Leicestershire County Council

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

Date/Time: **Wednesday, 10 September 2025 at 2.00 pm**

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

Contact: **Aqil Sarang (tel: 0116 305 2583)**

Email: **aqil.sarang@leics.gov.uk**

Membership

Mr. K. Robinson CC (Chairman)

Dr. J. Bloxham CC	Mr. J. Melen CC
Mrs. N. Bottomley CC	Mr. P. Morris CC
Mr. N. Chapman CC	Ms. A. Pendlebury CC
Mr. G. Cooke CC	Mr. P. Rudkin CC
Ms. B. Gray CC	Mr. C. A. Smith CC
Dr. S. Hill CC	Mr. A. Thorp 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

AGENDA

Item		Report by	
1.	Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2025.		(Pages 5 - 10)
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.		
7.	Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 35.		
8.	Environment and Climate Change Performance Report to June 2025.	Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Environment and Transport	(Pages 11 - 36)
9.	Annual Review of Leicestershire Country Parks.	Director of Corporate Resources	(Pages 37 - 42)
10.	Date of next meeting. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on 12 November 2025 at 2.00pm.		
11.	Any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent.		

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 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?

Members are reminded that, to ensure questioning during meetings remains appropriately focused that:

(a) they can use the officer contact details at the bottom of each report to ask questions of clarification or raise any related patch issues which might not be best addressed through the formal meeting;

(b) they must speak only as a County Councillor and not on behalf of any other local authority when considering matters which also affect district or parish/town councils (see Articles 2.03(b) of the Council's Constitution).

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Agenda Item 1

Leicestershire County Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 11 June 2025.

PRESENT

Mr. K. Robinson CC (in the Chair)

Dr. J. Bloxham CC
Mrs. N. Bottomley CC
Mr. N. Chapman CC
Mr. G. Cooke CC
Mrs. L. Danks CC
Ms. B. Gray CC
Dr. S. Hill CC
Mr. P. Morris CC
Ms. A. Pendlebury CC
Mr. C. A. Smith CC
Mrs. D. Taylor CC

In attendance

Mr. C. Whitford CC – Cabinet Lead Member for Highways, Transport and Waste
Mr. A. Tilbury CC – Cabinet Lead Member for Environment and Flooding
Ann Carruthers – Director of Environment and Transport
Jo Guyll – Assistant Director
Joanne Twomey – Senior Democratic Services Officer
Aqil Sarang – Democratic Services Officer

1. Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED:

That Mr. K. Robinson CC be appointed Chairman for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2026.

Mr. K. Robinson CC in the Chair

2. Appointment of Deputy Chairman.

It was moved by Mr. G. Cooke CC and seconded by Mr. L. Danks CC:

"That Dr. J. Bloxham CC be appointed Deputy Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council."

It was moved by Mr. C. Smith CC and seconded by Mrs. D. Taylor CC:

"That Mr. N. Chapman CC be appointed Deputy Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council."

The Chairman informed Members that both candidates had been duly proposed and seconded. In accordance with item 4 of Standing Order 27 a secret ballot would therefore take place.

The Chief Executive announced the results of the ballot, as follows:

Five Member votes for Dr. J. Bloxham, seven votes for Mr. N. Chapman CC and zero abstentions. The motion that "Mr. N. Chapman CC be appointed Deputy Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council" was therefore carried.

3. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2025 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

4. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that one question had been received under Standing Order 34.

Question asked by Mr. Adam Stares:

"What is the projected net cost to Leicestershire County Council in the current financial year (2025/26) to pursue its Net Zero Strategy as set out in 2023-2027 Action Plan? What is this as a proportion of the Council's total net spending?"

Reply by the Chairman:

The Net Zero Leicestershire Action Plan 2023-27 has been superseded by the 2050 Net Zero Action Plan (Updated).

In most cases, delivery of the Net Zero Strategy is a co-benefit of other service and savings delivery initiatives. For 2025/26, net revenue costs (where the primary reason is net zero delivery) are expected to amount to £0.38m and equates to 0.06% of the Council's total revenue net spending. It should be noted that the £0.38m includes specific costs that are not entirely attributable to delivering carbon reduction initiatives, e.g. the Energy Team in Property Services (which accounts for £0.06m net), works across the estate to procure the most cost-effective energy contracts and optimise external funding streams, reducing energy costs for the Council.

In terms of capital, the net budget provision is £0.67m, equates to 0.43% of the Council's total Capital Programme for 2025/26 and relates to the installation of electric vehicle charge points, air source heat pumps for end-of-life gas boilers and solar panels.

5. Questions asked by Members.

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

6. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

7. 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.

No declarations were made.

8. Declarations of the Party Whip.

There were no declarations of the party whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

9. Presentation of Petitions.

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

10. Final Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport the purpose of which was to seek the Committee's views and comments on the final Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) before this was presented to the Cabinet for approval at its meeting on 17 June 2025. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

i) The Committee welcomed the final draft LNRS and commented that this identified meaningful priorities that could be progressed to make a significant difference to the local environment.

ii) It was noted that the Strategy had been subject to public consultation and that the feedback received had been meaningful and demonstrated a high level of engagement. However, it was suggested that consideration should be given to other types of engagement in future to improve response rates, in particular, to encourage a wider range of different communities to get involved. It was acknowledged that all public consultation exercises undertaken by the Authority were constrained by the resources it had available.

iii) It was highlighted that a prudent use of grants would be required to deliver the Strategy and its priorities and that over the coming year(s) a pipeline of projects would be identified and funding sourced to deliver these.

iv) It was noted that the County Council had led on the development of the Strategy as the Responsible Authority for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Alongside this, a Delivery Plan would next be developed with partners and this would provide a shared platform setting out the agreed areas of focus to invest in and which could be maintained in the long-term. The Delivery Plan would be a live document adapted to circumstances and funding.

v) Members were pleased with and supported the innovative approaches highlighted in the Strategy to address flooding concerns across the County and requested that the Committee be kept updated on any progress made in this area.

vi) A Member commented that there were many people passionate about the natural environment locally who would support the delivery of this Strategy and that this would be delivered over the coming decades to support an environment which was better for all. However, it was a concern that this was reliant on funding to ensure delivery of projects.

vii) It was highlighted that although there were no commitments to funding for 2025/26, discussions would be held with partners as the Delivery Plan was developed to determine if, in addition to Government funding, local resources

could be made available to support the delivery of specific projects. It was recognised, however, that all local authorities and partners were under significant financial pressure at the current time.

RESOLVED:

That the comments made by the Committee be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 17 June 2025 for consideration.

11. Incorporation of Energy from Waste and Waste Incineration Facilities into the UK Emissions Trading Scheme - Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport the purpose of which was to update the Committee and highlight any potential implications emerging in respect of the Government's plans for the Incorporation of Energy from Waste and Waste Incineration Facilities into the UK Emissions Trading Scheme from 2028. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

i) It was highlighted that the County Council in its role as the waste disposal authority continued in its communications with district councils who were responsible for waste collection in their areas, particularly, regarding all new legislation when this arose to support future planning and to address potential impacts as part of the waste partnership.

ii) Although it was suggested there was scope for more to be done, it was noted that active promotions were undertaken across the district councils to inform residents regarding collections and the importance of disposing of waste correctly and it was highlighted that there was a potential risk of additional costs in future years if this waste was not disposed correctly as the waste would then have to be directed towards more costly disposal routes.

iii) The proposed changes if introduced would form some of the biggest changes in the sector in decades. The extent of the reforms would become clearer as developments progressed. A Member suggested that although past attempts to integrate waste collections across the County had been unsuccessful, the proposed changes and the risk of increased cost burdens on the County Council to dispose of the waste from 2028 highlighted the importance of having one collection service across the County.

iv) It was suggested that the direction of waste towards incinerators was becoming clearer and as the County Council was a shareholder of the Coventry & Solihull Waste Incinerator,, the Authority along with other contracts had the capacity to cover any increased waste required to be dealt with in this way.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided to the Committee be noted.

12. Date of Next Meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 12 September 2025 at 2.00pm.

2.00pm – 3.06pm CHAIRMAN
11 June 2025

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Agenda Item 8

Leicestershire County Council

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10 SEPTEMBER 2025

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE PERFORMANCE REPORT TO JUNE 2025

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 the latest performance update on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that the County Council is solely or partly responsible for within its Strategic Plan to June 2025 (Quarter One).

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The updates in this report reflect progress against the Council's Strategic Outcomes Framework within the Strategic Plan up to 2026, as well as the Environment and Waste performance framework and related high-level plans and strategies across the Council which inform the current performance framework and indicators in this report.

Background

3. This report highlights how a variety of Environment and Climate Change performance indicators are performing against the Council's key outcomes, primarily the Clean and Green outcome.

4. The performance dashboards, appended to this report as Appendix A, provides details of the performance of all the KPIs that support the Environment and Climate Change corporate aims. Definitions and data sources of these KPIs are included in Appendix B for reference. The dashboards include several indicators where the County Council does not have direct control of delivery, such as electric vehicle ownership and air quality. The latter examples are within the scope of the Environment Strategy, but they are not directly delivered by the County Council. They have been included to provide a greater oversight of the environment, to inform policy making and to help to understand what life is like in Leicestershire. They include a mix of national and locally developed performance indicators. Measuring these may highlight areas for scrutiny of delivery by other Council Departments, other agencies or the need for lobbying to influence policy and funding from the Government. It is expected that action

by a range of agencies will improve a number of these metrics over time. Internal indicators, where the County Council has the most control, are identified with an 'L' within the performance dashboards.

5. In order to review performance for each indicator reported, the performance dashboards show the latest data (if available), the previous update, the Direction of Travel (DOT), the target, the Red / Amber / Green rating (RAG) (if applicable) and the quartile position compared to other English county councils (where available). The dashboards also show trends over time.

6. Coloured DOT arrows (red, amber, green) show whether there has been an improvement or deterioration in performance compared to the previous result, for recently updated data, within the performance dashboards. Up arrows show an improvement in performance, whereas down arrows show a decline in performance, and horizontal arrows show no change. Grey DOTs mean that there is no recent update available. This may be due to the time taken to obtain data from third parties and calculate the results, or because many indicators are updated less frequently, such as annually.

7. The performance dashboards include information on the latest data against the target (where relevant) which generates a RAG rating, if it is applicable. Red indicates that close monitoring, or significant action is required as the target is not or may not be achieved. Amber indicates that light touch monitoring is required, as the performance is currently not meeting the target or it is set to miss the target by a narrow margin. Green indicates that no additional action is required as the indicator is currently meeting the target, or it is on track to meet the target.

8. The Council assesses its comparative performance through a benchmarking process, where it benchmarks its performance against up to 32 English county authorities which cover large, principally non-urban geographical areas. Where it is available, the performance dashboards within Appendix A indicate which quartile Leicestershire's performance falls into. The first quartile is defined as performance that falls within the top 25% of county councils (highest performing). The fourth quartile is defined as performance that falls within the bottom 25% of county councils (lowest performing). The comparison quartiles are updated annually.

9. The frequency with which the indicators are reported varies as some are quarterly, many are annual, and some data is reported even less frequently. Most of the quarterly data is at least one quarter in arrears. For clarity, the time-periods that the data covers are contained in the performance dashboards in Appendix A. The quarterly performance dashboard shows Environment performance up to June 2025.

Performance Update – latest data to June 2025

10. Overall, there are 26 performance indicators included in this report which are aligned with the County Council's Strategic Plan outcomes. They are presented in the Environment performance dashboards within Appendix A. Where a DOT

is available for the indicators: 12 showed performance improvement, three had declined in performance and 11 remained the same as the previous update.

11. The latest position shows that of the indicators which have targets, seven KPIs are green (they have met the target or are on track), six are amber (performance is currently not meeting the target or is set to miss the target by a narrow margin) and one is rated red (where performance is currently not meeting the target or is set to miss the target).

12. When compared to other English county councils, out of all the Council's Clean and Green KPIs, there is one indicator in the top quartile, which is the 'Percentage of domestic properties with Energy Performance rating C+ (new homes)' indicator (listed in Appendix A with a green first quartile position). There are nine Clean and Green KPIs that perform below average, within the third and fourth quartiles, listed in Appendix A.

13. The following updates cover the latest performance for all the Environment and Climate Change indicators up to June 2025 (Quarter One).

Clean and Green

14. Following the Government's decision to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars nationally by 2030, as part of its UK Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (published in March 2022), the Government predicts that a minimum of 300,000 public charging points will be needed nationally by 2030 to meet expected demand. In order to help decarbonise transport and contribute to the Council's own commitments for the County, the Council continues to support residents in switching to electric vehicles. The 'Electric vehicle charging locations per 100,000 population' improved in performance by 2%, from 72 in Quarter Three 2024/25 to 74 in Quarter Four 2024/25. This represents a 23% increase since the same period last year, when the figure was 60 per 100,000 population, demonstrating significant improvement over the year. In terms of comparison with other counties, Leicestershire is in the third quartile for 2024.

15. More than £3m in funding from the Government has been provisionally allocated to install Electric Vehicle (EV) chargepoints across Leicestershire. Working with a number of other councils and Midlands Connect, the Council has been provisionally allocated funding through the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure scheme (LEVI), which is expected to help expand the number of charge points across Leicestershire from 2024/25 to 2030. The Leicestershire Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy (EVCS) is required by Government in order to obtain LEVI funding. This sets out the Authority's approach to public EV chargepoint delivery and its ongoing operation and management, which was approved by the Cabinet on 13 September 2024. The EVCS is an important first step in helping the Council to play its part in the roll out of EV charging infrastructure. It also describes the roles of other

organisations, partners, and stakeholders such as Chargepoint Operators (CPOs) and Electricity Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) who are key stakeholders. The EVCS actions will focus on the delivery of public on-street chargepoints in residential areas, which will be available to all, particularly those households with no or limited off-street parking. The EV market is rapidly evolving and therefore, it is likely that the EVCS will need to be reviewed and refreshed after two years following a review of the Council's delivery projects delivery projects.

16. The 'Electric vehicle ownership – Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) rate/10,000 population' improved in performance by 8% as ownership increased from 253/10,000 in Quarter Two 2024/25 to 273/10,000 in Quarter Three 2024/25. This has increased by 38% since the same period last year, which was 197/10,000. It continues to demonstrate a notable shift of people moving from fossil-fuelled vehicles to electric alternatives. In terms of comparative performance, Leicestershire is now in the second quartile (above average) when compared to other counties for 2024 (previously third quartile in 2023). EV ownership is heavily influenced by the EV market in terms of vehicle costs and vehicle range, which have been cited as barriers to adoption. The Council has no influence on the market; however, the Council has some influence over EV charging locations that are installed on the public highway, which can encourage the uptake of EV ownership to some degree. ULEVs make up approximately 3.9% of all licensed vehicles in the County in Quarter Three 2024/25, which is just above the East Midlands rate of 3.7% for the same period.

17. The 'Renewable electricity generated in the area (MWh)' has increased by 12% from 355,263 MWh in 2022 to 398,399 MWh in 2023, demonstrating an improvement in performance since the previous year. When compared to other English county councils in 2023, this indicator remains in the third quartile. Renewable electricity generated includes wind, solar, tidal/wave, small scale hydro, bio energy and others, such as thermal exchange. The annual district level data is aggregated to provide a Leicestershire total. The data is sourced from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and is over nine months in arears.

18. The 'Renewable electricity capacity in the area (MW)' has improved in performance by 27%, from 340 MW in 2022 to 433 MW in 2023. However, this indicator performs below average when compared to other English county councils (third quartile) in 2023. The Council has a limited influence over the countywide renewable energy capacity, which tends to change in response to incentive schemes from the Government and the wider energy market.

19. The Council monitors the energy efficiency of new and existing homes within the County in the 'Percentage of domestic properties with Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating C+' indicators. There are separate indicators for new build properties and existing properties. The latest data shows that 99% of new homes are relatively energy efficient, with a C+ EPC rating, compared to older

homes of which only 54% were energy efficient in Quarter Four 2024/25 (most recent). Both types had fairly static performance since the previous quarter. The EPC register does not hold data for every domestic and non-domestic building, or every building occupied by public authorities. Buildings only require an EPC when they are sold, let or constructed. These statistics should, therefore, not be interpreted as a true representation of the whole of the building stock. They should, however, be viewed as part of a wider package of the Government's provision of information on the energy efficiency of buildings. The data is updated quarterly and sourced from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

20. Comparisons with other English county councils for 2024/25 show that the 'Percentage of domestic properties with Energy Performance certificate rating C+' for 'new homes' falls within the first (top) quartile in 2024/25. Energy efficiency of 'existing homes' are third quartile in 2024/25. Only new homes had above average comparative performance in 2024/25. The Authority does not have direct control over these indicators, but it does have some influence in terms of local initiatives. For example, the Home Energy Retrofit Offer supports residents with advice on what can be done to homes to keep them warm and cut energy bills, which is provided by the Warm Homes Service in the Public Health Department and the Green Living Leicestershire partnership. The Warm Homes Service ran a Home Energy Retrofit Offer project between 2024 and 2025, which aimed to offer personalised energy and retrofit advice to homeowners in hard-to-reach communities. An estimated maximum of 173 homes were supported by March 2025.

21. The Council's 'Amount of renewable energy generated as a percentage of consumption' increased to 21% in Quarter Four 2024/25, an improvement in performance of 3 percentage points since the previous update (18% in Quarter Three 2024/25). This internal KPI has not yet met its target of 34% which has resulted in a red RAG rating. Since the same time last year, performance has improved by nine percentage points (12% in Quarter Four 2023-24). The latest performance update is the highest that it has ever been, which is mainly due to a consistently high output from the County Hall biomass boiler over 12 months of 2024-25. The solar photovoltaic (PV) output was good but slightly lower than the previous year, most likely due to lower sunshine hours. The long term 50% target for this indicator, that is informed by the Strategic Property Energy Strategy 2020-30, is currently under review. The Council's Greenhouse Gas Report 2023-24, presented to the Committee in January 2025, provided a comprehensive update on this indicator for 2023-24.

22. Air quality performance improved slightly as PM2.5 (Population weighted annual mean PM2.5 data) declined from 8.9 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m3) in 2022 to 7.7µg/m3 in 2023 for Leicestershire (excluding Leicester). Compared to other English County Councils, Leicestershire remained in the 4th quartile in 2023 (lowest performance). The results would need to be approximately 6.4µg/m3 to achieve an average comparative position. PM2.5 within Leicestershire remains within the UK target of 10µg/m3. However, these latest results exceed the World Health Organisation's recommendations of 5 µg/m3. Inhalation of particulate pollution can have adverse health impacts. This

data describes the annual mean concentration of fine particulate matter at an area level, adjusted to account for population exposure, and it is measured in micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m3).

23. According to data from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, the major sources of primary PM2.5 are combustion in the energy industries, road transport (both exhaust and non-exhaust emissions), rail and air transport, residential sources, and small-scale (waste and wood burning stoves) burning. The Council's Environment and Transport and Public Health Departments jointly lead on air quality work for the County Council, with wider partnership work with district councils and other stakeholders. The Leicestershire Air Quality and Health Partnership was formed in 2020 following recommendations from a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on air quality and health in 2019. The Partnership consists of officers from the County Council and all the local district councils (which have a statutory duty to monitor air quality), the Integrated Care Board, and representatives from the University of Leicester. The group has an Air Quality and Health Action Plan for 2024-28, which will enable, facilitate and monitor collective action on air quality and health across the County Council, the district councils and other partners. The Partnership has launched focused subgroups to deliver on the action plan, where progress will be monitored and reported back to the main Partnership.

24. Recent partnership activity focused on Clean Air Day in June, designed to encourage people to adopt fewer polluting forms of travel and more active travel alternatives, such as walking, cycling and scooting, and increase awareness of health impacts linked to air quality. Joint communications were delivered across the Council and its partners (such as the district councils) on social media platforms. The Council's social media engagement had a reach of 7,500, with 11,400 impressions and 41 engagements. The coverage was very positive, and it spanned multiple media outlets including the Harborough Mail newspaper, a radio interview and online articles**.** A coordinated event at Farndon Fields School was also delivered by the Council's Sustainable Travel Team, in collaboration with Harborough District Council and local services. Of the surveyed families, 70% used active travel modes to arrive at school on the day, 98% acknowledged the clear benefits to reducing car use for short journeys, and 80% indicated that they would be more likely to choose walking, cycling or scooting for future school journeys.

25. The 'Greenhouse gas emissions from all sources in Leicestershire (kt CO_2e)' improved in performance from the previous year, as results showed a 5% decline in emissions to 4,330 kt CO_2e in 2023 from 4,568 kt CO_2e in 2022. The latest result slightly missed its target of 4,253 kt CO_2e, resulting in an amber rating. In terms of comparison with other English county councils, Leicestershire is in the second quartile for 2023 (above average). Over the longer-term, the latest data is lower than the longer-term average of 4,766 kt CO_2e since 2017, showing a better performance. This data is published annually by the DESNZ, and it is two years in arrears. It includes estimated territorial greenhouse gas emissions arising within the area of Leicestershire, excluding Leicester City, 2005-2022 (kt CO_2e). These cover emissions from the industrial, commercial, public sector, domestic transport, land use and forestry,

agriculture, and waste management sectors. As territorial estimates, they include emissions linked to energy consumed within the County but exclude the impact of imported goods. These estimates cover the Kyoto "basket" of seven gases: carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), perfluorocarbons (PFC), sulphur hexafluoride (SF_6) and nitrogen trifluoride (NF_3).

26. The 'Greenhouse gas emissions from Leicestershire (all sources) per capita (tonnes CO_2e)' improved in performance from the previous year as emissions decreased by 6%. The latest result of 5.9 tCO_2e in 2023 improved in performance since the previous year of 6.3 tCO_2e in 2022 and met its 6.04 tCO_2e target. Compared to other English county councils, Leicestershire remained in the third quartile for 2023 (below average). Over the longer-term, the latest data is slightly lower, showing a better performance, than the longer-term average of 6.7 (per capita) tonnes since 2017. This data is published annually by the DESNZ, and it is two years in arrears. It includes greenhouse gas emissions estimates in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_2e) per head of population for all sectors in Leicestershire, excluding Leicester City. These cover emissions from the industrial, commercial, public sector, domestic transport, land use and forestry, agriculture, and waste management sectors. As territorial estimates, they include emissions linked to energy consumed within the County but exclude the impact of imported goods. They also cover the Kyoto "basket" of greenhouse gases (as explained in paragraph 25).

27. The Council's gross 'greenhouse gas emissions' remained similar to the previous year at 9,351 tCO_2e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) in 2023/24 (internal data). Emissions have decreased by 68% since 2014/15. The County Council's 'net' greenhouse gas emissions were 9,282 tCO_2e for this period. Emission reductions occurred across most sources. Direct emissions from buildings had the largest reduction (at 12%), with the majority of this decrease due to reduced gas use in corporate buildings, attributed in part to warmer weather and the increased use of the biomass boiler at County Hall. The Council's Greenhouse Gas Report 2023-24 provided a comprehensive update on emissions, progress against targets and identified positive actions to sustain improvements.

28. 'Total business miles claimed ('000s of miles)' improved in performance as miles claimed reduced from 4.7m miles in Quarter Three in 2024/25 to 4.6m miles in Quarter Four in 2024/25 (internal data). It is currently lower than its target (5.2m), resulting in a green RAG rating showing good performance. It also performed better than its long-term average of 5.2m miles since 2015. Business mileage claims do not include commuting to and from work and only include mileage claimed by staff in carrying out Council business.

29. The Council is working to provide better data on biodiversity in the County. Currently, the Council is monitoring the ecological status of Leicestershire's rivers (excluding Leicester) which provides an assessment of the quality of the structure and functioning of a river's ecosystems. The Environment Agency (EA) provides data on 'Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) in good ecological status', which was 9.4% in 2019. The EA had changed their

methodology regarding how they assess river quality data in 2019. This resulted in the EA's adoption of more rigorous approach in surveying the status of rivers, covering new substances, new standards, and improved techniques and methods. It is therefore not possible to reliably compare the data from 2019 with the previous results. The EA is continuing to collect Water Framework Directive (WFD) data. The next full WFD classification will be undertaken in 2025, and it is expected to be available in 2026.

30. Similarly, the EA has also applied their new methodology to the 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. The next update is due in 2026.

31. The 'Hectares of LCC land in better management for nature' indicator was updated for 2023/24, and it has declined by 3%, leaving 3,736 ha in better management for nature. Despite this slight decline in performance, it continues to have met its target (3,641 ha). The change is due to 118ha of land being disposed of by the Council. This internal data includes a combination of the Council's land, including country parks, rural and urban highway verges, County farms and playing fields. It is based on the best available data of the amount of Council land that is in better management for nature where there is a conscious decision to manage the land with nature in mind.

32. The 'percentage of suitable Council land in better management for nature' remained the same as the previous year at 97% for 2023/24 and it has met its target (95%), demonstrating very good performance (internal data) (this is calculated from the above figure in paragraph 31 presented as a percentage of the total amount of suitable Council land).

33. Leicestershire is one of the least wooded areas of the country, currently with only around 6% woodland (2016), which is well below the national average of 10% (2024) for England. As a major landowner in Leicestershire, the Council has identified areas of its own landholdings where trees, woodlands and hedgerows can be planted to increase overall tree coverage. The Council made a pledge for an 'ambitious project to plant 700,000 trees' by 2032, which is the equivalent of one for every resident of Leicestershire. This equates to 70,000 trees planted each year. To help achieve this pledge, the Tree Management Strategy and Planting Action Plan was updated in 2021 to ensure the delivery of the pledge over a 10-year period. The latest tree planting provisional update shows that 494,240 trees have been planted by the Council and its partners up to June 2025, since July 2021, and this has greatly exceeded its cumulative target of 280,000 for 2025/26 (the data is derived from the Council and its partners). The latest result is approximately 70% of its 2032 target, showing an excellent performance. A detailed Tree Management Strategy Annual Update was provided to the Committee on 2 November 2024.

34. The 'Percentage of household waste sent by local authorities across Leicestershire for reuse, recycling or composting (former NI 192)' remained similar to the previous quarter at 44% over a 12-month rolling period up to and

including Quarter Three 2024/25 (the data is two quarters in arrears) and narrowly missed its 45% target. It lies within the third quartile position using latest 2023/24 published data compared to other English county councils. This indicator has had relatively static performance over the past year ranging between 43% and 44%. It is anticipated that the Collection and Packaging Reforms will improve performance against this indicator in the coming years. The Reforms include the roll out of mandatory weekly food waste collections from all households and an extended producer responsibility scheme for packaging which, by making producers responsible for their packaging throughout its whole life cycle, will encourage the use of more easily recycled materials. The Council adopted the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy in April 2023, which includes a pledge to put in place collection systems to contribute towards the future national target of 65% recycling by 2035 (Source: WasteDataFlow).

35. The 'Annual percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill (former NI 193)' remained similar to the previous quarter at 11%, in a 12-month rolling period up to and including Quarter Three 2024/25, and it slightly missed its more challenging refreshed target of 10%. Since the same time last year, waste landfilled has decreased by four percentage points (from 15% in Quarter Three 2023/24), showing a significant improvement in performance over the year. When compared to other English county councils, this indicator remained in the fourth (bottom) quartile in 2023/24. To achieve an average position when compared to the other English county councils, the performance would have to meet a more challenging 1.3% landfill rate. Through the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy, the Council is committed to reducing waste to landfill to less than 5% by 2025, well in advance of the national target of 10% by 2035. There has been a large improvement in performance over the recent years, and the Council will continue to improve performance where it is cost effective to do so. The energy from waste contract that commenced in April 2023 is expected to further reduce the amount of municipal waste being sent to landfill this year (Source: WasteDataFlow).

36. The 'Total household waste per household (kg)' remained relatively static in performance at 966 kg over the 12-month rolling period up to and including Quarter Three 2024/25 (the data is two quarters in arrears). In comparison to other English county councils, Leicestershire's performance was below average, as it is in the third quartile for 2023/24 (the same as the previous year's quartile) (Source: WasteDataFlow).

37. The 'Tonnes of waste produced from LCC sites' saw a 1% decline in performance as waste increased from 272 tonnes in Quarter Three 2023/24 to 275 tonnes in Quarter Four 2023/24. Despite this slight decline, this indicator has met its 376 tonnes target and performs better than its long-term average of 373 tonnes since 2015.

38. The 'Percentage of waste recycled from LCC sites (non-operational)' remained the same as the previous quarter at 62% in Quarter Four 2023/24 and missed its target of 70%. However, it remains at one of the highest levels (best) within

the past year and remains above its long-term average of 57% since 2015, showing a good performance over the long-term.

39. Total fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 population remained similar in performance to the previous annual update at 5.4 in 2023/24 up from 4.8 in 2022/23 (less than 1% change). This indicator performs in the second quartile when compared to other English county councils in 2023/24, better than average. The latest data is below the long-term average of 5.9 incidents in Leicestershire since 2015, showing a better than average long-term performance.

40. The results on the 'Percentage of staff who say LCC is doing enough to reduce its environmental impact (post training survey)' remained relatively static at 90% for Quarter Two 2024/25. It has met its target (90%), showing an overall good performance (internal data).

41. At the end of 2023-24, there were a total of two environmental risks. These environmental risks relate to areas where the Council is not meeting legal requirements, or the Council's policy is failing to address the Environment Strategy's objectives. These included the following:

    a) A biodiversity consideration was not sufficiently considered in the highways mowing regime. This risk will be reviewed to determine if sufficient progress has been made to reduce it.
    b) The matter of leaching from skips used to store dog waste at country parks has been raised with the relevant team to address.

42. Overall, the low number of risks demonstrates a good performance.

Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure

43. The 'NO_2 exceedances for Leicestershire' indicator shows the number of times nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) has exceeded the annual mean air quality objective of 40µg/m3. NO_2 is a gas that is mainly produced during the combustion of fossil fuels. In 2023, only one NO_2 exceedance was reported in Blaby, showing an improvement in performance since the previous year when three exceedances were reported across Leicestershire (since 2019, this indicator has ranged from 0-3). The data is sourced from the district councils Air Quality Annual Status Reports.

Background Papers

Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Outcomes Framework and Strategic Plan 2024-2026
https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/LCC-Strategic-Plan.pdf

Environment Strategy 2018-30
https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2020/7/13/Environment-Strategy-2018-2030-delivering-a-better-future.pdf

Environmental Performance Progress Annual Report 2023-24

https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s187765/01.%20Final%20Annual%20Environmental%20Performance%20and%20Progress%20Update%20Report%202023-24%20E%20Scrutiny%20220125.pdf (published January 2025).

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report 2023-24
https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s187768/Appendix%20B%20-%20Leicestershire%20County%20Council%20Greenhouse%20Gas%20Report%202023-2024%20-%20E%20Scrutiny%20220125.pdf (published November 2024).

Tree Management Strategy 2020-2025
https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2021/2/16/Tree-Management-Strategy-2020-2025.pdf

Tree Management Strategy Annual Update 2024
https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s186296/Tree%20Management%20Strategy%20Annual%20Update.pdf (published November 2024).

Leicestershire Air Quality and Health partnership Action Plan 2024-2028
https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s187233/Air%20Quality%20FINAL.pdf

Leicestershire Air Quality and Health partnership Action Plan 2024-2028 Appendix
https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s187241/Appendix%20-%20AQ%20and%20Health%20Partnership%20Action%20Plan%20FINAL%20DRAFT%202024-28.pdf

Leicestershire's Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy
https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s185084/Appendix%20A%20-%20Electric%20Vehicle%20EV%20Charging%20Strategy.pdf

Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy 2022 – 2050
https://www.lesswaste.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Leicestershire-Resources-and-Waste-Strategy-2022-2050.pdf

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

44. None.

Equality Implications

45. There are no specific equality implications to note as part of this performance report.

Human Rights Implications

46. There are no human rights implications arising from this performance report.

Appendix

Appendix A – Strategic Plan Performance Dashboards by Outcomes covering Environment and Climate Change Performance to June 2025.
Appendix B – Environment & Climate Change KPI Definitions.

Officers to Contact

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Appendix A

Strategic Plan Performance Dashboards by Outcomes covering Environment & Climate Change (ECC) Performance to June 2025

1. E&CC KPIs updated to June 2025. Clean & Green Outcome.

Indicator (* = Statutory Returns)	Latest Data	Period	Prev. Data	Perform. DOT	Target (Yearly)	RAG	Quartiles	Previous Updates	C/L
Electric vehicle charging location per 100,000 population	**73.5**	Q4 2024/25	71.6	↑		NA	3rd 2024		C
Electric vehicle ownership - Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) rate/10,000 population	**272.7**	Q3 2024/25	252.6	↑		NA	2nd 2024		C
Renewable electricity generated in the area (MWh)	**398,399**	2023	355,263	↑		NA	3rd 2023		C
Renewable electricity capacity in the area (MW)	**433.3**	2023	340.2	↑		NA	3rd 2023		C
% domestic properties with Energy Performance Certificate rating C+ (new)	**98.8**	Q4 2024/25	98.6	→		NA	1st 2024/25		C
% domestic properties with Energy Performance Certificate rating C+ (existing)	**54.1**	Q4 2024/25	53.2	→		NA	3rd 2024/25		C
Amount of renewable energy generated as a % of consumption	**20.6**	Q4 2024/25	18	↑	34	R	NA		L
PM2.5 Air pollution fine particulate matter (µg/m³)	**7.7**	2023	8.9	↑		NA	4th 2023		C
Greenhouse gas emissions from all sources in Leicestershire (ktonnes CO2e)	**4,330**	2023	4,568	↑	4,253	A	2nd 2023		C
Greenhouse gas emissions from Leicestershire (all sources) per capita (tonnes CO2e)	**5.9**	2023	6.3	↑	6.04	G	3rd 2023		C
Total LCC GHG emissions	**9,351**	2023/24	9,427	→		NA	NA		L
Total Business miles claimed ('000s of miles)	**4,686**	Q4 2024/25	4,742	↑	5,291	G	NA		L
Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) are in good ecological status (%)	**9.4**	2019	0.67	↑		NA	NA		C
Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) are in good chemical status (%)	**0**	2019	99.6	↓		NA	NA		C
Hectares of LCC land in better management for nature	**3,736**	2023/24	3,854	↓	3,641	G	NA		L
Percentage of suitable LCC land in better management for nature	**97.5**	2023/24	97	→	95	G	NA		L

Continued

Tree planting	**494,240**	Up to Jun 2025	437,284	↑	280,000	G	NA		L
* % of household waste sent by local authorities across Leicestershire for reuse, recycling, composting etc. (former NI192)	**43.92**	Q3 2024/25	43.3	→	45	A	3rd 2023/24		C
* Annual percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill (former NI 193)	**10.89**	Q3 2024/25	11.6	→	10	A	4th 2023/24		C
* Total household waste per household (kg)	**965.67**	Q3 2024/25	960.71	→		A	3rd 2023/24		C
Tonnes of waste produced from LCC sites	**275.2**	Q4 2023/24	271.9	↓	375.9	G	NA		L
% waste recycled from LCC sites (non-operational)	**62**	Q4 2023/24	62.2	→	70	A	NA		L
Total fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 population	**5.4**	2023/24	4.8	→		NA	2nd 2023/24		C
% of LCC staff who say LCC is doing enough to reduce its environmental impact (post-training survey)	**89.5**	Q2 2024/25	89.3	→	90	G	NA		L
LCC Environmental risks managed	**2**	2023/24	2	→	0	A	NA		L

2. E&CC KPI updated to June 2024. Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure Outcome

Indicator (* = Statutory Returns)	Latest Data	Period	Prev. Data	Perform. DOT	Target (Yearly)	RAG	Quartiles	Previous Updates	C/L
NO2 exceedances for Leicestershire	**1**	2023	3	↑		NA	NA		C

Data notes

C = Countywide Indicator, where the Council has less influence.

L = Local internal indicator, where the Council has more influence

In order to ensure comparisons are unbiased and insightful the following indicators are used in deriving annual quartile positions as part of the Council's corporate benchmarking approach. These indicators use published statistics from the relevant government departmental (e.g. Department for Energy Security and Net Zero) and the Office of National Statistics population data.

Renewable electricity generated within LA area (MWh per 1000 households)

Renewable electricity capacity within LA area (MW per 10k households)

Appendix B - Environment & Climate Change KPI definitions

Indicator Title	Definition	Source	Frequency	Branch	Sub outcome	Polarity
Electric vehicle charging location per 100,000 population	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. This data uses the latest population statistics to determine locations per 100,000 people. Polarity: high.	Source: Department for Transport & ONS (population data)	Quarterly	Environment & waste	The economy & infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly	High
Electric vehicle ownership - Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) rate/10,000 population	An Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) is defined as vehicles that emit less than 75g of carbon dioxide (CO2) for every kilometre travelled, based on the NEDC test. ULEVs include pure electric vehicles, electric range-extender vehicles, and plug-in hybrids (PHEVs). Source data: Ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) licensed at the end of the quarter by upper and lower tier local authority, United Kingdom from 2011 Q4 (VEH0132). (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/about/statistics). Polarity: High.	Source: Department for Transport & ONS (population data).	Quarterly	Environment & waste	The economy & infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly	High
Renewable electricity generated in the area (MWh)	The data presented includes renewable electricity generation for the local authority in the UK. Renewable electricity generated in the LA (Megawatt hours) Since 1989, renewable electricity data have been collated in RESTATS, the UK's Renewable Energy Statistics database, and is the primary source of accurate, timely statistics for UK renewable energy sources. Renewable electricity generated includes wind, solar, tidal/wave, small scale hydro, bio energy and others e.g. thermal exchange. The annual districts data available is aggregated to provide a Leicestershire total. This is produced by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ). It is published alongside a feature article 'Renewable Electricity in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England in 2022'. The data is 9 months in arears, due final Thursday in September. Polarity: High.	Source: Department for Energy Security & Net Zero.	Annually	Environment & Waste	The economy & infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly	High

Indicator Title	Definition	Source	Frequency	Branch	Sub outcome	Polarity
Renewable electricity capacity in the area (MW)	The data presented includes renewable electricity capacity for the local authority in the UK. Renewable electricity generated in the LA (Megawatt hours) Since 1989, renewable electricity data have been collated in RESTATS, the UK's Renewable Energy Statistics database, and is the primary source of accurate, timely statistics for UK renewable energy sources. Renewable electricity generated includes wind, solar, tidal/wave, small scale hydro, bio energy and others e.g. thermal exchange. The annual district data available is aggregated to provide a Leicestershire total. This is produced by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ). It is published alongside a feature article 'Renewable Electricity in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England in 2022'. The data is 9 months in arears, due final Thursday in September. Polarity: High.	Source: Department for Energy Security & Net Zero.	Annually	Environment & Waste	The economy & infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly	High
% domestic properties with Energy Performance Certificate rating C+ (new)	% of domestic properties with Energy Performance certificate rating C+ (new). This data is derived from the government's Energy performance building certificates for England and Wales tables. These include data from certificates lodged on the Energy Performance of Buildings Registers since 2008. It covers the 'Number of Energy Performance Certificates lodged on the Register by Region and Energy Efficiency Rating.' District numbers rating C and above are aggregated and divided by the total to gain a percentage figure for Leicestershire. The EPC register does not hold data for every domestic and non-domestic building, or every building occupied by public authorities in England and Wales. Buildings only require an EPC when, sold, let or constructed. EPCs are valid for 10 years. These statistics should, therefore, not be interpreted as a true representation of the whole of the building stock in England and Wales but viewed as part of a wider package of Government's provision of information on the energy efficiency of buildings. Display Energy Certificates (DECs) are designed to show annual energy use of a building based on actual energy consumption taken for the previous 12 months and must therefore be renewed annually. Figures published on the government website do get revised historically. Polarity: High.	Source: The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.	Quarterly.	Environment & Waste	People act now to tackle climate change	High

Indicator Title	Definition	Source	Frequency	Branch	Sub outcome	Polarity
% domestic properties with Energy Performance Certificate rating C+ (existing)	% of domestic properties with Energy Performance certificate rating C+ (existing). This data is derived from the government's Energy performance building certificates for England and Wales tables. These include data from certificates lodged on the Energy Performance of Buildings Registers since 2008. It covers the 'Number of Energy Performance Certificates lodged on the Register by Region and Energy Efficiency Rating.' District numbers rating C and above are aggregated and divided by the total to gain a percentage figure for Leicestershire. The EPC register does not hold data for every domestic and non-domestic building, or every building occupied by public authorities in England and Wales. Buildings only require an EPC when, sold, let or constructed. EPCs are valid for 10 years. These statistics should, therefore, not be interpreted as a true representation of the whole of the building stock in England and Wales but viewed as part of a wider package of Government's provision of information on the energy efficiency of buildings. Figures published on the government website do get revised historically. Display Energy Certificates (DECs) are designed to show annual energy use of a building based on actual energy consumption taken for the previous 12 months and must therefore be renewed annually. Polarity: High.	Source: The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.	Quarterly.	Environment & Waste	People act now to tackle climate change	High
Amount of renewable energy generated as a % of consumption	Renewable energy generated on County Council land and properties as % of total energy consumed. Introduced 2013. The purpose of this local indicator is to monitor and report on progress towards achieving the Environment Strategy and Energy Strategy targets. The total energy generated on LCC land is recorded quarterly as kWh and includes both heat (from the biomass boiler) and electricity (from photo-voltaic solar panels). Generated energy is recorded for each renewable energy installation where LCC receives the FIT payments. The KPI expresses the 12-month rolling total as a percentage of the total energy (gas, electricity and other fuels) used to heat and power LCC buildings over the same period. It is a key element of the Council's Environment Strategy and Energy Strategy. Recorded in percentage to one decimal place. Polarity: High is good. Reported quarterly, two quarters in arrears.	Source: LCC Environment Team.	Quarterly (reviewing)	Environment & Waste	The economy & infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly	High

Indicator Title	Definition	Source	Frequency	Branch	Sub outcome	Polarity
PM2.5 Air pollution fine particulate matter (µg/m^3)	Annual concentration of PM2.5 (fine particulate matter) at an area level, adjusted to account for population exposure. PM2.5 means the mass (in micrograms) per cubic metre of air of individual particles with an aerodynamic diameter generally less than 2.5 micrometres. PM2.5 is also known as fine particulate matter. Particulate matter (PM) is the term used to describe condensed phase (solid or liquid) particles suspended in the atmosphere. Their potential for causing health problems is directly linked to the size of the particles. Due to the small size of many of the particles that form PM, some of these toxic compounds may enter the bloodstream and be transported around the body, entering the heart, brain and other organs. Therefore, exposure to PM can result in serious health effects and is associated with respiratory conditions (such as asthma), cardiovascular disease (CVD), and lung cancer, and there is emerging evidence for associations with dementia, low birth weight and Type 2 diabetes. People such as the young, elderly and those with respiratory problems are most vulnerable to these effects. The inclusion of this indicator aims to support local areas to prioritise action on air quality to help reduce the health burden from air pollution. Around half of the concentrations of PM that people in the UK are exposed to come from either naturally occurring sources, such as pollen and sea spray, or are transported to the UK from international shipping and other countries. The remaining PM in UK air results from human activities in the UK, such as wood burning, various industrial processes (e.g. quarrying activities) and emissions from vehicles (mainly from tyre and brake wear). Polarity. Low. Caution is needed when considering apparent trends over time. Trend data should not be overinterpreted for a number of reasons: Concentrations of PM2.5 vary from year to year due to the weather. This variation due to weather is generally greater than the year-to-year variation from changes in emissions. The methods and data inputs for the pollution modelling are continually updated and improved.	Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).	Annual	Environment & Waste	Clean & Green	Low

Indicator Title	Definition	Source	Frequency	Branch	Sub outcome	Polarity
Greenhouse gas emissions from all sources in Leicestershire (kilo tonnes CO2e)	Estimated territorial greenhouse gas emissions arising within the area of Leicestershire, excluding Leicester City, (kt CO2e). These cover emissions from the industrial, commercial, public sector, domestic transport, land use and forestry, agriculture and waste management sectors. As territorial estimates, they include emissions linked to energy consumed within the county, but exclude the impact of imported goods. This is the greenhouse gas emissions estimate in kilo tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (kt CO2e) emissions for all sectors in Leicestershire. This is the grand total of industry, commercial, public sector, domestic, transport, land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF), agriculture, and waste management. These estimates cover the Kyoto "basket" of seven gases: carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), perfluorocarbons (PFC), sulphur hexafluoride (SF6) and nitrogen trifluoride (NF3). The last four gases are collectively referred to as fluorinated gases or F gases. The purpose of these estimates is to assist those using local emissions accounting as a tool in developing emissions reduction strategies. It should be noted that circumstances vary enormously between authorities, and local authorities have relatively little influence over some types of emissions, and for these reasons these statistics should be interpreted with caution. Except for the energy industry, emissions from the production of goods are assigned to where the production takes place. Therefore, emissions from the production of goods which are exported will be included, and emissions from the production of goods which are imported are excluded. Data range: Annual Jan - Dec. Published in June.	Source: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. Published annually around June. Two years in arrears.	Annual	Environment & Waste	Clean & Green	Low

Indicator Title	Definition	Source	Frequency	Branch	Sub outcome	Polarity
Greenhouse gas emissions from Leicestershire (all sources) per capita (tonnes CO2e)	Estimated territorial greenhouse gas emissions arising within the area of Leicestershire, excluding Leicester City, per capita of mid-year population, (kt CO2e). These cover emissions from the industrial, commercial, public sector, domestic transport, land use and forestry, agriculture and waste management sectors. As territorial estimates, they include emissions linked to energy consumed within the county, but exclude the impact of imported goods. This is the greenhouse gas emissions estimate in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e) emissions per head of population for all sectors in Leicestershire. This is the grand total of industry, commercial, public sector, domestic, transport, land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF), agriculture, and waste management. These estimates cover the Kyoto "basket" of seven gases: carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), perfluorocarbons (PFC), sulphur hexafluoride (SF6) and nitrogen trifluoride (NF3). The last four gases are collectively referred to as fluorinated gases or F gases. The purpose of these estimates is to assist those using local emissions accounting as a tool in developing emissions reduction strategies. It should be noted that circumstances vary enormously between authorities, and local authorities have relatively little influence over some types of emissions, and for these reasons these statistics should be interpreted with caution. Except for the energy industry, emissions from the production of goods are assigned to where the production takes place. Therefore, emissions from the production of goods which are exported will be included, and emissions from the production of goods which are imported are excluded. Data range: Annual Jan - Dec. Published in June. Published annually around June, two years in arrears.	Source: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. UK Local Authority and Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions National Statistics & ONS population statistics. Two years in arrears.	Annual	Environment & Waste	Clean & Green	Low

Indicator Title	Definition	Source	Frequency	Branch	Sub outcome	Polarity
Total LCC GHG emissions	Total GHG emissions from Leicestershire County Council sites (excluding schools) is monitored to ensure LCC can account for its environmental impact and performance and to support development of the environment strategy. This indicator is an aggregated figure of a number of other elements. These are: emissions from gas use in LCC buildings, emissions from electricity use in LCC buildings, emissions from other fuel use in LCC buildings, emissions from street lighting & traffic signs, emissions from traffic signals, emissions LCC fleet vehicles and plant, and from LCC business mileage. Emissions factors are released annually during the Summer by DEFRA. Polarity Low.	Source: LCC Environment Team	Annual	Environment & Waste	The economy & infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly	Low
Total Business miles claimed ('000s of miles)	Total business miles claimed. The number of business miles claimed by staff. The sum of all business mileage claimed by each staff member during the last 12 months. Polarity: Low is good. Reported quarterly (two quarters in arrears).	Source: LCC Environment Team	Quarterly (reviewing)	Environment & Waste	People act now to tackle climate change	Low
Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) are in good ecological status (%)	The Environment Agency along with a UK Technical Advisory Group have devised measurements for understanding the condition of our water. Ecological and chemical indicators are used by the Environment Agency to measure the condition of 'Waterbodies' in terms of whether the waterbody is doing well for nature (Ecological status) and for drinking and bathing (chemical status). This data is the percentage of Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) that has been assessed by the Environment Agency to be in good ecological condition. (Whilst they have extracted the overall performance for rivers in Leicestershire based on a percentage, for both key areas of measurement (Ecology and Chemical indicators), some rivers perform better or worse and others have localities that have a negative impact on quality.) Polarity: High. Data 5 years in arrears. The EA is continuing to collect Water Framework Directive (WFD) data. The 2022 classification was an interim data set and WFD classifications were only reported where data was available. Where this data was not collected, the previous classifications were rolled forward from 2019. The next full WFD classification will be undertaken in 2025, expected to be available in 2026.	Source: Environment Agency.	Five yearly	Environment & Waste	Nature and the local environment are valued, protected and enhanced	High

Indicator Title	Definition	Source	Frequency	Branch	Sub outcome	Polarity
Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) are in good chemical status (%)	The Environment Agency along with a UK Technical Advisory Group have devised measurements for understanding the condition of our water. Ecological and chemical indicators are used by the Environment Agency to measure the condition of 'Waterbodies' in terms of whether the waterbody is doing well for nature (Ecological status) and for drinking and bathing (chemical status). This data is the percentage of Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) that has been assessed by the Environment Agency to be in good chemical condition. (Whilst they have extracted the overall performance for rivers in Leicestershire based on a percentage, for both key areas of measurement (Ecology and Chemical indicators), some rivers perform better or worse and others have localities that have a negative impact on quality). The 2022 classification was an interim data set and WFD classifications were only reported where data was available. Where this data was not collected, the previous classifications were rolled forward from 2019. The next full WFD classification will be undertaken in 2025, expected to be available in 2026. Polarity: High.	Source: Environment Agency.	Five yearly	Environment & Waste	Nature and the local environment are valued, protected and enhanced	High
Hectares of LCC land in better management for nature	This indicator includes available data on LCC sites that the Council considers suitable to be managed to improve nature. It covers land managed for nature (in hectares) by the authority such as County Parks, County owned farms and on suitable highway verges. Better management means the Authority has made a conscious choice to consider nature in its design and maintenance and implemented best practice where possible.	Source: LCC Environment Team	Annual	Environment & Waste	Nature and the local environment are valued, protected and enhanced	High
Percentage of suitable LCC land in better management for nature	This indicator covers the percentage of suitable LCC land in better management for nature, that the Authority considers suitable. It covers the land managed for nature (in hectares) by the authority such as County Parks, County owned farms and on suitable highway verges. Better management means the Authority has made a conscious choice to consider nature in its design and maintenance and implemented best practice where possible.	Source: LCC Environment Team	Annual	Environment & Waste	Nature and the local environment are valued, protected and enhanced	High

Indicator Title	Definition	Source	Frequency	Branch	Sub outcome	Polarity
Tree planting	This data includes trees planted in Leicestershire since July 2021 by Leicestershire County Council and partners. The Council aims to plant 700,000 trees in Leicestershire by 2032, 70,000 each year. It excludes Leicester. Source: Tree planting Tableau dashboard. Data is cumulative (starting July 2021).	LCC Forestry Team.	Quarterly	Environment & Waste - property	Nature and the local environment are valued, protected and enhanced	High
% of household waste sent by local authorities across Leicestershire for reuse, recycling, composting etc. (former NI192)	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (quarterly). Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (quarterly) - The percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the authority for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion. This was previously collected as BVPI 82a and 82b in 2007/08. The numerator is the total tonnage of household waste collected which is sent for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion. The denominator is the total tonnage of household waste collected. 'Household waste' means those types of waste which are to be treated as household waste for the purposes of Part II of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 by reason of the provisions of the Controlled Waste Regulations 1992. This was previously reported as NI 192. Polarity: High is good.	Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Collection name: WasteDataFlow.	Quarterly.	Environment & Waste	Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way	High
Annual percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill (former NI 193)	The percentage of municipal waste which is sent to landfill. This is a 12-month rolling period up to and including the latest quarter. Denominator (Y): Total tonnage of municipal waste collected by the authority (or on behalf of the authority). The scope of municipal waste is the same as the European Union Landfill Directive and Landfill Allowances Trading Scheme (LATS). Defra's view is that the definition of municipal waste in the Landfill Directive and LATS encompasses all waste in the possession or under the control of a waste disposal authority or a waste collection authority, or agents acting on their behalf. Numerator (X): Municipal waste to landfill includes residual waste sent directly to landfill and that which was collected for other management routes (e.g. recycling, composting, reuse, Mechanical Biological Treatment) but subsequently sent to landfill. Polarity: Low value is good. Unit of measure: Percent.	Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).	Quarterly.	Environment & Waste	Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way	Low

Indicator Title	Definition	Source	Frequency	Branch	Sub outcome	Polarity
Total household waste per household (kg)	Residual household waste per household. This is the number of kilograms of residual household waste collected per household. Residual waste is any collected household waste that is not sent for reuse, recycling or composting. This is a 12-month rolling period up to and including the latest quarter. This was previously reported as NI 191. For further information on the definition of this indicator please visit: http://www.wastedataflow.org/htm/datasets.aspx#NI . Polarity: Low value is good. Unit of measure: Kg per household.	Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.	Quarterly.	Environment & Waste	Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way	Low
Tonnes of waste produced from LCC sites	Tonnes of all office waste produced from LCC properties (excludes schools). Polarity: Low is good. Reported quarterly (two quarters in arrears).	Source: LCC Environment Team.	Quarterly (reviewing)	Environment & Waste	Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way	Low
% waste recycled from LCC sites (non-operational)	LCC Waste and Recycling (non-operational waste). The data is derived from the Council's waste, recycling and confidential paper collections by the Council's contractor(s), and all other known recycling and reuse streams, including compost collections. The waste contractor (New Star/Bakers Waste) records all bin weights when collected but bags are given an estimated weight. The data reflects corporate/office waste. Operational waste streams are monitored separately. (12 months rolling totals provided). Polarity: High is good. Reported quarterly (two quarters in arrears). Source: LCC Environment Team.	The data is derived from the Council's waste, recycling and confidential paper collections by the Council's contractor	Quarterly (reviewing)	Environment & Waste	Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way	High

Indicator Title	Definition	Source	Frequency	Branch	Sub outcome	Polarity
Total fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 population	This is the total number of fly-tipping incidents. Fly-tipping statistics are taken from the WasteDataFlow database. Fly-tipping is the illegal deposit of waste on land, contrary to Section 33(1)(a) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Local authorities and the Environment Agency both have a responsibility in respect of illegally deposited waste. This includes local authorities and the Environment Agency collecting and reporting data on fly-tipping in their area, this dataset however, only includes LA collected data. Due to varying levels of estimation between councils and years, some caution is needed in the interpretation of the trends. Direct comparison between local authorities may also not be appropriate as there can be some differences in approach, where there is a level of discretion in using the guidance on reporting. The situation is complex and can be influenced by population density, housing stock, demographics, commuter routes, the rigour with which local authorities identify incidents or encourage the public to report incidents, training of street crews, and increased used of more sophisticated methods for capturing and reporting incidents. Therefore, in assessing the figures local authorities should not be classified as good or poor performers based purely on numbers of fly-tips. Collection Name: Fly-tipping incidents and actions taken. Unit: Fly-tipping incidents, Polarity: Low.	Source Name: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and population data from ONS.	Annual	Environment & Waste	Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way	Low
% of staff who say LCC is doing enough to reduce its environmental impact (post-training survey)	Staff % - LCC doing enough to reduce its environmental impacts. This question was added as part of the online Environmental Awareness training for LCC staff. Polarity: High. Reported quarterly (two quarters in arrears).	Source: LCC Environment Team.	Quarterly (reviewing)	Environment & Waste	People act now to tackle climate change	High
LCC Environmental risks managed	Environmental risks refer to the total number of known environmental risks regarding the authority's operations. E.g. Environmental compliance of depots. Polarity: Low.	Source: LCC Environment Team.	Annual	Environment & Waste	Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way	Low

Indicator Title	Definition	Source	Frequency	Branch	Sub outcome	Polarity
NO2 exceedances for Leicestershire	The number of times NO2 has exceeded 40µg (micrograms). NO2 is the chemical formula for Nitrogen Dioxide. This KPI is a sum of all the districts NO2 exceedances annually, as published in the Districts Air Quality Annual Status Report. For the public, the most prominent sources of NO2 are internal combustion engines burning fossil fuels. Outdoors, NO2 can be a result of traffic from motor vehicles. Indoors, exposure arises from cigarette smoke and butane and kerosene heaters and stoves. For the public, chronic exposure to NO2 can cause respiratory effects including airway inflammation in healthy people and increased respiratory symptoms in people with asthma. NO2 creates ozone which causes eye irritation and exacerbates respiratory conditions, leading to increased visits to emergency departments and hospital admissions for respiratory issues, especially asthma. Polarity: Low.	Source: Districts Air Quality Management Plans.	Annually	Environment & waste	Leicestershire has the infrastructure for sustainable growth	Low

Leicestershire County Council

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10 SEPTEMBER 2025

ANNUAL REVIEW OF LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTRY PARKS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the ongoing work within the County Council's Country Parks service.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Country Parks and Open Spaces Strategy was agreed by the Cabinet in May 2020 and runs from 2019 to 2029.

3. The Tree Management Strategy was approved by the Cabinet in March 2020 and runs from 2020 to 2025.

4. At its meeting in September 2024, the Committee received a report outlining biodiversity enhancements within the Country Parks service.

Background

5. Leicestershire County Council has a wide network of 18 parks and open spaces covering over 530ha. The Country Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, 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.

6. Three of the Council's parks form part of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) (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. Five parks contain Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) (Reed Bed Nature Reserve at Watermead Country Park, Moira Junction,

Grange Nature Reserve at Snibston Colliery Park, New Lount Nature Reserve, Saltersford Valley. LNRs are sites chosen by the local authority as particularly significant for their wildlife, geology, education, or enjoyment (without disturbing wildlife).

Review of 2024/25

7. Visitor numbers to the major destination parks have continued to be substantially above pre-pandemic levels.

Car numbers	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Beacon Hill	155,433	131845	133730	154770	153631	106042
Market Bosworth	47,475	47402	48093	45915	42916	26277
Watermead	5117	29761	29417	30199	26925	19392
Snibston	85,521	51,012				

8. These four sites have been included as they have modern parking systems in place which allow the capture of this data, other sites do not have the same level of data available. These numbers are car numbers, rather than visitor numbers. Many of the sites have multiple pedestrian entrances and so ascertaining exact visitor numbers is impossible. These numbers also do not include the large number of sites that do not have car parks or have free car parks.

9. Car parking numbers at Watermead Country Park have been heavily impacted by the vandalism of the car parking system in March 2024. A full replacement of the system is underway and the opportunity has been taken to change the previous pay on entry system for an Automatic Numberplate Recognition System that will allow payment on exit. The system has been installed since February 2025 and is ready for operation. However, there have been significant delays from Openreach in creating a connection to the site that means the system is still not operational. This has meant that for the financial year 2024/25 there was no income taken at Watermead Country Park and projected income is reduced in 2025.

10. Flooding remains a challenge at Watermead Country Park, with 9 flood events throughout the year, 5 being severe enough to warrant the closure of the country park. There was less infrastructure damage compared to previous years, but the effects of litter and silt on the park are significant and take up a lot of time for Rangers to rectify. From September 2024, 460 bags of flood-related rubbish were collected from the park.

11. A Countryside Stewardship Woodland Improvement agreement is in place with Defra (Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs)

from 1 January 2022 – 31 December 2026 for woodlands within most of the Council's parks. 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. Over the past year, rangers and volunteers have undertaken thinning works and contractors have started work at Bagworth Heath and will start at Sheet Hedges and Jubilee Wood in September 2025.

12. Throughout the winter months, the programme of rhododendron clearance on certain areas of Beacon Hill was continued. This non-native species rapidly colonises areas of the park if not kept in check. The rate of recovery of areas previously covered by rhododendron has been surprising, with heather, gorse and scrub moving to cover the areas.

13. Visitor facilities continue to be improved on our sites. At Market Bosworth Country Park we added a 'Scrub Stop' dog wash facility and the installation of new seating and improvements to the play area surfacing.

14. In partnership with the National Forest Company, we have seen the resurfacing and improvement of paths around the Ashby Woulds Trail and the Ashby Canal from Conkers to Donisthorpe Woodland Park.

15. Throughout the year, there has been an extensive programme of events and engagement activities on the sites, ranging from livestock walks at Beacon Hill and Dragonfly walks at Bagworth Heath. Snibston has B-Buddies Cycle Club which regularly run sessions plus the Snibston Heritage Trust which runs regular tours at Snibston Colliery Park.

16. Parkrun continues to be popular with events held throughout the year at Watermead, Market Bosworth and Beacon Hill. At Watermead, over 11,000 participants have completed just under 48,000 parkruns since starting in September 2021.

17. To mark the 50th anniversary of the Country Parks service, a large social media campaign with historic images occurred during the Love Parks week which ran from 26 July 2024 to 5 August 2024 and engaged with 33,000 online users.

18. Working with Froglife, new ponds have been reinstated and created at Bosworth Battlefield, Market Bosworth Country Park and Donington le Heath Country Park to improve habitat for great crested newts.

19. Working with the Trent Rivers Trust, a scheme has been delivered to install leaky dams, a new pond, wet areas and swales at Beacon Hill Country Park. The intention is that this scheme will help to slow the flow of water in the catchment areas around Loughborough. These works were funded by Trent Rivers Trust but costs were minimal, when

compared to traditional flood management. There are also wildlife and ecological benefits to the wider Beacon Hill site.

20. A new Country Parks website (www.leicscountryparks.org.uk) was launched on 14 June 2024. Since launch, the site has attracted 109,273 users.

21. This wide range of work has only been possible because of the dedication of a small team of Country Parks Rangers, supported by over 174 volunteers. These volunteers support the County Council with a variety of tasks from acting as wardens on sites, to litter picking and carrying out significant pieces of environmental conservation activities as part of larger teams. A number of the activities listed above would also not be possible without the support of volunteers. Corporate volunteering continues to grow.

22. The overall objective for the service is to return a cost-neutral financial position. Disappointingly, income into the service was below target in 2024/25, predominantly due to the damage caused to the car parking machine at Watermead Country Park.

23. The financial position for 2025/26 will also be reduced whilst the Service await the final elements to bring the replacement Watermead system online.

Work to date and looking forward in 2025/26

24. A Fotheringhay Oak was planted by the Chairman at Bosworth Battlefield to celebrate Richard III, kindly donated by Barcham Trees. In addition, a number of trees were planted at Market Bosworth Country park, sponsored by local residents.

25. The café at Beacon Hill was opened in 2019 and has been operated by the Council since then. After the success of outsourcing café operations at Snibston Colliery Park, a new operator has been appointed for the Beacon Hill café who will be commencing operation in September 2025.

26. At Broombriggs Farm there are improved stoned footpaths, connecting Woodhouse Eaves and Beacon Hill and a small dog exercise area.

27. Beacons were lit at Bosworth Battlefield and Beacon Hill to mark VE and VJ Day.

28. Another ‘Up to the Beacon Sculpture Trail’ is currently underway and runs until 21 September. Once again, it is coordinated by ArtSpace Loughborough. The project employed 14 local artists to create 37 works and installations which were sited along the 2.2km countryside trail. Some works resulted from direct commissions to artists and some works were co-created in community outreach sub-projects. The trail was centred around the West Beacon Plantation next to the upper car park.

The project was based on the theme 'Harmony and Healing for Planet and People'. It included a varied programme of arts activities aimed to promote personal and community well-being and increase awareness of environmental sustainability and draw links between the two. The outreach programme enabled vulnerable people, and young people from areas of multiple deprivation, to co-create artworks with professional artists that were exhibited as an integrated part of the programme. It is estimated that over 24,000 visitors took part in the trail.

29. A Green Flag Award, the benchmark international standard for publicly accessible parks and green spaces in the United Kingdom and around the world, was received in 2025 for Beacon Hill, Market Bosworth, Snibston and Watermead Country Park.

30. Work has been conducted with a consultant to explore the longer-term future for Broombriggs Farm, with seed corn funding from Natural England. This has helped us to better appreciate the current habitat and biodiversity onsite, as well as options for how it can be managed more sustainably.

Resource Implications

31. There are no additional resource implications for the service at this time.

32. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted on the content of this report.

Conclusion

33. Members are asked to note the report and to make any comments on the report or the Country Parks Service.

Background papers

Country Parks and Open Spaces Strategy:
https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s152649/APPENDIX%20Country%20Parks%20and%20Open%20Spaces%20Strategy%202019-2029.pdf

Tree Management Strategy:
https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s152064/Tree%20Management%20Strategy.pdf

Report to the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 9 September 2024 – Annual Review of Leicestershire Country Parks
https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1292&MId=7645&Ver=4

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Equality Implications

34. There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Human Rights Implications

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

Environmental Implications

36. The Country Park Service continues to deliver against wider Council polices through the management of its land holdings for the benefit of wildlife and people. The service works to create, enhance and maintain biodiversity found within the varying habitats found within the Councils country parks. The Council's parks are an exemplar of how wildlife and people can coexist and are a refuge for delicate habitat types such as heathland, wetlands and woodland.

Health Implications

37. The Council's parks are a resource for residents for physical wellbeing, but also mental wellbeing, allowing visitors to connect with nature within a safe and accessible parks environment. The benefits of positive mental health through accessing greenspaces came to the forefront during the pandemic, and this trend in usage of green spaces continues.

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