





## Taking climate action

2020 has been a year of huge change, with the global COVID-19 pandemic affecting all aspects of society. However, it has not changed the need for action on the climate emergency. The key message is clear: we need to take urgent action to limit the global rise in temperature to below 1.50C and to avoid the devastating impacts a further rise will provoke. This document provides the framework for our local actions here in Cherwell.

There are huge challenges to our ambitions. The scope of our goals for the district are in advance of national and regional policy and they will need to be matched by solid leadership from central government and significant changes across our communities. Technological, societal and economic conditions within the next decade will provide opportunities which we will need to realise and challenges we will need to overcome, whilst fully recognising that we have to do things differently and faster.

Cherwell is well placed to lead on this agenda. Many innovative projects and programmes have already been delivered in our district, such as the Eco Bicester initiative, which delivers new housing developments to a zero-carbon and much higher environmentally friendly standard, and which has been personally championed by many of us at Cherwell District Council.

We look forward to working with residents and businesses across the district to achieve these goals. COVID has underlined the critical importance of the environment and provided us with a unique opportunity to look afresh at how we would like to live in the future. It is our responsibility to take forward the environmental benefits we have seen during the pandemic and harness the collective will for building back better so that we can achieve real and meaningful change. We must do so not only for ourselves, but for future generations to come.

**Councillor Barry Wood**  
Leader of Cherwell District Council



# Transforming Cherwell



The challenge of addressing climate change cannot be underestimated. It requires rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society.

Our Climate Action Declaration set out a number of commitments covering our two connected roles:

- **Transforming our own organisation**
- **Fully playing our part in enabling a zero-carbon Oxfordshire**

This framework sets out our approach to tackling the Climate Emergency in our priority areas for action: our own estate, working with suppliers, ensuring our policies enable others to make low-carbon choices, and working with partners and businesses. It requires new roles and collaboration, alongside technical solutions and investment.

The following principles will help us realise and maximise the multiple benefits from our action on climate change:



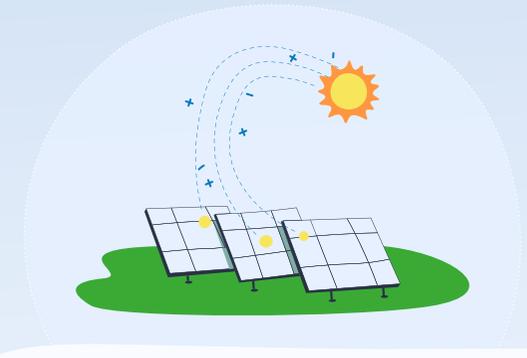
● **Evidenced based decisions**



● **Healthy Place Shaping**



● **Continuous improvement and Living Laboratory**



● **Maximising Cherwell Benefits**



● **Inclusive Transition**



● **Recognising a role for everyone**



# A Climate Active Council



Delivering our commitments takes us well beyond our current ways of working both in pace and scale - in short we need to do things differently.

## A dual approach:

We are implementing a two-year climate action mobilisation phase that focuses on priority teams, services and policies identified in this framework. In tandem, we will kick-start a transition to embed climate action across the organisation, so our business processes, culture and governance systematically drive lower-carbon outcomes.

## A role for everyone

The council's vision and values recognise the importance of climate action to our strategic priorities. Delivering our commitments will require improving all our staff services and embedding the skills, tools and culture to ensure 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.

Our approach will require new relationships with our stakeholders, both new expectations and engagement with our supply chain, and a review of where we are best placed to support others to take action.

## Holding ourselves to account

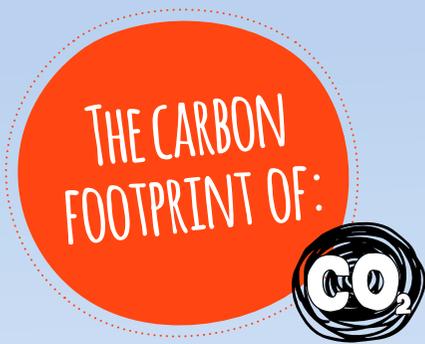
We will develop our annual carbon emissions reporting over time to help us monitor, evaluate, review and communicate our progress. We will also commit to reporting against this climate action framework in order to inform future corporate planning in the council.



# 1 A Climate Active Council

## Where we currently are and why we must take action

These graphs show the projection of emissions to 2030 under an approach where no additional action is taken. It is clear that without comprehensive and direct action neither the council or the district will achieve the carbon goals we need.



### 1: Cherwell District Council

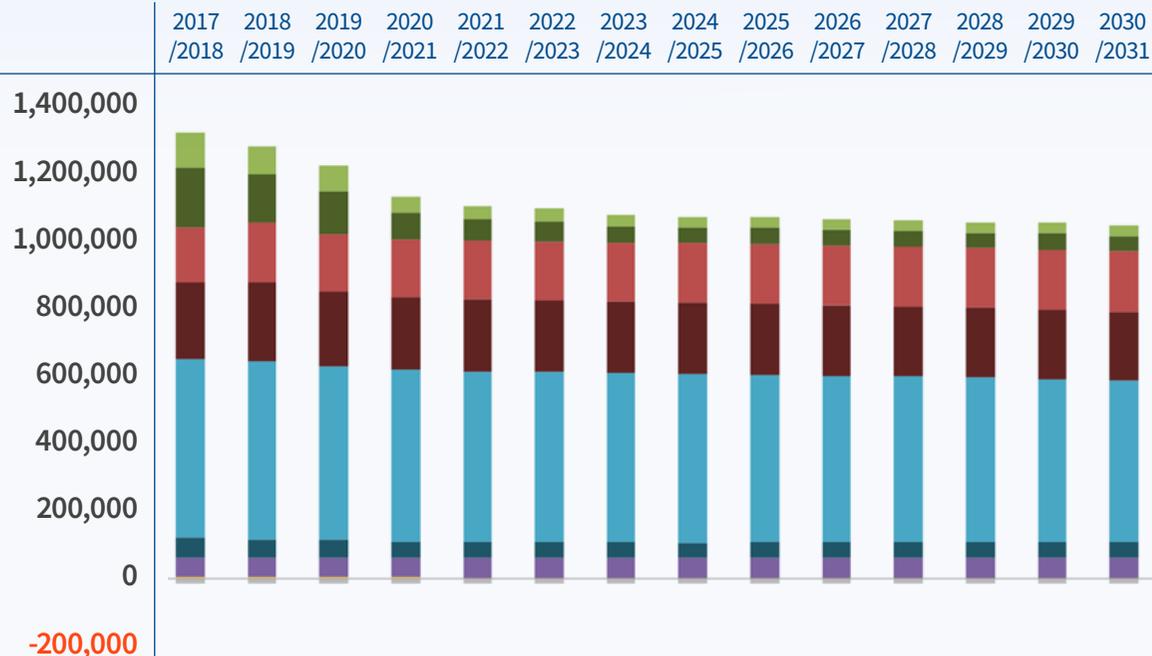
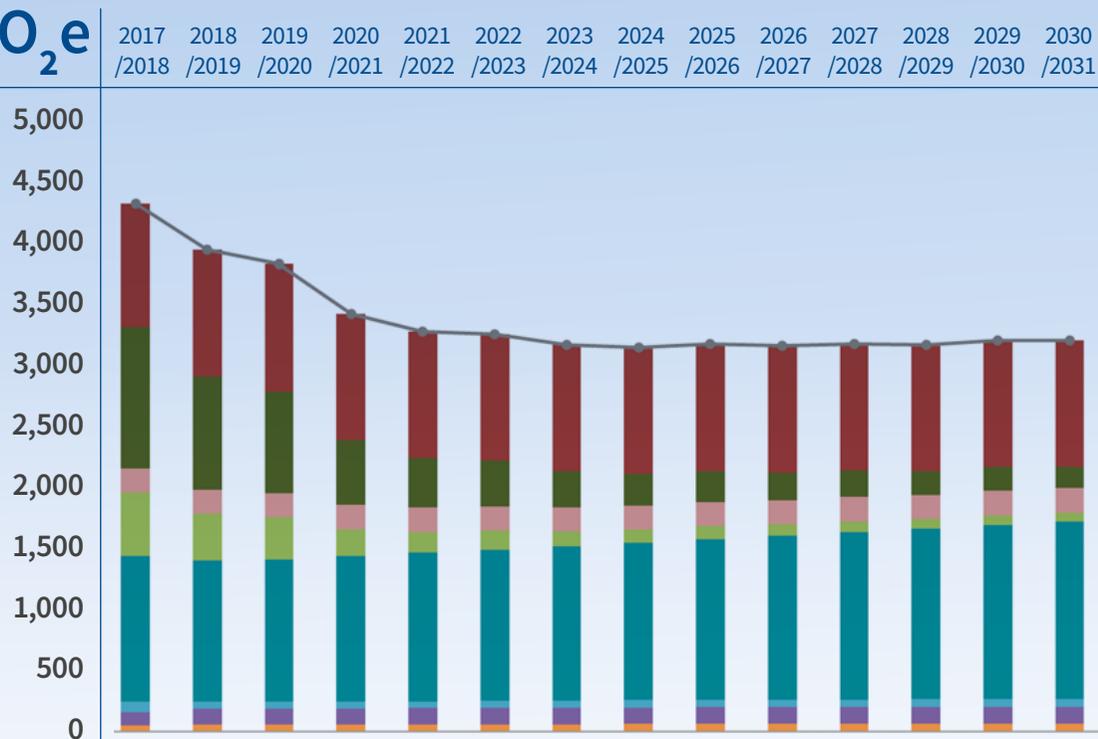
- Leisure centre heating
- Leisure centre electricity
- Council building heating
- Council building electricity
- Fleet diesel
- Council landscaping fleet
- Busines travel
- Council landscaping tools
- BAU total

### 2: Cherwell district

- Residential (electricity)
- Commercial and industrial (electricity)
- Residential heating (gas/other fuels)
- Commercial and industrial (gas/other fuels)
- Transport (cars/LGVs/HGVs/motorbikes)
- Transport (bus/rail)
- Agriculture
- Waste
- Cherwell District Council
- LULUCF



tCO<sub>2</sub>e



## OUR COMMITMENT

As your council we are leading the way and are committed to be net carbon neutral from our operations and activities by 2030.

## Resilience

The council, residents and businesses alike have all adapted to the global 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 upon that resilience by:

- Developing digital connectivity and skills to ensure continuity of services and to reduce travel emissions and support improvements to our estate
- Reducing reliance on grid electricity by generating our own clean power and reducing demand



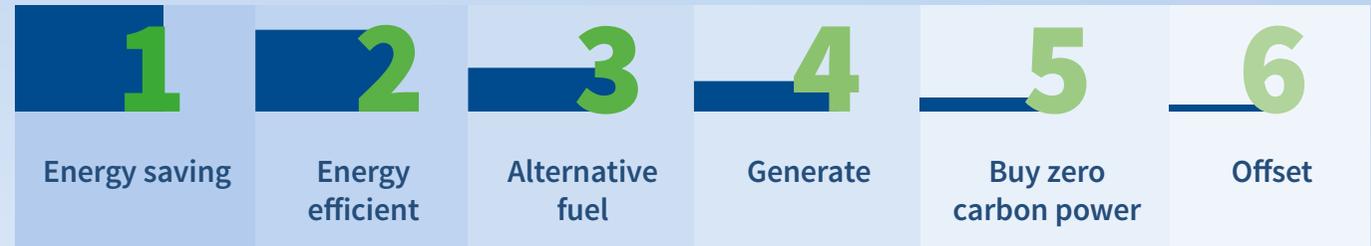
## Transformation

Residents, businesses, staff and our partners are going to see a very different council. Virtual meetings will be the norm and, through encouraging active travel and pool vehicles, travel by fossil fuelled vehicles will be the exception.





## APPLYING THE ENERGY HIERARCHY



### Take action now

- Best practice building design standards adopted
- Rigorous energy management practice introduced
- Virtual meetings policy as preference to travel
- Encourage and enable effective home working
- Continue 'electric as default' vehicle replacement policy
- Increase staff use of zero carbon travel options
- Support staff to transition from fossil fuelled to electric cars
- New purchasing standards reduce ICT demand
- Build the business case for solar on our roofs and car parks
- Ensure green power for our estate.

### Plan ahead and review the programme

- New property and leisure approaches supports zero carbon operations – buildings and travel
- Invest to save programme for generation and retrofit
- Shared electric pool cars / e-bikes shift away from private mileage
- Identify ways to improve biodiversity and carbon capture through our estate
- Fleet rationalisation and shared fleets
- Investigate ways of purchasing remaining green power direct from a local generator
- Future purchasing standards for our landscaping contracts.

### Horizon scan, pilot, and develop new business models

- Heat pumps, heat networks and green gas for our buildings
- Low carbon options for our large vehicles such as waste collection trucks, e.g. hydrogen
- Digital-first approach to specialist service delivery
- Local battery storage, flexibility and peer to peer trading to improve business cases
- Energy service contracts and innovative investment models
- Offsetting that delivers local social value.



# 3 Enabling a zero carbon Cherwell by 2030

## OUR VISION IS TO SHAPE A THRIVING CHERWELL

The date for this ambitious target is in advance of both national policy and the Oxfordshire Energy strategy. We will do our part to achieve a zero carbon district by 2030 and lead through example. Given the council's emissions account for 0.4% of the overall districts' emissions, we must also recognise our significant influence and encourage change in others, whilst acknowledging needed changes from central government and wider society.



### WORKING...



#### ...in partnership

Together with the Leaders and Chief Executives of all Local Authorities in Oxfordshire, we have committed to join together to tackle the Climate Emergency.

#### ...with businesses

Through the Oxfordshire and Cherwell Local Industrial Strategies, we will work to position the district as a leader in clean growth.

#### ...for the future

Support policies that enable zero carbon developments within the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and the Oxfordshire Local Connectivity and Transport Plan 5.

### LEVEL OF CONTROL WE HAVE AS A DISTRICT COUNCIL:

- **Direct control** e.g. council estate
- **Strong influence** e.g. outsourced contacts, planning decisions
- **Influence and leadership** e.g. planning policy, information campaigns, partnerships
- **Little to no influence** e.g. road transport, industrial emissions, private housing, NHS

# 3 Enabling a zero carbon Cherwell by 2030

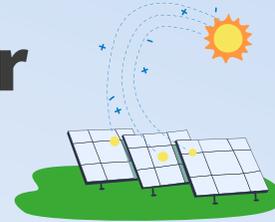
## The Oxfordshire Energy Strategy

Alongside a range of local partners Cherwell District Council is a signatory to OxLEP's Oxfordshire Energy Strategy. No single partner owns all the workstreams in the energy strategy. The low carbon investment required is estimated at £300m annually with the potential to add £1.35bn and 11,000 jobs to the Oxfordshire Economy. The strategy aims to:

- Secure a smart, modern, clean energy infrastructure in Oxfordshire
- Reduce emissions in Oxfordshire by 50% by 2030 setting a pathway to achieving net zero by 2050
- Enhance partnership working across Oxfordshire to focus on energy challenges and financing

HALVING EMISSIONS  
WILL REQUIRE:

**5x solar power**  
increase



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



**40% heating**  
to be renewable



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



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



### Taking this further

- Increase in commercial and residential solar power in the district
- Facilitate and encourage electric taxis
- Investigate ways of carbon capture to ensure local businesses benefit
- Encourage improvements in carbon intensity of local agriculture and food consumed, in conjunction with the Oxfordshire Healthy Place Shaping principles
- Promote environmental improvements and best practice through our local business networks, such as Oxfordshire Greentech.



# 3 Enabling a zero carbon Cherwell by 2030



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:

- Mainstreaming 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 fossil fuels
  - Enhancing digital connectivity

## 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. We will support investment in full fibre connectivity across Cherwell as a preference to new roads. We will prioritise active travel over single-occupancy cars, and adopt 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 supporting a new approach to the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy and Cherwell Local Plan. Moving to a zero-carbon Cherwell will also require substantial new investment – from the private sector and central government. The Cherwell 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.



# What we want to achieve



## Transport, connectivity and planning

Through our Local Planning role and work with partners:

- Prioritise digital infrastructure and co-working facilities over road building: connectivity, enabled by full fibre broadband across Oxfordshire will replace the need for many journeys
- Increase the number of people walking and cycling in conjunction with the healthy place shaping principles: it will be accessible and normal
- Accelerate the rise of electric, shared and autonomous travel
- Increasingly deprioritise journeys by single occupancy private car
- Promote net zero carbon new developments, with high fabric standards, renewables maximised on site and low embodied carbon
- Continue to spearhead the development of the nationally important true zero carbon Eco-town development.



## 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
- Protects, conserves and enhances carbon capture and storage through our natural environments
- Support the 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.



## Infrastructure business and systems

Through our planning and economic development roles, and working as a regional partner we will develop policy, support others, channel our investment and participate in innovation projects 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
- Change in the business community, business networks and development of the low carbon supply chain.



## Waste and consumption

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

- Maximise waste reduction and recycling
- Target zero growth in waste per person and an increase in the circular economy
- Work towards assessing whole system carbon impacts in our waste strategy planning and seek to influence national policy.



## Buildings and housing

By engaging with partners through OP2050, the Oxfordshire Energy 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 and the Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Network.

# How we will achieve it



## BUILD THE FOUNDATIONS

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



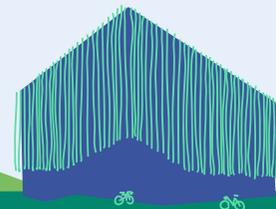
## TAKE ACTION

- Introduce a climate action toolkit and training programme for staff.
- Integrate climate action into the Business Planning for all services.
- Publish emissions reporting

- Review Partnership Options for Cross-County working on climate action
- Publish our social value policy to guide future contracts
- Introduce training for our procurement staff and key contract managers



- Support Community groups and Parish Councils in best practice and advice
- Support business networks in showcasing business best practice and innovation in the low carbon sector
- Encourage improvements in carbon intensity of local agriculture and food consumed, in conjunction with the Oxfordshire Healthy Place Shaping principles
- Seek to influence national policy for additional support for business making low carbon choices
- Explore 'smart' approaches to carbon management in supply chain



# How we will achieve it



## BUILD THE FOUNDATIONS

- Review and plan for the strategic investment requirements of the Oxfordshire Energy and Local Industrial Strategies
- Support the cross-county EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy
- Support Policy for net-zero carbon development in line with industry best practice in the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and Cherwell Local Plan review
- Support Policy for identifying sites for strategic renewables in Oxfordshire Plan 2050



## TAKE ACTION

- Develop and support zero carbon investment options to support the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy
- Implement and support post Covid-19 schemes to support home/ remote working and active travel
- Support the development of local cycling and walking infrastructure plans
- Support community and social housing enterprise-led initiatives for zero carbon, liveable housing developments
- With OxLEP support skills strategies that accelerate a zero carbon Oxfordshire
- With partners, review the role of 'Oxfordshire Bonds' to accelerate investment in retrofit and renewables
- Work with partners to facilitate domestic home improvements, such as through the Better Homes Better Health programme
- Continue to lead the nationally unique development of the NW Bicester Ecotown



# How we will achieve it



## BUILD THE FOUNDATIONS

- Support the review of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy with a new carbon prioritisation on investments
- Support the development of the Countywide Energy Insights tool for identifying renewable and energy efficiency opportunities

- Support a nature recovery strategy to include a new policy in the planning system

- Develop cross-Oxfordshire engagement on the role of 'circular economy'

PLAN

## Infrastructure and systems

ACTION

## TAKE ACTION

- Continue to support the remote working facilities in the district
- Install electric vehicle charging infrastructure in council owned car parks

PLAN

## Natural carbon management

ACTION

- 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

PLAN

## Waste and consumption

ACTION

- Work in partnership to delivery the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy
- Work towards whole system carbon impacts in our waste strategy planning and seek to influence national policy