

Minutes of a meeting of the OXFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD SCRUTINY PANEL on Thursday 22 November 2018

Voting members of the Committee present:

Councillor Sean Gaul	Cherwell District Council
Councillor Neil Prestidge	
Councillor Sean Woodcock	
Councillor Andrew Gant	Oxford City Council
Councillor Craig Simmons	
Councillor John Sanders	Oxfordshire County Council
Councillor Emily Smith	
Councillor Elaine Hornsby	South Oxfordshire District Council
Councillor David Turner	
Councillor Judy Roberts <i>(as substitute for Councillor Debby Hallett)</i>	Vale of White Horse District Council
Councillor Ben Mabbett	
Councillor Chris Palmer	
Councillor Derek Cotterill	West Oxfordshire District Council

Officers contributing to and supporting the Panel:

Caroline Green	Interim Deal Director
Paul Staines	Oxfordshire Growth Board Partnership Programme Manager
Sue Halliwell	Director for Planning and Place, Oxfordshire County Council
Giles Hughes	Head of Planning and Strategic Housing, West Oxfordshire District Council
Dawn Pettis	Strategic Planning Team Leader, Oxfordshire County Council (for the Energy Strategy item)
Stefan Robinson	Scrutiny Officer, Oxford City Council (supporting the Panel)
Jennifer Thompson	Committee and Members Services Officer, Oxford City Council (supporting the Panel)

10. Apologies for absence and substitutes; declarations of interest; Chair's announcements

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Nick Carter	Oxfordshire County Council
Councillor Debby Hallett	Vale of White Horse District Council
Councillor Julian Cooper	West Oxfordshire District Council
Councillor David Harvey	West Oxfordshire District Council

There were no declarations of interest.
There were no announcements.

11. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 18 September were agreed as a correct record.

12. Work programme for the Scrutiny Panel - November 2018

The Panel took this item after the public speakers.

The Panel discussed considering one of the Deal strands in detail at each meeting. They asked for a report on Affordable Housing at the January meeting.

Attendance and appropriate contributions by at least one member of the Growth Board at each Scrutiny Panel meeting would help communication between the Panel and the Board.

It is also important that the Panel equally holds local leaders to account, as it has until now only scrutinised officer's that support the Growth Deal. The panel agreed to request attendance by Growth Board voting members at each meeting.

The Panel also discussed improving communication between the Growth Board and its Scrutiny Panel and the Board's Sub groups

The Panel noted that communications between the Growth Board's Sub-groups and Scrutiny Panel were still being established, as was communication between these groups and the Board.

The Panel noted that there was considerable overlap and interdependence between the different Deal strands and also with the Board's other work. Good communications between the groups and project planning was needed to avoid duplication of work between groups, and to ensure that all the groups and the Panel understood the terms of reference of each other's' work.

The Panel asked for clear information and a briefing on the remit and work of each Sub-Group to better understand how these contributed to the delivery of the Deal and the work of the Growth Board, starting with a presentation from the Chair and officers of the Housing Sub-Group.

The Panel requested that each Leader should be encouraged to put in place a clear structure for communications between the Growth Board and each council's members.

The Panel agreed recommendations to the Growth Board:

1. At least one member of the Growth Board should attend each Scrutiny Panel meeting to answer questions about the Board's work. The Chair of one of the Sub-Groups should attend in rotation to discuss the work of their Sub-Group.

2. Officers working on the Deal's strands as part of the Deal team and the Lead officer for the councils should attend the Scrutiny Panel as appropriate to answer questions and discuss their work.

The Panel agreed:

1. To take at the January meeting:
 - a. A report on public engagement at the Growth Board
 - b. A report on the Affordable Housing strand of the Deal (inviting the Chair of that group and relevant officers)
2. To ask for the work plan for each advisory sub-groups.

13. Public Participation

The Panel heard one address and two questions from members of the public.

Adrian Townsend, in summary, spoke about the lack of accountability, transparency and engagement of the Growth Board. He considered that most parish councils and communities were unaware of the Board's existence. He asked for a directly elected Board solely comprising one member from each district, plus parish council co-optees from each district's area. He also asked that the Growth Board be asked to formally retract their statement on the Expressway.

Sue Haywood, representing Need Not Greed Oxfordshire, sent a written question, asking the Panel:

- what further impact they feel that the recent NIC statement will now have on the governance structures and local accountability,
- what opportunity is there to protect local accountability,
- whether the key documents in which any mandate and process for the JSSP is currently defined - including the Statement of Common Ground and Terms of Reference for the Growth Board, and the LDS, Scoping Document and Statement of Community Involvement - will require revision in light of any "new governance structures" that might be introduced, and
- by what process (and with what opportunity for local consultation) will this be done if this is to happen?

Peter Collins, representing CPRE, asked the Panel to:

- Confirm that this draft document (outline version of the JSSP Regulation 18 consultation document) exists and was considered at last week's Advisory Sub-panel.
- If so, to consider how this sits alongside the Growth Board's commitment in the draft Statement of Community Involvement to 'early, proportionate and meaningful engagement between plan makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and statutory consultees' and the 'initial scoping of key issues and options with stakeholders'.

The Panel asked that the Chair convey the substantive points to the Board.

In discussion about the issues raised the Panel commented:

1. They would not recommend disbanding or reconstituting the Growth Board; however the Panel would like to be consulted on any changes to terms of reference of the Board or sub-groups.
2. The Panel noted its own and all three public speakers' concerns over what appeared to be a lack of transparency around decision making, remoteness of the Growth Board from grass-roots bodies and representatives, and a lack of ability to influence and understand the rationale for major decisions. This appeared to be, in the perception of those members of the public attending Growth Board meetings, to be perennial issue for the Growth Board and has also been raised by speakers in different forums. These concerns covered areas such as a lack of transparency at the Board meetings and being unable to contribute to or see development of the high-level strategies prepared by OxLEP and the Board.
3. The Panel noted that although information was available on the Growth Board's website this was not always the most obvious site for either elected members or the public to view frequently and so key information could easily be overlooked.
4. The Panel discussed, from their position as newcomers to the Board's processes, improving the Board's transparency and engagement.

The Panel agreed recommendations to the Growth Board:

1. That the Growth Board establishes a clear pro-active process for informing district, county and parish councillors about their work and future consultations and decisions.
This may take the form of a circulated newsletter or bulletin sent out by the Board's programme officer, and should not rely solely on the information posted on the Board's website.
2. That the Growth Board takes formal votes on all items for decision, and records in the minutes each Leader's individual vote, to increase transparency about decisions and each Council's stance.
3. That the Growth Board remains fully committed to encouraging public engagement in the Board's work.

14. Energy Strategy

The Panel considered the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy and covering report, and a presentation from Dawn Pettis (Oxfordshire County Council) on the key elements of the strategy.

They noted a number of places in the Strategy where targets were defined or presented differently, particularly in relation to carbon and energy reduction.

They noted the very ambitious targets of reducing emissions substantially while also increasing housing and employment, and of retrofitting 4000 homes with energy efficiency measures. Officers themselves acknowledged these were extremely ambitious targets.

The Panel also noted and were concerned that the contribution to emissions made by vehicles remained high in recent years, and would continue to do so.

They noted that more information on grid capacity and management would be useful for planning authorities seeking to encourage the use of electric vehicles.

The Panel agreed one recommendation to the Growth Board:

That the Energy Strategy Action Plan is revised to ensure it contains SMART targets and clear and measurable objectives.

The Panel agreed:

- to consider the action/delivery plan before it was presented to the Growth Board;
- to scrutinise delivery of the action/delivery plan.

15. Oxford to Cambridge Expressway

The Interim Deal Director Caroline Green and the Director for Planning & Place (Oxfordshire County Council) Sue Halliwell gave an update on proposals for the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway.

The Panel noted in the update and their discussion:

- One of the biggest challenges identified as part of the Growth Deal process, as already highlighted by the JSSP Advisory Sub-Group, is the misalignment of Highways England's timescale for the Expressway and the development of the JSSP.

The Growth Deal requires that each of the Oxfordshire Council's submit their Local Plans no later than 1 April 2019. However, the panel understands that Central Government Planning Inspectors have questioned the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan at least partially on the basis that it doesn't take account of the Oxford / Cambridge expressway in their housing forecasts: an Expressway which does not yet have an assigned route within three preferred corridors. Public consultation on the route options is not due to take place until autumn 2019, with a preferred route being announced in 2020.

This conflict between deadlines suggests to the Panel that the planning process for these significant projects is not well aligned.

- Officers and Leaders had already raised these concerns with government departments and Highways England (HE) and discussions about aligning timetables and deadlines were ongoing.
- The Panel expressed disquiet about the statement in minute 24 of the Growth Board minutes of 25 September 2018 which could be read as conveying rather more

support for the Expressway than may have been intended, given the level of uncertainty around the proposals from HE. Officers confirmed that clarification would be provided at the next Growth Board meeting

- The Panel commented that Expressway did not, in their view, fit well with sustainability strategies, and believed that the experience of HS2 suggested that there may be more disruption than benefit for communities along the route.
- The Panel noted that Highways England was running events for district and parish councils, by invitation, and all invitees were encouraged to attend. However, Panel members noted instances where parish councils had not received an invitation and asked that officers impress on HE the need to use up to date contact information held by Oxfordshire County Council.
- There was also concern about the lack of information-sharing and consultation around the Expressway (including some parish councils not receiving an invite from Highways England to information events for all parish councils). While acknowledging that the Growth Board was not responsible for arranging those information events, the Panel asks that officers approach Highways England officers involved in arranging these events and request that all first and second tier authorities' councillors are invited to events run for parish and town councils. The discussions there would inform their own positions and allow them to better represent their residents.

The Panel agreed recommendations to the Growth Board:

1. That the Growth Board takes further steps to raise concerns with Central Government about the timing of the JSSP submission deadline, and individual Local Plan submission deadlines, by April 2019 as required by the Growth Deal, without first understanding more details about the impact of the proposed Oxford Cambridge Expressway.
2. That in light of the continuing uncertainty about the route choice and its impact on the communities affected and the wider county, the Growth Board clarifies its rationale and evidence base for endorsing the expressway.
3. And to ask officers to contact Highways England, with a view to ensuring that all future events and consultations have the appropriate town and parish councillors invited and that district and county councillors also be included as invitees; and to make available to HE correct up to date contact information for parish councils.

16. Oxfordshire Growth Board papers 27 November - for discussion

The Panel had before them the reports published for the Oxfordshire Growth Board meeting on 27 November.

They discussed and asked questions on the reports, and noted points and raised matters summarised as but not limited to:

JSSP Sub-Group

1. The Panel commented that communications had to be managed to make it relevant, manage expectations, and get proper public engagement in the process. The difficulties with matching major projects' timetables and public involvement had been discussed earlier.
2. Planned consultation events for the JSSP would involve around 100 stakeholder groups plus parish councils: the Panel asked that the relevant district and county councillors were invited to events involving parish councils so the parishes' concerns could be understood and fed back to the district councils.
3. In late January to early February all district councils would be asked to agree the first JSSP 'Regulation 18' Stage (the Options Document) for consultation through February and March, but this document was still at an early stage.

Infrastructure Sub-Group

4. Officers were working on a methodology to properly attribute (without double-counting) housing to the correct funding stream (infrastructure funds, Deal funding, and HIF grants).
5. Government's decisions on bids to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) would be announced in summer 2019.
6. The Panel noted that information on delivery of the Year 1 infrastructure projects, as well the list of projects in the years 2-5 programme would be agreed and published.

Housing Sub-Group

7. Affordable housing under the Deal counted only those additional homes provided over and above that secured through each council's planning policies and secured by the provision of Deal funding, so it was not all the affordable housing which would be provided in the county.
8. The Panel asked for clear information about the delivery targets and additional affordable housing when this was available; and asked that the work of Housing Sub-Group and the affordable housing strand be considered at their next meeting.

Healthy Place shaping report

9. The Panel noted the report highlighting the role that Local Plans could play in promoting public health.

The Panel noted the reports.

17. Growth Deal - matters not contained in Board papers

No matters were raised under this item.

18. Recruitment and staffing for the Growth Deal

The Interim Deal Director gave an update on recruitment and staffing for the Growth Deal delivery team and management of the Growth Board:

1. All posts for work on the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan had been filled and the new officers were starting work over the next few weeks. Recruitment to key senior posts for the other Deal strands was underway. These would help councils to co-ordinate and manage the delivery of the programmes.
2. The Growth Board and its scrutiny panel and sub-groups would be supported by a dedicated programme manager and committee secretary, and the scrutiny function supported by a part-time post from the Growth Board host authority (currently SODC). These posts were currently advertised.

The Scrutiny Panel noted the update.

19. Dates of meetings

The Panel agreed the dates of meetings as:

Scrutiny Panel
Thurs 24 January 6.30pm
Thurs 21 March 6.30pm
Thurs 30 May 6.30pm

All meetings to be held in Oxford Town Hall

The meeting started at 6.30 pm and ended at 8.30 pm

Chair

Date:

Growth Board Scrutiny Panel 22 November Public speaking – 3 speakers

1. Adrian Townsend – address (max 5min)
2. Sue Haywood on behalf of Planning for Real NEED not Speculator GREED in Oxfordshire - Question

May I start with an apology that I am not present to ask this question in person, but I am attending a WODC Scrutiny meeting which is scheduled at the same time as this meeting; illustrating a challenge and frustration in the opportunity for local authorities to meaningfully input to the Scrutiny and governance process in this strategy.

Need Not Greed Oxfordshire (NNGO) is a coalition of 35 groups from across the county, together representing thousands of community members. As a collective we have agreed a number of principles that we believe must be meaningfully delivered in the JSSP strategy if it is to produce an outcome that is both sustainable and beneficial for communities in Oxfordshire. One of these is the protection of local democracy, with planning control in the hands of locally elected and accountable representatives. We therefore read with some concern a recent NIC statement suggesting that "there are plans....for new governance structures across the Arc to be in place by Spring 2019". Further, that these will "take account of", rather than protect, "existing democratic accountabilities including.....district and county councils". There has already been a significant level of abstraction introduced into governance structures and local accountability by the revised Terms of Reference given to the Growth Board in order to deliver the Growth Deal and JSSP. Other strategies such as the LIS have further influence that is not represented by locally elected voice.

NNGO would therefore ask Scrutiny:

- what further impact they feel that this recent NIC statement will now have on the governance structures and local accountability,
- what opportunity is there to protect local accountability,
- whether the key documents in which any mandate and process for the JSSP is currently defined - including the Statement of Common Ground and Terms of Reference for the Growth Board, and the LDS, Scoping Document and Statement of Community Involvement - will require revision in light of any "new governance structures" that might be introduced, and
- by what process (and with what opportunity for local consultation) will this be done if this is to happen?

Thank you for your time on this question.

3. Dr Peter Collins on behalf of CPRE

CPRE is glad to see the formation of a Scrutiny Panel and considers it an essential adjunct to proper governance of the Growth Board.

Our question is in two parts, giving first a general comment about the necessity of visible and proper involvement of the Board's activities through detailed engagement with the public, in particular consultees like ourselves, and secondly providing an example where timely consideration of the issue recorded could ensure such proper action.

Generality

CPRE considers that issues of environment, heritage and social issues should always be considered alongside any and all proposals for action taken by the Board - and not just at a lower level of importance, perhaps just nodded at politely at the end of discussions.

To do this, proper engagement with the public, and particular consultees such as CPRE, through the process of coming to recommendations put before the Board is essential - co-optation to committees which have relevance to engagement is therefore important.

Timely consideration of all important matters, so that there are no slips in the best intentions have to be assured. Such duties should be ensured through the activities of the proposed Engagement Officer.

It is important that these matters are enshrined in working practice at the start of putting together a balanced and appropriate Growth Board.

Reference Agenda Item 7 - Oxfordshire Growth Board papers – Item 7, Feedback from the Sub-groups – no.8 JSSP Advisory Sub-group Forward Work Plan

CPRE is most surprised to note that an outline version of the JSSP Regulation 18 consultation document was due to be brought to the subsequent meeting of the Advisory Sub-Group on 15 November, which we assume has now taken place.

At the October meeting, this is described as a 'skeletal document, however what the document would say is broadly known'.

However CPRE and, we assume, other stakeholders have not yet been involved in any detailed discussions to inform this document. As Scrutiny Panel members are hopefully aware, CPRE has sought from the start to respond to the JSSP process in a positive and constructive way. It would therefore be disappointing, to say the least, if meaningful engagement should be failing at such an early stage.

We ask the Scrutiny Panel to:

- a. Confirm that this draft document exists and was considered at last week's Advisory Sub-panel
- b. If so, to consider how this sits alongside the Growth Board's commitment in the draft Statement of Community Involvement to 'early, proportionate and meaningful engagement between plan makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and statutory consultees' and the 'initial scoping of key issues and options with stakeholders'.



Reducing energy use and carbon emissions in Oxfordshire

11

Dawn Pettis
Strategic Planning Team Leader, OCC

Minute Item 14



Oxfordshire Energy Strategy

HOME / OXFORDSHIRE ENERGY STRATEGY

12

*For Oxfordshire to be at the
forefront of energy innovation to
foster clean growth*



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL



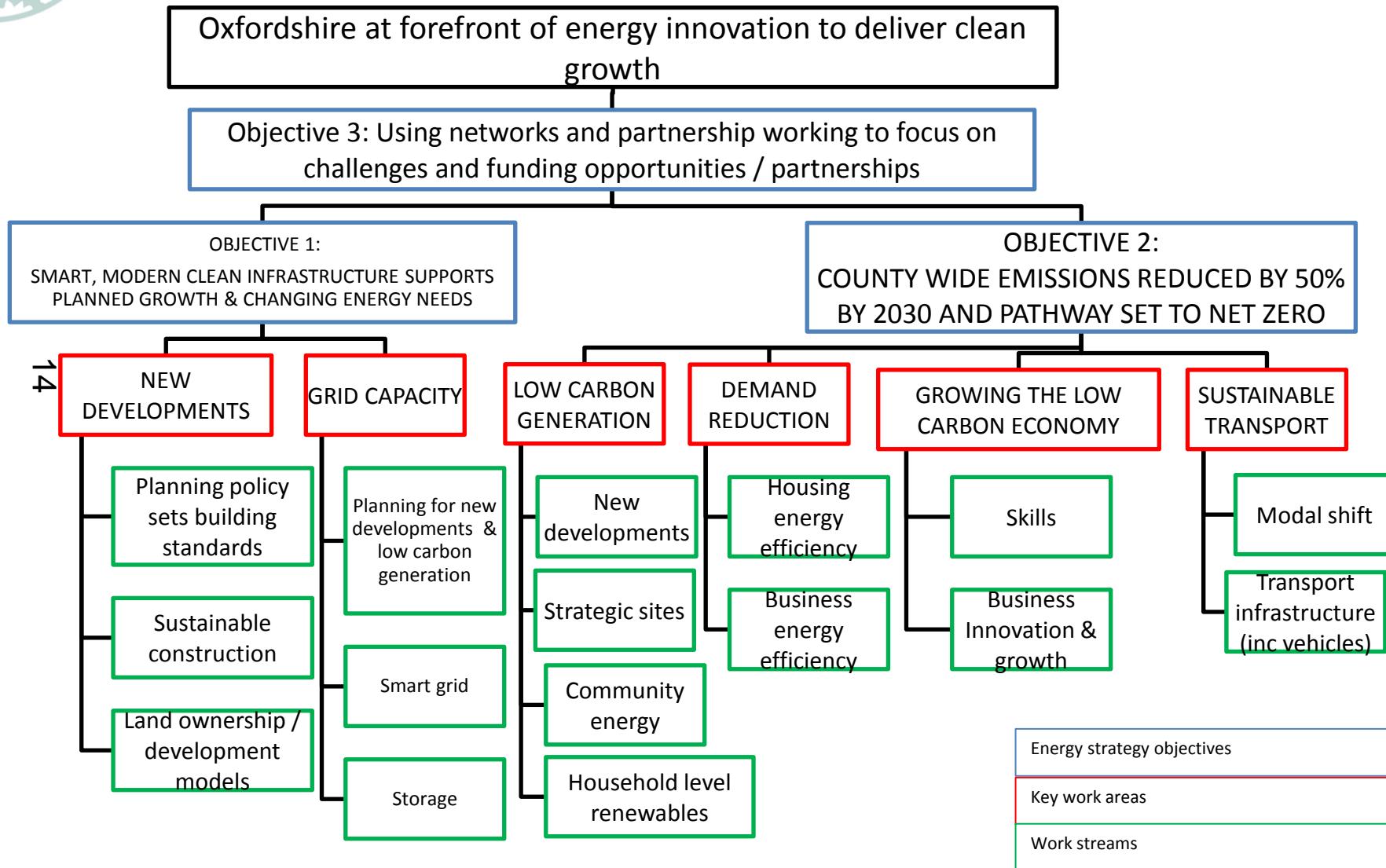
Three objectives.....

1. Secure a **smart, modern, clean energy infrastructure** – including increased electricity grid capacity - **which supports our planned housing, industrial and commercial growth, and changing energy requirements**;
2. Lead nationally and internationally to **reduce countywide emissions by 50% compared with 2008 levels by 2030** and set a pathway to achieve zero carbon growth by 2050. We will realise the economic benefits of this low carbon transition by supporting:
 - **ambitious and innovative clean generation projects** across the county, both in urban and rural areas, and in growth locations;
 - projects that **reduce energy demand and increase energy efficiency** for domestic, industrial, commercial buildings and transport energy
3. Enhance **energy networking and partnership working** across Oxfordshire to focus on the low carbon energy challenges and funding opportunities created through the Clean Growth Strategy and the Oxfordshire Industrial Strategy.



Delivering the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy

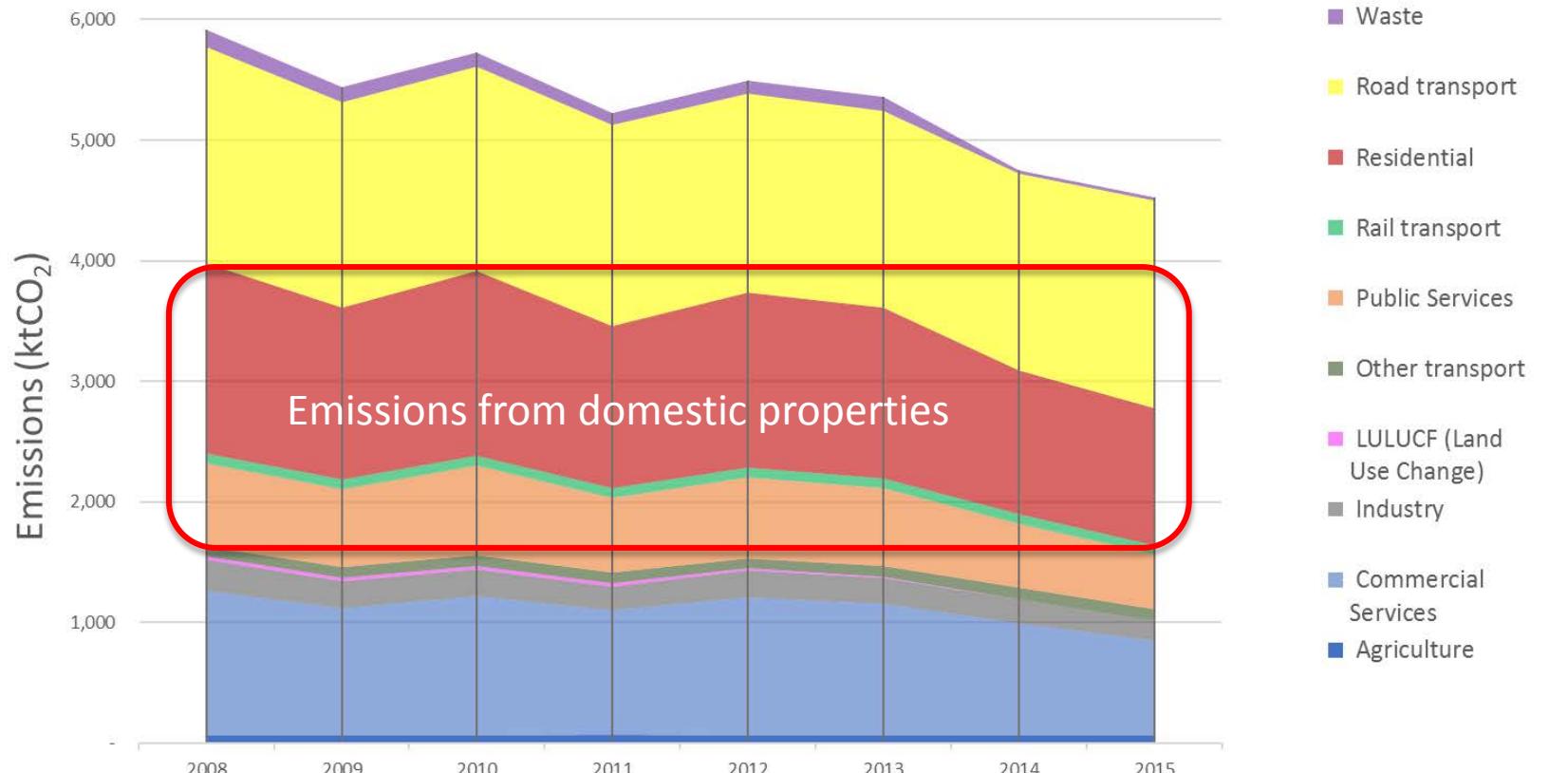
Themes and work streams





Oxfordshire emissions by sector

2008 to 2015



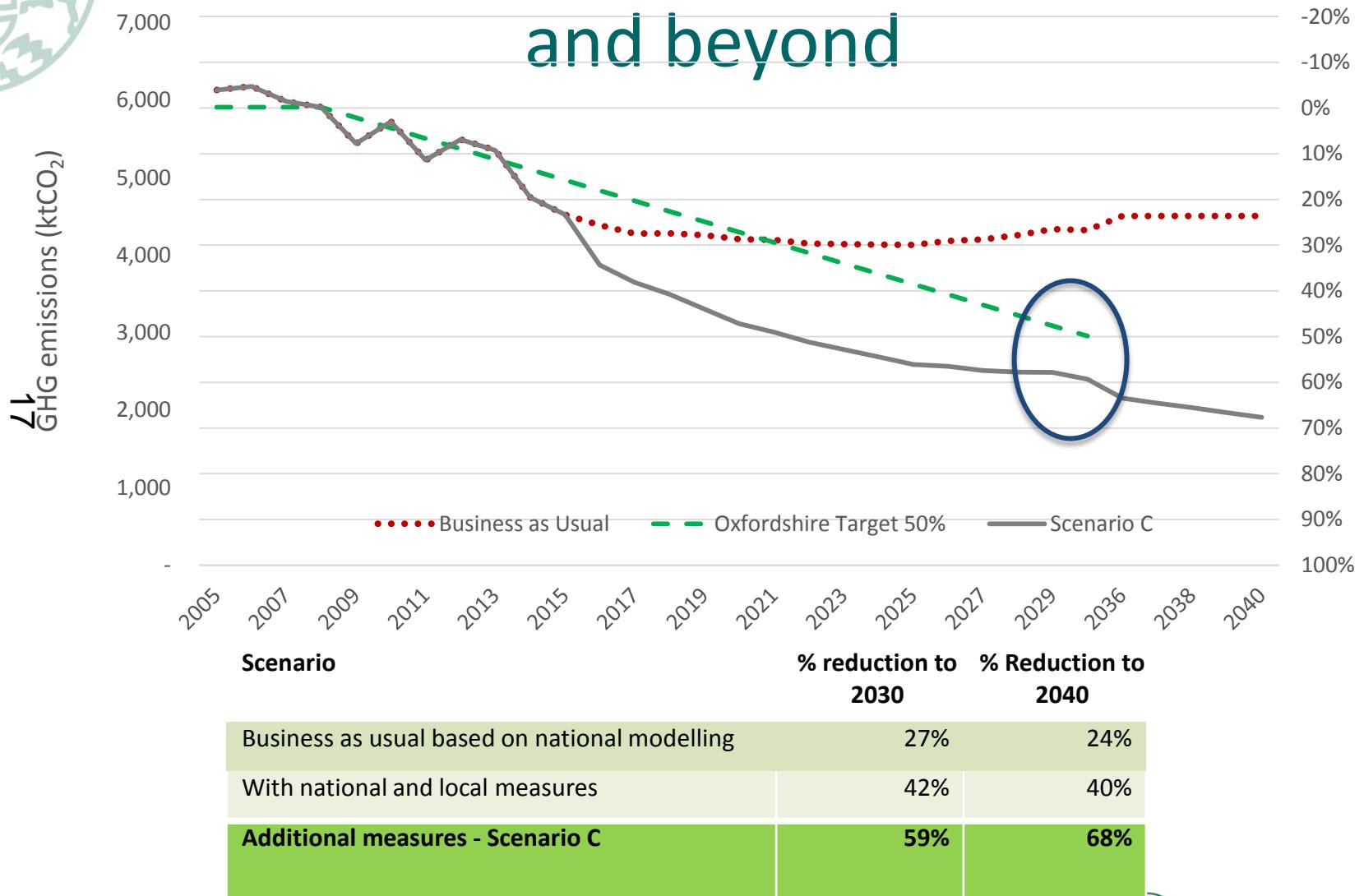
OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL



*.....to reduce countywide emissions by 50%
compared with 2008 levels by 2030
and set a pathway to achieve zero carbon
growth by 2050.*



Estimated emission projections to 2030 and beyond



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

This page is intentionally left blank