

# 2020 Climate Action Framework



FOR A THRIVING OXFORDSHIRE





## Tackling the Climate Emergency

The 'decade of action' required on climate change has begun with the COVID-19 pandemic. It has changed our world almost overnight. The pandemic has hurt us, and it has changed us. We must not allow it to hold us back: it is our responsibility to use this time of change to achieve our goals.

There will be significant challenges to our ambitions. It requires rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society and a strong lead from national government. But we are experiencing a moment in time at which our pace of learning and appetite for change is rapid. We have adopted new skills and adapted how we live and work. It is this ingenuity that we will draw upon as we address the climate emergency. We will 'build back better' for a zero-carbon, resilient economy, strong communities and a healthy place to live.

The future we will create will not be based on business-as-usual decision making. The government is reprioritising its investment plans. Oxfordshire County Council is doing the same: reprioritising road space and favouring digital connectivity.

Oxfordshire has a unique foundation: proactive and engaged communities, cutting-edge third sector and community energy, a high-potential low-carbon and innovation economy, world-class academia, a proactive public sector, and a track record of collaboration on transport and energy challenges.

**Zero carbon is integral to our vision for a thriving county: we will create a resilient economy based on zero-carbon jobs and future-proofed infrastructure in order to achieve liveable, healthy communities.**

**Councillor Ian Hudspeth**

Leader of Oxfordshire County Council

This Climate Action Framework sets out our guiding principles and how we will mobilise to tackle this challenge through two connected roles:

- **Transforming our own organisation**
- **Enabling a zero-carbon Oxfordshire**

## THE PRINCIPLES GUIDING OUR WORK ON CLIMATE ACTION:

### Evidenced-based decisions

- We hold ourselves to account and take an open, smart approach to data gathering and sharing to accelerate our ability to re-prioritise investment
- We work with our world-class universities to develop the evidence to inform decisions

### Maximise Oxfordshire benefits

- You can count on our spending to support the growth of low-carbon jobs
- We support communities to own energy projects and retain the benefits locally

## WE ARE FOCUSING ON:

- 1 Being a Climate Active Council**  
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- 5 Enabling a net-zero Carbon Oxfordshire by 2050**  
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## OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### Healthy Place Shaping

- We create sustainable, well-designed communities in which it is easy to eat well, be active and healthy

### Inclusive transition

- We support all our communities and businesses to participate
- We ensure costs and benefits are fairly shared
- We seek to design out energy inequality

### Continuous improvement and Living Laboratory

- Our estate is a 'Living Lab' to trial new ideas and accelerate innovation
- We are actively seeking new business models to make investment for zero-carbon viable
- We share our learning

### Recognising a role for everyone

- We are asking everyone to participate: our staff, communities, suppliers, businesses, partners and national government
- We build partnerships to tackle systemic challenges



# A Climate Active Council

## Mobilising change

The Council's Climate Action Team is implementing a two-year climate action mobilisation phase that focuses on the priority teams, services and policies that are identified in this framework.

## A role for everyone

The council's vision and values recognise the importance of climate action to our local prosperity and wellbeing. Supported by our Delivering the Future Together staff development programme we are embedding the skills, tools and culture so that:

- All our staff have the tools to play their role
- Our decisions consider carbon impacts
- Directors and managers have a low-carbon vision for their services
- All staff act as ambassadors for climate action with our partners.

## Holding ourselves to account

We will develop our annual carbon emissions reporting over time to report a wider scope than our 2030 net-zero operational target to help us monitor, evaluate, review and communicate our progress.

We also commit to report against this Climate Action Framework in order to inform future corporate planning in the council.





## Operating at net-zero carbon by 2030

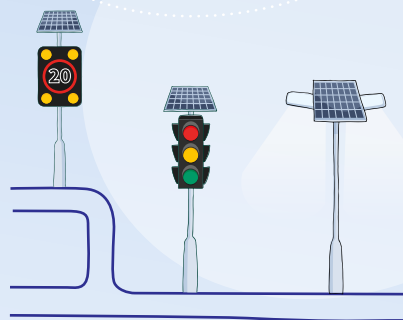
### OUR COMMITMENT

As your council we are leading the way and are committed to be carbon neutral by 2030 for our major operational footprint.



**500**

Fleet vehicles, including the fire service

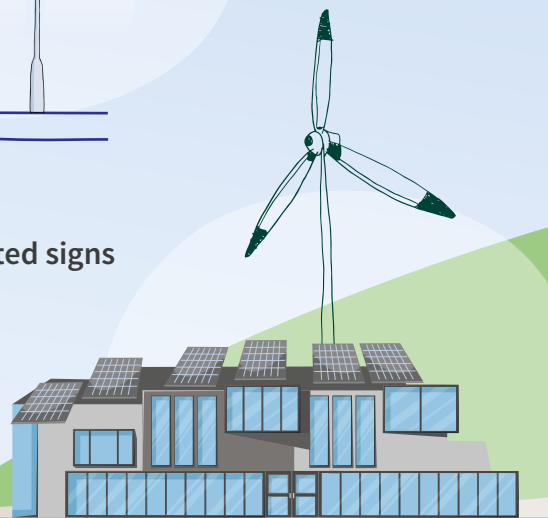


**60,000**

Streetlights, illuminated signs and traffic signals



Staff business **mileage**



Energy use in around

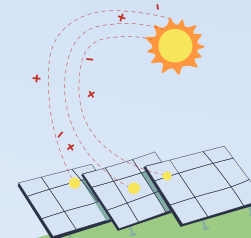
**140 buildings**

that the council occupies

### Resilience

The council, residents and business alike have all adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic. We can see that some of these adaptations also reduce carbon emissions. As we emerge, you will see us maintain and build on that resilience by:

- Developing digital connectivity and skills to ensure continuity of services and to reduce travel emissions and support rationalising our estate
- Optimising our property portfolio to avoid unnecessary travel and to focus upon infrastructure necessary to deliver critical services
- Reducing reliance on grid electricity by generating our own clean power and reducing demand.



### Transformation

Residents, businesses, our staff and partners are going to see a very different council. By 2024, the majority of our cars will be electric and by 2028 the same will be true of our vans. Virtual meetings will be the norm and through encouraging active travel, and local pool cars and bikes, by 2030 staff travel by private fossil fuelled vehicles will be the exception.

# 2 Operating at net-zero carbon by 2030

Reinvigorating our carbon management plan

Residents can expect value-for-money from our invest-to-save approach. Business can rely on us to pave the way through research and development partnerships that unlock new opportunities. Everyone can expect us to achieve real carbon emissions reductions: offsetting is an option of last resort.

## Take action now

Our actions embody an 'energy hierarchy' approach to ensure best value and reduce demand.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



1

### Design in energy saving from the outset

- New best practice building design standards adopted
- Virtual meetings policy as preference to travel
- Encourage and enable effective home working
- Increase staff use of active and zero-carbon travel options, particularly e-bikes

2

### Energy efficient

- Rigorous building energy management practice introduced
- Streetlighting conversion to LED
- Purchasing standards introduced to reduce energy demand from equipment



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### Alternative fuel

- Continue implementation of our 'electric default' car and van replacement policy
- Support staff to move to transition from fossil to electric cars

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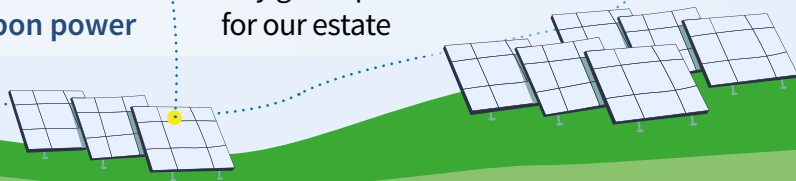
### Generate

- Build the business case for solar on our roofs, land and carparks

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### Buy zero carbon power

- Buy green power for our estate



## Plan ahead

Following our continuous improvement approach we will:

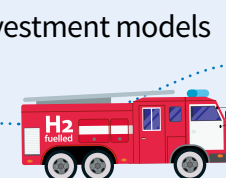
- Publish a new property strategy to support net zero-carbon buildings and travel
- Develop a new invest-to-save programme to reduce power use in buildings
- Convert traffic lighting to LED
- Optimise streetlighting demand through smart controls
- Introduce electric minibuses
- Identify ways to improve biodiversity and carbon capture on our green estate
- Implement a 'one fleet' management approach to help rationalise fleet
- Investigate opportunities to buy remaining green power direct from a local generator.



## Pilot, engage government and develop new business models

Through our Living Lab approach and Innovation Hub, support research and development of:

- Heat pumps, heat networks and green gas for our buildings
- Low-carbon options for large vehicles e.g. hydrogen
- Smart buildings innovations to improve control
- Digital-first approaches to specialist service delivery
- Battery storage, flexibility and peer-to-peer trading to improve business cases
- Solar-powered street lighting
- Energy service contracts and innovative investment models
- Offsetting that delivers local social value.

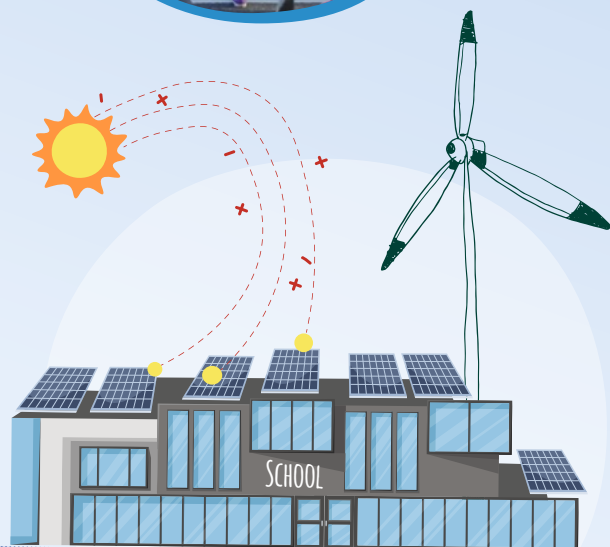


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## Supporting schools



Protecting the environment is an important part of schools' community values. Maintained schools are responsible for their operations and energy and maintenance budgets, but often lack the resources and capacity to reduce energy costs and carbon. Parents, teachers and pupils can rely on us to support them to address this challenge.



We want schools to be able to set and deliver against their own climate action targets, and to act as ambassadors in their communities. We will act to ensure:

- Schools have support to take action on energy efficiency
- Schools have access to the educational materials needed to engage pupils
- Promote a policy that newly approved schools are built to net-zero standards
- Innovative business models support all schools to generate and store their own energy
- Our services to schools and pupils operate at low carbon and impact e.g. cleaning, catering, maintenance, home to school transport
- We rapidly expand our 'School Streets' approach for more walking and cycling.



4

## Supply chain

We spend over £500m a year with suppliers delivering critical services for residents. Creating a new social value policy will lever more benefits from our purchasing and drive the market for low-carbon goods and services, supporting Oxfordshire's high potential low-carbon economy.

For climate action the policy will set a number of minimum expectations from our suppliers whilst allowing the flexibility to drive innovation and higher standards where the market is more advanced. It will:

- Clearly define best practice standards for goods and services
- Require reporting of carbon emissions within suppliers' control (called "direct" or "scope 1 and 2" emissions)
- Include pass/fail sustainability pre-screening questions
- Apply sustainability, innovation and circular economy principles at the outset and in our soft market testing for major contracts.

Over 80% of the Council's spend is with our 25 biggest suppliers.

By working with those suppliers, we have the greatest ability to influence the carbons emissions impact of our purchasing and move towards a circular economy.

## SPOTLIGHT ON... Our suppliers

Skanska, our highways contractor, is committed to working with Oxfordshire County Council for an accelerated decarbonisation of our highways contract, including taking a range of steps to reduce the embodied carbon in its infrastructure projects.





# How we will achieve it

We will transform our own organisation, support our schools and work closely with our suppliers. By building climate action into every decision, we will become carbon neutral by 2030.



## BUILD THE FOUNDATIONS

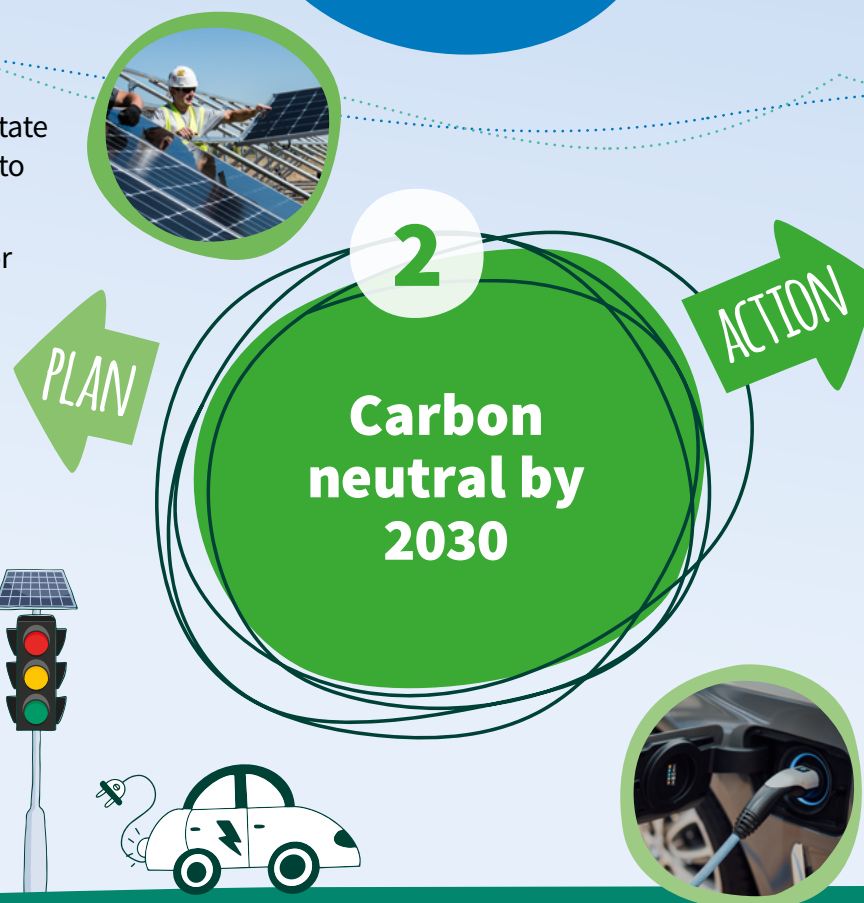
- Integrate climate action as a key theme in the council's vision and organisational development review

- Publish our property strategy to enable estate rationalisation and enhanced investment to reduce carbon emissions
- Develop an invest-to-save programme for energy efficiency and generation
- Review natural carbon management opportunities on our estate
- Develop approaches to offset delivering local social value
- Pilot 'flexibility' trials under Local Energy Oxfordshire
- Develop traffic lighting and signage conversion programme
- Publish workplace electric vehicle charging strategy
- Release of OCC property to minimise the demand for energy



## TAKE ACTION

- Introduce a climate action toolkit and training programme for staff
- Integrate climate action into the business planning for all services
- Publish emissions reporting



- Introduce new corporate building design standards in line with the industry Climate Emergency Design Guide standards
- Buy green electricity for our estate from October 2020
- Deliver our carbon management plan and new annual KPIs by end 2020
- Deliver our streetlighting LED conversion programme
- Continue to roll out our 'fleet to electric' policy
- Mobilise an organisational travel programme
- Introduce a staff incentive scheme to purchase EV
- Develop a "One Fleet" management approach to support rationalisation of fleet

# How we will achieve it



## BUILD THE FOUNDATIONS

- Review our structural maintenance programmes and commercial offers to schools for sustainability opportunities
- Agree approach to reduce carbon in 'home to school' transport
- Further develop and expand a model for installing solar on schools



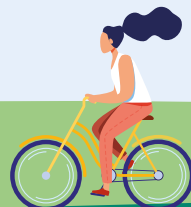
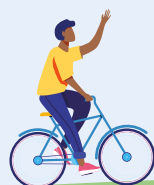
## TAKE ACTION

- Introduce a new support package for maintained schools to reduce carbon
- Introduce new standards for academy builds
- Publish initiatives to accelerate School Streets roll out

- Explore 'smart' approaches to carbon management in supply chain
- Collaborate to introduce climate action 'good practice' terms as part of our partnering with the third sector



- Publish our social value policy to guide future contracts
- Introduce training for our procurement staff and key contract managers
- Produce climate action opportunity plans with key existing suppliers



# 5 Enabling a zero carbon Oxfordshire by 2050:

## Partnerships

Our vision is to shape a thriving Oxfordshire - achieving liveable, healthy places. It is a vision for prosperity in an enhanced natural environment and within global carbon limits.

Together with the leaders and chief executives of all local authorities across Oxfordshire, we have committed to join together to tackle the Climate Emergency. With wider Oxfordshire partners we are signatories to Oxfordshire's Energy Strategy, setting out a pathway to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2030, as an ambitious step on the road to net zero by 2050.

The council's long-term funding of Community Action Groups created the biggest climate network reaching 80,000 people in 2018. They pioneer local food production and land management through to community-owned and operated hydro and solar power.

Review of the local partnerships and how they enable climate action and deliver the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy

Support the Local Industrial Strategy to position Oxfordshire as a leader in clean growth

Support Community Action Groups to expand and diversify their audiences. Other engagement initiatives like Oxfordshire Open Thought

Oxfordshire Growth Board  
England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and businesses

Communities

Our suppliers

Participate in an Oxfordshire cross-council climate group to join up our actions

Local Government

Central Government

Support policies that enable zero-carbon developments within the "Oxfordshire Plan 2050"

Support cross-sector innovation to move towards a circular economy

Universities

Schools and colleges of Oxfordshire



# 5 Enabling a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire by 2050:

Energy Strategy

## Oxfordshire's Energy Strategy

Alongside a range of local partners Oxfordshire County Council is a signatory to OxLEP's Oxfordshire Energy Strategy aiming to:

**1** Secure  
a smart, modern,  
clean energy  
infrastructure in  
Oxfordshire

**2** Reduce  
emissions by 50%  
by 2030 setting a  
pathway to achieving  
net zero by 2050

**3** Enhance  
partnership working  
across Oxfordshire to  
focus on energy  
challenges and  
financing

It is ambitious. To reduce emissions by 50% by 2030 calls for:

**5 times more**  
solar power in  
county

**40% of heating**  
to be renewable

New housing to meet  
the highest possible  
**energy standards**

**Electric and active travel**  
as the new normal

Retrofitting  
**4,000 homes**  
a year to a 'C' standard  
or higher

It is cross cutting: no single partner owns all the workstreams in the energy strategy. Its goals will be met in the shift to electric transport and heating. The commitment to 100,000 new homes in Oxfordshire by 2030 presents a huge opportunity to deliver on its ambition. The low-carbon investment required is estimated at £300 million annually with the potential to add £1.35 billion annually to the Oxfordshire economy by 2030, creating over 11,000 new jobs.

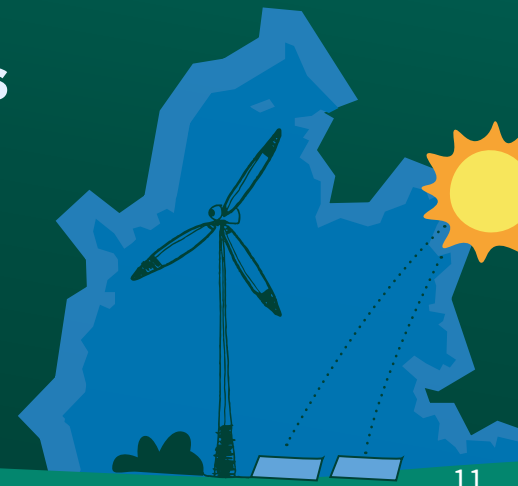
## Local Energy Oxfordshire (Project LEO)

LEO is a national demonstrator tackling energy at the community scale: it finds ways to invest in zero-carbon energy solutions that are only possible across multiple homes, schools or businesses.

Oxfordshire's Low Carbon Hub is developing new community-owned energy projects through its Smart and Fair Neighbourhood programme that will be possible thanks to a new local energy trading market developed by Scottish and Southern Energy Networks.

The council will deliver a new spatial 'energy insights' tool to identify potential for generation and energy efficiency across the county.

This strong Oxfordshire coalition involving public sector, community, academia and private sector, is a model for addressing systemic energy challenges.



# Enabling a Zero-carbon Oxfordshire by 2050:

*Build back better*

The pandemic has shown both the adaptability of communities and a growing desire to 'build back better'. As we consider our recovery we look to accelerate our work on climate action in 3 ways:



➡ **Maintaining positive changes for the long-term**

➡ **Seeking climate and connectivity investment to support economic recovery and jobs**

➡ **Focussing on building future resilience:**

- Supporting a local zero-carbon energy system that moves away from reliance on global fuel markets
- Enhancing digital connectivity

## SPOTLIGHT ON...

### Resilience and the Circular Economy

A 'circular economy' is one which enhances resilience as we collectively:

- Design out waste and pollution
- Keep products and materials in use
- Regenerate natural systems

The council is just one player and a 'circular economy' inherently depends on the whole system. So, we are committed to learning about the circular economy through our staff development programme. We will improve our ability to spot, support and operate in a way that leads towards this kind of system.

## Investment

The future will not be built on business-as-usual decision making. Central government is reviewing policies and re-prioritising funding, and we will need to do that same, prioritising investment in full fibre connectivity across Oxfordshire as a preference to new roads, active travel over single-occupancy cars, and planning and economic development policies that require the highest design standards from the outset.

We will create the evidence base to review and re-orientate investment towards the objectives of this strategy through a new approach to the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy. Moving to a zero-carbon Oxfordshire will also require substantial new investment – from the private sector and central government. A refresh of the low-carbon economy report for Oxfordshire will help identify the additional finance needed. Our Local Industrial Strategy and energy and transport innovation projects will help to de-risk business models to attract private investment. There will be roles for new partnerships on investment and ownership models. The council's commercial investment strategy already recognises the opportunity to align with energy strategy objectives in the county. We are committed to move to align our treasury investment with environmental and social governance best practice.

# What we want to achieve

Residents and businesses of Oxfordshire can rely on the council to use its strategic policy roles and partnerships to take climate action. For example, through our supporting role in the development the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (OP2050) which will set out the basis for future planning decisions about housing and infrastructure. Another important policy that the council leads on is the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.

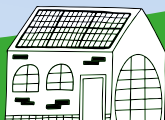
## TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY



**Through our local transport planning role we will:**

- Prioritise digital infrastructure over road building: full fibre broadband across Oxfordshire will replace many journeys
- Increase walking and cycling: it will be accessible and normal
- Enable safe, convenient electric public transport across and between towns
- Accelerate the rise of electric, shared and autonomous travel
- Increasingly deprioritise journeys by single occupancy private car
- Support electrification of rail networks in Oxfordshire.

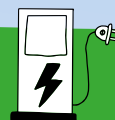
## BUILDINGS



**By engaging with the city and district councils through OP2050 spatial strategy, and Oxfordshire communities we support initiatives that lead to:**

- Extensive retrofitting of existing buildings
- Increase the proportion of work on fuel poverty delivered through improved building standards
- Net zero-carbon new developments, with high fabric standards, renewables maximised on site and low embodied carbon.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND SYSTEMS



**Through our strategic planning and economic development roles, and working as a regional partner we will develop policy, support others, take part in innovation projects and channel our investment for:**

- Smart, flexible, local renewable generation that enhances local resilience identified in strategic planning
- Good design that favours zero-carbon connectivity and low-impact living from the outset
- Enabling electric charging infrastructure accessible for all residents
- Community ownership of energy generation and storage assets.

## NATURAL CARBON MANAGEMENT



**Through our planning policies and as a community and regional partner we will ensure Oxfordshire:**

- Takes advantage of 'natural capital' assets such as soils, woodlands, hedges and ponds in order to capture and store carbon and are valued by communities
- Explore the opportunities for protection, conservation and enhancement of carbon capture and storage through our natural environments
- Support the community ambition to double tree cover in Oxfordshire with 'the right tree in the right place', as part of a holistic approach to enhance the county's biodiversity and green infrastructure.

## WASTE AND CONSUMPTION



**By leading county-wide partnerships, supporting residents and reviewing our own policies we will:**

- Maximise waste reduction and recycling
- Target zero growth in waste per person
- Work towards assessing whole-system carbon impacts in our waste strategy and seek to influence national policy
- Support both the consumption of healthy and sustainable food, and reducing food waste throughout the supply chain.





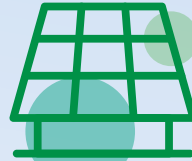
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## Enabling a zero-carbon Oxfordshire by 2050



### Developing partnerships

- Support Community Action Groups to expand, diversify and collaborate with civil society organisations
- Review partnership options for cross-county working on climate action
- Build upon our strong track record of working with the universities to shape research programme that serve Oxfordshire and lead the world
- Support Living Oxford to leverage Living Labs data and insights



### Investment

- Develop zero-carbon investment options under the commercial investment strategy to support Oxfordshire Energy Strategy
- Review our Property Investment Strategy to account for its contribution to our zero-carbon commitment and to continue to explore ethical, sustainable and good governance investment practices
- Update Oxfordshire's Low-carbon Economy report to provide evidence base to reprioritised infrastructure strategy
- Produce an Environmental, Social and Governance policy for treasury management investments
- Review and plan for the strategic investment requirements of the Oxfordshire Energy and Local Industrial Strategies



### Transport and Connectivity

- Deliver a new Local Transport and Connectivity Plan supporting a zero-carbon ambition
- Implement post-covid schemes to support active travel
- Deliver our Connecting Oxford schemes including the Zero Emissions Zone
- Develop and implement local cycling and walking infrastructure plans
- Pilot low traffic neighbourhoods
- Publish cross-county EV charging infrastructure strategy
- Roll-out up to 300 electric vehicle charge points in over-night charging hubs by 2022
- Support electrification of bus fleet in Oxford



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## Enabling a zero-carbon Oxfordshire by 2050



### Infrastructure and systems

- Publish an Oxford Infrastructure Strategy with a new carbon prioritisation on investments
- Develop the Countywide Energy Insights tool for identify renewable and energy efficiency opportunities
- Deliver the Local Energy Oxfordshire (LEO) partnership project and plan for a strategic energy partnership post-LEO



### Buildings

- Support policy for net-zero-carbon development in line with industry best practice in the Oxfordshire Plan 2050
- Support policy identifying sites for strategic renewables in Oxfordshire Plan 2050
- Introduce an Innovation Planning Framework to guide major development
- Support community and social enterprise-led initiatives for zero-carbon, liveable housing developments
- Through LEP, support skills strategies that accelerate a zero-carbon Oxfordshire (eg. jobs to deliver high quality retrofit)
- With partners, review role of 'Oxfordshire bonds' to accelerate investment in retrofit and renewables



### Natural carbon management

- Publish a nature recovery strategy to introduce new policy in the planning system
- Work with partners to launch a tree planting opportunity tool for Oxfordshire and develop funding models to support investment in increasing tree cover
- Introduce biodiversity net gain targets into planning policy



### Waste and consumption

- Work in partnership to deliver the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy
- Develop cross-Oxfordshire engagement on the role of 'circular economy'
- Work towards whole system carbon impacts in our waste strategy and seek to influence national policy