



SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 8 APRIL 2020

REVISED ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Scrutiny Commission on the draft Revised Environment Strategy 2018-2030 (Appendix A), the supporting draft revised Action Plan (Appendix B) and draft Tranche 1 Carbon Reduction Roadmap (Appendix C), which are being presented to Cabinet on 28 April 2020 and to County Council on 13 May 2020.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The current Environment Strategy 2018-30 was approved by Cabinet on 6 July 2018.
3. The County Council declared a climate emergency on 15 May 2019 with unanimous cross-party support. The declaration committed the Council to achieving carbon neutrality for its own emissions by 2030 and to working with others and lobbying government to support delivery of this commitment. There was also a commitment to support the limiting of global warming to less than 1.5°C, in line with the Paris Agreement. This in effect means achieving carbon neutrality for Leicestershire by 2050 or before.
4. The declaration also requested officers to undertake a review of the aspects of the Environment Strategy 2018-2030 necessary to achieve the carbon neutrality by 2030 aspiration, together with an assessment of the cost and technology implications. This work would enable Cabinet and Council to take informed decisions on delivering the revised ambitions of the Environment Strategy recognising that this will require the reallocation of resources by the Council.

Background

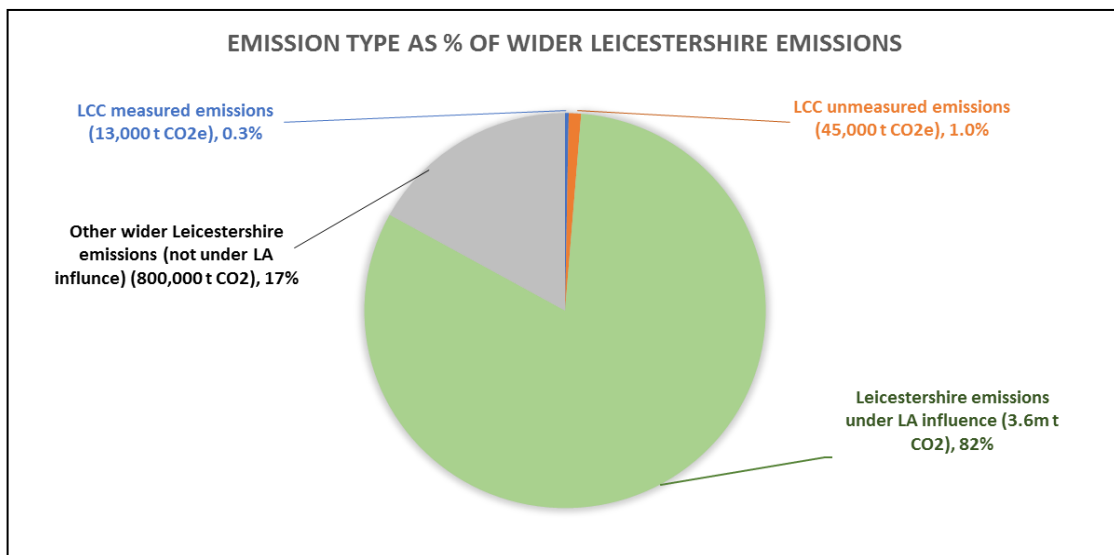
5. The Climate Emergency Declaration and associated commitments require the Environment Strategy and Action Plan to be revised.
6. A Carbon Reduction Roadmap will be produced highlighting key actions for reducing both internal and external carbon emissions. The Tranche 1 Roadmap will focus on the Council's internal measured emissions and align with the 2030 net carbon neutral commitment. Tranche 2 will focus on the

Council's wider unmeasured emissions and the approach to reducing Leicestershire's emissions. Both tranches will be combined into a single Carbon Reduction Roadmap which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

7. A revision of the Council's Strategic Plan and Outcomes has also taken place to embed the commitments made in the Climate Emergency Declaration and the revised Environment Strategy reflects the changes made.
8. Within the current Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reporting for internal emissions the following aspects are included in line with current government reporting guidance:
 - Buildings
 - Operational Fleet
 - Business Travel
 - Street Lighting and Signals
 - Fugitive Gases (e.g. air conditioning gases)
 - Transmission and Distribution (grid emissions)
 - Renewable Energy Exports
 - Offsets
9. The Council's internal measured (Tranche 1) emissions were almost 13,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) in 2018-19. A paper on the 2018-19 Greenhouse gas report was presented to the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 January 2020.
10. However, there are other aspects of the Council's operations which are known to produce emissions but are not included because they are currently optional for reporting purposes, the data is incomplete / non-existent or there are no agreed metrics/methodologies in place. These include:
 - Operational Waste
 - Water
 - Procurement
 - Farming / Land Use
 - Investments / Pensions
11. Adding the estimated emissions from the first three of these sources to the currently measured emissions gives a figure of 45,000 tonnes CO₂e. This figure will be higher if the emissions from farming / land use and pensions / investments are included.
12. The wider emissions for Leicestershire, which the government provides data on, includes emissions from the Housing, Transport, Agriculture and Industry sectors. This will therefore include emissions from 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.

13. The latest available figures for 2017 indicate that what the Government defines as 'local authority influenced emissions' equate to 3.6 million tonnes of CO₂. The total wider CO₂ emissions for Leicestershire have been calculated by the government at over 4.5 million tonnes. Note these figures only related to CO₂ emissions and not to wider greenhouse gas emissions as used for the Council's own emissions figures expressed as CO₂ equivalent or CO₂e.
14. Figure 1 below shows the different types of sources as a percentage of the wider Leicestershire emissions. This shows that the Council's measured emissions are only 0.3% of the county's wider emissions and the unmeasured emissions are only 1.0%.

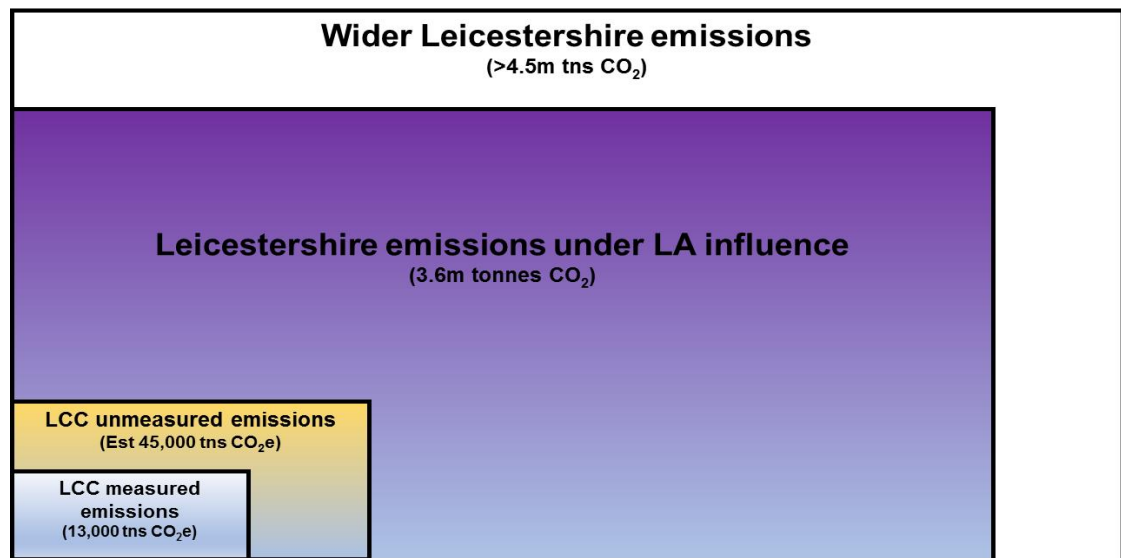
Figure 1: Emission type as a percentage of wider Leicestershire CO₂ emissions



15. There is an overlap between internal and external emissions which will need to be considered in developing solutions. Some of the Council's operational emissions may be best reduced by a county-wide or regional solution. For example, reducing emissions from the Council's operational and grey fleets may more effectively be done by working with partners such as the East Midlands Energy Hub, the LLEP and Leicester City Council.
16. 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 within scope when carbon reduction solutions are being assessed and developed. These in part will be addressed through the Climate Change Risk Registers and associated Business Continuity plans.
17. In view of this complexity, it is proposed to have a multi-faceted approach to the scope which will allow for consideration of a wider solution before consolidation to a final solution.

18. The initial focus of revising the Environment Strategy Action Plan will be on the 13,000 tonnes CO₂e of the Council's measured internal emissions which are reported through the Council's Annual Greenhouse Gas Report. To reflect the intent of the recent declaration, as part of the second phase of work the revision will also examine those other aspects within the Council's operations known to also be responsible for producing carbon emissions to identify opportunities for reducing them. In addition, it will also consider the Leicestershire emissions 'under local authority influence' to identify opportunities for collective actions which could better support a reduction in the Council's and county's emissions at the same time.

Figure 2: Diagram of proposed scope of the revised Environment Strategy Action Plan



19. The Carbon Reduction Roadmap will identify the significant actions that will contribute towards reducing both the Council's and county's carbon emissions.

Revised Environment Strategy Key Changes

20. The draft revised Environment Strategy (Appendix A) has, in addition to embedding the commitments made in the Climate Emergency Declaration and the changes made in the revised Strategic Plan, taken account of government policies, changes in legislation and information that has become available since the Strategy was approved in July 2018. The opportunity has also been taken to consider some format improvements and to strengthen some of the objectives.
21. Some of the key changes to highlight are as follows:

- The greenhouse gas reduction target has been changed to 100% by 2030 to reflect the carbon neutrality commitment made in the Climate Emergency Declaration.
- The Foreword, Executive Summary and the Introduction have been updated to reflect the Climate Emergency Declaration.
- The Key Drivers section has been updated to reflect Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019, Clean Air Strategy 2019 and 2019 State of Nature Report.
- The objectives in relation to the Health & Wellbeing and Local Economy themes have been strengthened.
- The Monitoring and Managing Change and Governance sections have been merged and rationalised.
- The Governance section has been updated to reflect new governance arrangements put in place following the Climate Emergency Declaration.
- The Glossary has been expanded.

Revised Action Plan

22. The revised Action Plan (see Appendix B) has removed any actions that have been completed since the original Action Plan was developed in 2018. For example, the actions to carry out a review of fleet vehicles to identify opportunities for using lower emissions vehicles, completing the development phase of the Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership bid and development of a countywide environmental volunteer scheme. Active and planned actions have been added across the six themes of the Environment Strategy as well as those which are crosscutting or related to Performance Monitoring; Reporting; or Strategic and Governance.
23. The Action Plan follows the four-year MTFs cycle and will be subject to annual review. The Action Plan is a live document which will be added to and changed as new projects and information become available, for example as a result of the development of the Tranche 2 Carbon Reduction Roadmap and consultation with service areas and partners.

Tranche 1 Carbon Reduction Roadmap

24. An exercise has been undertaken to identify possible workstreams for reducing the Council's measured emissions of approximately 13,000 tonnes CO₂e. The initial analysis has identified which workstreams are already planned to take place, which are low cost and / or high return, and which offer a low return or are more complex. Analysis has also allowed for the expected reduction in carbon emissions due to national changes such as decarbonisation of the electricity grid and the increased take up of electric vehicles.

25. A draft Tranche 1 Carbon Reduction Roadmap (Appendix C) has been produced setting out a suggested profile of how emissions could be reduced by 2030.
26. The Roadmap will be revised and improved as more work is done on understanding the design and deliverability of the workstreams and to take account of changes in circumstances and advances in technology etc.
27. Table 1 shows what initial analysis suggests could be removed from the Council's measured emissions by each of the different categories of actions by 2030.

Table 1: Tonnes of CO₂e removed by 2030 by each category of proposed actions

Category	Tonnes CO₂e removed
National change	3200
Planned improvements	3000
High return / simple improvements	2300
Low return / complex improvements	3500
Offset balance	700
Total tonnes CO₂e removed	12,700

28. Further work will be carried out on each workstream to develop more accurate figures on the costs and benefits (financial, carbon and other) which will form part of business cases and feasibility studies and inform future decisions on the implementation of actions.

Resource Implications

29. Utilising an evidence-based approach, the Council will continue to identify opportunities where both financial savings and improvements to the environment can be achieved. To date over £21million has been invested in significant projects which directly and indirectly have environmental benefits including the street lighting LED project, the installation of solar panels and the biomass boiler projects.
30. The Cabinet approved an initial budget of £450,000 to facilitate the review of the Environment Strategy and the development of the roadmap and to take immediate action to implement measures to reduce carbon emissions.

Further funding requirements will be identified through the development of the carbon roadmap and included in future MTFS as required.

31. The 2020-24 MTFS includes proposals valued at £16million for investing in tackling climate change such as the Quorn Solar Farm and the carbon neutral industrial units.
32. In the future there may be the potential to draw in private investment and external grant funding to support the implementation of some of the actions in the Environment Strategy Action Plan and these will be explored as opportunities arise.
33. With the incorporation of Carbon Reduction into the County Council's Strategic Change Portfolio from 2020/21 businesses cases will be developed for potential actions to assess the carbon, financial and other benefits of the proposals to ensure it positively contributes to the Council's objectives.

Timetable for Decisions

34. The Revised Environment Strategy, supporting Action Plan and the Tranche 1 Carbon Reduction Roadmap were considered by the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 5th March 2020. The Committee broadly welcomed the revised documents. An extract of the minutes from that meeting are attached as Appendix D.
35. The comments received from the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Commission will inform the final Strategy and be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 28 April 2020, prior to seeking approval by County Council at its meeting on 13 May 2020.
36. A Tranche 2 Carbon Reduction Roadmap will be produced and presented to Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Commission for consultation in early 2021, before being presented to Cabinet and County Council later in the year. The original timetable has been delayed due to the coronavirus emergency.

Background Papers

Link to [Environment Strategy 2018-30](#)

Report to the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5th March 2020 -

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1044&MId=5959&Ver=4>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Equal Opportunities Implications

37. An outline Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment 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.

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Revised Environment Strategy 2018-30 (draft)

Appendix B – Revised Action Plan (draft)

Appendix C - Tranche 1 Carbon Reduction Roadmap (draft)

Appendix D – Minute Extract from a meeting of the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee (5th March 2020)

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