

To: Future Oxfordshire Partnership
Title of Report: Pathways to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Joint Action Plan
Date: 20 March 2023
Report of: Sarah Gilbert, on behalf of the EAG Officer Group
Status: Open

Executive Summary and Purpose:

Following the publication of Pathways to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire in 2021, the Future Oxfordshire Partnership requested officers to develop a route map and identify areas for joint working between FOP members in line with evidence in the 'Oxfordshire leading the way' scenario.

The resulting Net Zero Route Map and Joint Action Plan (City Science, 2023) (Annex 1) details:

- The emission reductions necessary to achieve net zero by 2050
- The key milestones in 2025, 2030 and 2040.
- Carbon budgets of maximum emissions that can be emitted to maintain this pathway (including the provision of data at a scale available to Districts)
- KPIs to track progress
- Recommended areas for FOP members to work on jointly to accelerate action.

How this report contributes to the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision Outcomes:

This work supports the FOP strategic vision on climate action.

Recommendations: The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is asked to:

1. Note the report and attached Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan
2. Review and endorse the proposed joint actions and recommended prioritisation to form a programme of work reporting to the Partnership.
3. Review the governance and reporting proposals set out in the report and suggest any proposed changes as required.

The Joint Action Plan will draw on resources from across the partnership and stakeholders are asked for a commitment to collaborate in the proposed areas.

Appendices:

Annex 1: Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan

Annex 2: Current activity and resources

Introduction

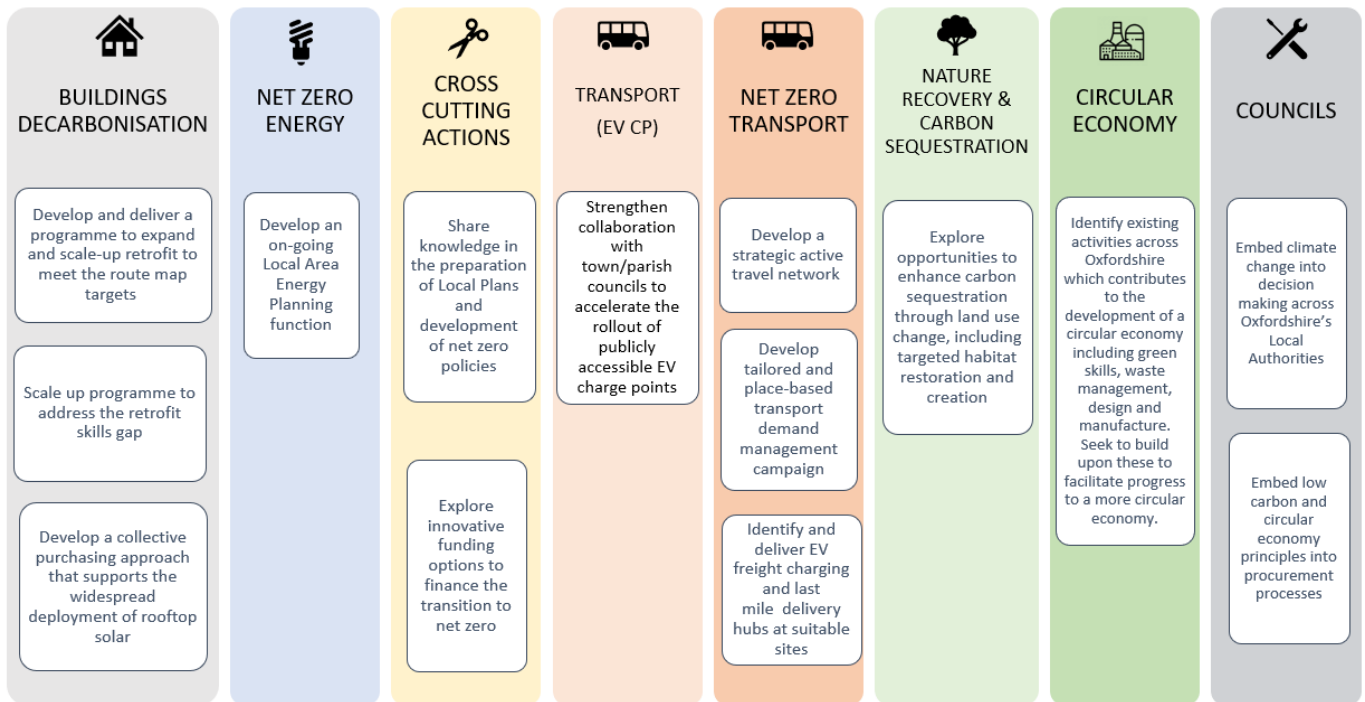
1. In 2021, the [Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire \(PAZCO\)](#) report was produced by the Environmental Change Institute at the University of Oxford with significant input from Oxfordshire councils, OXLEP and wider stakeholders.
2. It identifies a number of pathways to reach net zero in Oxfordshire including the Oxfordshire Leading the Way scenario, with a steeper trajectory to cutting emissions to 2030 and high ambition for solar, active travel and community led action. The report sets out the [investment needed](#) across sectors by 2030 (£3.5bn) to exceed a halving on emissions by this date.
3. PAZCO also appraises Oxfordshire's innovation economy, community engagement, business activity and partnership working between local authorities as the foundation for Oxfordshire's strengths on climate action.
4. Following a request from the Future Oxfordshire Partnership at its meeting in January 2022, officers commissioned City Science to develop a route map and action plan to identify areas and actions for collaborative working focussed on the powers of FOP members.
5. The collaborative action plan does not replace individual organisation's net zero strategy and workplans, or statutory documents and activity such as Local Plans or Local Transport Plan.
6. The scope of the commission was to focus on the areas of joint work between local authorities. The report recognises the breadth of wider stakeholder partnership working that will also need to take place to realise the vision of partners.

Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan

7. The resulting Oxfordshire Zero Carbon Route Map and Action Plan provides detailed pathway modelling and a series of route maps identifying the carbon emission reductions necessary to achieve net zero by 2050, with milestones at 2025, 2030, 2040 (Annex 1). This can be used to support a monitoring framework that can be utilised to continually drive the reduction in carbon dioxide emissions in Oxfordshire.
8. City Science have proposed Joint Actions to address the county's direct emissions (scope 1 and 2), workstreams on the circular economy and the use of common standards to suppliers have been identified to help address scope 3 (indirect) emissions¹. The priority actions, grouped into broad delivery programmes, are shown in Figure 1 below. They are set out in further detail in the full report in Annex 1.

¹ Scope 1 covers direct emissions from owned or controlled sources. Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, steam and heating etc. Scope 3 emissions are the result of activities from assets not owned or controlled sources.

Figure 1: Joint actions (as proposed by City Science)



9. Officers have been asked to prioritise the actions to allow EOG members to advise on resource allocation and potentially mobilise workstreams in a phased approach. Table 1 suggests the actions that Officers recommend prioritising as a first phase.
10. Individual organisations, including some existing joint working, will continue across other actions identified above in line with existing work programmes and these may be brought into a more formal programme at a later date (Annex 2 outlines examples of current activities).
11. Collaboration on these workstreams aims to bring the following benefits to FOP partners:
 - Effective use of member organisations resources to meet their own climate commitments
 - More streamlined relationships for external stakeholders
 - Helping scale programmes to secure investment
 - Clearer working structures that support sharing knowledge, information / best practice.

Table 1: Recommended actions for delivery in phase 1

Priority workstream		Reason for prioritisation	Convening lead
1	Buildings Decarbonisation	Commitment by national government to future funding of this area, ambition currently held back by delivery capacity. Multiple innovation funding streams that would benefit from joint working, knowledge share OXLEP work on skills taking place at a County scale	Oxfordshire County Council Retrofit Lead Oxford City Council OxLEP
2	Net Zero Energy - Local Area Energy Planning	Grid Constraints recognised as immediate strategic issue to clean growth Builds on work of Local Energy Oxfordshire and potential follow-on funding, expected to announce March 23, including opportunity to work closely with distribution network operators to support evidence-based investment in network to support effective transition to low carbon energy system	Oxfordshire County Council Energy Systems Lead (recruiting Q2 23/24)
3	Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	Existing joint strategy and City strategy agreed Devolution of funding 'Local EV Infrastructure' to upper tier local authorities confirmed for 2.5 years	Oxfordshire CC ZEV Infrastructure lead
4	Land- based carbon sequestration offset model	Joint working between FOP and LNP on investment model for land-based sequestration in Oxfordshire.	LNP Manager, OxonCC Partnerships and Programme Manager (in recruitment Q2 23/24)
5	Green Finance – Exploration of green bonds	Identifying new funding sources and models is critical to support delivery of net zero targets and full implementation of the joint action plan ZCOP sprint group exploring area based insetting model	TBC

12. Convening leads are identified to coordinate and facilitate joint working (sprint) groups to deliver the priority actions.

13. A number of workstreams are already included in the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) programme; the PAZCO action does not replace the ZCOP activity but will benefit from the close links with ZCOP to strengthen delivery of actions in these areas. Continuing discussion with the programme leads will ensure the work programmes align and benefit from each other, noting the recent agreement by the ZCOP steering group (January 2023) to invite district councils to join ongoing workstreams where relevant and helpful for the

progression of the wider PAZCO action plan (including, where necessary, and with agreement from the Sprint champions and leads, updating terms of reference for Sprint groups to ensure this ongoing alignment) .

Resourcing

14. Development of the joint action plan has been coordinated by the well-established FOP Environmental Advisory Group officer group. This group will continue to work together to support delivery of the Joint Actions with active discussions already underway on options to bring in external funding relevant to a number of the work areas. For example, South Oxfordshire District Council are currently leading a bid to the Net Zero Fast Followers programme with Vale of White Horse District Council, Cherwell District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council for resource to support the green finance and carbon sequestration work streams. The City and County Councils are unable to join the bid due to restrictions on funding secured through the Net Zero Pioneer Places programme (focussing on retrofit) - but benefits are likely to extend to all councils, at least indirectly).
15. Additional resource needs identified at this stage are:
 - Estimated £150k for Local Area Energy Plan development
 - Estimated £100k project management to coordinate development of the land based carbon sequestration investment approach
 - Secretariat support via the FOP core team to assist the coordination of the work programme and support County Council programme management resource.

Governance and reporting

16. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership has overall ownership of the Joint Action Plan, with the FOP Advisory Groups as sponsors for appropriate broad work areas, providing oversight and guidance on development and progress of the work. FOP is asked to consider that the Net Zero Energy and EV infrastructure programmes are sponsored by the Infrastructure Advisory Group, building decarbonisation and green finance by the Environment Advisory Group.
17. Whilst the development of the action plan focussed on joint working opportunities through the FOP, the identified actions also span the remit of other partnerships, e.g., the Local Nature Partnership, with existing governance and reporting structures. Where this is the case, oversight of the actions should continue through these arrangements, with regular updates brought to the FOP via the proposed monitoring approach set out below.
18. It is proposed that a six monthly update on activities against the priority actions will be taken to the relevant FOP Advisory Group. Progress against the emission reduction targets and action plan progress using KPIs identified in the Route Map report will be reported to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership annually. The reporting and review process will be coordinated by dedicated officer resource within the EAG officer group.

19. **The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is asked to review the governance and reporting proposal and suggest any proposed changes to the above.**

Budget and outstanding pieces of work

20. City Science will hold a workshop with officers from each of the Oxfordshire local authorities during March to identify areas where central government, through national policy direction, regulation, or investment, can support the transition to net zero not just across Oxfordshire but also nationally – recognising the benefits of a local-led approach and the importance of local investment.

21. The commission to develop the Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan has been delivered for £50,000 leaving £20,000 remaining in the shared budget. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is asked to advise how the remaining funds should be used.

Conclusion

22. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is asked to endorse the recommended programme of work.

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the EAG officers' group

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