

CABINET
– 24 February 2026

Climate Action Framework 2026 - 2030

Report by the Director of Economy and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Approve the Oxfordshire Climate Action Framework 2026-2030.

Executive Summary

- 2. The Oxfordshire Climate Action Framework (CAF) 2026 – 2030 (Annex 1) sets out the council’s vision and priorities for a greener, fairer, and healthier county as per the [Strategic Plan 2025 - 2028](#). Building on significant progress since the previous CAF in 2020, the framework aims for carbon neutrality¹ of the council’s own estates and operations by 2030 and a net zero Oxfordshire as early as possible in the 2040s as set out in the Strategic Plan. It integrates carbon emissions reduction, resilience to climate impacts, nature recovery, and waste reduction, emphasising collaboration, community empowerment, and economic resilience.
- 3. The CAF refresh provides an update on the county’s greenhouse gas emissions, and an overview of the council’s roles and responsibilities with regards to climate action. It then examines the council’s progress and priorities under nine key themes:
 - 1. Fair Transition
 - 2. Enabling a green economy
 - 3. Built environment
 - 4. Movement and connectivity
 - 5. Energy
 - 6. Natural environment and land use
 - 7. Waste and resources
 - 8. Our Own Estate: Zero carbon council and beyond
 - 9. Engagement and capacity building

¹ Definitions for ‘carbon neutral’, ‘net zero’ and other technical terms can be found in the glossary of the Climate Action Framework 2026 - 2030

4. The CAF also refreshes the council's approach to governance of its climate action programme, the most significant change being moving from six monthly to annual reporting to Cabinet every autumn.
5. A graphically designed version of the CAF will be made available in due course.

Background

6. The current [OCC Climate Action Framework](#) was published in 2020, after the council declared a climate emergency in 2019 alongside many other local authorities across the UK. Since then, the council's response to the climate crisis has become more developed. The 2020 CAF reflects a moment in time when climate action as a standalone service at the council was in its infancy, and the council was just beginning to understand the scale of the challenge to reach net zero for its estate and operations and for the wider county.
7. Since then, teams across the council have developed the following relevant strategies and initiatives:
 - [Local Transport and Connectivity Plan](#)
 - [Biodiversity Action Framework](#) and [Action Plan](#)
 - [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#)
 - [Green Prospectus](#)
 - [Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire \(PaZCO\)](#)
 - [Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan](#)
 - [Climate Adaptation Route Map](#)
 - [Circular Economy Plan](#)
 - Climate Engagement Plan
 - Carbon Management Plan
8. The Retrofit Action Plan, Local Area Energy Plan and Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy are underway. Over 500 colleagues are carbon literacy trained, and climate outcomes are integrated into some key strategies.
9. The wider policy and social context has changed significantly since 2020 which the CAF refresh aims to address.
10. Devolution may present new regional opportunities for delivery. Through both the Local Area Energy Planning Process and following the launch of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the council is looking to better define the strategic scale investment needs in the county for this agenda.
11. The Local Outcomes Framework was published in early February 2026, and contains key climate-related outcomes (climate change mitigation, percentage of homes rated Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C and above).

12. The CAF highlights that failing to adapt to the impacts of climate change could reduce Oxfordshire's Gross Value Added to the UK by up to £1.8bn per year in the 2050s. Therefore, investing in climate adaptation measures will reap considerable economic benefits.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

13. The CAF reflects the council's recently published Strategic Plan 2025 – 2028, with 'greener, fairer, healthier' providing the structure for the CAF's vision for Oxfordshire in 2030.
14. **Greener:** The CAF directly tackles the climate emergency and the council's responsibility for nature recovery, setting out the council's approach to climate action and the activities that are taking place under each of the nine themes.
15. **Fairer:** The climate crisis affects everyone, but not equally. Some communities face greater risks and are often overlooked in climate solutions. The CAF has been developed within the context of Oxfordshire's social and economic inequalities and presents four pillars which underpin a fair transition to a green economy.
16. **Healthier:** Better health outcomes are a clear benefit of climate action and highlighted within the report. Improvements in air quality, access to work and education, active and sustainable transport and access to green spaces are all closely linked with climate action/nature recovery and improve physical and mental wellbeing for Oxfordshire's residents.

Financial Implications

17. This framework is an overarching document which brings together a number of existing strategies and plans and shows how they fit together to meet the council's climate objectives. The framework does not make new commitments: it is in line with the council's Strategic Plan 2025-28 and its vision to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. The framework reiterates key commitments from the strategic plan: that the council aims to be carbon neutral in its direct operations by 2030 and that it is committed to enabling a net-zero Oxfordshire well ahead of 2050. The council provided an update on financing climate action as part of its [bi-annual update to Cabinet in July 2025](#).
18. PaZCO demonstrates the scale of investment required, with up to £3.4bn investment needed to meet the county's long-term net zero target. However, this is not expected to be delivered by local authority with the committee on climate change setting out that financing will need to come from a range of sources including private sector and national government. The 100 Together programme and [Oxon Green Futures](#) green prospectus have been developed to support access to financing.

19. Any new financial implications will be individually addressed through the relevant programme or plan referenced in the framework.

Comments checked by:

Filipp Skiffins, Assistant Finance Business Partner,
Filipp.Skiffins@Oxfordshire.gov.uk (Finance)

Legal Implications

20. Central government has committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, recognising much of this reduction must happen before 2030. Local authorities are clearly expected to play a role in these efforts. Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Environment Act 2021 the Council has duties to support climate adaptation and mitigation via biodiversity conservation, enhancement, and nature-based solutions. Whilst there are currently no other clear specific statutory duties on local authorities to take action that mitigates or adapts to climate change the Council does have wide powers to undertake such activities under its general power of competence set out at Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

Comments checked by:

Jonathan Pool, Solicitor (Contracts), Jonathan.Pool@Oxfordshire.gov.uk
(Legal)

Staff Implications

21. As stated in the Financial Implications section above, this framework does not make any new commitments and reflects existing workstreams and projects.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

22. The council's Climate Action Framework aims to ensure a fair sharing of the costs and benefits of climate action and avoiding energy inequality.
23. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Climate Action Framework and found a net positive impact on protected groups and the wider community. The focus on a fair transition to a green economy is a key part of this impact. Further EIAs will take place as part of the business case development for other individual elements of the climate action programme as they progress.
24. Over the long term, decisive action will reduce the negative impacts of climate change and ensure adaptation to locked-in effects compared to a do-nothing scenario. It will be beneficial to all groups, particularly those identified as vulnerable.

Sustainability Implications

25. The Climate Action Programme, and this CAF in particular, is at the centre of the council's commitment to tackling the climate emergency. It is a core element of the 'greener, fairer healthier' pillars of the Strategic Plan.

Risk Management

26. A strategic risk is included on the council's strategic risk register, noting the increasing vulnerability of communities, economy and infrastructure to climate impacts. A number of control measures have been identified and are being reported on through the Business Management and Monitoring report. The Climate Adaptation Route Map which is being delivered with the district councils and key partners will identify further mitigations.

Consultations

27. An all-member briefing on the CAF was held on 11 December 2025. This gave all councillors an opportunity to comment on and feed into the final version of the CAF. Councillors commented on the need for green skills and jobs to translate into opportunities for residents (addressed in Chapter Nine), and the need for community resilience building training to build adaptation capability (addressed in Chapter 16).
28. Key external stakeholders were also invited to comment, including officers at the City and District Councils, representatives of the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership, Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership and Community Action Groups Oxfordshire network. All comments have been integrated into the document.
29. There are a number of other key policies and strategies that feed into the CAF such as the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, and OxRAIL 2040: Plan for Rail, all of which were subject to extensive consultation with various stakeholders, including members of the public.

Robin Rogers

Annex: Oxfordshire Climate Action Framework 2026 – 2030
Climate Impact Assessment
Equalities Impact Assessment

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer:

Aoife Dudley, Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Policy & Project
Lead, Aoife.dudley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

February 2026