

To: Future Oxfordshire Partnership

Title of Report: Delivering a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Route Map and Action Plan Proposal

Date: 25 January 2022

Report of: Sarah Gilbert, Climate Action Team Leader on behalf of Environment Advisory Group Officers' Group

Executive Summary and Purpose:

This report responds to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's Environmental Advisory Group (EAG) review of the Pathways to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PaZCO) report. The EAG strongly supported the evidence in the report and requested for the Officer Group to scope the work required to develop a multi-stakeholder route map and implementation plan for Oxfordshire to deliver the outcomes in the report. This report proposes a scope of work and approach, governance, costs, and next steps.

How this report contributes to the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision Outcomes:

The work supports the [Future Oxfordshire Partnership's vision](#) of achieving carbon neutrality and the guiding principles to embrace technological changes, support a prosperous and inclusive economy, and maximise the benefits of strong collaboration. The proposed piece of work would set out local action to support this outcome.

Recommendations:

That, subject to budget provision being made available by each council, and agreement by the councils that the Partnership will oversee the EAG's role as a member steering group for this work, the Future Oxfordshire Partnership:

1. Endorse the development of a zero-carbon route map for Oxfordshire
2. Amend the terms of reference for EAG to provide a steering group function to the officer project group and the (PaZCO) Route Map and Action Plan, which will form a principal part of the EAG work programme.
3. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership request the chair of the EAG to provide updates on behalf of EAG to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership in respect of this work.

Appendices: None

Introduction

1. Each of the councils in Oxfordshire have all formally committed to climate action through their own declarations, corporate plans and collectively through signing up to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Vision. All councils are at different places in their planning for reaching their respective targets.
2. Alongside this planning on individual council boundaries, there are many areas that need to be tackled with a joined-up approach in order to meet each council's ambition:
 - where there is cross- boundary issue,
 - where scale is needed for delivery e.g. domestic retrofit
 - where multiple local partners have a role in supporting an outcome e.g. green construction.
3. A report commissioned by all councils and the LEP ([Pathways to a zero carbon Oxfordshire \(PaZCO\)](#)) was published in June 2021 addressing the question of how Oxfordshire can achieve net-zero emissions in the context of rapid growth.
4. At its September and November meetings the EAG supported a proposal to develop an ambitious route map associated with PaZCO to 2030 and particularly identify those areas in which the Future Oxfordshire Partnership members could work together locally as local authorities to accelerate progress across Oxfordshire.
5. The remainder of this report details a proposal for this work. The work supports the [Future Oxfordshire Partnership's Vision](#) of achieving carbon neutrality and the guiding principles to embrace technological changes, support a prosperous and inclusive economy, and maximise the benefits of strong collaboration.

Proposed Scope for a PAZCO route map and action plan

Proposed Objectives for the work

6. To define an Oxfordshire-wide route map to 2030 that can provide a springboard for action and a shared reference point for all Oxfordshire stakeholders. The route map should be realistic, but ambitious identifying how Oxfordshire can exceed national carbon budgets to 2030 targets by local action.
7. To articulate Oxfordshire's 'asks' for central government on investment and policy that are needed to accelerate decarbonisation in the county¹.
8. Identify a collective action plan from Future Oxfordshire Partnership members to particularly focus on identifying and workshopping a small number of areas to identify delivery plans where collaboration amongst Future Oxfordshire Partnership members, their supporting officers, and appropriate wider stakeholders can accelerate emission reduction work.
9. To identify a short set of measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress made and the outcomes of an action plan in the County.

Proposed Outputs

¹ For example, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) developed similar [pathfinder plans](#) which included ten 'asks' of Government, stressing the need for a 'local first' approach to help the region make greater strides in tackling climate change, and include: a regional programme for the wide-scale retrofitting of homes; a new model for investment in major energy infrastructure; keeping control over energy levies raised in the region and local retention of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) – worth over £50m to the region.

10. **PaZCO route map to 2030** – an easily engageable plan, set by theme/sector (assumed to follow the same chapter headings as the PaZCO report), and including clear steps (to achieve acceleration of action in the early years), set against local and national milestones. The route map should be clearly evidenced to the Oxfordshire context, relating to local industrial, social and economic mix and levels of housing growth, rather than ‘generic’ ones and build on the PaZCO Oxfordshire Leading the Way scenario. Where available, the work will look to provide an estimate of costs associated with actions, carbon emissions reductions, and an indication of co-benefits (particularly, but not limited to, health and job creation).
11. The route map should effectively communicate:
 - A ‘vision-setting’ reference point for Oxon stakeholders to use in allocating focus and developing actions going forwards.
 - Identified KPIs that could measure against readily available data
 - A timeline of the key changes and outcomes required against each carbon emissions milestone. Communicate what is baseline emissions data and anticipated emissions data over time.
 - The case for accelerating the pace of action, reflecting the PaZCO Oxfordshire Leading the Way scenario
 - Articulate Oxfordshire’s asks of central government/ private investment.
 - Include a short publishable version - with strong design element and plan to communicate vision to residents – summarising the above outputs.
12. A small number (Max 5) of **themed workshops** focussing on areas where joint work locally can accelerate decarbonisation and creating delivery plans. Themes will be decided with project working group and consultant, and could include domestic and commercial retrofit, role of green bonds.
13. **First three-year Action Plan** – bringing together actions for local authorities, OxLEP and wider Future Oxfordshire Partnership members where relevant, identifying joint working opportunities.
14. **A copy of supporting datasets** including an up to date carbon footprint (as the baseline position for the route map and action plan) for the county broken down by district.

Co-dependencies and exclusions

15. Oxfordshire County Council is delivering a workstream under the Local Energy Oxfordshire (LEO) project bringing together datasets into a tool to help inform local area energy planning. This data can be made available to the consultancy delivering the report.
16. The report will be signposted to actions already agreed in the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) report and route map, and look for opportunities to support these. The Oxfordshire scale report will however involve different actions given the more rural nature of the districts, and the need for activity in the wider county to enable the ZCOP outcomes.
17. The report will focus on the scope of the PAZCO report - ‘production emissions’ (Scope 1 and 2) as this follows the scope of the County and district targets, and Future Oxfordshire Partnership vision, on net zero within their areas. The route

map will therefore not focus heavily on nature recovery and biodiversity which are more in scope for the Local Nature Partnership, or Scope 3. Scope 3 emissions fall outside the scope of the PaZCO report, so for consistency the same approach is taken for this report. It is noted that Scope 3, and the mapping of actions for wider climate change mitigation and adaptation across the County, is in itself an important consideration and where there are links to this future work in the action plan, these should be highlighted.

18. The report will focus on the county but consultants will be asked to suggest any actions that could be enabled through wider geographies.

Governance and Delivery

19. The EAG is keen to keep the continuity with all the work and rigour of the PaZCO report. The authors, the Environmental Change Institute (ECI) at University of Oxford, have confirmed that they would not bid for delivery of this work but could work alongside the councils in an intelligent client function – providing continuity with the original work, methodology and data sources/models and providing challenge / steer as expert stakeholders in the preparation of the final report. ECI have provided a daily rate for officer time.
20. It is proposed that each local authority agrees for the EAG to take on responsibility as the steering group for the work, and that the Groups Terms of Reference be amended to confirm this role and allow the group if needed to co-opt experts and stakeholders, and engage more widely, as required to inform the project.
21. A small project group could be established including a nominated Future Oxfordshire Partnership SRO, County, Districts, OXLEP and rep of ECI. Other potential partners drawn from the original PaZCO steering group e.g. SSE, Low Carbon Hub may be invited.
22. The work will be overseen by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, subject to agreement by the local authorities, with the goal of the EAG recommending a joint route map and action plan to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership for their endorsement, which will then progress to be adopted by each of the constituent councils through their own local decision making for each authority to own the delivery of subsequent priority actions.

Financial Implications

23. It is proposed that a maximum budget of £70,000 is made available to develop the route map and action plan.
24. It is proposed that the County Council could cover 50% of cost and seek contributions of up to £7,000 from the City Council and Districts.
25. It is suggested that £5,000 is retained to engage ECI support with this work.
26. It should be noted that implementation of the action plan will require separate funding, however until the route map and action plan are developed this requirement is unknown.

Legal Implications

27. There are no legal implications associated with this work.

Timeline and proposed next steps

28. Below is an indicative timeline

Tasks and Milestone	Proposed date
Recommendations endorsed by Future Oxfordshire Partnership	25 th January 2022
Draft Brief	End January 2022
Request for Tender	February 2022
Select Preferred Tender Proposal and contract signed and mobilisation	March 2022
Engagement for route map	April 2022
Review draft route map (milestone 1)	May 2022
Theme based workshops with Local Authority officers and members, and key partners - reviewing milestones and input for the development of the First three-year Action Plan and acceleration areas	May 2022
Draft report writing for action plan	June 2022
Review draft action plan (milestone 2)	July 2022
Final Draft submitted for EAG endorsement	August 2022
Final Draft submitted for Future Oxfordshire Partnership endorsement	September 2022

Conclusions and next steps

29. In their 26 November 2021 meeting the EAG made the following recommendations:

- To request for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Executive Officer Group (EOG) to consider the proposal and to socialise within their respect authorities options for possible funding and associated governance. Advise on identifying any areas it wishes to workshop for acceleration.
- To seek Future Oxfordshire Partnership endorsement that the EAG will provide a steering group function to the officer project group [subject to agreement by each of the councils] and the (PAZCO) Route Map and Action Plan will form a principal part of the EAG forward plan.
- To seek Future Oxfordshire Partnership endorsement of the EAG chair to provide a link between EAG and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership on this work.

The recommendations for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's endorsement are as set out in the recommendations section at the start of this report.

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