

## Oxford 2040: Webinar hosted by Low Carbon Oxford North, 15 September 2020

### Introduction

On 15 September 2020 Low Carbon Oxford North hosted an online event and panel discussion, "What are our hopes for Oxford 2040?", drawing on Damon Gameau's inspiring film '2040'.

Our panel of guest speakers included **Barbara Hammond MBE** from the Low Carbon Hub on energy, **Abena Poku-Awuah** from the Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel on travel, and **Harpreet Kaur Paul**, lawyer and climate-just solutions consultant, on food and farming.

The speakers each set out their future vision for Oxford, looking at how solutions could help in both reducing carbon and tackling inequality. Their contributions were followed by breakout group discussions among participants, to highlight what actions we need to take to realise our visions for Oxford 2040.

You can watch the recording of the event here: [https://youtu.be/LitwYFI\\_u8k](https://youtu.be/LitwYFI_u8k).

And we have summarised some of the key points made during the event below.

### Context

Drawing on Damon Gameau's film '2040', speakers and participants were asked to consider Oxford's future through the 'four lenses of the city portrait' developed by Kate Raworth: How can our city be a home to thriving people, in a thriving place, whilst respecting the wellbeing of all people, and the health of the whole planet?

Oxford Friends of the Earth's publication 'Fast Forward Oxfordshire' was highlighted as a useful resource.

### Barbara Hammond: Energy

Some hopeful news: the carbon intensity of the UK electricity grid has halved since 2011 – we can make quite a lot of progress in a short space of time.

ICT is giving us the opportunities of moving from a very centralized, very fossil-fuel driven world, to a very decentralized, renewables reliant, electricity reliant world, where lots of very small installations can all be joined together. We have to electrify heat and transport, and most of that happening at the grid edge, most local to us. It's no longer a question of how much we need to reduce demand, but how we balance use and generation. A completely different ball-game.

One of the aims of **Project LEO (Local Energy Oxfordshire)** is to demonstrate how this can be done, e.g. how to offer flexibility services across the times of the day and seasons of the year in a way that balances generation and use, in a way that benefits everybody, that is accessible for everybody and managed in an equitable way.

### Abena Poku-Awuah: Transport

The lockdown last spring allowed a glimpse of what it could mean for Oxford to thrive, especially with transport. Oxford's historic roads were never designed for motor vehicle traffic. A lot of our ability to transform our streets and neighbourhoods for the better comes down to our willingness to rethink the space we have surrendered to cars.

- We want to close streets to cars and vehicles and open them up to people to create **safe space for people** to get sun, fresh air, exercise and social connection.
- We want to transform our city so that Oxford has a culture and skill set that motivates and inspires other cities.
- We want to see segregated bike lanes, particularly on main roads and bus routes.
- We want to see e-bikes and scooters and networks of pedestrianised or semi-pedestrianised neighbourhoods which bring huge benefits for all who live here.

Some of our visions for Oxford were exhibited in COHSAT's Pop-Up Shop over the summer.

### Harpreet Kaur Paul: food and farming

We may only have 100 harvests left if we continue on our current model. World-wide, small farmers make up 90% of all farms and have about 25% of farmland to work on. We have considerable food waste in some parts of the world. In other parts of the world where that food is often grown, we have huge amounts of food poverty, including here in the UK and in Oxford.

According to the IPCC, we need to move from intensive and industrialised farming approaches towards food systems based on agro-ecology and less and better meat.

And La Via Campesina has developed the concept of **food sovereignty**, the right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and the right to define local food and agricultural systems – often prioritising local production, direct commercialization, use of agro-ecological methods, and rights to land, water, seed and biodiversity.

To address environmental and inequality issues in Oxford and the UK, support needs to be provided to agro-ecological initiatives and local food growing initiatives that are trying to democratise access and create local jobs and local access to green space. At the same time we need an understanding that is global given how much of our food is produced outside the UK.

## Feedback from the breakout rooms

### General:

Lots of ideas for change are incorporated in the **One Planet Living** concept. Another helpful framework is outlined in 2011 documentary '**The Economics of Happiness**', looking at 'economic localisation'.

Addressing **inequality** is key to solving these problems, and the biggest challenge for Oxford. We need to recognise the **international dimension**. We need to ask: How does Oxford become more circular and not more insular? How can we support the **circular economy** in Oxford to be bigger?

### Transport and public realm:

Oxford should look more like it did under lockdown. We are inspired by COHSAT's vision for travel in Oxford. We want to see more pedestrianisation, and less car use.

However, public transport needs support, probably from central government (and public transport is difficult while Covid is an issue).

We need to move from car ownership to multi-modal public transport. We need to see mobility as a service - joining up e-bike/train/bus so that people can plan, book, pay for journeys (see Kent County Council plans for 'Mobility as a Service' project). 'Transition Streets' could provide another way of reducing car use.

We also need to recognise the difference between living in Oxford – where you don't need a car – to living outside Oxford, especially in remoter areas. And the transport system needs to cater for people with mobility issues.

### Food production and land use:

The council needs to be involved with stricter planning and regulations.

Changes to food production and use could make a huge difference in Oxford.

We should look at collective food production to benefit those in food poverty.

**Energy:** We feel enthused by the opportunities for micro-grids.

**Other issues:** As well as energy, transport and food, we also need to consider our attitude to 'stuff' and consumption. We should spend more time **connecting instead of shopping**.

## Final messages

It's important to believe that **things are doable**.

What motivates people to act on climate change: a sense of **collective values**, a shared issue to address (see upcoming research being published by PIRC/350).

## Useful links

<https://whatsyour2040.com>

<https://www.kateraworth.com/2020/04/08/amsterdam-city-doughnut/>

<https://www.oxfoe.co.uk/fastforward/>

<https://project-leo.co.uk>



<http://cohsat.org.uk/popup/>

[https://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/agriculture/2016/farming\\_for\\_the\\_future.pdf](https://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/agriculture/2016/farming_for_the_future.pdf)

<https://viacampesina.org/en/food-sovereignty/>

<https://www.bioregional.com/one-planet-living>

<https://www.localfutures.org/programs/the-economics-of-happiness/>