

Notes

OF A MEETING OF THE



The Future Oxfordshire Partnership Environment Advisory Group

HELD ON TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2022 AT 10.00 AM
VIRTUAL VIA MS TEAMS

Present:

Councillors: David Rouane (Chair), Sally Povolotsky, Andrea Powell, Andrew Prosser, Pete Sudbury, and Imogen Thomas

Officers: Sarah Gilbert, (Climate Action Team Leader, Oxfordshire County Council), Susan Harbour, (Strategic Partnership Manager, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils), Alex Jeffery, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Suzanne Malcolm, (Senior Responsible Officer) and Mish Tullar, (Head of Corporate Strategy, Oxford City Council)

Guests: Laurence Oakes-Ash (City Science) and Fiona Steel (Good Food Oxfordshire).

43 Apologies for absence and notification of substitutions; declarations of interest and Chair's announcements

Apologies were received from Councillor Pete Sudbury, Oxfordshire County Council, for the first half of the meeting. Councillor Sudbury joined the meeting before agenda item 5.

There were no declarations from Members.

The following announcements were made by the Chair:

- The Chair introduced himself, followed by introductions from the other members of the Environment Advisory Group for the benefit of new members.

44 Notes of the previous meeting

The notes of the previous meeting held on 24 March 2022 were agreed to be an accurate record of matters discussed.

Councillor Powell commented that an item on the solar panel strategy was noted as being brought to this meeting but as it is not on the agenda, queried where this might be on the work programme.

Councillor Rouane responded that this was included in agenda item 6 and that correspondence has also been received from Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and the item had also been raised at FOP. Councillor Rouane commented that it needs to be discussed at what forum this item would be appropriate and perhaps it would be a joint discussion with the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Advisory Group.

Councillor Rouane also noted that a speaker on climate adaptation from a mainstream organisation has not yet been organised. Councillor Povolotsky recommended Ocado as an organisation to be considered.

45 Implementation of the Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Route Map work - Update

The Advisory Group considered a report and received an update from Sarah Gilbert, Climate Action Team Leader, Oxfordshire County Council, on the Progress of Delivering a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Route Map and Action Plan. Sarah also provided a verbal introduction of PaZCO for the benefit of new members to the advisory group and provided a summary of EAGs involvement with PaZCO to date.

The report recommended that the advisory group note the appointment of City Science and their proposed approach to developing a net zero route map and action plan for Oxfordshire. Laurence Oakes-Ash was at the meeting representing City Science.

To date, City Science have consolidated the evidence in the carbon baseline for Oxfordshire and their task now is to convert that evidence into meaningful and tangible outcomes. Part of their work to date has been completing a literature review and 1:1 meetings with stakeholders to help establish best practice and to test and align with previous and emerging work in the county which aligns with the original PaZCO and the local transport and connectivity plan among others.

The next stage of the work is five thematic workshops which have emerged from discussions with Officers and partners about the most beneficial areas to focus on -

1. Rural travel
2. Freight
3. Domestic retrofit
4. Finance and Local Models of Finance
5. SME support to decarbonise and the role of FOP partners

The workshops will focus on prioritising the actions that are taken forwards and prioritising what is going to work best for Oxfordshire which will feed into quantitative prioritisation. From the ideas that emerge from the workshops, City Science will calculate how much carbon they expect those projects to save which will then be prioritised to feed into focus groups to follow later in the summer.

The Chair then opened the item for discussion. Comments and questions were received from members of the group.

Councillors noted that circular economy and food (consumption and diet) were absent from the themed workshops. Laurence responded that circular economy would be thematic across all areas and is something that is being pursued. On food, Sarah responded that their approach is that because the food strategy has been developed and has quite a lot of traction within the County, it would be most appropriate for the actions and issues from that strategy to be reflected in the PaZCO work rather than create another area of work, although a piece on consumption has been accelerated through to a focus group.

Councillors expressed a preference to ensure this work integrates with the existing landscape of various strategies and action plans and that the work should take a science-based approach with targets that are clearly communicated by utilising the already established communications strategy. Laurence responded on integration saying that there has been an existing policy review and tangible targets and objectives should be aligned to existing documents but also asked for suggestions of other existing strategies that might align with the route map.

The Councillors discussed behavioural change and it was suggested that this could be raised in each of the workshops because each of those areas has behavioural change as one of the contributing factors. Laurence responded that movement towards action is at the heart of their approach and City Science has action on their minds and this is more than just a report. In addressing behaviour change, Laurence commented that the Council's sphere of influence needs to be considered and how the capacity already within the system is harnessed.

Councillor Powell queried how members will be involved in the consultation. Sarah responded that they are aware members will have an appetite to be engaged and as such there is intention to open the groups to Councillor attendance and in addition, there would be a member consultation following the workshops to provide an update to Councillors.

Responding to a comment in the meeting chat, Councillor Rouane stated that the OxPlan 2050 sub-group is looking at the carbon impact of housing strategies, therefore it was not worth EAG repeating this work.

The advisory group members indicated that they were happy with the approach set out in the report.

46 Presentation on the work of Good Food Oxfordshire by Fiona Steel

Fiona Steel, from Good Food Oxfordshire (abbreviated to GFO) provided a presentation around the work that GFO are undertaking around the Oxfordshire Food Strategy. A draft strategy and the presentation were circulated to group members ahead of the meeting.

GFO is a network of over 150 local organisations committed to a better food system for Oxfordshire. GFO has been operating in Oxford City since 2014 and over the last two years expanded county wide. GFO were asked by the Councils to work to build a multi-stakeholder food strategy which was started in September 2021.

There is a genuine challenge around food which can be summarised into four areas that are putting pressure on the system: food poverty, climate emergency, food supply and health crisis. A coherent food strategy should tackle all four of these factors in six key areas and ambitions: food justice, food for the planet, sustainable food economy, good

food movement, governance and strategy and sustainable supply chain. Within these, GFO has identified the following priority areas for action:

1. Tackle food poverty and diet-related ill health
2. Build vibrant food communities
3. Grow our local food economy
4. Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains
5. Improve the health and sustainability of institutional catering

The approach that GFO are taking in delivering this programme is realising that there a lot of programmes that touch on food, but GFO are trying to work within the public health agenda around health inequality, the healthy place shaping agenda, climate action framework and the corporate and local plans and acknowledging that food happens within each of those areas, but this strategy needs to be embedded within each of those plans.

Part 1 of developing the strategy has been completed, step 2 concerns implementation and this involves developing food action plans within each district to engage stake holders at a grass roots level to build a plan for each district in line with their district plan.

Fiona concluded the presentation by noting several foundational projects where GFO are building understanding around supply chains, school food and community wealth building.

Questions were then received from members of the advisory group.

Councillor Thomas commended the inclusion of community wealth building but also noted the omission of meat and dairy reduction from the presentation & strategy. Fiona responded that the messaging is 'less and better meat and dairy', and the strategy would highlight the importance of sustainable agriculture.

Councillors raised the importance of elements such as micro-agriculture and the need to educate people about where their food comes from, and a question was raised about how schools would be engaged in the strategy. Fiona responded that micro-agriculture must be part of the model and that engaging with schools was central to the strategy but as a foundational project due to the pressures already being experienced by schools. On micro-agriculture, Councillor Rouane suggested feedback to the OxPlan 2050 sub-group with reference to local plans and challenges with planning issues on this topic.

In terms of what the group could do and what members could take to their Councils to have the greatest influence, identifying pockets of land for community growing but also establishing and supporting community gardens by commitment of resources were recommended by Fiona. Growing initiatives can be supported in community centres by resourcing and supporting cooking tutors by means of recruitment and compensation. Finally, encouraging local institutions such as schools and hospitals and social care institutions to buy from local farmers.

Councillor Rouane thanked Fiona for her presentation and recommended a follow up in 6 months to receive an update on the progress of the strategy should be added to the forward programme.

47 Presentation on climate adaptation by Councillor Pete Sudbury

The group received a presentation from Councillor Sudbury on Climate Adaptation and Climate Change Risk Assessment 3 (CCRA3). The presentation is for the information of members only and has no official status.

Following the presentation, the item was opened for discussion.

Councillors raised the lack of resilience planning as a concern and noted issues such as the Tree Policy not discussing climate-ready trees or planting guides being included in design guides. The messaging on climate adaptation was also discussed by Councillors who noted that there should be a forum where climate adaptation can be discussed without people being scared, that should give people confidence that they can do something about climate change and that the messaging on climate adaptation needs to be around people's lives within their lifetime. Councillor Prosser noted that the phrase climate urgency was more favourable over climate emergency.

Councillor Rouane asked Councillors whether the group should adopt a different tone regarding their messaging on climate adaptation and whether the group should write to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and ask that the other advisory groups should continue to give significant weighting to climate change in their discussion and recommendations?

Councillors noted that the communications piece was an evolving scheme that should be a positive and engaging strategy that makes clear the seriousness of the situation but also discusses actions are tangible for 'normal' people. It was suggested having a lexicon or framework guide of words to use to convey the climate emergency. Councillors added that there should be a focus on planning for the future with a psychology of messaging that allows people to envision a future as it is going to be, by scaling things down to a domestic level and then up again to connect with the global impact.

Councillors noted that people are aware of climate change and The Councils cannot afford to lose people's interest on the matter as keeping citizens, communities, and businesses safe is a comforting message for people of Oxfordshire.

Officer's present at the meeting commented that it could be challenging to change the tone of messaging but perhaps the wider communications piece can be looked at and was a point to be discussed at the Officer group. Officers noted that consistency of messaging is crucial and perhaps the Thames Valley resilience forum could also be looked at in this regard.

Councillor Rouane made two suggestions that were supported by the group

1. The Councils should consider a more urgent approach towards messaging on climate change.
2. That as Chair of the advisory group he should write to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and ask that the other work groups continue to give significant weighting to climate change in their discussions/recommendations.

48 Work Programme

It was agreed that the next meeting should include the following agenda items:

- Update from OxLEP on their Clean Growth Sub-Group. Suzanne noted that OxLEP are doing a review of their sub-groups and looking at how OxLEP and those involved in that group could work closer with EAG.
- To receive a presentation from a mainstream business in Oxfordshire on the work they are undertaking to implement Pathways to Zero Carbon. Suzanne noted that we had pushed back for some other, more mainstream, businesses but Ocado could also be a good option and Councillor Povolotsky would pick this up with Suzanne. Two presentations from companies in contrasting markets would be preferred.
- To receive a significant update on PaZCO following the conclusion of their workshops.

Agenda items suggested for future meetings:

- An update from Good Food Oxfordshire on their Food Strategy – a 6-month timeframe was suggested.

49 Future meetings

The date of the next meeting was originally scheduled to be on 2nd September 2022 however to ensure that a significant update on the PaZCO work can be delivered to the Environment Advisory Group, this meeting will be delayed until 20th September 2022.