

OxFutures: Final Report on the Communications Plan

Vision

Audience

Goals

Activities

Evaluation



November 2016

Partners

www.oxford.gov.uk



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**



**Oxfordshire Local
Enterprise Partnership**



Co-funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe
Programme of the European Union

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Have we achieved our vision?

In this section we provide our original vision statement in whole and then consider our progress towards achieving it. We reflect on whether this remains an accurate description of our vision for the future of Oxfordshire.

To mobilise investment into renewable energy and energy efficiency

Through OxFutures, we will build on the unprecedented success of community activity in Oxford and Oxfordshire to become a UK leader on community-owned renewable energy and energy efficient buildings for all.

The River Thames and the roofs of Oxfordshire will be the power stations of the future, and by harnessing this power our communities, businesses and public sector organisations will be spearheading the market for clean, renewable electricity generation. This, along with large scale retrofitting improvement programmes for households across the County, will put Oxfordshire at the forefront of providing exciting new opportunities for a range of investors looking for ethical, reliable and profitable investments.

OxFutures will bring investment of £400million into Oxfordshire by 2020; driving us towards positive, low-carbon economic growth for the benefit of local communities. The development of public sector energy schemes locally will help to secure existing and new jobs in the energy, infrastructure and building services supply chain.

Greater energy efficiency in our buildings and locally generated energy will increase energy security and resilience to energy price rises as less fossil fuels will be needed from the global market. Supporting affordable local energy will help vulnerable residents and the fuel poor

OxFutures will secure the City of Oxford's ambitious target to reduce its carbon emissions by 40% by 2020 and the Oxfordshire 2030 target of 50% reduction in CO₂, on 2008 levels.

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Through OxFutures, we will build on the unprecedented success of community activity in Oxford and Oxfordshire to become a UK leader on community-owned renewable energy and energy efficient buildings for all.

It is true to say that OxFutures has done exactly this. By providing the equivalent of start-up funding for the Low Carbon Hub, the OxFutures programme has led to the development and consolidation of a business model for community-financed energy projects.

Our position as a leader in the UK is reflected in the numerous nominations and awards that the partners have received:

- Oxford City Council: awarded Most Sustainable Public Sector Organisation in the Public Sector Sustainability Awards 2014
- Oxford City Council: awarded Local Authority Partner of the Year in the Community Energy Awards 2014
- Oxford City Council: short-listed for Best Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Project at the APSE Awards 2015
- Low Carbon Hub: shortlisted for the 2015 Observer Ethical Awards for Community Energy Project
- Low Carbon Hub: shortlisted for Community Energy in the Ashden Awards 2015
- Barbara Hammond awarded MBE in 2015 New Year's Honours list
- Low Carbon Hub has been shortlisted for the Observer Ethical Awards 2014 for Community Energy Project
- Low Carbon Hub: shortlisted for 2Degrees Social Value award 2014.

Our leadership is also demonstrated in the partners influence of UK Government policy, for example:

- Barbara Hammond first suggested a Community Energy Strategy be developed. This was championed by Greg Barker MP and then delivered under the steer of then Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change Edward Davey MP.
- The Warming Barton project and the Low Carbon Hub featured as case studies in that publication.
- Barbara Hammond is a member of the DECC's Community Energy Contact Group and chaired the Hydro Working Group

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This remains our long term vision for Oxfordshire. We have made a strong start in delivering those power stations of the future and normalising locally-owned, renewable generation in partnership with businesses and landowners.

Oxfordshire has been identified as a hotspot for ethical investment. This is reflected in Oxford-based funding platform provider Ethex in their reports: Positive Investing in the United Kingdom [2013](#) and [2014](#).

Progress on retrofitting has been less pronounced due to the challenges faced in leveraging investment into domestic properties (i.e. the shortfall of the Energy Company Obligation in Warming Barton) and in entering long term contracts on public buildings at a scale sufficient to attract private investment (our original plans for the OxFutures Fund). None the less all partners remain committed to retrofit – it just a question of working out how.

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We know from Low Carbon Oxford's publication, Oxfordshire's Low Carbon Economy, that to meet our climate objectives Oxfordshire needs £100m investment per year to 2030. So the ambition that OxFutures could contribute so significantly to that challenge still stands. Realistically the legacy of the programme is expected to be lower than the initial projection due to the loss of the Energy Performance Contracting pipeline. That work was stopped due to the context of national austerity measures and the impact they had on the County Council's ability to enter long term contracts on its estate.

The Low Carbon Hub has an established business plan and strong pipeline . Over £14m investments have been made into operational projects and a further £4m have been self-funded by organisations whose business case rested on pre-development work carried out by the Low Carbon Hub. The Hub has a pipeline of projects worth £11.5m that will be delivered within 3 years.. It undertook a procurement in 2014 and now work with four successful contractors through a framework. These contractors represent a mix of local companies and a large national provider in order that the Hub can secure sufficient capacity as needed and keep prices down through mini competitions.

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During the OxFutures programme delivery regional grid capacity has become increasingly tight and a risk to delivery of the pipeline. This weakness in our energy infrastructure exposes the need to drive forwards local energy in order to improve our resilience to energy shocks.

Looking forwards this remains highly relevant to the production of an energy master plan for Oxfordshire and the need to renew efforts on retrofitting in order mitigate energy price increases.

Both the City and County councils remain committed to 2020 and 2030 carbon targets and the City Council is in the process of developing a city-wide Sustainable Energy Action Plan. With COP 21 in Paris in 2015 we expect to look forwards for longer terms targets to be set.

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How did we engage our target audiences?

This section provides the descriptions of the target audiences we identified in our communications plan and a high level outline how they were engaged and the outcomes for the programme. Specific reporting on communication targets is provided later.



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Target audience #1

- Business and business associations
- Including LCO Pathfinders
- Engaged through networks, chambers of commerce, Institute of Directors
- Benefits from efficiency/generation include reduced bills, secure energy supply, CO2 reduction commitment
- Additional benefits from improved corporate sustainability and 'good neighbour' status
- May be suppliers of energy/environmental services

What we did:

Initial relationships developed through LCO pathfinders leading to the Oxford Bus Company installation. Luke Marion of OBC became a champion for the community-benefit model of delivery, presenting at the Action On energy conference. Building on this success led to the installation at Norbar and its Commercial Director, Catherine Rohll, presented at the Oxfordshire Energised closing conference in 2015.



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Target audience #2

- **Low Carbon Community Groups:**
- All 60+ low carbon community groups in Oxfordshire
- Engaged through Low Carbon Hub and Community Action Group networks
- The Key e-newsletter to capture the wider community
- Early adopters and/or environmental activists
- Want resource and financial help to improve their local community

What we did:

Community groups with well developed and resourced projects were supported by Low Carbon Hub as a priority. This enabled learning from the initial projects to be rolled out to subsequent projects. Key groups such as Osney Lock Hydro and Southill Solar became champions for the support the Low Carbon Hub were able to provide. This reached other groups through the Key newsletter and the events including: community energy training, Action On Energy and Oxfordshire Energised. The Powering UP! event attracted community groups from across the UK.



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Target audience #3

- **Investment community:**
- Social Investment Finance Intermediaries (SIFIs); angel networks, individual investors
- Engaged through Hub, personal and angel networks
- Interested in investment opportunities with a financial and social return
- Likely to include investors who are new to and curious about social impact models
- May include energy companies looking to meet their environmental obligations

What we did:

Action on Energy was designed to attract local investors and raise awareness. The Low Carbon Hub put priority resourcing into engaging local investors, starting with a smaller share offer in the first instance. When the Low Carbon Hub launched its first 'big' share offer in Autumn 2014, it targeted £1.5m. It got £1.7m! A further £4.4m was raised from two share offers issued in 2016.



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Target audience #4

- **Local community investors:**
- Local residents or others with a connection to Oxfordshire communities
- Engaged through Low Carbon Hub
- Interested in building a low carbon infrastructure for Oxford; investment opportunities with a financial and social return

What we did:

Local community investors were engaged through marketing for each share offer opportunity. This was lead either by the Low Carbon Hub for their offers, or by community groups running their own offer. The first such share offer of the programme was for Osney Lock Hydro. It smashed its target and raised over 90% of the funds from people living within 1 mile of the installation location.



Target audience #5

- **Public sector:**
- National, regional and local authorities, district councils, parish councils, Non-departmental public bodies (e.g. Environment Agency), local and national politicians
- The European Union and other European authorities
- Engage through council briefing, direct engagement with MPs, consultation groups/exercises, links from project delivery
- Interests: brand association, improved local environment; NDPBs reputation, learning from our experience

What we did:

We used and built on our connections with central government to influence DECC policy on community energy. OxFutures partners and projects were featured in the Community Energy Strategy. DECC provided co-funding for the Powering UP! conference which also featured the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change as a speaker. Locally politicians from across the districts and political parties have taken a joint platform to support the programme. Senior staff in the councils, involved in the project board, were well briefed and able to use their connections and influence to help address barriers – such as encouraging take up of the solar schools programme.



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Target audience #6

- **Lobbyists:**
- Community associations, NGOs, environmental orgs, campaign groups
- Engaged through personal and professional networks, press, open invitation conferences and events
- Interests: to promote their agenda – this may not always be aligned to the OxFutures vision (e.g. some preservation agendas)

What we did:

Engaged with Community Energy England to support joined up lobbying to central government.



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Target audience #7

- **Academic:**
- Researchers, experts, staff
- Engaged through alum networks, personal networks, university pathfinder representatives
- Interests: influencing national policy, opportunities to demonstrate or explore practical implications of academic research

What we did:

Took part in a research project run by the Environmental Change Institute at the University of Oxford. Used the outcomes of the Oxfordshire's Low Carbon Economy report to support the rationale and motivation for the OxFutures programme when presenting at events.



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Target audience #8

- **Press and media:**
- Local and national
- Engaged through councils' press offices, Hub press connections, local community publications and social media
- Interests: a good story

What we did:

Press releases for all major project milestones attracted local press in print and tv coverage.



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Our goals set out specific targets and related activities

This section updates these tables to set out what has been achieved.



Vision**Audience****Goals****Activities****Evaluation****Goal #1****Raise awareness of OxFutures project and vision locally and nationally:**

Specific targets	Related activities	Achievements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5000 twitter followers • 60 people’s power station community group case studies • 3000 FIT projects identified for people’s power station • 250 local community volunteers involved in conferences • 300 national LA conference participants • Speeches at 15 major conferences • Contributing to dissemination activities/materials for IEE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OxFutures: Action for Energy event • LCO Week • Powering Up conference • Close conference • Twice yearly stakeholder events • Social media campaign • Project website • People Power Station website • Project presentation documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • @OxFutures has 1064 followers and @LowCarbonHub has 1708 followers • @LowCarbonHub’s share offer Thunder Clap reached XXXX tweets • Action On Energy 200 local volunteers and key influencers. • Powering UP! 220 attendees from LAs and community groups in the UK • Energising Oxfordshire XX local volunteers, investors and landlords • Osney Lock Hydro featured on “Inside Out” on BBC1 South 2nd Feb 2015 • Speeches/panel participation at the following conferences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Exchange, June 2015, London • Carbon Trust Public Sector conference, Feb 2015, London • Global Net Webinar, Feb 2014 • MLEI conference, June 2013, Brussels • MLEI conference, March 2015, Brussels • Powering UP!, Sept 2014, Oxford • Community Energy Conference, Aug 2015, Oxford • Westmill Windfarm Annual General Meeting March 2014 • MidCounties Co-op Annual General Meeting April 2014 • Farming conference May 2014 • EASME conference in Brussels in October 2014 • Association for Public Sector Excellence, Manchester, Jan 2016 • Business in Oxford, Oxford, Apr 2016

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Goal #2

Securing political support for delivery and influencing national policy

- Key councillors and MPs are briefed and support the project
- Councils commit to support delivery as a landlord and/or investor
- Learning regarding national policy framework is captured and shared with MPs, officials and lobby groups



Specific targets	Related activities	Achievements
Contributing to Government policy consultations Attending invited advisory groups	Briefing city councillors through Carbon and Natural Resources Members Board Direct briefing for County portfolio owner David Nimmo-Smith Hub coordination of technical/policy responses to consultations Direct engagement with key councillors/MPs as guest/speakers at conferences.	Responses to 4 Government policies or consultations by partners Barbara Hammond attends the DECC Community Energy Contact Group and Chaired DECC's Hydro Working Group. SoS Edward Davey MP was a speaker at Powering UP! Oxford City Council worked closely with DECC in delivering the conference.

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Goal #3

Securing investment for key work packages

- Social impact investors are aware of OxFutures opportunities and keen to commit funds
- Awareness of social impact investment models is raised in the region – bringing this message out of London



Specific targets	Related activities	Achievements
<p>Circa 3000 investors are engaged to invest in community energy projects</p> <p>Leverage targets are met</p>	<p>OxFutures: Action for Energy event</p> <p>OxFutures strategy development stakeholder event</p> <p>Hub social impact network development</p>	<p>957 have been engaged investing a higher average than expected of around £3200</p> <p>£14m operational projects</p> <p>£4m self-funded projects</p> <p>£11.5m pipeline of projects for next 3 years</p>

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Goal #4

Securing committed community groups & pipeline projects

- Community groups are strongly engaged and supported contributing to increased successful delivery of projects



Specific targets	Related activities	Achievements
<p>Technical assistance contracts for renewable energy projects with 14 communities</p> <p>Technical assistance contracts for domestic retrofit projects with 6 communities.</p> <p>A pipeline of projects is developed to represent the required value of investments and delivered within project time frame</p>	<p>Hub community group network support</p>	<p>10 technical assistance contracts signed: Goring, Abingdon, Osney Lock, Charlbury, Radcot, ONCORE, Watchfield, Low Carbon South Oxford, Hub IPS, WOCORe</p> <p>4 no longer required because the community has become a shareholder of the Hub and asked the Hub IPS to take their project forward: Wallingford, Wolvercote, Sandford, Woodstock</p> <p>5 communities were engaged for domestic retrofit but no contracts have been signed due to winding that work package down</p> <p>A very strong pipeline is in place for delivery of the investment target and beyond.</p>

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What activities were undertaken?

This section provides links to deliverables and commentary on successes.

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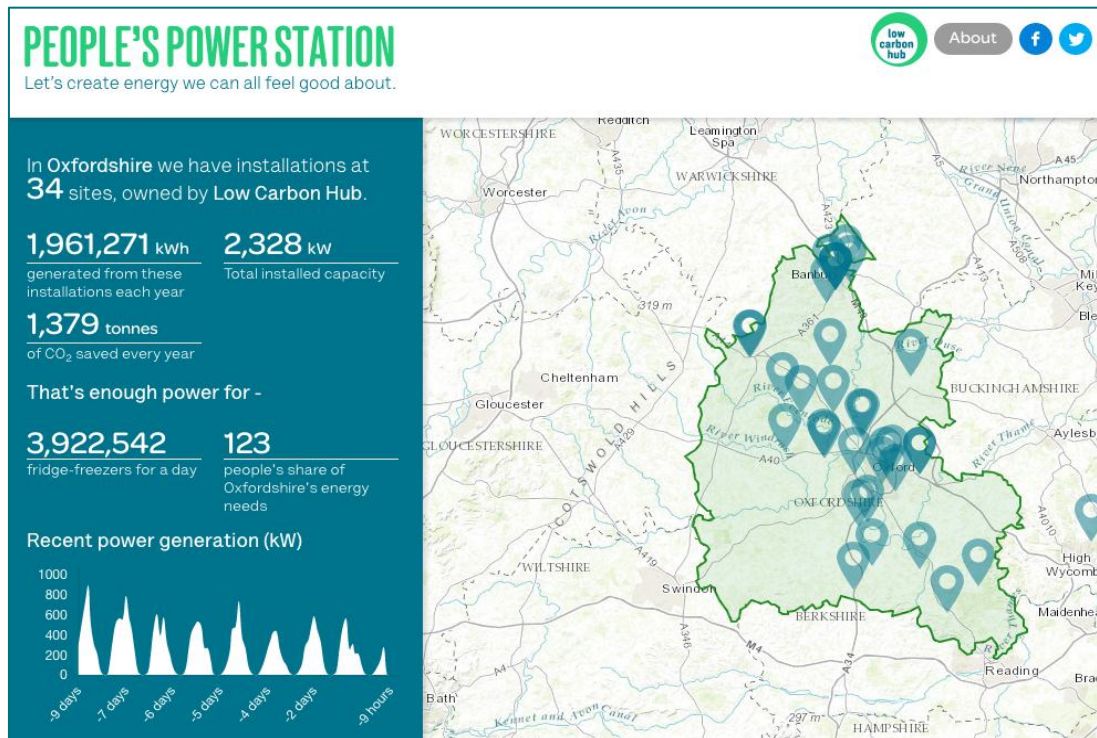
Task 1: Project presentation documents

- Project presentation pamphlet
- Final publishable report
- Public report on contracts

All can be found [here](#)



Task 2: People's Power Station



The website can be searched for a particular site or filtered to show all the installations owned by a particular organisation. The screenshot below shows the installations owned by the Low Carbon Hub. A real time feed shows current generation in the chart at the bottom and the figures show the annual expected generation and the social impact data arising from that generation

Home > OxFutures - A European funded project

OxFutures Home

Proje

OxFutures

Creating a low carbon future

OxFutures is mobilising large-scale investment to renewable energy and energy efficiency projects city and county. The aim is to achieve a 40% reduction in carbon emissions locally by 2020 and make low carbon economic development mainstream.

The project builds on the unprecedented success City and County councils on carbon reduction and energy efficiency. It has been kick-started by a grant from [Intelligent Energy Europe](#) to leverage investment £15million into local energy projects over the next years.

Projects

- [OxFutures Fund: to mobilise investment](#)
- [Powering up: to develop renewable energy](#)
- [Powering down: to reduce energy demand](#)
- [Public estate projects](#)



Dr Barbara Hammonc

"By making renewable Europe to do the same"



Councillor John Tann

"This project is fantastic"

Task 3: Project Website

- [A branded website](#) which communicates the OxFutures vision, the IEE-funded three programme events and links to partner websites
- The website will provide regular updates on the advancement of the investment project, and all public deliverables foreseen in the project

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Task 4: Social media campaign

- Tweets went out from the following accounts to drive people to our website, attend events and raise awareness
- The Hub's thunderclap raising awareness of their second share offer had a reached 10,000s of twitter and facebook users



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Task 5: Programme of events

- **OxFutures: Action for Energy**
 - 200 delegates
 - TED meets pledging event for key local influencers and OxFutures delivery stakeholders
- **Powering Up** national conference for community energy groups and local authorities.
 - Featured the then Secretary of State for Energy & Climate Change Edward Davey MP
 - Over 200 delegates
 - Amazing feedback
- **Energizing Oxfordshire** conference:
 - 200 delegates
 - Show cased endorsement of investors and landlord businesses and school who had projects with the Hub
 - Galvanized key decision makers to invest in the community energy pipeline



OxFutures  ACTION ON ENERGY

24 January 2014

Saïd Business School, Oxford OX1 1RQ

2.30 – 5pm

Followed by drinks reception until 6.30pm

Thursday 4 September 2014 - Oxford Town Hall

POWERINGUP!
Scaling up community energy together

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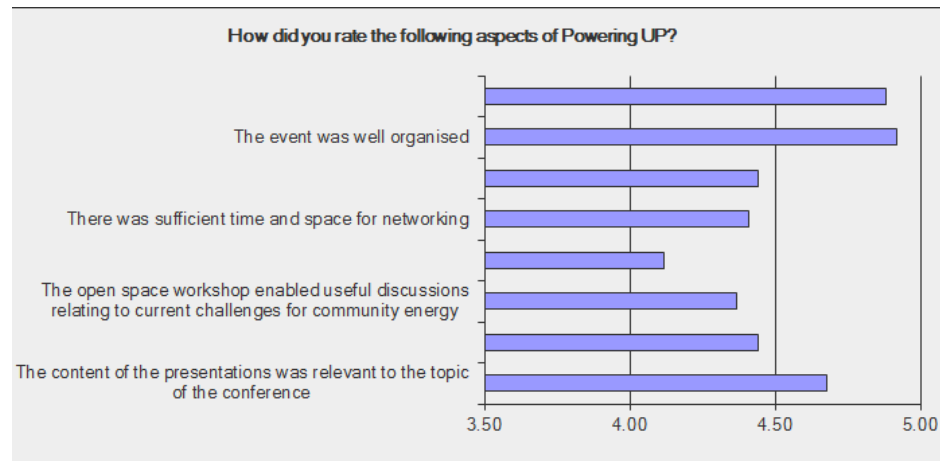
Performance indicators

KPI	Result
Twitter followers:	Low Carbon Hub: 2136/ OxFutures: 768
Number of stakeholders engaged	2136
Number of delegates at conferences and events	Met target with 200 at each
Website hits:	Not captured
Number of local, industry and national press mentions	12 known



Other monitoring

- Feedback on Powering UP! Conference:



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