

Agenda



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Date: 26 November 2024
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A meeting of the
Climate Emergency Advisory Committee
will be held on Monday, 9 December 2024 at 6.00 pm
This will be a virtual, online meeting.

This meeting can be watched live on our YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/@SouthandValeCommitteeMeetings/streams>

Members of the Committee:

Councillors

Hayleigh Gascoigne (Chair)
Eric De La Harpe (Vice-chair)
Kiera Bentley
Robert Clegg
Max Thompson
Scott Houghton
Sarah James

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.

Nick Bennett,
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. Minutes of the last meeting

(Pages 4 - 10)

To review the minutes of the last meeting held on 16 July 2024. If agreed as a correct record, the chair will sign them as such.

4. Declaration of interests

To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and non-registrable interests or any conflicts of interest in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

5. 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.

6. Public participation

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

REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE COMMITTEE

7. Update from the Cabinet Member for climate action, nature recovery and strategic partnerships

An update from the Council Leader, Councillor Bethia Thomas

8. Draft Nature and Climate Action Plan

(Pages 11 - 35)

The committee will consider the draft action plan, presented by Senior Climate Action Officer, Chloe Bunting.

9. Biodiversity Audit Update

The committee will receive a verbal update and presentation on the biodiversity audit carried out on council land by Nature Recovery Officer, Roselle Chapman.

10. Carbon Offsetting Workshop

Members will be asked for suggestions on ways to meet carbon targets. This item will be led by Kim Hall and Jessie Fieth, Senior Climate Action Officers.

11. Update on Task and Finish groups and future items

For committee to receive any updates on task and finish groups, and to discuss future items.

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Climate

Emergency

Advisory Committee



held on Tuesday, 16 July 2024 at 6.00 pm
This was a virtual meeting

Open to the public, including the press

In attendance:

Councillors: Hayleigh Gascoigne (Chair), Eric De La Harpe (Vice-chair), Kiera Bentley, Robert Clegg, Max Thompson, Scott Houghton and Sarah James

Officers: Tim Oruye (Head of Policy and Programmes), Dominic Lamb (Climate and Biodiversity Team Leader), Jessie Fieth (Senior Climate Action Officer), Chloe Bunting (Senior Climate Action Officer), Candida Basilio (Democratic Services Officer), Nick King (Economic Development Manager), Karen Tolley (Principal Economic Development Lead), Roselle Chapman (Nature Recovery Officer).

Cabinet member: Councillor Bethia Thomas

Guests: Dr Sara Le Roux from Oxford Brookes Business School

65. Chair's announcements

Chair ran through procedure for the virtual meeting.

Committee chair thanked previous committee members Councillors Sally Povolotsky and James Cox for their contributions, adding thanks to Councillor Povolotsky who previously served as Cabinet member for climate, and had provided her expertise in this area.

Chair welcomed new members, Councillors Kiera Bentley and Max Thompson.

The chair also introduced Roselle Chapman in her new role as Nature Recovery Officer.

66. Apologies for absence

None.

67. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting on 7 December 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

68. Declaration of interests

None.

69. Urgent business

None.

70. Public participation

None.

71. Update from the Cabinet Member for climate action, nature recovery and strategic partnerships

Councillor Bethia Thomas updated the committee with highlights of work undertaken.

- Climate and nature recovery action plan
- Positive news was due on funding from Innovate UK regarding an electric vehicle trail for waste collection
- Funding for a nature-based carbon offsetting project with Innovate UK was obtained, to expand markets for carbon offsetting. The Local Nature Partnership would lead in partnership with local councils including Vale.
- LEVI project for electric vehicle infrastructure - funding was approved with £3.6 million allocated to the county.
- The climate action fund, £100,000 was available and decisions would be made in September to allocate funds to projects that had applied. The selection process was that all projects were scored on their individual merits. Officer confirmed that there would be around £145,000 available due to carry forward of the last funding round's underspend.

A member asked about National Landscapes. Cabinet member confirmed that she had a productive meeting with them recently. Officer added that relevant topics could come to CEAC, if it was required that CEAC make a recommendation to Cabinet.

A member asked about waste collection vehicles and allocating electric vehicles to towns as it was more difficult for rural rounds to use these vehicles. Officer added that the trial would help and that this was already part of considerations on whether electric vehicles can handle long rural rounds. This was for the waste team to take into consideration.

72. Review of the Operational Net Zero Target

The report was introduced by the Corporate Energy Officer. A lot of progress was already made on targets, however the report recommended dropping the unachievable interim target of 2025 and retaining the overall target of 2030. To reach the target, we would need to accelerate work and obtain funding for potential projects in order to reach the 2030 target.

Members of committee asked questions of clarification on the four proposed scenarios (committed projects, potential projects, a potential solar farm and a potential low carbon fleet), and details within the report, before debating the report's recommendations in order to reach a conclusion as a committee and recommend to Cabinet.

- Members acknowledged greater baseline data was available now to reconsider the target that was set with no baseline.
- Some members were unsure on dropping the interim target completely.

- Members asked about the option for a solar farm on council land. The reporting officer explained that this was in early scoping stages.
- Members discussed staff mileage and what was being considered to reduce higher mileage (due to role). Officer responded that this was impacted by officers not all being in the same place. The new Climate Action Plan would raise this. It was difficult for the council to control as personal vehicles were individual choice. This may be captured in future though scope three (indirect emissions). It was confirmed that the scopes measured depended on the progress of a project. For example, a leisure centre running on gas would be measured for scope one, but would move to scope two measures if energy was decarbonised etc.
- On solar farms a member asked about whether a proposed solar farm would cover current electricity or be sufficient for future electrification of fleet etc. Would the supply go beyond need? Officers were still researching sites and the sizes available. An increase in electric fleet would logically be balanced with other efficiencies made elsewhere. This project was in early scoping.
- Formal council meetings needed to be in person for decision making as per legislation, so not all meetings can be virtual and save on travel as a result.
- It was confirmed that other councils were in the process of reviewing their net zero targets as well.

In debating the topic, two members discussed that the interim target could be shifted to 40 percent, keeping it ambitious but more achievable than 75 percent (recommendation b).

A member considered that recognising the progress made since 2009/10 in 'recommendation a' seemed to deflect, when some of the results would have been improvements to the energy grid etc, not just council work. It was suggested to make the recommendation similar to: "CEAC recognises the significant amount of carbon reduction activities that had been actioned by the council and activities that are being progressed now in order to reduce carbon emissions." The member also considered that the interim target should not be removed, but possibly other targets considered at different steps.

It was asked what the risks were to not changing the target, considering this was not a statutory target. An officer responded that it was more reputational, and monitoring and reconsidering targets shows that as a council we are monitoring our progress and adjusting them if unrealistic. A member considered that having these targets were important in order to drive KPIs across our work and contracts.

There was general reluctance to drop the interim target, and a member added that we should consider what does it mean to the public whether we change the target or leave it as it is? We needed to understand the full implications. When the targets were set, there was no baseline. Now there was a baseline, we could adjust the target accordingly, but not necessarily needing to change or even remove it. Could removing it show a loss of focus? A point was raised that reassessing a target should not be viewed as negative when we simply had more data available now to create more accurate targets.

Members asked whether officers could come back with a plausible interim target. Could the interim date be in-between 2025-30, such as 2027/8?

After discussing the implications of changing or removing the target, the chair summarised the discussion and members agreed with the following recommendations:

Recommendations:

- a) CEAC recognises the significant progress made in reducing our operational carbon emissions by 47 per cent since 2009/10.

Members added that, to be more transparent about achievements, can this recommendation be more descriptive about what we had achieved. Committee suggested in additional point about 2019 onwards achievements and the percentage reduction achieved.

b) CEAC recommends that Cabinet agrees to retain its operational net zero target of 2030, but do not agree that the interim target for a 75 per cent reduction in emissions should be dropped.

Members suggested that officers work on a more realistic interim target that we can set with the knowledge and tools gained. Possibly a target in 2027/28 rather than 2025.

73. Review of the District Net Zero Target

Senior Climate Action Officer Jessie Fieth introduced the progress report and explained the challenges to a district wide target. We had worked hard towards working with neighbouring councils in order to tackle this, working in partnership was the most effective method. Too much was out of the council's control, so this was a difficult target to achieve.

The officer explained that before taking this report to Cabinet in September 2024, she would consider recommendations from CEAC and also use the data from 2022 that was previously unavailable. The officer added that she had checked the new data and they do not considerably impact the discussion today.

We look set to reach a emissions reduction of 55% by 2030, based on the 2008 baseline. When the target was set, we agreed to use a 2017 baseline (based on Aether consultancy report), but we could not replicate the methodology. We adopted a 2008 baseline as used by other councils. We would need to reduce emissions by double the current speed to reach the countywide target of 2050. It was stressed that we as a council had an important role, but a lot of issues were out of council control. Working with stakeholders and neighbours was important. We needed to formally acknowledge that we cannot meet our interim target and reconfirm our commitment to carbon reduction. Members will be updated with yearly tracking.

Members asked questions of clarification.

- It was confirmed that new methodologies could be employed instead of Aether methodology, with a baseline being calculated from 2008. The reporting officer confirmed lessons were learned from a procurement perspective.
- If modelling annually, would this come back to CEAC? It was confirmed yes.
- Members discussed the data sources and discussed the potential causes of the drops and in emissions over the period, such as Didcot Power Station closures.
- It was explained that this was nationally sourced data and that individual projects were not calculated separately and there was not the capacity to calculate to that level of granularity. Individual projects would have consultants who would calculate specific impacts.
- The team leader confirmed that some areas had higher emissions, the example given was Cherwell and the impact of the M40. It could be similar for other areas in our district, but it was difficult to ascertain.

Members discussed their thoughts on the recommendations of the report, in order to conclude with a recommendation from the committee.

A member considered that 2045 was an appropriate target date but that we should formally recognise that the interim 2025 target was an unachievable target. Members discussed whether the interim target, if formally acknowledged, could be dropped or not. Some felt that the interim target could be dropped considering it was out of the council's control.

A member considered that only having the 2045 target was not meaningful enough. Could the interim target instead be a pathway of targets, replacing the current interim target.

There was concern about this target being largely out of the council's control. This context was important in this decision.

A member considered that with a new government in place, the targets being kept would help with future lobbying of government on climate targets.

A member mentioned the Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan, and considered whether we could align with that as a form of partnership work. An officer explained that the target in this work was 2050, with no interim target.

Members concluded that they supported 'recommendation b' as it is written.

'Recommendation a' was debated further due to varying opinions given. It was generally felt that interim targets were helpful for working with partners and government and driving ambition.

A member considered an extra recommendation was needed, but others asked whether the data was complete enough yet to consider a new interim target. The team leader explained that there was not enough resource before September to understand carbon budgets. This report and recommendations were going to inform the Corporate Plan targets in September. Members were reminded that there was a balance between officers conducting more data research for target setting and the resource needed to get projects up and running. CEAC did recognise that the timing of creating new interim targets depended on resource availability.

Members asked whether officers could investigate the practicality of setting more plausible interim targets every five years? The officer confirmed the team could provide a guestimate alternative interim target from the Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan^[1] report data, to present to Cabinet in September.

There was recognition of the fact that this target was widely out of the council's control, and the original setting of targets were without a baseline of data that we have now built.

Recommendations:

a) CEAC formally recognises that the interim aspirational target of achieving a 75 per cent reduction in district carbon emissions by 2030 cannot be met.

(b) CEAC agrees with the recommendation that Cabinet re-affirms its commitment to accelerating progress towards achieving an ambitious 2045 target to be a net zero carbon district

Added recommendation

(c) CEAC recommends that Cabinet considers developing new 5-year interim targets up to 2045 using carbon budget data from the Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan, for a more accurate interim target.

^[1] *The Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan was endorsed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership in March 2023. This report builds on the detailed evidence that was developed through the Pathways to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PAZCO) report, published in 2021.*

74. Local Area Energy Planning

Senior Climate Action Officer Jessie Fieth updated the committee.

Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) was a spatial plan that mapped out the existing energy infrastructure in an area and evaluates future demand. There would be a range of scenarios and technology suggested to help meet net zero targets. This was not a statutory requirement of the council, but councils tend to lead them.

We think it is important to lead on this because:

- We can have some control over our operational emissions, but district-wide there was a limit on what we can do. Having a LAEP will assist.
- Major updates were needed to our energy systems. The LAEP will produce a plan of actions to help us transition to a suitable system to deliver net zero ambitions.
- Identify solutions for our area and alternatives.
- LAEP will help us as a planning authority.
- The LAEP should be ready by summer 2025.

This workstream was county-wide. It was proposed that data collection was to occur county-wide, but detailed scenarios would be district specific, so there would be five LAEPS at the final stage. Consultants would be in place to collect the data, with officer teams assisting. Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) would decide on approving the budget. If approved, consultants would be in place in autumn. We would look to form some internal expertise so that less consultancy would be required. At various stages, the district can decide if it still can resource the project and continue or not.

This would be led by Oxfordshire County Council, but we would be involved, with more input in the final stages for the district specific LAEP.

CEAC could help further at the district level and this item could come back to the committee at those points.

75. Understanding the Net Zero Challenge for SMEs in South and Vale

Introduced by Nick King, Economic Development Manager. Karen Tolley (Principal Economic Development Lead) was also present to support the item.

Members were updated on decarbonisation projects for small and medium sized enterprises (SME's) and the research carried out on this, before a report was published publicly.

Dr Sara Le Roux from Oxford Brookes Business School presented and provided some results from the research carried out and the findings. She talked about barriers to action, the appetite and priority given to environmental issues by smaller businesses. Grants would be earmarked for environmental sustainability projects.

Economic Development Manager explained that this was a pilot scheme, as future funding was unknown, and ran through the planned process, and the bespoke support and tools (e.g., free energy audits) that were being planned for businesses who wanted to get involved. A draft grant policy was being circulated for grants up to £10k. Projects would need to demonstrate the value a project would have for sustainability/carbon reduction. There may be up to 20 grants offered in this pilot scheme.

Principal Economic Development Lead added that business engagement events and business breakfasts had been arranged.

Officers and guest speaker were thanked for their time.

76. Progress on the Draft Climate and Nature Recovery Action Plan

Senior Climate Action Officer Chloe Bunting updated the committee on the updates being made to the Climate and Nature Recovery Action Plan for 2024-2028 (CNRAP), including reviewing long-term targets and consideration of new legislative requirements. This plan would be adopted in line with the corporate plan at the end of the year. There was a task and finish group and staff consultation, and the team analysed the responses to bring a short-list of actions.

To report on progress, this would be in tandem with the corporate plan, a once-a-year in-depth reporting process with live data at more frequent intervals and consideration would be given to a data dashboard.

There will be a further task and finish group and this would come back to a meeting of CEAC.

77. Progress of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

An update was given by the Climate and Biodiversity Team Leader.

There had been workshops this year. The strategy was now a statutory requirement and we needed to produce one, and we will be given a clear national picture as to what we should be doing to address nature recovery, and also bring access to funding streams to help deliver targets. This strategy gives a national picture and was a big step for nature recovery.

The team leader ran through the stages already covered by the team, to produce maps and statements of what the local priorities were (forming the strategy). Over one thousand people attended the workshops and replied to consultations. There was a live map on Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) website where members can input information to inform on activities happening in their wards. In May, there was a wrap-up event to feedback to those who took part in workshops. OCC were responsible for the strategy, but we had a statutory duty to support and input into this.

The next stage was to work on the draft plan, with consultation planned in September/October. There would be a specific task and finish group for CEAC to contribute to the draft strategy. It was expected that the strategy would be published in Spring 2025.

78. Update from task and finish groups and future items

As mentioned, there would be Climate and Nature Recovery Action Plan task and finish group – this would be joint with South Oxfordshire District Council, due to being a joint strategy. Local Nature Recovery Strategy would have a task and finish group once out to consultation.

Chair closed the meeting and thanked all for their work and contributions.

The meeting closed at 8.39 pm

Chair:

Date:

Nature and Climate Action Plan

2025-29

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils



Nature and Climate Action Plan 2025-29

Introduction/Context/Scene Setting

This plan sets out the actions that South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council will be taking over the next four years to deliver against our commitments to fight climate change and to restore nature to our districts. This is the first joint action plan between the two councils, and it describes how we intend to deliver our key climate and nature strategic goals, as set out in our respective Council Plans 2025-29.

Both councils have ambitious targets to become carbon neutral in their own operations by 2030 and to become carbon neutral districts by 2045. In recent years it has become clear that climate change and the catastrophic losses suffered in the natural world are inextricably linked. This new Nature and Climate Action Plan (NCAP) therefore also includes actions that the councils will be taking to reverse the decline in nature and to help our communities adapt to the changing climate.

Our Progress

The councils' net zero targets are a part of a longer-term strategy to reduce carbon emissions, which we have been working on and reporting annually since 2009/10. Both councils declared a climate emergency in 2019, which led to the publication of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse's Climate Action Plans 2022-24, which for the first time clearly set out the actions that each council would take to reduce our own carbon emissions.

South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils have already made significant progress in reducing carbon emissions and taking climate action:

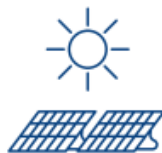
Progress and Highlights 2022-24

A total of **£1,866,546** in Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding secured to decarbonise our buildings



A total of **£342,632*** climate and nature focused external funding directly secured

£XXX* of Rural England Prosperity Funding awarded, to support local organisations with energy efficiency initiatives and decarbonisation



7 decarbonisations surveys and assessments completed for our buildings, such as leisure centres

A **Carbon Emissions Tool** shared with Town and Parish councils to help record and monitor the carbon emissions of their own operations

An internal **Climate Impact Assessment Tool** launched and made mandatory, to help assess the climate and nature impacts of our projects and decision making

Delivery of **webinars** for community organisations on supporting **domestic retrofit** and how to **retrofit community buildings**



Successful application for Designated Bathing Water Status for the River Thames at Wallingford Beach



Creation of **new** 'Action on Climate and Nature' dedicated landing **pages and content** on our website

Inclusion of **Carbon Reduction and Energy Efficiency scoring** and weighting as mandatory in our standard evaluation criteria, used when assessing bids for contracts

Climate change **online training e-learning module** launched, for staff and members



Delivery of our first 'park and charge' project - **62 public electric vehicle changing bays** now available across our car parks in the district

Establishment of **Electric Vehicle Car Clubs** based in our car parks, offering an alternative sustainable transport option



New **meadow areas** created on land we manage - **10,250m2** in total in 2024

Public convenience refurbishments included energy saving measures, such as energy efficient lighting, solar panels and rainwater harvesting



*Figures TBC

Progress and Highlights 2022-24

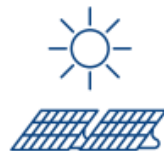


A total of **£5,992,916** in Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding secured to decarbonise our buildings



A total of **£453,281*** climate and nature focused external funding directly secured

£XXX* of Rural England Prosperity Funding awarded, to support local organisations with energy efficiency initiatives and decarbonisation



11 decarbonisations surveys and assessments completed for our buildings, such as leisure centres

A **Carbon Emissions Tool** shared with Town and Parish councils to help record and monitor the carbon emissions of their own operations

An internal **Climate Impact Assessment Tool** launched and made mandatory, to help assess the climate and nature impacts of our projects and decision making

Delivery of **webinars** for community organisations on supporting **domestic retrofit** and how to **retrofit community buildings**



A total of **£291,192** awarded through the Vale Climate Action Fund to local community organisations, for natural environment, energy, waste and consumption, sustainable transport projects, throughout 2022-2024

Creation of **new** 'Action on Climate and Nature' dedicated landing **pages and content** on our website

Inclusion of **Carbon Reduction and Energy Efficiency scoring** and weighting as mandatory in our standard evaluation criteria, used when assessing bids for contracts

Climate change **online training e-learning module** launched, for staff and members



Delivery of our first 'park and charge' project - **62 public electric vehicle changing bays** now available across our car parks in the district

Establishment of **Electric Vehicle Car Clubs** based in our car parks, offering an alternative sustainable transport option



New **meadow areas** created on land we manage - **61,900m2** in total in 2024



Public convenience refurbishments included energy saving measures, such as energy efficient lighting, solar panels and rainwater harvesting



*Figures TBC

Context

The councils' NCAP is part of a much larger picture, consisting of international, national law and local initiatives and plans all of which influence our priorities:

Internationally, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the entity responsible for the global response to climate change and oversees the implementation of the **2015 Paris Agreement**. The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change which pledges to keep temperatures *"well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C"*. Annual United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP) are held and are the foremost global forums for multilateral discussion of climate change matters and emerging international agreements.

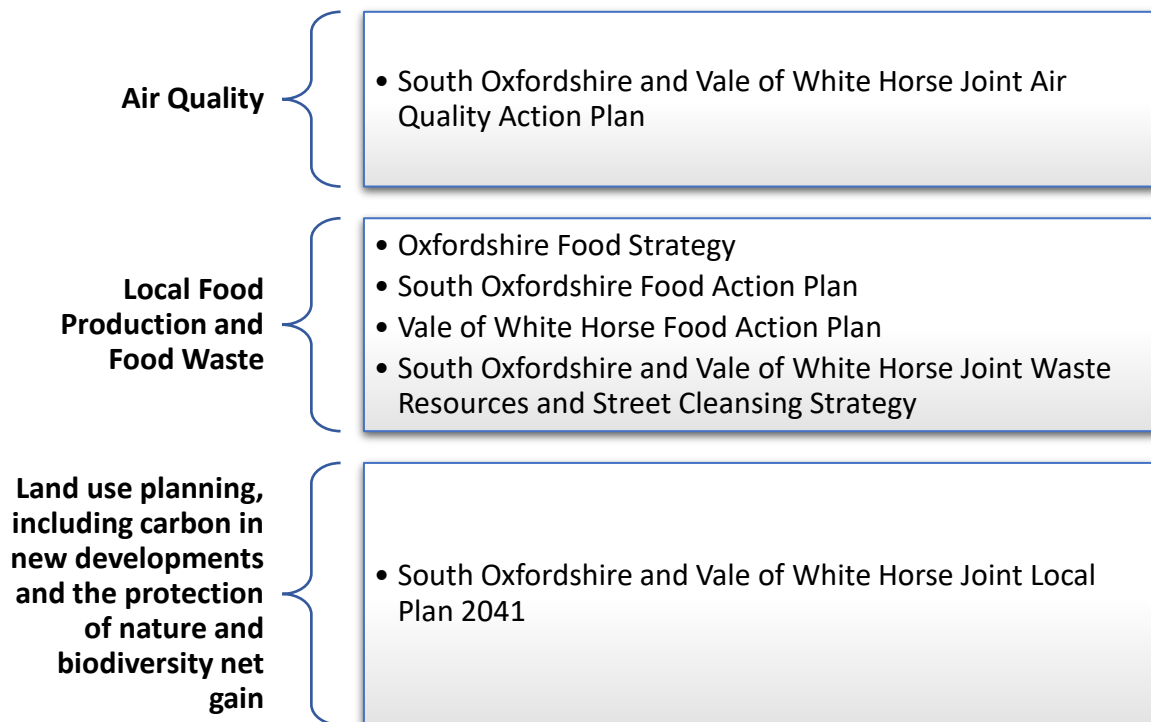
Nationally, **the UK Climate Change Act 2008** is the basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to climate change. It was amended in June 2019 and commits the Government to a 100 per cent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 compared with 1990 levels. The Act also created an independent Committee on Climate Change to provide advice to the government on these targets and related policies. **The 2021 Environment Act** covers a broad range of issues across the four priority areas of air quality, biodiversity, water and waste.

The NCAP recognises working in partnership as a fundamental part of our efforts to address climate change and by working together, we can make a greater impact on our targets of becoming carbon neutral districts by 2045. The councils' activity to reduce district-wide emissions is focused on supporting grassroots activities by local organisations and communities, alongside working in partnership with our neighbouring councils. This collaborative approach is set out in the [Oxfordshire Net Zero Routemap and Action Plan](#), which sets out a pathway for the county to achieve net zero by 2050 (the Oxfordshire-wide target).

In a similar way, we are working with a wide variety of partners to develop an approach to nature recovery in Oxfordshire, focusing on the creation of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The LNRS will set the direction of work in the county and the NCAP will translate this strategy into actions that we can take within our districts.

Scope of the NCAP

The NCAP has been designed to work alongside other existing local strategies and action plans and not to duplicate the actions and initiatives set out in these documents. For example, the following themes are addressed through the corresponding strategies and action plans:



NCAP Themes

The NCAP 2025-29 presents a list of actions that will help us achieve our aims of driving nature's recovery, cutting carbon emissions and creating a culture of sustainability through our operations.

The actions within the NCAP are split into five themes:

- 1. Operational Net Zero**
This theme focuses on our council operations, buildings, and assets where we have direct control over our carbon emissions.
- 2. District Net Zero – Communities, Engagement and Behaviour Change**
This theme focuses on how the councils can support our residents, communities and businesses to make choices which drive a reduction in carbon emissions across the districts.
- 3. District Net Zero – Partnerships**
This theme focuses on the areas that the councils can have the strongest impact on by working with our partners to achieve change and drive carbon reductions.
- 4. Nature Recovery**
The nature recovery theme sets out how we can drive nature recovery on our own land as an example to others, as well as setting out the actions that we can take both directly and in partnership to deliver the ambitions set out in the forthcoming Oxfordshire LNRS.
- 5. Adaptation**
This theme focuses on how the councils can ensure our service delivery is resilient to changing climate and on how we can support our residents and communities to adapt to extremes of a changing climate.

Measuring Progress

Each action within the NCAP includes measure(s) which will enable monitoring and reporting. Progress will be reviewed annually, and performance reporting will be in line with the Council Plans' framework and approach. Performance updates will be reported to South Oxfordshire's Climate and Ecological Emergencies Advisory Committee, the Vale of White Horse's Climate Emergency Advisory Committee and to Cabinet meetings.

The measures within the NCAP have been designed to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound (SMART) where possible, to enable clear monitoring of progress. The NCAP will be a live document and actions may be added, reprioritised and refocused as part of an annual review process. This will allow us to take account of a changing legislative and regulatory environment where necessary.



Hinksey Heights Nature Trail Boardwalk, funded by Vale Climate Action Fund



Wantage Draught Busters, funded by Vale Climate Action Fund



Mowbray Fields, Didcot, Meadow area on South Oxfordshire District Council land



Wallingford Beach, Designated Bathing Water in South Oxfordshire

ID	Action	Measure(s)	Team(s)	Head of Service	Indicative timescale Short (years 1-2) Medium (years 2-4) Long (years 4+)
Operational Net Zero					
1	Embed a climate-centred approach into all scales of procurement (including for routine and low risk purchases)	<p>1) Publication of new climate and biodiversity guidance for officers for tender specifications and evaluations by Q1 2025/26</p> <p>2) Update and enhance the climate and ecological implications section of the procurement training by Q3 2025/26</p>	Procurement/Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Finance/Head of Policy and Programmes	Short
2	Review opportunities to reduce the digital carbon footprint of the councils' websites.	<p>1) Carbon footprint of the websites TCO2e baseline obtained</p> <p>2) Actions to reduce digital carbon footprint identified</p>	Comms/IT team	Head of Corporate Services	Short

3	Produce annual reports outlining progress towards the councils' operational net zero targets and the predicted emissions pathway to 2030	<p>1) Annual report on progress towards South Oxfordshire's operational net zero target and modelled emissions to 2030.</p> <p>2) Annual report on progress towards Vale of White Horse's operational net zero target and modelled emissions to 2030</p>	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Long
4	Produce annual greenhouse gas emissions reports	<p>1) Annual report on South Oxfordshire's operational greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>2) Annual report on Vale of White Horse's operational greenhouse gas emissions</p>	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Long
5	Review the councils' approach to reporting Scope 3 emissions, considering emerging best practice and embodied carbon.	<p>1) Complete review of councils' approach to reporting Scope 3 emissions and seek approval for revised approach</p> <p>2) Revised approach to Scope 3 reporting implemented for 2026/27 reporting cycle</p>	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Short
6	Investigate options, and if appropriate procure software, for remote monitoring of energy management performance of building stock and train staff to manage software.	Option report completed and, if appropriate, software procured	Property Assets	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	Medium

7	Deliver an ongoing programme of climate training and engagement for all staff and offer additional opportunities for enhanced training for staff working in areas of high carbon emissions or potential for influencing others.	<p>1) Numbers of staff completing climate e-learning modules from 2025/26</p> <p>2) Number of staff completing enhanced training from 2025/26</p> <p>3) 15% of workforce to have completed enhanced training by Q2 2025/26</p>	HR/ Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Corporate Services/Policy and Programmes	Medium
8	<p>Deliver renewable energy projects:</p> <p>1) Review opportunities to maximise and deliver solar energy on council property/assets and prepare an investment business case where appropriate</p> <p>2) Assess feasibility, and where possible implement, a project to build a new renewable energy asset with the aim of offsetting the councils' electricity use.</p>	<p>1) Solar energy opportunities assessment completed</p> <p>2) Solar energy investment outline business case explored and approved if applicable by Q1 2025/26</p> <p>3) Detailed feasibility study for the renewable energy offsetting project completed</p>	<p>1) Property Assets/C&B Team</p> <p>2) 3) Strategic Property</p>	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord/Head of Policy and Programmes	Long
9	Retrofit all existing council-owned homes to a minimum of EPC C	100% of council-owned homes with an EPC rating of C or above by Q1 2025/26	Property Assets	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	Short

10	Identify opportunities for and seek additional funding to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions within the homes of our tenants, installing systems such as air source heat pumps backed up by solar PV and utilising battery energy storage systems to replace traditional carbon-based heating systems.	Percentage of council-owned homes with renewable energy heating systems.	Property Assets	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	Long
11	Maximise external funding to support the council's climate actions to reduce emissions from its own operations.	<p>1) Number of grant applications made to support climate actions annually</p> <p>2) Amount of income received to support climate projects annually and projected carbon emission reduction</p>	Insight and Policy Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Long
12	<p>A) Trial electric refuse vehicles and other relevant vehicle options, to identify the most suitable waste vehicles for reducing carbon emissions whilst maintaining service delivery.</p> <p>B) Replace end of life vehicles with the most suitable low carbon options and ensure there is the necessary charging infrastructure.</p>	<p>1) Complete electric waste vehicle trial by March 2025</p> <p>2) Update waste vehicle procurement strategy based on results of trial and post-trial report</p> <p>3) Subject to their suitability for the districts' collection rounds, identify appropriate funding sources for purchase of low emission waste vehicles</p>	Waste	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>1 and 2) Short</p> <p>3) Long</p>

13	Investigate opportunities for solar energy at depot site to provide an energy supply for electric waste vehicles and implement if applicable	Scope for solar energy to provide supply to depot site confirmed and negotiations with landowner completed if applicable	Waste	Head of Housing and Environment	Long
14	Create and deliver a plan for council vehicles (excluding waste fleet) to be zero emission, with necessary charging infrastructure in place or through utilisation of public charging network where possible.	1) Number and percentage of council fleet vehicles that are zero emission 2) Number of chargers installed for council fleet annually	Grounds Maintenance/Facilities	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	Medium
15	Create and deliver a plan to reduce carbon emissions from business mileage	1) Carbon emissions from business mileage - baseline and % reduction reported annually 2) Revised travel and expenses policy approved, with addition of low emission travel options 3) Production of a plan to reduce carbon emissions from business mileage	HR/ Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Corporate Services/Policy and Programmes	Medium
16	Investigate new and/or innovative finance opportunities to support the councils' decarbonisation projects.	1) 'Spend to save' opportunities are to be considered, alongside an affordable financing plan developed to fund the council's decarbonisation projects,	Strategic Finance	Head of Finance	Medium

		<p>commensurate with the council's overall financial position.</p> <p>2) Financing the councils' net zero targets, where it is deemed affordable, to be included in the councils' medium term financial plan</p>			
17	Prepare a decarbonisation plan for all council operational buildings (those from which we deliver a council service) to include cost, potential funding sources and timeline.	Decarbonisation plan for all operational buildings completed by March 2025	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Short
18	Prepare a decarbonisation plan for non-operational buildings where leases allow landlord involvement.	Review of non-operational buildings completed, and decarbonisation plan prepared where applicable	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Long

19	Develop and agree an approach to offsetting the councils unavoidable residual carbon emissions, with local co-benefits.	<p>1) Research approaches to offsetting residual carbon emissions and develop options for the councils to consider.</p> <p>2) Seek agreement for a set of principles to guide the councils' approach to offset residual carbon emissions.</p>	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>1) Short</p> <p>2) Medium</p>
District Net Zero - Communications, Engagement and Behaviour Change					
20	Engage with national policy makers to advocate for actions that reduce or limit the impacts of climate change and enable nature recovery at the local and regional level	<p>1) Number of relevant consultations responded to annually</p> <p>2) number of national policy makers engaged with on topics related to climate change and nature recovery</p> <p>3) Narrative/case study on a piece of advocacy, demonstrating impact and change for climate and/or nature at a local and regional level</p>	Insight and Policy	Head of Policy and Programmes	Short
21	Support residents to transition to healthy, low carbon lifestyles through our services	1) Narrative on how energy efficiency advice is integrated into Cost of Living support for residents provided by the	Community wellbeing	Head of Communities	Medium

		<p>councils' Community Hub and partners.</p> <p>2) Narrative and number of initiatives developed or supported, led by the council or in partnership, to encourage community food growing</p> <p>3) Number of S&V residents signing up to energysaverapp annually</p> <p>4) Number of energy efficiency grants taken up by S&V residents annually</p>			
22	Deliver a communications and engagement plan to support communities to transition to low carbon lifestyles	<p>1) Number of social media statistics following promotional campaigns (for example, engaged with, reached and sharing of posts)</p> <p>2) Number of press releases annually</p> <p>3) Narrative on relative success of nature recovery and climate focused campaigns</p>	Communications	Head of Corporate Services	Medium

23	Consider how the councils' Treasury Management strategy and role as a responsible investor can make a positive contribution to the councils' and district-wide net zero targets.	Commission a report to be carried out by the council's Treasury Management Advisors, the findings of which will be considered for inclusion in the councils' future treasury management strategies and reflected in treasury management operations in line with the council's obligations under treasury management regulations and their overall financial standing.	Strategic Finance	Head of Finance	Short
24	Proactively engage with and support, businesses to decarbonise their own operations and influence others in the community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Number of businesses signposted to decarbonisation support resources 2) Number of businesses supported to access funding 3) Number of businesses supported to access individual advice and guidance 4) Emissions reduction for projects grant funded by grants delivered by the economic development team (tonne / kilo) 	Economic Development	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	Short

25	Encourage development of green skills within local businesses.	<p>1) Number of green skills courses/trainings promoted</p> <p>2) Number of local organisations taking up green skills training</p> <p>3) Number of residents taking up green skills training</p>	Economic Development	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	Short
26	Encourage and support projects to address climate change and nature recovery within the district's Garden Communities.	Number of and narrative on, climate and nature recovery projects in Garden Communities that the councils' have supported	Garden Communities	Head of Communities	Medium

27	Provide resources, funding, advice and expertise to Town and Parish Councils and VCSE to decarbonise their operations and support residents to adopt low carbon lifestyles.	<p>1) Council website resources updated and maintained, measured by unique visits and downloads</p> <p>2) Narrative update on organisations supported, including case studies and/or learning. For example, through networking opportunities</p> <p>3) Number and value of council grants awarded for climate projects annually</p>	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Medium
28	Encourage the transition to electric vehicles for taxi drivers	<p>1) Percentage of taxi drivers with low emission taxis.</p> <p>2) Narrative on support provided to aid transition to low emission vehicles for taxi drivers</p>	Licensing	Head of Communities	Medium

District Net Zero - Partnerships					
29	Support the decarbonisation of buildings in the districts. For example, through grant schemes and green loan systems.	<p>1) Produce a report with recommendations on the establishment of a green loan system for retrofitting and installing energy efficiency measures in private sector homes</p> <p>2) Track progress through reporting the percentage of households with MCS-certified renewable energy installations in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.</p>	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Long
30	Support upgrades to energy infrastructure in the districts needed to achieve net-zero targets. For example, through developing local area energy plans for South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse and supporting community energy projects.	<p>1) Publication of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse local area energy plans</p> <p>2) Narrative/case study on community energy projects that the councils have supported</p>	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Long
31	Install publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure to support uptake of electric vehicles and improve access to charge points, to meet the Oxfordshire EV Strategy target of converting 7.5% of local authority managed car park spaces, to fast or rapid charging, by 2025.	<p>1) Number of public chargers installed on council owned land and their locations</p> <p>2) Usage percentages for chargers operated on behalf of the councils</p>	Technical services/ Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Development and Corporate Services/Head of Policy and Programmes	Medium

32	Work with partners to develop green financing mechanisms to fund district wide decarbonisation projects.	Narrative report on identification of green financing mechanisms	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Short
33	Produce annual reports outlining progress towards South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district net zero targets	<p>1) Annual report on progress towards South Oxfordshire's district-wide net zero target</p> <p>2) ktCO2 emitted from sources in South Oxfordshire each year</p> <p>3) Annual report on progress towards Vale of White Horse's district-wide net zero target</p> <p>4) ktCO2 emitted from sources in Vale of White Horse each year</p>	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Long
34	Investigate and enforce reported breaches of Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for privately rented homes.	Number of MEES breaches investigated and enforced	Private Sector Housing	Head of Housing and Environment	Short
35	In partnership with other Oxfordshire local authorities, develop an Oxfordshire retrofit strategy. This will consolidate all the activity in this area and provide information to guide funding and resourcing opportunities	Publication of Oxfordshire Retrofit Strategy by Q3 2025/26.	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Short

36	Work with Oxfordshire County Council and other partners to deliver active and sustainable travel infrastructure initiatives in the district	<p>1) Narrative on initiatives implemented, for example healthy placeshaping project</p> <p>2) Usage data for initiatives such as EV car clubs located in council owned car parks</p>	<p>1) Community wellbeing</p> <p>2) Climate and Biodiversity Team</p>	Head of Communities/Head of Policy and Programmes	Medium
Nature Recovery					
37	<p>The Councils to eliminate the use of peat in grounds maintenance on our land by year 2025/26.</p> <p>Reduce the use of harmful herbicides.</p>	<p>1) Amount of peat used in grounds maintenance and supply chains</p> <p>2) Amount of herbicides used in grounds maintenance operations</p>	Grounds Maintenance	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	Short
38	Review the use of annual bedding plants in grounds maintenance operations in favour of locally grown, sustainable alternatives	<p>1) Establish a baseline for current bedding plant usage by April 2025.</p> <p>2) Percentage reduction in use of annual bedding plants</p>	Grounds Maintenance	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	Short

39	<p>Undertake biodiversity audit of corporate land and develop proposals to put nature recovery at the heart of our grounds maintenance operations.</p>	<p>1) Complete biodiversity audits of South Oxfordshire/Vale of White Horse corporate land (Climate and Biodiversity Team)</p> <p>2) Develop options for nature recovery on council owned land and seek approval for implementation. (Joint action C&B and Grounds Maintenance)</p> <p>3) Percentage of council owned land managed for nature recovery (C&B)</p> <p>4) Produce a report outlining options for nature-based carbon sequestration schemes on council owned land (C&B)</p>	Climate and Biodiversity Team/Grounds Maintenance Team	Head of Policy and Programmes/ Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	Medium
40	<p>Support the development of land-based carbon sequestration offsetting model for the districts, by:</p> <p>Working with the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership and other Oxfordshire local authorities, deliver Innovate UK Net Zero Living 'Enabling nature-based carbon offsetting in Oxfordshire' project to develop new markets in Oxfordshire for nature-based offsetting.</p>	Delivery of Innovate UK Net-Zero Living project final report by June 2025	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Short

41	Work with partners to produce an Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and identify actions for South and Vale councils to deliver following adoption of the Strategy	<p>1) Adoption of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy by Q2 2025</p> <p>2) Develop action plan for South and Vale and incorporate actions into annual review of NCAP</p>	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Short
42	Provide resources, funding, advice and expertise to Town and Parish Councils, landowners, community and nature groups, to support nature recovery projects and delivery of the LNRS.	<p>1) Council website resources updated and maintained, measured by unique visits and downloads</p> <p>2) Narrative update on organisations supported, including case studies and/or learning and networking opportunities</p> <p>3) Number and value of council grants awarded for nature recovery projects</p>	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Medium
43	Promote the development of Habitat Banks in appropriate locations in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse as a key mechanism to drive nature recovery	<p>1) Number of habitat banks approved by South Oxfordshire/Vale of White Horse through Section 106 agreements</p> <p>2) Number of biodiversity units secured through council agreed habitat banks located in South Oxfordshire/Vale of White Horse</p>	Planning	Head of Planning	Long

44	Seek opportunities to increase support for and the profile of the Local Wildlife Sites Project as a key mechanism to help deliver Nature Recovery.	<p>1) Number of local wildlife sites surveyed</p> <p>2) Number of local wildlife sites where management advice is provided</p>	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Medium
45	Drive improvements to the ecological health of our river systems for people and wildlife. In part, delivered through support for and active engagement in the Catchment Partnerships	<p>1) Narrative report on projects and initiatives supported which aim to drive improvements in the ecological health of our river systems</p> <p>2) Activity to influence Thames Water, the Environment Agency and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to improve the ecological health of rivers and waterways in South and Vale</p>	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Medium

Climate Adaptation					
46	Work with partners to develop an Oxfordshire climate adaptation route map and action plan.	Publication of Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map and Action Plan	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Short
47	Following publication of Oxfordshire climate adaptation route map and action plan - Develop district level adaptation actions for the councils and integrate into annual review of the NCAP	Develop district level action plan for South and Vale and incorporate actions into annual review of NCAP	Climate and Biodiversity Team	Head of Policy and Programmes	Medium
48	Support communities to adapt to extreme heat, with a focus on people more vulnerable to extreme temperatures	<p>1) Delivery of awareness campaigns, for example, 'beat the heat' and 'cool spaces'. Measured by - social media statistics following promotional campaigns (for example, engaged with, reached and sharing of posts) and number of press releases related to climate adaptation.</p> <p>2) Narrative on success of climate adaptation focused campaigns</p>	Climate and Biodiversity Team/Comms	Head of Policy and Programmes	Long
49	Support communities to adapt to flooding	<p>1) Narrative and number of flood and drainage alleviation schemes facilitated and/or implemented</p> <p>2) Summary of other activities to reduce risk of flooding</p>	Technical services	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	Long