

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Oxford City Council (OCC) has carbon reduction and sustainability at the heart of all of its activities and the Environmental Sustainability Team lead on a variety of pioneering sustainability projects around energy efficiency, renewable energy, fuel efficiency and waste reduction.

After successfully reducing its carbon emissions by 25% by 2011 (against 2005/6 baseline) OCC has consistently succeeded in meeting its ambitious carbon reduction targets of 5% year on year and now increasingly focusses on partnership projects across the city to reduce emissions Oxford-wide, working towards a target of 40% emissions reduction by 2020.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT OF OXFORD CITY COUNCIL ESTATE

- OCC has invested around £700,000 to date in energy conservation measures since Jan 2008 using Salix funding.

This is estimated to result in avoided cost in annual energy bills of around £285,000 per year and the equivalent to 1420tCO₂ per year in reduced emissions.

- OCC's Salix revolving loan fund has been used to implement a wide range of sustainable and cost-effective technologies such as the latest in LED lighting technology in our social housing and depots, solar PV on our leisure centres and sheltered housing and automatic meter reading of our water, gas and electricity.
- The 'Offices for the Future' programme of office rationalisation and modern working styles has led to reduced CO₂ emissions through reduction and improvement of office space and reduction in transport emissions.
- OCC's new competition swimming pool and community centre developments will incorporate large scale solar PV arrays as well as biomass boilers which will be fuelled by the Council's own parks arisings.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT:

Oxford City Council strives to reduce the environmental impact of staff travel as well as working with partners in the city on low emissions strategies involving improvements in public transport, promotion of electric vehicles, freight rationalisation and promoting of cycling across the city.

In 2012 OCC employed a part-time workplace travel coordinator to implement a Workplace Travel Plan

www.oxford.gov.uk



order to reduce emissions and fuel bills and increase productivity. The improvements implemented included removal of grey mileage payments; creation and promotion of a new centralised pool car system of low emissions and electric vehicles, pool bikes and electric bikes; extensive promotion of sustainable travel related subsidies and benefits; creation of a Bicycle User Group (BUG) and free bike maintenance sessions and cycle training.

- OCC invests in the latest low emissions and electric vehicles in its fleet and has run several series of training staff on fuel-efficient 'smarter driving' techniques for staff which have reduced fuel usage by up to 17%.
- OCC has recently added 23 hybrid vehicles to the fleet, all of which are fitted with Lightfoot vehicle technology which gives real time visual and audible feedback to the driver, improving their driving behaviour which is expected to result in CO₂ and fuel savings of more than 10%.
- OCC is also leading the way on electric vehicle charging infrastructure and has partnered with Chargemaster to provide electric vehicle charging points in eight of our public car parks, including points which are dedicated to a local community Ecar club in North Oxford.
- In January 2014 OCC introduced a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) in Oxford's city centre – only the second of its kind in the UK outside of London. The LEZ means all local bus routes must be operated exclusively by buses whose engines meet the Euro V emission standard for nitrogen oxides (NO_x).



BEHAVIOUR CHANGE:

- OCC has a network of enthusiastic and knowledgeable 'Carbon Champion' volunteers from across all departments keep sustainability high on the agenda and encourage positive behaviour change within the workforce through campaigns and events such as swap shop events, tree planting, EV tester sessions, home energy saving pledges and local food events.
- OCC ensures staff are up to date with the Council's sustainability progress with weekly items in the staff newsletter, on the intranet and at regular presentations to the Management Practice Group.
- Local residents, councillors and other stakeholders are kept informed and engaged informed via regular events, press releases to local media, regularly updated webpages, items in OCC's 'Your Oxford' biannual magazine (which goes out to all householders) and via the popular @OCC_CarbonTeam Twitter feed.
- This year OCC coordinated the first ever Low Carbon Oxford Week event - a celebration of all the green initiatives in the city attended by over 5,000 local people. LCO Week saw over 50 organisations collaborate to put on 80 events between 14-22 June 2014. A short film capturing the spirit of Low Carbon Oxford Week event can be found on the website - www.lcoweek.org

DOMESTIC ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Oxford City Council met its target of 30% improvement in domestic energy efficiency in March 2008, which equated to £7,518 million worth of energy efficiency related works and a saving of approximately 106,000 tonnes of CO₂. Since then:

- Solar PV arrays of around 2.5 kWp were installed on a pilot of five OCC homes in one of the city's most deprived areas. The systems are predicted to generate a total of 10,700 kWh per year, income to the Council of £1,400 per year in Feed in Tariff payments for 20 years plus an extra £250 per year in export payments. Tenants can expect to save around £150 a year in energy bills or more. Next steps will be to roll this scheme out more widely on the 1,000+ OCC houses have already been assessed as suitable for PV.
- Recognising that Oxford faces the joint challenges of twice the average number of rented properties, OCC have worked on an innovative approach to use EPC data to addressing energy efficiency in the private rented sector through the enforcement route.
- With a very high proportion of heritage buildings in the city, OCC's Environmental Sustainability Team have also worked with the Conservation Team, Oxford Preservation Trust and BRE to develop the

Heritage Energy Efficiency Tool (HEET - www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/HeritageEnergyEfficiencyTool.htm) which provides guidance to owners of historical buildings on how to improve energy efficiency without compromising the heritage values of their properties

WASTE REDUCTION

- Internal recycling within OCC has been standardised and promoted and the current office recycling rate is around 75%. All food waste from OCC sites goes to a local Anaerobic Digestion plant where it is used to make green electricity and a rich organic fertilizer for local farms - a fact that is promoted to staff.
- Oxford City Council organizes extremely popular ReFashion events which have attracted a total of over 2,300 people to upcycle, wish and donate unwanted clothes and textiles in Oxford. These Green-Apple award winning aimed at promoting sustainable fashion and textile re-use have since been replicated by community groups across Oxfordshire in partnership with Oxfordshire Waste Partnership and with increasing involvement of local school, businesses and charities.
- Significant improvements to the way we collect household recycling and engage with local residents, including campaigns focussed specifically on students, have led to a peak recycling rate in Oxford of over 50%. Oxford City currently has one of the lowest rates of household waste to landfill of anywhere in the UK.

LOW CARBON OXFORD AND LCO WEEK:

Oxford City Council is only responsible directly for only 1% of the emissions in the city, however its influence and ambition goes much wider than its own operations. In order to address the broader sustainability of the whole of Oxford City and reach challenging 40% CO₂ emission targets for the city by 2020, the City Council launched the pioneering Low Carbon Oxford initiative in 2010.

Low Carbon Oxford is a city wide programme of collaboration between private, public and non-profit organisations. So far a total of 40 'Pathfinder' organisations have signed the LCO charter and committed to reducing their own emissions by 3% year on year and working together with partner organisations to create a sustainable green economy for the city. Recent LCO success stories include:

- the Oxford Bus Company partnering with the Low Carbon Hub to be the first Oxfordshire business to develop a renewables scheme with community benefit. Installation of 140kWp solar PV on the Oxford Bus headquarters will generate low-cost, clean renewable

electricity and enable local communities to benefit from the feed-in tariff revenue generated

- the FoodPrinting Oxford report, commissioned by the City Council, which was launched in January 2013 as part of the Linacre College lecture series. FoodPrinting Oxford looks into the sustainability of food systems in Oxford - a city in which only 1% of what we eat comes from the surrounding area (Oxfordshire). It examines the opportunities to make all aspects of our food system more sustainable in terms of the land use, water, energy and carbon emissions associated with each stage of the food process. www.oxford.gov.uk/Library/Documents/Environmental%20Development/Food%20Printing%20Oxford%20Report%202013.pdf
- The Good Food Oxford Charter which was launched in June and aims to foster support for a sustainable and healthy local food system in Oxford.
- Staff in all partner organisations involved in the LCO initiative along with other interested parties across the UK are kept up to date on the programme via a monthly newsletter, Low Carbon Oxford twitter feed (www.twitter.com/LoCO2Oxford) and updates to the LCO website (www.lowcarbonoxford.org)
- The People Project - a working group across sectors sharing best practice on employee engagement.

SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

- In 2011 Oxford City Council partnered with local community group Low Carbon West Oxford (LCWO) on a Local Carbon Frameworks project to replicate LCWO's successful approach to community engagement and create several new low carbon groups with a sustainable income stream from feed-in tariff incomes from solar PV projects on local buildings.
- This project led to the creation of the Low Carbon Hub - a community interest company which supports communities in scaling up renewable energy projects for community benefit. OCC have worked with the Hub to deliver many large scale renewable energy projects in the city as well as domestic energy efficiency projects such as Warming Barton, which saw over 10 households in Oxford's most deprived area receive free energy assessments and over 25 houses be provided with free external wall installation. See www.lowcarbonhub.org.
- In 2013 Oxford City Council was awarded £1.3million from the European Union for the OxFutures project as part of the Mobilising Local Energy Investment programme. OxFutures is a pipeline of renewable energy projects and to address barriers to finance for community and public estate projects in Oxfordshire.