



**OXFORD**  
CITY COUNCIL



# Local Carbon Oxford (LCOP)



**Presented by Lucy Fairchild, Zero Carbon Community  
Engagement Officer**

# What I'll be talking about today

- What is the problem we were trying to solve?
- What is Local Carbon Oxford?
- What have we achieved so far?
- What next?
- What can we learn?

# Net zero targets

## United Kingdom: 2050

The UK has a national target of reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

## Oxfordshire: Before 2050

The county has committed to achieving carbon neutral “well ahead” of the UK 2050 target.

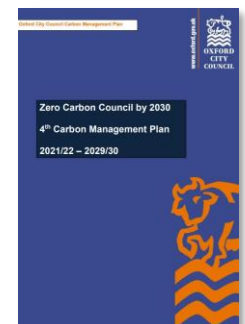
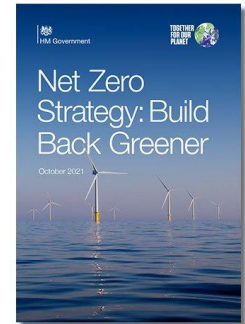
## Oxford: 2040

Oxford City Council is working with business and residents to get “Oxford to Zero” by 2040

## Oxford City Council: 2030

We are aiming to be a zero-carbon council by 2030.

www.oxford.gov.uk



# The challenges

**For Oxford:** To hit its target of Net Zero by 2040, *businesses, organisations and communities of all types and sizes* across the city need to be involved in the transition.



# The challenges

**For energy efficiency:** The amount of money needed for non-domestic retrofit is estimated at *£478 million* in the city of Oxford alone<sup>1</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> Estimate based on data from Energy Solutions Oxfordshire.

# The challenges

**For business:** Organisations who want to support climate action often do so by funding carbon projects that are *distant, vague and intangible*.



# What is Local Carbon Oxford?

*A matchmaking scheme for Oxford supporting energy efficiency projects that deliver carbon savings and community benefits locally.*

[www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk)

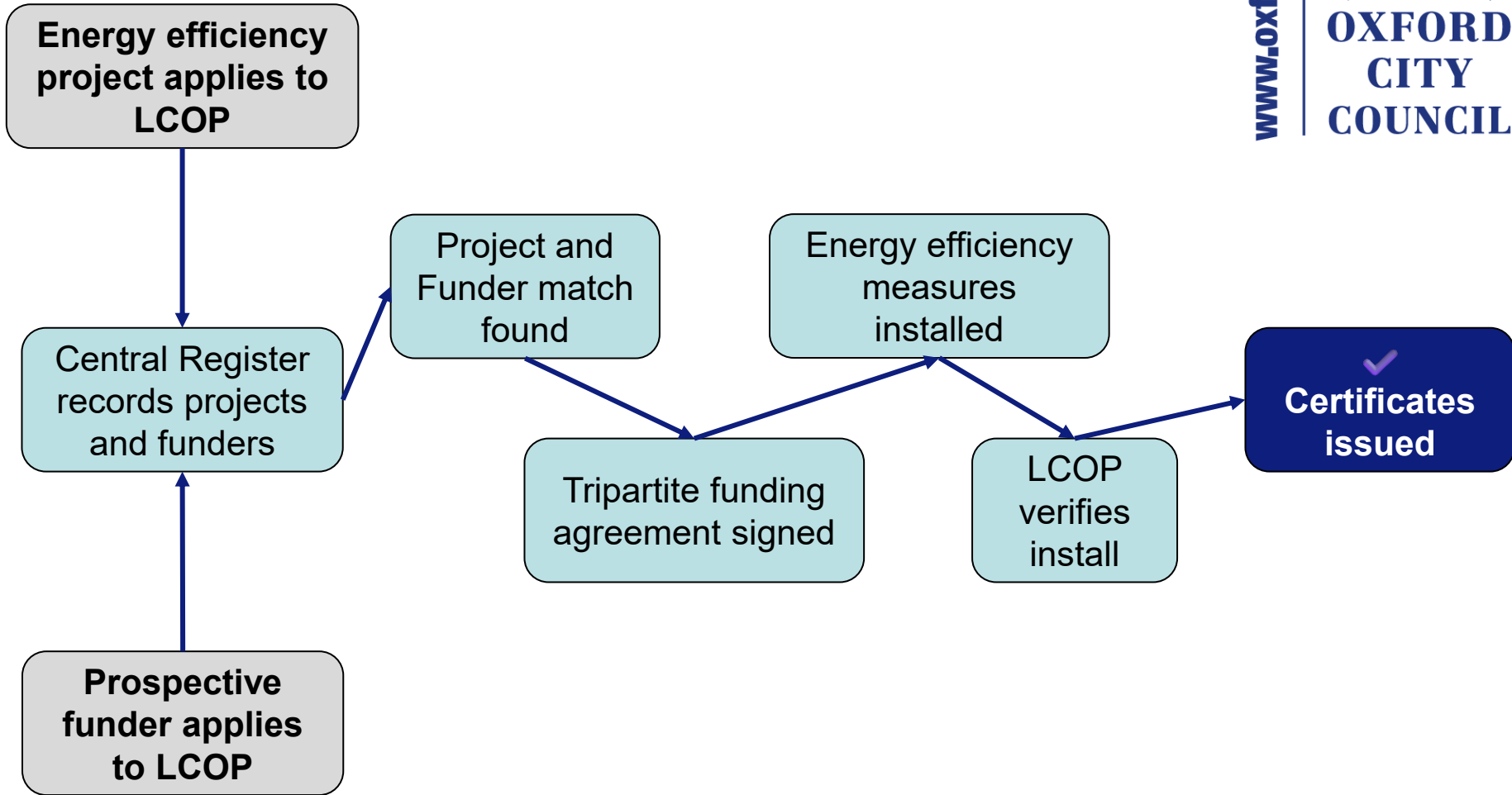


# What is Local Carbon Oxford?

- A funding scheme supporting local projects that reduce carbon and improve community prosperity.
- Provide support for SMEs, charities and community groups to deliver vital energy efficiency works on non-domestic buildings.
- Unique matchmaking approach pairs local organisations in need of funding with businesses and institutions keen to support community and climate action.
- Rigorous accreditation and validation process ensures funding goes to the greatest areas of local need to deliver tangible action on decarbonisation.
- Simple, transparent transfer of finance between funders and project developers.
- A pilot project grant funded by Innovate UK.



# What that looks like in practice



# Assessment criteria

We grade projects through a rigorous process that assesses:

**Maturity**

**Social  
benefits**

**Durability**

**Additionality**

**Carbon  
savings**



# What have we achieved so far?

Up to **£200,000 raised or pledged** in match funding for energy efficiency projects in Oxford

**135 local organisations and businesses** directly engaged by Local Carbon Oxford team

Up to **178.14 tCO<sub>2</sub>e local carbon savings *per year*** if all projects in pipeline were funded

**18 funders and project developers** applied to join scheme within 3 months of the public launch



# Successes and positives

- ✓ Successfully developed from scratch and delivered new product to market
- ✓ Product met with almost universal enthusiasm and positivity, momentum built quickly post-launch
- ✓ “Fail fast” approach helped us iterate through learning loops at pace and overcome barriers
- ✓ Established a critical role for local authorities to play in this space
- ✓ Successfully pitched business case for support through second phase of project



# Local Homelessness Charity:

## Loft insulation and lighting upgrade



**Energy savings:** Loft insulation improvements are expected to reduce annual gas heating use by 5% (eq. to ~ 7,600kWh). The LED upgrades will save around 970kWh annually compared with legacy lighting.



**Carbon reduction:** After 10 years, the loft insulation will save ~13.9tCO<sub>2</sub>e, and LEDs will save ~1.9tCO<sub>2</sub>e – that's an estimated 16 tonnes in total!



**Thermal comfort:** Improved heating for users of the space due to increased insulation.

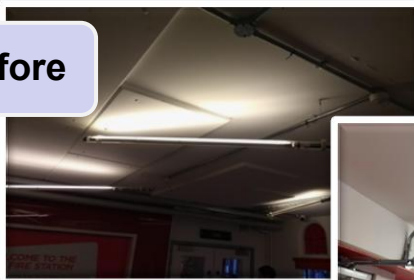


**Maintenance costs:** Lower maintenance costs due to the longer lifespan of LEDs compared to fluorescent lighting.



**Accessibility improvements:** LED installation provides better quality of lighting for staff and visitor comfort.

Before

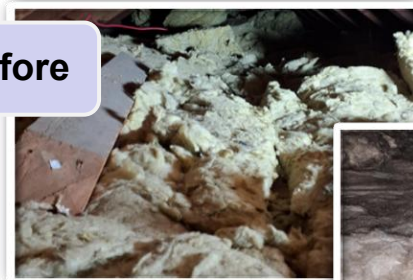


LED upgrades



After

Before



Loft insulation



After

# Challenges

- ❖ Culture – in this case around SME energy efficiency – takes time and space to build
- ❖ Buy in – needs to be secured from key stakeholders (internally and externally) as early as possible, especially with innovative approaches
- ❖ Net zero – a systemic goal which will not be achieved through a project-based approach
- ❖ Self-sustaining financial model - ensuring funding or clear value to justify LCOP service for council budget inclusion.
- ❖ Robustness to evolving national and local policy landscapes (e.g., NPPF, Local Plans).



# What's Next: Evolving LCOP into a Sustainable Service

- **Building a self-sustaining model** – creating a service that delivers clear value to exist outside of finite grant-funding that is nimble resource wise.
- **Ability to ebb and flow** the service depending on funding. Akin to investor rounds
- **Diversifying funding outputs** – Introducing new funding routes such as S106 contributions and procurement-linked Social Value.
- **Broadening the project base** – Expanding LCOP to fill council funding gaps for carbon reduction measures and integrating nature-based solutions in the offer.
- **Reassessing the role of carbon offsetting** – should we look to offer the purchase of offsetting credits? Who would fund/support verification of credits?



# Reflections and advice...

- Start with a clear theory of change, but be flexible about your model
- Recognise and acknowledge systemic barriers, and accept that your product cannot solve them all
- Take a systems-thinking approach to product design and take time to understand where your product fits into the ecosystem
- Use partnerships to extend your capacity, especially where you need trusted messengers
- Design for the user, organisations need support that fits *their* reality
- Recognise where it is productive and additive for a local authority to step in, and where it is not





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**Thanks for listening**

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