

Agenda



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Date: 24 September 2021
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A meeting of the
Climate Emergency Advisory Committee
will be held on Monday, 4 October 2021 at 6.00 pm
Virtual meeting

The meeting will be broadcasted live. Watch here:
<https://www.youtube.com/c/southandvalecommitteemeetings>

Members of the Committee:

Councillors

David Grant (Chair)
Eric Batts
Eric De La Harpe
Amos Duveen (Vice Chair)
Hayleigh Gascoigne
Alison Jenner
Bob Johnston

Alternative formats of this publication are available on request. These include large print, Braille, audio, email and easy read. For this or any other special requirements (such as access facilities) please contact the officer named on this agenda. Please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

Patrick Arran
Head of Legal and Democratic

Agenda

Open to the Public including the Press

1. Chair's announcements

To receive any announcements from the chair and general housekeeping matters.

2. Apologies for absence

To record apologies for absence and the attendance of substitute members.

3. Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

4. Urgent business

To receive notification of any matters which the chair determines should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances which have made the matters urgent.

5. Public participation

To receive any questions or statements from members of the public that have registered to speak.

6. Minutes of the last meeting

(Pages 4 - 11)

To review the minutes of the meeting on 19 April 2021 and agree them as a correct record, and for the chair to sign them as such.

The informal notes of the meeting on 14 June 2021 are also attached for members to note.

7. Task and finish groups updates

A verbal update to the committee.

ITEMS FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

8. Tree planting on council land policy

(Pages 12 - 25)

For the committee to consider the draft tree planting on council land policy. Introduced by Cabinet member Councillor Catherine Webber.

Reporting officer – Elizabeth Kingdom

9. Retrofit Scrutiny Report - Feedback from Joint scrutiny committee and discussion

(Pages 26 - 55)

For the committee to review the retrofit scrutiny report and the feedback received from joint scrutiny committee. Introduced by Councillors Hayleigh Gascoigne and David Grant.

10. Future Oxfordshire Partnership - Environment Advisory Group

A verbal update from Councillor Catherine Webber.

Reporting officer – Michelle Wells

11. Pathways to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Report - Section 4

(Pages 56 - 70)

For committee to review the Pathways to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Report – Section 4. This item will be introduced by Councillor David Grant.

Reporting officer – Michelle Wells.

12. Quarter 1 performance management report - theme 2

(Pages 71 - 86)

For committee to consider the Q1 performance report, for theme 2 – Tackling the Climate Emergency.

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

held on Monday, 19 April 2021 at 6.00 pm



This was a virtual, online meeting.

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors David Grant (Chair), Eric Batts, Eric De La Harpe, Hayleigh Gascoigne, Alison Jenner, Bob Johnston

Officers: Harry Barrington-Mountford, Andy Egan, Elizabeth Kingdom, Suzanne Malcolm, Candida Mckelvey, Heather Saunders, Michelle Wells.

Also present: Cabinet Member Councillor Catherine Webber.

40. Chair's announcements

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The chair updated the committee on some news regarding Faringdon Leisure Centre – independent external funding had been secured for green works. Replacement of the gas boilers with heat source pumps and potentially solar. Work had started quickly with the council's leisure team, starting in March 2021.

The chair informed the committee that at Vale scrutiny committee, a joint task and finish group had been agreed to with South scrutiny committee. This will be focussed on investigating how we can source the retrofit skills needed locally for carrying out works for the 'Green Home Grants'. These were extended and have now stopped, but due to be replaced with something else.

From now on, reports sent to committees, Cabinet and Council would include a section on environmental implications, just as there was a section for legal and financial implications.

The Town and Parish Council Forum on 24th May would have a focus on the environment, to share ideas and what worked well.

Chair added that the committee were due to review the trees policy in the next meeting planned for 14 June 2021. There could be a subset to the Biodiversity Working Group.

41. Apologies for absence

Councillor Duveen gave apologies.

Cabinet member, Councillor Debby Hallett, intended to introduce an item but had to send her apologies.

42. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

43. Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

44. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of 14 December 2020 were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting, and the chair will sign them as such.

45. Public participation

There was no public participation.

46. CEAC review

Councillor Grant introduced the report, which is a review the CEAC's effectiveness a year from establishment. What worked, and what would you change? The report presented today had been produced by council officers to analyse the results of the Vale CEAC review surveys. There were two surveys - one for committee members and another survey for Cabinet members.

Councillor Grant explained that tonight, the focus was on reviewing the output of the surveys, and in particular, the recommendations within. It was mentioned that we now have two Climate Action Lead Officers – Elizabeth Kingdom had joined the Insight and Policy team, so there was an increased resource for this work.

The information gained would be used to help shape the recommendations, thus improving the effectiveness of the committee. Ensuring that the work of committee aligned with the aims and objectives of the Vale Corporate Plan.

Vale CEAC did not favour a change of name. The committee also felt that quarterly meetings were sensible. However, the dates would need to be planned to fit in with key Corporate Plan milestones. Potentially, any key consultations that fall outside of CEAC meeting dates, could be picked up through Task and Finish groups.

Summary of key findings of the surveys, as listed in the report:

- "The majority of contributors to both the CEAC and Cabinet surveys believed that the committee had fulfilled most aspects of its advisory role effectively."
- CEAC members consistently highlighted the need to increase the level of resource given to both the work of the committee and the wider climate change agenda if meaningful progress was to be achieved.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents to the CEAC survey considered that the meetings of the committee had been productive and well structured.
- Most contributors did not want the name of the committee changed from CEAC to CEEAC.

- Contributors wished to see the CEAC be kept informed about the advancement of the Corporate Plan – with possibly an enhanced scrutiny role in relation to relevant projects and themes.”

The committee reviewed the key findings and agreed with the recommendations proposed within. These included the following recommendations to Cabinet.

Recommended to Cabinet:

- That the committee plays a formal role in the monitoring of the Corporate Plan 2020-24 and reviews the quarterly performance reports that are part of the council's performance management framework. (This will allow the committee to provide advice and guidance to Cabinet on the delivery of projects in relation to the tackling the climate emergency. The Corporate Plan 2020-24 has been designed to be agile, so projects within the plan will bend, flex and evolve, which further supports the need for the committee to play a key role in advising on its delivery. The committee's meetings calendar will align with the corporate plan's quarterly performance monitoring cycle.)
- That task and finish groups are established to work alongside officers on the Corporate Plan, communications and engagement, Zero Carbon definition, and relevant consultations. (They will report to the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee on a regular basis. They will provide opportunities to give a sense of focus and work in more detail on areas of interest for members. Each task and finish group should be led by a committee member to facilitate and manage input to the groups and feedback to the committee.)
- That the Chair of the committee be invited to attend the Cabinet meeting after each Climate Emergency Advisory Committee meeting to provide an update to Cabinet under the item “recommendations from other committees” to ensure there is an effective and open dialogue between the two meetings.

Other matters not requiring a Cabinet decision:

- The Chair of the committee and the Cabinet member for climate emergency and environment will review reports to Council, Cabinet and committees to ensure they consider climate and ecological implications.
- The Chair of the committee and Cabinet member for climate emergency and environment will receive monthly briefings from the Strategic Lead for Climate Action to ensure information is shared.
- The Cabinet member for climate emergency and environment is requested to flag any matters across other Cabinet portfolios where committee advice, input or guidance would be beneficial in advance of any formal decision-making, so these can be added to the committee's work programme.

47. CEAC Climate Action and Biodiversity Work Programme 2021/22

Cabinet member for environment, Councillor Catherine Webber, introduced the Biodiversity Work Programme 2021-22.

It was a strategic response to the Corporate Plan, the carbon neutral target set by the council, and the climate emergency declaration. To bring performance reports to the CEAC to review, check and challenge against CEAC projects.

The committee reviewed the report and asked a few questions on the formatting of the report which was explained.

The committee noted the progress to date on the climate action and biodiversity work programme for 2021/22.

Recommended to Cabinet to approve the 2021/22 climate action and biodiversity work programme.

48. Climate Action Plan Development

Cabinet member, Councillor Webber, introduced the Climate Action Plan Development. Year one focussed on the carbon baseline. Up to 2024, the action plan is a named commitment in the Corporate Plan.

A discussion was had regarding ensuring data is meaningful. It was expressed that involving County was important and keeping up good communications. Good work was happening. The framework was welcomed.

Committee asked how the “green champions” would work. Andy Egan, Climate Action Lead, explained that there would be genuine ownership – champions would have passion, knowledge, and the skills to lead and motivate.

The development of the Climate Action Plan will be informed by carbon emissions modelling to provide the council’s roadmap to achieving their carbon reduction targets.

Committee decided to agree to the proposed methodology.

Recommended to Cabinet to adopt the proposed methodology/developed process for the Climate Action Plan.

49. Biodiversity Action Working Group

Councillor Grant introduced this item and explained that the “working” part of the title was important, as was preferred to the previously used “steering”.

Rewilding was best to lock up carbon. Joint working with South CEEAC was proposed, with officers and members. Bring expertise together. There would be three nominated Councillors per district, nominated by Cabinet, and select officers.

The tree planting policy may be ready for Autumn 2021 and is important to residents.

The committee were supportive of joint working and welcomed an increase in this.

Recommended to Cabinet to establish a joint South and Vale member and officer Biodiversity Working Group to assist the council in scoping Corporate Plan 2020-24 biodiversity projects to tackle the climate emergency, which are currently subject to future discretionary growth.

CEAC members should contact Councillor Webber if they are interested in getting involved.

50. DEFRA Consultation on environmental principles

The consultation will start on 17 May 2021, and Councillor Grant envisaged a task and finish group for this task. The end date for consultation was 02 June. The committee would be invited to attend to provide their input.

51. NPPF Task and Finish Group

Councillor Batts expressed that there was a positive and proactive approach from the District.

Councillor Grant, before closing the meeting, mentioned that the intention was to keep the meeting set for 14 June 2021. The tree planting policy will be an item at this meeting. Future meetings would reflect the Corporate Plan timetable.

The meeting closed at 6.49 pm

Notes

of an informal meeting of



Climate emergency advisory committee members

HELD ON 14 JUNE 2021 AT 6PM

THIS MEETING WAS HELD AS AN INFORMAL, VIRTUAL MEETING

The recording can be watched here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Hc0SPQvxEs>

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors David Grant (Chair), Eric Batts, Eric De La Harpe, Amos Duveen (Vice Chair), Hayleigh Gascoigne, Alison Jenner and Bob Johnston

Officers: Harry Barrington-Mountford, Andy Egan, Elizabeth Kingdom, Suzanne Malcolm, Candida Mckelvey and Heather Saunders

Also present:

Public Speakers: Sally Reynolds and Lucille Savin of Abingdon Carbon Cutters.

52. Chair's announcements

General comments from Chair's introduction:

- Good feedback received regarding the Town and Parish Forum, and that more events like this would be appreciated.
- There was ongoing investigative work on retrofitting homes, and ensuring the skilled workers are available to complete the works needed. Ties into the Joint Scrutiny committee, who have a task and finish group on this item and will feedback any findings to CEAC.

56. Public participation

Public Speakers: Sally Reynolds and Lucille Savin of Abingdon Carbon Cutters.

- The public speakers talked about the tree policy and what they look for when helping organisations to plant trees.
- What are the aims? Who are the audience? Have sites been surveyed yet? Tree selection? Purpose – is it public access, is safety a consideration? Would there be any financial backing or external grant funding? timescales? Maturity of trees wanted? public engagement needed?
- We have been trying since 2019 to work through policy and permissions to plant on suitable land in Abingdon. The way forward wasn't clear, and we hope the new tree policy will be a one-stop shop to be able to plant trees.
- Wanting clarity, and a list of what is wanted from community groups to get permission.
- Could the council be proactive and identify pieces of land that are ready to be applied for.

57. The Development of Vale of White Horse Tree Policy

The Tree Policy, presented by Elizabeth Kingdom, an overview of the policy - are we going in the right direction.

- High level document to facilitate community groups planting on Council land.
- Other documents that exist – nationally, England Trees Action Plan. Corporate Plan, Climate Emergency declaration, Design Guide, Tree Protection Orders, Tree Care criteria, and a Green infrastructure strategy.
- Outlines how to protect, develop, and manage trees on our land.
- The principles are: Care and maintenance, supporting biodiversity, planning and development, community involvement.
- Email climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk with any comments. The policy will be sent out for review too. The deadline for comment is 2 July.

Comments:

Agreed this should be a joint policy with SODC. The aims are the same for the districts.

Feedback on the community principle – town and parish council involvement was viewed as an important lead on this. Noted we should be ready for community groups to be involved.

Needs to be the right trees in the right place. We should not exclude other eco positive projects, such as flower meadows and hedgerows.

New housing developments – people want to plant trees. Management companies are managing these, not town or parish. Can local companies get involved to help fund local projects? Onsite carbon offsetting for companies to take up?

Councillors can communicate to community – parish newsletters, social media, sharing council communications.

It was felt the principles were good, specific goals should be outlined clearly in the policy.

A view was expressed that an understanding of how much carbon is captured, annually, and how does this change over time, is wanted in the policy.

What happens at the end of life of a tree – consideration. Officer stated that this may be in tree maintenance. The Parks team may be able to advise on the procedure followed.

Shade from trees in built up areas is important for managing heat waves.

Oxford College furniture making department – could we ask them for advice?

Can we choose species that can be used for building materials afterwards, therefore locking away more carbon, and replacing mature trees with carbon absorbing saplings?

A higher concentration of trees (like a woodland) for people to visit – will the policy cover larger projects such as this?

Officer informed that Oxford Trees for the Future are developing a mapping tool as an online resource. There is an ELM Scheme to incentivise turning farmland into environmentally sustainable landscaped areas.

A draft is wanted for viewing by CEAC, but not to hold back the timeline for sign off, understanding that time is of the essence.

58. Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) projects

This item was regarding our leisure centres. In phase 1 of the funding, £1 billion was available to this scheme, managed by Salix, on behalf of the government. We submitted a £361k bid, for Faringdon leisure centre, for air source heat pumps and solar energy works. We are pleased to announce we were successful. The project is on track, with the contract being awarded already.

Phase 2 of this scheme was for £75 million. A significantly smaller amount. We submitted for Wantage Leisure Centre, for £614k. We unfortunately were not successful in this phase.

Harry Barrington Mountford added that the team had reflected on this. It was felt that the end date was not clear for submissions, and therefore there was a rush for bids, and the submissions were closed when enough bids were received. The addition of mandatory criteria, much later on, meant that it negatively affected our bid. The team worked hard around the Easter break to look at this, and unfortunately, we missed out. We did not have time to amend our bid before the submission window closed. Larger organisation's full time bid teams were more able to meet the tight deadline and the change in the mandatory criteria. However, we expect a third phase of funding to bid for.

A member did ask whether the notification of phases of funding could be shared wider to towns and parishes. HBM responded that it would depend on whether smaller organisations could manage such applications in light of phase 2, and we can advise if it would be useful to them.

Options regarding external consultants will be explored.

59. Task and finish group update

DEFRA environmental principles consultation was discussed in one group. We formed a VOWHDC response to the consultation. Our main comments were, in brief:

- We didn't feel there was enough quantitative, practical, robust priorities. We gave suggestions to improve this.
- Cascade from the environment bill – we felt these principles were watered down from the bill. We felt we should be more positive than just mitigation. We want to prevent harm in the first place.

The meeting closed at 7.11 pm

Agenda Item 8



Listening Learning Leading

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Policy for Planting Trees on Council Land



Foreword - South Oxfordshire

One element of our role as the Tree Champions for South Oxfordshire is to develop and promote a policy for planting trees on council owned land, which we are proud to be able to now share with you.

Through this policy, we set out the principles which will help to achieve our goals as tree champions: **to protect and restore nature across South Oxfordshire, to encourage people to reconnect with nature, to promote tree-growing initiatives, and to tackle the climate and ecological emergencies.** This policy also makes clear **the process which will enable the planting of trees on council land.**

Trees play many important roles, including improving the health and wellbeing of our residents and communities, filtering the air we breathe, cooling the surrounding environment, absorbing and storing rainwater, and sequestering carbon, helping us to reach our carbon neutral targets. **Protecting, planting and managing trees**, as guided by this policy, will help to deliver these outcomes for generations to come.

As residents of South Oxfordshire, **we are lucky to live in an area with good tree cover and green spaces**, which this policy will help to protect and enhance. As a council, we will continue to encourage our communities to reconnect with nature, and support them with their own tree planting initiatives. **This policy provides guidance to residents on tree planting and how residents can work with the Council to facilitate community planting projects.**

This policy and the outcomes it will deliver will contribute to the council's wider corporate plan priorities of **protecting and restoring our natural world, and tackling the climate emergency.**



Cllr Ian Snowdon
Tree Champion
South Oxfordshire District Council



Cllr Peter Dragonetti
Tree Champion
South Oxfordshire District Council

Foreword - Vale of White Horse

Tackling the climate emergency is one of our main priorities as a council, and we want to do everything we can, both as a council and as district, to reduce our emissions.

We are aiming to become a carbon neutral council by 2030, and for the Vale to be a carbon neutral district by 2045. **Our trees are vitally important** for helping us to achieve these goals as they capture and store carbon and provide shade. Beyond the many environmental advantages of trees, they also have health and wellbeing benefits for our residents, contributing to our priority of building healthy communities.

As cabinet member for climate emergency and the environment I am proud to present our tree policy.

This policy outlines five guiding principles we will follow as **we work to protect, plant and manage trees** on our land and seek to expand our tree cover. I am particularly keen on our ‘community’ principle which provides guidance to residents on planting trees and offers advice on getting involved in tree planting projects, as well as ensuring access to green space, as I want to do as much as possible **to support communities across the district in taking their own climate action as we work together to tackle the climate emergency.**

I look forward to supporting this work and further developing and enjoying our trees and woodlands.



Cllr Catherine Webber
Cabinet Member Climate Emergency and
Environment
Vale of White Horse District Council

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to outline how South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils will **protect, plant and manage trees** on the land they own, and how the **community will be supported with their tree planting initiatives**. The Councils will **seek to increase tree cover and to protect trees** on land they own as part of their plans to become carbon neutral.

This policy is an overarching document, setting out principles for protecting, planting and managing trees on council land, and with partners and the community. These principles will be used as a benchmark for future plans and policies developed by the Councils and will inform current projects that involve trees and woodland.

This policy is an ever-evolving document as guidance and thinking develops on this topic.

Tree Context

The councils truly value the many roles that trees play in our districts including their significant role in capturing carbon, providing oxygen, reducing flood risk, contributing positively to the health and wellbeing of our residents, providing homes to many species and supporting biodiversity. Protecting and increasing tree cover will ensure that trees across our district continue to benefit our residents, our environment, and will reduce our carbon emissions by removing carbon from the atmosphere.

TREE COVER IN SOUTH AND VALE

Hectares of Woodland
South Oxfordshire: 67852
Vale of White Horse: 57866

Percentage of land covered
by trees
England: 10.1%
South Oxfordshire: 13.9%
Vale of White Horse: 8.2%

Owners of Trees
District councils
Oxfordshire county council
Private landowners
Several organisations, including the Forestry Commission



Policy Context

Nationally, the government has recently committed to increase tree planting to 30,000 hectares per year across the UK by 2025 and has recently published the [England Trees Action Plan](#) which sets out the actions it will take to support tree planting and to ensure the many benefits of trees are realised. The South and Vale tree policy will help to achieve the UK's tree target.

This policy aligns with several existing county council and South and Vale plans and policies, as outlined below, and will support us in reaching our own carbon neutral targets.

Oxfordshire County Council Tree Policy

The county council's [Tree Policy](#) considers the public amenities provided by trees and how to manage trees in conjunction with the safe passage of highways.

Corporate Plan

South Oxfordshire's Corporate Plan includes themes to protect and restore our natural world, and action on climate emergency, with specific objectives addressing trees, which states that we will:

- With partners, promote in depth mapping and surveying of ecosystems across the district, **planning for restoration of the natural world** and working closely with landowners and specialist agencies
- Encourage the use of natural processes to combat risks arising from climate change, such as **meadows and trees to reduce flooding**
- Call for the establishment of a Local Nature Partnership for Oxfordshire to promote an ambitious **nature recovery programme, including tree and meadow planting, rewilding and providing habitats for wildlife** including wildlife corridors

The **Vale of White Horse Corporate Plan** prioritises tackling the climate emergency with objectives relating to trees which states that we will:

- Develop a **tree-planting strategy** and **work with partners to plant more trees** across the district
- Include in the council's Open Space Strategy opportunities to increase biodiversity, **increase tree cover**, and consider carefully the use of our open spaces
- Explore setting up a Habitat Bank to deliver biodiversity offsetting requirements and **facilitate tree planting**

Local Plan

The [South Oxfordshire](#) and [Vale of White Horse](#) local plans support the **protection and enhancement of the natural environment**, including on specific development sites. The design guides ([South](#) and [Vale](#)) provide further **guidance to developers**

Listening Learning Leading

on how the councils expect tree planting to be integrated into new development sites. Linked to this, the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) encourages the protection of trees and woodlands and seeks to achieve net gains in biodiversity. It also provides clear guidance that developments that cause the loss or deterioration of ancient woodlands and ancient or veteran trees should be refused.

Green Infrastructure Strategy

The South and Vale [Green Infrastructure Strategy](#)ⁱ presents our visions and objectives for the future provision and management of green infrastructure, which includes woodland, green space and amenity open space, up to 2031.

Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas

A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) ([South](#) and [Vale](#)) prevents land owners from cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping and wilfully damaging or destroying a tree without the council's written permission.

Trees in a conservation area that are not covered by a TPO also receive protection. Those wishing to fell or work on a tree in a conservation area must gain our permission.

Climate and Ecological Emergencies Declarations

In February 2019, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils both declared **climate emergencies**, and in February 2021 South Oxfordshire declared an **ecological emergency**. These declarations highlight the importance of addressing these emergencies and that action is needed.

South Oxfordshire's targets are to become **carbon neutral in its own operations by 2025 and to be a carbon neutral district by 2030**. The Vale aims to be **carbon neutral in its own operations by 2030, with a 75 per cent reduction in carbon emissions by 2025, and aims to be a carbon neutral district by 2045, with a 75 per cent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030**. Increasing tree cover and protecting trees will be vital for us to achieve these goals.



Principles

We will aim to protect, plant and manage trees on land owned by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts through the following principles:

Planting:

- **Commit to planting more trees** on our own land to further develop a robust treescapes, where appropriate **aiming to double tree cover** in areas
- Any trees that have been removed or have died on council owned land **will aim to be replaced, and where possible more than one tree will be planted**, ideally with a minimum of three trees

Caring and maintenance:

- **Best practice**, including sustainable methods, for planting, growing and caring for trees will be used to ensure a healthy tree population
- **Safety precautions and measures** will continue to take place in line with the councils' duty and legal responsibilities to maintain public safety

Supporting Biodiversity:

- Plant **appropriate tree species** for the planting environment, including considerations for endangered species, ensuring tree planting does not adversely affect other habitats
- Manage woodlands and trees to **maximise canopy cover and carbon storage** where possible
- Encourage biodiversity and habitats for wildlife in **trees through maintenance and planting methods**

Planning and Development:

- Develop new **planning policies designed to increase the amount and quality of tree planting** within new development proposals on council owned land, and work closely with developers to achieve this
- Use powers to **protect important trees, woodlands and hedgerows** where they are under threat from damage or destruction arising from development, inappropriate management or other land use change

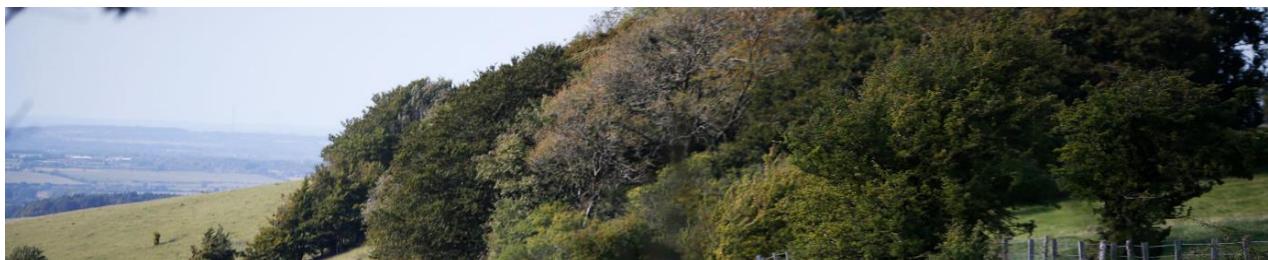
Community:

- **Establish procedures to enable communities to plant and care for trees** on council land where appropriate – see our [guide to planting trees for community groups](#) and the 'how to get involved' section below
- **Support the community and partners** to protect and plant trees to increase tree cover in appropriate locations across the districts, including through tree planting initiatives
- **Promote funding opportunities** and work to secure funding for planting trees through government and other funding sources as a council or in partnership

How to get involved

If you would like to plant trees on council land, please follow the steps below:

- First contact the council to establish whether the land identified for planting is owned by South Oxfordshire or Vale of White Horse District Councils. Please email your enquiry to climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk
 - We will let you know if the site is within the councils' ownership
 - If the identified land is owned by the council, please fill in [this form](#) to apply to plant trees on the land.
 - Specialist teams in the council alongside relevant cabinet members will then assess your application for site suitability and against the principles in this document and our tree planting guide to make a decision.
 - If the form is approved, you will be asked to sign a legal contract before proceeding with the tree planting. This agreement requires you to take full responsibility for the newly planted trees for at least three years following planting to ensure that the planting becomes successful.
 - Please note that this process could take up to three months
-





Listening Learning Leading



How to apply for third party tree planting projects on district council owned land in South Oxfordshire or the Vale of White Horse



Guidance

This application form is intended for use by organisations and community groups wishing to undertake tree planting projects on land owned by either South Oxfordshire District Council or Vale of White Horse District Council.

Before completing this form, please contact us to check that the land you have identified for tree planting is owned by the district councils. Please email your proposal to climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk including a map clearly identifying the land concerned.

If you receive a positive response to this email, we will invite you to complete the application form below. You should then send the completed application form to climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk.

Before submitting your application, we strongly recommend that you look at the [Tree Planting Guide](#), which provides advice on tree planting. Application approval will be based on availability and suitability of land and adherence to the principles in the policy for planting trees on council-land

If we are to agree to your proposals, you will be required to take full responsibility for the newly planted trees for at least three years following planting to ensure that the planting becomes successfully established. This will include, but not be limited to, watering of newly planted trees (where necessary) weeding, replacement of failures and maintenance of guards and stakes.

Please be aware that the whole process may take three months to complete so please consider this before submitting your application.



YOUR ORGANISATION

- ### 1.1 Name of organisation proposing the project:

- ## 1.2 Contact name and position in organisation:

- 1.3 Telephone No (landline): Mobile No:

E-mail:

Website:

- #### 1.4 Preferred address for correspondence:

- 1.5 Please provide details about the status of your organisation, e.g. is it a registered charity, parish council or a community group?

Do you have a formal constitution?

YES

NO

If your organisation is a charity, please provide the charity number;

Do you have a set of rules governing your organisation? YES NO

If YES, please provide a copy.

- 1.6 Please provide some background information about your organisation, its aims, when was it established and say how your proposals contribute to the aims of our Corporate Plan? [Vale Corporate Plan](#) [South Corporate Plan](#)

- 1.7 What insurance cover does your organisation have? (e.g. public liability insurance). Please include detail of all cover.

- 1.8 Does your organisation have policies in place for the following: the safety of children and vulnerable adults, working with volunteers and health and safety? *Community groups undertaking tree planting projects on Council owned land will be required to be appropriately insured and have policies or procedures in place to ensure the safety of their volunteers and all users of the site.*
-

Your proposed planting site and how you will maintain it

- 2.1 What is the address and post code of site? Please give the area or dimensions of the proposed planting site.

Please provide a Location Plan and some digital photographs of the proposed planting site.

- 2.2 What is the current use of the land? *Please consider the rate/frequency of use, is tree planting likely to conflict with other user's needs (i.e. is it an area used for informal sport or recreation?) are there any underground or overhead services which may affect the planting.*

- 2.3 Please provide a Tree Planting Plan clearly showing the location and layout of the planting proposals (i.e. locations for the individual trees to be planted and/or the spacings if woodland planting).

- 2.4 Please provide details of the type of planting proposed, including species choice, numbers of trees, size of planting stock and type of tree stakes and guards proposed?

- 2.5 Please provide a Maintenance Plan giving details of how you intend to maintain the planting for a minimum of three seasons following the planting to ensure

successful establishment? For some types of planting the Council may require a longer maintenance period.

- 2.6 Please provide details of how your planting project is being funded and any conditions attached to that funding?

 - 2.7 Please provide details of the source of the tree stock to be planted?
-

Other details about your project

- 3.1 Please outline if / how you consulted the local community about this proposal and how any potential conflicts been addressed?

- 3.2 How will the local community benefit from and engage with the project?

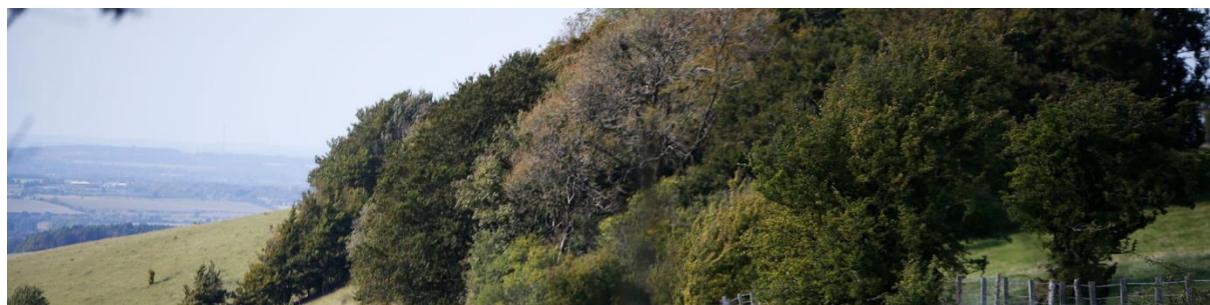
- 3.3 Who is involved with the project? What experience, skills and resources does your group offer?

- 3.4 Proposed timetable of work.
Anticipated start date:
Anticipated completion date:

- 3.5 Could the weather or other factors affect this timetable (i.e. availability of funding, flooding, availability of volunteers etc)?

Submitting your application

- 4.1 Submit your application and supporting documents by email to climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk We **do not** require a hard copy.
- 4.2 We will assess your proposals against our corporate property register and with internal specialist teams who are responsible for managing land. We may contact you to find out more about your proposals and arrange a site visit.
- 4.3 We will aim to contact you within three months of receipt of an application to confirm if your project is acceptable and the next steps.
If it is acceptable then we will require your organisation to enter into an agreement with the relevant council which may have conditions attached. The agreement will need to be in place before any planting takes place.



South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Retrofitting Homes Task and Finish Group

Recommended Ways Forward

August 2021

South Oxfordshire And Vale of the White Horse District Councils Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group 2021

Chair: Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye (South Oxfordshire)

Cllr David Grant (Vale of the White Horse)

Cllr Sue Roberts (South Oxfordshire)

Cllr Hayley Gascoigne (Vale of the White Horse)

Cllr George Levy (South Oxfordshire District Council)

Forward

Retrofitting homes for energy efficiency, so we can all cut carbon emissions, is not a new idea, but it has become increasingly evident that a strategic approach to this urgent and complex area of tackling climate breakdown is needed. From being a ‘niche’ idea 5 or so years ago it is now discussed nearly everywhere – look at this BBC report for example:- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-58320578> .

This Task and Finish Group formed out of frustration with the approach government are taking, shown in the failure of the Green Homes Grant to achieve even a tiny proportion of its objectives.

This report summarises our approach to the issues, gives a precis of what we heard from the people and organisations who came to talk to us and offers recommendations and proposed projects for the two District Councils and the wider local area to consider implementing. We looked at three main areas: advice, funding and installation, and investigated the issues and barriers to all three.

The members of the group would like to thank the people who came to give evidence and information to us. We gained a huge insight into many aspects of this industry and really appreciate the time given but also the commitment to helping us that all those invited showed. We would also like to thank the officers from South and Vale Councils who supported this group, helping in drafting the Terms of Reference and writing the initial Scoping Paper to start us off.

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Introduction

A large proportion of greenhouse gas emissions comes from heating and running homes across the world. For the UK to tackle the climate emergency, making our homes more energy efficient is crucial. Home energy consumption accounts for around 30% of total energy used and 20% of total carbon emissions in the UK. In Oxfordshire around 25% of GHG emissions are residential. Improving the energy efficiency of homes will reduce carbon emissions and help us to achieve our carbon reduction goals for the districts by 2030.

The Oxfordshire Energy Strategy of 2019 recommended that 4,000 deep retrofits need to take place *each year* in the County to halve emissions by 2030.

There are other benefits to retrofitting homes which include improving the health and wellbeing of residents as a result of living in homes that are warmer and less damp in the winter, keeping houses cooler in summer when there are heatwaves, and financial savings from more efficient energy use, which is particularly relevant for the 'fuel poor'. Fuel poverty is defined as a household that has above-average energy costs, and if paying those costs would push it below the poverty line as far as its remaining income is concerned.

There are campaigns and community groups working on this issue: e.g.

<https://www.householdsdeclare.org/> which has a series of interventions they are asking government to consider to help retrofit and energy saving measures in homes. In Oxfordshire, there are the Community Action Groups, as well as umbrella groups such as the Low Carbon Hub and South Oxfordshire Sustainability. Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute has also been deeply involved in the retrofit landscape.

In 2020 the UK government announced a grant scheme, called the Green Homes Grant, which proposed to help people financially to have some energy-saving retrofitting work completed in their homes. The grant was available for 6 months, from September 2020 to March 2021.

In light of complaints about the difficulties encountered by both contractors and home-owners in accessing this grant and having the work carried out, the South Oxfordshire Scrutiny Committee discussed setting up a Task and Finish group to look at the problems and issues around the grant, and to investigate barriers and challenges in retrofitting homes in the District in general. The Committee were concerned that achieving the target of carbon neutrality in the District by 2030 would not be possible if the schemes set up to accelerate retrofitting did not work, acknowledging that although this was a national scheme, it had a direct effect on the District's own targets and ultimately the well-being of its residents.

After interest from the Vale of the White Horse District Council's Scrutiny committee, the Task and Finish group became a group from the Joint Scrutiny committee of both councils.

Terms of Reference and methodology

Terms of Reference were agreed, and are attached as Annex A. Methodology was agreed as a series of meetings with identified organisations and individuals who would be invited to give a short introduction to their work and its connection with retrofitting, and the committee members would then ask a series of questions, similar for each meeting.

An initial Scoping Paper was written for the Group, attached as Annex B.

The group heard from the following speakers, who had been identified as key partners on this work and would provide a well-rounded perspective on the different aspects of retrofit:

- Richard Byard, OxLEP
- Tim Lunel, Low Carbon Hub and Cosy Homes Oxfordshire
- Russell Smith, Retrofit Works and Cosy Homes Oxfordshire
- Roger Westall, Abingdon and Witney College
- Paul Roberts, Aspire Oxfordshire
- Phil Hodge, Federation of Master Builders
- Professor Rajat Gupta, Oxford Brookes University

Context

Both South and Vale have carbon neutral targets for their districts, with South Oxfordshire aiming to be carbon neutral as a district by 2030 and the Vale of White Horse aiming to do this by 2045 with a 75% reduction by 2030. In terms of carbon emissions, homes account for around a quarter of total carbon emissions in both districts and therefore retrofitting homes will be vital.

Retrofit refers to a range of measures that can be made to improve the energy efficiency and temperature control of a building (which includes cooling and preventing over-heating in summer and heating effectively and efficiently in winter). Retrofit options include loft and wall insulation, low carbon heating systems for water and space, improved ventilation, energy-efficient lighting and often renewable energy generation.

Retrofitting homes is a priority for both councils, as identified in South and Vales' Corporate Plans:

- **South Oxfordshire:** under the theme of homes and infrastructure that meets local needs, there is a specific action on retrofit and fuel poverty: 'support and encouragement for the retrofit of our existing housing stock for low-carbon performance and to eliminate fuel poverty'
- **Vale of White Horse:** in the tackling the Climate emergency theme, there is a project to 'work with local partners and Government to encourage retrofitting houses with sustainable energy schemes; help residents to take advantage of schemes that come along to help with costs'

As stated in the introduction, the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy recommends that 4,000 deep retrofits need to take place each year to halve emissions by 2030. The number 4000 comes from the Oxfordshire Low Carbon Economy Report of 2014: which called for 64,000 retrofits in total in the 16 years to 2030. Retrofits have not been occurring at scale, and now there are only 9 years left until 2030, not 16. This means to halve carbon emissions by 2030, 7100 homes a year (2.5%) should be retrofitted.

For South Oxfordshire, with its 60,000 homes, this would mean 1500 homes a year from 2021 to 2030. South Oxfordshire's goal is for a zero carbon by 2030, so this should be doubled to 3000 homes a year.

Vale of White Horse has a similar number of homes to South Oxfordshire, but aims for a 75% carbon emissions' reduction by 2030. There the goal should be 2250 homes retrofitted per year, 2021 to 2030.

This gives an idea of **the scale of retrofit that needs** to be completed across the Districts, in a short amount of time.

Supporting and encouraging retrofit across the districts and county is important, however there are several barriers that make retrofitting homes a challenge, which have been identified in research and have arisen from conversations with partners. These include:

- The **absence of government policy** and regulations for this work;
- The **cost** of conducting this work for homeowners and landlords is high, and returns are often over a long period of time and do not accrue directly to landlords;
- There is a **gap in the skills and knowledge** required and **too few personnel** to complete retrofit projects, including for project co-ordination, advice, and installation of energy efficiency measures;
- A general **lack of awareness of retrofit**, both for homeowners, who therefore are not demanding this work, and by building companies who are not recommending energy efficiency measures for projects.
- Concern from householders of the disruption caused by retrofitting
- A '**stop-start' approach** to grant funding from government, changes in feed-in-tariff rates, grant funding ending prematurely and large administrative burdens to both householder and industry to obtain grants and tariffs.

While there are barriers to this work, there are also opportunities, especially locally:

- There is a desire from **partners to work together** to develop this work;
- Partners that are interested have the **relevant skills, knowledge and networks** to make this work successful;
- This work could develop a **local economy** on green skills and retrofit, **creating employment locally**;
- This is a **priority for both councils** and therefore there is support from councillors.
- Fits with the **Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and OXLEP** strategies for Oxfordshire in the next 30 years and Local Authority carbon targets.

Key Insights and Issues from the experts who came to give information and evidence to the Group

Skills in the 'green' sector

OXLEP (Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership) leads the skills programme on behalf of Oxfordshire and Department for Education for skills activity in Oxfordshire.

OXLEP has recently published a paper which looks at wider skills needs, especially post-COVID-19. Oxfordshire's economy is based around academia and innovation and faces labour shortages for 'lower value-added' jobs. Current 'green' business activity in Oxfordshire is mainly in the Electric Vehicle sector.

Developing new skills training can be held back by the skills' indicator code that the Department for Education uses which is out of date, there are no specific 'green' sector codes.

The system that supports skills' training is not agile, demand needs to come from the commercial sector and be supported by funds to Further Education (FE) colleges, and one needs to show the other is in place to start something new - a chicken and egg situation - so a co-ordinated approach is needed. FE Colleges teach the traditional construction skills, and there are plans in Abingdon & Witney College to teach 'green' building skills, but there also

needs to be a general focus on energy efficiency in the whole curriculum, for this to become ‘normal’. Apprenticeships do most of their learning onsite, so construction employers/businesses need to be thinking like that too.

OXLEP is working with Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce to create a local skills improvement plan which has been developed by business support with the FE sector. To ensure a green recovery, the development and training around green skills will be vital, and there is an opportunity to do this in the retrofit economy.

However, it is not just a ‘green’ skills shortage but knowledge of how the work is executed. For example, fitting insulation can be a basic task, but how it works with the rest of the house to keep warmth in and keep the building ventilated can be specialist knowledge. A solution is for the role of a Whole House Retrofit Coordinator to be used to ensure the retrofit is successful with that particular house and similarly the expertise of a Domestic Energy Advisor/Assessor can also help.

The Federation of Master Builders (FMB) knows that good quality work on retrofitting homes is crucial, but the Green Homes Grant just caused problems for the industry. Accreditation times were long and complex, and the Grant was withdrawn quickly. It could have done more harm than good.

FMB are working with the Construction Leadership Council to enable an inclusive, consistent approach, with local authority partners, to:

- Construct zero – encourage carbon zero building
- Transport – zero emissions on transport vehicles; improve logistics of transport; improving software systems so there is less waste
- Measuring carbon throughout the construction phase – how to design it out, using appropriate materials and construction methods

Labour & economy

Two big challenges identified by OXLEP and Aspire are on the supply side: are suppliers (construction partners) ready to scale to meet the demand? Is there the workforce to support the scaling up of retrofit / green skills? Small businesses need business development and awareness of incentives. In a ‘tight’ labour market like Oxfordshire, where will the workers come from to do this?

While Oxfordshire has had one of steepest rate of increases in unemployment in the country, numbers per se are relatively small. A previously tight labour market means that it is likely that the unemployed may quickly find new jobs. Neighbourhoods with higher rates of unemployment pre-pandemic have been hit the hardest. East Oxford, Abingdon, Banbury have been the worst affected. The Construction Leadership Council says a ‘retrofit army’ is needed, and what this would look like in Oxfordshire has yet to be envisaged.

Demand for retrofit

Cosy Homes Oxfordshire (a project from Low Carbon Hub) explained that there is retrofit demand in Oxfordshire from homeowners. They are now working at capacity, although they are a small business, so their capacity is limited. Cosy Homes provide a domestic energy report followed by access to a ‘retrofit co-ordinator’ to create a project plan to ensure the measures taken for energy efficiency in a home are done in the right order. Homeowners can see what needs to be done first, and can choose to take a piecemeal approach, knowing the order in which tasks should be completed and deciding whether to do some or all of the measures.

There is an opportunity here for small businesses. Many of the skills needed are general building skills but what is crucial is the co-ordination of the work which needs to be bespoke for each home.

However, in reality, given the number of homes in Oxfordshire, and the target to retrofit 7100 per year, demand is low. There is no clear understanding of finance and the investment. Payback can be long or may never be recouped, although simple insulation, a 'part-retrofit', usually pays back in a very short time.

People can be apprehensive about having builders in their home. There are two approaches: help people stay elsewhere for the time the retrofit takes; or retrofit room by room (more disruptive but it allows people to stay in their own home). An option is to retrofit only the most-used part of the home – the main communal rooms for example. This could offer some financial savings to the householder and reduce carbon emissions.

The drivers for retrofitting can be very different. Awareness of the climate emergency is high in Oxfordshire and elsewhere and is growing and many will respond for that reason; some like the gadgets in Smart Homes; and there is the fuel poverty driver too. There is a need to tap into the different drivers and segment need/demand and respond accordingly.

There are good examples of whole area approaches such as [Kirklees Warm Zone Project](#) – the Council worked with Scottish Power and did it all in one go, which made the supply chain easier and it was a success. Other local authorities have obtained government grant funding for retrofit projects such as the Isle of White: <https://iow.gov.uk/news/Green-Island-Grant-brings-500-000> and in York: [Decision - Council Housing Energy Retrofit Programme](#) (york.gov.uk). Other examples of Local Authorities work in this area are given at the end of Annex B, the Scoping Paper written for the Group.

Professor Gupta informed us of the Local Energy Mapping for Urban Retrofit (LEMUR) project run by Oxford Brookes, which targets areas of high energy usage.

The FMB said that Local Authorities could play some part in promoting good quality builders with the right retrofit skills and understanding, possibly having a kite mark scheme or some equivalent for construction businesses with the necessary retrofit understanding and skills, or businesses that have a retrofit capacity.

Energy Demand and Supply

Heat pumps and electric vehicles present a challenge for electricity grid supply. Retrofitting homes for energy efficiency reduces energy demand, but de-carbonising the fuel used for heating and hot water in the main means using electric heat pumps. Smart ways of ensuring that electricity demand is manageable across the country as demand increases is crucial. This could be helped by local production with homes fitted with photo-voltaic (PV) panels as part of the retrofit and batteries to store the energy for use at peak times.

A project at Oxford Brookes, Project ERIC (Energy Resources for Integrated Communities), installed solar PV and smart batteries (internet enabled and controllable) in 82 households in Rose Hill in Oxford. This demonstrated how management of distributed storage can increase self-consumption of PV electricity and reduce peak grid load. It gave householders more control over energy use.

Local Energy Oxfordshire, Project LEO, is run by a consortium including Scottish and Southern Energy Networks, the Universities, Low Carbon Hub and the local councils. It is trialling ways to build flexibility into the market so that energy supply and demand can be balanced locally.

Partnership Working

South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse Councils have signed up to membership of Oxfordshire Greentech, which organises conferences, and arranges collaborations through its network of low-carbon businesses and public bodies. Greentech has a strong focus on low-carbon retrofit and new-build.

Summary

1. **Crucially there is need for focused government policy and significant levels of funding** to support retrofit work. Industry and householders need confidence in the longevity of any scheme or policy. Short term, badly-designed schemes such as the Green Homes Grant set this process back by creating confusion, bureaucratic hurdles, financial challenges and stress.
2. Nationally, there is a **lack of relevant skills**, which is reflected locally, and therefore there is a need for upskilling and training to fill this gap, not only for green skills but also for management around this work. There are barriers to developing these skills and approaches in construction training: from the way the Department for Education designs skills qualifications, to the funding of FE colleges, and engagement of LEPS and industry bodies.
3. The role of domestic energy advice and **retrofit coordination is deemed vital**. The co-ordinator role along with domestic energy advice oversees the energy-efficiency work in the home. Each house will need a bespoke retrofit plan and the owner will need to be able to have a 'ladder' of options costed to decide what is best done and when. Cosy Homes Oxfordshire is currently offering this service. There are commercial opportunities here.
4. **Communication/publicity is needed about retrofit** to improve understanding of retrofit and its necessity amongst householders and the construction industry; and show how to think about 'home improvements' in terms of energy efficiency first and foremost. The Council could help build confidence for this work as part of a partnership.
5. Encouraging homeowners to retrofit their homes could increase the demand for **retrofit, creating a local economy** and demand for relevant skills and employment opportunities, which chime with a 'green' industry development across the Districts, the region and the UK. In Oxfordshire, paucity of workers due to low unemployment is a challenge, as well as the high cost of business premises for start-ups.
6. This work must be **commercially viable for builders**, especially as so many are small or medium sized enterprises.
7. Energy networks need to be able to cope with extra demand as people move from gas and oil heating to electric, as well as to electric vehicles. Oxford Brookes has carried out modelling on energy demand, and key partners are the electricity network companies when it comes to a local retrofit partnership. Mapping energy demand can also identify where there are high energy-usage neighbourhood areas to target.
8. Organisations **need to continue working together for a joined-up approach at county and national level**. The Construction Leadership Council has already written a National Retrofit Strategy which a local agency can take and make local with relevant partners.

Proposed Projects

Based on the insights from speakers and research into retrofit and related topics, the table below lists several projects that could be implemented by either Councils alone or Councils along with other relevant organisations. The table includes an influence column, indicating projects where the Councils can make the greatest impact, or where it might be more efficient and effective to conduct this work at county level.

Project	Detail	Timing	Influence
County-wide publicity campaign on retrofit	<p>Provide a simple county-wide communications campaign around retrofit to residents – what it is, what they can do, how much it will cost, how it can link to renovation/improvement work already planned on their homes, how much it will save financially and in terms of carbon emissions.</p> <p>Signpost to other organisations helping in the community: Superhomes, Low Carbon Hub etc.</p> <p>Link to Climate and planning pages on SODC/VOWHDC website</p>	This could be a consistent part of communications messaging	Strong – county and district level
Funding and affordability	Promote funding opportunities schemes and initiatives for improving home energy efficiency; and for training and upskilling, being clear about the costs and benefits.	Ongoing promotion through newsletters and council comms	Strong – county and district level
Staff homes & working from home carbon emissions contribute to the District Councils' emissions	Explore ways to incentivise Council staff to retrofit their own homes: grants/loans/discounts, etc .	Short-medium	Medium – may depend on some external funding grants

Project	Detail	Timing	Influence
Explore with other councils, social housing providers, and fuel poverty groups such as NEA, the overlap between fuel poverty and retrofit.	Explore ways that those least likely to be able to fund retrofit themselves and/or rent their homes can benefit in energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions, including ways to incentivise landlords to retrofit their properties	Medium term	Medium
Investigate opportunities for the Council to fund loans and start commercial projects; explore ways in which a Councils' retrofit advice and promotion unit can be set up and/or a commercial opportunity to offer energy assessor/retrofit co-ordination service including grants/loan guidance etc for homeowners to use	Are there opportunities for councils to invest in this with a reliable return, thereby encouraging retrofit? E.g. lobby for the Flexible Home Improvement Loan be expanded in its scope to all age groups. A unit in the Councils would be a visible indicator of the importance of retrofit. It could start small focusing on publicity and information, and grow as funding/policy allows.	Short-medium term	Strong
Planning application advice	Provide additional guidance: an information sheet or specialist officers to make comments on applications and also offer a fee-based advice service, on making energy efficiency improvements while building works are taking place (as in Wealden Council). Consider whether training planning officers in retrofit would be beneficial in promoting it.	Seek advice from Planning Department on the feasibility of this	Medium – the feedback will only be guidance

Project	Detail	Timing	Influence
Create a database of recommended installers based on national accreditations for retrofit	Create database of local renewables installers accredited with the Micro-Certification Scheme (MCS), windows companies with FENSA; insulation companies with appropriate certifications and memberships of trade bodies.	Short-medium	Strong
Construction Leadership Council	Investigate membership of this as a Planning Authority and how membership could help influence retrofit in Oxfordshire in general and Districts in particular. It is here that energy companies, energy hubs, Shelter, the National Federation of Builders and others are working together for a consistent approach.	Immediate	Strong

Project	Detail	Timing	Influence
Training and green skills-influencing and promoting retrofit to business	<p>Provide Business Support events.</p> <p>Develop and support training in green skills, construction work and future energy systems for unskilled and skilled construction workers. This could include training for retrofit coordinators and domestic energy advisors; and training on managing this type of business.</p> <p>Influence/co-create a countywide policy/approach with key partners</p> <p>For training providers to take on this work, there needs to be demand from students and from employers.</p>	Medium Long term, 5-10 years	Strong Medium – need to work with OxLep, and colleges Medium – collective influence with key partners at county level
Lobbying government	<p>Councillors, councils and relevant organisations to continue to lobby government to support long-term retrofit programmes, funding, and regulations for energy efficiency measures in buildings.</p> <p>Emphasise the damage done by short-term, bureaucratic, unsupported initiatives such as the Green Homes Grant.</p> <p>Lobby for funding/loans etc for landlords to retrofit homes to minimum standards or above</p>	Short	Medium

Project	Detail	Timing	Influence
Councils look to bid for government funding especially for retrofit homes	e.g. York, Kirklees; and expand mapping models to target where need is highest to bid for funding	Short	Strong
Explore how the Councils, along with other partners, e.g. OXLEP, Construction leadership Council etc can monitor numbers of homes retrofitted per year to monitor for carbon targets	e.g. energy consumption data etc that could be used; could work with Oxford Brookes on this.	Medium	Medium

Recommendations

- i. The issue should be a high priority for local planning authorities who are in a good position to shape and influence this. Reducing and de-carbonising the energy demand in homes is a key plank in achieving the net zero carbon targets of both councils.
- ii. Government support needs to be long term, reliable and as simple as possible, influenced by experts in the field and using local authorities and LEPs in partnership as trusted local leaders.
- iii. Both local authorities should work with OXLEP, Greentech, local business and professional organisations to establish an Oxfordshire retrofit partnership board, develop a local strategy, taking into account the Construction Leadership Council's national strategy, and fit it with the larger vision of a 'clean' economy outlined in the Oxfordshire2050 vision,
- iv. Each council should look at small and large actions they can take on their own and as a partnership in the possible projects listed in the table in 6. above.
- v. There are commercial opportunities that can benefit the local economy and residents, and financial investment opportunities for Local Authorities to invest in their own community, and in so doing support some of the most vulnerable. Both Councils should investigate these opportunities, including the commercial and financial opportunities here for Councils.

Annex A

South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse District Council

Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group

Scoping Document and Terms of Reference

Name of Task and Finish Group	The Homes Retrofit Joint Scrutiny Group
Members	(Chair) Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye Cllr George Levy Cllr Sue Roberts Cllr Hayley Gascoigne Cllr David Grant
Purpose and Scope of Task and Finish Specify exactly what the Scrutiny Review should achieve and refer where possible to VFM issues of service cost, service performance and/or customer satisfaction.	The T&F group will investigate whether there is the skills and capacity within the two Districts' areas to maximise the opportunity the government's grants and other financing for retrofitting old housing stock for better energy performance. This is in line with both the Councils' net-carbon targets, the urgency of climate change as outlined in both Council's Climate Emergency declarations and also to ensure warmer/more energy-efficient homes for those who need it for health and well-being. It is also in accordance with the two Councils' Corporate Plans.
Objectives and Indicators of Success What factors/outcomes will demonstrate that this Scrutiny Review has been a success.	Objectives: develop an accurate and up to date picture (with data where possible) regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarify barriers to improvement and suggest possible solutions • link any recommendations to work for councils, Oxlep, education establishments, and government

<p>Methodology/ Approach What types of enquiry will be used to gather evidence</p>	<p>Meet with task and finish group members to discuss and finalise those to invite to speak to the group, and questions to ask</p> <p>Invite these to 2 or more as necessary separate meetings with the T&F group to answer questions and discuss ideas for solutions</p> <p>Final meeting to discuss and finalise reports</p>
<p>Target body for Recommendations Cabinet, Council, Other/Partners</p>	<p>All Councils in Oxfordshire, Oxlep, BEIS, Oxfordshire Growth Board</p>
<p>Key dates Identify key meeting dates and any deadlines for reports or decisions</p>	<p>Final report should be ready in late Sept 2021 Also needs to report to scheduled Joint Scrutiny meetings as close to this as possible CEEAC/CEAC meetings</p>
<p>Risks Identify any weaknesses and barriers to success</p>	<p>Not enough evidence available Too much information to crystallise into recommendations in short time frame Not able to identify right people to give evidence</p>
<p>Witnesses/ Experts/ Site Visits Who, why and when</p>	<p>Oxlep Abingdon and Witney College Chamber of Commerce for contacts in industry/professional body Cosy Homes/Low Carbon Hub Retrofit Works NEF (fund Better Housing Better Homes) Oxford Brookes University</p>

Publicity & Media Do we need to publicise the review to encourage community involvement? What sort of media coverage do we want? Fliers, leaflets, radio broadcast, press release, etc.	Via Council comms social media channels request both professional and personal experiences
Resources & Budget <input type="checkbox"/> specialist staff <input type="checkbox"/> external support <input type="checkbox"/> consultation <input type="checkbox"/> research	Support for minutes, invitations and correspondence on this, Climate Emergency staff - finalising report
Completed by:	Cllr S Casey-Rerhaye
Agreed by Joint Scrutiny on:	

Annex B

Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group

South Oxfordshire District Council & Vale of the White Horse District Council

Home-Retrofit Scoping Paper prepared for the Task and Finish Group

1. Purpose of this Paper

Both South and Vale's Corporate Plans address the need to retrofit houses to reach their carbon neutral targets. In the SODC Corporate Plan, under the theme of *homes and infrastructure that meets local needs*, there is a specific action on retrofit and fuel poverty: "Support and encouragement for the retrofit of our existing housing stock for low-carbon performance and to eliminate fuel poverty". Similarly for VWH, in the *tackling the Climate emergency* theme, there is a project to 'work with local partners and Government to encourage retrofitting houses with sustainable energy schemes; help residents to take advantage of schemes that come along to help with costs'.

This paper provides background information on home retrofit, the current situation on retrofit and fuel poverty, and identifies options for developing a dedicated retrofit programme in the districts that will contribute to meeting the Councils' carbon neutral targets.

2. Background

2.1 What is retrofit?

Retrofit refers to a range of home improvement measures that can be made with the aim of ensuring that a property operates in as energy-efficient a manner as possible. Retrofit options include loft insulation, replacing gas boilers, improved ventilation, switching to efficient lighting or swapping to renewable energy sources

Whole House Retrofit is a complete approach to making homes more energy-efficient, focusing on the fabric of the house first including the walls, roof, floors, windows and doors, to strategies for ventilation, heating efficiency and cooling in the summer months. While individual measures for retrofit can be done, it is most effective and efficient to do a whole house retrofit.

Private homeowners, private landlords and social housing landlords can all retrofit their properties.

2.2 What is Fuel Poverty?

Fuel poverty is where a household's fuel costs are above average and if the household were to pay that amount, they would be below the poverty line. There tend to be three factors that affect fuel poverty: low household income, poor energy efficiency of homes (leading to higher energy bills), and high energy prices. Inability to pay for heating in the winter results in fuel poor households often being cold which has huge health implications, particularly on the cardio-vascular and respiratory systems, as well as affecting mental health, and contributes to health inequalities. In 2017, fuel poverty in South Oxfordshire made up 7.7% of households and in the Vale of White Horse, 7.4% of houses were fuel poor.

Improving the energy efficiency of a home through retrofit will help mitigate fuel poverty by lowering bills and warming houses, as explained in 2.3.

2.3 Why is retrofit important?

Retrofitting homes is vital for addressing climate change and helping both councils to reach their carbon targets. Home energy consumption accounts for around 30% of total energy used and 20% of total carbon emissions in the UK. In Oxfordshire around 25% of GHG emissions are residential. Improving the energy efficiency of homes will reduce carbon emissions and help us to achieve our carbon neutral goals for the district by 2030. The Oxfordshire Energy Strategy recommends that 4,000 deep retrofits need to take place each year to halve emissions by 2030..

There are other benefits to retrofitting homes which include improving the wellbeing of residents by living in homes that are warmer and drier in the winter, and financial savings from more efficient energy use, which is particularly poignant for those who are 'fuel poor'.

2.4 What are the barriers to retrofit?

While retrofitting is a win-win option, as it improves energy efficiency and will reduce bills, there are several barriers to homeowners retrofitting. These include:

Awareness and knowledge of retrofit	<p>Not all homeowners are aware of the changes they can make to their homes to be more energy efficient, as well as the benefits this has to the environment and their savings.</p> <p>Also, the term 'retrofit' is not a term which many people understand. Clear communication about what it is and how to do it will be key.</p>
Costs	<p>Making changes to your home can be expensive and the payback periods are long. Finding upfront cash can be difficult. The government conducted a study to determine costs of retrofitting different types of homes, which can be found here, with costs ranging massively depending on the size of the property and the types of retrofit projects conducted. Efficiency improvements are not thought to increase the value of a home, which does not incentive homeowners to invest in retrofit.</p> <p>There is funding available but it might not cover all the costs and many people are not aware of it.</p>
Skills	<p>There is a lack of tradespeople with the expertise and skills for conducting retrofit, especially as many different skills are required for retrofitting. This is a significant and recognised problem in Oxfordshire.</p>
Rented sector	<p>Around 20% of the UK's homes are privately rented and about 50% of those homes are EPC rating Dⁱ. According to the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES), all private rental properties must have an EPC rating of E or above. Tenants can act on their rights to ensure the home they are renting meets the MEES.</p> <p>Tenants rely on their landlords to make home improvements and landlords tend to focus on repairs rather than major improvements or retrofit. Improvements are often made between occupancy periods and landlords can then increase rental rates to cover the building costs. While energy efficiency measures will benefit renters as they will have lower bills, this doesn't have a direct impact for most landlords.</p>
Leaseholders	<p>Getting agreement from multiple homeowners and tenants in shared buildings is a complex process which acts as a deterrent to embarking on retrofit.</p>

Policy	There currently isn't comprehensive government policy for retrofit or any enforcement mechanism.
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2.5 What is best practise for retrofit programmes?

Local authorities and combined authorities are well placed to deliver retrofit schemes because of their ability to support key stakeholders and are often seen as a trusted partner by residents and businesses. Working in partnership with stakeholders allows for sharing of best practice and resources, including funding.

A 'one-stop-shop' is considered best practise for developing a retrofit scheme where homeowners and landlords can go to one service for their retrofitting needs. This service includes raising awareness of retrofit options, undertaking assessments and designs for homes, arranging contractors, and offering financial advice. A retrofit coordinator offers this role, which is the case with the Cosy Homes Oxfordshire initiative.

Appendix A provides examples of retrofit programmes conducted by other councils. There are different approaches depending on the target of the service, whether it is fuel poverty or whole house retrofit. Schemes addressing fuel poverty tend to partner with advice services to support residents to improve the warmth of their homes. For whole house retrofits, the role of the retrofit coordinator is vital for ensuring that the work is to standard and to help find qualified tradespeople.

2.6 What certifications are needed for retrofit?

Having trusted contractors and practitioners is vital for ensuring quality service that homeowners respect and recommend. In terms of accreditation needed for energy efficiency measures under government supported initiatives, such as the Green Homes Grant, contractors must be certified to install the measures against the Public Available Specifications (PAS) Standards 2035 by a certification body that has been accredited by UKAS. For installing low-carbon heat measures, Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) standards are needed. Contractors must also be TrustMark certified to install Green Homes Grant projects. The TrustMark quality standard is endorsed by Government for trades that operate in and around the home, and has recently expanded to include energy efficiency, repair maintenance and improvement and retrofit sectors.

Retrofit Works, an approved provider for TrustMark and a partner organisation of the Cosy Homes Oxfordshire initiative, offers a membership for practitioners which provides training and knowledge of the UK's retrofit industry. Members are also given work opportunities.

2.7 What national funding and support is available?

There are several grants and schemes available for home retrofit and to support those that are fuel poor, however there is a lack of large-scale programmes specifically for retrofit.

There is also a lack of forward thinking with many of these schemes (such as ECO) as they are not installing low carbon solutions but merely, for example, replacing old gas boilers with new ones. This creates uncertainty and frustration for both contractors and households, and does not consider the energy efficiency opportunities. The current schemes available are:

<u>Green Homes Grant</u>	<p>One strand of the programme earmarked £1.5bn in vouchers of up to £5,000 to help homeowners upgrade their homes, and up to £10,000 available to some of the UK's poorest families. It ran from September 2020 and has recently been scrapped by the government, with no new applications being accepted after the end of March 2021.</p> <p>There have been serious issues with the administration of this fund and many are waiting for reimbursement for their retrofit projects, including contractors and some of whom are getting into debt as a result of the slow paybacks.</p> <p>The Government has said there will be £300million of funding directed toward helping people on low-incomes gain access to energy efficiency improvements through local authorities.</p>
<u>Warm Home Discount Scheme</u>	This scheme offers a one-off discount of £140 on a homeowner's electricity, or electricity and gas if it is the same supplier, if the homeowner receives the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit or is on a low income
<u>Winter Fuel Payment</u>	For those born before 5 October 1954 and either receive a state pension or get another social security benefit, they will receive between £100-£300 to help pay for heating bills.
<u>The Regulatory Reform Order 2002</u>	<p>The Regulatory Reform Order 2002 gave local authorities wider powers to introduce policies to assist individuals with renewals, repairs, and adaptations in their homes through discretionary grants or loans. The power includes awarding discretionary grants or loans in addition to statutory DFGs.</p> <p>One of the aims of this policy is to reduce fuel poverty and the effects of living in cold homes, including excess winter deaths and illness.</p>
The Essential Housing Repair Grant	The Essential Housing Repair Grant are small grants available to improve the warmth, comfort, condition, safety or security of homes and can be used for energy measures, except when other grants are available.
<u>The Flexible Home Improvement Loan</u>	The Flexible Home Improvement Loan also offers is available to make the home safer, warmer, healthier or more comfortable for owner occupiers aged 60 or above, including the opportunity for renewable energy generation technology.
<u>Disabled Facilities Grant</u>	For those that are disabled and need to make changes to their home, they can apply for this grant to widen doors and install ramps; improve access to rooms and facilities; provide heating systems suitable for needs; and adapt heating and lighting controls to make them easier to use.
<u>Fuel Poverty Grants Scheme</u>	This is administered by National Energy Foundation (NEF) and provides grants of up to £1000 for essential energy saving repairs and improvements to homes with a specific focus upon energy efficiency and energy saving measures.

<u>Warm Homes Grant</u>	This is a discretionary grant that may be available to top up the Fuel Poverty Grant, and may be a total of up to £1000. The grant is available to homeowners and private tenants who meet the eligibility requirements of the Fuel Poverty Grant, but where the costs of energy efficiency, energy saving measures or essential energy saving repairs exceeds the Fuel Poverty Grant maximum.
<u>Rural Community Energy Fund</u> , Greater South East Energy Hub	Greater South East Energy Hub is offering this fund which is a £10 million programme for community renewable energy generation that benefits the community and environment. It supports rural communities by implementing renewable energy that can generate income locally, helps to achieve the Government's renewable energy and carbon reduction targets, and provides social and economic benefits to rural areas, such as through job creation and rural growth.

In terms of support, the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy published a report in February 2021, Sustainable Warmth – Protecting Vulnerable Households in England, which outlines the Government's plan to address fuel poverty. This will include:

- Further funds to retrofit social housing, including a £60 million investment and £150 million invested into a Home Upgrade Grant
- Expand the Energy Company Obligation (ECO)
- Investing £2 billion in the Green Homes Grant to improve energy efficiency of households
- Extending the Warm Home Discount
- Investing £10 billion on energy efficiency measures through the Private Rented Sector
- Improving energy efficiency standards through the Future Homes Standard and the Decent Homes Standard
- The Government has identified eight strategic challenges that need to be addressed to tackle fuel poverty.

Over the next few years it is likely there will be more funds to reduce fuel poverty and support retrofit projects.

3. Retrofit progress in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

3.1 EPC rating in South Oxfordshire

In terms of home energy efficiency in South Oxfordshire, most dwellings have an Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) ratingⁱⁱ of D, and flats have an average EPC rating of C, which reflects the average rating for the UK, and can be seen in the table below. From ONS data in 2019, new houses and flats in South Oxfordshire had a median EPC of B.

South Oxfordshire EPC rating by type of dwelling Jan 2008 to December 2020

* It should be noted that this is the rating of a property when it is sold, let or constructed, so does not reflect smaller home improvements which could include energy efficiency measures.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total

Bungalow	0.2%	2.3%	14.6%	48.3%	24.8%	8.0%	1.9%	9.5%
Flat	0.1%	24.7%	38.0%	25.0%	8.3%	2.6%	0.8%	16.2%
House	0.2%	13.0%	21.1%	39.6%	18.5%	6.2%	1.5%	72.6%
Maisonette	0%	9.6%	39.2%	30.2%	14.1%	5.2%	1.7%	1.8%
Total	0.1%	13.8%	23.5%	37.9%	17.4%	5.8%	1.4%	

In terms of rental properties, which make up less than 30% of households in the district, they have the following EPC ratings:

Type of Tenure	EPC Rating
Socially rented flats	C
Socially rented houses	C/D
Privately rented flats	D
Privately rented houses	D

By law, all rented properties must have an EPC rating of at least E, which is met here.

3.2 EPC rating in Vale of White Horse

In Vale of White Horse, most dwellings have an EPC rating of D, with the average house EPC rating at D and the average EPC rating for flats was C. ONS data found that from 2019, new houses and flats had a median EPC rating of B.

Vale of White Horse EPC rating by type of dwelling Jan 2008 to present

* It should be noted that this is the rating of a property when it is sold, let or constructed, so does not reflect smaller home improvements which could include energy efficiency measures.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
Bungalow	0.1%	2.2%	20.1%	47.2%	22.1%	6.3%	1.9%	7.8%
Flat	0.0%	34.6%	41.1%	17.0%	5.1%	1.4%	0.7%	17.8%
House	0.2%	27.7%	20.8%	33.5%	13.0%	3.9%	0.9%	71.8%
Maisonette	0.1%	16.0%	47.5%	24.1%	8.2%	3.1%	1.0%	2.6%
Total	0.1%	26.6%	25.1%	31.4%	12.2%	3.7%	0.9%	

Vale's homes that are rented make up 30% of all households and their average EPC rating are:

Type of Tenure	EPC Rating
Socially rented flats	C
Socially rented houses	C
Privately rented flats	C

3.3 What is currently being done locally?

Both districts aim to support and encourage retrofit programmes. Across the county there are schemes that are supporting residents in both districts to complete retrofit work and address fuel poverty. These schemes are Cosy Homes Oxfordshire and the National Energy Foundation's (NEF) Better Housing, Better Health.

Cosy Homes Oxfordshire, funded by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, is a pilot retrofit project that launched in 2019 to improve the energy efficiency and sustainability of homes in Oxfordshire. They offer a 'one-stop-shop' on home eco-retrofitting where a Retrofit Coordinator first assesses a home and identifies appropriate energy efficient measures, creates a tailored whole house improvement plan and then the Retrofit Coordinator supports the contractors and installers throughout the improvement works by ensuring technical requirements and standards are met. The initiative also links homeowners with trusted contractors, who have been assessed by the RetrofitWorks team, a partner organisation for the scheme. The initiative has been very popular and they are currently experiencing a back-log for appointments. The take-up has mostly been from those in the 'able to pay market.' The pilot is scheduled to finish in March 2021 and Cosy Homes Oxfordshire intends to continue its services.

Additionally, Better Housing, Better Health, a NEF scheme, provides home energy checks and grants for energy efficiency improvements where someone's health is being impacted by living in a cold or damp home in Oxfordshire. This project aims to support those that are at risk of fuel poverty and the health effects of cold homes. NEF also provides the councils' fuel poverty grant scheme, as outlined in the table in section 2.6. In the 2017-2019 financial years, 27 households in South Oxfordshire were awarded a total of £30,281 worth of fuel poverty grants for 19 heating improvements and 8 insulation improvements, and the Vale of White Horse was awarded fuel poverty grants of £19,738 to 24 households for 18 heating improvements and 4 insulation improvements.

As of February 2021, Oxfordshire County Council received GHG LAD Phase 1b funding to support 150 low income / poor performing homes with energy retrofit measures with an average grant spend of £8,500.00 per home. Plans are being developed as to how this will be implemented. There are also plans to implement the GHG Phase 2, which supports fuel poor homes with retrofit projects.

3.4 What is the local skills landscape for retrofit?

There are around 20,000 construction jobs in Oxfordshire making up about 5% of employment. There has been a recent growth in the construction sector, however they are seeing skills shortages. Retrofit Works, who supports Cosy Homes Oxfordshire, have found through this scheme that there aren't the skills to meet the demand for retrofit projects, not only for the wide range of construction skills needed for retrofit projects but also the business management skills to run a retrofit business. In addition, many local contractors are unaware of the Green Homes Grant scheme, don't have the demand from customers for retrofit projects, and therefore don't have the qualifications needed to take part in it. Several contractors didn't think it was worth paying for a membership to be TrustMark qualified until they had the demand for retrofit projects. While contractors felt they had the skills to conduct retrofit projects, they needed advice and direction on what to do to ensure energy efficiency measures were met, which tends to be the role of a retrofit coordinator. Without policies that

require contractors to conduct sustainable construction and a demand from homeowners for retrofit, there will continue to be a skills gap.

OxLEP have various programmes in place to address meeting the needs of local employers and the skills shortages in Oxfordshire's labour market. This includes the Community Employment Plans to ensure local people have better access to employment and training opportunities in Oxfordshire, and Oxfordshire Apprenticeships which promotes awareness of apprenticeships and traineeships to young people, parents and employers. There is potential to utilise apprenticeships and the Community Employment Plans to address technical skills shortages in the construction field.

Recently, a new construction skills college has opened in Oxfordshire at Abingdon and Witney College with funding from the Local Growth Fund 3. The curriculum will reflect Oxfordshire's innovation in low-carbon technologies and support the UK's goal to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. They also plan to support 400 apprenticeship over the next five years.

Oxford Brookes University also offers several construction related courses but they do not have a focus on sustainable methods. There might be an opportunity to work with them to address construction skills gaps in the county.

Nationally, the government has recently launched a Green Homes Grants [skills training competition scheme](#) which provides training in home energy retrofitting and low carbon heat insulation. This will provide tradespeople with the required skills and qualifications to deliver projects under the Green Homes Grant Scheme.

4. Key considerations

To determine the target audiences of retrofit programmes, the types of households and dwellings need to be considered in terms of their financial ability to pay as well as the need to improve the energy efficiency of the household.

Key household types are:

- Socially rented houses
- Socially rented flats
- Privately rented houses
- Privately rented flats
- Leasehold arrangements (for both flat rentals and flat ownership)
- Owner occupied houses
- Owner occupied flats

In terms of financing retrofits, for rental properties the landlord or housing association would be responsible for this. Therefore, the landlord would have to be willing to forgo rent while they make improvements, as well as having the funding to do so, which could come from government schemes. Also, the landlord won't directly benefit from the warmer home or lower bills so conducting retrofit would be to achieve a desired EPC rating and for their reputation or environmental credentials. For social landlords, they are likely to react to government policies to improve the energy efficiency of their property.

Owner-occupied houses and flats, which make up 74% of households in South Oxfordshire and 70% of households in Vale of White Horse, will be divided into those that are able to pay and those that aren't able to pay for retrofit projects. Those that are able to pay might do so if they have knowledge of retrofit, want to improve the energy efficiency of their home, and

the pay-back period doesn't affect them financially. For those that aren't able to pay, they would likely take up grant offers if they are aware of them and know the benefits of retrofit.

When considering the energy efficiency of a home, a better EPC rating will have a lower environmental impact and reduced energy bills. Referring to the tables in section 3.1 and 3.2, the EPC rating F and G make up just over 6% of all households in South Oxfordshire and just under 5% in Vale of White Horse. These households could be a target group for retrofit projects as well as addressing fuel poverty.

The councils may address these factors using different methods which will have varied inputs and impacts.

5. Project Options

Three options have been identified that could all form part of a retrofit programme to take forward each Districts' Corporate Plan priorities to support and encourage the retrofit for existing housing stocks.

5.1 Signposting and awareness raising

One programme of work is a communications strategy to raise awareness of retrofit and information about what projects can be conducted, including costs, encouraging residents and landlords to implement retrofit solutions in their homes. Information about funding and support available should also be promoted. The communications would be shared on each councils' webpages and social media, as well as in resident newsletters. Case studies of what residents have done to their homes could be shared to make the information more relevant and tangible.

Advantages:

- This is a low-cost option as it would use resources that already exist
- Would have substantial impact in terms of reducing carbon emissions if there is take-up

Disadvantages:

- There could be reputational damage to the Councils by promoting ineffectual government schemes or schemes where the district does not have the labour to support implementation
- Without targeting it could result in limiting take up to the able to pay market.

5.2 Retrofit Service

A second option is to provide a retrofit service. There are different ways that this service could be set up, including engaging with the existing Cosy Homes Oxfordshire service as well as the wider county. Three options are outlined below:

- (i) Setting up a new Council run retrofit service

This would involve each district designing their own retrofit service, based on best practice, and developing an officer or team to manage the programme. Funding would be needed to support this. The two councils could partner on this or each Council could develop their own service.

Advantages:

- Ensures close alignment to Council priorities and Corporate Plan
- Easier to make changes based on learning
- Can target certain groups, such as those in fuel poverty or households with low EPC ratings

Disadvantages:

- Significant inception costs
- Time involved in setting up a new unit and recruiting and training staff
- There may not be the labour to support this work locally
- There may not be the demand locally to support this programme

(ii) Sub-contracting an existing retrofit provider to deliver a bespoke service in the district

A specific contract could be developed for a bespoke retrofit service either for each district separately or both districts together, and could be provided by an already existing retrofit service, such as Cosy Homes Oxfordshire. The contract would include setting targets for certain groups, such as those with high carbon emissions or living in fuel poverty.

Advantages:

- Targeting households with high carbon emissions and in fuel poverty will help each district reach their carbon emission goals
- Utilising an existing service will require less input from either council and it is low maintenance to manage the contract
- Partnering on the contract, or engaging with other councils on the service, might strengthen the overall service provided by ensuring best practice and economies of scale

Disadvantages:

- A bespoke service is likely to be expensive to set up
- There may not be the demand or labour in the district to cover the costs of this programme

(iii) Provide additional funding to an existing retrofit provider to continue their service, with targets of specified number of home retrofit projects in the districts. This could be done by the councils individually or together.

An existing retrofit provider, such as Cosy Homes Oxfordshire, could be funded to improve the energy efficiency of a certain number of homes each district, while continuing their work across the county.

Advantages:

- Targeting households with high carbon emissions will help each council to reach their carbon emission goals
- Utilising an existing service will require less input from the council and low maintenance to manage the contract

- Cosy Homes Oxfordshire could also provide this service to surrounding councils, each having their own appropriate targets and benefitting from economies of scale (including a wider pool of labour and resources)

Disadvantages:

- There may not be the demand or labour in either district to cover the costs of this programme
- Contracting a service reduces the Councils' control

5.3 Retrofit Skills Partnership

A third option is to set up a partnership to address skills gaps for retrofit as it is vital that our workforce is skilled to meet home energy efficiency needs, helping us to achieve our carbon neutral targets. It is important that the construction workforce meet quality and trademark standards for retrofit, that contractors have the right skills, local training meets the skills need, and that qualified tradespeople are hired locally. Having more skilled labour for retrofit projects could also help to reduce the backlog of appointments with Cosy Homes.

It is recommended to set up a partnership that would address this by working with the colleges to offer the right training, with local contractors to ensure there are jobs for newly qualified tradespeople, and with landlords and construction companies so that local contractors are hired for their retrofitting services. This would also be a great opportunity to address equality and diversity issues in this sector, and to encourage females to train in this field. The Abingdon and Witney College have recently opened a construction school that could support this. It is recommended that the Partnership is at county level to achieve economies of scale and could be part of the environment sub-group of the Growth Board.

To ensure this partnership covers all angles of the skills needs, it is recommended that partners would include:

- OXLEP – who support employment and skills programmes
- Colleges – especially the Abingdon and Witney College with their construction school
- Oxford Brookes University – they have several construction and real estate courses which could be tailored to teach sustainable construction methods and retrofit
- District / county / city councils – to provide support and coordination
- Social housing landlords – who can provide their perspective, opportunities and barriers to retrofit
- Landlords association – providing insights as landlords
- Private Housing Grants officer – to provide support and perspectives on private housing
- Construction representative(s) – who can provide insight into the construction industry, and the barriers and opportunities they face in terms of retrofit
- Cosy Homes Oxfordshire – an existing retrofit scheme who are well connected in the county
- Aspire Oxford – this is an employment charity helping those that are homeless, disadvantaged or facing poverty to find work and housing. They support their clients with employability skills training.

Advantages:

- A whole county partnership approach would result in more joined-up work and pooling of larger resources
- Economies of scale
- Creating a programme that will support retrofit in the future, while also providing jobs

Disadvantages:

- South Oxfordshire would not have complete ownership of this project as they will be working in partnership

6. Conclusion

To conclude, at a minimum, communications need to be shared on retrofit to raise awareness and encourage residents to retrofit their homes. Providing a retrofit service will be needed to support residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, but ensuring the right skills are available will be needed for this service to work. A longer-term retrofit skills partnership will be important to ensure the labour market is equipped to conduct retrofit work.

Appendix A

Retrofit Examples

Cornwall Council

In July 2020, Cornwall Council secured £4.2million from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Energy Innovation Programme for a Whole House Retrofit project. They are working with SSE to improve 83 homes managed by Cornwall Housing and aim to be a cost-effective model for improving energy efficiency while also cutting energy bills and reducing fuel poverty.

Devon County Council

Devon County Council is supporting Cosy Devon which is a scheme for households operated by local authorities and community organisations across Devon and Torbay to save them energy. Through the Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP), they offer free energy and money saving advice, targeting households that are in or at risk of falling into fuel poverty.

East Sussex

The Warmer Sussex programme, launched in October 2019 with RetrofitWorks, is a not-for-profit which supports local people to make their homes more energy efficient. They provide a Retrofit Coordinator to all projects who can create a Whole House Plan for the retrofit project, advise on energy efficiency measures and provide options for local trusted tradespeople to do the work. Throughout the process the Retrofit Coordinator

communicates regularly and once the building work is complete, they check that the work meets the required standards.

Ecofurb, London and South Cambridgeshire

This service provides a whole house approach to improving the energy efficiency of a home. Ecofurb offers a free Plan Builder which provides options for retrofitting and renovations, producing a plan for the work. A Home Survey and Ecofurb plan are then completed by the Ecofurb coordinator which highlights the changes to your home's performance that could be achieved and a phased plan for doing so. The Ecofurb coordinator can also get quotes for the work from trusted contractors, and oversee the work to ensure it meets the required standards.

Keep Warm and Well, East Sussex

This programme, provided by RetrofitWorks and Citizens Advice, offers advice and support to keep people warm at home for less, protecting residents from the effects of living in a cold home. The programme provides advice on funding for keeping your home warm, identifies ways to keep the home warm, conducts small works to improve the warmth of a home, and provide access to housing insulation and heating. They also work with partners by offering them training to identify people who might be vulnerable and living in a cold home, and signposting to Keep Warm and Well for support.

ⁱ <https://www.greenfinanceinstitute.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Financing-energy-efficient-buildings-the-path-to-retrofit-at-scale.pdf>

ⁱⁱ For a breakdown of EPC ratings, visit: <https://www.edfenergy.com/energy-efficiency/how-improve-your-epc-rating>



Steady Progression



Societal Transformation



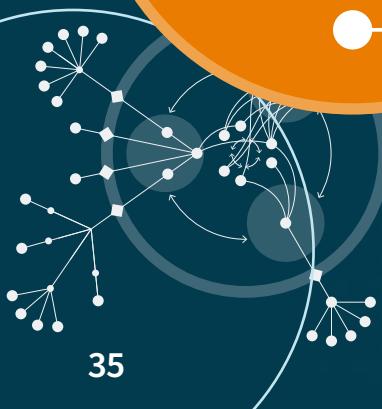
Technological Transformation

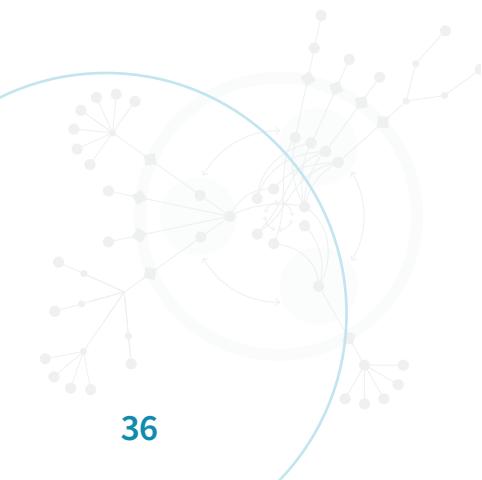


Oxfordshire
Leading the Way

4 Scenarios for a zero-carbon Oxfordshire

There is widespread agreement on the need to drive down emissions and achieve a zero-carbon economy in Oxfordshire by 2050. However, this will not occur without concerted action at multiple scales and by diverse actors. Although Oxfordshire is reliant to a large extent on transformations at the national or even international level to decarbonise its electricity and transport systems, and to eradicate emissions from its building stock, the county also has the option to lead the way towards drastic emissions reductions, going further and faster than other parts of the UK.





This chapter sets out three different pathways to achieving zero-carbon (**Societal Transformation**, **Technological Transformation** and **Oxfordshire Leading the Way**), and contrasts these with a business-as-usual scenario (**Steady progression**). The chapters which follow provide further detailed analysis of the changes needed to achieve net-zero.

4.1 Methodology and approach

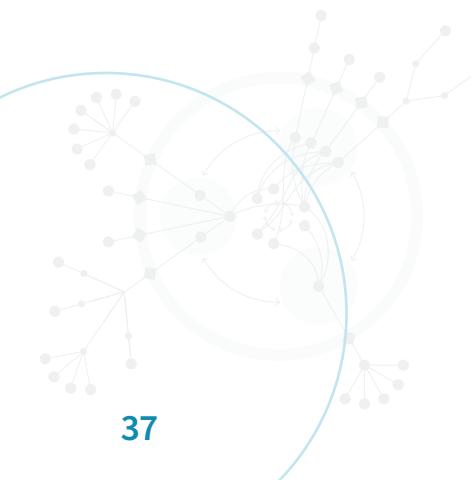
Our scenarios build on comprehensive modelling undertaken by the National Grid (NG) in developing their *Future Energy Scenarios* (FES). The four scenarios in this report align with their 2020 FES, which have also been adapted by the electricity Distribution Network Operator covering most of Oxfordshire: Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), to create the Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES). To differentiate between our scenarios and those set out by NG, we have chosen slightly different names for each of the three pathways to zero-carbon.

Where available for Oxfordshire, data on key indicators such as energy demand, renewable generation, and the uptake of electric vehicles have been used as a starting point and combined with modelling by NG to extrapolate figures for 2030 and 2050. However, population growth on a national scale is forecast to be far more modest than in Oxfordshire. We have therefore adjusted the underlying calculations based on expected growth in housing and population, which are consistent across the four scenarios. Further, the NG FES analysis was conducted before the government brought forward the ban on new petrol and diesel vehicles to 2030, so our projections of EV uptake are more rapid.

None of the scenarios should be interpreted as forecasts or predictions, but instead outline different possible pathways to decarbonising the economy, indicating the scale of investment, societal and technological change needed to meet climate goals. The approach in this report differs from that taken in 2014, which included just one scenario with the level of action needed to meet UK climate goals. This time, three of the four scenarios achieve net-zero by 2050, varying in the extent of social and lifestyle change, technology mixes and local action. However, it should be highlighted that each of these pathways require change across all sections of society, driven by strong policy and public support at the national and local levels.

Housing and population growth projections

Oxfordshire's population is growing rapidly. Up to 2031, the figures in this report are based on data compiled by Oxfordshire County Council's Research & Intelligence team, using housing data forecasts provided by City and District Councils. These figures indicate an average of just under 6,000 new homes added to the dwelling stock each year to 2031. Thereafter, no plans have yet been agreed, and for our scenarios we have assumed an additional 4,000 homes are built each year from 2031 to 2050.



All modelling is subject to uncertainty and error. Future energy scenarios have a tendency towards emphasising technological solutions with a focus on supply,⁴⁸ underplaying the significance of economic, social and behavioural drivers of energy demand. Models often make broad assumptions about high levels of energy service demand, characterised by thermostat settings and transport preferences. Ecosystem services and consumption emissions are often treated separately. In response, we have adapted our scenarios to include some additional, difficult-to-quantify, features of a zero-carbon future, with a focus on the demand side.⁴⁹

Although the COVID-19 pandemic led to significant reduction in energy demand during 2020, we have not included this in our underlying calculations. There is limited recent data available at the geographical scale needed, and it is difficult to predict the near term rebound in energy consumption, travel behaviour and associated carbon emissions. While this is a limitation of these scenarios, the uncertainties associated with decadal trajectories outweigh near term fluctuations.

A note on local renewable generation

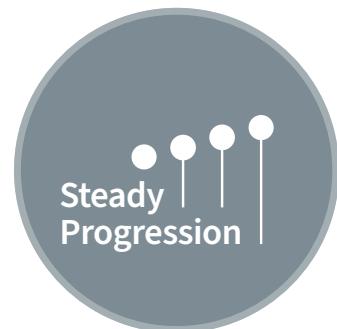
Our 2014 scenarios included metrics relating to the proportion of electricity and heat demand generated by local renewable sources by 2030. The figures of 56% and 40% respectively were incorporated into the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy as recommendations of what might be needed to halve emissions by 2030.

As mentioned in Chapter 3 and discussed further in Chapter 8, recent developments and future projections indicate that this figure for electricity now represents a highly ambitious pathway. Whereas in 2014, Scenario C assumed significant development of onshore wind in the county, in this report we focus primarily on solar photovoltaics for new local electricity generation, for reasons outlined in Chapter 8.

For heat, we are no longer using the indicator: '*renewable heat as a percentage of total heat demand*'. This is partly because it is becoming apparent that, besides improving building insulation, heat pumps will drive the decarbonisation of heating in Oxfordshire, and it is a matter for debate whether these represent local generation or energy efficiency. We have replaced this metric with a simpler indicator which is also used in national policy: the number of heat pumps installed per year. We also include indicators for natural gas and hydrogen demand.

48 Barrett et al (2019). Modelling Demand-side energy policies for climate change mitigation in the UK: A rapid evidence assessment. UKERC Working Paper.

49 It is worth noting that National Grid and other modellers such as the Climate Change Committee have been increasingly including social, cultural and behavioural factors in their scenarios. Our scenarios for Oxfordshire go even further.



4.2 Scenarios

Steady Progression

Steady Progression extrapolates from trends on emissions reductions. It incorporates recent policy announcements such as the ban on sales of new petrol and diesel vehicles, but progress is uneven across sectors, and it does not achieve net-zero by 2050.

In this scenario, Oxfordshire continues to rely on high levels of natural gas for **heating**, with demand for gas falling by only 6% by 2050. The deployment of heat pumps is gradual. Overall energy demand continues to fall but at a more modest rate due to minimal increases in energy efficiency in buildings and industry.

In **transport**, the majority of small private vehicles are electrified, although some plug-in hybrids remain on the roads. The numbers of people working from home on a regular basis continues to gradually increase from the pre-pandemic baseline, but this results in minimal reduction in vehicle mileage as home-workers substitute commutes for other local trips.⁵⁰ Demand for train commuting is reduced however. Railway electrification is achieved for the new East West Rail route, but rising costs hamper progress on the main routes through Oxford. There is more progress in electrifying buses, but this fails to attract many new passengers switching from private transport. Rates of walking and cycling remain low as a proportion of total trips, and cycling culture fails to take hold outside of Oxford City as new housing continues to be built at low densities. HGVs become cleaner by switching to gas, but continue to rely on fossil fuels. Hydrogen does not feature significantly as a fuel for either transport, heating, or energy storage.

Electricity demand remains steady to 2030, and then increases by 74% to 2050 (compared with 2018), driven by substantial housebuilding. It is assumed that from 2025 heat pumps are installed in all new homes, and from 2028 their occupants own one electric vehicle, which they charge at home. **Flexibility** is minimal, with limited smart charging practices and vehicle-to-grid (V2G) deployment. The adoption of flexible practices by householders and businesses remains a niche activity in the near term, but time-of-use tariffs become more widely adopted (54%) by 2050. 60% of electricity generation is provided by renewables by 2030, but most of this is provided by technologies deployed outside of Oxfordshire. Nonetheless, falling prices and increased efficiency lead to an increase in **solar generation** of 32% by 2030 (500 GWh), and 131% by 2050 (880 GWh). Installed capacity of solar reflects the current share of 80% ground mounted, 20% rooftop. However, as electricity demand increases, the proportion supplied by local renewables rises only slightly to 16%, and that remains constant as new installations keep track with growing electricity demand.

In this scenario, in line with recent trends, **land use** is largely unchanged except for the continued loss of farmland for housing development. Over 9,000 ha of land (3.5% of the area of Oxfordshire) is allocated for development between 2011 and 2031. Solar farms expand to occupy an additional 670 ha of farmland. Around half of the land in the county continues to be dedicated to livestock farming, with 27% remaining as intensive pasture (improved grassland), and approximately half of the 43% arable land being used to produce livestock feed. Modest habitat restoration efforts are linked to new biodiversity net gain policies, though these are hampered by intense competition for land.

⁵⁰ Hook, A., Court, V., Sovacool, B.K. & Sorrell, S. (2020). A systematic review of the energy and climate impacts of teleworking. *Environmental Research Letters*, 15: 093003



Societal Transformation

Societal Transformation

This pathway to a zero-carbon economy is driven by significant changes in consumer practices.

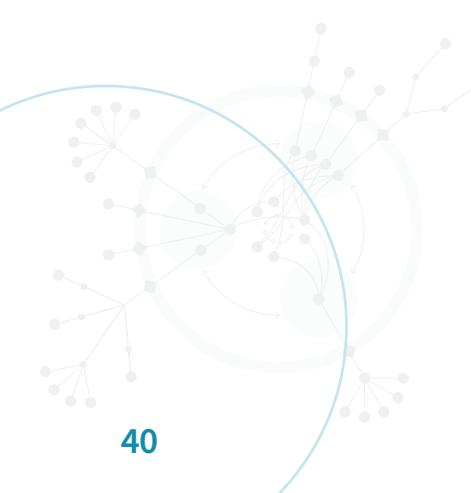
Total energy demand falls significantly in this scenario, with a national programme of retrofit leading the way to achieving high levels of efficiency across Oxfordshire's building stock. **Electricity demand** more than doubles by 2050 compared with 2018, driven by the large-scale deployment of heat pumps to replace gas and oil boilers throughout Oxfordshire. Reflecting this, demand for natural gas falls by 31% to 2030, and by 2050 to zero. From 2025, no new homes in Oxfordshire would be connected to the gas grid, but from 2035, some areas of the county's gas grid are repurposed for **hydrogen**.

In this scenario, Oxfordshire maintains its 3% share of UK **solar capacity**. This means more than doubling generation by 2030 (850 GWh) and achieving more than 5 times current levels by 2050 (2,100 GWh). In this scenario, the proportion of rooftop solar grows to 25% of installed capacity. Combined with relatively small contributions from landfill gas, anaerobic digestion and biomass, local renewable generation represents 27% of Oxfordshire's electricity demand in 2050.

Flexibility is a major feature of electricity demand, with Oxfordshire's residents playing a crucial role in balancing the electricity grid to maximise the usage of renewable power. In 2030, 29% of households have adopted time-of-use tariffs which incentivise flexible usage, and by 2050 this rises to 73%. Oxfordshire's increasing number of electric vehicles owners adopt smart charging practices, and V2G technology is deployed across 3% of households by 2030, rising to 26% by 2050. Electricity storage in this scenario is largely decentralised, with building-scale batteries coupled with rooftop solar installations, and a role played by aggregators to harmonise their operation at a neighbourhood scale, such as trialled in Project ERIC.⁵¹ Flexibility is also enabled by a substantial increase in remote working, allowing householders greater opportunity to avoid and shift their demand for travel.

A transformation in mobility takes place, as changing travel habits during the COVID-19 pandemic are incorporated into everyday life. Overall **transport** energy demand is reduced, with significant increases in walking and cycling for shorter trips and widespread home working. Incentives and communications campaigns are needed to drive up the use of public transport following the pandemic. These changes are also driven by bold policies such as the implementation of low traffic neighbourhoods, concentrating new housing in mixed-use development at higher densities, and restrictions on vehicular access to town centres. EV adoption is rapid supported by local, shared public charging facilities, and larger proportions of heavy vehicles including buses and HGVs are electrified than in other scenarios. In this pathway, modal shift drives up train usage and investment. All railway lines in Oxfordshire are fully electrified by 2050.

⁵¹ Project ERIC ran from 2015–2017 in Rose Hill, East Oxford.



In **Societal Transformation**, greenhouse gas emissions from **land use** are reduced as the result of the widespread adoption of low-meat diets.⁵² This reduces the demand for pasture and arable land for livestock feed, freeing up more space for restoration of native woodland, floodplain meadows and wetlands. In addition, less land is taken for new housing due to strong planning guidance that encourages compact development, together with lower reliance on private cars which reduces the space needed for parking. As a result, the target to double Oxfordshire's woodland is achieved, including through integrating new native woodland planting and regeneration into the Nature Recovery Networks along with restoration of natural grassland, wetland, heathland and shrub. Attractive green travel routes are also integrated into these networks and into new developments, further boosting the number of people choosing to use active travel. Agriculture diversifies, including more horticulture and agroforestry, and a wider variety of food is produced for local consumption. Farmers lead the way in enhancing biodiversity and improving soil quality, including planting and expanding hedgerows, leading to co-benefits for natural flood management, water quality and other ecosystem services.

52 The National Grid Future Energy Scenarios do not provide detail on dietary change, however the Committee on Climate Change's 'Balanced Pathway' involves a 20% shift away from red meat and dairy products by 2030, with a further 15% reduction of meat products by 2050 and their Widespread Engagement pathway has a 50% reduction in meat. *Sixth Carbon Budget*, p165. Our Societal Transformation scenario sees a 75% reduction for meat but no reduction for dairy, based on a low carbon version of Public Health England's Eatwell Plate.

A note on negative emissions and offsetting

For a single county embedded in a national energy and transport system, it is difficult to define and quantify carbon offsetting. Typically this is defined as carbon mitigation or sequestration measures taking place outside a defined boundary, with a need for evidence to prove that the carbon reductions would not have occurred without additional investment and intervention. If we were to draw a boundary around Oxfordshire, then decarbonisation efforts elsewhere in the UK could be defined as offsetting. New installations of renewable generation such as offshore wind could be classed as offsetting Oxfordshire's emissions, as the county benefits from the zero-carbon electricity produced.

Another way to define offsetting might be to refer to negative emissions technologies and nature-based solutions for sequestering carbon remaining from difficult-to-decarbonise sectors such as aviation and shipping. Options include bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), Steam Methane Reforming with CCS (to produce hydrogen), and nature-based solutions including afforestation and ecosystem restoration. Although their scenarios rely on negative emissions to achieve net-zero, the National Grid do not rely on negative emissions from overseas.

For clarity and simplicity, we do not refer to mitigation or negative emissions activities conducted outside Oxfordshire as offsetting. We follow NG in planning for net-zero to be achieved within the UK territory, but acknowledge that Oxfordshire will rely on action taken elsewhere. The extent to which it does varies amongst the three net-zero scenarios, including the deployment of solar photovoltaics, and the quantities of biofuels grown as feedstock for electricity generation in BECCS power plants outside of the county.



Technological Transformation

This pathway to zero carbon emissions relies on the widespread deployment of existing technologies and the development of new innovations and infrastructures. Although the means by which Oxfordshire's residents travel and heat their homes are transformed, their practices and behaviours undergo less change, and demand for energy services continues to increase. Of the three net-zero pathways, Oxfordshire is most reliant on technologies developed and deployed outside of the county.

In this scenario, **hydrogen** features prominently as a fuel for heating, energy storage, industrial processes and heavy vehicles. It is deployed rapidly with 110 GWh used in 2030, rising to levels of annual demand in 2050 (5,300 GWh) which roughly equates to current usage of natural gas. Natural gas demand falls less steeply than in the other zero-carbon scenarios, as hybrid boilers are rolled out, ready for sections of the grid to be switched from natural gas to hydrogen. At the national scale, natural gas demand remains high in this scenario, as it becomes the primary means by which hydrogen is generated, accompanied with carbon capture and storage technology. However, it is very unlikely that these conversions take place in Oxfordshire, so natural gas demand falls to zero by 2050.

Although the widespread uptake of electric vehicles drives **electricity demand** up (+84% by 2050), this is substantially lower than in other net-zero pathways, due to less electrification of heat. This is reflected in the lower numbers of **heat pumps** installed in this scenario, although even here the number of homes heated with electricity doubles by 2050. The high costs associated with the shift from natural gas to hydrogen are somewhat offset by efficiency improvements in **buildings**, although ambition on energy efficiency in buildings is lower than in other net-zero scenarios.

Although new homes continue to be connected to the gas grid beyond 2025, policy requires that boilers are hydrogen-ready by this date to facilitate a fuel-switch at a later date.

The proportion of **electricity demand** met by local renewables is slightly lower than in the **Societal Transformation** pathway, as a result of relatively lower uptake of rooftop solar as opposed to ground-mounted. As such, the proportion of rooftop solar falls from 20% to 10%, as large-scale ground mounted installations are preferred. At a national scale, new electricity generation is dominated by wind power, but this is not widely deployed in Oxfordshire. The county retains a 3% share of UK solar capacity, and 23% of electricity demand is met by local sources of generation by 2050.

Flexibility features less prominently in this scenario than other zero-carbon pathways, as consumers are more reluctant to shift the times of day when they travel, charge their EVs or carry out energy intensive activities such as laundry, cooking or electric heating. The proportion of households on time-of-use tariffs is only 10% in 2030, rising to 60% by 2050; while uptake of V2G is negligible in 2030, rising to only 11% of car owners in 2050. Technological solutions, as opposed to changing practices, deliver a larger share of the flexibility needed to balance energy supply and demand, and this scenario includes the development of a new 10MW hydrogen peaking plant in Oxford.⁵³ Learning from the process of installing of a 50MW hybrid battery on the transmission grid as part of Energy Superhub Oxford, a further 50MW storage capacity is deployed to ease constraints elsewhere in the county.

⁵³ This is included in SSEN's future scenarios.

Transport. In this scenario, the electrification of the private vehicle fleet takes place on roughly the same timescale as in **Societal Transformation**, driven by the ban on sales of new fossil fuelled vehicles by 2030. However, growth in public transport use is slower than in other net-zero scenarios due to lower willingness amongst the public to switch away from private modes. As a result, congestion remains a significant issue in the county, with active modes, public transport and remote working only partially offsetting the growing number of trips taken by private car. With car usage remaining high, this scenario requires the most extensive public charging infrastructure and rapid charging is in high demand, but the uptake of V2G by Oxfordshire's EV owners is modest. Both trends drive the need for investment in electricity grid capacity. Although progress is made to electrify railways in Oxfordshire, some routes switch to hydrogen in this scenario. Hydrogen is the fuel of choice for heavy vehicles.

In this scenario, **agricultural** production is intensified in Oxfordshire, with a larger number of farmers moving to horticulture practices using polytunnels and indoor hydroponics. Intensification is further assisted by technological innovations as automated mechanical weeding, the widespread use of GPS and in some cases, machine learning.⁵⁴ As such, levels of food production increase despite some agricultural **land** being allocated for afforestation and solar farms. This scenario features a narrow focus on planting trees, ignoring the value of other habitats and the importance of planting the right trees in the right place. As a result, there are fewer co-benefits for biodiversity or ecosystem services than the other two net-zero pathways, and even some adverse impacts as non-native trees are planted on biodiverse and carbon-rich grassland. Also, without dietary change to free up farmland, and with less compact housing developments, competition for land means that tree planting targets are not achieved.

⁵⁴ Liakos, K.G., Busato, P., Moshou, D., Pearson, S. & Bochtis, D. (2018). Machine learning in agriculture: A review. *Sensors*, 18: 2674. doi: [10.3390/s18082674](https://doi.org/10.3390/s18082674)

Contributions from the non-domestic sector

As discussed in Chapter 7, the non-domestic sector in Oxfordshire is extremely heterogenous. With more than 32,000 businesses in the county, there is significant variation in the design, fabric and usage of buildings, as well as the business activities taking place within. Whereas for domestic buildings, the number of homes retrofitted to certain standards of energy efficiency is a useful measure of progress, we have used alternative metrics for the non-domestic building stock, focusing instead on the steps taken by businesses to reduce emissions.

There are a wide variety of resources to help organisations develop plans to achieve net-zero. Oxfordshire businesses Seacourt Printers and Anne Veck have developed action packs to support other businesses on their sustainability journeys, while colleagues at Oxford University have helped to launch the [SME Climate Hub](#) a repository of advice and resources. Energy Solutions Oxfordshire is a new energy services company launched by the Low Carbon Hub and Oxford Brookes to provide a one-stop shop for businesses to reduce energy wastage.

There are a wide variety of steps that businesses can take to reduce their carbon footprints, and we have selected metrics which will help to indicate that Oxfordshire's business community is taking seriously their responsibility to tackle climate change, by monitoring their impact, developing and publishing net-zero strategies, and taking part in zero carbon networks.



Oxfordshire Leading the Way

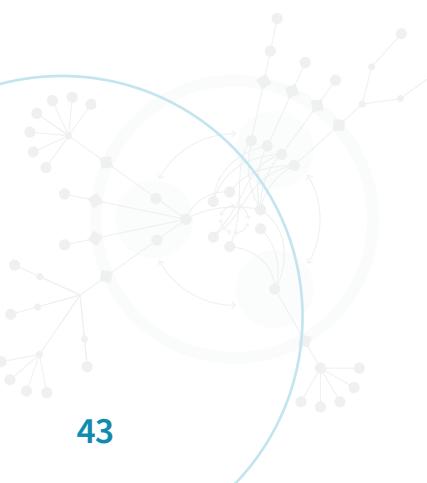
In this scenario, Oxfordshire goes further and faster than other areas of the UK in achieving zero carbon emissions. This is driven by high levels of public support for local action and strong policy, as well as lifestyle change amongst householders and communities. Oxfordshire builds on its leadership position in the low carbon sector by attracting investment in clean-tech innovation, and expanding community initiatives and the sharing economy.

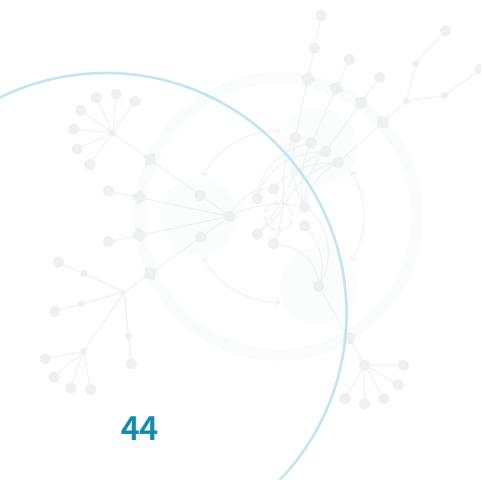
Oxfordshire Leading the Way balances the need for societal change and technological innovation represented in the two other zero-carbon scenarios. **Heat pumps** are deployed rapidly in Oxfordshire, alongside a transformative retrofit scheme. The retrofit market is assumed to take several years to create, so numbers start small and build up to market maturity in the 2030s. By 2050 it is assumed that 95% of today's housing stock (280,000 properties) have been renovated to a high standard of efficiency. In Oxfordshire no new gas boilers are installed across the building stock from 2025.

Driven by the rapid deployment of heat pumps and electric vehicles, **electricity demand** in this scenario follows the steep trajectory outlined in **Societal Transformation**. Building on the successful trials of markets for flexibility services in Project LEO, businesses and residents actively engage in **flexibility** practices, saving on energy bills and assisting with grid balancing. **Hydrogen** in this scenario is adopted primarily for heavy vehicles and energy storage, with a small amount generated locally using electrolysis.

This scenario involves a moon-shot for the deployment of **solar photovoltaics**. Oxfordshire's share of UK capacity increases to 4% by 2030, and 6% in 2050. This equates to a *three-fold* increase in solar capacity in the county by 2030 compared with 2019 figures, and *ten-times* by 2050. Accelerated rooftop installations play a key role in achieving these increases, and new-build dwellings include an average of 4kW capacity from 2023. In the medium term (2030), the proportion of rooftop solar increases to 40% of installed capacity, but as the availability of suitable rooftops diminishes and large ground-mounted arrays are constructed, this falls back to 30% by 2050. As a proportion of Oxfordshire's electricity demand, renewables provide 31% in 2030, and 52% in 2050.

Energy demand associated with **transport** falls following the COVID-19 pandemic, as Oxfordshire residents incorporate walking and cycling into their daily routines, with more amenities being provided locally, and businesses support remote working. Reduced car-usage is also driven by extensive pedestrianisation measures implemented by Oxford City and the market towns, workplace charging levies, the proliferation of low traffic and higher density neighbourhoods, and the expansion of shared transport options. Vehicle electrification occurs more rapidly than in other net-zero scenarios, and sharing business models, including autonomous fleets, are pioneered in Oxfordshire, driven by a thriving automotive sector. This leads to reduced car ownership. Freight consolidation centres and other localised warehousing and production enable low carbon local delivery of goods throughout urban areas.





Oxfordshire's **land**-based resources play a critical role in supporting decarbonisation efforts at the national scale. This means that a greater proportion of land is allocated for growing bioenergy crops than in other net-zero scenarios, used for power generation, aviation and shipping. The proportion of land currently used for meat and dairy production is reduced as a result of changing diets to make way for bioenergy crops, ecosystem restoration and solar arrays. Solar farms are built throughout the county, but still only occupy less than 1% of land area. Agriculture diversifies and a wider variety of food is produced for local consumption. Permaculture practices are pursued, and the number of allotments in Oxfordshire triples. New local initiatives such as community gardens, farmers markets and land trusts crop up around Oxfordshire. Membership of Good Food Oxford and the Community Action Network quadruples by 2030.

Quality vs quantity

The nature of scenario modelling means that the focus is inevitably on **quantity**: adoption of heat pumps and EVs, numbers of homes retrofitted, businesses conducting energy audits and hectares of trees planted.

Although more difficult to capture in scenario modelling, **quality** is crucial. The 'performance gap' describes the difference between actual and modelled energy usage for buildings, and can be as high as 60% in low energy housing.⁵⁵ An integrated approach to quality assurance (such as the systems and standards advocated by the Passive House Institute) is needed to get real-life energy performance down to the levels assumed in the quantitative analysis. Similarly, householders' capacity and willingness to shift their electricity demand matters just as much as the numbers adopting time of use tariffs and V2G technology. Businesses may conduct regular energy audits and monitor their carbon footprint, but acting on this information is what counts. Finally, hectares of trees planted per year is a crude measure, which ignores the importance of selecting species which enhance biodiversity and provide additional ecosystem services besides carbon sequestration, as well as the need to restore a balanced mix of different habitats.

Ultimately, what counts towards climate goals is actual, observed emissions reductions, rather than the number of homes renovated, trees planted, heat pumps installed or EVs registered. The difference between modelled and observed outcomes depends on the quality of design and workmanship, the performance of installed technologies, and user preferences and behaviour.

⁵⁵ Gupta, R., Howard, A., Kotopouleas, A. & Krishnan, S., 2019. Meta-study of the energy performance gap in UK low energy housing. In: ECEEE Summer Study Proceedings. Presented at the ECEEE, Belambra, Presquile de Giens, France.

Scenarios	Steady Progression		Societal Transformation		Technological Transformation		Oxfordshire Leading the Way		Notes
Indicator	2030	2050	2030	2050	2030	2050	2030	2050	
Buildings									
No. of pre-2020 homes renovated	3,000	30,000	8,900	280,000	3,000	150,000	8,900	280,000	Supply chains and governance arrangements will take 5–10 years, so little change before 2030. ⁵⁶
Energy standard for retrofits, kWh/m ² /year (useful energy; domestic space heating only)	100	100	100	60	100	100	100	60	
Average EPC rating for all buildings	D	D	D	B	D	C	D	B	Current average is D; improvement requires support to achieve higher ratings and a regulatory minimum standard to make low-rated buildings unusable (with finance and other support for upgrades).
Percentage of Oxfordshire businesses conducting annual carbon footprints and/or energy audits	3%	6%	15%	80%	10%	40%	20%	80%	Figures refer to businesses with employees (excludes sole traders)
Proportion of large businesses with published net-zero strategies	5%	30%	60%	95%	30%	60%	70%	100%	
Coverage of business networks dedicated to achieving zero-carbon (% of total number of businesses)	3%	10%	20%	40%	5%	15%	25%	50%	Examples include Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership and Oxfordshire Greentech, but more are needed. Figures exclude sole traders.
Heat									
Natural Gas demand (GWh)	4,800	4,900	3,600	0	4,300	0	3,300	0	Demand in 2018 was 5,270 MWh
Hydrogen demand (GWh)	20	160	19	1,600	110	5,300	30	1,800	Currently negligible.
Number of heat pumps (total installations)	41,000	190,000	120,000	390,000	64,000	250,000	130,000	390,000	There are roughly 1,500–2,000 heat pumps in Oxfordshire currently.

56 Construction Leadership Council (2020), Greening our existing homes national retrofit strategy.

Scenarios	Steady Progression		Societal Transformation		Technological Transformation		Oxfordshire Leading the Way		Notes
Indicator	2030	2050	2030	2050	2030	2050	2030	2050	
Transport									
Battery electric vehicles as proportion of all light vehicles on the road	25%	95%	37%	99%	35%	99%	40%	99%	Currently <1%
Number of battery electric vehicles (BEVs)	130,000	600,000	195,000	500,000	185,000	525,000	210,000	450,000	There are roughly 430,000 vehicles in Oxfordshire currently, of which 2,500–3,000 are BEVs.
Domestic and workplace charge points	80,000	200,000	68,000	165,000	74,000	175,000	58,000	150,000	There are roughly 2,000 to 2,500 chargers currently.
Public charge points	7,000	18,000	10,000	25,000	15,000	26,000	16,000	36,000	There are roughly 240 public chargers currently. Includes shared residential charge points (e.g. on street). The European Commission recommends 1 public chargepoint is installed for every 10 EVs on the roads. ⁵⁷
% Telecommuting	10%	15%	30%	40%	10%	20%	25%	35%	Defined as percentage of labour force working primarily from home. In 2019, about 5% of those in employment in the UK said they mainly worked from home, although this rose to 47% during the first lockdown in April 2020.
Active travel investment	£10	£15	£20	£40	£15	£30	£25	£40	Per capita, per year, including capital and revenue based on 2021 prices. In 2018/19 active travel investment averaged £6 per person. ⁵⁸
Electricity supply									
Solar generation (GWh)	500	880	850	2,100	700	1,400	1,100	3,900	Solar generation was 382 GWh in 2019. In ST and TT, solar capacity remains 3% of UK total. In OLTW, this increases to 4% by 2030 and 6% by 2050.
Total renewable electricity supply (GWh)	660	1,000	1,000	2,200	870	1,500	1,300	4,000	Renewable generation was 533 GWh in 2019.

⁵⁷ Transport & Environment (2018), Roll-out of public EV charging infrastructure in the EU.

⁵⁸ Cycling and walking investment strategy Report to Parliament, p24. February 2020.

Scenarios	Steady Progression		Societal Transformation		Technological Transformation		Oxfordshire Leading the Way		Notes
Indicator	2030	2050	2030	2050	2030	2050	2030	2050	
Renewable electricity supply as a percentage of electricity demand	16%	16%	25%	27%	23%	23%	31%	52%	Current renewable electricity generation represents 15% of demand
Flexibility									
Percentage of households with time-of-use (TOU) electricity tariffs	6%	54%	29%	73%	10%	60%	35%	83%	Flexibility figures are taken directly from National Grid's 2020 scenarios. Currently <1%.
Percentage of households utilising vehicle to grid technology	0%	5%	3%	26%	0.2%	11%	5%	45%	Percentage of all households, although not all own vehicles, nor have access to off-street parking.
Land use									
Hectares of trees planted per year	60	60	430	430	210	210	430	430	Tree planting is enabled by dietary change in ST and OLW.
Hectares of agroforestry, hedgerows and garden trees planted per year	0	0	1,400	1,400	0	0	1,400	1,400	Farmer and community participation enables additional tree planting in ST and OLW.
Hectares of natural grassland, heath, scrub and wetland restored per year	5	5	400	400	0	0	200	200	ST aims to double the area of non-woodland semi-natural habitats from 4.5% to 9%. OLW is constrained by heavy demand for land for solar and biofuels.
Percentage of land used for ground-mounted solar generation	0.15%	0.26%	0.23%	0.57%	0.24%	0.45%	0.23%	0.99%	This is calculated based on an area for Oxfordshire of 260,500 ha (2,605 km ²).
Hectares of land used for bioenergy crops	0	0	10,000	10,000	20,000	20,000	25,000	25,000	All scenarios include less than the NG's estimated need for bioenergy, due to land use constraints. The remainder must be grown elsewhere in the UK or imported. ST relies on demand reduction to reduce need for BECCS.
Percentage of food demand met in Oxfordshire	60%	40%	95%	60%	55%	39%	87%	55%	Based on area needed to produce food with an equivalent calorific value. Currently Oxfordshire meets the equivalent of 74% of its food demand. This increases with low meat diets but decreases over time with high population growth and loss of farmland for housing, afforestation, biofuels and solar.

4.3 Investment and economic impact

In a report for the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), Cambridge Econometrics estimated that GDP at a national level would be 2–3% higher between 2020 and 2050, and would generate around 300,000 additional jobs if the UK follows a path to net-zero.⁵⁹ Although the investments needed in developing and deploying the solutions for reducing carbon emissions are high, especially in the near term, they predict a net economic benefit.

The economic impacts of the transition are likely to be geographically uneven, and the CCC acknowledges that many jobs will be lost, for instance in the oil and gas sector. Oxfordshire's economy, which is already dominated by the service sector and high-tech manufacturing, stands to benefit substantially from this transition. However, to capitalise on this opportunity, there is a need for unprecedented levels of investment in transport, buildings and the energy system in Oxfordshire.

Based on available evidence and without using econometric modelling techniques, we have provided estimates of the additional investment needed to reach the 2030 goals outlined in [Oxfordshire Leading the Way](#).

	Investment 2021–2030	Notes
Transport		
Active travel	£100m	
Vehicle fleet decarbonisation	£240m	Majority of additional investment needed is focused on LGVs, HGVs and buses, as it is expected that the total cost of ownership for battery-electric passenger-cars equals or even undercuts current costs for conventional vehicles before 2030
Electric charging infrastructure	£150m	Includes public and private
Rail electrification	£125m	Based on 50% of the non-electrified ⁶⁰ multi-track line being electrified at an average cost per km of £1,750,000. ⁶¹

⁵⁹ Cambridge Econometrics (2020), Economic impact of the Sixth Carbon Budget.

⁶⁰ The stretch of mainline rail from Reading to Didcot has already been electrified, representing 10% of Oxfordshire's total railway.

⁶¹ Railway Industry Association (2019), [Electrification cost challenge](#).

	Investment 2021–2030	Notes
Buildings		
Housing retrofit and heat pumps	£1.5bn	Assumes that costs of (re-)training the workforce are met at national level as part of a strategic re-positioning of the economy to meet decarbonisation targets. Assume £25K per retrofit; £10K per HP. Majority of investment is private.
Business advice and engagement services	£50m	Assume a network of 100 decarbonisation consultants working with local businesses (upscale OxFutures) @ £50K per consultant per year
Renewable energy		
Solar generation	£630m	Based on CAPEX installation costs of £750/kWp and OPEX of £7000/MW/year.
Grid infrastructure	£450m	Based on £30bn UK CAPEX network investment in CCC's balanced pathway, scaled by Oxfordshire's forecast demand contribution.
Battery Storage (supply side)	£100m	Based on CAPEX installation costs of £500/kWe and OPEX of £25000/MW/year.
Land use & natural ecosystems		
Strong planning policy	Low cost	Strengthen planning policy to protect carbon-rich habitats, encourage green roofs and rooftop solar, and mandate compact, walkable low carbon development. Green roofs expected to reduce building heating and cooling costs and walkable neighbourhoods expected to deliver healthcare savings.
Awareness raising to encourage low meat diets	Low cost	Expected to reduce healthcare costs
Tree planting	£113m	Planting 22,600 ha of tree and agroforestry cover by 2050 at £5000 per ha of cover. ⁵⁹
Plant 8,500 km of hedgerows	£44m	Based on estimate of £526/100m for 8,500 km of species-rich hedge including hedgerow trees. ⁶²
Habitat restoration	£31m	Estimated £800 per ha for 9000 of meadows and £8000 per ha for 3000 ha of wetlands

62 Warner, E (2020), Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement on the University Estate.

Cabinet report



Report of Head of Policy and Programmes

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Wards affected: All

Cabinet member responsible: Cllr Debby Hallett

E-mail: Debby.Hallett@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

To:

Scrutiny - 23 September 2021

Cabinet - 01 October 2021

Vale of White Horse District Council Quarter 1 Performance Report 2021

Recommendation(s)

(a) that Cabinet members approve the Quarter 1 Performance Report 2021

Purpose of Report

1. To introduce the first quarterly performance report to Vale of White Horse District Council for the Corporate Plan 2020-2024. The intention of this report is to demonstrate the progress made in the reporting period against the corporate aims as set out in the Corporate Plan.

2. The contact officer is Harry Barrington-Mountford, Head of Policy and Programmes for South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and Vale of White Horse District Council (VWDC).

Corporate Objectives

3. Working in an open and inclusive way.

Background

4. In April and May of 2021, officers and Cabinet members worked on drafting a set of measures which could be assigned to each of the individual aims within the approved Corporate Plan 2020-2024. The draft measures were progressed through Scrutiny (27 May 2021). The measures were well received and were endorsed to progress to the following Cabinet meeting where they were approved, along with the accompanying Performance Management Framework document (PMF) on 28 May 2021.
5. The PMF set out the key elements of performance reporting across the organisation and proposed a reporting timetable of 4 quarterly reports, aligned with the financial year.

The Q1 Performance Management Report

6. The appended report is the first quarterly report covering activity within the period 1 April 2021 and 30 June 2021. This report demonstrates the progress made against the aims in the Corporate Plan and will facilitate constructive conversations with Cabinet Members and their respective Head of Service. These conversations will ensure that progress is being made and is able to be demonstrated or will facilitate appropriate challenge where members do not feel that this has happened.

Climate and ecological impact implications

7. There are no direct climate or ecological implications arising from the report. A number of the identified measures and the detail provided by services in response, relate to Corporate Plan themes which focus on the climate and ecological agenda. By their nature, their progress being reported here will contribute to an advancement of the aims in the Corporate Plan.

Financial Implications

8. There are no direct financial implications arising from the detail provided in the Q1 Performance Report as this is specific to activity which took place in the period of 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021.

Legal Implications

9. None

Risks

10. None

Other implications

11. None

Background Papers

- Vale of White Horse District Council Quarter 1 Performance Report

Vale of White Horse District Council

Strategic Performance Report

Quarter 1 2021/22

August 2021

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Draft

BACKGROUND

1. The Council monitors performance and progress towards achieving the aims and priorities set out in the [Corporate Plan](#).
2. This report provides a strategic overview of performance for Q1 (1 April to 30 June 2021) focusing on the activity to deliver the corporate priorities in the Vale of White Horse Corporate Plan 2020-24.
3. In addition to providing a performance update and assurance against the delivery of the Council's six strategic themes in the Corporate Plan, this report will also provide any strategic context relevant to the Council's operations and given the significant impact of Covid-19 on communities, services, and staff, the report will include a section on Covid-19 response and recovery.
4. This report is the first iteration, and it is expected that it will evolve in line with the new approach to Performance Management being embedded in the Council as well as from feedback from senior officers and Members.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic continued to have far-reaching implications for the Council and our communities, during Quarter 1 – 01 April to 30 June 2021. Although the pandemic has created an unprecedented challenge for the Council, we have responded to the needs of our communities, whilst successfully starting to deliver on our commitments within the Vale of White Horse District Council Corporate Plan – a forward-looking plan which is the start of a new direction to 2024.

This Quarter included significant easing of restrictions as part of the Government's roadmap steps 2 and 3, increasing many residents' social freedoms. However, those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, or those who feel the level of risk is too high, have not been able to access these new social freedoms, which may create the risk of social isolation for some residents, with consequences for both mental and physical health. This Quarter has also seen the continuation of the biggest NHS vaccination programme in health service history, with half of adults over 30 having been vaccinated against Covid-19 by 27 June 2021, the impact of the pandemic on resident wellbeing remains a focus for the Council in Quarter 2 and beyond.

The national reopening of sports facilities, retail and hospitality sectors and cultural centres from 26 June and the reopening of the Beacon in Quarter 2 (formally used as a Covid-19 test centre), and potential income generation opportunities from projects to be delivered later in the Corporate Plan – such as the Strategic Property Review are both important aspects to building financial resilience. In addition, this Quarter the Council has responded to opportunities to influence HM Government for an improved financial settlement for councils, to ensure long term financial and service sustainability. We have submitted consultation responses on the future of the New Homes Bonus (which included proposals on a new funding formula), the outcome of which will be monitored over the upcoming Quarter.

THEME 2: TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Strategic Lead – Suzanne Malcolm – Deputy Chief Executive – Place

We will:

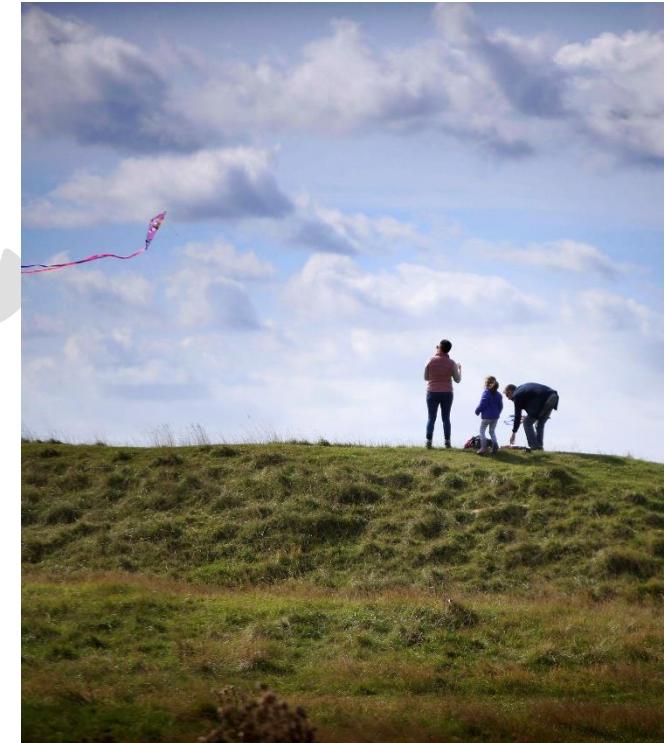
- do everything we can to help tackle the Climate Emergency
- reduce council emissions by 75% by 2025
- become a carbon neutral council by 2030
- reduce all emissions across the Vale District by 75% by 2030
- aspire to be a carbon neutral Vale district by 2045.

We will do this with:

- a Climate Emergency programme, focussed on what the council has control over, working towards our own targets for our own buildings, vehicles, leisure and arts centres
- a Climate Emergency programme focussed on encouraging the wider district community to reduce its carbon footprint in order to meet the Climate Emergency targets
- a programme around exercising our influence with partners on wider policy, working with neighbouring authorities, lobbying Government, and identifying environmental policy gaps.

Key Activities in Q1:

Working to reduce carbon emissions from our own operations including our buildings is an important part of our work tackling the climate emergency. During Quarter 1 the Vale secured £361,000 of external funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to fully refurbish the heating system at Faringdon Leisure Centre with the installation of a low carbon, renewable energy system. A Project Manager has been appointed to coordinate the delivery of these improvements and the initial stages of the tendering process are underway. The works are on track for completion in 2022.



The design process for the new Council shared office is also well underway, with the minimisation of carbon emissions a key part of the brief. The building is being designed to achieve 'BREEAM excellent' accreditation and deliver a strong performance in terms of carbon emissions- 40% lower than those stipulated in the 2013 building regulations. Furthermore, provision has been made so that the embedded carbon in the building fabric as well as emissions from day-to-day operations will be calculated to facilitate offsetting.

With the aim of increasing tree cover and improving biodiversity in the district, development of the policy for planting trees on Council land is underway. Sites are currently being explored by the Property team drawing on insights from the Strategic Property Review.

As part of our work to encourage the wider district community to reduce their carbon footprint, the climate action pages of the council website have been revamped and now include up to date information on how residents can play their part, including in cutting carbon emissions from their home.

The Council has also joined the Oxfordshire Greentech network. The network can provide be valuable resource for businesses as they seek to reduce their carbon footprint.

The Air Quality Annual Status Report to Defra was submitted on 30 June 2021. To achieve our aim of improving how we measure air quality, Environmental Protection are working to determine where a Particulate Matter (PM) monitor would best be located. Vale has £16,500 in capital funding available for this project. The Government's forthcoming 'Environment Bill' may well introduce a requirement to monitor PMs and include specific requirements around the specification and location of equipment and the Council is acting with this in mind.

Throughout Quarter 1, the Climate Action Team have worked with colleagues across council departments to ensure that our commitments on the climate emergency are reflected in the work we do. The team have reviewed plans, provided insight and expertise, and advised colleagues on how projects can be made as climate friendly as possible, with all formal reports now having a "climate implications" section. This engagement with teams across the council has contributed



£361,000

**EXTERNAL FUNDING
SECURED TO
REFURBISH HEATING
SYSTEM AT FARINGDON
LEISURE CENTRE**

to 'tackling the climate emergency' being such an important factor across several themes in this report. It also reflects the fact that action on climate change must be wide ranging if we are to meet the scope of our ambition in this area.

The council is moving forward in the development of the Climate Action Plan and will be co-creating the plan with service areas to ensure the Climate Emergency is fully embedded into all service plans.

Performance Measures

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
PROGRAMME 1	A climate emergency programme, focussed on what the council has control over, working towards our own targets for our own buildings, vehicles, leisure and arts centres	A narrative summary comprised of all new activity to reduce the carbon footprint of all Council assets on a quarterly basis		Harry Barrington-Mountford	<p>The new shared office – located in South Oxfordshire – is being designed to both achieve BREEAM (the world's leading sustainability assessment method for master planning buildings) excellent accreditation and a greater than 40% reduction in carbon reductions from those contained within the 2013 building regulations. The embedded carbon in the building fabric and emissions from day-to-day operations will be calculated to facilitate offsetting as part of a wider corporate approach to climate change.</p> <p>The Vale has also successfully secured £361k of external funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme for the installation of low carbon and renewable energy at Faringdon Leisure Centre. This will involve the full refurbishment of the heating system on both the wet and dry sides of the centre. A Project Manager has been appointed to coordinate the delivery of these improvements and the initial stages of the tendering process are already underway. The works are due for completion in 2022.</p>
TCE1.1	Develop a Climate Emergency Strategy for the Council, setting out how we will reach Zero Carbon for all Vale assets by 2030. Identify energy saving opportunities in council-owned buildings and fleets	A narrative report of activity underway to design the plan to achieve a zero-carbon position for all Vale assets by 2030.	Cllr Catherine Webber	Harry Barrington-Mountford	<p>A Climate Action Plan for the Vale is being developed. A tool (GlidePath) to measure the reduction in carbon emissions has also been implemented.</p> <p>The consideration of further opportunities to identify energy saving opportunities in council-owned buildings will be based on the recommendations arising from the Strategic Property Review.</p>
TCE1.2	Complete the CEAC Year One Climate Action Plan and plan for future years	Narrative report on progress	Cllr Catherine Webber	Harry Barrington-Mountford	A Climate Action Plan is being developed for the Vale.

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Performance Measures

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
TCE1.3	Include in Councils Open Space Strategy opportunities to increase biodiversity, increase tree cover, and (other things we want to do on Council's open spaces)	Narrative report on specific opportunities which have arisen for the council to improve open spaces. Also include any additional policy developments.	Cllr Catherine Webber	Harry Barrington-Mountford	A policy for the planting of trees on Council land is currently being developed. Sites are currently being explored by the Property team (based on the findings of the Strategic Property Review).
PROGRAMME 2	A climate emergency programme focussed on encouraging the wider district community to reduce its carbon footprint in order to meet the Climate Emergency targets	A narrative update of the work of the comms team in promoting measures/initiatives which will help the community to reduce it's carbon footprint.		Harry Barrington-Mountford	<p>The Vale website has been refreshed to contain advice on how residents can reduce their carbon footprint (Action on Climate and Nature). Additional information on how to decrease emissions from domestic properties has also been made available.</p> <p>The Council has joined the Greentech network. This helps support businesses in lessening their impact upon the environment.</p>
TCE2.1	Complete those tasks in Year one Climate Action Plan that have to do with reducing carbon in the wider district	Narrative report on progress	Cllr Catherine Webber	Harry Barrington-Mountford	A Climate Action Plan for the Vale is being developed. The focus this quarter has, nevertheless, been on work to reduce the carbon footprint of the council's own assets – as this is within our direct control – rather than the wider district.
TCE2.2	Introduce policies for zero carbon construction requirements	Narrative update on progress toward design guide implementation, transitioning into review of relevant information/developments in this area	Cllr Catherine Webber	Adrian Duffield	A Joint Design Guide (JDG) Supplementary Planning Document is currently being produced. This will contain guidance on zero carbon in construction. The JDG is due for internal consultation in August and external consultation in October. The final draft is then scheduled to be ready in December with it being adopted in February 2022.

Performance Measures

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
TCE2.3	Introduce sustainable growth and environmental policies to our Local Plan	Narrative update on the progress towards development of new local plan, specifically referring to details in TCE2.3/4	Cllr Catherine Webber	Adrian Duffield	Annual Target - No response submitted Q1 2021/22
TCE2.4	Ensure our Local Plan contains polices to make new buildings carbon zero to build and to live/work in	Narrative update on the progress towards development of new local plan, specifically referring to details in TCE2.3/4	Cllr Catherine Webber	Adrian Duffield	Annual Target - No response submitted Q1 2021/22
TCE2.5	Develop a year two plan with CEAC for meeting our Climate emergency goals	High level narrative on progress towards approval of two-year plan	Cllr Catherine Webber	Harry Barrington-Mountford	The Climate Action Plan for the Vale is being developed this will set out actions towards the climate emergency until 2024.
TCE2.6	Improve how we measure air quality. Explore particulate measurement in our sensitive areas. Explore ways to publish AQ measurements in live time, so people can make decisions on whether it's healthy outside for them today	Narrative containing updates/changes to AQ monitoring techniques, an update on work with partners to monitor AQ and details of published AQ measures	Cllr Catherine Webber	Liz Hayden	<p>The Vale has £16,500 one-off capital funding available for 2021/22. The Environmental Protection team are, therefore, considering where a particulate matter (PM) monitor could be installed that could provide base line data.</p> <p>HM Government may also introduce a requirement to monitor PM as part of the measures contained within their Environment Bill. If this occurs, we anticipate that Defra may offer some form of grant funding to local authorities for the purchase of additional PM monitors and equipment. They would also be expected to provide technical guidance relating to monitoring locations, equipment sensitivity etc.</p>

Performance measures

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
TCE2.7	Update the Air Quality Action Plans for our Air Quality Management Areas	Until funding confirmed for development of new AQAP's, narrative update on any significant deviation from last relevant AQAP. Once funding confirmed, this can report on the development of the new AQAP.	Cllr Catherine Webber	Liz Hayden	<p>The Air Quality Annual Status Reports have been submitted to Defra. These were due on 30 June 2021.</p> <p>A By the end of August internal processes will commence to seek funding for the development of new Air Quality Action Plans.</p>
TCE2.8	Explore setting up a Habitat Bank to deliver biodiversity offsetting requirements and facilitate tree planting	Narrative update as to progress of potential pilot and other relevant initiatives	Cllr Catherine Webber	Harry Barrington-Mountford	<p>South and Vale in partnership with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and Finance Earth are attempting to set up a Habitat Banking Pilot Scheme. To further this work, the Councils have supported an application to Defra's Natural Environment Readiness Fund for the establishment of two habitat restoration projects (one in each district). We are currently awaiting the outcome of this bid.</p>
PROGRAMME 3	A programme around exercising our influence with partners on wider policy, working with neighbouring authorities, lobbying Government and identifying environmental policy gaps	General Narrative update		Harry Barrington-Mountford	<p>Successful Town and Parish Forums focusing on climate action took place during Q1 2021/22. These events were well attended and several key themes relating to both the climate emergency and Climate Action Plan were discussed.</p>

Performance Measures

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
TCE3.1	Complete the CEAC Year One Action Plan and plan for future years	Narrative report on progress	Cllr Catherine Webber	Harry Barrington-Mountford	A Climate Action Plan for the Vale is being developed. Alongside the continued delivery of actions from the CEAC year one work programme.
TCE3.2	Work with partners to define a waste reduction scheme: including ways to reduce bulky waste headed to landfill and reduce recycling contamination	Narrative report to outline steps to influence partners and our actions to reduce overall waste	Cllr Catherine Webber	Liz Hayden	<p>The Vale continues to work with Biffa to consistently send good quality recycling to the sorting depot. Contamination rates are approximately 9 per cent which is low when compared to other local authorities.</p> <p>In order to further reduce overall waste, we have launched a new webpage "reducing your waste and increasing your reuse" – https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/reducing-your-waste-increasing-your-reuse/</p> <p>This outlines some of the actions that residents can take to reduce consumption and increase recycling.</p> <p>While bulky waste levels are currently less than 5 per cent, the Council continues to collaborate with partners to further reduce the amount heading for landfill.</p>
TCE3.3	Develop a tree-planting strategy and work with partners to plant more trees across the district	Narrative update to include development of the tree policy and subsequent activity	Cllr Catherine Webber	Harry Barrington-Mountford	A Tree policy is currently being developed.

Performance Measures

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
TCE3.4	Develop a Biodiversity Net Gain Targeting Strategy and contribute to a Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire	Narrative update on related work, including but not limited to the work to support the Oxfordshire Plan.	Cllr Catherine Webber	Adrian Duffield	No progress reported Q1 2021/22
TCE3.5	Work with partners to provide electric charging points in Vale car parks and at our buildings, and increase charging infrastructure across Oxfordshire	A narrative update to include work to promote and develop EV infrastructure across the district. Quantitative element - breakdown of existing/planned EV charging points	Cllr Catherine Webber	Liz Hayden	The EV 'Park and Charge' project is being managed by Technical Services. Following the completion of due diligence on phase one, the next stage is to meet the electricity supplier – when appointed by Zeta/EZ – to discuss and agree the layout and design of bays. The aim is to complete the installation of EV charge points by March 2022. e.
TCE3.6	Take an active role in the Oxford-Cambridge arc to influence the inclusion of sustainable growth and environmental policies	A narrative update on the work of the Oxford-Cambridge arc and our influencing activity	Cllr Catherine Webber	Adrian Duffield	As part of the work being undertaken to develop the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, officers are influencing the development of the Arc Spatial Framework. In addition, they have also attended several meetings (e.g. the Arc Collaboration Forum early-stage workshop) that will help to influence and shape the future development of the arc. Officers have also, in collaboration with their colleagues at Oxfordshire County Council, succeeded in changing the parameters of England's Economic Heartland's Oxford-Milton Keynes transport study. It will now cover a new wider area which will include Science Vale. Lead members of the Council are also engaging with the Oxford to Cambridge Arc through a variety of channels (e.g., the Arc Leaders Group). Furthermore, in April, Vale Cabinet endorsed the Arc Environmental Principles. These set out how the Arc partners will seek to: work towards a target of net zero carbon at an Arc level by 2040; protect, restore, enhance, and create new nature areas and natural capital assets; be an exemplar for environmentally sustainable development; ensure that existing and new communities see real benefits from living in the Arc; and use natural resources wisely.

Performance Measures

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
TCE3.7	Take an active role in the Growth Deal and the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 to influence the inclusion of sustainable growth and environmental policies	Narrative report on work to support the Oxfordshire Plan in accordance with TEC3.7	Cllr Catherine Webber	Adrian Duffield	Annual Target - No response submitted Q1 2021/22
TCE3.8	Work with local partners and Government to encourage retrofitting houses with sustainable energy schemes; help residents take advantage of schemes that come along to help with costs	Narrative report on work influencing work, comms activity and direct engagement with residents.	Cllr Catherine Webber	Harry Barrington-Mountford	A joint retrofit task and finish group was set up to review the retrofit landscape across both districts and to make recommendations for a way forward with this work. The group met with key partners to understand their experiences and perspective on retrofit. A report was written, summarising the key points raised during the meetings, as well as recommended ways forward to address the retrofit needs in the districts. Councillors are currently working on a more detailed report that will be shared more widely.