

CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY FOR WEST OXFORDSHIRE 2021-2025

Climate Action as a District

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

CLIMATE ACTION
for West Oxfordshire

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Why a Climate Change Strategy?

West Oxfordshire District Council is in the unique position of being able both to contribute strategically to climate action for Oxfordshire and the South East, whilst also being able to take local, grassroots action in the district. We can:

- listen and respond to the individual and collective views of residents and communities;
- influence and shape the development of strategy and policy for climate at county and regional level;
- communicate our local response to the climate and ecological emergency as good practice that can be shared beyond the boundaries of West Oxfordshire and
- make a positive difference towards the national effort to address climate change, channelling Government stimuli for a green industrial revolution to deliver local benefit.

In line with the commitments set out in the Council Plan (2020-2024), this Climate Change Strategy (“Strategy”) has been developed as the framework for how the Council’s priorities for climate action across the district, for 2021-2025, can be achieved.

In 2020, we saw change few could have imagined. In what is widely regarded as a fast-paced and quickly evolving landscape, the Council has designed this Strategy to ensure its scope can adapt effectively to, and encompass changes in, national and regional policy, green industry and green technology. The Strategy identifies five themes as the focus of local climate action:

- 1) Protecting & restoring natural ecosystems
- 2) Energy
- 3) Active travel & low-carbon transport
- 4) Standards in new development
- 5) Engage, support and educate

Each theme is accompanied by a set of strategic objectives that the Council pledges its support to delivering in meeting its vision. The Council will report annually on its progress against the objectives of the Strategy and, where appropriate, revise the document so it remains current.

1.2 Context

In December 2015, the Paris Agreement was adopted by 195 nations at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and included the aim of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change by *“holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.”*

Shortly after the Paris Agreement, UNFCCC invited the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – a world-leading body for assessing the science related to climate change – to produce: *Global Warming of 1.5°C, an IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of*

strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty.

The IPCC special report highlighted how limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require “*rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society.*” The research and findings of IPCC research informed the UK government’s next steps and in June 2019, the UK became the first country to legislate long-term climate targets by introducing a legally binding net-zero carbon emissions target to end the UK’s contribution to global warming entirely by 2050.

In recognition of the urgency and importance of local action in response to a global concern, on 26th June 2019, West Oxfordshire District Council declared its Motion to address the climate and ecological emergency.

In 2020, the UK’s response to Covid-19 as a global health crisis served to emphasise the importance of climate action. The cross benefits and interrelationships between public health and the natural environment were clear. Natural green spaces and access to nature provided many with a source of refuge and outdoor relaxation during periods of lockdown, while improvements in local air quality as a result of a reduction in transport emissions were welcomed not only for their immediate environmental benefit, but as an important factor in people’s longer-term health and wellbeing. For those able to work from home during lockdown, there was a national shift to home working with transport emissions dropping dramatically as a result. Some experts attributed the clearer skies in April during lockdown to a reduction in air pollution, which then saw UK solar energy breaking the all-time peak generation record. National fossil-fuel consumption also fell during these corresponding months in April and May of 2020 as a consequence of solar energy generation levels. Indeed, it was in 2020 that Great Britain generated a full calendar month of coal-free electricity for the first time since the Industrial Revolution.

Low- and zero-carbon (LZC) energy production has since been increasingly documented as an industry that is key to our green recovery and economic growth moving forward. The Council went on to develop its Local Recovery Plan with climate action at its heart, capturing the positive lessons learned through its response to the Covid pandemic and recognising the value communities in the district place on the natural environment.

The Prime Minister has also, in 2020, noted it as a “defining year of climate action” for the planet in discussion ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), and recently published The Ten-Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution¹. The UK government will, in the coming months, develop strategies for how it intends to deliver The Ten-Point Plan.

1.3 Action as a Council

The Council has taken many positive steps for climate action during 2020. This work has been steered and driven forward by members of our cross-party Climate Action Working Group (see Figure 1).

1

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936567/10_POIN_T_PLAN_BOOKLET.pdf

Cllr David Harvey leads the Council’s response as Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Chair of the Working Group, and has said:

“We are all responsible for taking climate action so that we leave to our future generations an environment that we ourselves would wish to live in. The way in which we respond to the climate and ecological crisis today is our legacy. Action is needed and this Group is committed to leading the way by example.”

Figure 1: Members of the Cross-Party Climate Action Working Group.



This leadership is illustrated in The Council Plan 2020-2024² and Local Recovery Plan, October 2020³. Both include Climate Action as a key theme and commit to: *Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity.*

As part of delivering the Council’s strategic priorities, a Carbon Action Plan was also produced in October 2020⁴. It sets out the Council’s trajectory for how it will deliver its commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

This Strategy now represents the Council’s focus on climate action as a District and defines a framework for delivering its vision and priorities.

² <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/about-the-council/plans-and-policies/council-plan-2020-to-2024/>

³ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/8d8b970bc2e9597/west-oxon-covid-recovery-plan.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/our-route-to-carbon-neutral/>

2.0 Our Vision

The Council has defined its vision and now pledges its commitment to shaping a district where:

- the restoration of natural ecosystems and biodiversity are delivered widely and consistently.
- everyone feels they have access to wildlife-rich sites, to the benefit of their health and wellbeing.
- housing-energy retrofit is a continuous programme of activity and is helping to reduce energy consumption for households, addressing fuel poverty and improving health.
- clean and local energy is commonplace, providing local communities with energy independence and resilience.
- active forms of travel including cycling and walking are widely adopted and ultra-low-emission transport infrastructure is equipped to meet rising demand.
- growth and new development are designed to the highest standards of energy performance and environmental sustainability.
- partnership with national, regional, county, district and local partners and communities continues to progress clear and positive outcomes for climate action.
- everyone feels they can work collectively to make a difference, taking climate action at home, at work and as part of their local communities.

3.0 Strategy Themes

The Council’s vision and themes have been developed in response to:

1. The Data

Government data on CO₂ emissions for West Oxfordshire within the Local Authority’s Scope of Influence.

2. Your Views

The results of our public Climate Action Survey carried out in spring of 2020.

3.1 The Council’s Approach

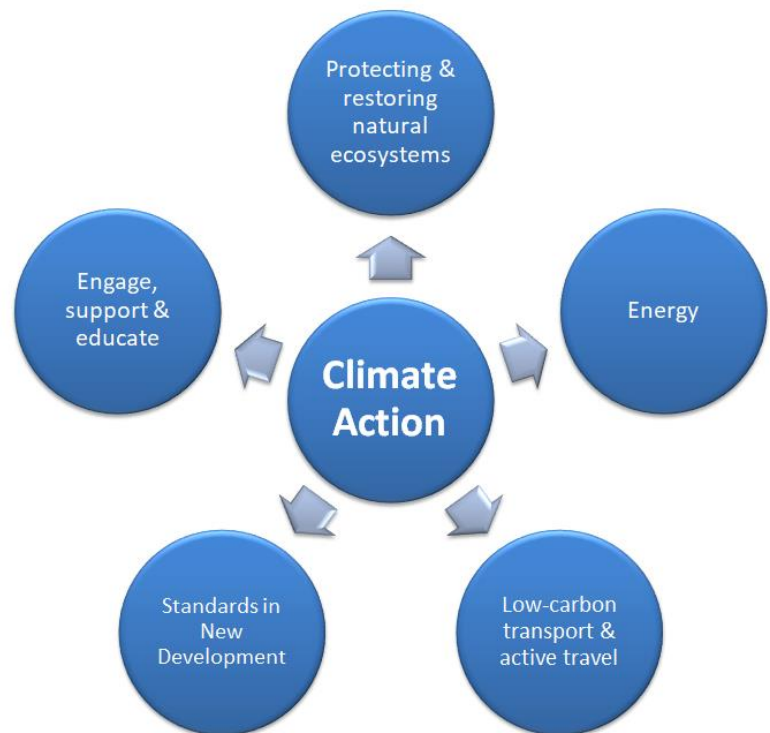
Five themes are presented within the Strategy to encapsulate the Council’s vision and act as a focus for planning climate action as a district.

Whilst themes have been identified within the Strategy, the Council notes there are intrinsic links between each of the themes. One theme cannot be entirely separated from another. These linkages are sometimes referred to as co-benefits. A simple example is when improvements to natural ecosystems and wildlife go on to improve the soil and the habitat’s capacity for carbon sequestration, which in turn helps us to mitigate climate change. These same improvements to nature also help to improve local air quality and with it the general health and wellbeing of nearby communities.

Understanding the linkages between the themes is important in order to be able to plan projects that derive multiple benefits. One carefully planned and climate-conscious action has the potential to begin a sequence of positive environmental outcomes. For instance, an organisation’s policy to encourage staff to work from home will help to reduce transport emissions, improve local air quality and contribute to a cleaner atmosphere. People will then enjoy travelling on foot or by bicycle, and perhaps as a result feel more encouraged to take these more active and sustainable forms of travel in future. The Council will maximise opportunities to embed the principles of the Strategy so that the objectives for climate action are a consideration across all Council priorities and decision making.

In taking forward the Strategy, the Council also recognises the importance of planning projects that lead to multiple benefits for people living and working in West Oxfordshire. The Council will consider the benefits of designing mitigation and adaptation measures at a local level in order to address the issues of climate change.

Mitigation is the act of **reducing and preventing** the effects of climate change. For example:



- Generating heat from clean energy such as solar, wind or hydrothermal and **preventing** the need for the burning of fossil fuels - a process of combustion that releases greenhouse gas emissions impacting on climate change - replaces an energy source so that climate change impact is mitigated.
- Changing land use, selecting crops, restoring and creating new ecosystems as a way of increasing carbon storage in soils and plants and developing long-term carbon sequestration is a way of **reducing** the effects of climate change.

Adaptation is the act of developing new approaches and strategies to reduce and **manage** the negative effects of climate change. For example: reducing the impacts of flood risk from sea level rise by constructing seawalls as flood defence.

Principles of a circular economy are also relevant across all five themes and will be considered by the Council in procurement decisions. These are principles based on an approach that designs out waste and pollution, keeps products and materials in use, and regenerates natural systems. It is one approach that offers a solution to improving quality of life whilst also tackling the issues of climate change. It has an increasing role to play in the future economy, from a global level down to a local level.

4.0 The Data

The most recent government data on CO₂ emissions indicates that West Oxfordshire currently accounts for 14% of total emissions in the County⁵, see Figure 2. Calculated as tonnes of CO₂ emitted per capita, the District was 5.1, which is the second-lowest total in the County after Oxford City (see Figure 3). These figures represent total CO₂ emissions by sector and include, in their entirety, major industrial and transport infrastructures such as railway lines and motorways, see Figure 4.

Figure 2. Total CO₂ Emissions in 2018 by Area in Oxfordshire.

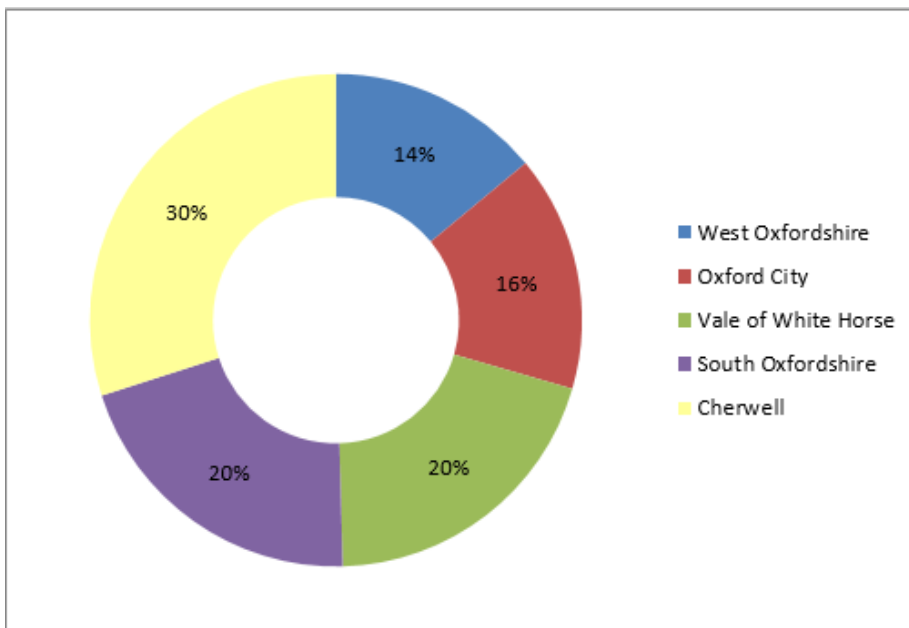
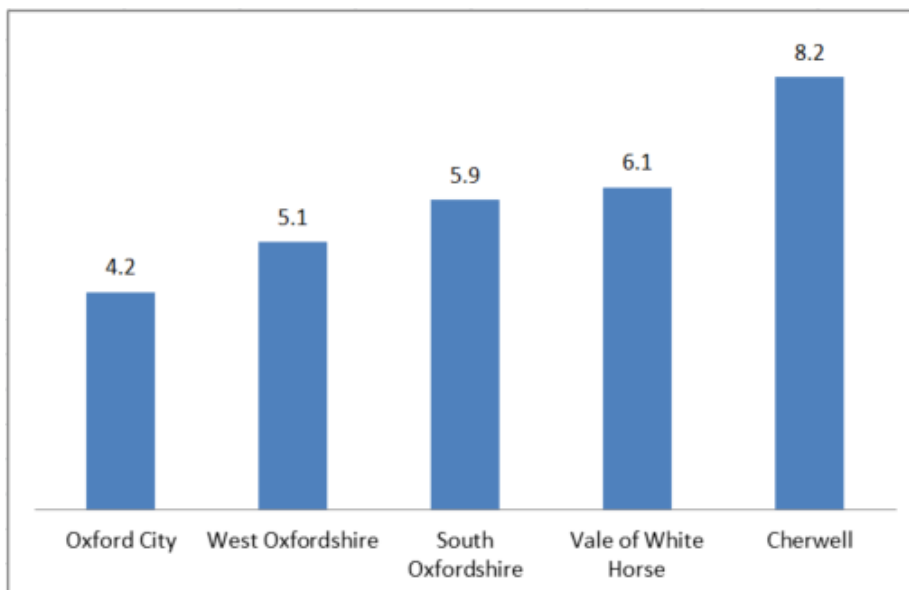
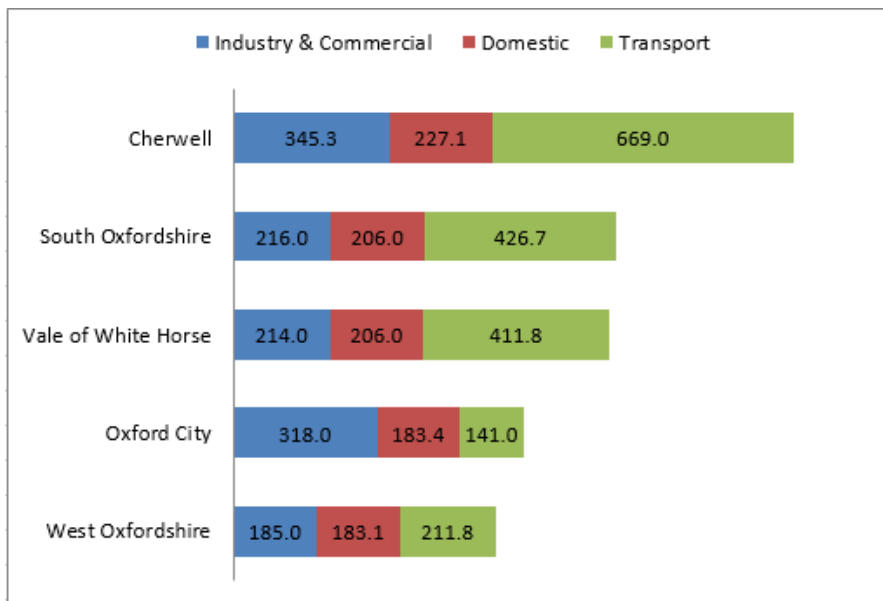


Figure 3. Total CO₂ Emissions in 2018 per Capita by Area.



⁵ BEIS UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2005-2018, published June 2020

Figure 4. Total kilotonnes of CO₂ Emissions in 2018 by Area & Sector.



In the Council’s planning of climate action, it has been important to consider the total CO₂ in the Local Authority’s **Scope of Influence**. This is a subset which excludes industrial sites, railways, motorways and land use. The District Council has an ability to have either a direct or influencing impact on these CO₂ emissions.

The most recent government data shows CO₂ emissions for West Oxfordshire are fairly evenly distributed across industrial and commercial, domestic and transport sectors (see Figure 5).

Since 2005, there has been a steady decrease in CO₂ emissions across “industry & commercial” and “domestic” sectors. “Transport” emissions show less of a decline during the same period, indicating a continued reliance on internal combustion engine vehicles as a district, see Figure 6.

Figure 5. West Oxfordshire’s Total kilotonne CO₂ Emissions in 2018 by Sector.

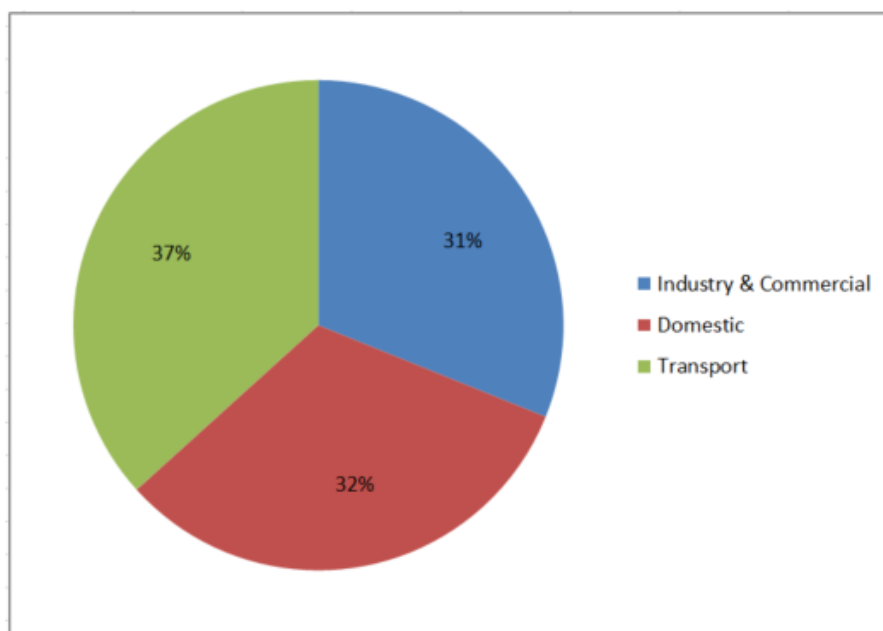
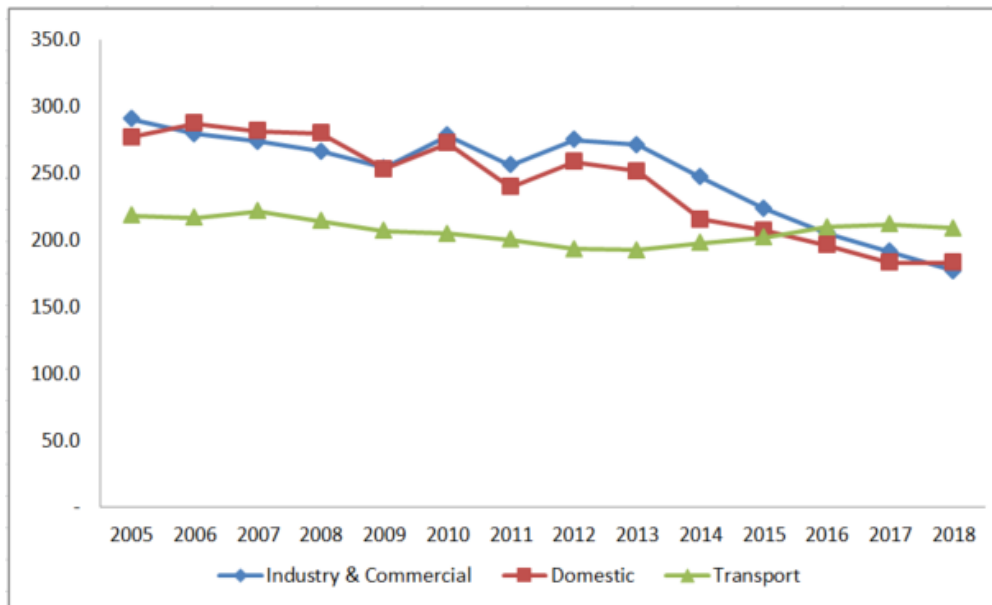


Figure 6. West Oxfordshire's Total kilotonne CO₂ Emissions in 2018 within Local Authority Scope of Influence, by Sector.



5.0 Your Views

In the spring of 2020 the Council carried out its Climate Action Survey and young people's art competition to engage with people living and working in West Oxfordshire, inviting their views on climate action.

The Council collected both quantitative and qualitative data from its Survey to



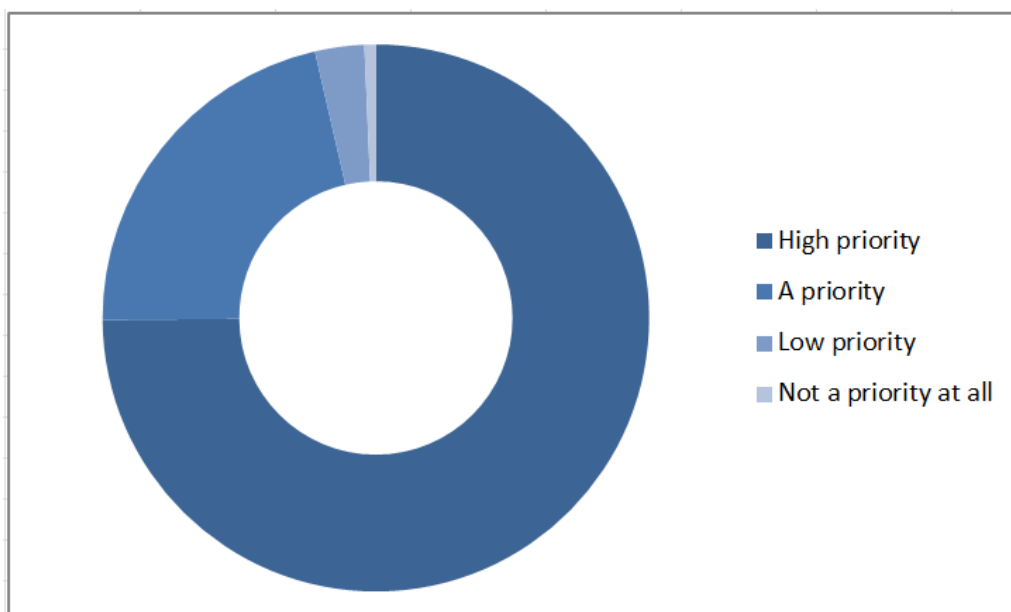
© Climate action competition, winning art by Millie Freer

which 446 responses were received, equivalent to one in every 250 residents in the district.

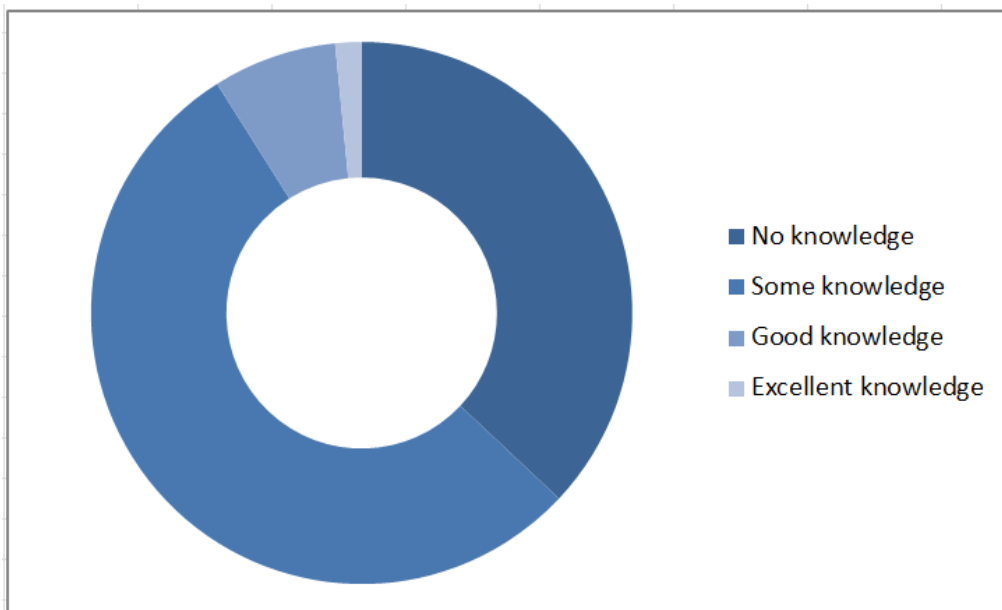
This data has provided the Council with a strong sense of what is important to those living and working in West Oxfordshire.

The Council received the following responses to their survey questions.

Q1. How much of a priority is the issue of climate change to you?

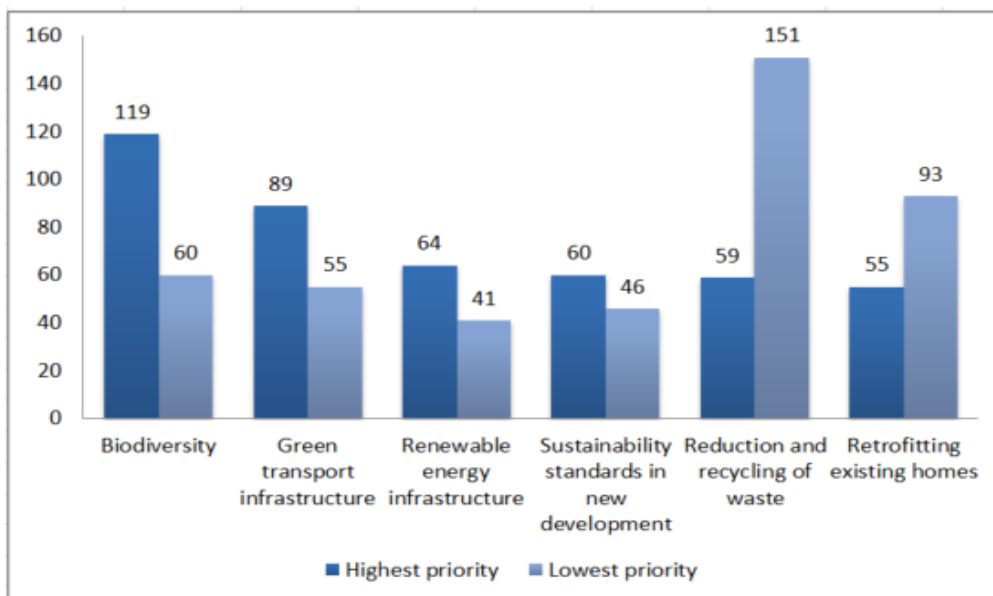


Q2. How much do you know about the Council’s work on climate change?

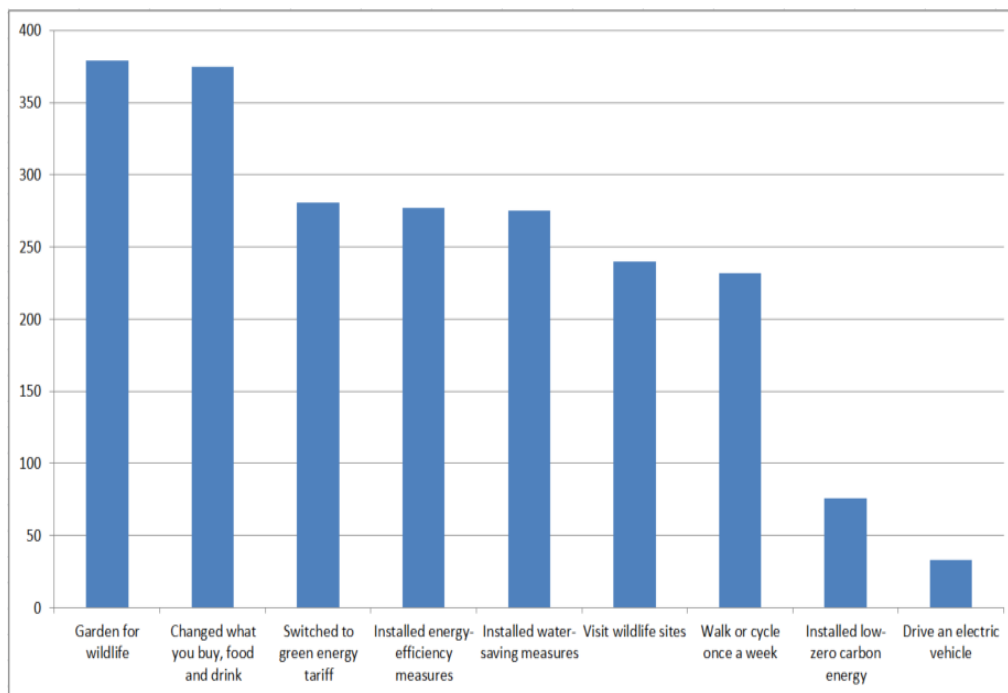


The cross-party Climate Action Working Group has now analysed the data, which includes all written feedback. The Working Group has taken the priorities and ideas of its residents fully into account in the prioritisation of the Strategy and in the development of its vision and objectives.

Q3. Rank by priority the areas you believe the Council should focus on.



Q4. What action have you already taken to tackle climate change?



6.0 Theme One: Protecting & Restoring Natural Ecosystems



Snake's head fritillary © Lynne Ebbs

6.1 Vision

The Council pledges its commitment to shaping a district where:

- the restoration of natural ecosystems and biodiversity are delivered widely and consistently.
- everyone feels they have access to wildlife-rich sites, to the benefit of their health and wellbeing.
- partnership with national, regional, county, district and local partners and communities continues to progress clear and positive outcomes for climate action.
- everyone feels they can work collectively to make a difference, taking climate action at home, at work and as part of their local communities.

6.2 Strategic objectives 2021-2025

The Council will deliver its vision by:

- protecting existing biodiversity value and creating new opportunities for the restoration of natural ecosystems at sites under the Council's stewardship. This will be carried out with a new, dedicated biodiversity and countryside land-management staff member. Land Management Plans will be developed.

- working with councils, regional and local partners to identify and deliver strategic opportunities for the restoration of natural ecosystems, improving habitat connectivity, wildlife corridors, and nature-based solutions in land-use management. For example, further developing a pilot initiative currently under way with Oxfordshire County Council and the Wychwood Project to assess a **Natural Capital approach** as a method for understanding the multiple benefits of nature, informing strategic opportunities for restoring natural ecosystems.
- partnering with councils in the development of Oxfordshire strategy and policy for biodiversity, nature conservation, climate-change adaptation and mitigation. This will be carried out by continuing to play an active role in the development of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.
- leading a county-wide collaboration on a **Local Nature Partnership (LNP)** for Oxfordshire.
- collaborating with partners on habitat mapping and species surveys. This will focus on continually improving the quality of data on the condition of our natural ecosystems to inform decision-making in planning and Council strategy. More immediately, this will be done by continuing support given to the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) and collaborating with Oxfordshire councils and partners on the Oxfordshire tree-mapping project and the emerging Nature Recovery Network.
- delivering targets for natural landscape, **biodiversity net-gain and nature-based solutions** as part of new development in West Oxfordshire by retaining, as a minimum, existing dedicated resource in planning policy and development management teams. Embed good-practice principles as an expectation within the West Oxfordshire Sustainability Standards Checklist and Local Plan review.
- working across Council departments to link the objectives of this Strategy and theme with Council Plan (2020-2024) priorities, implementing each objective for: healthy towns and villages; a vibrant district economy; strong local communities; meeting the housing needs of our changing population; modern Council services and sustainable finance.
- engaging, supporting and communicating good practice for biodiversity and nature recovery with the West Oxfordshire community.

6.3 Delivery Partners

Key delivery partners and existing networks that the Council currently coordinates with, and will continue to, include:

Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire district councils, Publica councils, town and parish councils, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Cotswold Conservation Board for the AONB, universities and colleges.

NGOs: Wychwood Project, Wild Oxfordshire, Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE), Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC), Lower Windrush Valley Project (LWVP),

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), Catchment Partnerships, Witney Woodland Volunteers.

Landowners: Including Blenheim, RAF Brize Norton, National Farmers Union (NFU) and Country Land & Business Association (CLA).

6.4 Strategic Frameworks

The following strategic frameworks have been identified by the Council as critical to protecting and restoring biodiversity in West Oxfordshire. They are frameworks the Council will continue to contribute towards, facilitating action at a local level.

- The UK's Ten-Point Plan (November 2020): Nature Strategy and England Tree Strategy (emerging)
- The Environment Bill: Biodiversity-Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Network Strategies (emerging)
- Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (emerging)
- The Oxford to Cambridge Arc (emerging)
- Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network (emerging)
- Natural Capital Framework.

7.0 Theme Two: Energy



Southill Solar © WODC

7.1 Vision

The Council pledges its commitment to shaping a district where:

- housing-energy retrofit is a continuous programme of activity and is helping to reduce energy consumption for households, addressing fuel poverty and improving health.
- clean and local energy is commonplace, providing local communities with energy independence and resilience.
- partnership with national, regional, county, district and local partners and communities continues to progress clear and positive outcomes for climate action.
- everyone feels they can work collectively to make a difference, taking climate action at home, at work and as part of their local communities.

7.2 Strategic objectives 2021-2025

The Council will deliver its vision:

- leading by example through the implementation of its **Carbon Action Plan** (2020) and commitment to becoming a carbon-neutral Council by 2030.

- working with both existing and new partners to create opportunities for **energy-efficiency and low-/zero-carbon housing-energy retrofit**. This will be carried out through continued partnership with the Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Network and financial support to housing-energy retrofit delivered through the Better Housing Better Health (BHBH) service run by the Council’s partner, the National Energy Foundation (NEF).
- contributing to projects developed as an Oxfordshire partnership, to Government’s **Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD)** Scheme, focused on new and targeted housing energy retrofit projects.
- promoting and signposting partnership projects that support housing energy retrofit in West Oxfordshire, such as the Oxfordshire Cosy Homes Initiative.
- developing opportunities for new partnerships as the route to achieving wide-scale domestic and non-domestic energy retrofit projects.
- working towards **net-zero housing and economic growth** in West Oxfordshire, supporting a transition to a zero-carbon economy and clean-energy supply. This will be carried out through, for example, the review of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan and by continuing to play an active role in the work of the Oxfordshire Growth Board, contributing to the development of county-wide strategy and policy for zero-carbon economic growth by 2050.
- supporting initiatives that offer opportunities for **local jobs in the low-/zero-carbon sectors**, promoting events and opportunities through the existing business network for West Oxfordshire.
- contributing to the planning of projects as a pathway to achieving net-zero for the West Oxfordshire community, developing plans for a clean- and local-energy transition. For example, continuing support for the development of a whole-system **Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)** for Eynsham and a pilot initiative being led by the Low Carbon Hub (LCH) as models for other parts of West Oxfordshire.
- working across Council departments to link the objectives of this Strategy and theme with Council Plan (2020-2024) priorities, implementing each objective for: healthy towns and villages; a vibrant district economy; strong local communities; meeting the housing needs of our changing population; modern Council services and sustainable finance.

7.3 Delivery Partners

Key delivery partners and existing networks that the Council currently coordinates with, and will continue to, include:

Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire district councils’ Energy Officers Group and Cross-County Climate Change Officers Group, town and parish Councils, Publica councils, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), Oxfordshire Growth Board, Department for Business, Energy

and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH), Housing Associations and Registered Providers, including Cottsway Housing, universities and colleges.

NGOs: Low Carbon Hub (LCH) and Smart and Fair Futures Project, Cosy Homes Oxfordshire, Local Energy Oxfordshire (Project LEO). Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Network and National Energy Foundation (NEF).

Landowners: Blenheim, RAF Brize Norton.

7.4 Strategic Frameworks

The following strategic frameworks, policies and plans have been identified by the Council as critical to delivering housing-energy retrofit and a local clean-energy transition in West Oxfordshire. They are frameworks the Council will continue to contribute towards, facilitating action at a local level.

- The UK's Ten-Point Plan (November 2020): Energy White Paper, Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy, Net-Zero Strategy, Heat & Buildings Strategy, Hydrogen Strategy (emerging)
- UK Net-Zero by 2050
- UK Industrial Strategy and Clean Growth Strategy
- Oxfordshire Industrial Strategy (2019)
- The Oxford to Cambridge Arc (emerging)
- Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (emerging)
- Oxfordshire Low-Carbon Economy Report (currently being updated)
- Oxfordshire Energy Strategy and target to: *“reduce County-wide emissions by 50% by 2030 (compared to 2008 levels) as a necessary pathway to achieving zero-carbon growth by 2050.”*
- Whole-system Local Area Energy Plan for Eynsham (emerging)

8.0 Theme Three: Active Travel & Low-Carbon Transport



© Richard Fairhurst

8.1 Vision

The Council pledges its commitment to shaping a district where:

- active forms of travel including cycling and walking are widely adopted and ultra-low-emission transport infrastructure is equipped to meet rising demand.
- growth and new development are designed to the highest standards of energy performance and environmental sustainability.
- partnership with national, regional, county, district and local partners and communities continues to progress clear and positive outcomes for climate action.
- everyone feels they can work collectively to make a difference, taking climate action at home, at work and as part of their local communities.

8.2 Strategic objectives 2021-2025

The Council will deliver its vision:

- leading by example through the implementation of its **Carbon Action Plan** (2020) and commitment to becoming a carbon-neutral Council by 2030. An agile working strategy

currently encourages Council staff to home work. Whilst a review of cycle-storage facilities at the Council offices will be done to ensure staff and Councillors feel there are facilities that enable them to cycle to work.

- working towards **net-zero-carbon growth by 2050** in partnership with Oxfordshire councils and county-wide partners, supporting the transition to **ultra-low-emission transport and active travel**. This will be done as part of a review of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan and by contributing to the development of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and Oxfordshire Local Transport & Connectivity Plan (emerging).
- identifying and exploring new opportunities for low-traffic neighbourhoods and cycle networks that are direct, safe, comfortable and attractive. This will be done to improve access to active forms of travel across the district, reducing demand for transport.
- delivering **EV infrastructure across the district**, at sites in Council ownership, meeting the policy ambitions and standards set out within the Oxfordshire EV Infrastructure Strategy and aspire to reach a target of 7.5% of local-authority-managed car-parking spaces providing EV charging by 2025. This is equivalent to 263 of the total 3,500 car parking spaces owned by the Council and includes public car parks, Council offices and commercial centres, depots, offices and industrial units to let. Consideration will also be given to the potential for electric-bike- and scooter-charging hubs.
- working as a partner in the Oxfordshire Park & Charge project to install EV-charging infrastructure in Council-owned car parks in 2021, contributing to a 7.5% target.
- implementing standards for EV-charging infrastructure and active travel in new development. This will be done by delivering the policy expectations and standards for EV set out for Salt Cross Garden Village within the Area Action Plan (AAP) and the Oxfordshire EV Infrastructure Strategy (emerging). Standards for EV charging and active travel are also included in the Council's Sustainability Standards Checklist in Planning and will be included as part of a review of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.
- researching alternative, low-/zero-carbon fuel sources and opportunities to **pilot new technologies** that emerge to support the transition away from fossil fuels to modes of ultra-low-emission transport.
- working across Council departments to link the objectives of this Strategy and theme with Council Plan (2020-2024) priorities, implementing each objective for: healthy towns and villages; a vibrant district economy; strong local communities; meeting the housing needs of our changing population; modern Council services and sustainable finance.
- monitoring Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) at Bridge Street, Witney and Horsefair and High Street, Chipping Norton, where National Air Quality Standards are not met and are therefore the subject of Air Quality Action Plans; work with partners to seek reduction in traffic levels in these areas to improve air quality.

8.3 Delivery Partners

Key delivery partners and existing networks that the Council currently coordinates with, and will continue to, include:

Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Park and Charge, Oxfordshire district councils working with the Oxfordshire EV Infrastructure Strategy Project Board and Working Group, Energy Officers Group and Cross-County Climate Change Officers Group, town and parish Councils, Publica councils, Department for Transport (DfT), universities and colleges.

8.4 Strategic Frameworks

The following strategic frameworks, policies and local plans have been identified by the Council as critical to the delivery of low-carbon and active travel infrastructure in West Oxfordshire. They are frameworks the Council will continue to contribute towards, facilitating action at a local level.

- The UK's Ten-Point Plan (November 2020): Transportation Decarbonisation Plan (emerging) and commitment to end the sale of all new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030.
- UK Net-Zero by 2050
- UK Clean Air Strategy (2019)
- UK Air Quality Strategy (2007)
- Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy
- Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (emerging)
- The Oxford to Cambridge Arc (emerging)
- Oxfordshire Local Transport & Connectivity Plan (emerging)
- Oxfordshire Sustainable Travel Programme (2020)
- The Oxfordshire EV Infrastructure Strategy and LA policy: *"The Councils will aspire to reach or exceed a target of converting 7.5% of local authority managed public car park spaces, to fast or rapid EV charging by 2025."*
- West Oxfordshire Local Plan, 2040 (emerging)
- Local Air Quality Action Plans for Bridge Street, Witney and Horsefair and High Street, Chipping Norton

9.0 Theme Four: Standards in New Development



9.1 Vision

The Council pledges its commitment to shaping a district where:

- the restoration of natural ecosystems and biodiversity are delivered widely and consistently.
- everyone feels they have access to wildlife-rich sites, to the benefit of their health and wellbeing.
- clean and local energy is commonplace, providing local communities with energy independence and resilience.
- active forms of travel including cycling and walking are widely adopted and ultra-low-emission transport infrastructure is equipped to meet rising demand.
- growth and new development are designed to the highest standards of energy performance and environmental sustainability.
- partnership with national, regional, county, district and local partners and communities continues to progress clear and positive outcomes for climate action.

9.2 Strategic objectives 2021-2025

The Council will deliver its vision:

- taking action locally to accelerate the transition to **net-zero carbon** as a standard for all new development in West Oxfordshire, working with county and regional partners, landowners, developers and local residents.

- implementing climate policies, including targets for biodiversity net gain and net-zero-carbon development, at **Salt Cross Garden Village** as a requirement of the Area Action Plan (AAP).
- increasing standards for new development, including major and minor, new and refurbishment applications. This will be done by requiring applicants to submit a Sustainability Statement demonstrating how they will meet the Council’s Sustainability Standards Checklist in planning and design for: **Water use and flood risk, Biodiversity, Green and Active Travel, Aligning with Net-Zero Carbon, Sustainable Construction, Materials and Waste and Voluntary Standards for Sustainability**. This will be carried out with a new, dedicated staff member. This will also be incorporated as part of a review of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.
- creating **toolkits and best-practice guidance** to support new-build and retrofit projects designed to be low-/zero-carbon, both in their operation and in terms of whole-life embodied carbon.
- innovating new methods of **energy-data collection** to support a requirement for the post-construction monitoring of buildings in operation. This will be carried out in the interests of closing the performance gap between stages of design and construction, increasing transparency on how new developments are performing in operation.
- supporting the appropriate siting and development of strategic solar photovoltaics (PV) and renewables, for a local transition to clean energy.
- growing capacity and resource for collaboration on projects with Catchment Partnerships and the Environment Agency to ensure **flood-risk and water management** is appropriately considered as part of the decision-making process in development planning and as a feature of climate-change mitigation and adaptation.
- delivering targets for **natural landscape, biodiversity net gain and nature-based solutions** as part of new development in West Oxfordshire by retaining, as a minimum, existing dedicated resource in planning policy and development-management teams.
- working across Council departments to link the objectives of this Strategy and theme with Council Plan (2020-2024) priorities, implementing each objective for: healthy towns and villages; a vibrant district economy; strong local communities; meeting the housing needs of our changing population; modern Council services and sustainable finance.

9.3 Delivery Partners

Key delivery partners and existing networks that the Council currently coordinates with, and will continue to, include:

Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Innovation Hub, Oxfordshire Cross-County Climate Change Officers Group, town and parish Councils, Publica councils, Oxfordshire Growth Board, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Homes England, universities and colleges.

NGOs/QUANGOs: Homes England, Low Carbon Hub (LCH) and Local Energy Oxfordshire (Project LEO), Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE), Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC), Wildlife Trusts, Catchment Partnerships, Natural England, Environment Agency.

Developers and Landowners, Housing Associations and Registered Providers.

9.4 Strategic Frameworks

The following strategic frameworks, policies and local plans have been identified by the Council as critical to raising standards in development in West Oxfordshire. They are frameworks the Council will continue to contribute towards, facilitating action at a local level.

- The UK's Ten-Point Plan (November 2020): Energy White Paper, Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy, Net-Zero Strategy, Heat & Buildings Strategy, Hydrogen Strategy, Nature Strategy and England Tree Strategy (emerging)
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- The Environment Bill: Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Network Strategies (emerging)
- Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network
- Natural Capital Framework.
- UK Net-Zero by 2050
- UK Industrial Strategy and Clean Growth Strategy
- Building Regulations
- Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (emerging)
- The Oxford to Cambridge Arc (emerging)
- Oxfordshire Innovation Framework
- Oxfordshire Energy Strategy and target to: *“reduce county-wide emissions by 50% by 2030 (compared to 2008 levels) as a necessary pathway to achieving zero-carbon growth by 2050.”*
- West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2018) & West Oxfordshire Local Plan, 2040 (emerging)
- Salt Cross Area Action Plan (submission draft August 2020)
- West Oxfordshire Sustainability Standards Checklist

10.0 Theme Five: Engage, Support & Educate



10.1 Vision

The Council pledges its commitment to shaping a district where:

- partnership with national, regional, county, district and local partners and communities continues to progress clear and positive outcomes for climate action.
- everyone feels they can work collectively to make a difference, taking climate action at home, at work and as part of their local communities.

10.2 Strategic objectives 2021-2025

The Council will deliver its vision:

- maintaining the **Climate Action Network** for West Oxfordshire as a channel for the Council to publicly disseminate information on climate action, local projects and initiatives. A quarterly, seasonal bulletin will be produced as a way of sharing information on Council news and local events.
- developing local case studies and good practice on how action can be taken to address climate change. Whether this might be, for example, a nature-conservation project at a local school or a housing-retrofit project completed in a conservation area, the Council will encourage people in West Oxfordshire to use the Climate Action Network as a forum for sharing good practice and learning from each other's experiences.
- raising awareness about biodiversity, nature's recovery and natural capital through various mechanisms, including Council communications. Provide education on how people can reduce their impact on, and help to increase, biodiversity.

- facilitating local action in partnership with parish and town councils in West Oxfordshire through events and meetings held by the Council through its dedicated Town and Parish Council Forum.
- promoting events and opportunities through the existing business network for West Oxfordshire.
- developing press and communications on Council action taken to address climate change – via radio, video and in print. This will continue to be done using press releases, via social-media channels and via the Council’s dedicated webpages.

10.3 Channels

The following channels will be used by the Council to engage, support and educate:

Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, website, email, Town and Parish Council Forum, Competitions and Community Events.

11.0 Monitoring & Review

The Council will report annually on its progress against the objectives of the Strategy and, where appropriate, revise the document so it remains current.

Figures on CO₂-emissions reductions as a district will be included as part of the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) under climate. Both qualitative and quantitative measures will be included in the AMR as a method for reviewing and reporting on progress against the Strategy.