



Meeting: **Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

Date/Time: **Tuesday, 9 November 2021 at 2.00 pm**

Location: **Sparkenhoe Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield**

Contact: **Ms. C. Tuohy (cat.tuohy@leics.gov.uk)**

Email: **0116 305 5483**

Membership

Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC (Chairman)

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC Mrs. A. J. Hack CC
Mr. N. Chapman CC Mr. B. Harrison-Rushton CC
Mr. M. Frisby CC Mrs. R. Page CC

**Please note: this meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's web site at <http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk>
– Notices will be on display at the meeting explaining the arrangements.**

AGENDA

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>
1. Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2021.	(Pages 5 - 12)
2. Question Time.	
3. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).	
4. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.	
5. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.	
6. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.	



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| 7. | Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 35. | | |
| 8. | Engagement on the Council's Strategic Plan. | Chief Executive | (Pages 13 - 64) |
| 9. | Environment and Climate Change Annual Performance Report 2020/21. | Director of Environment and Transport and Chief Executive | (Pages 65 - 84) |
| 10. | Leicestershire Country Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and the Effects of Covid-19. | Director of Corporate Resources | (Pages 85 - 90) |
| 11. | Tree Management Strategy Update. | Director of Corporate Resources | (Pages 91 - 102) |

There will be a presentation for this item.

12. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.
13. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Wednesday 26 January 2022 at 2.00pm.

QUESTIONING BY MEMBERS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The ability to ask good, pertinent questions lies at the heart of successful and effective scrutiny. To support members with this, a range of resources, including guides to questioning, are available via the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Website <https://www.cfgs.org.uk/>

The following questions have been agreed by Scrutiny members as a good starting point for developing questions:-

- Who was consulted and what were they consulted on? What is the process for and quality of the consultation?
- How have the voices of local people and frontline staff been heard?
- What does success look like?
- What is the history of the service and what will be different this time?
- What happens once the money is spent?
- If the service model is changing, has the previous service model been evaluated?
- What evaluation arrangements are in place – will there be an annual review?

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Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee. held at County Hall, Glenfield on Friday, 3 September 2021.

Mr. T. Pendleton CC
Mr. G. A. Boulter CC
Mrs. A. Hack CC

Mr. Lovegrove CC
Mrs R. Page CC
Mr. N. Chapman CC

Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr. B. Harrison-Rushton CC and Mr. M. Frisby CC

In attendance

Mr. B. Pain CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Environment and the Green Agenda

1. Appointment of Chairman.

That it be noted that Mr. T. Pendleton has been appointed Chairman of the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2022.

Mr. T. Pendleton CC in the Chair

2. Election of Deputy Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Mr. M. Frisby CC be elected Deputy Chairman of the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2022.

3. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that the following six questions had been received under Standing Order 34 from Ms. J. Howard.

“Further to the questions we raised at the meeting of the Environment and Transport Scrutiny committee we were very pleased that both yourself and the Officers are passionate about recycling and emissions. And we would thank you for your replies and target dates given.

Please can we therefore ask the following questions to further understand your targets on recycling, and with the answers we could try and improve recycling together, as it is a matter for all of us to be aware and change our habits. Some of the additional questions are based on the Channel 4 programme on March 8th entitled ‘The Dirty Truth about your Rubbish’ details of which were forwarded to you. Others are further questions on your targets.

1. You have stated that the recycling figure you have reached is 45% and you have not yet reached your 50% target. Please can you confirm if this 45% figure is what

is collected by the collecting authorities or is the figure that is actually sent for recycling within the County.”

Response by the Chairman:

“The 45% figure is based on former National Indicator 192, defined as the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, composting or recycling. This incorporates material collected by district councils at the kerbside and material delivered by residents to one of LCC’s Recycling and Household Waste Sites.

This figure is calculated through the national WasteDataFlow system. Information on how NI192 is calculated can be found at

https://www.wastedataflow.org/documents/guidancenotes/NationalIndicators/GN31_Handbook_Definitions_1.0.pdf and

https://www.wastedataflow.org/documents/guidancenotes/NationalIndicators/GN30a_BV_PI_and_NI_comparator_calculations_Qu100.pdf”

2. “What percentage of recycling collected is rejected and sent to landfill or incineration as it is contaminated.”

Response by the Chairman

“During the 2020/21 financial year, just over 10% of the total tonnage of kerbside collected recycling was contaminated.”

3. “What audits are taken on black bag waste to determine any percentage figure of recyclable products that are contained in the waste. If these figures are not available, please can consideration be given to producing them so that improvements can be made. This will dramatically help ambient air quality from air polluting emissions from plastics in the incineration process.”

Response by the Chairman

“Audits of black bag waste are undertaken on an ad-hoc basis. The last audit took place in autumn 2018.”

4. “In reply to question 4, 5, In particular you state:

Emissions from the disposal of municipal waste are classified as Scope 3 (Other indirect emissions) i.e. emissions that are a consequence of an organisation’s actions but which occur at sources which they do not own or control under HM Government’s Environmental Reporting Guidelines (March 2019) for voluntary greenhouse gas reporting. The inclusion of these emissions is optional, please see previous answer with regard to changes in the scope of the council’s greenhouse gas emissions report.

If these reporting requirements are optional we would enquire why you would not wish to include them into your net carbon emission targets as they are part of the County’s carbon footprint. As you know Wales is setting a very good example and targeting to be a Zero Waste country by 2050.

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf>

Zero waste is where all waste that is produced is re-used or recycled as a resource without the need for any landfill or energy recovery.”

Response by the Chairman

“Municipal waste is not included in the Council’s own greenhouse gas reporting. The Council use the BEIS data to monitor the emissions for Leicestershire, which includes reference to waste related emissions. See <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/723c243d-2f1a-4d27-8b61-cdb93e5b10ff/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2019> for more details.”

5. “Please will you include us in your email list for committee papers in the future, and in particular we are very interested in the target for spring 2022 for the Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy setting out how the County intends to manage municipal waste within the County to 2050, including your technology neutral position, R1 status for incinerators, and recycling etc.
6. Regarding your policy on Carbon Capture, we are interested in your target for the end of 2021 to complete your work. Again please can you forward the relevant paper.”

Response by the Chairman

“You can sign up for email alerts about newly published agendas, reports and minutes of council meetings using the link here:- <https://politics.leics.gov.uk/mgRegisterKeywordInterest.aspx?bcr=1>. Once registered, you can choose which committees or electoral divisions you are interested in, you will then receive an email linking all the relevant items published that day.”

Supplementary Questions

The supplementary questions to questions 1, 3, 4 and 5 set out below were submitted by Ms Howard. The Chairman agreed to provide a written answer to these questions following the meeting.

“1. What percentage of the 45% of recycled waste collected is suitable and sent for actual recycling companies. Statistically this figure will be lower.

3. What percentage in the black bin waste audit was found to be recyclable in the audit. And what is being done about this. How are the public educated in this respect as different boroughs have different policies?

4. Can the council consider including these emissions from municipal waste in its policy

5. We are particularly interested in what measures the council have to ensure that it is not exposed to illegal processes in the disposal of the county’s residual waste in its waste management policy bearing in mind recent fines levied on operators.”

4. **Questions asked by members.**

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

5. Urgent Items..

There were no urgent items for consideration.

6. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

All members who were also members of district councils declared a personal interest in relation Agenda Item 9, Briefing on Environment and Strategy Carbon Commitments and Agenda Item 10, the Resources and Waste Briefing.

7. Declarations of the Party Whip.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

8. Presentation of Petitions.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 35.

9. Briefing on Environment Strategy and Carbon Commitments.

The Committee received a briefing on the Environment Strategy and the Council's Carbon Commitments. A copy of the presentation, marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were made:-

- i. Higher levels of air pollution within North West Leicestershire and Market Harborough were as a result of the location of industry as well as logistics located along the strategic road network. It was noted that North West Leicestershire's levels also included some emissions from the Airport, though not all.
- ii. Work was underway to develop Tranche 2 of the Carbon Reduction Roadmap to address the Council's wider unmeasured emissions and the approach to reduce Leicestershire's emissions. However, it was recognised that there also needed to be pressure from Government. The Council was working with UK100 in order to lobby for top down change.
- iii. Ash dieback was not the only risk to trees within Leicestershire, to which Members were assured that the Forestry Team continued to work to protect and improve the treescape within Leicestershire, which included the target to plant 700,000 trees by 2030.
- iv. Air quality was recognised as a multifaceted issue which was overseen by the Director of Public Health due to his oversight of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Members were assured that a report would be brought to the Committee as appropriate given its remit.

- v. It was suggested that the Department look to overlay the Air Quality and Biodiversity maps provided, to allow the Committee to consider any correlation between the two factors.
- vi. The Council would look at alternative fuels such as electric and hydrogen for its fleet. Part of the consideration would include availability, fit for purpose and what infrastructure would be needed to support that fleet.

The Lead Member for the Green Agenda concluded by praising the work undertaken by the Environment Team in working to reduce the County Council's emissions to 11,000 tonnes, meaning the Council was currently on track to reach net zero by 2030. However, he emphasised that the next step to deal with the Council's unmeasured emissions and the wider county emissions would be a challenge given the Council lacked direct levers of influence in some circumstances. Ultimately it was recognised that at all levels people needed to take responsibility in recognising their own behaviour and decisions in order to combat climate change.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

10. Briefing on the Resources and Waste Strategy.

The Committee received a briefing on the Resources and Waste Strategy. A copy of the presentation marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were made:-

- i. It was queried how the Council was working with partners to ensure a smooth implementation period regarding changes proposed by Government, given the Council's role as Waste Disposal Authority and district councils' responsibility to collect waste and recycling. The Director assured Members that the County Council was communicating across its established waste partnership, and that issues posed were not a job for just one organisation. As a result, the County Council was looking to review its Joint Strategy with the Leicestershire Waste Partnership which includes the district councils and will involve engagement with the wider public.
- ii. Regarding Government's proposal to introduce mandatory food waste collection it was noted the scheme would take extensive planning, and Government had promised to meet net additional costs for. However, despite this it would create a challenge for both the County Council and district authorities.
- iii. A Member raised a concern relating to waste from construction, demolition and excavation that continued to increase, and what the Council could do to manage that given the increase in infrastructure also promoted by Government. The Director assured Members that where possible the Council would look to recycle, and reuse, as with some road schemes recycling of material could take place on site in some circumstances. Furthermore the Council was a relatively small player in the creation of that type of waste, and it was felt that even if sector activity increased it would not automatically mean the Council's waste would, as policies and behaviour change looked to reduce output of waste where possible.

- iv. Skip firms and other parts of the waste industry were regulated by the Environment Agency. Permits for sites such as Whetstone Waste Transfer station set out conditions for operation in relation to hours, tonnage and how long waste could remain on site. Private firms were regulated in the same way.
- v. Leicestershire County Council was technology neutral and would look at the best source and overall business case to prevent landfill as per the Government's policy position. In relation to its performance indicators, Members recognised that the Council's landfill was getting redirected to energy from waste where possible. This took time due to long-standing contracts, however once up for renewal the County Council could look at other technologies through its procurement process.
- vi. A member queried whether the increase in waste to incineration could affect recycling rates due to the calorific value of waste required by incineration, though it was noted rates had remained relatively stable in the past five years.
- vii. District councils managed waste collection differently. It was noted that generally all collected the same range of things and that the County Council worked closely with districts regarding contamination issues. North West Leicestershire District Council tended to have less recycling but lower levels of contamination due to its curb side sorting method, whereas the other district councils had higher levels of contamination due to their single recycling bin but higher levels of recycling, which evened itself out.
- viii. The Council was awaiting further information from the Government about how proposed 'producer payments' would work. A Member highlighted that orders online created far more packaging, but no extra charge, than an item bought in store, requiring a 10p bag. It was expected that through extended producer responsibility the more packaging put on the market that was unrecyclable, the more they would pay – therefore in future it was expected producers would be more sustainable in their packaging,
- ix. It was felt the Council did not put enough emphasis on reduction within the Council's Waste Strategy, in comparison to re-use and recycle.
- x. Given the impact of the pandemic the plans for re-use facilities at the Recycling and Household Waste Sites had been paused, the Department was looking again at restarting the planned service.
- xi. Members were pleased to note the positive local initiatives such as Plastic Free Oadby, a group that looked to reduce the use of plastic containers and bags in their local area.
- xii. A member queried Cabinet's decision to cut the budget for recycling education, in a time where it was more important than ever to influence good behaviour. In response the Chairman however noted there had been no reduction in recycling rates as set out in the presentation.
- xiii. Three Recycling and Household Waste sites had been temporarily closed due to the shortage of HGV drivers which were needed to empty waste at the sites. The decision also ensured that other sites could be kept open, without spreading staff too thinly.

The Lead Member for the Green Agenda concluded that it was clear the County Council played a key role as Waste Disposal Authority and that the Council was generally successful in limiting what it sent to landfill. It was emphasised that considering the Council's budget, in relation to other councils which may have undertaken a Private Finance Initiative with the Government to reduce their waste contract costs, the County Council did well. Furthermore it was recognised that the Environment Bill was a key piece of legislation that would result in a profound change of how the County Council and its partners dealt with waste, which would be eagerly awaited.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation provided be noted.

11. Environment and Waste Performance Report to June 2021.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Environment and Transport which provided an update on performance of Environment and Waste to June 2021. A copy of the report, marked 'agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion the following points were noted:-

- i. The indicators within the report were a set of national and local indicators, some of which were historic as part of previous national data sets, which the County Council still felt it should report. These indicators were then divided under the Council's Strategic Objectives to enable Members to consider whether the Council was moving in the correct direction. As a result, it monitored both Leicestershire County Council indicators and wider Leicestershire indicators which covered industry and the members of the public. The Director assured Members that they welcomed any suggestions regarding future indicators or statistics Members would like to consider.
- ii. The percentage of waste recycled from Leicestershire County Council sites (non-operational) had been impacted by a change in the mix of waste collected during the pandemic, for instance the Council no longer collecting separate food waste, due to low numbers of workers in its offices. The Council would continue to monitor the indicator and look at ways to improve it as part of new ways of working plans.
- iii. Following a query on how Leicestershire related to other authorities in its energy efficiency ratings for existing homes, it was noted that the County Council was quite low, in the third quartile. This was partly due to a large number of older homes lacking cavity insulation. Members noted that the Government's Green Homes Grant was available to help with further information detailed on the County Council's website, that all those eligible should be encouraged to take up.
- iv. Following a concern related to the increase in Leicestershire County Council fleet emissions Members were assured that the increase was due to the pandemic as a result of social distancing where two vehicles were needed to transport workers, rather than the one.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

12. Dates of Future Meetings.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that future meetings of the Committee would be held at 2pm on the following dates:-

Tuesday 9 November 2021
Wednesday 26 January 2022
Tuesday 1 March 2022
Tuesday 14 June 2022
Friday 2 September 2022
Tuesday 1 November 2022

2.00pm-4.05 pm
03 September 2021

CHAIRMAN



**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 9 NOVEMBER 2021**

ENGAGEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the draft Strategic Plan (2022-26), a copy of which is appended to this report. A 12-week public consultation is set to commence on 1 November 2021, subject to approval being given by the Cabinet at its meeting on 26 October 2021.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Strategic Plan is complemented by the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which sets out a financial plan supporting the priorities in the Strategic Plan, as well as by the Strategic Change Portfolio which outlines how the Council will transform local services in response to national and local drivers for change whilst seeking to maintain or improve outcomes. The Plan is also underpinned by Departmental Business Plans and strategies which provide further detail on how the Council will deliver the aims and actions in the Plan.
3. On 6 December 2017, the County Council approved the current Strategic Plan (2018-22). This Plan was based on five aspirational outcomes which described the County Council's vision for Leicestershire. On 15th May 2019, the County Council declared a climate emergency. On 8 July 2020, the County Council approved a revised version of the Plan (still to expire in 2022) to reflect the Council's declaration of a climate emergency, with recognition that it would need to be revisited as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Background

4. The Strategic Plan sets out the Council's ambitions and priorities for the next four years. It outlines what it aims to achieve and how it intends to do it.
5. The current Plan is due to expire in 2022. Work has been undertaken to review and refresh the Plan and to re-assess the Council's strategic priorities, particularly in light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Plan Structure and Contents

6. The draft Plan (2022-26) is based on five strategic outcomes which describe the Council's vision for Leicestershire. Each outcome includes four or five sub-outcomes which will need to be achieved to deliver the outcome.
7. The outcomes are broad and aspirational, reflecting the County Council's significant and wide-ranging responsibilities and capacity to influence. Therefore, to ensure that the Plan provides a clear strategic direction for the Council, it also includes specific aims and actions to deliver each outcome over the next four years.
8. The Plan also includes a section on 'enabling services' which is intended to highlight the contributions of the County Council's corporate functions (e.g. Finance, Legal, HR) to outcome delivery as well as sustaining good governance. This is followed by a section on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which highlights the Council's aims and actions to maintain a balanced budget whilst protecting frontline services and weathering the coronavirus crisis. Finally, there is a section on the Strategic Change Portfolio, summarising the aims and actions of the four key pillars of this internal transformation programme.

Strategic Outcomes

9. The outcomes, which are detailed below, are intended to broadly reflect the remits of departments and the portfolios of lead members. However, successful delivery of the Plan will rely upon departments sharing ownership of the outcomes in addition to the outcomes being reflected in all relevant Council plans and strategies.

- 'Clean, Green Future' Outcome: *Reflects the need to protect and enhance the environment and tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and unsustainable resource usage.*

Sub-outcomes:

- People act now to tackle climate change;
- Nature and the local environment are valued, protected and enhanced;
- Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way;
- The economy and infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally-friendly.

- 'Great Communities' Outcome: *Aims to ensure Leicestershire has thriving, inclusive communities in which people support each other and take responsibility for their local area.*

Sub-outcomes:

- Diversity is celebrated and people feel welcome and included;
- People participate in service design and delivery;
- Communities are prepared for and resilient to emergencies;
- Cultural and historical heritage are enjoyed and conserved;
- People support each other through volunteering.

- ‘Improving Opportunities’ Outcome: *Aims for all children to get the best start for life and to have access to a good quality education. Also aims for everyone to have the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential.*

Sub-outcomes:

- Every child gets the best start for life;
- Every child has access to good quality education;
- Families are self-sufficient and enabled to be resilient;
- Everyone is able to aim high and reach their full potential.

- ‘Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure’ Outcome: *Aims to ensure that we build a productive, inclusive and sustainable economy at the cutting edge of science, technology and engineering. Also reflects the need for our infrastructure to meet the demands of a growing population and economy.*

Sub-outcomes:

- There is close alignment between skills supply and employer demand;
- Leicestershire has the infrastructure for sustainable growth;
- Leicestershire is an attractive place where businesses can flourish;
- Economic growth delivers increased prosperity for all;
- Leicestershire has the right homes in the right places to meet needs.

- ‘Keeping People Safe and Well’ Outcome: *Aims to ensure the people of Leicestershire have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing. Also reflects the need to ensure people are safe and protected from harm.*

Sub-outcomes:

- People are safe in their daily lives;
- People enjoy long lives in good health;
- People at the most risk are protected from harm;
- Carers and people with care needs are supported to live active, independent, and fulfilling lives.

Governance

10. The Council’s current Strategic Plan (2018-22) is also based on five strategic outcomes. Its implementation has been led by Outcome Advisory Boards (OABs) responsible for supporting alignment of Departmental Business Plans with the outcomes. A review of this approach identified that the OABs have not influenced Business Plans and seem to have lacked clarity on their specific roles and priorities. This has led to the increased focus in the revised Strategic Plan on defining specific aims for each outcome, as well as the development of a new governance model.
11. The revised model is based on Outcome Boards, which will no longer aim to advise Departments on the contents of their Business Plans. These Outcome Boards will instead focus primarily on monitoring the Council’s progress in delivering the aims of their respective outcomes, providing six-monthly reports to Corporate

Management Team to highlight key achievements, challenges and priorities. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees will continue to receive quarterly updates on performance for the areas they cover. The Outcome Boards will also have the capacity to review and inform Council strategies whilst they are being developed, to help ensure that they reflect the aims of their respective outcomes.

Environment and Climate Change

12. The revised Strategic Plan (2022-26) includes a new outcome, '*Clean, Green Future*' which reflects the Council's aspirations to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and unsustainable resource consumption. Additionally, the section in the Plan on the Strategic Change Portfolio includes a summary of the purpose, aims and actions of the Council's Carbon Reduction Programme.
13. Environment and Climate Change considerations are also embedded throughout the Plan. For example, the '*Great Communities*' outcome includes, for sub-outcome 6.3 'Communities are prepared for and resilient to emergencies', an action for the Council to take action to support the resilience of the County to the existing and predicted changes in climate. This outcome also includes, for sub-outcome 6.5 'People support each other through volunteering', an action to develop and maintain a volunteering offer across Council services including Environment and Waste.
14. Further, the '*Strong Economy and Infrastructure*' outcome includes, for sub-outcome 8.2 'Leicestershire has the infrastructure for sustainable growth', an aim for infrastructure capacity and capability to support growth and net zero carbon emissions. This is supported by an action to encourage and support active and sustainable travel options, where appropriate, by learning from best practice and encouraging the uptake and use of electric vehicles and micro-mobility as appropriate, including through provision of infrastructure. The '*Strong Economy and Infrastructure*' outcome also includes, for 8.5 'Leicestershire has the right homes in the right places to meet needs', an action to work with partners and developers to ensure that all housing developments are low carbon and enhance biodiversity.
15. Additionally, the '*Keeping People Safe and Well*' outcome includes, for sub-outcome 9.3 'People enjoy long lives in good health', an action to deliver a wider determinants programme of work to address the range of social, economic and environmental factors which influence health outcomes, thereby improving health and reducing health inequalities. This will include for example our work with partners to improve air quality.
16. The '*Clean, Green Future*' outcome includes the following aims and actions of relevance to Environment and Climate Change.

Sub-outcome 5.1 'People act now to tackle climate change and protect the environment'

Aims:

- Residents actively involved in tackling climate change and protecting the environment
- Reduction in the rate of CO2 emissions per capita (average per resident)

Actions:

- We will use our interactions with communities to raise awareness of environmental impacts and harness community capacity to address them
- We will provide support and opportunities for learning to local communities, schools, and businesses to promote positive environmental action and collaborative working, leading to constructive behavioural change
- We will support residents to be more resource efficient in their energy and water use, such as through our Warm Homes service which provides free advice and information on managing heating costs and staying warm at home well as grants to deliver first-time gas central heating systems
- We will work with partners to expand zero and ultra-low emissions vehicles and charging, including Heavy Goods Vehicle refuelling, and promote sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling

Sub-outcome 5.2 ‘Nature and the local environment are valued, protected and enhanced’

Aim: Increase in the percentage of county land which promotes diversity of habitat and species

Actions:

- We will support awareness raising and education on biodiversity and the value of natural capital to society and the economy
- We will create, protect, enhance, and manage sustainable green infrastructure and biodiversity on Council managed land and assets
- We will seek to improve the biodiversity value and condition of natural capital features on Council managed land and assets
- We will seek to demonstrate and support environmentally sustainable farming practices that support the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity and the condition of natural capital features
- We will work with partners through the LLEP to develop a Natural Capital Investment Plan, and deliver the roadmap the recent Natural Capital Review Report set out for Leicestershire, minimising the loss of habitats and the impacts of development and encouraging innovative land use

Sub-outcome 5.3 ‘Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way’

Aim: Increase in the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting and reduction in the percentage landfilled

Actions:

- Increase in the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting and reduction in the percentage landfilled
- We will reduce the tonnage of household waste produced in Leicestershire and minimise its environmental impact by applying the waste hierarchy in the priority order of prevention, preparation for reuse, recycling, other recovery, and disposal
- We will continue to encourage appropriate use of the Recycling & Household Waste Sites service
- We will provide a trade waste recycling, treatment and disposal service for businesses in Leicestershire, where practicable and cost-effective to do so
- We will work closely with other Waste Disposal Authorities to share ideas and opportunities for joint working / collaboration and innovation

Sub-outcome 5.4 ‘The economy and infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly’

Aim:

- Increase in the percentage of businesses taking action to reduce their carbon impact
- Reduction in CO2 emissions under the Council’s influence in the local area

Actions include:

- We will ensure that our Corporate Asset Investment Fund owns efficient assets which enhance the environment and biodiversity in the county
- We will reduce the impact of the Council’s procurement and delivery of goods and services on the environment
- We will work with businesses to raise awareness of the need to act on climate change and to support carbon reduction and circular economy practices
- We will identify and promote business opportunities arising from a circular economy
- We will work with partners to identify the investment requirements for zero carbon development and develop associated training and skills routes
- We will work with partners to create new, low-carbon business units and managed workspaces for start-ups and small companies
- We will work with partners and developers to ensure developments are low or zero carbon, climate resilient and enhance biodiversity
- We will ensure effective restoration of public transport services following the pandemic and identify opportunities to make transport more efficient
- We will encourage and support active and sustainable travel options by encouraging the uptake and use of electric vehicles and micro-mobility
- We will reduce pollution and contamination in Leicestershire through our Trading Standards service and other areas of control and influence
- We will continue to investigate and pursue opportunities to increase carbon sequestration through nature based solutions, such as tree planting

17. The section on the Strategic Change Portfolio includes, in sub-section 13.3, the following aims and actions to deliver the Council’s Carbon Reduction Programme.

Aims:

- Net-zero carbon emissions from the Council’s own operations by 2030, with an interim 64% reduction by 2025
- Leicestershire County Council is a climate active organisation – carbon reduction and adapting to climate change are included in decision making

Actions:

- We will complete an assessment of the cost and technology implications of achieving net zero carbon by 2030 for the council
- We will produce a Net Zero Carbon 2030 Plan for the council
- We will reduce our demand for energy, increase our use and generation of clean energy
- We will explore opportunities to remove carbon from the atmosphere through nature based solutions such as tree planting
- We will include net zero carbon criteria in our decision making

- We will create a culture for carbon reduction through communications, training, tools and guidance

Consultation and Timetable for Decisions

16. Development of the Plan has so far included engagement with lead officers for supporting strategies and the current (2018-22) outcomes, Department Management Teams, Corporate Management Team and Mrs. P. Posnett CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Community and Staff Relations.
17. Subject to Cabinet approval at its meeting on 26 October 2021, a 12-week public consultation on the Plan will begin on 1 November 2021 and run until 21 January 2022. As part of the consultation all of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Scrutiny Commission (from 1 -17 November), key partnership boards such as the Children and Families Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board (17 and 25 November respectively) will be provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft Plan.
18. Residents, community groups and partner organisations will also be invited to provide feedback on the draft Plan through a variety of methods including a public survey and meetings in which the Plan will be presented and reviewed.
19. Findings from the consultation will be used to inform development of the final Plan and it is intended that, in March 2022, a report will be presented to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration and then to the Cabinet presenting the outcome of the consultation and seeking agreement for the revised draft Plan to be submitted to the County Council for approval on 18 May 2022.

Resource Implications

20. All actions within the Plan are from existing service/business plans and strategies. As such, there should not be any additional resource investment required to deliver the Plan beyond that which has already been approved.
21. However, as referenced in Section 11 of the Plan ('Monitoring Outcome Delivery'), officer resources will be required to monitor delivery of the Plan and ensure that the strategic outcomes are reflected in and supported by all relevant underpinning Council plans and strategies. These tasks will be carried out by Outcome Boards, consisting of representatives from departments and corporate services. As delivery of the Plan will require continued collaboration with partner services, representatives from the Outcome Boards will interact with relevant partnership boards to monitor outcome delivery and promote integration of strategies.
22. The number of Outcome Boards has been reduced following a review of outcome delivery arrangements. Therefore, fewer officer resources will be required than have been utilised to monitor and support delivery of the current (2018-22) Plan.
23. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the Plan and will have a further opportunity to comment following the public consultation (prior to the March 2022 Cabinet meeting).

Conclusions

24. It is recommended that the Committee provides its views on the draft Strategic Plan (2022-26) as set out in the Appendix, including the content highlighted in this report.

Background papers

[Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan \(2018-2022\) \(Previous Plan\)](#)

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

25. None

Equality and Human Rights Implications

26. A screening assessment of the Strategic Plan concluded that a full impact assessment is not required. The Strategic Plan is a high-level document which reflects the content of existing Council plans and strategies in order to set out a clear summary of the Council's overall ambitions and delivery approach; it does not include new actions which could have Equality and Human Rights Implications.
27. The Plan will, however, have a positive impact as it promotes Equality and Human Rights, primarily by including, within the section on the '*Great Communities*' outcome (see sub-section 6.1), specific aims and actions to deliver the sub-outcome: 'diversity is celebrated, and people feel welcome and included'. This sub-outcome highlights issues around community cohesion and hate crime along with specific actions which the Council will deliver over the next four years to address these issues. Equality and Human Rights are also embedded throughout the Plan.

Other Relevant Impact Assessments

Crime and Disorder Implications

28. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report. The Plan promotes community safety by including, within the section on the '*Keeping People Safe and Well*' outcome (see sub-sections 9.1 and 9.2 of the appendix), specific aims and actions to deliver the sub-outcomes 'people are safe in their daily lives' and 'people at the most risk are protected from harm'.

Appendices

Appendix: Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan (2022-26) (**Revised Plan**)

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Strategic Plan

2022-26



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1. Glossary

Term	Definition
LLEP	Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership
VCSE Sector	Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EHE	Elective Home Education
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
GVA	Gross Value Added
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
R&D	Research and Development
SMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
GDHI	Gross Disposable Household Income
PM2.5	Fine Particulate Matter
CO2e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent

2. Foreword



Cllr Nick Rushton

Leader of Leicestershire County Council

This Strategic Plan sets out our ambitions and priorities for the next four years (2022-26). It outlines what we want to achieve and how we intend to do it.

It is based on five strategic outcomes which are aspirational; they outline the end results that we want to see for Leicestershire. For each outcome, we have identified specific aims which we will focus on achieving over the next four years, with corresponding actions. Further detail can be found through the relevant strategies in our Strategy Library.

Whilst the outcomes have been set out in separate sections, it is recognised that there are significant interdependencies between them. For example, reducing our carbon footprint supports not only our aim to tackle climate change but also to ensure positive health outcomes for current and future generations. Further, improving the educational attainment of disadvantaged children ensures they are able to access opportunities to fulfil their potential and supports economic growth in the county. Links between outcomes have been highlighted throughout the Plan and some actions support multiple outcomes.

We will deliver it by building upon our previous achievements, such as being recognised by Impower as the most productive Council in England and Wales, whilst being the lowest funded County Council in the UK. However, the Council alone cannot deliver all the change that will be needed. Through continued collaboration with our partners to coordinate and integrate our plans we hope to make the maximum impact on the most pressing issues that we face and celebrate and build on the success of this great county.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicholas Rushton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

3. Vision

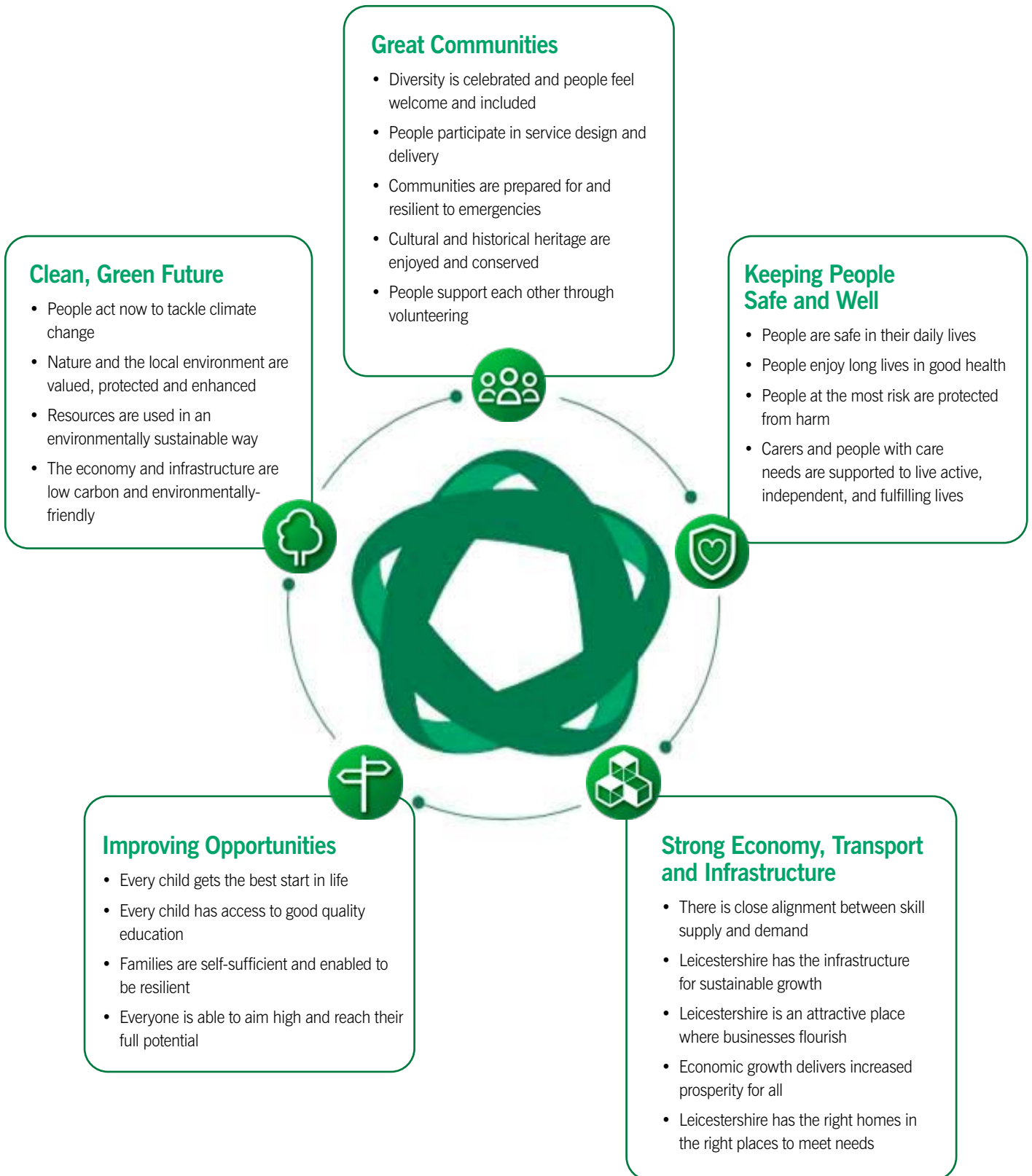
The vision below summarises our ambitions for Leicestershire and puts us on the right path to secure the best possible future for local residents.

An inclusive county in which active communities, great connections and greener living enable everyone to prosper, be happy and healthy.

We want Leicestershire to have welcoming and inclusive communities in which people take responsibility for their local areas and support each other. People are safe and well, living active, independent, and fulfilling lives. The local economy is flourishing with resilient, clean growth delivering increased prosperity for all. Everyone, regardless of their background or personal characteristics, has access to the opportunities they need to aim high and achieve their aspirations. People act now with urgency to protect and enhance the environment and meet the challenges of climate change.



4. Strategic Outcomes



5. Clean, Green Future

This outcome reflects the need to protect and enhance the environment and meet the challenges and opportunities of responding to climate change. Global warming is leading to an increase in the frequency and intensity of storms, flooding and heatwaves and changes in pests and diseases. It will affect social and environmental determinants of health including clean air, safe drinking water, supply of sufficient food and access to secure shelter. It will also damage local infrastructure and services, reduce productivity, increase the likelihood of conflict and climate migration and increase the loss of biodiversity.

There is increasing recognition of, and commitment to, the need to protect, promote and improve the environment at a local, national, and global level. The Paris Agreement of 2015 requires countries to limit global temperature rise to below 1.5 to 2°C. The interconnection between economic development, social equity and inclusion and environmental impacts has also been recognised internationally via the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The UK Government has prioritised action on climate change through the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019, requiring the government to reduce the UK's net emissions of greenhouse gases to zero by 2050. This will require transformational action.

On 15th May 2019, Leicestershire County Council declared a climate emergency, making a commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions from its own operations by 2030 and to work with others and to lobby government to achieve net zero carbon emissions for Leicestershire by 2045.

The Council has different levels of control and influence in protecting the environment and addressing climate change. It is responsible for complying with legislation relating to the environmental impacts from its activities, such as heating and powering our offices, using vehicles and generating waste; managing the environmental impacts from the activities of Leicestershire residents and businesses, such as air pollution from local transport and the reduction, recycling and disposal of household waste; and enforcing environmental legislation on businesses, such as in relation to product packaging, banned substances and energy certificates. It also has capacity to influence wider environmental action by lobbying government and working with partners within Leicestershire.

The Council commits to minimising the environmental impact of its activities and helping to protect the environment of Leicestershire. We will tackle climate change and embed environmental sustainability into everything we do. We will work with partners to deliver sustainable development by recognising and fostering the links between the environment, people, and the economy.

The priorities and commitments to deliver this outcome focus on how the Council will help to protect the environment and tackle climate change through its service delivery and interactions with residents and partners. Further detail on how the Council will reduce carbon emissions from its own operations can be found in the section on the Council's Carbon Reduction Programme.

5.1 People act now to tackle climate change and protect the environment

To achieve net zero carbon emissions in Leicestershire we need communities to be aware of the need for action on climate change and to act now to reduce environmental impacts. There is significant potential for individual action and community-led initiatives to support environmental sustainability (e.g. energy usage, sustainable transport, recycling). Our Community Survey highlights that 97% of residents feel protecting the environment is important. However, only 45% feel informed about what the Council is doing to protect the environment and tackle climate change, and 67% think the Council should be doing more.

Leicestershire has a higher rate of average waste produced per household than comparator counties, which may suggest that there is scope to reduce the amount of waste produced locally. We also have lower rates of electrical vehicle ownership than comparators and fewer electrical vehicle charging points.

There has been a 33% reduction in the rate of domestic CO2 emissions in Leicestershire since 2010. Leicestershire also ranks in the best performing 25% of comparators for the percentage of new-build houses with an Energy Performance Certificate rating of C+. However, the county ranks in the worst 25% comparators for the percentage of *existing* homes with this level of energy efficiency.

What will success look like?

- Residents actively involved in tackling climate change and protecting the environment
- Reduction in the rate of CO2 emissions per capita (average per resident)

Our Commitments

- We will use our interactions with communities to raise awareness of environmental impacts and harness community capacity to address them
- We will provide support and opportunities for learning to local communities, schools, and businesses to promote positive environmental action and collaborative working, leading to constructive behavioural change
- We will support residents to be more resource efficient in their energy and water use, such as through our Warm Homes service which provides free advice and information on managing heating costs and staying warm at home well as grants to deliver first-time gas central heating systems
- We will work with partners to expand zero and ultra-low emissions vehicles and charging, including Heavy Goods Vehicle refuelling, and promote sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling



5.2 Nature and the local environment are valued, protected and enhanced

Biodiversity describes the enormous variety of life on Earth. Biodiversity and the eco-system cleanse our atmosphere, provide us with the oxygen we breathe, the clean water we drink and the food we eat as well as many of the medicines which help to keep us well. The natural capital assets (geology, soil, air, water and all living things) of Leicestershire have an annual value of £388.45 million, with agricultural habitats generating £180.91 million annually.

Intensively managed farmland is poor for wildlife whilst land which is less intensively managed with little or no applications of chemical fertiliser, pesticides and herbicides is much richer in wildlife. In Leicestershire and Rutland where more than 80% of the land is farmed, good habitats for wildlife are now few and far between and much of our wildlife is being squeezed out and continues to decline. Leicestershire and Rutland are amongst the poorest counties for sites of recognised nature conservation value. The best sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) represent only about 1%% of the land area in Leicestershire.

Natural green space includes a wide variety of land from scrub and wetland to woodland and meadow. Access to natural green space supports our health and well-being. There is a risk that future development may not sufficiently consider the value of natural capital and green space.

What will success look like?

- Increase in the percentage of county land which promotes diversity of habitat and species

Our Commitments

- We will support awareness raising and education on biodiversity and the value of natural capital to society and the economy
- We will create, protect, enhance, and manage sustainable green infrastructure and biodiversity on Council managed land and assets
- We will seek to improve the biodiversity value and condition of natural capital features on Council managed land and assets
- We will seek to demonstrate and support environmentally sustainable farming practices that support the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity and the condition of natural capital features
- We will work with partners through the LLEP to develop a Natural Capital Investment Plan, and deliver the roadmap the recent Natural Capital Review Report set out for Leicestershire, minimising the loss of habitats and the impacts of development and encouraging innovative land use

5.3 Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way

A further environmental crisis we are facing, in addition to climate change and biodiversity loss, is unsustainable resource usage. We are using the planet's resources at a faster rate than they are being replenished and in a way which does not allow most of these resources to be reused within our economic systems. In order to address this crisis, we need to move to a circular economy model. This is a more resource efficient alternative to a traditional linear economy (make, use, dispose) where resources are used for as long as possible, then products and materials are recovered, regenerated, or recycled.

Leicestershire County Council is responsible for the reuse, treatment, recycling, or disposal of the collected wastes. In addition, it has the duty to provide places for the deposit of household waste from residents (Recycling & Household Waste Sites). Compared to other county areas, Leicestershire has a lower rate of household waste which is recycled and has a significantly higher percentage of waste which is landfilled.

What will success look like?

- Increase in the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting and reduction in the percentage landfilled

Our Commitments

- Increase in the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting and reduction in the percentage landfilled
- We will reduce the tonnage of household waste produced in Leicestershire and minimise its environmental impact by applying the waste hierarchy in the priority order of prevention, preparation for reuse, recycling, other recovery, and disposal
- We will continue to encourage appropriate use of the Recycling & Household Waste Sites service
- We will provide a trade waste recycling, treatment and disposal service for businesses in Leicestershire, where practicable and cost-effective to do so
- We will work closely with other Waste Disposal Authorities to share ideas and opportunities for joint working / collaboration and innovation

5.4 The economy and infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly

Decarbonising the economy and infrastructure is the key solution to addressing the climate emergency. Nearly 70% of Leicestershire's emissions come from commercial, industrial and transport sources, with the remaining 30% coming from domestic sources (how we heat and use energy in our homes). Total commercial CO₂ emissions in Leicestershire have reduced by xx% since 2005 and industrial CO₂ emissions have reduced by xx%. However, transport emissions have only fallen by x%. The move to a low carbon, environmentally-friendly economy will require policy, technological and behavioural changes.

The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP)'s survey of local businesses from March-June 2021 found that 35% of businesses had taken action to reduce carbon impact in the past 2 months and 50% planned to take action over the following 6 months.

What will success look like?

- Increase in the percentage of businesses taking action to reduce their carbon impact
- Reduction in CO₂ emissions under the Council's influence in the local area

Our Commitments

- We will ensure that our Corporate Asset Investment Fund owns efficient assets which enhance the environment and biodiversity in the county
- We will reduce the impact of the Council's procurement and delivery of goods and services on the environment, including through the reduced use of raw materials and fossil fuels, increased use of renewable energy and deployment of smarter and more efficient processes
- We will work with businesses to raise awareness of the need to act on climate change and to support carbon reduction and circular economy practices
- We will identify and promote business opportunities arising from the move towards a circular economy

- We will work with partners to identify the investment requirements for zero carbon development and develop associated training and skills routes
- We will work with partners to create new, low-carbon business units and managed workspaces for start-ups and small companies
- We will work with partners and developers to ensure developments are low or zero carbon, climate resilient and enhance biodiversity
- We will ensure effective restoration of public transport services following the pandemic and identify opportunities to make transport more efficient
- We will encourage and support active and sustainable travel options, where appropriate, by learning from best practice and encouraging the uptake and use of electric vehicles and micro-mobility as appropriate, including through provision of infrastructure
- We will reduce pollution and contamination in Leicestershire through our Trading Standards service and other areas of control and influence
- We will continue to investigate and pursue opportunities to increase carbon sequestration through nature based solutions, such as tree planting



6. Great Communities

The Great Communities outcome aims to ensure that Leicestershire has thriving, integrated and inclusive communities in which people support each other and take responsibility for their local area. We want communities to frequently tell us what is important to them and how well services are working and to work with us to improve services. Communities also need to be resilient and adaptable during emergencies to ensure a seamless return to normal life.

The communities we live in and the relationships we have are the primary source of our physical and mental health – which in turn affects the kind of life we are able to live and the part we play in society. Our communities are key assets and by investing in them we can cultivate the conditions for people to flourish.

Whilst the pandemic has presented significant challenges for communities, it has also offered many examples of positive community spirit and highlighted the willingness of people to volunteer to help others, particularly the most vulnerable. Leicestershire's thriving and diverse Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, comprising over 3,000 organisations, has continued to provide essential services. Over 1,000 Covid-19 volunteers have been recruited to support vulnerable people through activities such as providing food and medication, transport to and from appointments, information about support available and check-in/befriending contact. A further 1,250 county volunteers were recruited to support the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

We aim to encourage more people to become active citizens, taking responsibility for their local areas. We will 'help communities to help themselves' by supporting them to take advantage of and build on the assets within their local area (e.g. buildings, people, skills, and networks) to help solve local challenges. We will build upon the successful partnerships and initiatives which have developed during the pandemic to further strengthen and empower communities. We will also provide VCSE organisations with tailored information, advice, and support to build community capacity and strengthen universal services.

The council has a strong record of engaging with communities on services and strategies. This reflects our commitment to openness and transparency and supports informed decision-making on council services. We also encourage and support communities to direct development in their local areas. We aim to increase the involvement of residents in service design, such as by using a wider range of engagement methods and reaching marginalised communities.

Culture is our past, present and future. It's what we have inherited, what we are experiencing now and what we would like to see remembered. It's myths and legends, faiths and religion, buildings, villages, cities and landscapes, art, dance, music, and food, treasured and meaningful objects and possessions, values, beliefs and memories. We will preserve and make accessible our local cultural and historic heritage to enhance the wellbeing of local residents.

Resilient communities are capable of bouncing back from adverse situations. They do this by actively influencing and preparing for economic, social, and environmental change. We will work with partners to support society to avoid, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

Our specific priorities and commitments to deliver this outcome are set out in the following pages. To deliver them, we will work closely with residents, VCSE organisations and partner services.

6.1 Diversity is celebrated and people feel welcome and included

Our Community Insight Survey finds that as of Quarter 1 2021/22 the vast majority of residents (92%) agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. However, this percentage represents a decrease from 96% in Quarter 2 2020/21. The rate of hate crime has also increased since the EU referendum and during the pandemic.

What will success look like?

- Increased community cohesion
- Better reporting and reduction in hate crime
- Council services are accessible and inclusive for all

Our Commitments

- Our Equalities strategy will focus on providing accessible services, promoting community cohesion and ensuring equity in employment opportunities
- We will sign up to the Race at Work Charter, The Disability Confident Scheme and the Stonewall Workforce Equalities Index
- We will provide guidance, training and support for all staff to address equalities issues
- We will organise and promote civic events throughout the county to celebrate our diverse communities
- We will support the Inter Faith Forum to promote greater understanding and awareness of religion, faith, and belief
- We will support the Leicestershire Equality Challenge Group to provide an independent challenge to our work to ensure service accessibility
- We will work with partners through the Leicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board to tackle all forms of hate crime

6.2 People participate in service design and delivery

Our Community Survey suggests that 94% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. The majority of residents (57%) feel well informed about the Council and 67% state that they trust the Council. However, only 33% feel that they can influence Council decisions.

Neighbourhood Plans enable residents to develop a shared vision for local neighbourhoods and to shape the development and growth of local areas. There are now 125 active Neighbourhood Planning groups and there has been an increase in the number of Plans adopted, from 34 in 2019/20 to 38 in 2020/21. There are also 35 communities managing their local library, with many of these being community hubs which support the needs of local people.

What will success look like?

- Increase in the proportion of residents willing to work together and who feel that they can influence Council decisions
- Increase in the number of Neighbourhood Plans adopted

Our Commitments

- We will engage residents, service users and partners in the planning of services, through a variety of means
- We will sign the Consultation Institute's Charter and follow the best practice principles for consultation and engagement
- We will actively encourage community participation through the planning process, for instance through consultation on planning applications
- We will support Neighbourhood Plan development and provide timely and co-ordinated consultation responses from the Council
- We will continue to support Parish and Town Councils in their role as community leaders and providers of community managed services
- We will continue to support communities to plan and deliver devolved services, such as community-managed libraries and heritage sites

6.3 Communities are prepared for and resilient to emergencies

Leicestershire County Council aims to ensure that communities are ready for emergencies and prepared to respond. This can be supported through the development of Community Response Plans, which help communities to identify the skills, knowledge and resources that can be mustered to help those within the community who have been affected. There are currently 53 Community Response Plans across Leicestershire.

What will success look like?

- Increase in the number of active Community Response Plans

Our Commitments

- We will work with the Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland Resilience Partnership to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies
- We will support communities to develop Community Response Plans, so they are in a position to help themselves in exceptional circumstances
- We will provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations to ensure effective business continuity management
- We will take action to support the resilience of the County to the existing and predicted changes in climate
- We will undertake the Lead Local Flood Authority statutory duties including reviewing Leicestershire's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
- We will maintain our Resilient Highways Network, targeting works to ensure that traffic is kept moving despite disruptive events (e.g. severe weather)
- We will work with partners through the Signposting and Community Support Service to provide emergency short-term food and fuel support

6.4 Cultural and historical heritage are enjoyed and conserved

There was an 8% reduction in visits to heritage sites between 2018/19 and 2019/20. The pandemic has also had a significant impact on the county's museum and heritage sites and library services, with premises having closed during the restrictions. However, services have adapted through digital delivery including virtual museum tours, whilst libraries have seen an 89% increase in the number of e-loans from 2019/20-2020/21.

What will success look like?

- Increase in the number of Leicestershire residents and visitors engaging in cultural and heritage activities

Our Commitments

- Our libraries, heritage, country parks and adult learning programmes will promote wellbeing by providing free and accessible community facilities, exhibitions and parks and outdoor activities and offering a range of learning opportunities
- Our Audience Development Team will ensure that new audiences obtain the wellbeing benefits associated with cultural participation and support communities through the Cultural Communities Network to develop their own bespoke programmes of cultural events and activities
- Our Creative Learning Services will support schools with a wide range of resources, pupil sessions and professional help to stimulate reading for pleasure and creative learning across the curriculum
- Our Record Office will preserve and provide access to resources which can be used to research Leicestershire's history and culture
- Our Museums', Curatorial and Collections teams will maintain the County's natural history, artefacts, specimens, information and objects as well as the stories of the people who have made Leicestershire their home for thousands of years
- Through GoLearn! (Leicestershire Adult Learning Service), we will offer a wide range of online adult learning courses in venues across Leicestershire

6.5 People support each other through volunteering

As highlighted previously, there has been a surge in prospective and mobilised volunteers during the pandemic, which is reflected nationwide; 750,000 people registered to volunteer for the NHS Volunteer Responders scheme within four days of its launch in April 2020 and over 4,000 mutual aid groups formed. Locally, 1,077 volunteers were recruited to support vulnerable people at the beginning of the pandemic and a further 1,250 recruited to support vaccination. However, pre-pandemic there was a long-term downward trend in volunteer numbers and our latest Community Survey finds that 39% of resident respondents had given unpaid help in the last 12 months, suggesting that there may be scope to increase the rate of volunteering.

VCSE organisations have taken a leading role in ensuring the provision of support for vulnerable people throughout the pandemic, however they have faced significant financial pressures due to reduced income, the costs of making facilities Covid-19 secure and increases in demand.

What will success look like?

- There is a sustained increase in volunteering post-pandemic

- VCSE organisations remain financially viable and maintain service delivery

Our Commitments

- We will continue to provide communities with up-to-date information and advice to support and promote volunteering
- We will develop and maintain a volunteering offer across services such as libraries, museums and heritage, social care and environment and waste
- We will encourage Council employees to volunteer to develop their skills and experience, build links with communities and support local initiatives
- We will support volunteers to maintain their health and wellbeing
- We will support the growth and development of VCSE organisations by providing targeted grants and funding
- We will commission an ongoing programme of support for VCSE groups in areas such as governance, income generation, commissioning support, representation, and establishment



7. Improving Opportunities

This outcome aims to ensure that all children get the best start for life and have the opportunities they need to reach their potential, regardless of where they grow up, or the family circumstances they are born into. This reflects evidence that the first 1001 critical days of life (from pregnancy to age two years) have a significant influence on neurological brain development and lifelong outcomes for the child. We believe children are best supported to grow within their own families and as such the outcome also reflects the need to ensure families are resilient and self-sufficient. Further, it aims to ensure that disadvantaged adults, such as those with learning disabilities, autism and/or mental health conditions, are able to aim high and achieve their aspirations.

The impact of family and community disadvantage is felt before a child enters school and is likely to have a significant impact on their future educational attainment and life chances. Whilst the term 'disadvantage' is usually linked to a family's income, a wider definition incorporating the child's vulnerability in the context of their family or community is more useful. For example, children living in a home where there is domestic abuse, a parent has poor mental health and/or problematic usage of drugs or alcohol, are at greater risk of experiencing mental illness and engaging in harmful behaviours. We also know that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities may be disadvantaged.

A report from the Association for Young People's Health suggests that many of the risk factors for poorer outcomes amongst children and young people have been exacerbated by the pandemic, including financial hardship, poor emotional health and wellbeing and academic pressures. Young people already facing challenges in their lives (such as living in poverty, with a disability and/or in challenging family situations) seem to have been hardest hit.

Early education has the potential to drive social mobility and improve outcomes for the next generation. It is therefore essential that children arrive at school ready to learn. High quality care in the early years of a child's life supports better readiness for school, stronger cognitive skills and speech and language development. Investing in children's development in the early years leads to large payoffs for children, communities and the wider economy. It is estimated that individuals with five or more good GCSEs have average lifetime productivity gains of £100,000, compared to those with qualifications below this level.

Our services will be flexible and responsive to the needs of children and families, providing the right level of support at the right time. Wherever possible children's and families' needs will be met by universal services, however we will also invest in effective, targeted services that identify and support vulnerable families at an early stage. Supporting families requires effective collaboration between partner services. We will therefore work closely with partners, including through Leicestershire's Children and Families Partnership - a sub-group of Leicestershire's Health and Wellbeing Board which brings together local authorities, police, health, schools, probation and the voluntary sector - to help ensure children and young people reach their full potential.

7.1 Every child gets the best start in life

The 1,001 days from pregnancy to the age of two set the foundations for an individual's cognitive, emotional and physical development. These 1,001 days are a critical time for development, and we are committed to improving how we support families during the 1,001 critical days.

Leicestershire generally performs well in child and maternal health, with a lower rate of under-18 conceptions, smoking at the time of delivery and low birth weight babies than England. It also currently has a slightly higher percentage of children achieving a good level of development at age 5 than the national average, although performance on this measure has historically tended to be below comparators.

However, Leicestershire ranks in the worst 25% of county areas for the percentage of children achieving the expected level of development at age 2-2.5yrs. It also performs poorly in terms of the percentage of eligible 2 year olds taking up free early education in Leicestershire (an initiative focused on the most socio-economically deprived households) and the percentage of children eligible for free school meals who achieve a good level of development at age 5. There is also further work to do around maintaining breastfeeding rates after initiation across the County.

There are 2 tiers of support for children with special educational needs (SEND): 'SEN Support' and 'Education, Health and Care Plan' (EHCP). EHCPs are the higher level of support. In Leicestershire, the percentage of children with SEND who have an EHCP and achieve a good level of development by age 5 is significantly higher than national average. However, for children on SEN Support, performance is below the national average.

For the past 10 years in Leicestershire there has been a year-on-year increase in the rate of children who are looked after in our care. Locally, as of 2019, Looked After Children were working below age related expectations when they start school - 72% were below age related expectations for Personal, Social and Emotional Development and 78% were below in Communication, Language and Literacy.

What will success look like?

- Services working in more integrated and collaborative ways to support pre-school children and their families
- Increase in the proportion of young children achieving a good level of development at foundation stage

Our Commitments

Services working in more integrated and collaborative ways to support pre-school children and their families

- We will focus on strengthening collaboration between partners to improve early education, health and wellbeing outcomes for pre-school children
- We will work with partners across education, health and care to promote breastfeeding initiation and continuation
- We will develop an integrated Early Years Pathway to ensure that vulnerable children are identified and supported early
- We will develop an integrated communication strategy to promote the 1001 Critical Days Children's Manifesto
- We will join up how services for pre-school children and their families report on performance to support a coherent understanding of our progress and where we need to improve
- We will help to ensure staff across health, care and education are informed about the needs of children with SEND and available support

Increase in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at foundation stage

- We will focus on narrowing the development gaps that affect children and families who are at the greatest disadvantage (e.g. those who live in poverty or have a poor home environment, have special educational needs and/or are in our care)
- We will support parents and families to build on their understanding of children's needs so that they are able to get their children off to a good start

- We will help families access free childcare and provide high-quality childcare and early education that is fully inclusive and accessible
- We will support all childcare providers to offer sufficient high-quality early education places
- We will protect and where possible strengthen the service provided by our Children and Family Wellbeing Centres
- We will provide greater clarity on what success looks like when children are ready for school and on how we can support schools to be ready

7.2 Every child has access to good quality education

As of 2018/19, Leicestershire had a higher proportion of primary and secondary schools rated either good or outstanding than the national average. The vast majority of children and families are offered their first preference of school placement. Leicestershire also has better overall educational attainment rates than the national average from key stages 1-4, although outcomes at A-Level are consistently below comparator levels.

Although children in our care have significantly poorer educational outcomes than their peers, Leicestershire performs well compared to other counties in this area. Additionally, educational attainment for children with SEND who have an EHCP is better in Leicestershire than the national average at all key stages except key stage 2. However, for children on SEN Support, educational attainment is consistently below comparator levels. Further, for children in receipt of free school meals, educational attainment rates at key stages 2 and 4 are consistently lower locally than the national average.

One of the key challenges in Leicestershire is a growing need for school places. Demand for EHCPs to support children with SEND has also increased significantly locally, at a rate higher than regionally or nationally. We recognise that the majority of children with SEND can and should have those needs supported in a mainstream setting at the SEN Support stage, without the need for an EHCP.

What will success look like?

- Sufficient, high quality mainstream school places and specialist SEND provision to meet growing demand
- Improved educational attainment amongst disadvantaged pupils (e.g. those in receipt of free school meals, with SEN and/or a disability)

Our Commitments

Sufficient, high quality mainstream school places and specialist SEND provision to meet growing demand

- We will work with partners to ensure that admissions arrangements promote diversity and choice and meet the needs of vulnerable groups
- We will ensure a sufficient supply of high-quality school places by monitoring capacity and extending or building new schools where required
- We will implement an ambitious sufficiency programme to develop SEND provision across the local area, including development of resources in pre-school settings and mainstream schools to promote inclusion and expansion of existing special schools

- We will maintain strong arrangements for the management of our assets, and strengthen our relationship with Academies, to ensure all school buildings (irrespective of their designation and funding arrangements) are fit for purpose

Improved educational attainment amongst disadvantaged pupils

- We will aim to help school pupils catch up with learning missed during the pandemic and continue to improve educational attainment
- We will focus on ensuring all children in our care access appropriate, stable education placements and positive educational experiences. Our Virtual School will ensure children in care and care leavers receive the best education possible and develop skills and knowledge for a successful future.
- We will work with partners through the SEND and Inclusion Board to ensure the culture of all mainstream schools and providers is inclusive and staff are well-equipped and supported to meet the learning needs of the vast majority of children, including those with SEND.
- We will work with further education colleges to develop opportunities for a more individualised learning experience for young people with SEND.
- We will focus on improving the quality of EHCPs and developing the EHCP process and Annual Reviews both within the local authority and between the local authority, clinical commissioning group and provider services
- We will ensure that when a child or young person needs move to a different educational provision or service, this is done in a timely manner with the appropriate information being made available so that needs are well understood

7.3 Families are self-sufficient and enabled to be resilient

Many families have emerging or complex needs which require support to enable their children to achieve good outcomes in life. To provide an effective response, we need to identify issues early, ensure joined-up working between services and work directly with families.

In 2019/20, Leicestershire County Council achieved its target for the number of families achieving significant and sustained progress through the Troubled Families programme, which aims to improve the lives and outcomes for England's most complex and 'troubled' families.

Disruption in family lives can lead to children missing education, with the impacts felt by children themselves, families and society. Leicestershire has low rates of children missing education. The number of elective home-educated (EHE) children has increased from approximately 150 six years ago to over 790 children which highlights the need to ensure families are well-equipped and supported to provide a suitable education.

Leicestershire has a high rate of children with SEND who have an EHCP and this has increased in recent years. As the majority of children with SEND can and should have those needs supported in a mainstream setting at the SEN Support stage without the need for an EHCP, this may suggest a need to develop the confidence and capacity of families to manage the needs of children with SEND.

What will success look like?

- Families are able to identify their own support networks and feel more able to deal with issues as they arise
- The Council continues to achieve its target for the number of families achieving significant and sustained progress

Our Commitments

- We will develop the Leicestershire Information and Support Directory and Local Offer to help families access information, guidance, and support
- We will support the delivery of Citizens Advice services and crisis and hardship support for people in need
- We will work positively with parents and carers opting for EHE, offering a range of support to ensure that statutory duties are met
- We will work across the early help partnership to ensure all agencies are able to identify families who may require additional support at the earliest possible opportunity, and will work with partners to make sure families receive the best response to their needs
- We will continue to prioritise investment in preventative services to help to avoid the need for children to become looked after. We will ensure children who are at risk of family breakdown receive timely and, if necessary, intensive support to help them to remain living with their families
- We will develop our support to young people who encounter emotional difficulties or require other targeted early help support

7.4 Everyone is able to aim high and reach their full potential

Only 2% of children aged 16-17 in Leicestershire are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), below the national average (2.7%). The sub-groups we know are most likely to be NEET are care leavers, young carers, young offenders, young parents, and young people with learning and/or other disabilities. For example, the proportion of children with SEND who have an EHCP and are NEET at ages 16-17 is 9.4%; above the national average (8.9%).

The percentage of young people aged 19 with at least a level 2 qualification is consistently higher locally than the national average, however for those from poorer backgrounds who claimed free school meals during school, performance is consistently lower locally than the national average.

Leicestershire is in the best performing 25% comparators for the percentage of care leavers who are in education, employment, or training as well as for the percentage of care leavers who are living in suitable accommodation.

It is also in the best performing 25% comparators for the proportion of people aged 18-64 with a learning disability who are in paid employment and the proportion who are living in their own home or with their family. However, it is in the worst 25% of comparators for the proportion of those in contact with secondary mental health services who are in paid employment, and below the average amongst comparators for the proportion who are living independently.

What will success look like?

- Below national average rate of vulnerable young people (e.g. unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, those with SEN and/or disability, those who are from poorer backgrounds and/or care leavers) who are NEET
- Above national average rates of disadvantaged adults (e.g. those with learning disabilities, autism and/or mental health conditions) who are in paid employment and living independently

Our Commitments

Below national average rate of vulnerable young people who are NEET

- We will challenge schools in relation to statutory individualised careers guidance for vulnerable groups
- We will monitor the progress of learners beyond age 16 to ensure good progress and identify those at risk of becoming NEET in order to target them for additional support to participate in education or training and make positive and well-informed choices
- We will identify the interests and skills of children in our care and provide them with information and advice about educational and career options
- We will raise employers' awareness of the issues affecting care leavers to help ensure they offer the right support to care leaver employees
- Through our Teenagers with Babies Action Group, we will deliver actions to reduce NEET amongst Teenage parents, such as ensuring seamless support pathways and improving access to educational opportunities
- Our Youth Offending Team will provide young offenders with dedicated Education Worker and Careers Advisors to ensure they are actively engaged in education, training or employment and will advocate for them with schools, colleges, alternative providers, and employers
- We will expand the range of alternative providers for young offenders and others for whom formal educational placements are not suitable

Above national average rates of disadvantaged adults who are in paid employment and living independently

- We will maintain a person-centred process to support navigation through transition, from child to adulthood
- We will continue to offer engaging 'first steps' learning opportunities through our Adult Learning Service as a way of increasing participation for disadvantaged learners, and to prepare them for a more formal programme of learning
- We will work with all partners to promote and extend opportunities for supported employment for disadvantaged people
- We will support people to live in the least restrictive environments possible, by developing more supported accommodation, including 'step down' temporary accommodation, and exploring the benefits of single accommodation units with on-site shared support for adults with mental ill-health

8. Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure

This outcome aims to ensure that, using our local capabilities, innovations, and skills – we build a productive, inclusive and sustainable economy at the cutting edge of science, technology and engineering. It also reflects the need for our infrastructure to meet the demands of a growing population and economy, by providing great connections and sufficient employment space and housing of a range of types and tenure.

Our economy is primed for success. We have unrivalled assets such as a world-class university with one of the UK's largest science parks, a central location with the largest distribution park in Europe and the UK's 2nd largest freight airport. Our strong and growing manufacturing sector forms the backbone of our economy. Recently, the East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster sites in North West Leicestershire were selected for Freeport Status. This could provide a significant boost to manufacturing and logistics industries and create up to 60,000 additional jobs.

However, our economy faces significant challenges including lower productivity than the UK. This may be in part due to a lack of training, investment and innovation. Productivity helps businesses to grow more profitable and is a key determinant of the pay and living standards of residents.

The pandemic has also had a significant impact; leading to many jobs being classified as 'vulnerable' (particularly in hospitality, tourism, retail and manufacturing) and a contraction in job vacancies and hiring. This has impacted workers in low pay and/or insecure jobs the most and increased the risk of lower-skilled workers facing unemployment and job insecurity. Young people have been particularly affected by a reduction in entry level positions and apprenticeships. The capacity and capability of many businesses has also been significantly stretched in terms of their resilience and financial health, and rural areas have experienced disruptions to harvesting and demand for agricultural produce, as well as supply chain disruptions in the food and drink sector.

Pre-Covid, the Leicester and Leicestershire economy generated £24.5 billion in GVA, with 42,000 businesses and 538,000 jobs. Testament to its resilience and growth potential, we expect this to increase, despite the impacts of the pandemic, to £30.2 billion and 568,000 jobs by 2030.

The specific priorities and commitments for this outcome, outlined in the following pages, will enable the economy to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and support long-term growth. To deliver them, we will continue to work in close partnership with public sector partners, businesses, and universities. We will focus on ensuring that people have the skills they need to access employment, as this will support a good quality of life and help businesses to grow. We will ensure that infrastructure provides excellent connectivity, enabling access to opportunities and opening up sites for development. As highlighted in the [Clean, Green Outcome](#), we also need to ensure that economic growth and infrastructure development supports the transition to net zero carbon emissions.

8.1 There is close alignment between skill supply and demand

Manufacturing and logistics are the key employment sectors in Leicester and Leicestershire, and we aim to accelerate growth in these areas. However, we also want to increase employment in business and financial services, tourism and hospitality and creative design, as well as facilitate growth in life sciences, environmental/low carbon technologies and space and aerospace. Local skills needs will also be driven by the shortfall in overseas workers, caused by Covid-19 and the fall in EU workers. This is likely to have a significant impact on the social care sector, which has already been facing recruitment and retention

difficulties for many years. There will be a need to encourage life-long learning, and to improve skills attainment across all of these priority sectors.

Leicestershire performs well in terms of the percentage of working-age population qualified to Levels 2+ and 3+, and the percentage of residents qualified to NVQ Level 4+ is similar to the national average. It also has a good supply of graduates to the local labour market and a strong and improving further education sector which provides a wide range of vocational training to meet local employer needs. However, there are insufficient numbers of local young people choosing to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM), which is critical for our growth sectors.

Leicestershire has lower levels of in-work training than comparators and employers are reporting a lack of skilled workers in key sectors which is impacting business performance. The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP)'s survey of local businesses in 2021 found that 21% of businesses had recruitment difficulties, 60% required improvement in basic work-based skills and over a third in digital skills.

Leicestershire has a lower unemployment rate than the national average. However, the rate has increased locally during the pandemic; the rate of Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit claimants increased from 1.6% in March 2020 to 3.3% in June 2021. Young people are likely to be disadvantaged due to missing education, reduction in apprenticeship opportunities, a more competitive labour market and lack of workplace digital skills.

What will success look like?

- Improvement in population skills and reduction in the proportion of employers reporting skills shortages or gaps
- Increased opportunities in the labour market for young people and reduced unemployment and job insecurity

Our Commitments

Improvement in population skills and reduction in the proportion of employers reporting skills shortages

- We will work with partners through the LLEP to:
 - Capture and analyse labour market information to identify skills shortages and growth businesses
 - Support the Further Education sector to expand and improve their facilities, especially where there is a strong link to growth sectors
 - Develop Skills Plans for priority sectors to promote relevant job opportunities and help businesses meet their recruitment and skills needs
 - Create a Leicester and Leicestershire Digital Skills Partnership to address digital skills deficiencies in the workplace and wider society
 - Focus on embedding employability skills so that individuals are well-prepared for employment and attractive to employers
 - Provide flexible leadership and management skills development programmes
 - Promote enterprise skills programmes to help people think about self-employment and support start-ups and existing businesses

Increased opportunities in the labour market for young people and reduced unemployment and job insecurity

- We will provide information, advice, and guidance on the labour market to parents, teachers and young people and promote STEM careers
- We will work with partners to identify pathways into employment and support youth engagement in emerging, productive, and buoyant sectors
- We will work with partners to continue provision of youth, employment, and career services such as Careers Hub and Youth Employment Hub
- We will work with partners to support the graduate careers and retention initiatives of local universities and to incorporate graduate skills into enterprise support, innovation, and growth initiatives
- We will work with partners to produce an Apprenticeship Action Plan to address the decline in apprenticeships due to Covid-19
- Our Kickstart scheme will provide employment placements for young people aged 16-24 at risk of becoming long-term unemployed
- We will work with local authorities, businesses, and education providers to support Leicestershire people back into employment following the Covid-19 crisis through re-training/job matching and stimulating entrepreneurialism
- Our Work + scheme will provide free one-to-one support, advice and information to people looking for secure paid employment or training

8.2 Leicestershire has the infrastructure for sustainable growth

We need our infrastructure to support continuous economic growth, whilst helping to tackle the climate emergency. There is a need to develop and promote sustainable forms of transport and decarbonise road transport.

Leicestershire's population is projected to rise to 860,618 by 2043 – an increase of 23% from 2018. Leicester and Leicestershire's Strategic Growth Plan identifies the need for 96,580 more homes by 2031 and a further 90,500 dwellings from 2031-50. Just under 200,000 new homes are therefore set to be built by 2050. These will need to be supported by new roads, schools, transport, and other infrastructure – estimated to cost £600m over the next 25 years.

The Strategic Growth Plan also identifies the need for an additional 367-423 hectares of land for employment use by 2031. Since 2010, there has been a transformation of the provision of world class business locations and premises in Leicester and Leicestershire; brand new Grade A office, technology and manufacturing premises accommodate 5,000 high-technology jobs. There is a need to continuously explore how existing employment areas can be supported and where new growth should be directed.

Road networks in Leicestershire are in fair condition with a relatively low percentage of roads requiring consideration of structural maintenance, although the percentage is higher for unclassified roads. However, unreliable journey times and congestion on local roads in county towns and on parts of the strategic road network (M1 Junctions) are a frequent complaint. Further, the predominantly rural nature of the county presents viability challenges for medium and long-distance public transport, which in turn means that it can be difficult to identify opportunities to travel by sustainable modes. Where mid or long-distance bus and rail opportunities exist, they may be infrequent, with long journey times, and stops located at potentially inconvenient locations.

In terms of digital infrastructure, the pandemic has accelerated the pace of digital transformation of businesses and public services, with employers expecting digital skills to become increasingly important.

Whilst this has created opportunities for enhanced business efficiency, productivity and resilience, it has also exposed the 'digital divide' in society with residents unable to afford and/or use digital devices, rural areas lacking access to high speed broadband or 4G or 5G services and independent retailers in our Towns and Rural areas struggling to sell on-line or advertise themselves by social media.

What will success look like?

- Infrastructure capacity and capability supports growth, whilst supporting net zero carbon emissions
- Sufficient employment sites and premises for growth

Our Commitments

Infrastructure capacity and capability supports growth, whilst supporting net zero carbon emissions

- Through our Corporate Asset Investment Fund, we own and manage a diverse portfolio of property and other investment assets. We will use this to support growth in the county and ensure there is a diverse range of properties and land assets available to meet the aims of economic development
- We will continue to provide safe, suitably maintained highways that support and encourage new housing development and economic growth and employ a flexible approach to reviewing, amending, and developing the network to reflect changing travel demand and traffic patterns
- We will maximise opportunities from technological innovations; utilising evidence gathered on the Major Road Network and from key radial routes to support end to end journey planning and better traffic management
- We will continue to press Government for long-term funding streams to help us maintain our highway assets and support passenger transport services
- We will work in partnership with local bus operators to promote and champion the provision of affordable, frequent, and high-quality passenger transport services and support with the recovery of the passenger transport market following the Covid-19 pandemic by identifying opportunities to provide access to essential services in the most cost effective and efficient way
- We will engage with the freight and logistics sector, to better understand the needs of the sector and ensure that schemes are developed which support the efficient movement of freight into, around, and out of Leicestershire
- We will work with partners through Midlands Connect to invest in strategic road and rail improvements to reduce congestion, improve journey times and support housing growth (e.g. Midlands Rail Hub proposal - rail infrastructure improvements to provide better rail links across the Midlands)
- We will continue engaging with HS2 Ltd to ensure that Leicester and Leicestershire's interests are protected and/or advanced throughout construction
- We will encourage and support active and sustainable travel options, where appropriate, by learning from best practice and encouraging the uptake and use of electric vehicles and micro-mobility as appropriate, including through provision of infrastructure
- We will work with partners through the LLEP to improve digital connectivity through broadband, Wi-Fi and 5G connectivity in rural blackspots and will define and implementing the Council's first digital connectivity strategy

Sufficient employment sites and premises for growth

- We will work with partners to renew existing employment sites and premises where there is demand
- We will work with partners to maintain confidence and momentum of development of strategic sites and the Freeport

8.3 Leicestershire is an attractive place where businesses flourish

The Leicestershire economy is dominated by small businesses - with 89.2% of businesses micro-sized (employing 9 or fewer people). Building on the support from our growth hub and successful partnership initiatives, we can continue the substantial progress made in the last 10 years, as evidenced by the growth in number of businesses (+18% between 2014 and 2019) and improvements in start-up and survival rates.

However, productivity rates are lower locally than the national average. Investment in research and development (R&D) is a key driver of innovation and productivity growth. Investment in R&D in Leicestershire has however been consistently below the national average; In 2016 R&D expenditure was equivalent to 1.5% GVA for Leicestershire, Rutland, and Northamptonshire – below the UK average (1.7%), and government target of 3% in the longer-term. This highlights the need to increase investment and activity in R&D and innovation and to lever existing R&D capabilities from our leading corporations.

Leicester and Leicestershire is a prime location for international businesses – with 18% of all businesses exporting overseas in 2020, and 83% of exporters selling to markets in the EU. Over the next 10 years, businesses must adapt to the new challenges and opportunities posed by Covid-19 and EU-Exit, as illustrated by the value of goods exported from the UK declining by 16% throughout 2020 – the largest drop since comparable records began.

What will success look like?

- Growth and expansion of existing innovation and R&D strengths
- Further increase in business density; particularly in growth sectors and knowledge-based businesses

Our Commitments

Growth and expansion of existing innovation and R&D strengths

- We will work with partners through the LLEP Innovation Board to drive forward accelerated innovation priorities
- We will work with partners to ensure the R&D sector has sufficient skills, capabilities and support to retain and attract new R&D programmes
- We will support R&D funding bids, innovation and knowledge transfer initiatives and increase public and private investment in R&D and innovation
- We will work with partners to increase opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange, pooling of resources, and applied problem solving
- We will support development of business and university networks to promote technology adoption and digital transformation
- We will work with businesses to improve the culture of innovation and awareness of the business performance benefits

Further increase in business density; particularly in growth sectors and knowledge-based businesses

- We will continue to support the key growth sectors of life sciences, space and earth observation, sports and sport science, advanced engineering, ICT, food and drink, logistics and professional and financial services – as well as the locally important sectors of agriculture, textiles, creative and cultural, construction, tourism and the visitor economy, and the voluntary and non-profit sectors
- We will work with partners to encourage and support international business expansion, including in the Freeport site
- We will develop and implement the Freeport strategy and SME support for exporting, identifying key sectors and opportunities
- We will continue to provide advice and support to businesses to assist recovery from Covid-19 and adaptation to the new EU trading relationships

8.4 Economic growth delivers increased prosperity for all

We aim for local economic growth to advance equality by creating opportunities for all, and for the benefits of increased prosperity to be distributed fairly.

Leicestershire is not deprived overall; the county is ranked 137th out of 152 upper tier authorities in England for Multiple Deprivation, where 1st is the most deprived. However, pockets of significant deprivation exist; four neighbourhoods in the county fall within the most deprived decile in England.

There is a lower number of children living in poverty locally than the average amongst county authorities and a lower percentage of children in secondary schools receiving free school meals. However, the percentage is higher than comparators for nursery and primary school children. Further, Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) is lower locally than average amongst county authorities.

Leicestershire has a low rate of households assessed as being at risk of homelessness, ranking in the best performing 25% comparators. However, financial pressures on residents are likely to increase as government Covid-19 support measures end. Local survey data suggests that over half of residents are worried about the economic wellbeing of their friends and family and significantly more are worried about their own economic well-being.

What will success look like?

- Growth in Gross Value Added (GVA) corresponds with an increase in GDHI and a reduction in the percentage of children receiving free school meals

Our Commitments

- We will focus on supporting inclusive economic growth in the disadvantaged areas and groups of Leicestershire
- Our Work + scheme will provide free one-to-one support, advice and information to people looking for secure paid employment or training

8.5 Leicestershire has the right homes in the right places to meet needs

Housing is generally an area of good performance, as Leicestershire ranks in the best performing 25% of comparators for the rates of new houses and affordable houses built. However, expensive house prices in rural areas puts housing out of reach for many and Leicestershire has a high rate of local authority owned homes which are 'non-decent' (an issue in Charnwood, Hinckley and Bosworth, North West Leicestershire and Melton). As highlighted, there is a need for 187,096 new houses by 2050, with 96,580 of those required by 2031. These will need to be low carbon developments and include affordable housing. The number of older people living in Leicestershire is also forecast to increase significantly, and many will require specialist accommodation.

What will success look like?

- Leicestershire is on track to deliver the 187,096 new dwellings required by 2050

Our Commitments

- We will work with developers, landowners, and statutory agencies to remove the barriers to development
- We will focus development in major strategic locations to reduce the amount that takes place in existing towns, villages, and rural areas. This will allow us to plan for new housing and employment with new and improved roads, public transport, schools, health services, shops, and open space
- We will explore ways to secure financial contributions through development to support essential infrastructure (e.g. highway capacity, schools etc)
- Through the Leicestershire Rural Housing Group, we will guide work to assess and meet the housing needs of people in the villages of Leicestershire
- We will work with partners and developers to help ensure all housing developments are low carbon and enhance biodiversity
- We will develop further the Social Care Investment Plan to secure suitable accommodation choices for social care service users



9. Keeping People Safe and Well

This outcome aims to ensure the people of Leicestershire live in a healthy environment and have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing. It also aims to ensure people are safe and protected from harm.

Health and wellbeing is an asset to individuals, communities and wider society. Good mental and physical health is a basic precondition for people to take an active role in family, community, and work life. However, these benefits are undermined by health inequalities. Those living in the most disadvantaged areas often have poorer health outcomes, as do some ethnic minority groups and vulnerable people. Health inequalities have been further exposed by Covid-19 as it has taken a disproportionate toll on groups already facing the worst health outcomes.

Health inequalities are driven by factors beyond age, gender, genetics, lifestyle, social and community networks, socio-economic, cultural and environmental factors. The Council has influence and responsibility over some of these 'wider determinants of health' such as education, housing, transport, culture and clean air. It also fosters economic opportunity which is reflected in the supply and quality of jobs in the local area. Further, it empowers people to help themselves and each other, for example through volunteering and local initiatives.

We will work with partners through Leicestershire's Health and Wellbeing Board to improve the health and wellbeing of children and adults and reduce health inequalities. This will include addressing the wider determinants of health, with a focus on breaking down intergenerational cycles of deprivation and poor health outcomes. We will ensure that everyone has access to information and advice which supports their wellbeing and enables them to think ahead and plan for their future. We will promote wellbeing by building upon peoples' strengths and community assets. We will identify people who may be at risk of needing social care support in the future and help them to gain or regain the skills to live independently. We will also enable those requiring further support to take control of their health and wellbeing and to live active, independent, and fulfilling lives through easy access to effective, personalised care.

To help keep people safe, we will work with partners through Leicestershire's Safer Communities Board to strengthen links between work-streams being undertaken to reduce crime and disorder within communities. We will also fulfil our statutory duties to safeguard vulnerable children and adults who have experienced, or may be at risk of experiencing, abuse, or neglect. This will include work with partners through the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults' Board and Safeguarding Children's Partnership to coordinate and continuously review and improve safeguarding practices.

9.1 People are safe in their daily lives

Total crime levels are relatively low in Leicestershire compared to other areas and have reduced in recent years. The number of people killed or seriously injured on the County's roads is also low and public satisfaction with road safety is high. Leicestershire also has low rates of youth offending.

However, during 2020/21 there were significant increases in: hate crime (+32%); sexual offences (+32%); drug offences (+24%) and violence with injury (+13%). There was also an increase in reported anti-social behaviour across the County during 2020/21. There has been a reduction in the percentage of residents who feel safe when outside in their local area after dark, from 88% in 2019/20 to 79% in 2020/21. A survey by the Leicestershire Police and Crime Commissioner found that respondents tended to attribute this to a lack of street lighting and the proximity of anti-social behaviour and crime.

From 2018/19 to 2020/21, there has been a year-on-year reduction in the number of referrals to child safeguarding for child sexual exploitation. However, the rate of referrals for child criminal exploitation has

however increased slightly from 140 in 2019/20 to 145 in 2020/21. There is a risk that child criminal exploitation and violence related to young people may increase or become more visible during Covid-19 recovery.

What will success look like?

- Less crime and fear of crime and increase in the percentage of residents who feel safe when outside in their local area after dark
- Fewer children and young people involved in and impacted by criminal behaviour

Our Commitments

Less crime and fear of crime and increase in the percentage of residents who feel safe when outside in their local area after dark

- We will work with Police and other agencies to ensure anti-social behaviour is dealt with swiftly and effectively
- We will work with partners to raise awareness of and tackle all forms of hate crime in which people are targeted based on their personal characteristics
- We will help to reduce the prevalence of modern slavery and trafficking by ensuring our suppliers adhere to the highest standards of ethics and working with the Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland Modern Slavery Action Group to raise awareness, disrupt crimes and safeguard victims
- We will work closely with partners and communities through the Violence Reduction Unit to prevent serious violence
- We will work with partners to raise awareness of and tackle scammers and rogue traders who exploit vulnerable consumers
- We will enforce standards related to food and product safety

Fewer children and young people involved in and impacted by criminal behaviour

- We will deliver a robust, whole-family approach to prevent children and young people from engaging in criminal behaviour
- We will work with partners to provide safe spaces for children and young people to play, without the risk of being groomed into criminal exploitation
- We will deliver preventative street-based work with young people targeted in areas with high levels of anti-social behaviour
- We will identify and address the exploitation of children and young people and provide care and support to those affected

9.2 People at the most risk are protected from harm

There is an upward trend in demand for child safeguarding, with an increase in the rate of Section 47 enquiries (initiated to decide whether action should be taken to safeguard a child suspected to be suffering or at risk of suffering harm) and children on child protection plans. The rate of children looked after by the local authority has also increased year-on-year for the past 10 years.

Whilst the rate of reported domestic abuse-related incidents remains below the national average, it has increased in Leicestershire from 21.1 per 1,000 population in 2017/18 to 23.1 in 2019/20 and during

2020/21 there was a 20% rise in Domestic Violence with Injury and a rise in psychological abuse. Domestic abuse has also been a more prominent feature in child safeguarding cases during the last year.

What will success look like?

- Safeguarding approaches are effective in recovery from Covid-19 and informed by learning from the pandemic
- Vulnerable people are identified and protected from harm and abuse

Our Commitments

Safeguarding approaches are effective in recovery from Covid-19 and informed by learning from the pandemic

- We will focus on identifying and responding to hidden harm (e.g. self-neglect, mental ill-health and/or learning disabilities, domestic abuse)
- We will support care homes with Infection Control, vaccination, and Personal Protective Equipment support to minimise Covid-19 outbreaks
- We will risk assess and quality assure care providers to ensure services are safe and protect vulnerable children and adults
- We will work with partners to review the response to and forward implications of Covid-19 and recovery work regarding safeguarding

Vulnerable people are identified and protected from harm and abuse

- We will improve how we work with families to safeguard babies by ensuring robust procedures are in place and raising awareness of risk factors
- We will develop a communications strategy to support partners to deliver universal safety messages to children and young people
- We will work with partners to develop joint responses to risk including child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, gangs, missing from home
- We will focus on combatting sexual violence and domestic abuse by developing a Domestic Abuse Strategy, protecting all survivors and their families in safe and appropriate accommodation and improving our understanding of perpetrators and how to respond to them
- We will develop trauma-informed practices and offer direct work to support children to recover from Adverse Childhood Experiences
- We will ensure that work with young people to reduce risk and vulnerability assists prevention of adult safeguarding need
- We will work with communities to prevent people becoming victims and ensure they know how to seek help and have the confidence to do so
- We will develop understanding of equality and diversity issues and the impact on access to safeguarding services
- We will review and change systems to ensure that the new Liberty Protection Safeguards Legislation and codes of practice are in place

9.3 People enjoy long lives in good health

The health of people in Leicestershire is generally better than the England average, as it is one of the 20% least deprived counties in England. Life expectancy for both men and women is higher in Leicestershire than the England average. However, healthy life expectancy (an estimate of how many years people might live in a 'healthy' state) is only marginally higher than the national average and there are significant health inequalities in the county, as life expectancy is 6.3 years lower for men and 5.0 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Leicestershire than in the least deprived areas.

As highlighted, health outcomes are influenced by a range of social, economic and environmental factors, known as the 'wider determinants of health'. Air pollution, particularly fine particulate matter (PM2.5), is a significant health hazard. PM2.5 is the 3rd leading cause of preventable deaths in Leicestershire.

Additionally, two thirds of adults, and one third of children in year 6, are either overweight or obese. This increases their risk of having long-term conditions like type 2 diabetes and reduces expected lifespan. There has also been a rise in adults classified as physically inactive from 19.5% in 2018/19 to 21.9% in 2019/20. Whilst these figures are similar to the national average, some areas of the county have higher rates of overweight/obesity and physical inactivity than England. Physical inactivity has also been exacerbated by the pandemic, with the deconditioning of the population during lockdown restrictions.

In terms of mental health and wellbeing, Leicestershire has a high rate of people reporting a low happiness score and a high rate reporting a high anxiety score. Although there is a low rate of suicides in Leicestershire compared to other counties, the county has a high rate of excess deaths amongst those aged under 75 with a severe mental illness. These excess deaths are explained not only by suicides and accidents but also physical illnesses; studies show that that all-cause mortality in people with severe mental illness is 2 to 3.5 times higher than in the general population. There has also been a significant increase in the number of cases referred to adult social care mental health teams during the pandemic, which has also occurred across the country. Surveys and cases also suggest that ongoing Covid-19 restrictions are having an impact on mental health of children and young people.

What will success look like?

- Improved healthy life expectancy and reduced health inequalities
- Increased proportion of residents with a healthy weight
- Improved mental wellbeing and reduced prevalence of mental ill health

Our Commitments

Improved healthy life expectancy and reduced health inequalities

- We will focus on breaking down intergenerational cycles of deprivation and poor health, promoting new ways of working to tackle disadvantages
- Through Healthy Together 0-19 we will provide Health Visiting and School Nursing to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people
- We will provide information and advice to enable people to access services, facilities and resources which contribute towards wellbeing
- We will deliver a wider determinants programme of work to address the range of social, economic and environmental factors which influence health outcomes, thereby improving health and reducing health inequalities. This will include for example our work with partners to improve air quality.

- We will embed a Health Equity in All Policies approach to ensure policy decisions help to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities
- We will identify those at risk of needing social care support in the future and intervene early wherever possible to maintain wellbeing

Increased proportion of residents with a healthy weight

- We will provide weight management support and guidance to residents, so that they can achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- We will work with partners through Active Together (Leicestershire and Rutland Sport) to support people to get and stay active; ensure physical activity and sport facilities are high quality and accessible and promote the county as a premier location for sport businesses
- We will work with partners in a 'whole-system' approach to deliver the Healthy Weight Strategy; creating an environment which facilitates healthy choices and supports individuals to be physically active and maintain healthy weight

Improved mental wellbeing and reduced proportion of residents experiencing mental ill health

- We will promote positive mental health and improve awareness of risk factors for poor mental health to increase resilience
- We will learn from and sustain the excellent customer satisfaction with our cultural, wellbeing and adult learning services; promoting and facilitating access to our libraries, museums and learning centres to promote the wellbeing of residents and their communities
- We will implement Making Every Contact Count Plus to make the most of opportunities to support peoples' wellbeing
- We will work with partners to improve access to mental health services for all ages to promote recovery and independence
- We will work with partners to ensure the early detection and treatment of child mental health and wellbeing needs

9.4 Carers and people with care needs are supported to live active, independent, and fulfilling lives

Leicestershire's reablement services effectively support those with physical or mental health needs to maintain or regain their independence and avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital or residential care; In 2020/21 Leicestershire ranked in the best 25% of comparators for reablement outcomes. Additionally, Leicestershire has low rates of adults aged either 18-64 or 65+ being permanently admitted into residential or nursing care. This is important because residential care is an expensive resource for individuals and the local authority and research suggests that people tend to prefer alternative options.

Leicestershire also has a high proportion of people with social care needs who are in receipt of a direct payment or personal budget; enabling people to access personalised care and support by choosing provision which is suitable to meeting their outcomes.

However, there is a need for improvement in the proportion of people who find it easy to access information about adult social care services and in the quality of life and overall satisfaction of those who receive care and support. In 2019/20, Leicestershire also ranked in the worst 25% comparators for the proportion of adult service users who felt safe or that they had control over their daily lives. The level of

social contact in the daily lives of carers and users of social services also remains comparatively low and an area for improvement, something which the Covid-9 crisis has made worse.

As mentioned, the number of older people, and those living with dementia and/or mobility problems, is forecast to increase significantly. Some will require housing adaptations to meet their changing needs and others will need more specialist accommodation or support.

What will success look like?

- Increase in the proportion of people who find it easy to access information and advice about adult social care services
- Improvements in the experiences of those who receive adult social care and support
- Carers are recognised, valued, and supported to undertake their caring role, whilst maintaining their own health and wellbeing

Our Commitments

Increase in the proportion of people who find it easy to access information and advice about adult social care services

- We will improve access to information and advice through our digital plans including the directory of services and First Contact Plus
- We will work closely with partners to take a more proactive approach to providing advice and information relating to housing, including development of social prescribing and empowering frontline staff to encourage people to take responsibility for their housing needs
- We will continue to provide good quality information, advice, and guidance for those living with dementia and their informal carers

Improvements in the experiences of those who receive adult social care and support

- We will implement activities identified through research with our customers to improve satisfaction with our adult social care services
- We will work with partners to deliver integrated services at the point of delivery with seamless transitions between health and social care
- We will provide effective crisis response, reablement services, equipment, and technology to enable people to be self-reliant
- We will review progress on the Living Well with Dementia Strategy 2019-22 and co-produce a new strategy and action plan with our partners
- We will continue to ensure care services and support procured by the Council provide a good supply and quality of dementia care
- We will explore solutions to transport issues, enabling older people to remain active and independent and connected to community
- We will support people in receipt of direct payments and Personal Assistants to choose the provision suitable to meeting their outcomes
- We will develop further the Social Care Investment Plan to secure suitable accommodation choices for social care service users

- We will work with providers of services to maximise peoples' opportunities for independence, health, and wellbeing

Carers are recognised, valued, and supported to undertake their caring role, whilst maintaining their own health and wellbeing

- We will work with partners to identify carers and ensure they are signposted, if required, to relevant information and services
- We will ensure accurate advice, information and guidance is available to assist carers to navigate health and social care services
- We will listen and involve carers in the development of services that enable them to continue to provide their caring role
- We will develop carer-friendly communities by awareness-raising within existing community groups
- We will promote health checks for carers to help them to maintain their own physical and mental health and wellbeing
- We will work with housing and other organisations to ensure carers can access technology, equipment, or adaptations
- We will ensure carers have access to assessments which will determine if social care services have a statutory duty to assist them

10. Enabling Services

Delivery of this Plan is dependent on a wide range of 'back-office' services such as Finance, IT, HR, Legal, Communications, Property Services, Strategy and Business Intelligence, Democratic Services and Business Support. These organisation-wide functions support frontline services by providing business support based on specialised knowledge, best practice and technology. They also support good governance, ensuring that:

- Resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities
- There is sound and inclusive decision making
- There is clear accountability for the use of those resources

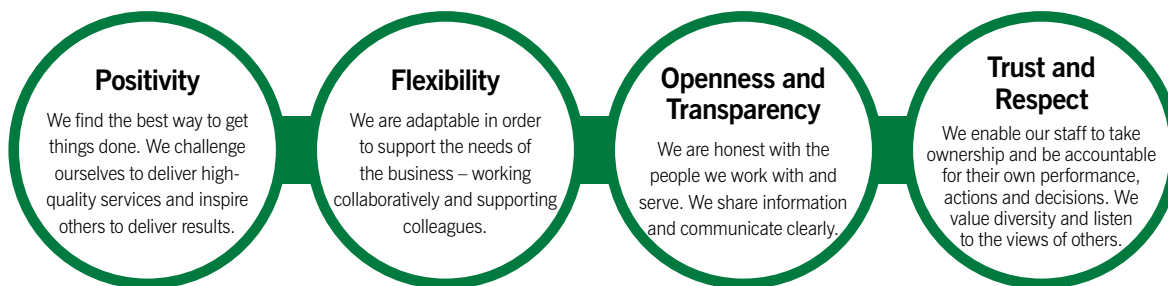
Good governance is about ensuring the Council is doing the right things, in the right way and for the benefit of the communities it serves. It leads to high standards of management, strong performance, effective use of resources and positive outcomes. The diagram to the right illustrates the core principles of good governance which the Council is committed to and how they relate to each other: Principles A and B permeate implementation of principles C to G.

Back-office services have a key role in ensuring that the Council adheres to these principles and achieves positive outcomes for service users. For example, Strategy and Business Intelligence support principle C by assisting decision-makers in defining the Council's overall vision and outcomes. Additionally, Finance support Principle F by enforcing financial discipline, strategic resource allocation and efficient service delivery.



10.1 Leicestershire County Council Values and Behaviours

Good governance flows from shared values and culture. Our values, set out below, underpin everything we do and describe how we will deliver this Plan.



11. Monitoring Outcome Delivery

Council officers will oversee delivery of this Plan through Outcome Boards which will meet on a quarterly basis. These will ensure that the Council maintains focus on achieving the outcomes throughout service planning and delivery and that the aims of this Plan are reflected in all relevant supporting strategies.

The Council's Scrutiny Committees will receive quarterly reports on progress in delivering the outcomes in this Plan and our Annual Performance and Benchmarking Reports will provide a summary of progress each year.

Progress in delivering the outcomes will also be monitored internally by the Outcome Boards through updates on delivery of key activities supporting outcome delivery along with reviews of Leicestershire's performance on the Performance Indicators set out in Appendix A. Updates on outcome delivery and performance will be shared with our Corporate Management Team, led by the Chief Executive, to inform strategic decision-making and resource allocation.

12. Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) provides information on its financial planning over a four year period. Our latest Strategy, covering 2021-25, focuses on protecting frontline services and weathering the coronavirus crisis. The MTFS, along with other plans and strategies such as the Strategic Change Portfolio, aligns with and underpins the Strategic Plan.

The Council continues to operate in an extremely challenging financial environment following a decade of austerity and spending pressures, particularly from social care. The position has also been severely affected by Covid-19 and the ongoing financial impacts of the pandemic are unclear. There is also significant uncertainty and risk around future funding levels.

What will success look like?

- A credible 4-year financial plan to deliver at least 2-years of balanced budget followed by 2-years with a financial gap that is at a manageable level
- A financial plan that reflects the council's key priorities
- Delivery of planned savings and active pipeline of new initiatives
- Sustainable level of service growth, particularly in social care
- SEND capital and revenue costs contained within designated external funding streams
- Capital programme that balances support for the Council's priorities with financial sustainability
- Balance-sheet that supports the Council's resilience to financial shocks
- Above 'normal' share of eligible funding schemes secured and sufficient developer contributions towards the cost of local infrastructure
- Progress on Fair Funding to increase Leicestershire's share of national funding

Our Commitments

- We will raise awareness inside and outside of the Council of our financial position and the challenges faced
- We will maintain transparency around our savings proposals
- We will target efficiency savings and new income generation before service reductions
- We will ensure regular updating of assumptions to support the efficient flow of resources to Council priorities
- We will promote a culture of forward planning to ensure there is time for corrective action
- We will embed financial discipline in decision making to increase value for money assurance for Council Taxpayers
- Through our Corporate Asset Investment Fund, we will continue to invest in commercial schemes which support the Council's budget

13. Strategic Change Portfolio

The Council has long held an internal approach to transformation that ensures we respond effectively to national and local drivers of change, including the need to transform local services whilst seeking to maintain or improve outcomes. The Council's Strategic Change Portfolio (SCP) brings together the collective response to these drivers of change, delivered through four primary programmes:

- Sustainable Finances
- Customer & Digital
- Carbon Reduction
- Ways of Working

Overseen by the Council's Transformation Delivery Board, and managed through Departmental Change and Programme Boards, the SCP contains key targets and deliverables for each programme as described below.

13.1 Sustainable Finances Programme

The savings requirements contained within the Council's annually refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy remain a central driver for the Council's change portfolio. However, the scale of the financial and transformation challenge is increasing, with the simple changes having been made and the straightforward savings long-since delivered. What remains is complex change, often involving multiple partners and many risks.

The body of work contained within the portfolio, refreshed annually, currently represents future savings targets in excess of £48m, including £21m for SEND.

13.2 Customer & Digital Programme

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed customer expectations of how our services should be delivered and the need for more immediate access to information and support via a broader range of channels is greater than ever before. In response to the changing needs of our citizens we will focus on developing and delivering against an improved, council-wide customer and channel strategy which supports the delivery of modern and effective services in the most efficient and sustainable way. By promoting innovative, digital ways of working, we will seek to shape the Council's interaction with its customers as part of our digital revolution and to enable improved customer journeys leading to an enhanced customer experience and faster, first time resolution of customer needs.

By 2024...

- Innovation will be our business as usual
- Automation and digital will have improved services and reduced cost
- Customer journeys for staff and residents will be simple

What will success look like?

- Customers directed to the right channel, at the right time, in the most efficient way
- Our customer channels maximise citizen value whilst reducing the cost of service
- A whole system approach is taken to designing our customer journey and back office processes

Our Commitments

Customers directed to the right channel, at the right time, in the most efficient way

- We will further develop our Customer and Digital strategies to shape our delivery of services
- We will increase our customer understanding and actively involve our customers to inform our channel development
- Through engagement with groups such as the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group, we will continuously seek to understand and mitigate the impact of digitalisation and channel development on those with protected characteristics, to ensure services remain accessible to all
- We will improve our front-end communications interfaces to support the routing of customer enquiries to the right channel at the right time
- We will deliver a new target operating model for our Customer Service Centre
- We will support high-quality, consistent customer experience council-wide
- We will enhance the customer experience through improved digital services

Our customer channels maximise citizen value whilst reducing the cost of service

- We will increase the amount of automation for repetitive, low value activities and integrations
- We will increase customer adoption of improved digital solutions driving a cultural shift to “digital by choice”
- We will improve our ability to resolve queries on first contact using the optimal channel
- We will identify opportunities to reduce the cost of service provision through more effective deployment of resources and/or efficiency savings

A whole system approach is taken to designing our customer journey and back-office processes

- We will work jointly with departments to develop and deliver improved customer journeys
- We will improve our contact and system data to inform continuous improvement activity
- We will seek to exploit emerging technologies and system integration where possible to enable more streamlined end-to-end working

13.3 Carbon Reduction Programme

The Carbon Reduction Programme aims to achieve net zero carbon from the Council’s own operations by 2030, with an interim target of 64% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2025 (compared to 2016/17 emissions)

The Council’s emissions are set out in our annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report (GHG) and expressed in a standard measure of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) in line with national guidance which follows the international Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard. Existing

efforts and future opportunities to reduce our carbon emissions from internal operations were documented, resulting in the development of a draft roadmap to net-zero emissions by 2030.

The Council is in a good position in comparison to many other authorities due to the quantity and quality of data we have in relation to our emissions and our historic efforts to reduce emissions which date back as far as 2008/09. Overall, in 2019/20, the council had reduced its greenhouse gas emissions from its own operations by 67% to 11, 663 tCO₂e compared to 35, 778 tCO₂e 2008/09.

The impact of Covid-19 has been seen most significantly in business mileage and to a lesser degree in emissions from our estates, and an emerging objective is to look to retain as much of these carbon reductions as possible, primarily through close engagement with our Ways of Working Programme. Even before the impacts of Covid-19 on carbon emissions are considered, Leicestershire County Council is ahead of target in the delivery of net-zero emissions by 2030.

As highlighted, the recognition of the climate and biodiversity emergencies mean that there is increased local, national and international policy commitments to address the issues. This has led to increasing opportunities to secure external funding and investment. The most recent success has been in our bid for decarbonisation funding, securing £3.6m towards works on our key buildings, including expansion of the biomass heating system across County Hall.

However, meeting the ambitious net-zero 2030 target remains a significant challenge, particularly in light of the challenging financial position of the council and demands on staff resources. There is also the risk that national legislation or local policies change, impacting on our baseline or possible solutions to decarbonise our operations.

What will success look like?

- Net-zero carbon emissions from the Council's own operations by 2030, with an interim 64% reduction by 2025
- Leicestershire County Council is a climate active organisation – carbon reduction and adapting to climate change are included in decision making

Our Commitments

- We will complete an assessment of the cost and technology implications of achieving net zero carbon by 2030 for the council
- We will produce a Net Zero Carbon 2030 Plan for the council
- We will reduce our demand for energy, increase our use and generation of clean energy
- We will explore opportunities to remove carbon from the atmosphere through nature based solutions such as tree planting
- We will include net zero carbon criteria in our decision making
- We will create a culture for carbon reduction through communications, training, tools and guidance

13.4 Ways of Working Programme

The Covid-19 pandemic saw a huge shift in organisational culture – with many working from home for the first time. This brought about a change in mentality around how we work with each other and how we serve our customers. It led to a wholesale rethinking of how departments and teams need to operate in the future; including the need for a higher degree of flexibility and more remote working than previously thought possible.

In the latter half of 2020, the Workplace Programme Board, along with wider stakeholders came together to rescope the vision and objectives into a new programme called “Ways of Working” – building on the already great foundations and principles established through the workplace programme as well as key learnings and opportunities presented throughout the pandemic in relation to changing ways of working.

What will success look like?

- All staff are provided with the technology and training needed to do their job effectively
- The way we work embodies continuous improvement, innovation, and ambition
- Council-operated workplaces are a shared resource based on need, where staff and customers can collaborate

How are we doing this?



Our Commitments

All staff are provided with the technology and training needed to do their job effectively

- All staff will have an assigned ‘worker style’ and the IT kit they need
- All IT equipment will be centrally owned and replaced in good time to ensure technology is effective and productive
- All staff will have the ability to work remotely through specialist technology, software, and remote access – no one will be tied to a specific location
- Where appropriate, staff meetings will be ‘digital by default’ - hybrid and face-to-face meetings will be supported with investment in workplace technology and collaboration spaces

The way we work embodies continuous improvement, innovation, and ambition

- We will focus on objectives and outputs not on presenteeism for office-based staff
- Staff - in consultation with managers - will be empowered to choose the right location to deliver their work - freedom to choose with responsibility to meet service and customer needs first
- Senior leaders and managers will lead by example – champion > role model > challenge

Council-operated workplaces are a shared resource based on need, where staff and customers can collaborate

- Our workplaces will be set up to better support collaboration, productivity, wellbeing, and customer service
- We will prioritise space for activities, not individuals - flexibility will be the norm and use of fixed desks will be kept to a minimum
- We will all work in the most appropriate location for the task we are doing rather than being at a council office or workplace by default
- Staff will be encouraged to work as flexibly as possible, using a mix of workplaces (offices, working from home, remote working) to best meet service and customer needs, and support staff wellbeing.

**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 9 NOVEMBER**

**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE
REPORT 2020/21**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF
ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an annual performance update on the key performance indicators that the Council is responsible for delivering against the Council's Strategic Plan. Many of the performance Indicators included in this report are reported by the Environment Branch of the Environment & Transport Department and several are published by government.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The updates in this report reflect progress against the Council's Strategic Outcomes Framework within the Strategic Plan to 2022, and the Environment performance framework and related high-level plans and strategies.

Background

3. Following the decision to separate the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee by the full Council in July 2021 this is the first annual report to the Committee covering solely Environment and Waste performance. This report highlights how a variety of indicators are performing against the Council's key outcomes: Strong Economy, Wellbeing and Opportunity, Keeping People Safe, Great Communities, Affordable and Quality Homes and supporting corporate enablers and includes highlights for the year.
4. This report includes Appendix A, containing a performance dashboard that forms part of the Council's Annual Report 2020/21 Performance Compendium. The performance dashboards include several indicators for which the Council does not have direct control of delivery, such as for air quality, river quality and biodiversity. These indicators have been included to provide a broader picture of the local environment and comprise a mix of national and locally developed metrics. Reviewing these may highlight areas for scrutiny of delivery by other agencies or the need for lobbying to influence government policy and funding. It is expected that action by a range of agencies will improve a number of these metrics over time.
5. The Council's performance is benchmarked against 33 authorities which cover large, principally non-urban, geographical areas. Where it is available, the dashboards

indicate which quartile Leicestershire's performance falls into. The 1st quartile is defined as performance that falls within the top 25% of county areas (the best). The 4th quartile is defined as performance that falls within the bottom 25% of county areas (the worst). The comparison quartiles are updated annually in November.

6. Improvement or deterioration in performance is indicated by the 'direction of travel' arrows on the performance dashboard. For example, if tonnes of carbon emissions from LCC buildings reduces, the direction of travel arrow will point upwards representing an improvement in performance.
7. Appendix B contains a draft of the Environment and Climate Change highlights and once finalised it will be included in the Council's Annual Delivery Report, which will go forward to Cabinet and Council in due course.

Performance Update – Annual Report 2020/21

8. The Annual Report dashboard shows performance for Environment and Climate Change performance up to March 2021. Overall, there are 25 performance indicators included in this report which are aligned with the Council's Strategic Plan Outcomes. The dashboards in Appendix A show: the indicator description, the quartile position, the direction of travel of performance, end of year data, target/standard; the previous end of year data; polarity (whether a high or low number is good performance) and commentary.
9. Where a direction of travel is available: 18 show improvements, 4 had declined and 1 remained similar to the previous year.
10. Where comparative data is available, with the exception of 'CO2 emissions per capita,' performance is below the average (quartiles 3 or 4) when compared to other English county areas.

Environment and Waste

Waste Management (Great Communities & Corporate Enablers)

11. The following waste performance indicators support the Council's 'Great Communities' outcome except for the two internal waste indicators which cover waste produced by the County Council and support the 'Corporate Enablers' outcome.
12. 'The total household waste per household' declined slightly from 1031kg in 2019/20 to 1020kg in 2020/21 resulting in a slight improvement in performance. In comparison to other county councils Leicestershire's performance was below average (in the third quartile in 2019/20).
13. The 'tonnes of waste produced from LCC sites (non-operational)' has significantly improved in performance this year as waste decreased by 63% from 358 tonnes (2019/20) to 133 tonnes (2020/21) and has met its interim target of fewer than 410 tonnes. This is largely due to most office-based staff working at home during the pandemic period. This indicator has shown a long-term improvement (i.e. reduction in waste) since 2012-13.

14. The percentage of municipal local authority collected waste sent to landfill has significantly reduced from 32.2% in 2019/20 to 27.8% in 2020/21 resulting in an improvement in performance which has met its 30% target. This is due to the authority having negotiated an increase in the amount of waste delivered to alternative disposal points which diverts waste that would have been landfilled into alternative treatment. This is expected to help reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill in future years. Leicestershire is in the fourth quartile for this indicator compared to other English county councils for 2019/20. The next quartile update is expected to reflect the improvement in performance for 2020/21.
15. The 'Percentage of Waste recycled from LCC sites (non-operational)' declined in performance by 13 percentage points since the previous update from 61% in 2019/20 to 48% in 2020/21 and missed its target of 62.3%. Many buildings and Council services operated at a reduced staff capacity in quarter 4 due to the third national lockdown, which meant that less dry recycling was captured in council buildings. An important outcome here is that there has been a significant reduction in waste overall and consequently there is less recyclable waste being produced / captured which is resulting in a lower recycling performance figure. There is less paper due to reduced printing and no composting waste, both of which would have previously bolstered the recycling figure.
16. The 'percentage of household waste sent by local authorities across Leicestershire for reuse, recycling or composting' declined from 46% in 2019/20 to 43% in 2020/21 and has missed its statutory 50% target. Compared to other county councils Leicestershire is below average (in the third quartile 2019/20). During 2020/21, Covid-19 meant some waste services across the County were temporarily disrupted or suspended, significantly impacting the service. During the year, the Council continued to support residents in reducing their waste through the SHIRE environment grants. These have supported projects to minimise household waste and reuse in order to reduce the amount of waste thrown away. The Council offered a range of educational activities (many online in 2020) to promote waste reduction, recycling and reuse. (See the Waste Management section of Appendix B for further highlights).
17. The 'percentage of staff who say LCC is doing enough to reduce its environmental impact' has improved in performance from 89% in 2019/20 to 93% in 2020/21 and has met its 80% target.

Reducing Carbon Emissions & Mitigating the Impact of Climate Change (Great Communities)

18. The following environmental impact performance indicators mostly support the Council's 'Great Communities; and 'Corporate Enablers' outcomes.
19. A number of gases contribute to climate change. The Kyoto Protocol – the international agreement addressing climate change covers seven main GHGs: carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), nitrous oxide (N₂O), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆) and Nitrogen Trifluoride NF₃. The following figures report on Carbon Dioxide (Carbon – CO₂) emissions only (in relation to indicators in the Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022 which will be updated to include all greenhouse gases in the revised Strategic Plan indicator set).

20. In relation to the Strategic Plan 2018/2022 indicator, 'total Carbon emissions from LCC sites (excluding schools)' for 2020/21 showed a 19.6% reduction in carbon emissions to 9,228 tonnes in 2020/21 from 11,480 tonnes in 2019/20. The largest sources of emissions reduction were from business mileage, streetlighting & traffic signals, building electricity and fleet vehicles. A considerable amount of this reduction can be attributed to the impact of Covid-19 on council operations and the significant shift to home working of Council staff.
21. Carbon emissions from the Council's buildings have reduced by 11%, well ahead of its target and caused by significant reductions in electricity emissions, through reductions associated with the impact of Covid-19 on Council operations, a reduction in carbon intensity of grid electricity and energy efficiency and renewable energy investments across the Council's property estate.
22. Carbon emissions from LCC streetlighting and traffic signals have reduced by 14.9% since 2019/20. As the national grid continues to decarbonise electricity supply, performance on this indicator is expected to continue to improve over the long term. There are also ongoing measures to save energy, such as the programme of dimming down lights across the County at night.
23. The Council's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have reduced during 2020/21 by 19.4% since the previous year and reductions are currently ahead of the target. A comprehensive update on the Council's 2020-21 GHG emissions and progress against the council's net zero targets will be presented to the January 2022 meeting of the Committee.
24. Carbon emissions from LCC fleet decreased by 15.5% during 2020/21, displaying an improvement in performance, but remaining higher than the target. During 2020 the Council had to hire more vehicles to ensure social distancing which did result in additional fuel usage but this has been more than offset by the reduction in passenger fleet and the delay of resurfacing works during the year.
25. The latest data for 'CO2 emissions per capita (in LA influence)' shows an improvement in performance as carbon emissions declined from 5.0 tonnes per person in 2018 to 4.8 in 2019, and is similar to the average of other county councils. This is a measure of estimated carbon dioxide emissions per head of population. It excludes: emissions from motorways, diesel railways and net emissions from land use, land-use change and forestry on the grounds that these are outside of local authority control. Data is provided by the government (BEIS) and is two years in arrears.
26. The 'Total Business miles claimed' improved in performance as it fell from 5,560,000 miles in 2019/20 to 2,462,409 miles in 2020/21 and has met its target. This reduction can be attributed to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions as there were fewer staff travelling for work alongside the Councils improvement initiatives. Please note this data is not yet complete for the end of year, it is therefore expected to be a slight underestimate. The final result is expected to meet its target.
27. The Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) deployment data (Domestic) per 10,000 households improved in performance by 13% in 2020/21 since the previous year as it increased from 37 (2019/20) to 42 (2020/21) per 10,000 households. Since this is beyond the direct control of the Council a target has not been set. The RHI supports

the installation of renewable and low-carbon-heating by individual households. RHI Payments are made over a 7-year period and, in most cases, are estimated using values from the dwelling's Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). Statistics for the RHI details the number of applications and accredited installations on the domestic schemes so far. This data covers the number of accreditations by local authority. This is a useful indicator as it provides an important insight into how sustainable Leicestershire households are in terms of heating.

28. Renewable energy capacity in the area has remained steady at 325 MW in 2020/21 when compared to the previous year (326 MW). This is not within the Council's control. Capacity has begun to plateau in recent years. This indicator performs below average when compared to other county councils (3rd quartile for 2019). The Council has limited influence over countywide renewable energy capacity, which tends to change in response to government incentive schemes and the wider energy market. However, progress is monitored in line with the objectives outlined in the Council's Environment Strategy 2018-2030.
29. Renewable energy generated has improved in performance slightly (1%) from 532,254 MWh in 2019/20 to 538,605 MWh in 2020/21. Generated energy has also begun to plateau in recent years. This indicator performs below average when compared to other county councils (3rd quartile for 2019).
30. The 'Amount of renewable energy generated as a percentage of consumption' was introduced following the Council's pledge to use 100% clean energy by 2050 as part of the UK100 campaign. The 'amount of renewable energy generated as a % of consumption' improved in performance from 13% in 2019/20 to 17% in quarter 3 in (2020/21). Despite this improvement it has not met its refreshed target of 23% yet. This could be due to reduced efficiency of solar panels over time, panels needing cleaning or an increase in electricity consumption.

Right infrastructure for Sustainable Clean Growth (Strong Economy)

31. 'Electric vehicle ownership – Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) rate/10,000 population' improved in performance as ownership increased from 104/10,000 in 2019/20 to 147/10,000 2020/21 (rolling 12 months data to March 2021) resulting in an increase of 42% demonstrating a significant improvement in performance over the year. This reveals an increasing momentum of people moving from fossil fuelled vehicles to more sustainable electric alternatives. However, Leicestershire remains in the third quartile (below average) when compared to other counties for 2020. Leicestershire's overall rate of car ownership was 5,440 per 10,000 population in 2020, which is very slightly above the average for county councils.
32. Electric vehicle charging locations have seen a 28% improvement as they increased from 15.86 per 100,000 population in 2019/20 to 20.33 per 100,000 population in 2020/21. The 'National Chargepoint Registry (NCR)' was established by the UK Government in 2011 to provide a public database of publicly-funded charge points across the UK in support of the Government's objective to promote the use and sales of Ultra Low Emission vehicles (ULEVs). This data covers Leicestershire locations only and does not include charging points that are privately funded. This data uses the latest population estimates to determine locations per 100,000 people.

33. The Council is working to provide better data on biodiversity in the County. Currently the Council is monitoring the ecological status of Leicestershire rivers which provides a snapshot on how biodiverse they are. The Environment Agency (EA) provides data on 'Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) in good ecological status' which was 9.4% in 2019. The EA have changed their methodology regarding how they assess river quality data in 2019. They have adopted a much more rigorous methodology in surveying the status of rivers which now covers new substances, new standards, and improved techniques and methods. It is therefore not possible to reliably compare 2019 data with previous results.
34. Similarly to the above, the EA has also applied their new methodology to reporting of 'Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) in good chemical status' data. This has resulted in no rivers in Leicestershire having a good chemical status in 2019. In fact, no surface water bodies nationally have met the criteria for achieving good chemical status.
35. 'NO₂ exceedances for Leicestershire' declined from 8 in 2018 to 3 in 2019 suggesting an improvement in NO₂ air quality performance. Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is a gas that is mainly produced during the combustion of fossil fuels. This indicator is the number of times NO₂ has exceeded 40 micrograms. It is published by district councils in their Air Quality Annual Status Reports. During 2019 the UK experienced slower economic growth which may have contributed to a reduction in the production of NO₂ via fewer emissions from cars, trucks and buses, power plants, and off-road equipment within the locality. As previously mentioned, electric vehicle ownership has also increased over recent years, which may also have contributed to reduced NO₂.

Health and Wellbeing

36. Inhalation of particulate pollution can have adverse health impacts. The biggest impact of particulate air pollution on public health is understood to be from long-term exposure to fine particulate matter, also known as PM_{2.5}, which increases the age-specific mortality risk. This data describes the annual concentration of human-made fine particulate matter at an area level, adjusted to account for population exposure and is measured in micrograms per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). The major sources of primary PM_{2.5} are combustion in the energy industries, road transport (both exhaust and non-exhaust emissions), rail and air transport, residential sources, and small-scale waste burning. Performance on this has declined as total PM_{2.5} increased from 9.13 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2018 to 9.92 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2019, which is higher than the England average of 9.60 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (2019).
37. The highest levels in the county are present in Blaby, North West Leicestershire and along the M1. Both the M1, East Midlands Airport and various quarries appear to have the most impact on levels. This data is also reported by the Council's Public Health service. A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association suggests that long-term exposure to PM_{2.5} may lead to plaque deposits in arteries, causing vascular inflammation and a hardening of the arteries which can eventually lead to heart attack and stroke. Scientists in the study estimated that for every 10 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) increase in fine particulate air pollution, there is an associated 4%, 6% and 8% increased risk of all-cause, cardiopulmonary and lung cancer mortality, respectively. A national UK target is due to be set before 2022.

Energy Efficient Homes (Quality Homes)

38. As part of supporting the Council's Affordable and Quality Homes outcome the Council monitors both the energy efficiency of new and existing homes within the County. In 2020/21 'The percentage of properties with Energy Performance certificate rating C+ for existing homes' was 39%, an improvement in performance from the previous year of 35%. Leicestershire is in the fourth (worst) quartile for this indicator when compared to other English county councils for 2020/21. The authority has limited influence over these indicators. In January 2021 the County Council continued work with E.ON to provide people with free, first-time gas central heating installation, and urged eligible residents to apply. Households not connected to mains gas and relying on inefficient ways of heating their homes can be eligible for the measures, which are part of the Leicestershire Warm Homes Fund Project. Residents on certain income levels or those in receipt of certain benefits, including child benefit, or those who are now receiving Universal Credit due to the pandemic, may also be able to apply for the support. Qualifying homes could also receive a free gas network connection through the Affordable Warmth Solutions programme. The project follows a successful funding bid by the council to the £150m Warm Homes Fund. Eligible residents may also be able to receive free insulation measures for their homes, including loft and cavity wall insulation, further improving the warmth and comfort of homes across the county.
39. 'The percentage of domestic properties with energy Performance Certificate rating C+ for new homes' was 97% in 2020/21 and had declined in performance slightly since the previous year from 99%. Leicestershire is in the first (best) quartile for this indicator when compared to other English county councils for 2020/21.

Background papers

[Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Outcomes Framework and Plans 2018-22](#)

Leicester and Leicestershire Business Survey 2020, Available on request.

[Environment Strategy 2018 – 2030: delivering a better future](#)

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

There are no specific equal opportunities implications to note as part of this performance report.

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Environment & Climate Change Annual Report Performance Dashboard, 2020/21

Appendix B – Environment & Climate Change Annual Report highlights.

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Appendix A – Environment & Climate Change Annual Report Performance Dashboard, 2020/21

Environment & Waste								
Strategic Plan	Description	Quartile position	Direction of Travel	End of Yr 2020/21	Target / Standard	End of Yr 2019/20	Polarity	Commentary
Waste Management								
*	Total household waste per household (kg)	3rd (2019/20)	↑	1020.1	-	1031.1	Low	This indicator showed a slight decrease in total household waste per household in 2020/21.
*	Tonnes of waste produced from LCC sites	✓ -	↑	132.8	<410.1	357.7	Low	Waste produced at LCC sites has fallen by 63% due to most office based staff working at home during the pandemic period.
*	Annual percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill	4th (2019/20)	↑	27.8%	30%	32.2%	Low	A fairly significant reduction in municipal waste sent to landfill compared to 2019/20 has meant that the 30% target has been met.
*	% waste recycled from LCC sites (non-operational)	-	↓	48.4%	62.3%	61.0%	High	The % of waste recycled has reduced and missed the target of 62.3%. There has been a significant reduction in overall waste (see above) and consequently there is less recyclable waste being produced/captured.
*	% of household waste sent by local authorities across Leicestershire for reuse, recycling, composting etc.	3rd (2019/20)	↓	43.1%	50%	45.5%	High	This indicator showed a slight decrease in performance in 2020/21 and has missed the 50% target. During 2020/21 Covid-19 meant some waste services across the County were temporarily disrupted or suspended significantly impacting the service.
*	% of staff who say LCC is doing enough to reduce its environmental impact	✓ -	↑	93%	80.0%	89%	High	There has been an improvement in performance for this indicator.
Notes: Comparators are the 33 county councils & county unitaries.								

- ↑ Improvement in performance (18 indicators)
- ↓ Decline in performance (4 indicators)
- Similar performance (1 indicator)

	Top quartile
	2nd quartile (1 indicator)
	3rd quartile (8 indicators)
	Bottom quartile (1 indicator)

✓ Exceptional performance (6 indicators)

Strategic Plan	Description	Quartile position	Direction of Travel	End of Yr 2020/21	Target / Standard	End of Yr 2019/20	Polarity	Commentary	
<u>Reducing Carbon Emissions & Mitigating the Impact of Climate Change</u>									
*	Total Carbon emissions from LCC sites (non-operational)	✓	-	↑	9,228	14,403	11,480	Low	This improved in performance over the year. The largest sources of emissions reduction were from business mileage, streetlighting & traffic signals, building electricity and fleet vehicles. A considerable amount of this reduction can be attributed to the impact of Covid-19 on council operations and the significant shift to home working of Council staff.
*	Carbon emissions from LCC buildings (tonnes)	-	-	↑	3,380	3,885	3,796	Low	Carbon emissions from our buildings have reduced by 11% resulting in improved performance that is well ahead of its target. This is mainly due to a reduction in the carbon intensity of grid electricity, as well as an increase in renewable energy (both solar and biomass) now being used to replace fossil fuel consumption.
*	Carbon emissions from LCC street lighting and traffic signs (tonnes)	✓	-	↑	2,401	5,790	2,822	Low	Carbon emissions from street lighting and traffic signals have improved in performance due to a 14.9% reduction over the year.
*	Total LCC GHG emissions	✓	-	↑	9,434	16,098	11,702	Low	The Council's net GHG emissions have reduced during 2020/21 by 19.4% and are well ahead of their target.
*	Carbon emissions from LCC fleet	-	-	↑	2,455	2,072	2,905	Low	Reduction in emissions from 2019-20 but narrowly missed target.
*	Carbon emissions per capita (in LA influence) (tonnes per person)	2nd (2019)	-	↑	4.8 (2019)	5.0 (2019)	5.0 (2018)	Low	This has seen an improvement in performance and is very similar to the average of other English county councils. Data is provided by the government (BEIS) and is 2 years in arrears. Data shown is for 2018 and 2019. This is a measure of estimated carbon dioxide emissions per head of population.
*	Total Business miles claimed ('000s of miles)	✓	-	↑	2,462	5,745	5,560	Low	The number of 'Total Business miles claimed' has reduced in the last year resulting in an improvement in performance and has met its target. The reduction is likely to have been influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic crisis as there were fewer staff travelling for work alongside the Councils improvement initiatives.
*	Renewable heat incentive deployment (Domestic) per 10,000 households'	3rd (2019)	-	↑	42.36	-	37.36	High	This improved in performance by 13% since last year. This is beyond the direct control of the Council which is why a target hasn't been set.
*	Renewable energy capacity in the area (MW)	3rd (2019)	-	→	324.7	-	326	High	Renewable energy capacity in the area has remained steady when compared to last year. This is not within the Council's control.
*	Renewable energy generated in the area (MWh)	3rd (2019)	-	↑	538,605	-	532,254	High	Slightly more renewable energy was generated this year compared to last year.
*	Amount of renewable energy generated as a % of consumption	-	-	↑	14.3%	22.9%	13.2%	High	The 'amount of renewable energy generated as a % of consumption' improved in performance from 13% in 2019/20 to 14% in 2020/21. Despite this improvement it hasn't met its target of 23% yet. This could be due to reduced efficiency of solar panels over time, panels needing cleaning or an increase in electricity consumption.

Strategic Plan	Description	Quartile position	Direction of Travel	End of Yr 2020/21	Target / Standard	End of Yr 2019/20	Polarity	Commentary
Right Infrastructure for Sustainable Clean Growth								
*	Electric vehicle ownership - Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) rate/10,000 population	3rd (2020)	↑	146.78	-	103.53	High	Electric vehicle ownership has increased by 42% since 2019/20, demonstrating a shift away from fossil fuel to electric vehicles.
*	Electric vehicle charging location per 100,000 population	3rd (2020)	↑	20.33	-	15.86	High	Electric vehicles charging locations have seen an improvement in performance by 28%.
*	Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) are in good ecological status (%)	-	-	9.4% (2019)	-	-	High	River quality in good ecological status improved slightly since the Environment Agency previous assessment. (Data is for 2019.)
*	Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) are in good chemical status (%)	-	-	0% (2019)	-	-	High	The Environment Agency methodology for assessing river 'chemical status' has become more rigorous and no rivers in Leicestershire now have 'good chemical status.' Currently no surface water bodies nationally have met these criteria. Data is 2019.
*	NO2 exceedances for Leicestershire	-	↑	3 (2019)	-	8 (2018)	Low	This indicator is the number of times NO2 has exceeded 40 micrograms. It is published by District Councils in their Air Quality Annual Status Reports. Data is for 2018 and 2019.
Wellbeing								
*	PM2.5 Air pollution fine particulate matter (µg/m³)	3rd (2019)	↓	9.92 (2019)	-	9.13 (2018)	Low	Performance on this has declined as total PM2.5 increased from 9.13 µg/m3 in 2018 to 9.92 µg/m3 in 2019 this is higher than the England average of 9.6 µg/m3 (2019). The highest levels in the county are present in Blaby, North West Leicestershire and along the M1. Both the M1, the East Midlands airport and various quarries appear to have the most impact on levels.
Affordable & Quality Homes								
*	% domestic properties with Energy Performance Certificate rating C+ (existing)	4th (2020/21)	↑	38.7%	-	34.8%	High	Improvement compared to previous year.
*	% domestic properties with Energy Performance Certificate rating C+ (new)	1st (2020/21)	↓	97.3%	-	99.0%	High	Slight reduction compared to previous year.

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Appendix B - Annual Report for Environment and Climate Change highlights

Environment, Climate Change and Waste

Our aim is to ensure that we protect our environment by minimising our environmental impact as a council, tackling climate change and embedding environmental sustainability into what we do. In May 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency and made commitments to achieve carbon neutrality for its own operations by 2030. We also committed to work with others and lobby government to achieve carbon neutrality for Leicestershire by 2045. We want to create a clean and green future which will bring economic, social and environmental benefits. By the end of last year, we had reduced greenhouse gas emissions from council operations by 67%.

Environment Strategy – an Environment Strategy was approved in July 2020 reflecting our new commitments. We have agreed a £16 million package of measures over the next four years to reduce carbon, such as generating clean renewable energy on the council's estate and increasing the efficiency of our buildings and streetlighting.

Clean Air Pledge – Global Action Plan report that every year air pollution causes up to 36,000 deaths in the UK. Supporting national campaigns such as Clean Air Day encourages residents to think about their own contributions to air pollution and carbon emissions, and to pledge to take action to help us make Leicestershire a greener, healthier, happier place to live together. In October 2020 the Council marked Clean Air Day by renewing its pledge to continue to tackle air pollution and reduce carbon emissions. In June 2021, for the third year running the Council marked Clean Air Day UK.

Net Zero Carbon – initial plans to deliver net zero for the council's operations were agreed in July 2020 and a more detailed Net Zero Council Delivery Plan is being developed. In December 2020 the County Council joined the UK100 coalition of the most ambitious local leaders in the UK, pledging to achieve 'net zero' across the county by 2045, five years sooner than the government target of 2050. This reflects our commitment to tackle climate change and drastically cut emissions.

Energy Strategy – in March 2021 we set out plans for further energy saving over the next decade as we move towards being carbon neutral by 2030. The revised Strategic Property Energy Strategy will involve tailoring energy upgrades with new digital ways of working in mind. The targets include making a 30-to-50% further reduction in energy consumption from council buildings, compared with last year, along with a 50% increase in onsite renewable or zero-carbon energy generation.

We were successful in applying for £3.6m funding from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme which will pay for an ambitious programme of works to cut our carbon footprint. Among the projects planned for the next year are increasing the number of solar panels and LED lighting at County Hall, introducing solar panels and electric vehicle chargers at Snibston Colliery Park and investigating

low carbon heating solutions at other council-owned properties. It is also hoped to install large scale energy generation schemes such as solar farms on council land. Schools, academies, tenants and developers will also be encouraged to implement low carbon solutions.

The council is also purchasing green electricity to support its net zero ambitions while continuing to improve its energy efficiency and increasing its energy supply from renewables. Additionally, successful electric vehicle trials have been completed to identify suitable alternatives for the council's fleet operations. A new procedure for vehicle procurement considers whole life costs and environmental impacts to identify the best available options and to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles for appropriate journeys. Further, a new project to improve the energy efficiency of low level streetlighting through trimming the hours of illumination and dimming the power of the lights will deliver further carbon reductions from streetlighting.

SHIRE Environment Grants – in October 2020 community groups and organisations were invited to apply for the latest round of SHIRE Environment Grants of up to £3,000. The scheme aims to help projects that minimise household waste, reduce carbon emissions and improve biodiversity. A virtual workshop was held in January 2021 to encourage and support groups in applying for the grants. A simplified application process is also available for smaller grants of up to £300. One organisation to benefit from a grant is Countesthorpe Parish Council. The grant enabled them to install two 5000L water harvesting tanks in the village hall grounds. The tanks collect run-off rainwater that is used by the parish council for such things as watering planters around the village, keeping the area in bloom without negatively impacting on the environment.

Burbage Parish Council used the money to plant hedges in popular green spaces to create new habitats for native animal species. South Kilworth Parish Council ran another of the projects which benefited. Their bird box scheme saw a total of 94 RSPB birdboxes placed around private houses, the church and the school in time for the 2021 breeding season. Cotesbach Parish Council improved the village pond to improve biodiversity, Melton's 103 'The Eye' ran a radio recycling and repair scheme and the Loughborough Wellbeing Centre are running textile reuse and upcycling sessions.

Litter Picking Equipment – in February 2021 the Council offered support to local litter picking groups by helping them to access the equipment they need. Across Leicestershire, there are hundreds of groups who collect litter from Leicestershire streets, parks, verges and other public spaces. Practical support was offered through a new fund which supplied these groups with road signs and hi-vis jackets to help keep them safe, and extra-long litter pickers to reach under bushes and hedgerows. The benefits are numerous, litter-picking keeps our public spaces clean, aids wildlife, promotes walking and increases recycling.

Tree Strategy - last year we agreed a Tree Strategy and Action Plan with the aim of significantly increasing tree coverage in the County. Leicestershire is one of the least wooded counties in the country and this will only get worse as we deal with the effects of Ash Die Back. Our Strategy will make a significant contribution to

increasing tree planting working with partners and landowners and help to deliver our commitment of planting 700,000 trees, one for every resident in the County.

Tree and Hedge Planting – the Tree Strategy identifies the need for a substantial and sustained programme of tree planting to offset the effects of tree loss throughout the County. In November 2020, during National Tree Week, the Council once again teamed up with the Woodland Trust to offer free packs of trees to local landowners and farmers, to help restore Leicestershire’s woodland and hedgerows. Trees are an essential resource that provide a wide range of environmental, economic and social benefits, and our focus is to continue to build upon our ever-growing green infrastructure.

In July 2021 we kicked off our new plan to make Leicestershire greener by planting 700,000 trees. We currently manage around 321,000 trees (including 404 hectares of woodland), but with diseases such as Ash Die Back placing more trees under threat, the authority’s strategy and action plan will see the number of trees across the county increase dramatically. It has already started to improve, thanks to the National Forest, which has increased forest cover in the north west corner of the county to 21%. Tree planting will also support the council’s pledge to become carbon neutral by 2030. Trees and woodlands enhance our quality of life: they support wildlife, help combat climate change and add beauty to our towns, villages and countryside. Research also shows that a walk among trees reduces stress and improves mental wellbeing.

New Biodiversity Plan – in June 2021 we agreed a new approach to protecting and improving Leicestershire’s natural environment and biodiversity. Called ‘Action for Nature’, the plan sets out key areas to focus on, including rivers and wetlands such as the River Anker and parts of the River Soar near Quorn, and a decline in mature trees and grassland areas. It also identifies a number of areas for action including improving land management practices on land owned or managed by the council and supporting tenants of council land to do the same. We aim to ensure biodiversity is included in the development of council policies and plans and those of other partner organisations. We also continue to support awareness raising and education on biodiversity.

Wildflower Initiative – in September 2020 the Council became the first local authority in the midlands to join the BLUE campaign, which aims to promote biodiversity by re-introducing wildflowers and plants to roadside verges. The BLUE campaign was started in 2014 by wildlife film maker, Fergus Beeley, in response to a report on the State of Nature published by the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology that year, which highlighted the dramatic decline in biodiversity and biomass across the UK. A blue heart symbol, made out of recycled materials, is placed in the ground where rewilding is taking place. Currently there are 12 wildflower verges across Leicestershire, with the Council hoping that the BLUE campaign will inspire more communities to get involved. This year also marked the largest reduction in the areas of rural verges the council have cut, to allow wildflowers to thrive and encourage pollinators. We are working with our parish councils to roll out our wildflower verge scheme, improving the biodiversity of our communities and providing vital habitats for our native species.

Waste Management

Environment Bill - the Environment Bill introduces a series of measures that will fundamentally change the way government, businesses and individuals produce and consume products, including new legal powers allowing resource efficiency standards to be set for new products and clear labelling, enabling citizens to make fully informed purchasing decisions. The Bill will also provide a domestic framework for environmental governance and contain specific environmental policy areas including waste, air quality, nature and biodiversity.

Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy – this strategy guides delivery of a range of waste and recycling services to Leicestershire’s residents, including kerbside collections, provision of Recycling and Household Waste Sites, and a range of initiatives designed around the principles of the waste hierarchy (in order of preference: to prevent waste, reuse materials, recycle and compost, treat waste and finally dispose of what’s left). The Leicestershire Waste Partnership commenced the review of the Strategy in October 2020.

Resources and Waste Strategy – the National Resources and Waste Strategy sets out how the Government will preserve material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving to a circular economy. During May 2021 we responded to a second round of consultations including Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging, a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers and consistency in household and business recycling collections.

Waste Education – in Summer 2021, we provided theatre sessions to schools with the aim of inspiring the next generation of recyclers to think about reducing, reusing and recycling and to encourage more sustainable behaviours. We offered 50 two-hour sessions to all primary schools in Leicestershire who received an interactive and fun workshop. We also offered free educational workshops, activities and talks to community groups in Leicestershire. Owing to the pandemic most were held online with some held in person where social distancing allowed. Classes included Healthy Eating – Zero Waste where residents learnt how to cook healthy meals from scratch and how to make the most from leftovers, and textile reuse classes exploring how reusing old garments to make new items can be good for the environment and also help save money. In 2021 we also launched a new public newsletter covering a range of waste and environmental topics and opportunities to get involved.

Take - Charge Campaign – from November 2020 we highlighted the risks involved in disposing of batteries and their potential to cause fires. We ran a social media campaign and displayed posters at our Recycling and Household Sites reminding people to recycle their batteries correctly.

Food Waste Prevention – in March 2021 the Council joined with WRAP, the UK’s leading sustainability charity, to promote its inaugural Food Waste Action Week. Food Waste Action Week aimed to highlight easy, everyday actions to avoid food wastage and halt its contribution towards climate change. 70% of all food wasted in the UK is from our own homes, with each year seeing households throw away 4.5m tonnes of food which could have been eaten. The council’s Adult Learning Service

hosted an online cooking course, “Let’s Cook Tea”, which ran during March 2021 and featured lots of food waste prevention tips. People were also asked to reduce the amount of food they waste at home and take part in activities hosted throughout the week on Love Food Hate Waste’s Twitter and Facebook platforms and the Love Food Hate Waste website.

Composting – each year Leicestershire residents produce more than 300,000 tonnes of rubbish and recyclables, some of which is uncooked fruit, vegetables and garden waste which could have been composted rather than put in the residual waste bin. We continue to offer cut-price compost bins to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. We also supported Compost Awareness Week in May 2021, an annual event to promote all aspects of home composting. Residents can also call on the support of a Master Composter; volunteers who use their skills to raise awareness of the benefits of home composting.

Recycling – in September 2020 we teamed up with Recycle Now as part of Recycle Week to create a video, thanking residents for continuing to recycle through the pandemic and to keep reducing contamination. Just under half of all household waste in Leicestershire is currently recycled or composted, however items such as used nappies and food waste are still being disposed of incorrectly in recycling bins across the county which can spoil recycling. The council also joined forces with Keep Britain Tidy to back its #TedSays campaign to encourage residents to recycle responsibly and not put nappies in recycling which can result in loads of good recycling being rejected. Digital contamination messaging was also utilised with the use of a ‘digital van’ sent to targeted areas and seen by over 67,000 residents.

Environment Action Volunteers – the Environment Action Volunteers specialise in a variety of topics such as food waste prevention, composting, biodiversity and carbon reduction and help Leicestershire residents establish positive environmental behaviours. Due to the coronavirus pandemic our engagement activities have been suspended with more digital events and engagement opportunities being developed and delivered in order to inform and engage on waste prevention, reuse and recycling and home composting. As restrictions are eased our volunteers will once again be attending events and delivering talks.

Waste Treatment – the Council continues efforts to reduce reliance on landfill and increase the use of waste treatment. We have also commenced the procurement of additional waste treatment capacity. This will ensure the Council’s reliance on landfill as a disposal method for residual waste continues to reduce and we will be able to meet targets set in the National Resources and Waste Strategy.

New Waste Transfer Station – in July 2021 we began building a new waste transfer station at Bardon Business Park to help manage household waste and reduce the amount of rubbish sent to landfill. The new waste transfer station is being built on land at Interlink Way South, Bardon by Willmott Dixon. The development will include a warehouse style building and associated weighbridges, outside bays, office space and parking. With the county’s two current waste transfer stations at Whetstone and Loughborough operating at capacity, the new site is much needed. The site will have solar panels and an energy efficient office building including sensor lighting and

water saving taps and toilets. This is in line with the council's pledge of reducing energy consumption throughout its buildings alongside reducing the amount of carbon produced through its operations. There will also be electric vehicle charging points at the premises. It is hoped that the new site will open in 2022.

Waste Infrastructure Improvements – maintenance and improvement schemes have continued to be delivered at Leicestershire's Recycling and Household Waste Site (RHWS) and waste transfer stations (WTS). In April 2021 work was completed to replace an ageing section of bay walls at Coalville RHWS to ensure customer safety. In the same month the pushwall at Whetstone WTS was rebuilt to prolong the life of facility, which is essential for day-to-day disposal services. A planning application was submitted in June 2021 for the redevelopment of Kibworth RHWS, which if approved would result in a much improved split-level site, making it easier for residents to recycle whilst also improving health and safety on site. Planning was secured to allow improvements to be made to the drainage at Bottesford RHWS, and a new staff welfare facility was provided at Somerby RHWS in August 2021.



**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 NOVEMBER 2021**

**LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTRY PARKS AND OPEN SPACES
STRATEGY AND THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19**

**REPORT OF THE
DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update on the Committee on the Country Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and recent actions to deliver the strategy in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Country Parks and Open Spaces Strategy was agreed by Cabinet in May 2020 and runs from 2019 to 2029. The Strategy contributes to two of the Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 outcomes, Wellbeing and Opportunity and Great Communities, as well as a number of objectives within the Council's Environment Strategy.
3. The Tree Management Strategy was approved by Cabinet in March 2020.

Background

4. Leicestershire County Council has a wide network of 18 parks and open spaces covering over 530ha. The Country Parks and Open Spaces Strategy agreed in 2020, set out six destination parks: Beacon Hill Country Park, Broombriggs Farm, Watermead Country Park, Snibston Colliery Park, Bosworth Battlefield and Market Bosworth Country Park, alongside the Council's secondary parks elsewhere in the county. The main 'destination' parks are those which are generally the reason for people's visit and not only cater for the local community but attract visitors from further afield.
5. The Strategy set out five core principles:
 - i. Country parks and open spaces are not a statutory service, but they are a county council asset that can contribute to the wider objectives of the council including health, education, biodiversity and the environment

- ii. Parks and open spaces will be safe and accessible for citizens and visitors and central to everyday community life
 - iii. The strategy will develop a vision that will be shaped with elected members, officers across all key services, partners and communities
 - iv. Volunteering, community engagement and partnership participation are integral to delivery of the strategy
 - v. Our parks will become sustainable through the income that we generate through them and funding that we access
6. The Strategy also set out four priority themes, with actions to deliver them. Finally, it briefly detailed actions to take place on our six destination parks.

Priority themes and some highlights delivered in the past 18 months

Provide a network of safe and accessible parks

- 7. The new Snibston Colliery Park, which opened in December 2020, has seen considerable investment in cycling and walking routes throughout the country park, with a new café, sitting alongside a flagship play area.
- 8. An improvement plan at Watermead Country Park will upgrade key infrastructure in the park, starting in November 2021, including the main entrances to the site, site signage and visitor interpretation. An important new feature will be a revamped play trail around King Lear's Lake.

Ensure that the biodiversity, heritage and landscape values of all sites are conserved and developed

- 9. Three of the Council's parks form part of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Beacon Hill Country Park, Sheet Hedges Wood and Jubilee Wood). SSSIs are sites that have been designated due to containing unique species or habitats of high scientific value for conservation.
- 10. Five parks contain Local Nature Reserves (Reed Bed Nature Reserve at Watermead Country Park, Moira Junction, Grange Nature Reserve at Snibston Colliery Park, New Lount Nature Reserve, Saltersford Valley). Local Nature Reserves are sites chosen by the local authority as particularly significant for their wildlife, geology, education, or enjoyment (without disturbing wildlife).
- 11. A Woodland Management Plan for woodlands within most of the Council's parks is now in place. This builds upon the principles set out within the Council's Tree Strategy and promotes excellence in

silviculture (the care and cultivation of woodlands), whilst increasing biodiversity and making woodlands more resilient to pests and diseases.

12. Grassland management is also a focus, with two pasture fields being added to Market Bosworth Country Park. These will be managed with an annual 'cut and collect' to promote the growth of wildflowers. A new grassland project at Watermead Country Park will also see the restoration of grassland areas, through funding from the Trent Rivers Trust Botanica WWFUK Pollinators Project Grant.
13. At Beacon Hill, the heathland restoration work continues with a pilot closure of a small area of the park at Jewels Hill from March to July 2021 to encourage ground nesting birds and other wildlife associated with a heathland habitat. Officers are currently evaluating the results of this pilot.
14. At Snibston Colliery Park, Donington le Heath Country Park and Bagworth Heath Country Park, pond restoration works and heathland improvements will be taking place this winter, as part of a Council biodiversity net gain scheme.

Ensure widespread engagement and participation of citizens, communities and partners

15. Parkrun has now started at Watermead Country Park, with more than 230 participants taking part at its inaugural parkrun event. Others are also planned for other sites around the county.
16. The Country Parks service is part of a Green Social Prescribing pilot, run with colleagues in Public Health and launching on 8 November 2021. This will work with Social Prescribers, including link workers and local area coordinators in two areas of the county to link people to nature-based interventions and activities to support their physical and mental health
17. Around 110 active volunteers support the service across almost all of the sites.

Develop a sustainable financial model for growth – including grant funding, sponsorship and greater commercial income

18. The Council has been able to increase its commercial income through greater use of refreshment concessions on its parks – giving people opportunity for a drink or light refreshment, whilst bringing income into the service.
19. Funding has recently been received from bodies including British Cycling, Trent Rivers Trust Botanica WWFUK Pollinators Project Grant, and the Angling Trust, to develop activities and improve our sites.

Recovery of Country Parks Service from COVID-19 pandemic

20. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, car parks in country parks were closed. They reopened in May 2020 and for the rest of the financial year, visitor numbers were the highest ever experienced in our parks. The table below gives an indication of the level of increase for some of our major parks.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Watermead visitors	63852	64493	58765	78000
Market Bosworth visitors	45297	52159	48005	112000
Beacon Hill visitors	164589	183776	229638	407000

21. The large volume of visitors put a particular strain on the service, both in terms of car parks frequently reaching their capacity in autumn and winter 2020, but also in high levels of wear and tear to park infrastructure and increases in litter and dog waste.
22. Although the larger visitor numbers resulted in greater income into the service from car parking revenue and café income, expenditure was significantly higher with requirements for additional staffing for wardens in parks, as well as cleaners for toilets and other facilities. The lack of volunteers during this period and increased visitor management workload for the rangers, meant that timetables for environmental work programmes inevitably slipped.
23. One interesting by-product of the decline in visitors during the first lockdown, was the increase in wildlife in unexpected places on our parks – examples included a family of otters at Watermead Country Park and ground nesting birds in parts of Beacon Hill.
24. Visitor numbers have now reduced to a more manageable level, although still remain elevated compared to 2019/20.
25. Watermead Country Park has become a focus for the way in which the County and City remembers the COVID-19 pandemic with a memorial trail of trees and benches stretching from the northern to southern ends of the park. It was officially opened in June 2021.

Conclusions

26. This report updates the Committee on the Country Parks Strategy and some of the actions undertaken to deliver the strategy. It also sets out the challenges to the service caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
27. Members are asked to note the report and for any comments on the report or the Country Parks Service.

Background papers

[Country Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2019-2029](#)

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None

Equality and Human Rights Implications

There are no equality or human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

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**Environment & Climate Change
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Tree Management Strategy

9th November, 2021

Adam Goodall

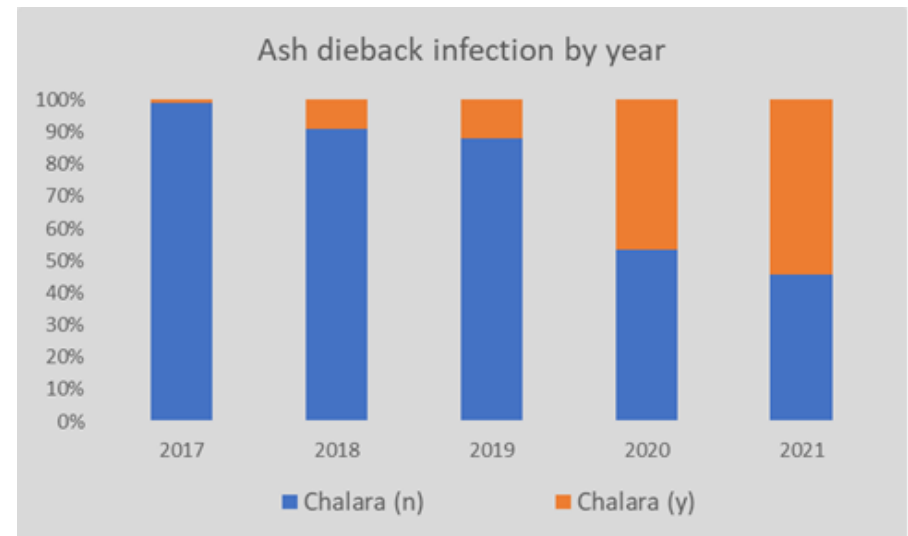
Principal Tree & Woodlands Manager

- ❑ The Tree Management Strategy and Tree Planting Action Plan were approved by the Cabinet on Tuesday 24th March 2020.
- ❑ The Strategy included an action plan to set out the Council's targets to significantly increase tree planting across Leicestershire in relation to the challenges faced as one of the least wooded counties in the country with 6% overall cover, compared to 10%+ nationally.
- ❑ The effects of Ash Dieback will have a significant affect on the biodiversity and landscape of the County with over 80% of ash trees predicted to die.
- ❑ The need for increased tree cover, both globally and locally, is well documented as a major action to mitigate climate change.
- ❑ The Tree Management and Planting Plan make a significant contribution to increasing the number of trees across the County, the Plan aids in delivery of both our Environment and Country Parks Strategy
- ❑ The Conservative manifesto included a pledge to plant 700,000 trees across the County: one tree for every resident of Leicestershire.

- ❑ Ash are one of the most common trees in Leicestershire. It is anticipated that Ash Dieback will decimate the species, increasing pressure on already threatened tree populations, landscapes and the environment.
- ❑ The challenges posed by the Ash Dieback disease now present within Leicestershire, are being addressed through the Council's Ash Dieback Action Plan & Project Board.
- ❑ Over the next 10 years between 75% and 90% of all ash trees in the County may be lost. (estimated 500K+ pop)
- ❑ There are an estimated 130,000 ash within or adjacent to the highway network - 98,000 on third party land and 32,000 on adopted highway.
- ❑ From 2017 the Forestry Group have been undertaking a programme of ongoing inspections of its highway trees to monitor progress of the disease and identify works as required..
- ❑ The trend between 2017 and 2021 suggests that ash die back has now fully established in the County and the rate of spread has increased.

63

2017 - 1% of trees inspected showed symptoms of ash dieback.
2020 - 47% of trees inspected showed symptoms of ash dieback.
2021 - 54% of trees inspected showed symptoms.



Delivery of the Pledge over next 10 years – Two key threads



Partnership working

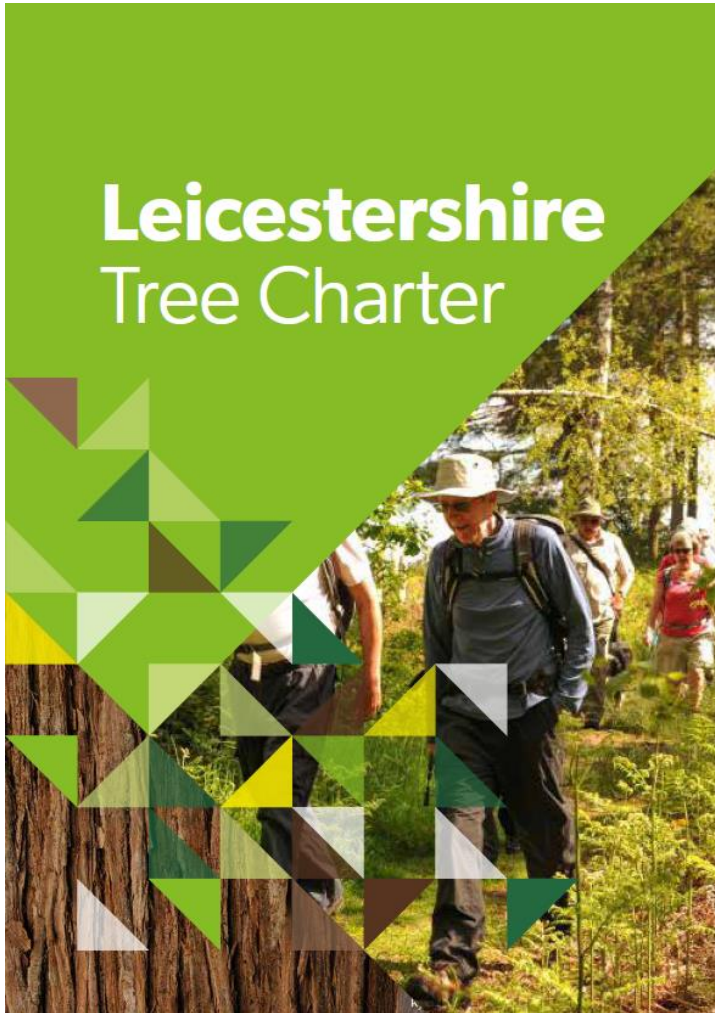
- ❑ We will collaborate with a range of different partners to facilitate the planting of 700,000 trees in Leicestershire.
- ❑ Through our Tree Charter we will collaborate with partners to deliver campaigns which will engage residents and other partners by raising awareness about the benefits of trees and encouraging tree planting.

Leading by example

- ❑ As a major landowner in Leicestershire, we will identify areas of our own estate where trees, hedgerows and woodland can be planted, in order to increase overall tree coverage.
- ❑ We will develop new approaches to securing significant numbers of tree stock to ensure continued supply for planting schemes, including a new tree nursery to facilitate tree planting objectives.



- ❑ Project Board met on 8th September, 2021.
- ❑ Board is attended by a cross-section of departments to ensure buy-in to the project and chaired by Gordon McFarlane.
- ❑ Board will meet Quarterly to monitor progress and provide oversight.
- ❑ Website pages being redesigned to provide landing page for the project, further information on Tree Strategy, Charter and advice/guidance for planting projects.
- ❑ Website will include means of registering tree planting projects being undertaken throughout the County by other organisations.
- ❑ Comms plan approved for regular media releases and good news stories.
- ❑ Delivery will start this year with a number of new planting across the County (also see delivery plan).



- ❑ Aim to launch the Charter during National Tree Week in November 2021.
- ❑ Produced in partnership with the National Forest.
- ❑ Calls for collective vision and partnership working across Leicestershire to protect and enhance our treescape.
- ❑ Identifies three key drivers for action: to support a secure and safe future, to enhance the wellbeing of our communities and to facilitate sustainable enterprise.

- ❑ A Woodland Management Plan has been produced to guide the sustainable management of 338ha of woodland across the County Parks estate.
- ❑ An application has been made for Countryside Stewardship Woodland Improvement Grant to fund management activities over five years from January 2022
- ❑ The total value of the grant would be c.£110,000 over 5 years, plus £3,000 in capital works
- ❑ The primary objectives for all sites to meet sustainable forest management over a long-term vision are:
 - ❑ To manage the woodlands through a programme of felling, thinning and replanting to create and maintain a varied age class distribution.
 - ❑ To maintain and enhance the public amenity and access provision across all sites.
 - ❑ To maintain and enhance the woodlands' landscape value into the future.
 - ❑ To maintain, develop and enhance biodiversity and wildlife in the woodlands.
 - ❑ To work towards a varied age class distribution across the woodland estate.
- ❑ A sounds communication strategy will be developed to manage public interest to ensure site users are fully informed of planned work.

Tree Planting Action Plan

Key Updates

Action

Local Authority Treescapes Fund – LCC application to the Forestry Commission on behalf of a partnership bid – provides 100% capital costs to increase tree planting and natural regeneration in local communities. The bid will provide £227k over four years to plant and maintain **over 20,000 new trees** across the county by parish councils, community groups, district councils and LCC.
FUNDING SECURED for delivery in 2021/22

20,000 trees
Winter 2021/22

Urban Tree Challenge Fund (round 3) – Application to be developed for highway sites in NW Leicestershire - The fund provides 50% of published standard costs for planting and establishment within urban areas. The bid will provide £25k to deliver the planting of additional **60 street trees** planted in Coalville. **Expected before end of 2021**

60 street trees
plus 200 BAU
street trees
Winter 2021/22

Partnership Working - Work with partners to monitor newly planted trees in the county by individuals/partners. E.g. Woodland Trust, National Forest, Tree Council and other partners. Provide advice / guidance to district councils' Planning Authorities in the revision of Local Plan policies and other strategic documents to include woodland cover and canopy cover targets
20,000+ trees per annum. In progress.

20,000 trees
Winter 2021/22

Changing Landscapes scheme - Ravenstone. National Forest funding to transform 9ha of arable farmland to a mix of woodland and rough ground for barn owl foraging. Will establish over **12,000 trees** across the site and provide capital costs of £180k towards the scheme.
Potential to dedicate new woodland as part of the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations
FUNDING SECURED for delivery in 2021/22

12,000 trees
Winter 2021/22

Woodland Trust Partnership – Have agreed with the Woodland Trust to increase support for tree packs/woodland creation to provided estimated **30,000 trees and hedge plants per annum** for planting within the County. **SECURED for delivery in 2021/22**

30,000 trees
Winter 2021/22

Tree Planting Action Plan

Tree Planting Delivery– Indicative annual planting numbers

Delivery	Yr0 20/21	Yr1 21/22	Yr2 22/23	Yr3 23/24	Yr4 24/25	Yr5 25/26	Yr6 – 10 26-31	
Free Trees/Woodland packs	19,300	22,000	22,000	22,000	22,000	22,000	60,000	
LCC Estate	300	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	110,000	
Direct advice & support	-	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000	
Partnership activities	-	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	150,000	
Totals	19,600	72,000	72,000	72,000	72,000	72,000	360,000	<u>739,600</u>

Tree Planting Action Plan - Funding

- ❑ The England Trees Action Plan, supported by an intended £500m from the Nature for Climate Fund support the creation and management of trees and woodland.
- ❑ Aims to treble tree planting rates in England reflecting England's contribution to meeting the UK's overall target of planting 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this Parliament.

This includes opportunities of:

- ❑ over £25 million for Woodland Creation Partnerships this year alone – **Suitable for farm estate**
- ❑ £6 million for the Urban Tree Challenge Fund for 2021/22 & 2022/23 – **Bid in progress**
- ❑ £2.7 million Local Authority Treescapes Fund for 2021/22 – **Bid Successful**
- ❑ £15 million for the England Woodland Creation Offer - supports woodland establishment as well as natural colonisation, agroforestry and riparian planting – **Aimed at landowners but will fund LCC to design.**



The England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024 
May 2021



Tree Planting Action Plan - Funding

Appendix A – Current Grant Schemes for tree planting projects	Funding
<p>Ash Dieback Project Board: £80k per annum to fund recovery tree planting – currently covers free tree schemes including Woodland Trust and other landscape restoration work</p>	<p>£80k per annum</p>
<p>England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO): support to create new woodland, including through natural colonisation, on areas as small as 1 hectare. Minimum block size 01.ha. Woodlands scored based on criteria such as nature recovery, improved water quality, planting riparian buffers, flood risk prevention & social benefits, such as public access</p>	<p>100% capital costs for establishing woodland. Additional payments for public benefits.</p>
<p>HS2 Woodland Fund: funding to support native woodland creation or the restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) within a 25-mile zone surrounding the HS2</p>	<p>Up to £8,500 for new woods & £4,000 for PAWS rest.</p>
<p>Woodland Creation Grant: capital grant supplies 80% of standard costs through the Countryside Stewardship scheme.</p>	<p>capped at £6,800/ha</p>
<p>National Forest Changing Landscape Scheme: based on standard costs to establish new woodland and key wildlife habitats</p>	<p>100% capital/maintenance costs plus incentive payments.</p>
<p>Urban Tree Challenge Fund: 2 years funding for urban tree planting and establishment within target areas.</p>	<p>up to 50% of standard costs for urban tree planting</p>
<p>Local Authority Treescapes Fund: Towards establishing trees in non-woodland settings such as in riverbanks, hedgerows, parklands, urban areas, beside roads and footpaths.</p>	<p>100% capital costs and 3 yrs maintenance based on standard costs</p>
<p>Small scale schemes: Annual small scale schemes by Tree Council (Community Hedge Fund, Orchards for Schools free tree packs); Woodland Trust (Community/School packs/Trees for your farm), TCV (I dig trees) etc</p>	<p>Various.</p>

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