



## Project Fact Sheet

### Project full name (Project acronym)

Please note that a factsheet on your project is available at  
[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/projects/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/projects/index_en.htm).

You are invited to verify the information and to update where appropriate and necessary.

### Main Information

Please, fill out only these columns that need to be updated. Tick all other fields.

<b>Key Action:</b>	Mobilising Local Energy Investment
<b>Project coordinator</b>	Oxford City Council
<b>Contact person name:</b>	Mairi Brookes
<b>Contact person phone:</b>	+44 (0)1865 252212
<b>Contact person email:</b>	mbrookes@oxford.gov.uk
<b>Project's Partners</b>	Oxfordshire County Council
<b>Project's website:</b>	www.oxfutures.org
<b>Benefits:</b>	Providing technical assistance to prepare sustainable energy/retrofit projects which leverage private sector finance alongside public sector income.
<b>Keywords:</b>	Community energy, sustainable investment, energy efficiency
<b>Duration:</b>	29/11/2012 – 28/11/2016
<b>Budget:</b>	Euro 1,535,063 (EU contribution 75%)
<b>Contract number:</b>	+44 (0)1685 252212

*A nationally recognised programme that has built on the ground-breaking work of Oxfordshire's communities for a low carbon economy*



**Over £14m invested in local energy projects since 2012**

Predominantly funded by community share offers and the Energy Company Obligation, our programme has led to operational projects of: 8 MW solar on schools and businesses, 0.95 MW of hydro generation on the Thames, 100s houses insulated and piloted school LED lighting retrofits.

**We've achieved this on a constant learning curve**

Since conception this programme has proved its resilience to changing policy on feed-in tariffs, supplier obligation and tax relief on investments. At the start our biggest risk on exchange rates was catastrophic Eurozone collapse but in the last six months it is Brexit and the fall of the pound that has impacted our projects.



**Over £10m community benefit funding secured**

Low Carbon Hub delivers local, low carbon energy projects for the benefit of the community. The landowner gets low carbon electricity; community investors get a fair return; and, the Hub gains an income stream which is used to support further projects and to explore new business models to take Oxfordshire towards a low carbon economy.

**A legacy of democratized energy generation**

Oxfordshire is recognised at a national level as a leader in community energy. Because of the OxFutures project not only have we delivered on the opportunity on our doorstep, but the Low Carbon Hub has a viable business model in a post-FITs era. The potential pipeline beyond OxFutures is valued at £11.5m of investments into local low carbon heat, solar and hydro projects and could secure a further £5m in community benefit. This could grow significantly from the known projects that currently form the pipeline.



**Project's results** (max. 500 characters per bulletpoint)

Result 1	Establishing the OxFutures Community Fund, a revolving construction finance fund for community energy projects across the city of Oxford and county of Oxfordshire.
Result 2	Developing the business model of Low Carbon Hub, a social enterprise that scales up local renewable energy projects through community share offers and delivers community benefit from any surplus income. Low Carbon Hub undertook an investment and contract readiness process to develop their business capability and communication.
Result 3	7.4 MW of community-owned renewable energy projects
Result 4	Energy efficiency funding leveraged from Energy Company Obligation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 owner-occupied houses retrofitted in Barton</li> <li>• €827k across the city council social housing estate</li> </ul>
Result 5	Piloting LED retrofits in schools in the county

**Lessons learnt** (max. 500 characters per bulletpoint)

(You do not need to fulfil this section until the first Interim Report is ready. Afterwards please limit yourself to three most important points. None of these should exceed 500 characters.)

Lesson 1	<p><b>Being flexible has been essential:</b> an assumption at the beginning of the programme was that access to finance for mid-sized energy projects was the major barrier. Its corollary is that the hurdles to on the ground delivery are well understood and surmountable. In fact access to finance has been relatively straight forward, albeit a consequence of the work we have done. The challenge of a large pipeline of mid-size projects, in a changing policy framework is far greater. Context and policies change and we have responded and changed the programme and our approach to it. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grid capacity constraints limiting or delaying project delivery</li> <li>• Increased administrative and legal costs required to overcome concerns of key stakeholders, in particular in the solar schools pipeline.</li> <li>• Decreased solar panel costs leading to a larger, riskier pipeline with higher overhead costs.</li> <li>• Landowner decisions regarding hydro projects reducing the likely pipeline</li> </ul>
Lesson 2	<p><b>A major barrier to investments is not technical, nor access to finance, but enabling decision makers to take investment decisions.</b> The project has always been at the cutting edge of investment delivery as we are in uncertain policy and investment territory. Investors are always dealing with a changing environment (even with clear FITs degression) so it is natural that they are slow to move. Keeping up with the changing environment and investor responses has required significant resource and attention. The increased human capital at the Low Carbon Hub and within the councils is a major outcome of this project. It is also interesting to note that as we are grow closer to grid parity for solar, these constantly shifting terms will settle, so investor confidence ought to increase</p>

Lesson 3

**The costs anticipated when negotiating the grant agreement did not capture the full costs.** For example there were costs associated with raising money (share offer delivery and the cost of raising debt finance) that weren't fully appreciated. Great flexibility in framing and accounting for costs, i.e. treating funding like a start-up investment in business, would be more appropriate for this kind of project.

**Last updated**

Last updated: 14.12.2016