


Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan for Oxfordshire County Council services

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[Sustainability West Midlands](#) (SWM) was established in 2002 as an independent, not-for-profit company and our purpose is to help the West Midlands become more sustainable, greener and fairer for all.

Our vision is that the West Midlands is leading in contributing to the national target of Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 whilst addressing health inequality and driving inclusive growth. We monitor the [West Midlands Sustainability 2030 Roadmap](#) which acts as a framework that all organisations based or operating in the region can use to help them make changes to their activities in the knowledge that they will contribute to wider regional ambition.

SWM's support our [members](#) and other local stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors to implement these changes by enabling them to demonstrate innovation and leadership and provide opportunities to collaborate and celebrate success.

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Above: River through Oxford

Front cover image: Flooding on Abingdon Road, Oxford

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Summary of the Actions for 2025/26

This document sets out the climate change adaptation actions that should be considered for implementation by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), to ensure that the services it provides are prepared for the impacts of climate change, including greater incidence and severity of flooding, a higher likelihood of water scarcity and more intense and prolonged heatwaves.

Following extensive stakeholder engagement and consideration of the evidence base, this section summarises those actions that are deemed a **‘very high-immediate’ (VH-I)** priority for implementation in the first financial year, 2025/26. Other actions that are deemed ‘very high,’ ‘high’ or ‘medium’ in priority are included in section 2.4, the full action plan.

1. Report on progress with delivery of this Route Map and implementation blueprint annually to the FOP and set up a monitoring framework.
2. Develop a new Oxfordshire-wide Climate Adaptation Working Group under the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP) structure.
3. Revise membership of, and develop a new Terms of Reference for, the OCC internal adaptation working group.
4. Ensure that climate change adaptation forms a key part of the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire.
5. Expand efforts to Identify financing options and funding sources to enable implementation and integrate into the next budget cycle.
6. Develop a set of adaptation capacity building materials that are specifically targeted at executive officers, Cabinet Members and Councillors across the county.
7. Embed and/or support delivery of climate adaptation into a range of co-dependent strategies and plans being produced by council departments/ external partners.
8. Conduct an analysis of which of Oxfordshire’s habitats, species and crops could be most affected by climate change, including the negative impacts of new pests, pathogens or invasive non-native species (INNS).
9. Expand on the [Oxfordshire Way](#), existing work and relationships to empower vulnerable communities to develop climate change adaptation and/or community emergency plans.

1 Introduction and background

SWM has been commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) on behalf of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) to develop a Climate Change Adaptation Route Map, aimed at providing a series of actions that should be considered for implementation by decision makers in Oxfordshire, to ensure that the county's natural environment, people, infrastructure, buildings and businesses are prepared for the impacts of climate change. The core objective is to ensure that Oxfordshire can better manage, prepare for and respond to severe weather events and an increasing likelihood and severity of these in future.

Purpose of this document

Alongside this, OCC have asked SWM to prepare an adaptation plan that focuses on the climate change adaptation actions that should be considered for implementation by Oxfordshire County Council, to ensure that the services within its control are resilient to a future climate. The document should be read in conjunction with the Climate Change Adaptation Route Map for Oxfordshire, which is the county's overall response to adaptation. This document extracts the actions that OCC are most likely to provide a leading role in implementing and expands on them accordingly, to help OCC prioritise what it should be considering as next steps. It also includes a selection of additional actions that are deemed too specific to include in the Route Map.

This Plan will be continuously updated via a rigorous monitoring system, with a full refresh conducted in 2030, i.e. five years after its creation. Many of the actions included within the Plan will commence from now, although many may take longer than five years to complete, and some may not be able to be implemented until after 2030. In short, there is a need for regular scrutiny and updating of this document so that decision-making can be done in advance and as accurately as possible, in light of continuously changing circumstances. Much is likely to have changed by 2030 and this is a reasonable timescale by which to conduct a full Plan review.

This document focuses **only** on the actions for OCC and does **not** include:

- Background and policy context
- A summary of the Oxfordshire Climate Vulnerability Assessment.
- The climate change risk assessment for Oxfordshire.
- The overall Route Map for implementation across the county.
- The detailed justification behind the selection of each action.
- A detailed methodology.

For readers wishing to obtain more information on the above, please consult the Climate Change Adaptation Route Map for Oxfordshire.

2 Oxfordshire County Council Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan

2.1 Introduction and what is included

This plan only includes actions that are **within the direct control of OCC** to implement or that OCC is **likely to provide a leading role on** with regards to implementation, and **do not** include actions that are outside OCC's control, or that OCC may be able to act only in a supporting role. Most of these actions are included in the Climate Change Adaptation Route Map for Oxfordshire, as the actions OCC take the lead on will affect the whole county's approach on adaptation and, critically, OCC have the power and capacity to take on a leading role for many of the actions, even if responsibility for implementation could be shared. However, some other actions have been added specifically to this plan that we have deemed to be too specific to be included in a county-wide plan.

However, it should be emphasised that some of the actions in this plan cannot happen in isolation and, therefore, the Route Map should be consulted alongside to ensure actions are being considered holistically and with other activities and priorities in mind.

2.2 How the action plan is set out

Provided overleaf is an Action Plan that sets out:

- Actions that have been identified that, if implemented, could help to adapt Oxfordshire County Council's services to a changing climate. The majority of these actions are mirrored in the Climate Change Adaptation Route Map for Oxfordshire, with some new additions as indicated.
- Three initial suggested steps that OCC **could** take towards implementation of the specified action.
- Which OCC department(s) should lead on delivery (the plan is ordered alphabetically by delivery lead).
- Other OCC teams or (an)other organisation(s) that may be able to support the implementation of this action.
- Whether the action should be (either due to urgency or its simplicity) implemented in the short (within the next two years), medium (two-10 years) or long (>10 years) term.
- Whether implementing this action is expected to be intense from a resourcing and cost perspective, from L (Low), Medium (M) to H (High).
- Based on various aspects, we have prioritised each action as follows:

VH-I	Very High and Immediate
VH	Very High
H	High
M	Medium

- We have also used the principles set out in the [Local Partnerships Adaptation Toolkit](#) (Section 4.3) when selecting and considering actions:

Effectiveness – will the actions meet your objectives and if so how? <input type="checkbox"/>	Legitimacy – is it politically, ethically and socially acceptable? <input type="checkbox"/>
Efficiency – do the benefits exceed the costs? If not, how can they? <input type="checkbox"/>	Urgency – how soon could each option be implemented? <input type="checkbox"/>
Equity – the action should not adversely affect other areas or vulnerable groups <input type="checkbox"/>	Costs – consider social and environmental costs, not just economic <input type="checkbox"/>
Flexibility – is each option flexible and will it allow for adjustments and incremental implementation? <input type="checkbox"/>	Robust – is each option able to cope with a range of future climate projections? <input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainability – does each option contribute to sustainability objectives, and are they themselves sustainable? <input type="checkbox"/>	Synergies/coherence with other strategic objectives – does each option help to achieve other objectives? <input type="checkbox"/>
Practical – can the action be implemented on relevant timescales? <input type="checkbox"/>	

- We have ensured that the actions listed do not (e.g.) contradict other local priorities, disadvantage vulnerable people, and consider cost and efficiency, rather than merely suggesting a set of unrealistic and potentially counterproductive actions that could lead to maladaptation.
- We recognise that some of these actions may be being implemented or considered by organisations that we did not consult with during the evidence-gathering stage. An established monitoring process should allow for actions to be continuously reviewed with progress reported back through to stakeholders through the relevant established partnerships. It is also recommended that a refresh of this plan takes place alongside the Route Map after five years (2030).

2.3 List of acronyms

The table below includes the acronyms of the organisations listed in the plan.

Acronym	Organisation
BBOWT	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
BOB ICS	Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System
BRE	Building Research Establishment
C&RT	Canal and River Trust
DB&T	Department for Business & Trade
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfE	Department for Education
DfT	Department for Transport
DHSC	Department for Health and Social Care

Acronym	Organisation
EA	Environment Agency
FC	Forestry Commission
GWS	Groundwork South of England
HE	Historic England
LCGs	Local Community Groups
LEP	Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
LRF	Local Resilience Forum
NE	Natural England
NFF	National Flood Forum
NFU	National Farmers Union
NH	National Highways
NR	Network Rail
NT	National Trust
OALC	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
OBU	Oxford Brookes University
OCC	Oxfordshire County Council
OHFT	Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
OUH	Oxford University Hospitals
PH	Public Health
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SHAP	Sustainable Housing Action Partnership
SWM	Sustainability West Midlands
TW	Thames Water
UOx	University of Oxford
WO	Wild Oxfordshire

Overleaf commences an adaptation plan for OCC services. Unlike the Route Map, it is ordered alphabetically by lead delivery team, rather than by risk theme.

2.4 The Action Plan

The colour coding in the 'Action No.' column corresponds to the following theme:

Governance, Reporting and Monitoring	Natural Environment and Assets	Infrastructure	Health, Communities and the Built Environment	Business and Industry, including Agriculture
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Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
1.	Develop a register of people under the care and responsibility of OCC who may be most at risk from the impact of heatwaves.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Collate a register of all individuals who are looked after by OCC, e.g. those under the jurisdiction of home care services Determine which of these people are most exposed to the impacts of heatwaves, e.g. those with respiratory conditions, disabilities etc. Ensure that protocols are put in place to provide them with appropriate PPE during hot weather. 	Adult Social Care Children's Services	OHU OHFT	-	Medium-term, on-going	L	VH
2.	Consider adding adaptation measures into assistive technology options.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify any existing measures that could assist with adaptation objectives (but that are perhaps not classed as adaptation at present) Draw up a list of potential options, e.g. provision of fans during heatwaves Train assistive technology needs assessors to factor in such provisions when assessing homes. 	Adult Social Care	Assistive Technology suppliers	DHSC	Short-term	L/M	M
3.	Develop a new Oxfordshire-wide Climate Adaptation Working Group under the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP) structure.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and map the stakeholders you want to be represented on the group Co-develop a Terms of Reference (ToR) Establish a secretariat and set up a date for the first meeting. 	Climate Action	ZCOP and other stakeholders as required	EA Defra All potential group members	Short-term, on-going	L/M	VH-I
4.	Ensure adaptation is fully integrated into existing relevant boards/groups.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a list of relevant boards and groups Propose how adaptation could be integrated in Group ToRs 	Climate Action	All organisations can look at embedding adaptation into their	-	Short-term, on-going	L	VH

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
		3. Prepare briefing papers on adaptation for Group Chairs and provide a presentation on adaptation at one of the meetings.		KPI and reporting processes				
5.	Revise membership of, and develop a new Terms of Reference for, the OCC internal adaptation working group.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use this plan to identify gaps in membership, and any members who are infrequent attendees 2. Revise the ToR, reflecting the how the group can help to deliver this plan 3. Arrange the next meeting at which the new ToR is proposed and shared. 	Climate Action	SWM	-	Short-term, on-going	L	VH-I
6.	Establish strategic links with the local universities by offering work placements and research opportunities on adaptation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify which of the actions in this plan and the Route Map may be suitable for further research by a university placement 2. Engage with the local universities and establish contacts with relevant departments (e.g. geography, earth science, physics) 3. Prepare short- and long-term placement briefs for projects to generate support for the highest priority actions. 	Climate Action	UOx OBU	-	Short-term, on-going	L	H
7.	Identify adaptation leads and other equivalent working groups in neighbouring counties.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use SWM's good practice research document (done as part of this commission) to identify neighbouring activities 2. Identify contacts either via council central switchboards or other sources such as the Net Zero Hubs or LGA 3. Reach out to these contacts for an initial conversation. 	Climate Action	Relevant partners as specified, including local National Landscapes and GSENZH	-	Short-term	L	H
8.	Develop a set of adaptation capacity building materials that are specifically targeted at executive officers, Cabinet Members	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research what is already out there in terms of materials and identify existing good practice 2. Peruse resources from Climate Outreach who may have some pre-developed materials 3. Engage with executive officers, Cabinet Members and Councillors to determine knowledge gaps to help tailor the materials. 	Climate Action, Comms	CAG District Councils SWM	-	Short-term	L	VH

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
	and Councillors across the county.							
9.	Establish and rollout a climate change adaptation public communications strategy and plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research what is already out there in terms of materials and identify existing good practice 2. Peruse resources from Climate Outreach who may have some pre-developed materials 3. Identify key messages to highlight to local residents, using existing resources such as the CVA and the new Route Map. 	Climate Action, Comms	Climate Outreach District Councils EA LCGs OBU UOx	Defra EA	Short-term	L/M	H
10.	Develop an online hub of adaptation resources.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the content on the existing climate adaptation webpages on the OCC website 2. Collate a list of new resources that could add value and decide where they should be uploaded; adding a new adaptation section to the Climate Action Oxfordshire website may be the most impactful solution 3. Use the new communications materials outlined above to help populate these new pages. 	Climate Action, Comms	-	-	Short-term, on-going	L/M	M
11.	Embed and/or support delivery of climate adaptation into a range of co-dependent strategies and plans being produced by council departments/ external partners.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the relevant strategies and plans included in this action plan that are priority for adaptation integration (e.g. LNRS; see Annex 2 in the main Route Map) 2. Identify a list of additional relevant strategies and plans 3. Engage with strategy/plan owners to discuss embedment. 	Climate Action	-	-	Short-term, on-going	L	VH-I
12.	Embed climate risks into corporate risk assessments.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify key climate risks that are likely to affect the county (using the CVA) 2. Determine to what extent climate risks are discussed in other corporate risk registers and service delivery plans already 	Climate Action	All organisations can embed climate risks into corporate risk assessments Central Govt	-	Short-term	L	H

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
		3. Set up discussions with relevant OCC teams around how to best reflect climate risks into their existing risk registers.						
13.	Develop an approach to capturing data that can help to monitor the impact severe weather events have on the county.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify where the current data gaps are 2. Engage with data holders on how these gaps may be filled and identify where data may exist already 3. Investigate use of the SWIMS tool for an easier and more creative way of capturing extreme weather impacts. 	Climate Action	C&RT District councils EA Fire Service LRF Met Office Police SSEN/ Scottish Gas Network TW	-	Short-term, on-going	L/M	VH
14.	Map climatological and relevant non-climatological data to inform spatial planning.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the relevant datasets that OCC already has access to via engagement with GIS specialists. 2. Map stakeholders who could have other datasets that OCC does not yet have access to. 3. Engage with these data holders to encourage data sharing to assist the county's climate change planning. 	Climate Action	Several partners can help contribute relevant datasets	-	Short-term, on-going	L/M	H
15.	Establish a comprehensive database of local adaptation projects.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Develop a sharable spreadsheet and populate with existing known projects (some of which are referred to in the Route Map) 5. Put out a call to the new Working Group members at every meeting to provide updates 6. Identify a central point of contact to ensure the database is kept up to date. 	Climate Action	Organisations working on climate adaptation projects	-	Short-term	L/M	H

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
16.	Report on progress with delivery of the Route Map and action plan annually to the FOP and set up a monitoring framework.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a monitoring mechanism (see recommendations section) for the Route Map 2. Align the actions in this plan with those in the Route Map to, ideally, have one monitoring mechanism that covers both 3. Use this to keep this plan and the Route Map continuously up to date. 	Climate Action	All partners	Defra EA	On-going	L/M	VH-I
17.	Integrate the consideration of adaptation options into Net Zero retrofit programmes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with DC planners to identify principles being considered in the new adaptation guidance document for developers that could be applied to retrofit programmes 2. Liaise with expert bodies (e.g. BRE) to ascertain if any guidance on integrating adaptation into retrofit schemes already exists 3. Bring this intelligence together to create new retrofit guidance that includes adaptation measures alongside Net Zero considerations. 	Climate Action, Property Services	BRE Developers District council Housing GSENZH Housing Associations	EA MHCLG	Medium-term	M/H	VH
18.	Launch a farm adaptation auditing programme.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share intel from the schools auditing programme with NFU on a potential approach for adaptation auditing 2. Help them to identify farms that are potentially most in need of an audit based on impacts from past events 3. Identify adaptation options that have been implemented on the ground in farm settings already as good practice examples. 	Climate Action	Defra EA Local farming networks NFU	Defra	Medium/ long-term	M/H	VH
19.	Assess how planned digital infrastructure projects could be affected by climate change.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ascertain whether extreme weather or future climate risks have been factored into digital infrastructure projects led by OCC 2. Identify areas that are targeted for intervention and whether there is a particular exposure to climate risks in these areas 3. Appraise options to ensure resilience in future digital projects. 	Digital Infrastructure	DCMS Digital infrastructure providers	DCMS	Medium-term	M	H

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
20.	Embed climate adaptation into new investments and projects designed to boost economic growth.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify existing projects and those in the pipeline 2. Work with the LEP to establish criteria that prioritises future-proofing in investment 3. Use mapping and other intelligence to determine locations that would benefit from investment in resilience to boost growth whilst adapting to climate change. 	Economic Development	DB&T Defra EA LEP Technical consultancies	-	Short-term, on-going	L/M	VH
21.	Continue the rollout of strategic flood management schemes and identification of areas suitable for alternative flood resilience measures.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue dialogue with the EA to align plans for flood management schemes 2. Identify any areas that are prone to flooding but where flood defence schemes may not benefit, to prioritise locations for alternative flood protection measures 3. Use the CVA to identify potentially vulnerable assets and prioritise measures in these areas. 	Flood Risk, Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team	EA LRF NFF	EA Defra	Long-term, on-going	H	VH
22.	Undertake an assessment/ mapping exercise of local roads, cycle paths, pavements, electric vehicle charging points and car parks to determine which are most likely to be at risk from failing/ reduced performance in future climatic conditions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consult with NH and other partners as to whether any mapping has already been undertaken, and source other relevant maps (such as flood maps from the EA) 2. Interrogate data and information on past weather events and their impacts on the highways network 3. Identify gaps in these data prior to undertaking a new mapping exercise, and produce a strategy aiming to fill these gaps. 	Highways	District council Parking teams OCC Flood risk DfT EA NH TW	DfT EA	Medium-term	M/H	VH
23.	Assess the potential for increased asset failure (e.g. street lights, signals, other street furniture) due to climate change.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use data and reports to determine the reasons for asset failure in recent years, and whether these are linked to extreme weather events 2. Identify any patterns that may show that increasing flood or heatwave events have led to an increase in asset failure 	Highways	NH District councils	-	Medium-term	M	H

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
		3. Undertake climate modelling to determine how climate change may exacerbate the problem in future.						
24.	Utilise telemetry and warning systems to provide alerts and notifications of severe weather related issues on the road/cycle network.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify existing systems that could be utilised and engage with the JORT team who have a similar action allocated to them (see action 31) 2. Engage with partners on how to maximise the effectiveness of rolling out a new system 3. Collate a list of users who would benefit most from being in receipt of the alerts. 	Highways	OCC Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team EA Met Office	-	Short-term	L	H
25.	Assess the adequacy of the provision of salt and grit supplies.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Based on recent heatwave events, analyse the impact this has had on grit usage and supplies in Oxfordshire 2. Identify thresholds at which grit spreading is required in heatwave conditions 3. Use climate modelling to determine whether a likely increase in temperatures across the year may lead to changes in the quantity of grit required. 	Highways	NH Met Office	-	Short-term	L/M	M
26.	Assess the viability of current 'green verges' in a future climate.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider whether current cutting regimes may need to change (especially) due to milder winters, and the potential cost implications 2. Identify verges that have already suffered in extreme weather conditions 3. Work with the NE&L team to identify how green verges along highways could perform in future climatic conditions using climate modelling. 	Highways	OCC Natural Environment and Landscapes District councils	NE	Short-term	L/M	H
27.	Identify and prioritise adaptation options on the most popular current and future walking and cycling routes across the county.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify through data and engagement which routes are used most often and for what purpose 2. Determine if these routes have any existing issues (e.g. prone to flooding) 3. Consider adaptation options that will enhance the resilience of these routes to maintain and boost usage. 	Highways, Transport Policy	OCC Natural Environment and Landscapes Sustrans Living Streets District councils	-	Medium-term	M/H	H

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
28.	Ensure biodiversity improvements and tree planting programmes are integrated into local highways works.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish if there are any existing biodiversity improvement plans along highways networks by engaging with colleagues responsible for nature improvement 2. Prioritise which areas may benefit most from biodiversity improvements, factoring in how these could enhance resilience to future extreme weather impacts 3. Develop a pilot scheme in one area prior to rolling out and wider integration. 	Highways, Transport Policy	OCC Natural Environment and Landscapes District councils	NE EA	Short-term	L	H
29.	Undertake an analysis of all County Council-owned bridges and structures to check their viability in a future climate.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the possibility of integrating this with action 21, undertaking an assessment/ mapping exercise on the local road network 2. Interrogate data and information on past weather events and their impacts on bridges and structures 3. Identify gaps in these data prior to undertaking the analysis, and produce a strategy aiming to fill these gaps. 	Highways	C&RT DfT District councils EA HE NR	-	Medium-term	M/H	H
30.	Develop a register of OCC staff who may be most vulnerable during heatwaves and consider provisions to support them.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collate a list of all staff employed by OCC and their roles 2. Determine which of these people are most exposed to the impacts of heatwaves, e.g. outdoor workers, manual labourers, care workers etc. 3. Ensure that protocols are put in place to ensure they are provided with appropriate PPE during hot weather, and that this is written into staff handbooks etc. 	HR	OCC Climate Action, PH	-	Short-term, on-going	L	H
31.	Review, support and strengthen early warning systems and communications of weather thresholds in light of climate change.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use climate projections to determine how the thresholds may need to change, based on best practice 2. Identify existing systems that could be utilised, and engage with Highways who have a similar action allocated to them with regards to the road network (see action 24) 	Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team	OCC Climate Action District council Housing EA LRF	-	Short-term	L	H

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
		3. Collate a list of users who would benefit most from being in receipt of the alerts.		Met Office				
32.	Expand on the Oxfordshire Way , existing work and relationships to empower vulnerable communities to develop climate change adaptation and/or community emergency plans.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify a project lead for this activity who can convene and manage a large range of partners 2. Map out the stakeholders who are likely to be interested in supporting this programme in some form 3. Identify vulnerability via this engagement, using existing mapping (including the CVA) and by liaising with communities who have lived experience of dealing with extreme weather. 	Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team, Climate Action, Flood Risk	District councils EA LCGs LRF/ Fire Service NFF OALC Parish councils TW	EA Defra MHCLG NLCF	Short-term, on-going	M	VH-I
33.	Promote and expand on existing measures that promote building household resilience to climate change.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collate existing pieces of guidance to build from and identify ways these could be brought together into a package of advice for householders 2. Identify whether these measures could be integrated into the public communications campaign suggested in action 9 3. Utilise mapping (e.g. CVA) and identify areas most exposed to climate hazards, aligned with other vulnerabilities, to target interventions in areas that may need them most. 	Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team, Flood Risk	District Council Housing Fire Service Housing Associations LCGs Parish councils SHAP	MHCLG EA NLCF	Medium-term	M/H	H
34.	Embed climate adaptation into any natural environment/ natural capital working groups operating county-wide.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify a list of relevant groups 2. Propose how adaptation could be integrated in Group ToRs 3. Prepare briefing papers on adaptation for Group Chairs and provide a presentation on adaptation at one of the meetings. 	Natural Environment and Landscapes, Climate Action	BBOWT District councils EA FC NE OLNP RSPB	-	Short-term	L	H
35.	Ensure that climate change adaptation forms a key part of the emerging Local	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage with the EA's LNRS lead, who is pioneering integration of adaptation into LNRS strategies 2. Assess how climate change is impacting upon nature recovery right now, and how this is likely to change in future 	Natural Environment and Landscapes	BBOWT EA FC NE NT/HE	-	Short-term	L	VH-I

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
	Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire.	3. Align this with the key priorities of the LNRS.		RSPB WO				
36.	Ensure local tree-planting and biodiversity improvement programmes contribute to climate adaptation objectives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the range of organisations who are planning on implementing tree planting programmes 2. Determine their consideration of the 'right tree right place' principle with respect to climate adaptation 3. Provide advice to lead organisations on how to factor adaptation into future programmes. 	Natural Environment and Landscapes	The myriad of organisations involved in tree planting schemes. Nurseries should also be consulted to ensure demand can be met locally	FC EA NE Defra	Short-term, on-going	L/M	VH
37.	Produce a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Oxfordshire.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider existing (e.g. LNRS) and future planned (e.g. tree) strategies and how these need to be reflected in the new GI strategy 2. Conduct a similar exercise with existing GI projects and their impact on various objectives (biodiversity, adaptation, health and wellbeing etc.) 3. Identify key stakeholders and run a preliminary workshop to kick start first steps. 	Natural Environment and Landscapes	BBOWT C&RT District councils EA FC GWS NE RSPB WO	Defra EA NE	Long-term	M	VH
38.	Ensure Oxfordshire continues to establish a range of Nature Based Solutions and Natural Flood Management (NFM) projects to support adaptation objectives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify existing projects and those in the pipeline 2. Use the development of new strategies (see above) to identify areas that could benefit from new NFM projects 3. Engage with a range of stakeholders on these proposals prior to building a business case. 	Natural Environment and Landscapes	All of the partners listed here that in some way look after the natural environment	EA NE Defra	Short-term, on-going	M/H	VH
39.	Conduct an analysis of which of Oxfordshire's habitats, species and crops could be most affected by climate change, including	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify whether any organisations have already commenced looking into this issue, especially at the national level (Defra) 2. Collaborate with local beneficiaries to mobilise action and identify who has resources to take it forward 	Natural Environment and Landscapes	BBOWT Defra District councils EA FC NE	Defra NE FC	Short-term	M/H	VH-I

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
	the negative impacts of new pests, pathogens or Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS).	3. Use existing literature to identify any emerging or observed trends in pests, pathogens or INNS that are affecting habitats and species present in Oxfordshire.		RSPB UOx WO				
40.	Set up or utilise existing community-led groups that can routinely monitor the areas identified as potentially being most vulnerable to pests and diseases.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peruse the analysis undertaken on which species could be most at risk from the negative impacts of new pests, pathogens or Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) (see above) 2. Identify prone hotspots identified and cross-reference with the location of active community groups 3. Engage with the DCs and these groups to determine appetite on assisting with monitoring. 	Natural Environment and Landscapes	BBOWT Defra District councils EA FC LCGs NE RSPB TVERC WO	Defra NE FC	Medium-term	L/M	VH
41.	Monitor the colonisation of new species due to climate change.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify through the strategies and further engagement whether new species are already establishing themselves in Oxfordshire 2. Identify any existing studies into potential future trends; liaise with BBOWT 3. Establish ways of monitoring future trends (potentially by integrating with the above two actions). 	Natural Environment and Landscapes	BBOWT Defra EA FC LCGs NE RSPB TVERC WO	Defra NE FC	Medium-term	M	M
42.	Embed climate resilience into public sector procurement criteria.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify any current supply chain vulnerabilities that may disrupt operations, based on climate change risks elsewhere 2. Identify any examples of good practice where climate resilience is being embedded into procurement criteria already 3. Develop criteria within tender documentation asking suppliers to comment on whether they have assessed their company risks to climate change, and have any plans in place to address these. 	Procurement	All public sector procurement teams	LEP DLUHC	Medium-term	M	H

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
43.	Continue the schools adaptation plan programme, and expand to other public buildings and assets.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritise which schools would benefit most from a plan, based on various vulnerability parameters 2. Seek funding sources that can help schools implement identified options 3. Consider expanding the programme to include other public buildings in OCC control, prioritising those that are most vulnerable in terms of exposure and who uses the building. 	Property Services, Education	Academy Trusts BRE DfE Technical consultancies	DfE Defra	On-going	M	H
44.	Assess the viability of all other OCC-owned buildings (e.g. libraries, museums, wedding ceremony rooms) in a future climate.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify through asset and estate management strategies which buildings are likely to be retained or sold/ vacated, to help prioritise 2. Undertake initial analysis of potentially vulnerable buildings based on past event exposure and existing mapping, and propose options 3. Identify consultancies who can undertake a climate risk assessment of the remaining buildings to determine for which to prioritise interventions (including retrofit; see below). 	Property Services	OCC Climate Action Technical consultancies	DESNZ	Short-term	M/H	M
45.	Apply the principles of integrating adaptation into retrofitting of OCC-owned buildings.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake the tasks associated with the action above to identify which buildings to prioritise for retrofit 2. Use the principles of the retrofit guidance created for action 16 3. Identify suitable adaptation retrofit options for each building as appropriate. 	Property Services	OCC Climate Action BRE Developers	DESNZ	Medium-term	M/H	M
46.	Research effectiveness of 'cool spaces.'	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn lessons from other authorities (e.g. London) that have developed similar initiatives 2. Develop criteria that constitutes a 'cool space' and collate a list of potential candidate locations 3. Consult existing mapping (e.g. CVA) that can help to highlight where cool spaces may be most beneficial for the community. 	Public Health	BOB ICB District councils Housing Associations LCGs Parish councils	UKHSA NHS	Short-term	M	H

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
47.	Ensure climate adaptation is integrated into the design and planning for new infrastructure assets and schemes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify examples of good practice conducted elsewhere on applying the principles of climate resilient infrastructure standards 2. Learn from the development of the new adaptation planning guidance (refer to the Route Map) 3. Use this to develop new guidance for new infrastructure projects on climate adaptation integration. 	Teams responsible for provision of infrastructure	All other infrastructure providers	-	Short-term, on-going	M	VH
48.	Ensure new local passenger transport vehicles are fitted with air cooling devices.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with the local bus companies to ensure a consistent approach to this action 2. Identify whether any new community vehicles are due to be commissioned in the near-term 3. Integrate an expectation into the procurement of new vehicles that they should include cooling. 	Transport Policy	Bus operators such as Stagecoach DfT	Bus operators DfT	Medium-term, on-going	M/H	M
49.	Ensure climate adaptation is integrated into future updates to the Local Transport Plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use this plan for ideas of ways to incorporate adaptation options into the next LTP revision in 2027 2. Consult with Highways on areas where adaptation measures may be most effective to deal with current known issues 3. Identify how adaptation could be integrated into the LTP revision, e.g. embedding resilience to the 'healthy place shaping' theme. 	Transport Policy	OCC Highways, Climate Action DfT NH Sustrans	DfT	Medium-term	L/M	VH
50.	Analyse how climate change could impact on the local waste collection and disposal service.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage with the DCs; doing this analysis in collaboration covering collection and disposal will save resources and create a holistic picture 2. Determine whether any existing analysis has already been carried out on waste disposal resilience 3. Use mapping and past experiences to identify disposal sites that may already be at risk from the impacts of extreme weather to aid prioritisation. 	Waste Management	District council waste collection teams Waste collection companies	-	Short-term	L/M	H
51.	Ensure waste management practices, storage and treatment facilities are	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify what support can be provided to this action; OCC could potentially act as convenor to ensuring all the county is covered 	Waste Management	Defra EA Wrap	Waste contractors EA	Medium-term	M/H	H

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
	robust to withstand future climatic conditions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether any existing analysis has already been carried out around waste storage and treatment facilities Integrate waste facilities into the development of new infrastructure guidance (see action 47) as appropriate. 		<p>Technical consultancies</p> <p>Waste contractors/ operators</p>	Defra			
52.	Conduct a climate change assessment of minerals extraction processes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether any analysis has already been carried out on how climate change could affect minerals extraction Determine whether any existing analysis has already been carried out around minerals extraction sites Undertake climate modelling and risk assessments of relevant sites; this may be led by OCC or guidance provided by OCC to enable operators to undertake the assessment themselves. 	Waste & Minerals	<p>Defra</p> <p>Landowners/ NFU</p> <p>Relevant operators</p> <p>Technical consultancies</p> <p>Wildlife and environmental organisations</p>	EA Defra Industry	Medium-term	M	H

3 Strengthening the delivery of the Strategic Plan

In developing this plan, it is easy for us to focus purely on the need to adapt to climate change in light of there being a climate emergency, rather than consider the bigger picture. However, we understand that Oxfordshire, led by the County Council, has very specific priorities that need to be taken forward, and we need to consider these priorities in this plan, which we have tried to do throughout the process.

We would like to demonstrate this by setting out our arguments about how climate adaptation can aid the delivery of the key outcomes detailed in the [Oxfordshire Strategic Plan 2023-25](#). This is essentially the county's delivery manual and, in the Council leader's own words, sets out how the council and its partners can *'make sure that everyone in Oxfordshire can take advantage of the opportunities that our vibrant, diverse and innovative county has to offer.'*

The table below lists the majority of the outcomes and how we feel that a county more adapted and resilient to climate change can help strengthen and/or accelerate the likelihood of achieving them, or how the success measures can help ensure the county is resilient to climate change.

Strategic Plan priorities	Objectives given in the Strategic Plan	How adapting to climate change could aid delivery, or visa-versa
The Climate Emergency	Implement together with partners the county's 'pathways to zero carbon' route map, a comprehensive plan for decarbonising Oxfordshire.	As described in this plan, both adaptation and Net Zero actions have the potential to complement each other and accelerate the delivery of both agendas, if done well.
	Work to bring our own buildings and operations to net zero by 2030 and increasingly align our supply chain emissions with our net zero ambitions. Support the retrofit of residential homes to improve energy efficiency.	Improving the efficiency and energy performance of buildings provides an opportunity to minimise future risks to climate change, especially through improvements to ventilation leading to a reduction in overheating.
	Support and promote a shift towards active travel (walking, cycling and use of public transport), reducing the need for private cars and accelerate the transition to electric vehicles by expanding charging capacity across the county.	Air quality may worsen in a future of hotter, drier summers so driving down vehicle use will help to ease the potential health implications of this. Such conditions also provide opportunities for more favourable walking and cycling conditions in future summers.
	Work with partners to continue to build a greener, more resilient and fairer renewable energy network.	Energy infrastructure is at risk from climate change, through (e.g.) increased flooding of sub-stations and power failures during extreme heat. Investing in local, renewable energy schemes will strengthen resilience to the network, reducing the risks of failures.
	Accelerate work on supporting biodiversity and nature recovery in parallel with adaptation to climate change, including	This priority directly benefits adaptation; much of this plan focuses on the importance of nature in the adaptation response.

Strategic Plan priorities	Objectives given in the Strategic Plan	How adapting to climate change could aid delivery, or visa-versa
	potential impacts of extreme weather and supply chain disruption.	
	Support community and business activity to cut carbon emissions and accelerate a shift to a resilient and locally focused zero carbon economy.	A resilient economy will not be realistic if helping businesses to address the risks to climate change is not considered alongside helping them meet net zero targets. Businesses that consistently flood or close during periods of extreme weather will weaken the local economy, and resilience must be built into their processes now.
	Deliver our LED street lighting replacement programme to further reduce the energy, visual and environmental impacts of street lighting.	A review of local highways in terms of their likely ability to cope in a future climate will help to ensure the lights will not go out along key strategic routes during periods of extreme weather.
Transport	Prioritise active travel and public transport on the existing and planned highway network to support healthy lifestyles and address inequalities in transport.	As mentioned previously, there is potential for warmer, drier summers to provide opportunities for more favourable walking and cycling conditions in future summers, but only if (see above) all transport networks are assessed for their climate resilience.
	Develop and implement a plan for improved strategic routes for freight, including exploring rail and reducing large vehicle movements on non-strategic roads.	A review of local highways in terms of their likely ability to cope in a future climate will help to ensure strategic routes are not going to fail. Considering adaptation measures on the network should be built in from the planning stage to ensure future resilience.
	Develop and approve priority local transport and connectivity plan part 2 — area travel plans.	
	Deliver our commitments within the bus service improvement plan and enhanced bus partnership.	As above, and there should also be consideration to overheating risk on buses to aid passenger safety and not discourage bus use in hotter summers.
Nature and Green Spaces	Support and enable the activities from Oxfordshire's community action groups to improve local environments and make nature more accessible.	There is a huge opportunity for existing community action groups to also focus on climate resilience, working together to ensure climate impacts are minimised in their local area and that vulnerable residents are protected. Nature improvement activities can be the key to this.
	Improve the amount and distribution of accessible and safe natural green space within Oxfordshire in conjunction with partners.	Whether green spaces are resilient to future climate change is also significant, as people will not want to visit them if they are (e.g.) often closed due to flooding.

Strategic Plan priorities	Objectives given in the Strategic Plan	How adapting to climate change could aid delivery, or visa-versa
	Develop a countywide nature recovery strategy, including a tree and woodland plan that involves taking part in the Queen's Green Canopy programme, and support the development of a new local nature partnership for Oxfordshire.	Adaptation should be fully integrated into all nature and tree related strategies, as both the key to bolstering resilience (e.g. planting trees in the right place can help to alleviate flood risk and reduce the urban heating effect) and to ensure new and existing plantations are themselves resilient to a future climate.
	Ensure our public rights of way network is safe and effectively maintained.	There is a greater risk that rights of way could become flooded and overgrown due to changing weather patterns; prone areas should be prioritised for maintenance to reduce the risk of possible closure.
	Address the drivers and impact of disadvantage through practical plans delivered with partners to create a more inclusive and sustainable Oxfordshire.	Climate change will affect disadvantaged people disproportionately. Plans to tackle disadvantage should, therefore, include addressing climate-related risks at their heart.
	Provide technology to improve processes around signposting, self-assessment and information about sources of help for local residents.	These sources of help could include how to cope during periods of extreme weather, to build in personal resilience.
	Work with those communities most at risk of poor health, gathering insight to understand the causes of poor health and developing funded action plans to improve residents' health.	Climate change impacts will affect those most prone to poor health more than others, for example through exacerbation of respiratory conditions in heatwaves. These risks should be considered when planning and funding decisions are being made.
Inequalities	Implement the delivery plan for Oxfordshire's digital inclusion strategy together with partners, including how assistive technology can support vulnerable groups to access services and lead a better quality of life.	These solutions could also include aids towards personal resilience, such as mapping 'cool spaces' vulnerable people can visit during heatwaves, an initiative not possible without digital literacy.
	Deliver support programmes to help mitigate the impact of ongoing rises to the cost of living, including launching a crisis fund to support those in most financial need.	As with health outcomes, those less-financially well-off are more at risk of being negatively affected by climate impacts, due to an inability to respond and recover. Ways of helping people deal with such issues can be built into this priority and considered as a criteria for the crisis fund.
	Address local health inequalities through the establishment of a Health Inequalities Forum for Oxfordshire within the new integrated care system.	The Integrated Care System must consider climate adaptation options so that issues should as addressing health inequalities can be tackled through this lens, considering that climate

Strategic Plan priorities	Objectives given in the Strategic Plan	How adapting to climate change could aid delivery, or visa-versa
		impacts are likely to further expand the health inequality gap.
Local democracy	Build greater confidence in our consultation and engagement processes by clearly describing how residents' feedback will be used and where it has helped shape policy or decision-making.	Involving and consulting residents on adaptation options is important so that these options can reflect their needs and are not forced upon them from above.
	Improve our approach to equality and climate impact assessments, ensuring that we set out the effects of our decisions on particular groups of residents.	This is directly related to climate adaptation and links to the above action.
	Provide regular opportunities for residents to engage in open dialogue with cabinet members, including Oxfordshire Conversation Q&A events.	This can be achieved through the establishment of community resilience schemes, where local Councillors are taking a leading in role in supporting and engaging with their residents to strengthen their local area's ability to manage climate impacts.
	Demonstrate the contribution of each scrutiny committee to the development of policy and decision-making through the publication of an annual report.	There may be an opportunity to build decisions made on climate adaptation into this report.
Local businesses and partners	Work with partners, including the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), to enable long-term job creation for local businesses through apprenticeships and business support.	There is a need for a cohort of employees who have adaptation skills, such as flood engineering or overheating retrofit specialists as expertise on these issues is lacking. There is potential for the LEP to encourage growth in this area.
	Work with partners and contractors to develop green skills, promote jobs and investment in the green sector, encouraging sustainable and inclusive development as we transition to a circular economy.	The 'green sector' should also include climate resilience as emphasised above, and also include experts on providing nature-based solutions to multiple issues pertaining the climate crisis.
	Promote career pathways in health and social care for local people and encourage those who are looking to change their careers to start their own enterprises in the sector.	Careers in health and social care are likely to be even more sought after when climate impacts become more prevalent.
	Work with suppliers to maximise additional social and environmental value, as part of our progressive procurement policy and development planning processes, which will benefit local communities.	Environmental value should also include climate resilience criteria; a buyer may have their own house in order but their supplier may fail in periods of extreme weather, so asking for evidence of resilience and business continuity protocols will provide reassurance of maintained delivery.

Strategic Plan priorities	Objectives given in the Strategic Plan	How adapting to climate change could aid delivery, or visa-versa
	Facilitate research and collaboration between businesses, the universities, OxLEP and our health and local authority partners to maintain Oxfordshire as a centre of innovation, turning ideas into real-life solutions in areas including transport, climate, energy and healthcare.	Innovative solutions are needed more for climate adaptation than they are for net zero, and so there as an opportunity to ensure this is a key area of focus.
	Provide a long-term support offer for our voluntary and community sector partners through the implementation of the voluntary and community sector strategy, enabling a strong, diverse and vibrant voluntary and community sector in Oxfordshire.	This links to building community resilience programmes, and the strategy should include a strand to help establish these to build in the strength that the Strategic Plan is aiming for.
Health and wellbeing	Lead on an update to the Oxfordshire health and wellbeing strategy, which includes: implementing the domestic abuse strategic action plan, and combatting the harm caused in local communities from illicit drug use.	Climate change poses potentially significant health and wellbeing risks, and it is important that measures to address potential climate impacts are embedded into the strategy, along with any opportunities that climate change (e.g. drier summers) could bring.
	Address worsening rates of unhealthy weight in Oxfordshire, including addressing a range of underlying factors that cause this trend.	Linked to the above, there are potential opportunities for more favourable summer conditions to encourage exercise. Of equal importance is ensuring resilience to green spaces and (e.g.) cycle paths so that extreme weather does not lead to closure and discouragement of use.
	Maximise access to the opportunities provided by libraries, museums, nature and green spaces and other services to support the health and wellbeing of residents.	These assets should be assessed for their resilience to climate impacts to ensure they can remain open and functional during extreme weather.
	Provide a long-term support offer for our voluntary and community sector partners through the implementation of the voluntary and community sector strategy, enabling a strong, diverse and vibrant voluntary and community sector in Oxfordshire.	As mentioned above, community resilience forms a big part of this, as enabling communities to address climate impacts themselves will build strength and encourage their ability to flourish.
Carers and social care	Help people to live independently and support themselves through personal and local facilities, using the Oxfordshire Way approach.	This could include provision of 'resilience packs' for individuals, so that if increases in extreme weather occurs and results in (e.g.) power outages, individuals are better prepared to look after themselves.

Strategic Plan priorities	Objectives given in the Strategic Plan	How adapting to climate change could aid delivery, or visa-versa
	Focus resources on areas of high deprivation to tackle social isolation and reduce health inequalities.	People in these areas are most likely to be worst affected by the impacts of climate change due to their inability to prepare, respond or recover. This should be a key theme when focusing on provision of resources in these areas.
	Co-produce with carers a refreshed all-ages carers strategy for the health and social care system, which improves carers' wellbeing, and invest in practical solutions to help carers maintain their caring roles.	There is a risk to social care delivery due to climate change, leading to (e.g.) carers unable to access the homes of vulnerable people or care homes becoming too difficult to work in during heatwaves. Climate assessments should take place to ensure climate change does not negatively impact on carer wellbeing.
	Prepare for care quality commission assurance, working with residents and partners to triangulate evidence and further embed continuous improvement.	Building resilience into care home operations and business continuity, i.e. ensuring that they can still operate a quality service during extreme weather, will help to achieve this outcome.
Children and young people	Support the emotional mental health and wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the number of interventions in schools and places which young people frequent.	Schools are also at risk from climate impacts, and to avoid closure or health risks during an increase in periods of extreme weather, climate risk and impact assessments should take place especially at schools that are (e.g.) in flood risk zones or where vulnerable children reside.
	Increase activity that supports pupils with special educational needs and disabilities to have their needs met in mainstream school settings and deliver our special school capacity expansion programme.	As above, except this becomes more important in special schools where pupils may have underlying conditions making them more vulnerable to health issues, especially during heatwaves.
	Support families to care for their children at home where it is safe to do so, integrating assessments and support in the community to prevent children needing to come into the care system.	The quality of a family's home, including aspects such as damp and thermal comfort, play a part in enabling children to stay at home, and any homes that may be at greater risk of issues relating to these could be prioritised for adaptation.

This analysis shows that, to varying degrees, creating a more climate resilient Oxfordshire is commensurate with the priorities of the Strategic Plan and, in many cases, can help to make those priorities more achievable and deliverable, if adaptation is carried out with consideration, thought and effectiveness.

It is important the future iterations of the Strategic Plan consider climate change adaptation throughout their development, and that strengthening climate resilience forms a key part of future county priorities. We hope that the above analysis can assist with this.

4 Next steps and initial recommendations

In the Climate Change Adaptation Route Map for Oxfordshire, we have set out what we believe should be the first steps towards successful implementation. These recommendations have been repeated here, but we have supplemented this with an additional box which provides further clarity on what OCC's role should be specifically.

Maintain engagement with stakeholders

Throughout the development of the Route Map, we have undertaken various rounds of stakeholder engagement, and connections and relationships have been established and built upon. We can be confident in stating that the Route Map has been co-created, as without stakeholder input the action plan would likely have looked very different, less location-specific and not reflective of existing local activity.

In their role as a coordinating body, OCC should build on this extensive engagement quickly, by establishing a new Oxfordshire-wide Climate Adaptation Working Group, fitting into the structure of the new Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP). This should include key stakeholders who are likely to be chiefly responsible for implementing the actions in this plan. This should launch alongside publication of this Route Map so that it is still fresh in people's minds and, initially, should be used to agree who will lead on each of the VH-I 2025/26 actions.

We recommend calling it a 'working group' as this implies it will be active, action-focused and collaborative; in other words, it should exist to take forward the highest priority actions. This would also make it clear that this is not 'just another plan' to sit on a dusty, virtual shelf. The group's Terms of Reference should be reflective of this ambition. SWM can share an example from the West Midlands upon request.

OCC's role

As the recommendation states, OCC should lead on the establishment and setting up of the Working Group, ready to launch by April 2025. The first steps towards achieving this will be to:

- Map those stakeholders that are required on the Working Group based on the stakeholders likely to be key in delivering the VH-I actions both in the Route Map and in this action plan.
- Follow up with those stakeholders that are required to join the Working Group post-Route Map publication to encourage them to participate.
- Develop a Terms of Reference for the Group in consultation with fledgling group members (SWM has sent the West Midlands example as mentioned to OCC).
- Establish a secretariat, an individual who has time and capacity to manage the logistics of the group alongside ensuring any matters arising and actions are taken forward.
- Identify a suitable Chair who has the capacity and skills to lead the Group.
- The secretariat should then mobilise by arranging a date for the first meeting in April 2025.

Identify priorities

The first step is to agree a list of actions with partners that are going to be implemented in the first year, or where implementation will be commenced quickly. We have provided our perspective on how each action should be prioritised for implementation in the main action plan:

VH-I	Very High and Immediate
VH	Very High
H	High
M	Medium

This is based on the following aspects:

- The urgency of the risk based on the risk assessment
- The resource intensity of implementation and the likely cost/benefit
- Potential financing options available
- The co-benefits implementing the action would bring
- The potential scale of the impact
- Whether the action builds on existing work
- Whether the action is a quick win and can be implemented at pace
- Whether there is clear stakeholder expertise to mobilise implementation
- Whether implementation as national or local policy backing.

OCC's role

While the Route Map is owned by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP), as a coordinating body and the better resourced local authority, OCC has the gift to lead on prioritisation of the actions through collation of views from other members of the FOP and other key stakeholders, i.e. those who will form the new Working Group. It is suggested that OCC can:

- Use the first meeting of the Working Group to discuss prioritisation and where OCC is proposing to deviate from our recommendations, allowing Group members to comment.
- Prioritise actions that are under its control, i.e. those outlined in this Plan, where the effect on other partners in re-prioritisation is minimal.

This re-prioritisation will allow for more realistic implementation and ability to establish a more robust monitoring system.

Integration

Wherever possible, adaptation measures should be integrated into Net Zero and other relevant activities to double the impact of the activity whilst minimising resource requirements. This would also ensure adaptation actions do not threaten to contradict Net Zero targets, or visa-versa. Many actions provide suggestions on how to do this.

OCC's role

Oxfordshire's councils are already excelling in many areas of climate mitigation, in particular pertaining building retrofit, transport and behaviour change. It is within OCC's gift to focus on integrating adaptation measures into these projects where possible, as indicated in this plan. It can also advise other Working

Group members on how to do the same, and it may be beneficial to focus one of the meetings specifically on co-benefits.

Adaptation financing

Identifying financing options will be crucial to the successful implementation of some of these actions. Mapping of these opportunities and lobbying of central Government needs to take place hand-in-hand, to encourage appropriate investment. There also needs to be strategic use of public sector funds to lever in appropriate private sector investment. The [100 Together](#) initiative set up in Oxfordshire and the forthcoming Green Investment Pipeline and Prospectus provides a key mechanism to identify private financing sources that may be suitable for adaptation.

OCC's role

The university and/or the LEP are likely to have good insight into financing options for adaptation projects. Where OCC could support this, aside from expressing any of its own knowledge on adaptation financing, is by aligning actions in this plan and in the Route Map with the identified financing options, by utilising the prioritisation process to identify which projects require innovative financing to be taken forward. OCC is key in ensuring that applications for funding are robust, with clear objectives established on what they hope to achieve.

Outcomes and measures of success

Undertaking a cost/benefit analysis of each action will provide some element of quantification and give backing to implementation. A high-level analysis of this has commenced in the form of the economic rationale (see the Route Map), but a more in-depth analysis will be needed when embarking on implementation of actions where investment is required. Where undertaking a cost/benefit analysis is not possible, it is still important to consider what the specific outcomes are for each action, in order to make the case for implementation.

OCC's role

OCC can lead on the development of these outcomes and measures of success for both the Route Map and this action plan. These should follow the principles of SMART goals wherever possible and can be established directly for actions where OCC are likely to be the lead. For other actions in the Route Map where other stakeholders are likely to be the lead, OCC can support with the establishment of these objectives for the highest priority actions. All outcomes, regardless by whom they are derived, should be transparent and communicated to all Working Group members to ensure there is no contradiction or overlap with other actions.

Building in flexibility

Despite having an understanding on the likely broad climatic changes expected to occur in Oxfordshire, it is impossible to be specific about exactly what is going to happen when, due to various elements of uncertainty.

Not knowing exactly when, and to what extent, we need to take action by makes both implementation of adaptation actions, and making the case for implementation, more challenging. This is why the action plan highlights many ‘no regret’ actions that can be implemented in the face of this uncertainty. However, this may be more challenging with others where (e.g.) significant investment is required.

It is, therefore, important to build flexibility into adaptation actions by taking an [adaptation pathways approach](#), which can help to manage the long-term and uncertain nature of climate change impacts. It will allow projects to be scaled up or down depending on how the climate changes in reality, and will also show what level of adaptation needs to take place against a range of plausible scenarios



Iffley Lock and Towpath, near Oxford

OCC's role

The universities, alongside Government departments and arm's-length bodies such as the Environment Agency, Met Office and Defra, are likely to have some intelligence around adaptation pathways and how to build this flexibility into projects and systems, as well a small selection of private consultancies. OCC should establish dialogue with these organisations to identify good practice and gain advice on how to approach this for the projects that require significant investment, or whereby having a greater degree of certainty would make a stronger case for implementation. This can form part of the prioritisation exercise outlined above.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Developing a process for M&E that outlines how and when actions will be assessed and allows one to capture progress against each action is critical. A first step should be to develop a monitoring system, or integrate adaptation actions into an already established monitoring system, which allows for the capturing of progress against each action. A reporting mechanism should also be established to ensure progress is being communicated to partners and senior leaders. OCC should be responsible for the M&E process as the county-wide coordinating body, and should ask for regular updates on progress from the FOP members and other relevant partners responsible for implementation as required.

The Local Partnerships [Climate Adaptation Toolkit for Local Authorities](#) (page 40+) provides more information on M&E and how this can be achieved.

OCC's role

While the Route Map is owned by the FOP, as a coordinating body and the better resourced local authority, OCC will look after the main monitoring process that is implemented post-publication of the Route Map to keep track of the progress of the actions. It is also likely to be the lead organisation for many of the actions, as demonstrated by this action plan.

At a high level, the monitoring 'system' can simply be a spreadsheet that can be shared with the Working Group members which, ideally, can allow any of the action owners to provide updates on progress towards implementing the actions. Where this is not possible, the secretariat can manage this process as part of Working Group member liaison, ensuring that one of the recurring items at Working Group meetings is to review and update the monitoring spreadsheet with progress.

Evaluating implemented actions can also be led by OCC, especially for actions within its control and with consultation on other actions where leads are more likely to be external organisations. This is where establishing measures of success is key, so that evaluation can be made easier and, in some cases, quantifiable.

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