org/other/fossil-fuel-free-streets-declaration

[12] Here is the link to the text of the declaration and the list of current signatory cities: https://www.c40.org/other/covid-task-force

The report of the Oxford Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change can be found here: https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20011/environment/1343/oxford_citizens_assembly_on_climate_change

Oxford's progress to date

Oxford City Council itself is only a small emitter in terms of Oxford's emissions as a whole. In 2019/20 the Council emitted an estimated 7,425 tonnes of CO2e. That represents around 1% of the approximately 754,000 tonnes of CO2e from the city as a whole in 2017, which is the latest city-wide dataset.

See appendix 5 for breakdown of City Council emissions

We have already made huge strides forward on climate change action, historically delivered under Carbon Management Plans dating back to 2008, and Sustainability Strategies dating back to 2011. In 2021 we expect to become a net zero carbon Council by increasing to 100% our use of 'green gas' (from renewable sources) for heating, complementing our current 100% renewable electricity contract, and by using carbon offsetting for vehicle and other emissions. This will cover all emissions resulting from the Council's direct operations, where we pay the bill. Our recently adopted 4th Carbon Management Plan 2021/22-2029/20, set a clear target for the reduction of our underlying emissions to become a fully zero carbon Council by 2030.

We will reassess the council's targets and make these more ambitious if we secure the additional funding, powers, incentives and policies that we are lobbying for from central government and if, through partnership with local organisations, there is a commitment to increased action within the city boundary.

The City Council will provide annual reports outlining progress against each carbon budget and priority areas for action in the year ahead.

The Oxford City Council 4th Carbon Management Plan is available here: https://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/documents/s58375/ZeroCarbonPlanCabinetReportV1.1.pdf

Our work will be organised into themes, drawing on the five themes of the Citizens' Assembly and, in recognition of the new type of democratic discussion prompted by the Citizens' Assembly, adding a sixth theme:

1. Buildings
2. Transport
3. Biodiversity and offsetting
4. Renewable energy
5. Waste reduction
6. Democratic discussion and engagement, and scientifically informed action

Appendix 6 details progress that has already been achieved across each of these themes.

Oxford's emissions profile

Most of Oxford's emissions originate from buildings (81%) and transport (16%). A relatively small proportion of emissions originate from waste disposal (2%). Tackling emissions from Oxford's buildings and roads is therefore a high priority. See Figure 2.

This Council's statutory powers and responsibilities are important levers to reduce emissions in the city. But, these powers are limited when considering how to reach net zero across buildings and transport, meaning that partnership and collaboration – and the Council's role as an influencer and convenor – will be vital for the successful delivery of this plan.

Figure 2: emissions inventory for Oxford (2017) excluding land use. Source: Anthesis.

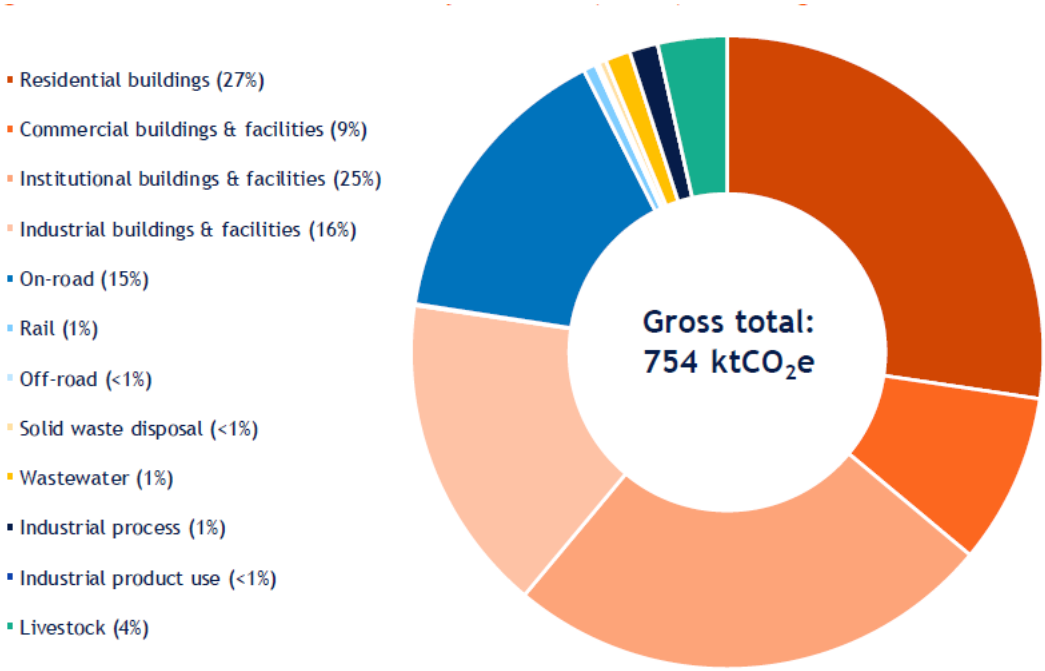


Figure 3: How we measure carbon emissions

The Greenhouse Gas Protocol provides a global standardised framework to measure and manage emissions. To distinguish between emissions occurring inside and outside the city boundary resulting from activities within the city, emissions are divided into three categories: scope 1, 2 and 3.[13]

Scope 1: Emissions associated with combustion of fuels directly by a consumer. Within Oxford this mainly refers to gas use for heating and hot water, and petrol/diesel used by vehicles whilst they are on the roads in Oxford.

Scope 2: Energy which is purchased from elsewhere but used by a consumer. Within Oxford this means the electricity used in the borough. The emissions are created at power stations located outside of Oxford, but the electricity is used within Oxford supplied via the electricity grid.

Scope 3: Emissions resulting from the behaviour and activity of a consumer but occurring from sources outside of their control. Within Oxford these are the emissions from the food we eat, products we buy, our travel outside the borough, etc. Measuring these emissions are particularly complex as they are often a combination of scope 1 and 2 emissions in other locations.

[13] https://ghgprotocol.org/sites/default/files/standards/GHGP_GPC_0.pdf

Oxfordshire Energy Strategy

Oxford City Council is a signatory of the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy, which sets out our countywide commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2030. This ambition is aligned to the Council's proposed carbon budgets. It was produced by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership with input from all six Oxfordshire councils. .

The strategy can be found here:

https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxfordshire%20Energy%20Strategy.pdf

Climate Emergency Strategy Support report

To inform our action plan and the development of Oxford's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change, the City Council commissioned a Climate Emergency Strategy Support report from Anthesis to assess current emissions and what is needed to reduce these to net zero. Table 1 outlines the key findings from the Climate Emergency Strategy Support report and the recommendations by assembly members.

More information on the findings of the Citizens' Assembly can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 1: Technical requirements for Oxford to reach net zero and recommendations from Citizens' Assembly members

<table>
<tr><th>Climate Emergency Strategy Support Report – key findings</th><th>Citizens' Assembly recommendations</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Buildings</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Almost all of Oxford's homes will be retrofitted to make them more energy efficient.

All new homes will be built to Passivhaus standards.

Lighting and alliances will be 73% and 25% more efficient in domestic and non-domestic buildings respectively.

Heating systems will be 100% and 80% electrified in domestic and non-domestic buildings respectively.

There will be a shift from gas to electric for cooking.</td><td>A combination of developers, private landlords, individuals, Central Government and Oxford City Council should prioritise reduction of emissions from buildings</td></tr>
<tr><td>A balanced approach is needed between emissions reduction and provision of affordable housing</td></tr>
<tr><td>All new builds should be built to sufficiently high standards</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Transport</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Overall reduction in miles travelled per person of 25%

19% reduction in road transport use</td><td>Encouraging a shift away from private car use is key</td></tr>
<tr><td>Implementation of infrastructure changes (more and safer cycling infrastructure) and technological changes</td></tr>
</table>

50% increase in **rail transport** use (by 2030) 100% **electrification** of cars, buses and trains. 22% reduction in road freight mileage A significant increase in **cycling and walking**.	Unified strategy for transport planning between the City and County Council and public transport providers
	Incentivising public transport use and consideration about how vulnerable groups can get about
Biodiversity and offsetting	
24% increase in **forest coverage** By 2030, **offsetting** of emissions via natural sequestration will have increased by 15% **Offsetting** should be considered with caution. Only use high quality, regulated systems and purchases, consider which are the most robust and reliable schemes, while recognising that offsetting is a controversial approach.	Assembly Members were very positive about creating more biodiversity and green space around Oxford
	Creating more green space and planting more trees was considered an 'easy win' and visible to the whole community
	There were questions about whether 'offsetting' could effectively address carbon neutrality, and if it allowed those who can afford it to continue polluting
	Assembly Members identified a tension between setting aside land for green space while, at the same time, allowing for new housing to be built
Renewable energy	
547.8 MW of installed renewables capacity, via a mixture of technologies including large- and small-scale PV and hydro (an increase from 8.6WM of installed renewables capacity in 2020 – primarily solar PV, with some onshore wind and hydro).	Electricity was viewed as more expensive than gas, and there were concerns about the affordability of solar panels
	It was felt that too much emphasis is currently placed on the individual to take the initiative. The council and national government need to play a more direct role in helping households to make the transition away from gas and to new sources of power
	Assembly Members were open to compromise in deciding where renewable sources would be placed – neutralising climate breakdown was ultimately seen as more important than the aesthetics of Oxford's skyline
Waste reduction	
57% **less waste** produced 137% increase in **recycling** rates	Individuals and organisations should be encouraged to consumer and produce less, respectively.
	More education and information to ensure effective recycling in the city

City Council's Response to the Citizens' Assembly's Final Report

In December 2019 the City Council published its response to the Oxford Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change in a Cabinet Paper found here: https://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/documents/s52089/Cabinet%20Report%20-%20Citizen%20Assembly%20Report%20-%20Dec%20Cab%20-%20121219%20v17%20CLEAN.pdf

This document set new objectives for the Council and city and committed to numerous actions to reduce emissions to net zero across the Council estate and the wider city. The Citizens' Assembly didn't set a target to reach net zero carbon for the city as a whole, instead proposing this should be led by the science. Following input from the Oxford City Council's Scientific Advisor, Professor Nick Eyre, and with the full backing of 21 leaders of major Oxford institutions, businesses it was agreed that achieving net zero by 2040 was a technically achievable ambition for the city. A detailed roadmap to net zero emissions for Oxford has been commissioned and will be published in summer 2021.

Council targets following the Citizens' Assembly:

- Net zero city by 2040
- Net zero council in 2021
- Zero carbon council by 2030[14]

Alongside this, the Council has committed significant additional funding to support decarbonisation.

Despite the impacts of COVID-19 on its finances, the Council's 2021-22 Budget identified over £17 million in new capital and £1 million in new revenue to demonstrate real leadership in tackling the climate emergency. The funding covers areas ranging from local leadership, through to work with the County Council to reduce traffic congestion, to increased retrofitting of existing Council Housing stock, to electric vehicle charging, and a low carbon heating network. This is on top of around £90 million of other ongoing partnership funding leveraged.

The Climate Scrutiny Review Group

The cross-party Climate Scrutiny Review Group was set up by the Council's Scrutiny Committee in recognition of the urgency and importance of tackling this issue and the need to challenge and independently scrutinise the wider work of the Council. The Group is cross-party and is primarily focused on reducing emissions from buildings – which account for the vast majority of the city's emissions. The Group has made 56 recommendations to the Cabinet on ways to respond to the challenge of reducing emissions from the buildings in our City and addressing the wider Climate Emergency. The Council used this extensive input as the basis for further work focused in particular on an approach to decarbonisation of its council house and its operational, community, and commercial property assets. The Council published this in the form of a White Paper in response to the Scrutiny Review to set out our underlying thinking about our current vision and strategy, outline what we intend to do and explain how the group's recommendations further our vision.

The Scrutiny Committee: Climate Emergency Review Group recommendations paper (March 2020) can be found here: https://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/documents/b18938/Scrutiny%20Report%20-

[14] The Council's targets cover direct and indirect energy related CO2 emissions referred to as Scope 1 (direct emissions from owned or controlled sources) and Scope 2 (indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, health and cooling).

%20Climate%20Emergency%20Review%20Group%20Wednesday%2011-Mar-2020%2018.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=9

The Council Commentary and Response to Recommendations (January 2021) can be found here:
https://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/documents/b19774/Scrutiny%20Reports%20Wednesday%2010-Mar-2021%2018.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=9

Oxford's interim carbon targets

Oxford City Council has commissioned detailed work to produce 5 yearly carbon targets for the city running through to 2040. The draft targets will be presented to the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership for consideration and adoption.

Other Council environmental strategies and plans

In addition to the Oxford City Council and wider Partnership plans and strategies to support decarbonisation, the Council has adopted a number of targets and plans, all of which will support the transition to net zero. These include:

- **Air Quality Action Plan**: this includes a city-wide air pollution target of 30 µg/m3 by 2025, more ambitious than the legal annual mean limit value for NO2 of 40 µg/m3. This focuses on the reduction of transport emissions, primarily from the delivery of the Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) and Connecting Oxford. The ZEZ seeks to reduce emissions from vehicles in parts of the city while Connecting Oxford seeks to reduce the number of private cars on the city's roads.
- **Urban Forest Strategy:** Trees provide shading, biodiversity resources, carbon sequestration and green infrastructure. An Urban Forest Strategy sets out the vision, strategy and actions to protect and enhance the city's urban forest.
- **Waste and Recycling Strategy:** This strategy sits within a hierarchy of waste management strategy and policy at European and national levels. Waste and recycling have a critical role in relation to carbon emissions and resource management.
- **Biodiversity Action Plan:** The Biodiversity Action Plan provides an overview of actions Oxford City Council are taking to improve and conserve biodiversity through our range of functions.

Part 4: How will Oxford achieve net zero?

Framework

This plan builds on the initial response to the Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change. It sets out a comprehensive series of actions that the City Council will take now across the five themes that were discussed at the Citizens Assembly:

1. Buildings
2. Transport
3. Biodiversity and offsetting
4. Renewable energy
5. Waste
6. Democratic discussion and engagement, and scientifically informed action

Over the course of the next decade technologies and policies will change. This plan does not set out a definitive route to net zero. Instead, it focuses on what the council is doing now to achieve this goal.

Governance: Setting up the infrastructure internally to make change happen

Oxford City Council is a democratic body, led by elected members. Cabinet is the decision-making body of the Council. Within Cabinet, responsibility for the net zero agenda sits primarily with the Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford. However, achieving net zero is a cross-cutting Council objective and responsibility extends to all other Cabinet Members.

All elected members have a role in examining the Council's climate change plans via "Scrutiny", which allows those members that are not in Cabinet and from different political parties to ask questions, make suggestions and hold the Council to account.

The Council recognises that tackling the climate and ecological emergency requires a step-change to how we work, with action and leadership from across the organisation. To support this, the Council has established formalised internal governance, including the establishment of a new Zero Carbon City Steering Group. This brings together senior leaders from across the Council and Oxford Direct Services to lead and report on progress against our goals and to drive the action that is required. The Steering Group reports to the Corporate Management Team (CMT).

The City Council has also appointed its first independent Scientific Advisor, Professor Nick Eyre to bring advice and judgement to bear on plans to net zero and draw on the wealth of expertise on climate breakdown that exists within the city. Professor Nick Eyre is a Professor of Energy and Climate Policy, University of Oxford, a Senior Research Fellow in Energy at the Environmental Change Institute (ECI), and a Supernumerary Fellow of Oriel College. He leads the Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions, which is the main UK university research programme on energy use. He is also a Co-Director of the Oxford Martin Programme on Integrating Renewable Energy. The Scientific Advisor will:

- Bring independent advice and judgement to bear on issues of policy, strategy, performance and award of programmes, projects and contracts principally relating to climate breakdown.
- Contribute to the development, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of strategic plans and objectives.

- Provide independent opinion and verification of Oxford City Council's policy, strategy, performance, and aspiration to deliver funded programmes that meet our zero carbon objectives for the council and the city.
- Strengthen the relationship between Oxford City Council and the universities of Oxford.

Priority areas for action

Achieving net zero will require a citywide effort, with action and input from local and national government, businesses, institutions and citizens. Oxford City Council itself is responsible for around 1% of the city's emissions. The Climate Emergency Strategy Support by Anthesis estimated that the sphere of the Council's potential influence (through its convening and local authority powers) covers up to 66% of all of Oxford's emissions. Achieving net zero will require significant collaboration between the City Council, local and national stakeholders, and residents.

Zero Carbon Council

Oxford City Council is responsible for 1% of the city's emissions from its buildings and fleet vehicles.

The Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change was clear that the Council should have a leadership role in driving emissions reduction in Oxford. Some examples of the City Council as a leader are covered in table 3.

Table 3: Oxford City Council leadership role on the climate and ecological emergency

Function	Strengths we can leverage
Visioning	Understanding the values that exist in Oxford's diverse society in order to better understand what is important to different groups of people, so that impactful individual and community-level climate action may occur in line with these. Action on climate change can have multiple benefits, not just reducing carbon emissions. These are known as co-benefits, and we can align positive outcomes for climate actions with actions in health, wellbeing, education, and additional policy areas. By understanding co-benefits of environmental action, we can reimagine social change.
Funder	Since 2012, the Oxford City Council has helped attract well over £100 million of innovation investment for environmental projects. We will build on this success by drawing in additional grant funding and driving new, innovative solutions. These projects have delivered multiple benefits including the decarbonisation of buildings and transport, EV infrastructure, and improvements to air quality and the city's biodiversity.
Enabler and enforcer	Oxford City Council is the local planning authority and has powers covering key areas such as the private rented sector, and waste. The Council will build on existing work to enable – and enforce where necessary - action to decarbonise the city. The Council's new Local Plan 2036 includes an ambitious carbon reduction policy requiring new developments in Oxford to go 40% further than the national government targets on

	carbon emissions. This will rise to 50% after 2026 and, in the case of new residential development, zero carbon from March 2030. This could be accelerated if the Government introduces stricter national standards – something the Council will continue to lobby for. Over 30% of housing in Oxford is privately rented – with some of the best and worst standards for energy efficiency. The Council will continue to use its enforcement powers to improve standards in this area, as well as working with landlords to raise energy efficiency levels. Oxford has high rates of recycling – but net zero requires us to go even further. Citizens' Assembly members asked for more information for residents to help them recycle more and correctly. The Council will build on ODS's work in this area to help residents and businesses do more.
Convenor and influencer	A net zero Oxford requires action from everyone in the city, including businesses, institutions, local government and residents. Oxford City Council will play an important role in galvanizing action via the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership, building on the work of Low Carbon Oxford. We will collaborate with the transport authority, Oxfordshire County Council to secure the changes we need to see in the city to enable an increase in walking and cycling, the electrification of road transport and decrease in car use. This will build on existing work including Connecting Oxford and the Zero Emissions Zone.
Expertise	The Council published its first Carbon Management Plan in 2008 and has extensive experience in the areas of energy management and low carbon innovation. We will use this expertise to help the wider city transition to net zero, via the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership and through future external funding bids.
Campaigner	Oxford City Council represents more than 160,000 people. We will continue to use our voice to lobby for the resources and powers we need from central government to make the transition to net zero and secure the associated benefits for our residents. Without action from central government the ambitions of Oxford City Council – and all local authorities – will be held back.
Innovation and Trialling	Oxford City Council has a strong track record of delivering innovation projects that solve challenges facing the city – and country - as we transition to net zero. Examples of this include the OxPops trial (where we tested pop up charging technology), Energy Superhub Oxford and Local Energy Oxfordshire. Trialling tests models of change at different scales.

Learning	To understand the potential for climate action to achieve far-reaching social changes in the future, it is valuable to learn lessons from the Council's work and historic experiences of transformation, and understand both obstacles and drivers that have influenced them. This involves learning from council- and government-led changes and community-led changes.
Landlord	As a landlord of commercial and residential properties, the Council can make a real and direct difference by reducing carbon emissions from its buildings, which will offer many co-benefits to its tenants by providing healthier living and working environments and supporting the local supply chain. The Council will ramp up its actions to reduce underlying emissions from across its estate, prioritising the electrification of fleet vehicles and heating systems. Not only will this reduce emissions and show leadership, but it will also help build supply chains and expertise in the city and within ODS.
Employer	As a significant employer in the city, the Council also has a responsibility to ensure its employees are informed and supported to shift their behaviours to reduce emissions in their own lives.

Zero Carbon City: Partnership and collaboration

With strategic use of policies and good example, the Council will leverage its influence over current and potential emitters to reduce the city's emissions. Change will require the use of both "carrot" and "stick" – mandating action where the Council has the power do to so, as well as providing incentives and support where needed and possible.

The Citizens Assembly was clear that the burden of change should not fall unevenly on individuals. It was felt that large businesses, central and local government should take responsibility. This plan seeks to establish that fair balance of action.

Zero Carbon Citizens

For all of the city's stakeholders, this next decade will be key to our collective net zero plans. Significant emissions cuts will need to be achieved, and doing this will require fresh thinking. Technological change alone will not be sufficient. We can only do this by transforming the way we live our lives, adjusting norms, and adapting society as people.

At the heart of the Council's philosophy is the principle that change should not be forced onto communities. We work with citizens to understand their views, build their knowledge to develop a shared plan and vision for our city, and galvanise community-led action. This was the background to the Citizens' Assembly, which was an opportunity for elected members and staff to hear first-hand the views of a representation of residents on this issue.

While the onus of responsibility will be on government and businesses, everyone in the city has a role to play in the journey to net zero. Behaviour change and individual action will have a significant impact - and Oxford's communities need to be heard, supported and informed as we develop our plans.

Community action can deliver both real impact and important co-benefits: improving health and wellbeing, strengthening community pride, and supporting training and jobs. We have seen how effective work at community scale can be, empowering at individual level but big enough to make a difference. It offers personal solutions to something that can seem

intimidatingly large and abstract. Communities can lead and inspire behaviour change, but they need the right infrastructure in place.

In November 2020 the City Council organised a Youth Climate Summit that brought together Oxford's young people to learn more about climate breakdown and its impacts, explore the topic of lobbying for change and inform the Council's plans on climate action. The Summit heard perspectives from young people in the Global South, a world-leading Oxford scientist and Scientific Adviser to the Council, and local and national UK politicians.

The proceedings of the Youth Climate Summit were filmed and can be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftes0SOUkwA

More information on mobilising young people to get involved in tackling climate change can be found in Appendix 7

Actions that residents can take to reduce their emissions include:

- Reduce consumption of meat and dairy, which is responsible for 14% of global emissions.
- Switch to walking and cycling if you can. Most car trips in the UK are under 5 miles. Petrol and diesel cars pollute the air and release climate changing emissions.
- Switch to a green energy provider. Every person choosing a green tariff is adding their support for renewables. Many green tariffs are cheaper than standard fixed-rate tariffs that many UK households are on.
- Save energy at home. See how you could save on your energy bills and reduce carbon emissions by enquiring with the local Low Carbon Hub.

Many of the lifestyle changes that would help the climate would also benefit our health – with healthier diets and more exercise.

Monitoring progress

Each year Oxford City Council will assess progress towards it net zero goals – both for the Council and for the wider city. Newly published BEIS local authority data will be used to assess our current progress, which will be published on the Council's website.

Part 5: Co-benefits of climate breakdown measures

The primary aim of this action plan is to reduce carbon emissions in Oxford and transition the city to net zero in a fair and equitable way. However, action on climate change has multiple co-benefits for our local economy, for public health and for resilience to the inevitable impacts of the climate and ecological emergency.

Investment in measures that will cut carbon could deliver multiple benefits to the local economy. According to the Committee on Climate Change the low carbon economy has the potential to grow 11% per year between 2015 and 2030 – four times faster than the rest of the economy.[15] Oxfordshire is already doing well. The low carbon economy represents 7% of the economy locally and supports 8,800 jobs. Major innovative projects such as Energy Superhub Oxford and Local Energy Oxfordshire provide the potential for further growth and expansion as scalable solutions to national and international challenges.

Some examples of wider co-benefits are outlined in table 4.

Table 4: benefits of climate action for Oxford.

Issue	Measure	Co-benefit
Buildings		
Oxford has higher than the Oxfordshire average for fuel poverty rates. Poor energy efficiency has a direct effect on the physical and mental health of residents.	Improved insulation, targeting households that are most in need.	Improved energy efficiency reduces costs to the NHS, helps tackle inequality and improve the productivity of the workforce.
Transport		
Recent data on air pollution shows that there are still exceedances of the NO_2 annual mean limit value at six locations in Oxford. In January 2020, a study from Centre for Cities showed that the estimated absolute number of attributable deaths caused by PM2.5 alone in Oxford in 2017 was 55.	Increased walking and cycling and reduced car use.	Active transport improves health, reduces costs associated with fuel and increases the connectedness of the city. Less time will be wasted due to motorists being stuck in traffic.
Biodiversity and offsetting		
In the UK, 41% of species have decreased since 1970, with 15% of species currently at risk of extinction.[16]	Increased tree cover, enhanced biodiversity and green space.	Trees intercept rainwater avoiding the need for storm water treatment, filter air pollutants and reduce carbon emissions.

[15] https://ashden.org/climate-action-co-benefits-toolkit/
[16] https://nbn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/State-of-Nature-2019-UK-27-09-19.pdf

		Access to nature improves physical and mental health.
Renewable energy		
A net zero Oxford will need to be supported by 547.8 MW of installed renewables capacity, via a mixture of technologies including large- and small-scale PV and hydro. Currently, the city has 8.6WM of installed renewables capacity – primarily solar PV, with some onshore wind and hydro.[17]	Scaled up renewable energy generation	The second largest sector within the low carbon economy is renewable electricity, with renewable heat seeing the biggest growth in 2017. Local energy schemes can save councils and communities money and generate revenue. Diversifying and decentralising energy supply can improve the resilience of communities to withstand energy price increase.
Waste and recycling		
Significantly less waste must be produced, and much higher rates of recycling are needed to get to net zero.	Greater education and information as well as repair cafes and other community initiates.	Reduced strain on landfill sites, development of new skills in repair and maintenance, lower costs (fixing offers cheaper solutions to consumers) and social interaction in the community.

[17] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics

Part 6: Action plan to net zero Oxford

Zero Carbon Council

Oxford City Council's buildings represent less than 1% of Oxford's total emissions.

Significant progress has been made towards the decarbonisation of the council's estate, achieved though lighting upgrades, insulation measures, heating plant upgrades and installing solar PV on many of the Council's building.

A step change in emissions reduction will be needed between now and 2030 to reduce emissions to zero. This will equate to a year on year emissions reduction of 10% - a doubling of the current 5% year on year emissions reduction. This will require further improvements in the energy performance of buildings with a focus on a rapid switch to the electrification of our heating systems.

A zero-carbon estate will require:

- **Improved energy efficiency and replacement of gas heating**: switching gas heating systems to low carbon electricity (e.g. heat pumps)
- **Increase in renewable technologies**: install more renewable technologies across our estate and land assets and invest in in local large-scale solar farms.
- **Fleet vehicles will be zero emissions:** all fleet vehicles will have transitioned to be all electric or zero emission, fuelled by electricity from renewable sources.

Actions

Action Number	Carbon reduction area	Action	Estimated completion date	Source
1.	Operations and buildings	Purchase renewable gas for all its sites and offset remaining emissions during 2021	December 2021	Scrutiny response 2021/ Carbon Management Plan
2.		Deliver the City Council's 4th Carbon Management Plan, which aims to achieve zero carbon by 2030	Ongoing	4th Carbon Management Plan
3.		Continue to support the installation of renewable energy in and around the city, particularly where this links to local energy balancing and retaining money within the local economy, through working with organisations such as the Low Carbon Hub	Ongoing	Cabinet Paper 2019
4.	Fleet vehicles	Publish a plan outlining steps toward full	March 2022	4th Carbon Management Plan

		decarbonisation of fleet vehicles.		
5.		Undertake a feasibility study to assess opportunities for electrification, costings and opportunities for funding and delivery. Assign a fleet carbon reduction champion and delivery team to focus on rapid tackling of reduction of carbon emissions across entire Council fleet (including Oxford Direct Services vehicles).	Ongoing	4th Carbon Management Plan
6.		Explore and implement innovations such as more use of alternative fuels	Ongoing	4th Carbon Management Plan
7.	Procurement	The Council will undertake soft market testing to see whether typical suppliers can meet or adapt to a requirement to measure the carbon cost of their activities, which the Council would include within its carbon reporting. This will be considered further at the next iteration of the procurement strategy.	September 2022	Scrutiny response 2021
8.	Internal communications and staff	Projects are ongoing to increase recycling of waste arising from the Council's own office accommodation and operations and eliminate waste to landfill.	March 2022	Cabinet Paper 2019
9.		The council will use the opportunity of the central government's removal of the £1000 Cycle to work cap to support staff in the purchasing of electric bikes through statements of support, internal awareness raising of the Cycle to Work scheme, and organising trial opportunities for electric bikes.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021

Net Zero City

Residential buildings

Residential buildings account for the largest proportion of Oxford's buildings emissions and for 27% of total emissions. A mixture of developers, private landlords, individuals, Oxford City Council and central government are responsible for reducing emissions from residential buildings.

Commercial buildings and facilities

Commercial buildings account for just under 10% of Oxford's emissions.

The Council will rely on partnerships with other freehold landlords in the city and working with leaseholders to create an environment where we are all ready to take advantage of any new grant, demonstration funding or to respond to new legislation.

Transport

Surface transport accounts for 16% of Oxford's total emissions, with the largest contribution from road transport - including cars, vans, motorcycles, buses and taxis.

Since 2005 there has been an 11.7% decrease in transport emissions across the city.[18] The number of journeys made by car increased from 27,700 to 30,600 since 2001.[19] Rates of cycling in Oxford are some of the highest in the country, with 39% of adults cycling at least once a week.[20]

Biodiversity

The world is facing an ecological emergency, with escalating threats to wildlife and ecosystems. In the UK, 41% of species have decreased since 1970, with 15% of species currently at risk of extinction.[21] The climate emergency is exacerbating the ecological crisis, with many species being unable to adapt fast enough to new climate patterns.

Oxford is an exceptional place for wildlife and has an impressive range of diverse and rare species and habitats for a city of its size. It is a key part of what makes Oxford a special place to live.

The City Council recognises the linkage between these two crises and is committed to building a city with enhanced biodiversity and green spaces – which will benefit wildlife and the physical and mental wellbeing of residents.

Energy generation

Oxford City Council has been active in renewable energy installation on its own estate and across the city. An equivalent of 10% of the Council's energy demand is met by renewables. The Council has been willing to take risks around funding and grant applications to back local and community energy initiatives.

[18] BEIS local authority 2018 data
[19] Anthesis report for Oxford City Council 2019
https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1184/new_data_on_carbon_emissions_in_oxford
[20] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/821842/walking-and-cycling-statistics-2018-accessible.pdf
[21] https://nbn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/State-of-Nature-2019-UK-27-09-19.pdf

We will continue to support the installation of renewable energy in and around the city, particularly where this links to local energy balancing and retaining money within the local economy – including through our work with organisations such as the Low Carbon Hub.

The Council will keep under review investment and other fiscal opportunities to support the community renewable energy network in and around the city.

Waste and Recycling

Oxford's waste treatment accounts for under 2% of Oxford's emissions.

Oxford city's recycling performance is one of the best in the country for a city, when compared with near neighbours; and Oxfordshire's is the best in England.

Democratic discussion and engagement, and scientifically informed action

A net zero Oxford requires action from everyone in the city, including businesses, institutions, local government and residents.

Oxford City Council will play an important role in galvanizing action via the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership, building on the work of Low Carbon Oxford.

Actions

Action Number	Carbon reduction area	Action	Estimated completion date	Source
10.	Residential buildings (existing)	ODSL will continue to develop retrofit services as an area of expertise and is discussing opportunities with partners in the development of their supply chain. This has been included in the Draft Business Plan 2021/23 for ODS.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
11.		The Council has established a target of 95% of its housing stock to be EPC level C or above by 2030. The Council agreed its 4 year MTFP which included a 7.2m investment programme to support this outcome. This includes developing a set of standard packages of work that can be undertaken simultaneously to ensure energy efficiency measures are also delivered at least inconvenience to the tenant.	Ongoing	MTFP/ Scrutiny response 2021
12.		The City Council is reviewing possible options to establish what improvements are required to the building fabric to its	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021

		housing properties, so they are zero carbon.		
13.		The Council will explore all avenues that could lever in additional funds for retrofits, including levying separate charges on residents in lieu of reduced energy bills.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
14.		The Council is looking to review the business case as to the value of properties purchased by the HRA when whole life costing is considered which has the potential to help the viability of schemes built to the equivalent of a passivhaus standard.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
15.		The Council will monitor and develop a strategy to reduce the high refusal rate for energy efficiency improvements in Council-owned properties	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
16.		The Council will identify retrofitting champions amongst its own tenants and those in other accommodation who are willing to talk about their experiences of retrofitting to those interested in following suit.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
17.		The Council is seeking to collaborate across public bodies who have made bids under the decarbonisation fund.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
18.		The Council will ensure its tenants and purchasers of Council-built homes are supported as much as possible to engage in low-carbon lifestyles, such as through welcome packs providing information and potentially discounts at local food coops, bike shops and bus passes. This will be pursued in in consultation with tenant champions and ambassadors.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021

19.		The Council will use its position to increase the number of local apprenticeships available in energy-efficient construction methods.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
20.		The Council will consider the use of carbon monitoring and reduction to estimate energy use from Council housing, rather than simply their communal areas.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
21.	Private rented sector	The Council will lobby government to raise energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector and to give Oxford City Council selective licensing to raise standards. The City Council will be proactive on enforcing Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES).	Ongoing	Cabinet Paper 2019
22.	Residential buildings (new build)	The Council will work with OCHL to further explore the appropriateness of developing KPIs to measure the rate of heat transfer through a structure (u-values) and the airtightness of the properties they develop to Passivhaus levels	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
23.		The Council has adopted an aspirational target that all private homes built through the Council's companies are electric-only and built with a 'fabric-first' Passivhaus approach, ensuring that, if not fitted initially, on-site renewable energy can be easily retrofitted at a later date. OCHL and HRA new builds are currently working to a carbon reduction target of 70% below 2013 Building Regulations. Fabric standards already far exceed Building Regulations.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021

24.		OCHL is in the process of establishing a framework of MMC/ Off site manufacture suppliers to support the 'fabric first' approach	Summer 2021	Scrutiny response
25.	Planning	The Council will produce a Technical Advice Note (TAN) on Sustainable Design and Construction which will include advice and further guidance to support the Local Plan policy RE1. This is committed within the Local Development Scheme agreed by Cabinet in July 2020.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
26.		The Council will seek to bring forward a Statutory Planning Document (SPD) for the West End, which explore whether there is any specific advice on sustainable design and construction in this area that should be included.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
27.		The Council is preparing a TAN looking at heritage and climate change – listed in Local Development Scheme (LDS) agreed by cabinet in July 2020.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
28.	Council owned community and commercial buildings	The Council has commissioned condition surveys for the whole commercial portfolio, and this will provide essential data with an indicative cost. This will result in a business case being presented for the necessary upgrades to the building fabric. The condition survey will inform and help us to develop a programme to work towards an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) 'B' rating where this is possible	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
29.		For all new-build community building projects the Council will explore the costs and practicalities of delivering net zero energy schemes as part of the feasibility process	Ongoing	Cabinet Paper 2019

30.		The City Council will rely on partnerships with other freehold landlords in the city and working with leaseholders – many of whom are on long leases - to create an environment where all are ready to take advantage of any grant or demonstration funding and to respond to any new legislation	Ongoing	Cabinet Paper 2019
31.		The City Council will explore the principals of 'Green Leases' on all new lettings. We will also secure agency advice on new lettings in respect of sustainable energy and if we are able (without a loss of income), we will require tenants to use sustainable solutions.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
32.		Where the Council is considering purchasing new buildings, these will be constructed to BREEAM standards	Ongoing	Cabinet Paper 2019
33.		Where existing in-use buildings are being considered for purchase officers propose to look at cost-effective ways of improving the environmental performance of these assets	Ongoing	Cabinet Paper 2019
34.		The new Asset Management Plan (2021/2031) will provide the strategy for the environmental sustainability themes (which includes the goal for the operational portfolio to be carbon neutral by 2030 wherever possible) and provide an annual monitor for the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) April 2023, which will apply to all existing lettings not just new ones, together with its programme for achieving EPC Grade B, subject to business case	September 2021	Scrutiny response 2021
35.		We will consult with our commercial tenants to understand interest and	March 2022	Scrutiny response 2021

		appetite to ascertain their 'buy-in' to Zero Carbon and what measures they are undertaking in their businesses to add to this agenda.		
36.		We will provide 'welcome packs' for all new tenants signposting them to renewable energy sources.	June 2021	Scrutiny response 2021
37.		We will obtain specialist commercial advice on future portfolio operating models and leasing approaches of commercial assets to inform whether additional costs could be passed onto tenants and/or use of Salix e.g., the City Council pays the bills or recharges our tenants in a service charge type arrangement. If this becomes possible additional internal resources would be required to administer this process.	March 2022	Scrutiny response 2021
38.		Wherever possible OCC will look to encourage tenants wanting to make improvements to their properties to reflect Zero Carbon aims.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
39.		We will seek opportunities to ensure future proofing is included in advance of the 2023 date where we are planning repairs and maintenance projects.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
40.		The City Council has contacted other authorities (e.g., Bristol, Birmingham and Cambridge with similar portfolios) to ascertain how they are incorporating zero carbon aims. This best practice will be incorporated into future planning to reduce carbon	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
41.		We will propose what basic standard of measurement is appropriate for new build and refurbishment projects in the Asset Management Plan (E.G. BREEAM /	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021

		NABERS and the target level within that standard.)		
42.		The Council's internal business case for all major capital projects (>£500k) will consider and cost for zero carbon (shadow cost) to allow it to make informed investment decisions and to go beyond building regulations where possible and where budget is available. To inform this process, we will establish an appropriate threshold / return for the additional costs.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
43.		OCC will actively review opportunities for carbon offsetting initiatives on its land assets e.g., tree planting, exploration of solar etc.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
44.		We will continue to explore various funding models, take expert advice, and ascertain where we will be able to utilise Salix funding for these improvements or such other government funding initiatives such as Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant.	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
45.	Transport	Introduce a pilot zero emission zone from 2021 in the city centre and a wider zone from spring 2022	June 2022	Cabinet Paper 2019
46.		Continue to partner with Oxfordshire County Council on Connecting Oxford, which includes proposals for a workplace parking levy, rapid bus transport and enhanced walking and cycling facilities	Ongoing	Cabinet Paper 2019
47.		Work with Oxfordshire County Council to develop the creation of cycle greenways into the city	Ongoing	Cabinet Paper 2019
48.		The Council will seek additional external funding to expand Oxford's electric vehicle charging capacity	Ongoing	Cabinet Paper 2019

49.		All taxis licensed in Oxford will be zero emission capable by 2025 and, through our electric vehicle charging infrastructure and other support, we are incentivising the Black Cab fleet to be zero-emission capable	Ongoing	Cabinet Paper 2019
50.	Waste and recycling	A zero-waste festival, trialled in 2019, will return in 2021 (coronavirus restrictions permitting).	September 2021	Cabinet Paper 2019
51.		The City Council is helping resource a revitalised countywide Oxfordshire Waste and Resources Partnership to drive behaviour change around waste reduction and recycling.	Ongoing	Cabinet Paper 2019
52.	Community action and engagement	As part of the Council's review of its grants programme it will consider assigning a portion of the small grants pot to a prospectus for voluntary and community responses to the Climate Emergency.	April 2022	Scrutiny response 2021
53.	Democratic discussion and engagement, and scientifically informed action	The Council will join, promote and support the website of Oxford Together on Climate Change	Ongoing	Scrutiny response 2021
54.		The Cabinet member for Zero Carbon Oxford will be participating in a parish council meeting on the climate emergency in early 2021. A virtual event will be delivered in 2021 on local action.	Early 2021	Scrutiny response 2021
55.		The City Council will explore with others the opportunity to establish a retrofit summit, to bring together manufacturers, contractors, and designers in the domain of retrofitting. A proposal will be taken to the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership to suggest that it	December 2022	Cabinet Paper 2019/ Scrutiny response 2021

		convenes a zero-carbon building summit		
56.		The Council's outreach and curriculum programme with Oxford schools will be expanded to cover broader climate change issues. We will develop our work in this policy area with the city's Local Education Authority, Oxfordshire County Council, as part of a shared effort to tackle climate issues.	Ongoing	Cabinet Paper 2019
57.		Produce a roadmap to net zero, to inform the work of the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership, which aims to achieve net zero emissions in Oxford by 2040. The roadmap will provide the evidence base for the ongoing work of the Partnership, as it establishes "sprint groups" to achieve emissions cuts through collaborative action in key areas.	July 2021	N/A
58.	Governance and monitoring	The Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership will provide regular reporting against its interim targets to net zero.	Ongoing	Cabinet Paper 2019
59.		The Council will extend consideration of carbon impacts to all areas of its activity and policy making by introducing Environment Impact Assessments into the Cabinet process.	Ongoing	Cabinet Paper 2019
60.	Biodiversity and offsetting	Develop and deliver a biodiversity strategy that takes a holistic approach to carbon reduction and biodiversity net gain	March 2022	Scrutiny response 2021/ Cabinet Paper 2019
61.		Develop an offsetting policy that supports the delivery of the Council's commitment to biodiversity net gain	March 2022	Cabinet Paper 2019
62.		Publish an Urban Forest Strategy, which provides a strategic approach to tree planting in the city which supports our biodiversity and climate adaptation objectives	March 2022	Cabinet Paper 2019