

OxFutures update for OEP

17th January 2014

This report accompanies a presentation by Mairi Brookes, Oxfutures Project leader, Oxford City Council and Anthony Simpson, Low Carbon Hub.

Background

1. Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council were awarded a grant by the Intelligent Energy Europe programme of the EU. It covers 75% of the costs towards a £1.3m programme to mobilise local energy infrastructure. The funded period started on 28th November 2012 and lasts for three years and has the following key targets:

Leveraging investment in energy projects	£20m
Renewable generation capacity	8.4 MW
Demand reduction energy savings	13,330, 000 kWh
Carbon emissions reductions	7,900 tCO ₂ p.a.

2. The grant is formally titled 'Oxfordshire Total Retrofit' but following work on the communications plan a public-facing brand of 'OxFutures' was adopted as this is more accessible and can be used as an umbrella for future projects that also aim to deliver the city and county's carbon targets over the next 20 years.
3. Local community interest company Low Carbon Hub is the major partner to the two councils in delivering the four programme strands:
 - The OxFutures Fund
 - Investment on the public estate
 - Community energy: powering up
 - Domestic retrofit: community powering down

Progress

4. Options for a private sector OxFutures Fund were explored but the current economic climate is not supportive for this. Instead we plan to develop the Low Carbon Hub's financial and business structures to investment readiness with a goal of securing a £5m revolving construction finance fund for powering up projects.
5. Investment in the public estate will focus on community-facing assets for which councils have a choice of raising funds themselves, or partnering with the community.
6. Low Carbon Hub have launched the Solar Energy for Schools programme and undertaken a scoping exercise for solar PV on car parks. Oxford City Council is working to leverage Energy Company Obligation funding for energy efficiency improvements to tower blocks and other social housing.
7. The community and business powering up project pipeline is strong and likely to meet our investment target on its own. 140kWp of solar PV have been installed at

Oxford Bus Company, Osney Lock Hydro is under construction with Abingdon and Goring hydro projects at the planning submission stage.

8. The Warming Oxfordshire and Warming Barton programmes have delivered over 300 energy assessments following community engagement events and leafleting. In Barton 25 houses have been installed with external wall insulation which was part funded by ECO investment. Despite this success, policy uncertainty combined with difficulties in fully funding measures through ECO mean that our immediate next steps will be to develop a better financial model for funding domestic retrofits before expanding the offer to householders further.

Event

9. OxFutures is running an event on Friday 24th January at the Said Business School in Oxford, to gather senior decision-makers and influencers in Oxfordshire who wish to help the transition to a low carbon and more sustainable society (see Annex 1).
10. The event aims to create a high-level and effective network of Oxfordshire leaders to take action on energy locally. The event will explore how “low carbon economy thinking” can be a driver for social and economic benefit.

Recommendations

11. Councillors consider whether there are opportunities for projects on the public estate or within their wider communities that might benefit from the Oxfutures programme.
12. Councillors note the “Oxfutures: Action on Energy “event on Friday 24th January. Further information is available from Mairi Brookes.

Contacts

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Annex 1:

OxFutures >> ACTION ON ENERGY

24 January 2014

Said Business School, Oxford OX1 1RQ

2.30 – 5pm

Followed by drinks reception until 6.30pm

Key speakers:

**Jonathon Porritt CBE**

Co-founder Forum for the Future

**Leo Johnson**

Co-author of Turnaround Challenge

**Caroline Mason CBE**

Chief Executive Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

**Catherine Bottrill**

CEO Pillo

**Tim Stevenson OBE**

Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire

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