Essentials for college sustainability and resilient community progress

The University of Oxford has global influence, not least in terms of understanding and developing a more sustainable way of life. Our main contribution to a more sustainable future is through our academic mission; to create future citizens more knowledgeable, empowered and proactive in this field whatever they choose to do. However, our global, national and local direct impact as a result of our educational activities also needs to be quantified and ameliorated wherever we are able to do so. The Oxford colleges are fundamentally sustainable organisations, but we need to manage our activities and partnerships in recognition of the current climate and biodiversity crisis, and the local and global need for social change.

VISION

	Carbon	Creatures	Community
Direct responsibility	• Leadership in policy direction for the Colleges in delivering buildings and services capable of a being fit for purpose while delivering a net reduction in carbon emissions year on year.	• Stewarding our directly managed land to deliver net gains in biodiversity year on year.	• Recognising and realising our ability to provide a supportive environment for our communities, allowing all voices to be heard and facilitating support and stewardship of people, buildings and resources
Partnerships	• Working with, buying from and investing in only those organisations that share our ambitions in carbon reduction and convince us they can achieve them	• Working with, buying from and investing in organisations that share our ambitions for biodiversity net gain, protecting habitat and wildlife, species protection. • Working with tenants and other land users towards these shared goals.	• Strong arrangements with our local communities enhancing the impact that we have through our intellectual, social, and financial assets to improve life chances and life experiences within the community in which we are embedded.
Influence	• Leading by example and use our educational skills to inform, engage with and influence the behaviours of our residents, staff and other communities to reduce our collective carbon footprints.	• Leading by example and use our educational skills to inform, engage with and influence our residents, staff and other communities to restore our natural environment and biodiversity at a local and global level.	• Encouraging the members of our community to build broad, mutually productive relationships and share their own expertise and knowledge in the same way.

Goals in each of these areas need to be quantified and measured to enable us to monitor our own progress towards them. We have the opportunity to set realistic but ambitious targets collectively or individually and align ourselves with partners such as other Colleges, the University and others. We can work together to learn from each other and share the work of monitoring, reporting on progress and communicating more widely.

PRIORITIES 2022-24	Monitoring & Evaluation / Communication & Engagement		Carbon	Creatures	Community
		Direct responsibility	• Understanding and managing our buildings to reduce the intrinsic carbon demand from new buildings and refurbishments and the demand from the way we use all of our buildings. • Business & academic travel reduction targets, considering our income generation business and how we sustain income while reducing the carbon footprint of the venture • Procuring and providing food with a lower impact on carbon and biodiversity, land use and water. • Assessing our entire procurement strategies to identify where best to drive carbon out of what we buy and waste less	• We should aim for Biodiversity Net Gain for new buildings and refurbishments in excess of that mandated through the planning process: know what we have now and plan to improve it by at least 20% • Evolve existing grounds and land to increase existing habitats and species and specifically enhance biodiversity by at least 20%, encouraging wildlife to thrive. • Identify development sites with the biodiversity value of each site positively weighted in each site assessment.	• Adopt People policies which are fair for our communities: good remuneration, good leadership, wellbeing Initiatives, supportive working practices, staff student collaboration • Work with our local communities using our various "capital" to improve people outcomes in the local area. • Develop a framework for wider social justice policies and action commensurate with our position in the community and the sector

		Partnerships	• Work with partners/suppliers to reduce their transport impacts for deliveries, sourcing products etc.
			
			• And make it easier for our visitors to reduce theirs
			
			• Work with partners/suppliers who are working to reduce the impact of their products or produce; seek and accept alternatives
				• Link with relevant university departments and third party wildlife champions to find beneficial synergies
				
				• Partner with University, City, County and other landowners to understand corridor opportunities and the creation of larger/connecting habitats
				
				• Influence more sustainable farming and land management practices with tenants/partners
					• Engage with communities outside our walls.
					• Sign the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter
					Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter with pledges v03.docx.pdf
					   • Charitable initiatives
					• Wider social justice policies
					   • Inclusive recruitment
					   • Social Impact Investment
					• Engagement and communication
					   • Inspire, aspire

		Influence	• We can inform, facilitate and influence the habits of our students and staff communities in
			   • How they use our buildings and services
			   • What they eat
			   • How they travel
			   • What they buy
				• Engage staff and students in sustainability audits and projects
				
				• Inform and educate on the impact of choice on biodiversity and the consequences of biodiversity loss
					• Use our influence with our own communities and the local and global communities we know to allow our staff and students to work with others too: building social connections, volunteering, doing good, engaging with and understanding the wider world

OUTPUTS 2022 – 2024

Carbon

Direct responsibility

- List the most carbon intense buildings and subset of priority quick wins
- Promote low cost energy saving measures which are achievable for all colleges
- Publish case studies of decarbonisation projects and building control systems
- A framework for building heating standards
- Understanding of the potential for passivhaus (or similar) for new College buildings
- A Business & academic travel policy template, considering income generation activities
- A repertoire of low impact menu items achievable for individuals
- List of highest carbon impact common college purchases and alternatives

Partnerships

- Agreed Sustainability Scorecard for colleges' suppliers of goods and services to be scored against
- Circular and sharing economy working group
- Carbon Buddying between Colleges

Influence

- Sustainable student information for college living agreed with OxSU

Creatures

- Standardised biodiversity measures audit embedded and used repeatedly by colleges
- Identify quick wins to enhance biodiversity on direct managed sites
- Adopt new building development philosophy to commit to 20% BNG

- List of highest biodiversity impact common college purchases and alternatives
- Collaboration with external wildlife champions evident
- Shared spaces for future creation of larger/connecting habitats identified between multiple Colleges and other landowners

- staff and students engaged in audits and projects

Community

- Staff survey results improving; engaging staff in the decision making process for their own wellbeing

- Opportunities for investment in social impact programmes/social bonds identified

- The menu of opportunities for work with local stakeholders which already exists is better taken up by Colleges

- Collaborative connections based on environmental and social sustainability pilots exist in Oxford across multiple areas of activity and are actively pursued by the University and other partners. Engage and develop a proposal for consideration.

- Volunteering pilot schemes exist
- Examples of Colleges or College departments supporting local communities abound.

Monitor and Evaluate

- Formulate targets in each area in a range that colleges can sign up to and which align with the University's targets.
- Establish a shared resource to measure, monitor and evaluate progress for colleges that wish to participate

Communicate and Engage

- Publish findings
- Build collaborative sustainable frameworks with buy in from all communities