

CABINET – 13 SEPTEMBER 2019**CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION - REVIEW OF THE
ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND IMMEDIATE
AREAS FOR ACTION****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet with an overview of the work to be undertaken to enable action to be taken on meeting the commitments set out in the County Council's climate emergency declaration of 15 May 2019.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:-
 - a) The progress made to date and the planned actions be noted;
 - b) The proposed process and reporting schedule for the updating of the Environment Strategy and the review of the Action Plan be noted;
 - c) The Council's Strategic Plan and Single Outcome Framework be revised to incorporate the new environment and climate change commitments as part of its wider review;
 - d) £450,000 revenue funding be allocated to facilitate the review of the Environment Strategy and Action Plan and take immediate action to implement measures such as some of those outlined in the Appendix to the report.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. In order to address the climate emergency commitments made by the County Council, it is necessary to update the Authority's Environment Strategy and ensure that the associated Action Plan will deliver the required activities.
4. A review of the Council's Strategic Plan will enable it to reflect the commitments made in the climate emergency declaration.
5. The allocation of £450,000 will enable the implementation of a number of short-term immediate initiatives and facilitate the assessment work to understand what actions will enable the Council's commitments to be met. This in turn will

enable the updating of the Environment Strategy and the review of the Action Plan.

Timetable for Decision (including Scrutiny)

6. Subject to Cabinet's approval of the proposed approach, progress in the updating of the Environment Strategy and review of the Strategic Plan will be presented to both Cabinet and Scrutiny in six monthly progress reports.
7. The review of the Environment Strategy will set out a roadmap and the key actions that will need to be taken to achieve the commitments made in the climate emergency declaration. The updated Environment Strategy and revised Action Plan will be presented in stages during 2020 to Scrutiny and Cabinet.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. On 6 July 2018, the Cabinet approved the Environment Strategy which sets out the Council's vision, aims and objectives on the environment for the period 2018-2030.
9. On 15 May 2019, the County Council declared a climate emergency and committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 for its own operations, to work with others and to lobby government to make the wider 2030 target possible and to try and limit global warming to less than 1.5°C.
10. The declaration also requested officers to undertake a review of the aspects of the Environment Strategy 2018-2030 necessary to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. This will include an assessment of the cost and technology implications to enable the Cabinet to take an informed decision on how the Council will reduce its carbon emissions and support the required reduction in emissions from the County, recognising that this is likely to require the reallocation of resources by the Council.
11. On 6 December 2017 the County Council approved the Strategic Plan 2018–2022 and the Single Outcomes Framework. At present the Council's Strategic Plan 2018-22 has five strategic outcomes which describe the Council's vision for people in the county. These outcomes are set out below and the forthcoming review will consider how best to update them to reflect the commitments made in the climate emergency declaration.
 - i) Strong Economy: Leicestershire's economy is growing and resilient so that people and businesses can fulfil their potential.
 - ii) Wellbeing and Opportunity: The people of Leicestershire have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing.
 - iii) Keeping People Safe: People in Leicestershire are safe and protected from harm.
 - iv) Great Communities: Leicestershire communities are thriving and integrated places where people help and support each other and take pride in their local area.

- v) Affordable and Quality Homes: Leicestershire has a choice of quality homes that people can afford

Resource Implications

12. The climate emergency declaration will necessitate council-wide activity that is not currently incorporated into its financial plans. It will also require additional staff resource to update the Environment Strategy and review the associated Action Plan as well as carry out specialist analysis to understand how current operations will need to change to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Approval is therefore sought for £450,000 to enable this early work as well as implement a number of initial initiatives.
13. Projects identified during the review will be subject to individual business cases before any funding is allocated.
14. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on this report.
15. The funding will be incorporated into the MTFs when it is refreshed over the next few months. Expenditure that needs to be incurred in the current financial year will be taken from the Transformation Reserve.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

16. As this is a matter which will affect all areas of the County, a copy of the report is being circulated to all members of the County Council.

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PART B

Background

The Environment Strategy 2018-2030

17. The Environment Strategy sets out how the activities of the Council impact on the environment and the rationale for taking action to address this and to address wider environmental issues affecting the County and the people living within it.
18. The vision of the Strategy is that:-
'Leicestershire County Council will minimise the environmental impacts of its own activities and will contribute to the improvement of the wider environment through local action. We will continue to play a significant role in protecting and enhancing the environment of Leicestershire, meeting the challenges and opportunities of climate change, and seeking to embed environmental sustainability into both social and economic development in the county.'
19. The Strategy is supported by a live three-year Action Plan designed to accommodate changing policies and priorities.
20. The Strategy has an overall target of achieving a 38% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from County Council operations by 2030 (compared to 2016-17 baseline). This was aligned to the government's then target to achieve an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, as set out in the Climate Change Act 2008. However, in June this year the Government changed the target, to achieving zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Declaration of Climate Emergency

21. The Council's climate emergency declaration of 15 May 2019 commits it to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 for its own operations, to work with others and to lobby government to make the wider 2030 target possible and to limit global warming to less than 1.5°C.
22. The Council noted the UK's commitments at international level and the recognition that temperature rises need to be limited to between 1.5° and 2°C above the internationally recognised pre-industrial baseline by 2030 and that the UK is not currently on track to achieve its statutory carbon targets. Members agreed that the Council had made commendable progress towards meeting its 2011-12 climate change targets and recognised its responsibilities, having signed up to the UK100 Pledge. However, the Council agreed that current efforts and targets for reducing emissions and limiting temperature rises were insufficient and resolved to:
 - (i) Update the Environment Strategy 2018-2030 to aspire to zero carbon by 2030;

(ii) Re-evaluate the position with respect to:-

- reducing emissions from Leicestershire road transport;
- reducing emissions from waste disposal;
- fossil fuel extraction including fracking;
- procurement policies for external contractors;

(iii) Call for the support of all parties to urge Government to:-

- provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;
- work with other governments (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods to limit global warming to less than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels;

(iv) Work with partners and other public bodies across the county and region to deliver this ambitious goal through all relevant technologies, strategies and plans.

23. A review of the Environment Strategy 2018-2030 together with an assessment of the cost and technology implications of doing so will enable the Council to take informed decisions on all aspects of its operations, recognising that this is likely to require the reallocation of resources.

Implications of the Climate Emergency Declaration

24. The commitments made in the declaration equates to achieving a further 20% reduction in carbon emissions from the Council's own operations (i.e. 80% to 100%) and achieving this 20 years sooner than set out in the Environment Strategy (i.e. by 2030 instead of 2050).

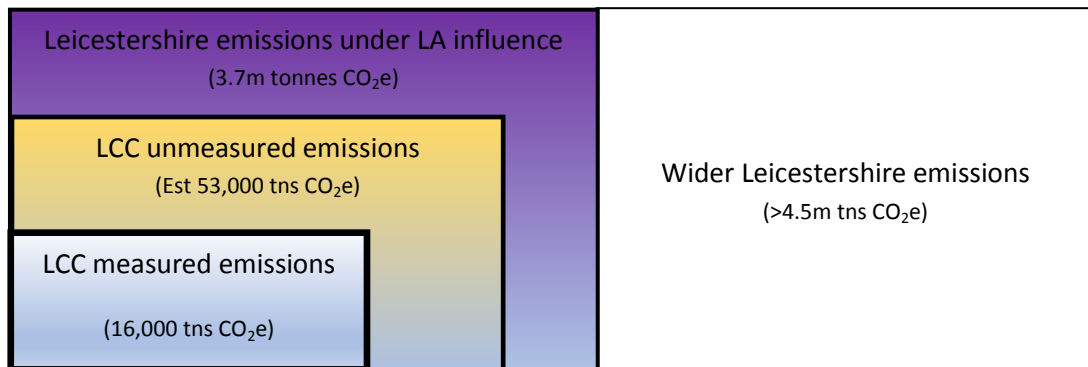
25. The measured greenhouse gas emissions for the Council are currently almost 16,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). When added to the unmeasured emissions the Council's emissions are estimated at approximately 53,000 tonnes of CO₂e.

26. The wider 'local authority influenced' emissions for Leicestershire for which the government provides data, indicate that these emissions equate to 3.7m tonnes of CO₂e. This includes emissions from Housing, Transport, Agriculture and Industry sectors and includes such sources as:

- Energy use in housing, businesses and other buildings
- Vehicles driving through and within the county
- Factory processes such as burning, heating, cooling etc
- Agricultural activities and practices

27. The government's wider emissions for Leicestershire have been calculated at over 4.5m tonnes of CO₂e. Figure 1 below illustrates how the different sources of carbon emissions relate to each other.

Figure 1: County Council and Leicestershire carbon emissions in context



28. The Council's measured emissions are only 0.36% of the County's wider emissions and the unmeasured emissions have been estimated at about 1%. This highlights that even with significant effort put into reducing the Council's emissions it will have only a very small impact on reducing the County's wider emissions.
29. Some of the Council's operational emissions may be best reduced by working collaboratively with others. For example, reducing emission from the Council's operational and grey fleets may be more effectively done by working with partners such as the East Midlands Energy Hub, the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, Leicester City Council and the district councils. As such, there is an overlap between internal and external emissions which will be considered when deciding on and prioritising actions.
30. Taking wider action to reduce the County's carbon emissions and working collaboratively with others to do so will be a strong and visible demonstration of the Council fulfilling its important leadership role in meeting the challenges and opportunities of climate change.
31. In order to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the Council's impact on the environment it will be necessary to make changes to all aspects of its work. In light of the wide-ranging impacts of the climate emergency declaration on the approach to all areas of operations and service delivery, it is proposed to update the Council's Strategic Plan to ensure it fully reflects the environmental and climate emergency commitments. This will be done as part of a wider review of the Strategic Plan which is due to commence in October 2019.
32. Furthermore, as the impacts of climate change are happening now and are expected to continue at an increased pace and intensity it will be important to also include climate change resilience and adaptation when carbon reduction solutions are being assessed and developed. This will include for example, taking action to enable the local road network to cope with greater extremes of weather and updating of business continuity plans to account for the existing and predicted impacts of climate change.

33. At a national level, the move in June 2019 to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 will require the current national economic model to be replaced by a more localised, steady state and circular economy model with a greater focus on the type of development, resilience, wellbeing and quality of life.
34. There are numerous benefits both nationally and more locally to taking action to reduce carbon emissions and address ecological decline including:
- new green industries with new jobs and export opportunities;
 - quieter streets, cleaner air, less congestion;
 - smarter cities and more comfortable homes;
 - healthier lifestyles, with more active travel and healthier diets;
 - more biodiversity, cleaner water and more green space to enjoy;
 - reduced global warming avoiding the worst effects and costs;
 - longer term savings for the Council;
 - income and investment opportunities for the Council.

Climate Emergency Mobilisation and Implementation

35. The following key activities will be required in order to identify what actions will need to be undertaken to meet the climate emergency commitments:
- a) Update the Environment Strategy and review the associated Action Plan in a number of phases. The exercise will set out a roadmap and the key actions that the Council can take to meet the commitments in the climate emergency declaration;
 - b) Assess key areas of council activity to understand its carbon impact and the costs and benefits of any changes;
 - c) Identify and implement short-term 'low regret' initiatives, developing businesses cases as necessary. A list of possible areas of activity is listed in the appendix;
 - d) Update the Council's Strategic Plan to ensure it fully reflects the environmental and climate emergency commitments;
 - e) Learn from other local authorities, undertake research and networking;
 - f) Consider how best to engage with communities, businesses and other stakeholders.
36. The approach needed to respond to the Climate Emergency could be considered in the same way as that taken by the Council to respond to funding challenges presented through austerity. Such a response will require organisation-wide transformation in how it designs and delivers services and engages with and influences partners and stakeholders. The governance, assurance and investment models utilised by the Council's existing Transformation Portfolio provides a framework for supporting organisational

change and it is therefore proposed that further work is undertaken with colleagues from the Transformation Unit to align the Climate Emergency alongside existing change priorities.

37. The revised Environment Strategy will be presented to Scrutiny for its consideration and the Cabinet for approval once completed.

Progress to date

38. The Council has already made significant progress in reducing its environmental impact with a 61% reduction in carbon emissions and a 55% reduction in wider greenhouse gas emissions since 2008-09. The amount of renewable energy generated on Council land and properties as a percentage of total energy consumed has increased to almost 13%. The Council has also halved the amount of office waste produced and is achieving a recycling rate of almost 80% at County Hall.
39. This performance has been achieved by a number of projects and activities such as:
- Installing 872 kilowatts of solar panels across the council estate and a biomass boiler at County Hall.
 - Roll out of the streetlighting LED scheme has resulted in a 79% reduction in emissions and reduced electricity consumption by 63% since 2012-13.
 - Programme of rationalising the Council's estate and disposing of inefficient buildings.
 - Energy efficiency improvements such as automatic lighting, window frame and glazing improvements etc.
 - Replacement of inefficient vehicles and greener driver training.
 - Provision of standard recycling facilities across most of the Council's estate.
40. Since the climate emergency declaration was made on 15 May 2019, a number of actions have already taken place, with further work packages underway including:
- Reducing the use of single use plastics in Catering Services.
 - Assessing the implications of signing up to the Government Sustainable Buying Standards.
 - Supporting an expansion of the Green Belle project that provides funding to SME's in Leicester and Leicestershire to install energy efficiency solutions into their businesses.
 - A Green Fleet Review is underway looking at opportunities to green the Council's operational and grey fleets.
 - Supporting generation of local renewable energy through a proposed 10MW solar farm at Quorn and a zero-carbon industrial estate.
 - Agreement to switch to a green electricity tariff from October 2019.

- Contributed to the development of an environment and climate change evidence base and put forward recommended actions for the development of the LLEP Local Industrial Strategy.
- Developing a strategic approach to biodiversity.
- Commitment to develop a comprehensive tree planting programme as part of the Council's new Tree Management Strategy.
- Updating relevant environmental targets in line with the commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 for the Council's own operations.
- Planning for environmental and climate change considerations as part of the Lutterworth East development and seeking to make it an exemplar development.
- Supporting Leicester City Council in development of a funding bid to provide electric Park and Ride buses.
- Engaging with neighbouring authorities to explore how the Council might work together with them to reduce carbon emissions.

41. The Appendix provides an indicative list of possible areas of activity that could be examined as part of developing the Action Plan.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

42. There are no equality and human rights implications from this report. The Outline Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment for the Environment Strategy 2018-2030 indicated that overall the Strategy is likely to have a positive impact. However, individual projects will be assessed for equal opportunities implications as they are developed as part of the Strategy implementation process or following the completion of the review exercise.

Background Papers

Notice of Motion to the County Council on 15 May 2019 - Climate Emergency
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=5112&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet on 6 July 2018 - Environment Strategy
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5412&Ver=4>

Report to the County Council on 6 December 2017 - Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2018-22
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=5104&Ver=4>

Appendix

Possible areas of activity by emission source

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