

Cowley Local Projects



1. Energy advice

What is it?

Energy advice provides information to all householders about measures they can take to use energy more efficiently, reducing wastage and high energy bills.

What is the project scope?

An energy advice programme would aim to capitalise both on existing forums and designed interventions to deliver low cost- no cost advice.

- Roll-out of the Oxfordshire licensed Home Wise Tool from the Energy Saving Trust – a personalised home energy action plan that can be tailored to the budget and needs of the household.
- Food larders and Leys Community events.

Who are the beneficiaries?

It is particularly, though not exclusively, targeted at low income households who might struggle with managing energy bills through periods of high cost of living.

What it needs?

- Training on energy efficiency and advice
- Volunteers
- Funding for give-aways such as radiator foil, chimney balloons etc

2. Home visits and small measure improvements

What is it?

Home visits and small measure improvements is the next step from energy advice. Following the light touch intervention of energy advice, people could be offered a home energy assessment visit with some on the spot improvements.

What is the project scope?

- Pre-requisite is the energy advice programme.
- All homes in the Cowley Local area but focussed principally on those in fuel poverty or low income threshold.
- Approximately 1 – 1.5 hour free home energy visits
- Adjustment of home thermal controls, if necessary, plus some small interventions.
- Report explaining findings and recommendations

Who are the beneficiaries?

People who have been identified through the energy advice programme.

What it needs?

- Safeguarding training for home assessors
- Level 3 NEA training
- Volunteers
- Funding for small interventions
- Funding for project management

3. Debt Advice Centres – Energy Training and delivery

What is it?

Debt advice centres that operate either in a local area and at county level have expressed interest in getting additional energy advice as part of their repertoire for use in their client interactions and for a course on managing money (and energy use/ bills).

What is the project scope?

- Train energy advisors.
- Work in partnership with them for delivery

Who are the beneficiaries?

- People identified through the debt advice agencies.

What it needs?

- Development of specific training package
- Funding for delivery.
- Funding to encourage people to attend; either supermarket voucher or small energy efficient kitchen appliance.

4. Increasing smart meter uptake

What is it?

Smart meters are the first step to consumer flexibility. Without smart meters, customers have a very narrow range of energy tariff options which don't allow them to take advantage of cheaper energy times or to take advantage of flex opportunities.

Data (provided in the data packs) shows where Smart meter uptake is relatively low in areas of lower income. To enable a just and fair transition, household smart meter coverage is essential.

What is the project scope?

- To work with trusted community partners to understand the barriers to smart meter uptake
- Facilitate increase in uptake
- Could also be done in combination with the energy advice programme

Who are the beneficiaries?

- People identified through community engagement.

What it needs?

- Development of specific Smart meter uptake training package
- Funding for delivery.
- Funding to encourage people to attend; either supermarket voucher or small energy efficient kitchen appliance.

5. Off-gas household support for transition

What is it?

According to Lenza, there are 175 properties utilising oil and 222 properties using non-piped gas in the Cowley Local area. Other fuel (biomass/ solid, coal, and dual fuel) types collectively represented just 12 properties. These households face higher prices which are more susceptible to fuel-price volatility.

What is the project scope?

- To support off-gas households with alternative thermal heating options, namely heat pumps.

Who are the beneficiaries?

- They are largely householders in the rural part of the substation area.

What it needs?

- Engagement with the communities
- Develop a value proposition which doesn't mean bill increases
- Connecting with funding opportunities.

6. Retrofit salary sacrifice scheme

What is it?

The Retrofit Salary Scheme (RSS) project will identify gaps in current retrofit policy, and develop a scheme ready for roll-out and pilot in the UK.

RSS is a tax-efficient incentive for home-owning employees to improve their properties using the models of salary sacrifice schemes in place for the purchase of bicycles and EVs. Employers can address Scope 1–3 direct and indirect carbon emissions as well as supporting employees.

Oxford University Environmental Change Institute are working with organisations including Green Finance Institute, Lloyds to explore ways of developing evidence and practical solutions around financing mechanisms for retrofit and low-carbon technologies.

What is the project scope?

- Partner with an existing Oxford-based project.
- To develop a blueprint that could eventually be presented to government, supported by evidence, recommendations, and a practical product design.

6. Retrofit salary sacrifice scheme cont.

Who are the beneficiaries?

UK government has a viable project.

What it needs?

- Market experience, previous policy engagement, and lessons from EV salary sacrifice schemes, while considering how such an approach could help make green home technologies more affordable and accessible.
- Participation between big employers and the project

7. Other Employee Schemes

What is it?

Employers in Cowley Local use their employee engagement programmes to help support a fair and just, clean energy transition.

What is the project scope?

To be defined.

Who are the beneficiaries?

Employees of participating organisations.

What it needs?

- Definition of the employee scheme potential
- Sign-up by employers of the employee scheme
- Delivery of scheme
- Evaluation
- Spread the learning

8. Energy Business Breakfast for SMEs

What is it?

Large businesses in the area to offer business breakfast opportunities for learning and sharing .

What is the project scope?

To be defined.

Who are the beneficiaries?

Employees of the organisations supporting these schemes.

What it needs?

- Definition of the employee scheme potential
- Sign-up by employers of the employee scheme
- Delivery of scheme

9. ESOx Energy Assessment

What is it?

The Low Carbon Hub runs the Energy Solutions Oxfordshire (ESOx) programme which provides energy assessments for non-domestic customers. The reports typically identify savings of 19% on energy bills, of which one third are no cost or low cost to implement. Organisations are then eligible to apply for upto £10,000 in matched funding to deliver some of the changes recommended.

What is the project scope?

- Promote ESOx assessments in the Cowley Local area.

Who are the beneficiaries?

Businesses within the Cowley Local area.

What it needs?

- Marketing and networking to share ESOx concept
- ESOx capacity to deliver assessments
- Potential funding for ESOx assessments

10. Industrial Flexibility Partnership (IFP)

What is it?

An Industrial Flexibility Partnership (IFP) is a collaboration between industrial energy users (factories, processing plants, data centres, warehouses, etc.), energy companies, and sometimes electricity network operators to make industrial energy demand more flexible. The goal is to help balance the electricity system while reducing costs and supporting the integration of renewable energy.

What is the project scope?

- Map out peak demand across non-domestic energy users.
- Identify opportunities to reduce the peak through coordination between high use times
- Act as a pilot for community balancing.

Who are the beneficiaries?

System benefits as peak load management reduces the need for reinforcement.

What it needs?

- Leadership and coordination across big energy consumers

11. Public Sector Register for Cowley Local

What is it?

Creation of a public sector register for the primary sub-station area. This would involve building a central database that records and tracks the energy consumption of public-sector buildings and facilities in the area.

A public-sector energy register can help:

- Identify the highest-energy-consuming buildings.
- Target retrofit investments.
- Monitor progress toward net-zero goals.
- Support grant funding applications.
- Find opportunities for energy flexibility schemes.
- Benchmark performance between sites.

What is the project scope?

Scope would include:

- Schools, Council offices, Libraries, Leisure centres, Community centres, Social housing (depending on scope), NHS facilities and other public buildings

Who are the beneficiaries?

This would support public sector decision making as the register becomes the evidence base for future energy and carbon-reduction projects rather than just a list of buildings.

12. Apprentice programme for energy assessment

What is it?

The House of Commons report show that youth unemployment (ages 16–24) is about 15.8%–16.2% the highest level since around 2015 outside the pandemic period.

NEA Level 3 training provides skills and knowledge to allow people to do home assessments. This project would support local young people from the Cowley Local primary area to get funded places for training and support them with volunteering and potentially job opportunities after that.

What is the project scope?

- Identify young people who are considering work opportunities and inform them about the training opportunity
- Provide training
- Support them with volunteering opportunities to gain experience
- (Support them with employment in the retrofit sector).

Who are the beneficiaries?

Young people aged 18 – 30 in the Cowley Local area.

What it needs?

- Partnership with local organisations who work with young people such as Oxford Hub and Leys CDI
- Funding for NEA Level 3 training
- Training
- Development of energy assessment service (volunteer and paid)

13. Power Up

What is it?

The data pack shows that 75% of households in the Cowley local area are suitable for solar PV. Additionally, Lenza data suggests a high proportion of the households are also suitable for air source heat pumps (ASHPs).

Power Up reduces the cost of the purchase per household through bulk purchase. Cosy Homes Oxfordshire are trialling bulk buying schemes in Eynsham. BAXI, the principal sponsor for Oxford United, is a local business that installs ASHPs. They might be interested in a partnership on this project.

What is the project scope?

Scope would include:

- Identifying routes to engage with residents who could be interested in such a scheme. In Eynsham this was done via the Community Groups that are members of the LCH. There aren't groups with a similar focus in Cowley Local
- Partnering with ethical commercial partners to develop a scheme.
- Roll-out of the scheme

Who are the beneficiaries?

Residents in homes that can benefit from these LCTs, that are:

- Able to pay
- In a secondary substation area allows for LCT implementation

13. Power up... cont.

What it needs?

- Deep engagement with resident populations in Oxford City and South Oxfordshire areas
- Development of scheme
- Roll out of scheme

14. Heat Network

What is it?

Heat Network zoning indicates areas which have the lowest-cost, low carbon heating solution. DESNZ has published Heat Network Zoning (HNZ) maps for 28 pilot regions across England, highlighting key zones for heat networks within these regions. Although these zones have not been delineated for Oxford, the OxLAEP analysis shows that the area around Cowley Local meets the considerations.

What is the project scope?

- to be defined

Who are the beneficiaries?

- System benefits

What it needs?

- to be defined

15. Community Ownership of Solar Farms

What is it?

Community-owned energy is when the organisation that owns and operates energy generation or storage projects is established legally as a social enterprise and anyone - but especially people local to the project - can invest and own the projects. Investors get a reasonable return, and profits are used for the benefit of the community.

This is our model at Low Carbon Hub.

What is in the project scope?

Low Carbon Hub would like to acquire one (or more!) ground mount solar projects in the area that already have planning and grid permissions. We would design the project so that local residents could invest in the project (and get a return).

Our legal model is that profits are reinvested to support the community accelerate and benefit from the energy transition. We would also explore new ways to ensure local organisations and the community can benefit, perhaps through a new shared ownership model.

Who are the beneficiaries?

Anyone who invests in Low Carbon Hub - we would seek to make this as easy as possible for local people. There would also be beneficiaries of our Impact Programme: home energy advice, support to community groups and small businesses. We would fund the coordination and delivery of the CAPZero plan where appropriate. We will explore other ways in which we can fund local initiatives and organisations

What it needs?

Securing engagement and support from local leaders, parishes, councils and GB Energy

16. Cowley branch line decarbonisation

What is it?

Reopening south-east Oxford's freight-only Cowley branch to passengers with two new stations at Oxford Cowley (serving residents at Cowley and the Leys, and businesses in the Cowley Local PSA) and Oxford Littlemore.

It promotes a modal shift from car to train. Matters of electrification of the line and use of the line for generation of electricity are not clear.

What is the project scope?

The scope of the project would need to be established.

Who are the beneficiaries?

System wide.

What it needs?

- Understanding what is being considered by the Steering Group, the Oxford Strategic Rail Promoters' Group, for this project,

17. Domestic Retrofit

What is it?

Domestic retrofit for 'hard to decarbonise' houses continues to be a challenge. The data pack (page on Fuel Poverty and Deprivation), shows that there are parts of the primary sub-station area where although deprivation levels are low, the measure of deprivation for the living environment is high.

The mode EPC rating for Cowley Local is C but there are three areas within Cowley Local which have an EPC modal rating of E

- South Oxfordshire 004B
- South Oxfordshire 006F
- South Oxfordshire 007E

In addition to this Vale of White Horse 003D shows a mixed modal profile of C & E. These LSOAs highlight areas where residents are likely to face higher bills and comfort challenges compared with the Cowley Local average.

What is the project scope?

- Targeted engagement of householders/ landlords.
- Development of value proposition.

What it needs?

- Deep engagement with communities in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse