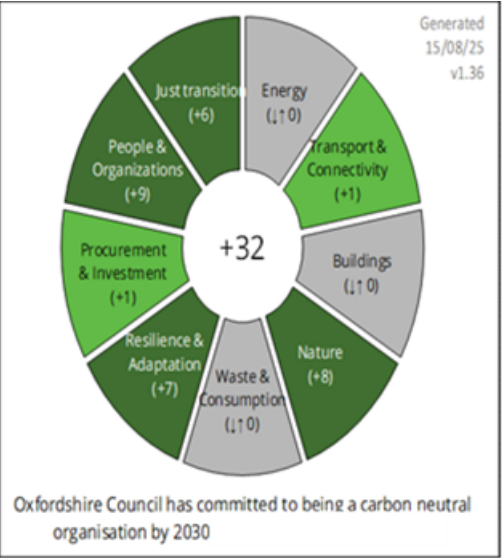


# Climate Impact Assessment

## Summary

Directorate and Service Area	Environment and Highways, Landscape and Nature Recovery Team
What is being assessed	Oxfordshire County Council has been appointed the 'Responsible Authority' to prepare and publish a new Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire. This is a statutory requirement on OCC within the Environment Act 2021.
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	new function since June 2023
Summary of assessment	<p>The project has created a shared, singular vision of nature recovery in Oxfordshire including an agreed set of priorities, actions that need to be achieved, and a map of where these actions could be delivered to create a network of nature in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>The map and documents were developed based on an extensive engagement process that includes workshops, surveys, and a public consultation. In total the strategy</p>
Completed by	Chloe Edwards
Climate action sign off by	Franco Gonzalez
Director sign off by	
Assessment date	05/08/2025



Detail of proposal

Context / Background	<p>Oxfordshire County Council is Responsible Authority for production of an Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). This project has been funded for 2 years (2023 – 2025) by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The preparation of the strategy started in 31st July 2023.</p> <p>The production of the LNRS is a collaborative process with a wide range of stakeholders, and the governance structure sits within the Local Nature Partnership to help facilitate this.</p> <p>Production of the LNRS is governed by the Environment Act 2021 and associated regulations and guidance which sets out steps that all LNRSs need to follow. This LNRS has completed all the steps and has produced both a Statement of Biodiversity Priorities (a written list of agreed priorities for biodiversity in Oxfordshire) and a Local Habitat Map (an interactive online map that shows where certain actions could be delivered to benefit biodiversity in future).</p> <p>14 workshops and events were held in early 2024 to invite local people and organisations to engage with the development of the strategy and shape the priorities, actions, and locations. We worked to reach seldom heard voices during this engagement process. One way was by hosting a range of free workshops (online, in-person, during the week, at the weekend, in the morning, in the evening, in different locations in the county, and offering free food). We also tailored the workshops to be suitable for a range of different people including farmers, landowners, businesses, local nature recovery groups, school children, councillors, nature recovery professionals, local residents, and others. We also held free, online, public webinars which we recorded and shared online for others to view.</p> <p>After the workshops and webinars we prepared a draft version of the strategy and then hosted a public consultation on the strategy. The documents and map were available online for 6-weeks from 18 October 2024 to 01 December 2024 and we invited people to respond through the online survey, by email, by post, and they could get in touch to request accessible versions of different parts of the strategy.</p> <p>The LNRS Project Manger also attended and hosted over 50 different meetings during the 6-week period to help and invite local people and organisations to respond to the consultation. We received 2,143 comments in response to the consultation. The strategy was then adjusted in response to the consultation comments in 2025.</p>
Proposal	<p>The Environment Act 2021 introduced a requirement to prepare and publish a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). LNRSs are an England-wide system of spatial strategies that establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature’s recovery and provide wider environmental benefits. They agree priorities for nature’s recovery, map the most valuable existing habitat for nature, and map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals.</p> <p>In late June 2023 Oxfordshire County Council was appointed Responsible Authority for the Oxfordshire LNRS, and the LNRS Project Manager was appointed on 31st July 2023.</p> <p>A LNRS steering group was formed within Oxfordshire’s Local Nature Partnership, led by Oxfordshire County Council. This governance structure was approved by Cabinet in May 2023, and has helped to ensure the LNRS is produced in a collaborative manner. The steering group is supported by several working groups with each leading on different requirements of the LNRS (see image below in this table).</p> <p>Each and all of the District and City Councils and Natural England were appointed as ‘Supporting Authorities’ to support the preparation of the strategy and they have all been closely involved in the development work and sit on the steering group and other groups.</p> <p>The process of producing an LNRS is set out in statutory guidance from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).</p>
Evidence / Intelligence	<p>During the strategy preparation, the decision making has been informed by input from a great range of people, over 3,000 formal responses to the strategy’s workshops, surveys, and public consultation. Their voices helped to draft the priorities for nature recovery and biodiversity in Oxfordshire, agreeing which are of greatest importance, helped to identify important species locally, and influenced the locations that were mapped as important for nature recovery actions.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council invited a wide range of groups to guide and oversee different decisions that led to the creation of the strategy. The organogram in the previous section of this table shows that about 140 people met with the LNRS regularly throughout the strategy creation to guide decisions. The final decision making was typically completed by the Steering Group.</p>

<b>Alternatives considered / rejected</b>	<p>The LNRS process is a statutory five-step process clearly outlined with both statutory and non-statutory guidance which we followed. To achieve everything, this LNRS completed a two-step engagement process. In the first step we held a round of initial workshops with a range of people to hear about initial priorities that local people and organisations held for nature recovery in the county. We then assimilated this with pre-existing information and data about biodiversity and nature recovery in Oxfordshire. Then, we prepared a draft version of the strategy to present back to people in the second step of engagement where we hosted meetings and an online public consultation to show local people and organisations what we had created with their guidance and asked them whether we had got things right, wrong, and we asked what should be changed before we finalised the strategy. We received strong, positive participation with over 2,100 responses to this and we have since adjusted the strategy based on these responses.</p> <p>The consultation and engagement team described that this was a new and different approach for Oxfordshire and can see that it offers people further opportunity to develop the decision-making process together with the Council.</p>
---	---

Category	Impact criteria	Score (-3 to +3)	Description of impact	Actions or mitigations to reduce negative impacts	Action owner	Timeline and monitoring arrangements
Energy	Increases energy efficiency	N/A				
Energy	Promotes a switch to low-carbon or renewable energy	N/A				
Energy	Promotes resilient, local, smart energy systems	N/A				
Transport & Connectivity	Reduces need to travel and/or the need for private car	N/A				
Transport & Connectivity	Supports active travel		1 Enables Sustainable active travel plans to use the strategy to identify key corridors on the map for targeted work to achieve multiple benefits, both for nature and for people to travel through suitable green/blue spaces			
Transport & Connectivity	Increases use of public transport	N/A				
Transport & Connectivity	Accelerates electrification of transport	N/A				
Buildings	Promotes net zero new builds and developments	N/A				
Buildings	Accelerates retrofitting of existing buildings	N/A				
Nature	Protects, restores or enhances biodiversity, landscape and ecosystems		3 The strategy document has created a statement of priorities to achieve for biodiversity and created a map that highlights areas for nature recovery which would create a much larger, more resilient network of nature that is joined up and benefits nature and builds significant resilience to a changing climate as well as a range of other social, and economica benefits for local people and organisations			
Nature	Develops blue and green infrastructure		3 The strategy document will create a map and statement of priorities that highlights areas for nature recovery as supported by stakeholders to facilitate urgent, efficient nature recovery actions that stakeholders across Oxfordshire want many of which are long, connected corridors including along existing green infrastucture and could be used to identify new areas to enhance infrastructure into the future.			
Nature	Improves access to nature and green spaces		2 The LNRS has idneitified priority neighbourhoods in the county where action to enhance green spaces and access to green spaces could hold paritcualr benefits for the people in those areas and could help to reduce inequalities in Oxfordshire.			
Waste & Consumption	Reduces overall consumption	N/A				
Waste & Consumption	Supports waste prevention and drive reuse and recycling	N/A				

Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience to flooding		Mitigating flooding was repeatedly rated as the top priority for people and organisations in Oxfordshire and the LNRS has mapped actions to enhance and create habitats with particular emphasis on doing this in Oxfordshire's floodplains and along Oxfordshire's rivers to improve the quality of freshwater habitats as well as improving water quality and reducing flooding for homes and businesses
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience to other extreme weather events (e.g., storms, cold snaps, heatwaves, droughts)		Delivering the LNRS network of habitats would create a more resilient environment in Oxfordshire which would be more resilient when extreme weather events occur (more wetlands to hold flood water and protect homes, more trees in urban areas to cool people and infrastructure, and a more connected network to enable local species to move and adapt to climate change).
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience of council services, communities, energy systems, transport infrastructure and/or supply chains		If the LNRS network of habitats could be delivered, the natural environment would be more capable of coping with extreme weather conditions and changing weather and the local services such as transport and infrastructure would be expected to struggle less.
Procurement & Investment	Procurement practices prioritise low-carbon options, circular economy and sustainability		Procurement of services will consider locality to Oxfordshire and low impact provision of services throughout the development of the LNRS.
Procurement & Investment	Investment being considered supports climate action/ is consistent with path to net zero	N/A	
People & Organizations	Drives behavioural change to address the climate and ecological emergency		This project has created a shared, singular vision of the priority nature recovery actions across Oxfordshire including an emphasis on improved behaviours needed to recover nature (benefitting Oxfordshire's resilience to climate change and Oxfordshire's biodiversity).

People & Organizations	Drives organizational and systemic change to address the climate and ecological emergency	<p>This project has worked in partnership to create a shared, singular vision for actions and locations to achieve nature recovery in Oxfordshire. This has involved working closely with partners across organisations in Oxfordshire to improve and develop working relationships across and within organisations. Working closely with district and city councils as well as NGO partners and partnerships for nature across Oxfordshire. Adopting the LNRS has a powerful opportunity to represent many and agree a single vision for Oxfordshire.</p>
Just transition	Promotes green innovation and job creation	<p>The creation of a strategy that requires future delivery of actions is expected to promote the need for future jobs in nature recovery and conservation.</p>
Just transition	Promotes health and wellbeing	<p>This strategy focuses on nature recovery which people will deliver and will benefit from. Health and wellbeing is an inseparable aspect of nature recovery actions. As actions are taken they benefit the health of both people and nature and the LNRS highlights the importance of the relationship between nature and people.</p>
Just transition	Reduces poverty and inequality	<p>The strategy recognises that access to nature is unequal in Oxfordshire and we have incorporated research about 16 priority neighbourhoods in Oxfordshire which have deprived access to greenspace to focus actions to recover nature in these spaces to help reduce the inequality of access to, and benefits from, nature.</p>