

## Notes

OF A MEETING OF THE



# The Future Oxfordshire Partnership Environment Advisory Group

HELD ON TUESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 10.00 AM  
VIRTUAL VIA MS TEAMS

### Present:

**Councillors:** David Rouane (Chair), Sue Cooper, Sally Povolotsky, Andrew Prosser and Imogen Thomas

**Officers:** Ian Boll, (Corporate Director Communications, Cherwell District Council), Inga Doherty, (Energy Insight Lead, Oxfordshire County Council), Alex Jeffery, (Future Oxfordshire Partnership), Suzanne Malcolm, (Senior Responsible Officer), Mish Tullar, (Head of Corporate Strategy, Oxford City Council).

**Guests:** Laurence Oakes-Ash (City Science) and Heather Watkinson (City Science)

### **50 Apologies for absence and notification of substitutions; declarations of interest and Chair's announcements**

Apologies were received from Councillor Pete Sudbury, Oxfordshire County Council and Councillor Andrea Powell, South Oxfordshire District Council. Councillor Sue Cooper substituted for Councillor Powell.

There were no declarations from Members.

The Chair welcomed Members, Officers and Guests to the meeting.

### **51 Notes of the previous meeting**

The notes of the meeting held on 21 June 2022 were agreed to be an accurate record of matters discussed.

### **52 Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan briefing paper**

The Environment Advisory Group considered a report and received a presentation from City Science on the Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan. The presentation was given by Laurence Oakes-Ash and Heather Watkinson.

## Introduction

City Science have built on the existing Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PaZCO) work by using the baseline evidence previously produced by the University of Oxford and other partners. The goal of the project is to translate that into a programme of actions to make meaningful progress to delivering net zero.

At present there are 15 proposed actions for inclusion in the action plan. Consultation sessions will now ensure that any additional feedback is considered before the action plan is finalised.

## Baseline Emissions

The scope of the baseline emissions data covers 4 main areas: transport, domestic, industrial & commercial and energy supply.

Transport – 44% of Oxfordshire’s total emissions are from the transport sector and it is also the sector where emissions have declined the least since 2008. Councillors especially noted the contribution of ‘through traffic’ in Oxfordshire to transport emissions.

Domestic – 25% of Oxfordshire’s total emissions are from the domestic sector and there has been a 35% decline in emissions in this sector since 2008 largely due to a change in grid intensity. Currently 53% of Oxfordshire homes are in EPC Band D and below. On this point, Councillors raised the issue of heritage buildings facing difficulties in trying to increase their energy efficiency, but this was not yet a detail that City Science have explored.

Industrial & Commercial – 26% of Oxfordshire’s total emissions are from the industrial and commercial sectors and emissions in the sector have declined by 44.5% since 2008. Councillors questioned what constitutes industry and commerce? Laurence responded that any business operating from a business site will be classed in this category. A company operating from a home however would be classed as domestic.

Energy supply/renewable generation – 2014-2015 saw a large increase in Oxfordshire’s annual renewable generation and Laurence noted that targeted funding can make a significant difference.

Councillors discussed the data and questioned whether it is solely based on carbon emissions or whether the data considers other pollutants which have an impact cost on the budget with regards to health? Laurence responded that the data is carbon emissions and greenhouse gas emissions which have been converted into carbon equivalents. There is not a separate exercise for looking at particulate matter or pollutants that are associated with air quality, but Laurence noted that many of the actions will have a knock-on benefit in order to address air quality and actions in the route map will capture such co-benefits.

## The Route Map

The goal of the route map is to break down what needs to be done by 2025, 2030, 2040 and 2050, and also provides wider concepts of what is happening at a national level as well as locally.

Transport – The transport sector route map targets reaching net zero by 2040 in line with emerging local transport connectivity plan. The key areas of focus in the transport route map are reducing trip demand, shifting to sustainable modes and then residual emissions are covered by widespread electrification across the remainder of trips.

Mish Tullar (Oxford City Council officer) questioned how transport targets can be achieved when around half of emissions are produced by through journeys and would these targets be met by actions affecting local journeys? Laurence responded that the local connectivity transport plan is broadly targeted at reducing the number of trips which originate in Oxfordshire, and in order to reduce total emissions there does need to be a reduction in local trip miles. On through trips, Laurence recommended that closer working with partners will be required and actions that do not reduce trip miles need to be catered for by increases in electrification for example.

Councillors noted on the transport route map that hydrogen sources are out of scope of the work but questioned this decision bearing in mind the Central Government roadmap is pushing vehicles above 3 tonnes to hydrogen. Councillor Rouane asked that City Science take this in mind for the next stage of their work and also view the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) roadmap for transport which goes into detail on hydrogen.

Domestic – The key objective in the domestic sector is performance of the housing stock. By 2030, 23% of existing properties are at a minimum in EPC B and by 2050 this increased to 100%. Also in the route map is a continued tightening of standards for new developments beyond the future home's standards, moving to Passivhaus Plus by 2030.

Ian Boll (Cherwell District Council officer) posed a question about funding, specifically the 17,000 homes retrofitted to >EPC B, requiring £10-£15 million of revenue per annum. Laurence reassured the group that there is good news in this space, a “wall of money” willing to lend, noting more green mortgages being offered and British lenders wanting to lend for the purposes of supporting homes to become more energy efficient.

Industrial and commercial – The key objective in this route map is to retrofit buildings and de-carbonise industrial processes.

Energy supply – The goals of the energy supply route map are increasing the contribution of solar alongside Oxfordshire Leading the Way which was part of the original PaZCO work and set a goal for Oxfordshire to deliver 6% of the UK's solar energy. The route map sets a goal of 4.1% by 2030.

Councillors questioned consultees and data, specifically were Harwell EnergyTec Cluster consulted as they could provide a roadmap of the technology and investment coming into Oxfordshire which could make the data more personalised to the county. They were not consulted but City Science worked closely with Oxfordshire County Council on who the 1-1 consultations should be allocated to. On the question about data, Laurence noted that the baseline data fed into a model which was tested with stakeholders against the previous targets.

Councillors noted a desire to be more ambitious with regard to the ‘easier to decarbonise’ sectors, noting that Oxfordshire was is an innovative county and the pathway to net zero would be challenging but striking the balance between achievability and ambition is imperative.

### The Actions & Next Steps

Actions were generated during the thematic workshops which covered the themes of freight, rural transport, finance, industrial, commercial & business and retrofit/domestic. Prior to the focus groups, three actions were emailed to attendees to pre-vote on their top

two priority actions which were then discussed during the focus group. Councillors expressed an interest in what would happen to actions rejected during focus group sessions. Laurence responded that although 15 actions felt appropriate, the action plan is an evolving document and on occasion actions were merged where they were interdependent so that all three could be taken through to the action plan development.

Mish Tullar (Oxford City Council officer) asked for a list of the organisations that participated in the workshops to cross reference with organisations that are already engaged with and to identify any gaps in the consultation.

In terms of gap analysis, City Science acknowledged that Oxfordshire has already mobilised a range of successful carbon emission projects and now needs to scale up those existing projects to deliver the ambitions of the route map. For example, 120,000 private electric vehicles, 15,000 electric LGVs and 900 electric HGVs on Oxfordshire's roads by 2030. Councillors expressed concern that rural areas were under-represented, and the targets for transport do not accurately reflect the challenges of rural communities. The representatives from City Science reassured the group that rural transport had been a theme of the thematic workshops and a focus throughout the process is to support improvements to rural transport.

The final focus group to take place is around 'finance' and Councillors questioned whether this meant funding? Laurence confirmed that 'finance' was in two parts, the first was engagement with the Council finance divisions to make sure they are bought-into anything that may need to be funded post the delivery of this work but also discussing how Oxfordshire can be more innovative in terms of how it gets the money to deliver these actions.

A general theme emerged during the discussion: Councillors noted that there is already work underway in this field and plenty of the actions proposed by City Science are already captured by the ZCOP work. Councillors expressed a need to avoid the duplication of work and effort and also not to hinder or halt those actions that are already underway, such as the Local Nature Partnership leading on the delivery of habitat restoration. Councillors also raised concerns around pitfalls in some of the actions namely the roll out of EV charging points and heritage properties and there was also a call from Councillor Cooper for more information for towns and parishes if they were to invest in EV charging points themselves. Councillors noted some concern as to whether the appropriate bodies have been consulted specifically FarmED on the issue of land use and carbon sequestration.

### Next steps

Actions will be presented at the action plan consultation session as business cases with details such as owners & champions and clearly identifying how the action aligns with the route map as well as funding requirements. This is a high-level overview, and a more detailed outline will go into the final report. Councillor Povolotsky raised the importance of 'connecting the gaps' of independent work already underway and engaging industry to ensure these actions are deliverable. Laurence suggested that another section could be added to the action plan to note what groups or companies are already working in that space, but this was not done originally to avoid a conflict of interest in terms of companies being involved in the governance of actions. Councillor Povolotsky did not consider this would be a conflict of interest and such investment from and engagement with industry would be required to fund the proposed actions.

Following the update to the EAG there will be the action plan consultation session on 21<sup>st</sup> September and a draft action plan and report will be presented to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) on 3<sup>rd</sup> October with feedback expected by 2<sup>nd</sup> November. 16<sup>th</sup> November is the final draft route map and action plan submission date to OCC. Between November and January the route map and action plan will go through the relevant Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) groups (EOG, EAG, FOP Scrutiny Panel) before reaching the meeting of the Partnership on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023. Responding to a question from Ian Boll (Cherwell District Council officer), Suzanne Malcolm confirmed that individual Councils would have the opportunity to take the report through an informal sign-off process and there was work ongoing in the EAG Officer Group to populate a table showing a timeline for this.

There was a final point from Councillors for clarification more generally on how each Local Authority is defining net zero. Laurence responded that aligning with the ZCOP definition is outlined in the report. Laurence concluded the presentation by noting that there would be a chapter in the final report stitching together all of the actions and key themes emerging from the work.

Councillor Rouane closed the discussion by commending the imminent delivery of the action plan and route map.

**Action: Alex Jeffery to circulate slides to Members with the meeting notes.**

## **53 Work programme**

The agenda for the meeting on 12 December 2022 already has a number of items therefore it was suggested that the talk on the work of the Local Nature Partnership could be deferred to the first EAG meeting in 2023.

**Action: Alex Jeffery to contact Matt Witney to defer LNP agenda item.**

Suzanne Malcolm noted with regard to the OxLEP item for the forward programme on page 10 of the agenda pack, an update was not possible at this meeting due to OxLEP's prior meeting being cancelled on 19.09.2022 due to the unforeseen Bank Holiday.

**Action: Alex Jeffery to re-arrange for item to be on the agenda for the next meeting of the Environment Advisory Group.**

Regarding the talk from a business, Ocado have been approached but no response has yet been received to that invitation. Suzanne Malcolm asked whether Councillor Povolotsky could 'nudge' Duncan Russell as she had originally provided his contact details.

**Action: Councillor Povolotsky to contact Duncan Russell with regard to responding to EAG invite to talk.**

Councillor Povolotsky proposed an update following the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty national conference however it was felt that this falls within the scope of the Local Nature Partnership.

Councillor Rouane suggested that EAG should have a joint meeting with the proposed planning sub-group (name to be decided) on solar farms to discuss who should take this

forward. Once the advisory group has been established this agenda item can be added to the forward programme.

## **54 Future meetings**

The advisory group noted the date of the next meeting as 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 10am.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am