

PARTICIPANTS BRIEFING PACK



OXFORD CITIZENS ASSEMBLY ON CLIMATE CHANGE



Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of Oxford City Council

WELCOME

Thank you so much for giving up your time to help us with this really important task ahead of us to discuss how we can address the climate emergency in Oxford.

The Oxford Citizens Assembly on Climate Change is a unique opportunity for you to give your views to us to help us make real actions. At the end of this process, a report on the findings from the Assembly will be produced which will give us some real guidance as to how we want our city to look in the future.

A few years ago we started a process with citizens in Oxford to build a vision for 2050 and what our city would look like. Children in our city helped us to produce that vision and we hope you will help us make that vision a reality - a vision of a future where we have good air quality, people are able to get around without relying on the private car, our housing has been retrofitted and we have a better city for all of us to live in.

Carbon reduction in our city is very important and there is lots of information in this pack and links to where you can find out more information.

You don't need to read everything at this stage. There will be expert speakers at the Assembly who will be taking you through what it means for us, what it means for Oxford, and what it means for you.

Thank you again for giving up your time. We really appreciate it.



CONTENTS:

- 1 WHAT IS A CITIZENS ASSEMBLY?
- 2 WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE AND WHAT IS NET ZERO?
- 3 WHAT WILL WE BE DISCUSSING AT THE CITIZENS ASSEMBLY
- 4 DEBUNKING CLIMATE CHANGE MYTHS – WORLD WILDLIFE FUND
- 5 COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE INFOGRAPHIC
- 6 PRACTICAL INFORMATION

1 WHAT IS A CITIZENS ASSEMBLY?

A Citizens Assembly is a group of people who are brought together to learn about and discuss an issue or issues, before reaching a conclusion about what they think should happen. The people who take part are chosen so they broadly reflect the wider population – in terms of demographics (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity and social class) and relevant attitudes.

This Citizens Assembly on climate change will broadly follow guidelines set out by Involve, and the Government's Innovation in Democracy Programme and will be facilitated by senior researchers at Ipsos MORI. 50 members of the Oxford City public, including you, have been randomly selected to create a 'mini-public' broadly representative of the demographics of the population of Oxford (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity etc).

As a member of the Assembly you will be meeting over two weekends – **28th & 29th September and 19th & 20th October**. You will learn about climate change and options for action through a combination of presentations from experts and facilitated workshops. This will be followed by time for discussion and deliberation on the topics. You and your fellow Assembly members will be asked to vote on a range of options that will form the recommendations to Oxford City Council from the Citizens Assembly.

Ipsos MORI will publish a report outlining the Citizens Assembly's final recommendations and this will be presented to Oxford City Council's Cabinet in December 2019. It will then be presented to Full Council in January 2020 to consider for adoption and develop an appropriate response to the recommendations.

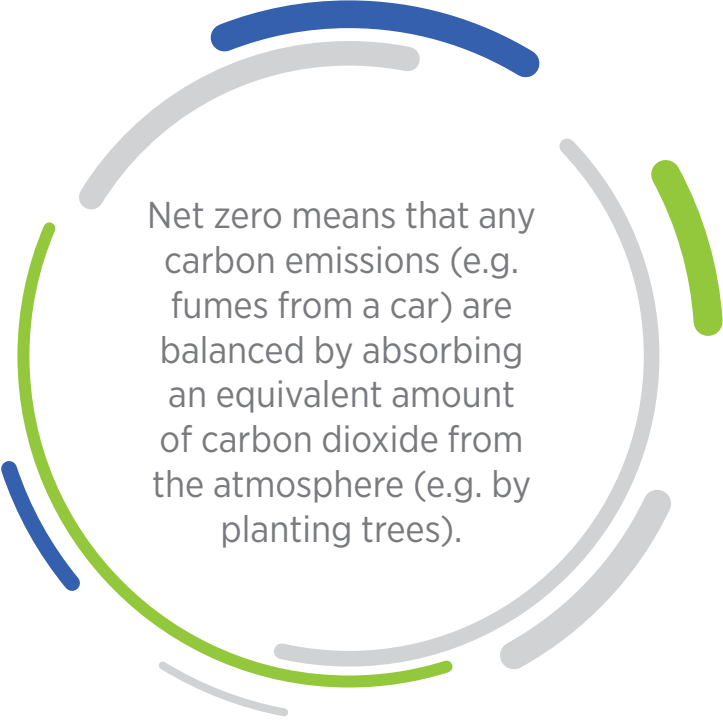


2 WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE AND WHAT IS NET ZERO?

Our planet's climate is changing. Scientific evidence since the mid-20th century shows us that this is the result of having too much carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. This has been caused by the burning of fossil fuels such as oil, gas and coal. David Attenborough's film "Climate Change: The Facts" explains this very well.

You can find a link to this video, to the 4 minute clip for this film and we hope that you have time to watch it before the Citizens Assembly starts.

Significant efforts have been made to reduce carbon emissions locally, nationally and globally over the last few decades. However, it has recently become clear through scientific evidence that we are not reducing our carbon emissions quickly enough. In fact, not only do we have to significantly reduce, or even stop, using fossil fuels but some scientists say we also need to start actively removing carbon from the atmosphere. This approach is being taken by many cities and nations globally and the goal is referred to as "net zero".



Net zero means that any carbon emissions (e.g. fumes from a car) are balanced by absorbing an equivalent amount of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (e.g. by planting trees).

WHAT ARE CARBON EMISSIONS?

Carbon emissions are the release of carbon into the atmosphere. For example, when you drive a car, the engine burns fuel which creates a certain amount of carbon dioxide depending on its fuel consumption and the driving distance. When you heat your house with oil, gas or coal (known as fossil fuels), then you also generate carbon emissions. Fossil fuels create carbon emissions and cause pollution. They are also finite, meaning that they could run out. Other types of energy harnessed from natural resources such as solar power, wind energy, tidal energy and geothermal heat are known as renewable energy sources. The energy generated from renewable sources does not create carbon emissions and the resources that they use naturally replenish on a human timescale.

The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report warned that the current global target of an 80% reduction in carbon emissions compared to pre-industrial levels by 2050 is not enough to avert catastrophic temperature change. The report recommended that it is essential that global temperature change is limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius meaning that rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society will be required to ensure this. In view of this report, the Government legislated that the UK will reach net zero by 2050. This will mean that national policy, legislation and innovation will emerge in order to achieve this. We have included an infographic on page 14 produced by the Committee for Climate Change that explains the global and national context

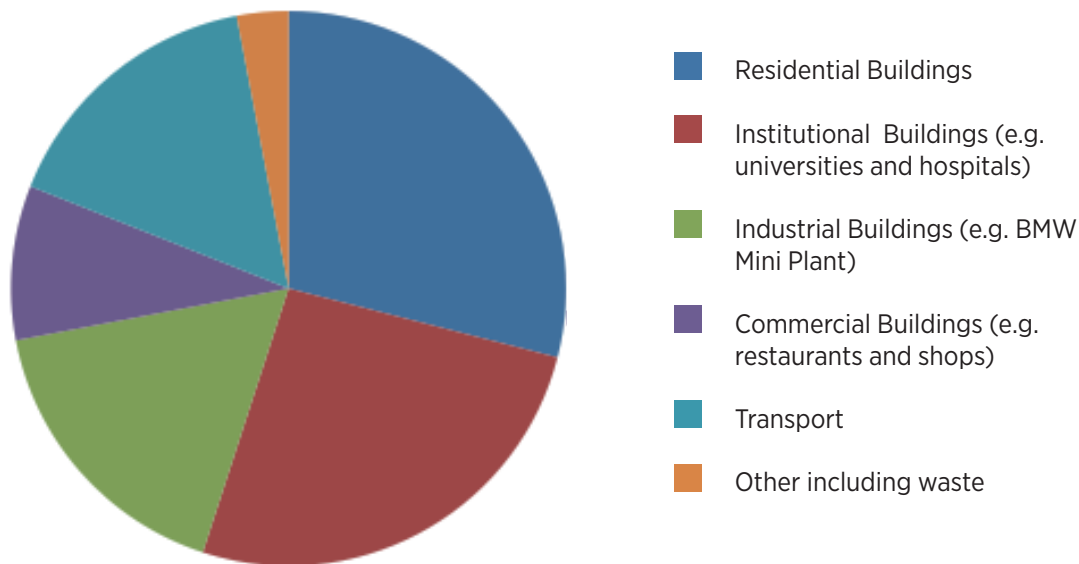
In January, Oxford City Council members unanimously declared a climate emergency and agreed to create a Citizens Assembly in Oxford to help consider more measures to reduce emissions.



3 WHAT WILL WE BE DISCUSSING AT THE CITIZENS ASSEMBLY

Climate change and how we address it is a very big topic and there are many different ways that we can act to address the challenges. Oxford City Council has looked to see where most of our carbon emissions come from in the city so we know where to focus our conversations.

Oxford's Carbon Emissions



Source: Anthesis SCATTER 2016

To reach net zero we know that we need to use less energy but we also need to make more clean energy. We also need to understand the importance that our natural environment has in helping us to adapt to climate change. We will be discussing five themes to reflect this: Buildings; Transport; Renewable Energy; Biodiversity and Offsetting; and Waste Reduction (see table above for more information on why we have chosen to discuss these topics).

Whether or not climate change is happening is not part of the discussion topics because there is enough evidence to take this as a fact. Despite this evidence there is quite a lot of misinformation on the topic. We have included a list in this pre-reading pack produced by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) which sets out the most common climate change myths.

The key question to be examined at the Citizens Assembly is:

‘The Government has legislation to reach ‘net zero’ by 2050. Should Oxford be more proactive and seek to achieve net zero sooner than 2050 and what trade-offs are we prepared to make?’

This question seeks to examine whether Oxford should be more proactive and drive change through what the council controls and influences in order to hit net zero in Oxford earlier than 2050. Taking this approach will mean that resources may have to be re-directed away from other priorities and that trade-offs may have to be made.



Why should we in Oxford think about getting to net zero faster? A global perspective.

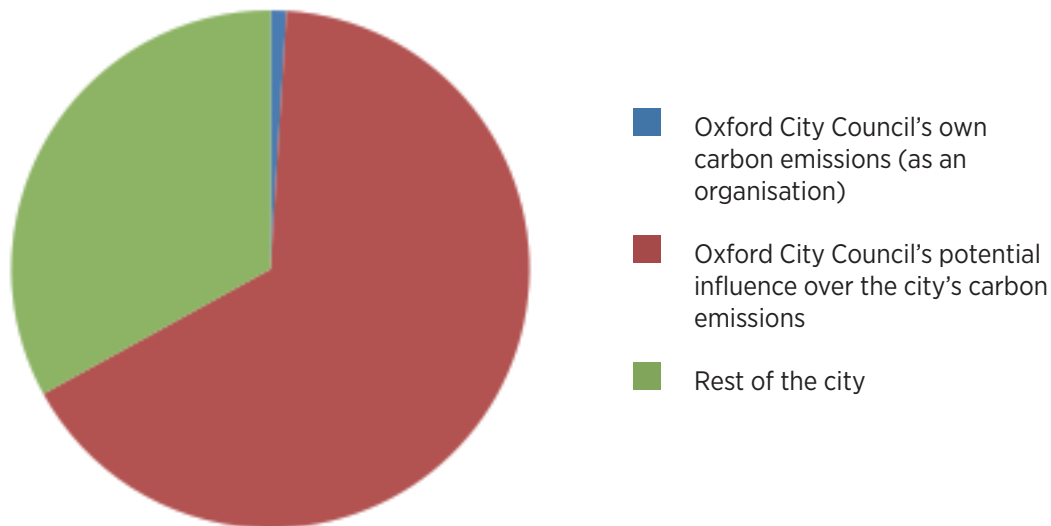
Climate change is the result of the accumulation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Scientific evidence shows us that this is predominantly due to the historic process of industrialisation (based on the burning of fossil fuels) that has enabled the world's richest countries to develop as they have.

The United Nations is working to get developed countries to take responsibility for causing climate change in the first place, despite rapid industrialisation in developing countries now adding to the problem. The most severe climate change impacts are being felt by the world's poorest countries. This is because many poor countries are more vulnerable geographically to severe weather or rising sea levels. Furthermore, such countries have less ability to cope with damage from such events.

The argument is: the quicker developed countries reduce their carbon emissions, the more scope developing countries will have to address their development needs, in the short term, without it extending beyond planetary carbon limits.

Oxford City Council has an important role to play in the city and how we reduce our overall carbon emissions. We have direct control over lots of services, such as waste collection and managing our housing stock and commercial properties. We also have influence in other parts of our city such as through planning and influencing our partners. For example, Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for transport planning in Oxford, not Oxford City Council. However, we work closely with them on issues that affect Oxford. We also work together with businesses and many community organisations.

Oxford City Council's Influence



Source: Anthesis Climate Emergency Report 2019

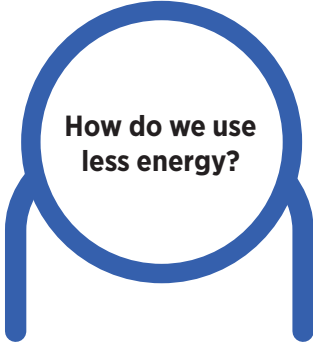
Through this Citizens Assembly we are seeking to discuss how quickly we reach net zero as a city, not just as a council. This approach offers policy makers across the city the opportunity to develop considered and deliverable actions in response to the Assembly, and creates the opportunity for stakeholders such as institutions, businesses and individuals to contribute with their own programmes of activity.

The aim of the Citizens Assembly is to help us to understand how ambitious you and your fellow Assembly members want us all to be to reach net zero.

The table that follows details the five themes for the Assembly and some of the background information for these topics.

The UK Government has legislation to reach 'net zero' by 2050.

Should Oxford be more proactive and seek to achieve 'net zero' sooner than 2050 and what trade-offs are we prepared to make?




How do we use less energy?

Buildings

How do we ensure our buildings are fit for the future?

The main source of carbon emissions in Oxford is from our buildings. That includes residential buildings, institutional buildings (like Oxford University and the John Radcliffe Hospital) industrial buildings (like the BMW Mini factory) and commercial buildings (like shops and restaurants). The biggest contributor in all of those is residential buildings, that's the houses that we live in. The energy that we use at home for heating, cooking, lighting and powering our electronic devices all add up and have an impact on our planet.

Source: Anthesis Climate Emergency Report 2019



How do we make more clean energy?

Renewable Energy

How do we transform our energy system to ensure it comes from renewable sources?

In order to achieve net zero we need to make more clean energy from renewable sources. Most of us are still very dependent on fossil fuels for our heating and energy needs. Approximately 11% of the UK's final energy consumption in 2018 came from renewable sources (UK energy statistics 2019). Solar panels are the most frequently used renewable energy technology in Oxford. Approximately 2% of homes in Oxford have solar panels.

Source: Anthesis Climate Emergency Report 2019



How do we improve our environment on the journey to net zero?

Biodiversity & Offsetting

The role of biodiversity and offsetting on the journey to net zero

Biodiversity is the variety of plant and animal life on earth and is essential for maintaining healthy ecosystems that make human life possible. Our natural world provides food, water, regulates disease, supports the pollination of crops and provides us with physical and mental health benefits. A healthy environment is also essential for absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Carbon offsetting is a way to compensate for emissions by funding an equivalent carbon dioxide saving elsewhere, this is often done through tree planting.

Waste Reduction

How do we reduce our waste to deliver net zero?

Whilst the treatment of waste only accounts for a small percentage of Oxford's carbon emissions there are several associated emissions such as transport emissions from waste collections and from the carbon dioxide emitted during manufacture of the waste products themselves. The amount that we consume and dispose of has an impact on our planet.

4 DEBUNKING THE CLIMATE CHANGE MYTHS

With the climate crisis becoming a hot topic in mainstream media - there's a lot of confusion around what climate change actually is. That's why we've tried to clear up some of the most frequently heard myths, so that you can tell fiction from fact!



ONE: THE EARTH'S CLIMATE HAS ALWAYS CHANGED

Over the course of the Earth's 4.5-billion-year history, the climate has changed a lot. This is true. But the rapid warming we're seeing now can't be explained by natural cycles of warming and cooling. The kind of changes that would normally happen over hundreds of thousands of years are happening in decades.

Global temperatures are now at their highest since records began. In fact, 17 of the 18 warmest years on record have all taken place since 2001.

This much faster warming corresponds with levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which have been increasing since the industrial revolution. So, when people talk about climate change today, they mean anthropogenic (man-made) climate change. This is the warming of Earth's average temperature as a result of human activity, such as burning coal, oil and gas to produce energy to fuel our homes and transport and cutting down trees to produce the food we eat.

TWO: PLANTS NEED CARBON DIOXIDE

Plants do need carbon dioxide (CO₂) to live. Plants and forests remove and store away huge amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere each year. But the problem is,

there's only so much carbon dioxide they can absorb and this amount is getting less, as more and more forests are cut down across the world, largely to produce our food.

Let's be clear, CO₂ itself does not cause problems. It's part of the natural global ecosystem. The problem is the quantity of CO₂ that's being produced by us as humans; there hasn't been this level of CO₂ in the atmosphere for 800,000 years.

THREE: GLOBAL WARMING ISN'T REAL AS IT'S STILL COLD

Global warming is causing the Earth's average surface temperature to increase. This is not only making heatwaves and droughts more likely but it's also causing changes to our natural climate systems. These changes are making extreme weather events more likely and more severe. For example, hurricanes and storms are becoming more intense, moving slower and taking longer to die down.

Because of where we are, the UK & Ireland are likely to get more rain and wind as a result of climate change while New York will see more snow.



FOUR: CLIMATE CHANGE IS A FUTURE PROBLEM

This is no longer an excuse not to act on climate change and push the burden onto future generations. Last year, the world's leading climate scientists warned we only have 12 years to limit global warming to a maximum of 1.5C and avoid climate breakdown.

We're already seeing the devastating effects of climate change on global food supplies, increasing migration, conflict, disease and global instability, and this will only get worse if we don't act now. Man-made climate change is the biggest environmental crisis of our time. It threatens the future of the planet that we depend on for our survival and we're the last generation that can do something about it.

FIVE: RENEWABLE ENERGY IS JUST A MONEY MAKING SCHEME

It's a commonly-held belief that renewable energy is expensive, but this simply isn't true! Solar power and onshore wind are the cheapest ways of generating electricity; meaning the energy they produce is cheaper than using nuclear, gas and fossil fuels.

The cost of renewables has fallen faster than anyone could have predicted. And yet the government are still backing dirty fossil fuels. Did you know the UK has the biggest fossil fuel subsidies in the EU? That's right, they spend an eye-watering €12bn (£10.5bn) a year supporting dirty fossil fuels.

SIX: POLAR BEAR NUMBERS ARE INCREASING

This isn't the case. Climate change is the biggest threat faced by polar bears. The Arctic is warming roughly twice as fast as the rest of the world, causing sea ice to melt earlier and form later each year. This makes it more difficult for female polar bears to get onto land in late autumn to build their dens, and more difficult for them to get out onto the sea ice in spring to feed their cubs. Their main source of prey, seals, are also affected by climate change, as they depend on sea ice to raise their young.

This means that in some parts of the Arctic, polar bears are having to survive with less food than they did previously. Polar bear populations are predicted to decline by 30% by the middle of this century.

SEVEN: RENEWABLE ENERGY CAN ONLY WORK WHEN IT'S NOT CLOUDY OR WINDY

Industry is developing new techniques for storing electricity and managing demand at peak times meaning that even if the sun isn't shining or it's not blowing a gale, it's still possible to rely on renewable energy sources.

The majority of UK homes get their electricity from the National Grid. When you switch to a clean supplier, they guarantee that for every unit of electricity you take out of the Grid, they'll put the same amount of clean energy back in, helping to clean up our energy supply.

EIGHT: ANIMALS WILL ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

This one isn't a myth, Darwin got the adaptation part right. But let's be clear, some plants and animals will adapt but not all.

To survive, plants, animals and birds confronted with climate change have two options: move or adapt. There are several examples of species that have begun to adapt to climate change already.

But increasingly, it's a different story for many. Given the speed of climate change, it's

becoming impossible for many species to adapt quickly enough to keep up with their changing environment. And, as habitats are destroyed by roads, cities and dams, moving becomes increasingly difficult. For those that can't move or adapt, the future doesn't look so positive.

NINE: GETTING RID OF HUMANS WILL FIX THIS

This, we firmly believe, is wrong. It's easy to start feeling that we've gone too far already and that the planet won't be able to support the world's growing population.

It's WWF's mission to build a world where people and nature thrive together. The technology and systems we need to move to 100% renewable energy by 2045 and use our planet's resources sustainably are already available. What's now needed is for political and business leaders to take bold and urgent action towards using these solutions to address the climate crisis and restore nature.

TEN: CHINA IS THE ONLY COUNTRY RESPONSIBLE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Despite being one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases, China is currently one of the largest investors in renewables. The increase in investment has been in response to the rapid growth of green business and the need to clean up air pollution in its major cities.

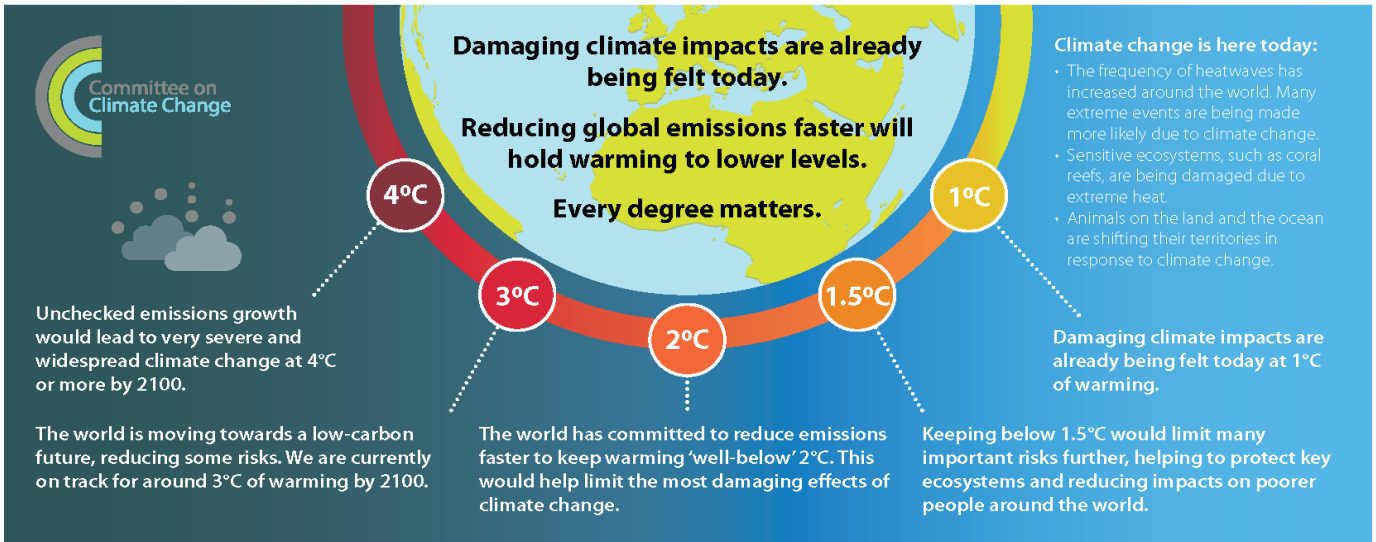
Climate change is a global issue and we all have a responsibility to step up to the climate crisis. Action on it will need serious investment but has the potential to deliver huge benefits for nature and people. We all need to raise our voices and fight for our world!

World Wildlife Fund

<https://www.wwf.org.uk/updates/10-myths-about-climate-change>



5 COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE INFOGRAPHIC



UK action to address climate change can have an international impact



The UK can and should act as a leader in the global response to climate change - UK emissions contributed to causing it, and its leadership can have an international impact.



The UK has been a leader on climate change action. The UK has the opportunity to continue its leadership and join other countries already pursuing net-zero emissions targets.

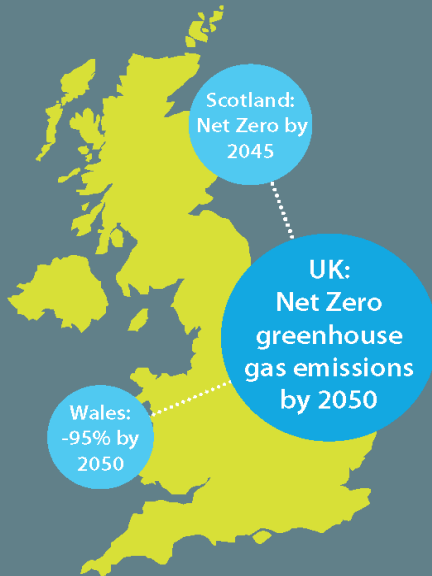


The UK has committed to act by signing the Paris Agreement. This provides many options for countries to collaborate to reduce their emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change.

Annual costs of achieving net-zero emissions are between 1-2% of GDP in 2050, comparable to those estimated in 2008 for achieving an 80% target.



- Innovation has driven down the costs of key technologies, such as offshore wind & battery storage.
- Some costs to consumers, such as increased heating bills, can be offset by cheaper transport costs (thanks to a widespread shift to electric vehicles) and cheaper electricity bills (thanks to low cost renewable electricity).



There are many benefits of phasing out harmful emissions



For the economy
New green industries with new jobs and export opportunities for the UK.



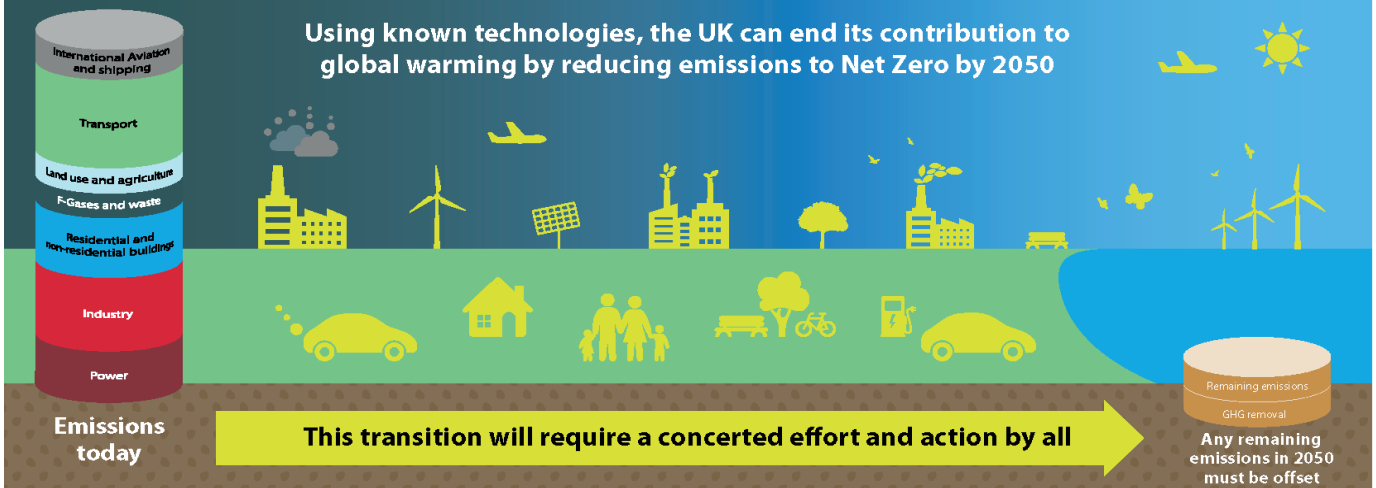
For the individual
Quieter streets, cleaner air, less congestion.
Smarter cities and more comfortable homes.

Healthier lifestyles, with more active travel and healthier diets.



For the country
More biodiversity, cleaner water, more green space to enjoy.
Reduced global warming, avoiding climate damages like flooding.

Using known technologies, the UK can end its contribution to global warming by reducing emissions to Net Zero by 2050



Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/CCC-Net-Zero-Infographic.png>

6 PRACTICAL INFORMATION

DATES & TIMES

Saturday 28th September 2019	9am - 5.30pm
Sunday 29th September 2019	9am - 5.30pm
Saturday 19th October 2019	9am - 5.30pm
Sunday 20th October 2019	9am - 5.30pm

WHERE

Thatcher Building,

Saïd Business School

Park End Street

Oxford OX1 1HP

<https://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/>

[View on Google Maps](#)

FOOD & REFRESHMENTS

Breakfast, lunch and refreshments (vegetarian/vegan) will be provided on each day.

PAYMENT

Each participant will receive £300 in total for attending both weekends
£150 will be paid after the first weekend and £150 after the second weekend

PRIVACY

As a voluntary participant in the Citizens Assembly, your identity will be protected through the process. All participants have the right to privacy and to remain anonymous, so you cannot be lobbied by third parties.

Members of the media will be attending the Citizens Assembly and will be reporting on the event as a whole, on condition they observe your privacy. There will be no expectation or requirement to speak with the media, however if you wish to, you will be allowed, and the City Council communications team can provide you with support.

Speaker presentations and panel discussions at the Assembly will be live-streamed and the subject matter discussed will all be in the public domain. Therefore, the only area of confidentiality we ask of you is that you respect the right of other participants to remain anonymous; and that you refrain from sharing information/pictures/videos about other participants with the media or on social media

Further Information on Climate Change and Citizens Assemblies

If you are interested in learning more about climate change and citizens assemblies before the event, here are some links to useful resources:

Citizens Assembly

Involve – Citizens Assembly <https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/methods/citizens-assembly>

Electoral Reform Society: What is a Citizens Assembly? <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/what-is-a-citizens-assembly/>

Climate Change

BBC News <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-24021772>

Nasa Evidence <https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>

WWF Infographics http://wwf.panda.org/our_work/climate_and_energy/cop24/

4 minute clip from Climate Change: The Facts (iPlayer):

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p076w7g5>

Low Carbon Oxford - <http://lowcarbonoxford.org/>

Anthesis – Oxford City Council Climate Emergency Report 2019 - www.oxford.gov.uk/citizensassembly

We are very much looking forward to this exciting event and to meeting you.

If you have any questions in the meantime please do not hesitate to contact us:

CONTACT DETAILS

Ipsos Mori

Contact details

Prior to the Assembly please contact Rebecca Paton on 07831 702513

During the Assembly please contact Paul Carroll on 07980 314071



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