



# Environment Strategy 2018 - 2030: delivering a better future

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# Foreword

## Cllr Blake Pain, Cabinet Lead for Environment

**Leicestershire County Council has a long-established commitment to the environment and has done much to reduce its impact on the environment. However, there is much more we need to do, especially as we work with others to meet the challenges of climate change and eco-system decline.**



In my privileged role as Lead Member for Environment I am becoming increasingly aware of and worried by the overwhelming scientific information that highlights the existing and future impacts of climate change and the significant decline in our natural environment. As a county councillor and Cabinet member, I believe we must take a leadership role in building on the global and national commitments made to address the situation by lobbying government and working with partners to take action within Leicestershire.

In recent years there have been growing public calls for action on the environment and climate change, be that in terms of reducing the use of single use plastics, improving air quality, encouraging the use of low emissions vehicles and improving energy efficiency.

In response Leicestershire County Council has declared a climate emergency and made a commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 from our own operations and to work with others and to lobby government to achieve carbon neutrality for Leicestershire by 2050 or before.

This revised Environment Strategy takes account of these commitments as well as the latest information and key drivers for action on the environment. It recognises that if we are to make a positive difference to the lives of Leicestershire people we need to protect and enhance the environment and meet the challenges and opportunities of climate change.

Delivery of this Strategy will require significant collaborative working within Leicestershire County Council, with the communities of Leicestershire and with partner organisations.

I look forward to supporting this collaborative effort to ensure a better future for the people of Leicestershire and for future generations.



# Environment Strategy – At a glance

**There are clear drivers for action to protect and improve the environment and to tackle climate change at a global, national and local level. Leicestershire County Council is building on its longstanding commitment to the environment and taking action to reduce the impact of its operations on the environment, its contribution to climate change and to ensure its assets are resilient to the effects of climate change.**

**The Council will also work with partners to protect and enhance the Leicestershire environment and help to deliver sustainable development by recognising and fostering the links between the environment, people and the economy.**

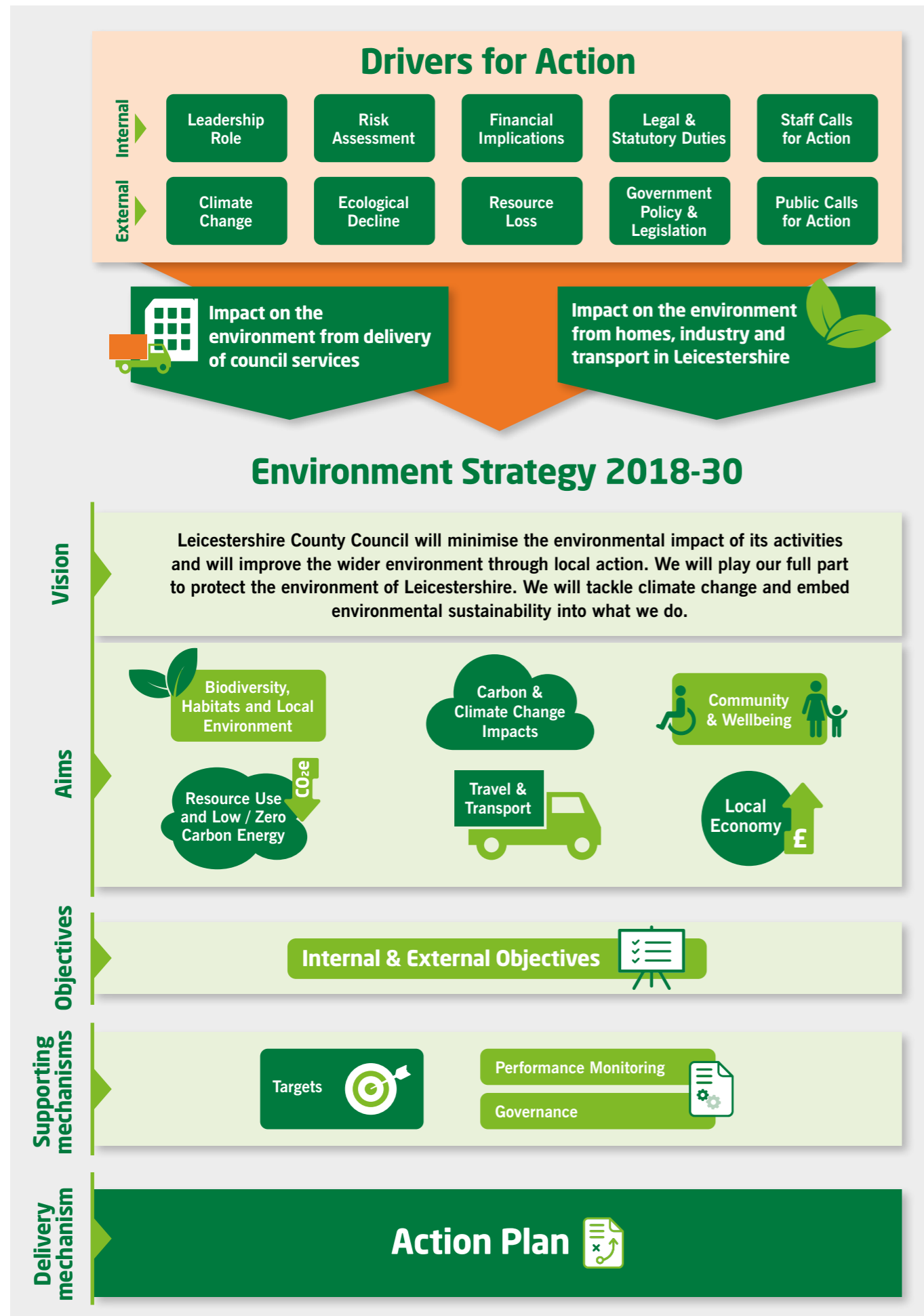
Figure 1 seeks to provide an 'at a glance' summary of the Environment Strategy. It identifies the key internal and external drivers for action and also acknowledges that our use of resources and energy and the delivery of council services have an impact on the environment.

It also highlights the more significant environmental impact that arises from domestic, industrial and transport sources within Leicestershire as people and businesses go about their daily lives.

These drivers and factors have informed the development of the Environment Strategy, its vision, its aims across 6 themes and the combination of internal and external objectives.

These are supported by a set of targets, a robust performance monitoring system and an appropriate governance structure which oversees and manages delivery through an evolving Action Plan which is regularly reviewed.

Figure 1: Environment Strategy – At a glance



# Introduction

There is increasing recognition of, and commitment to, the need to protect, promote and improve the environment at a local, national and global level.

The Council is committed to minimising its environmental impacts, protecting and enhancing the Leicestershire environment and helping to deliver sustainable development by recognising and fostering the links between the environment, people and our economy.

This Strategy sets out our vision, aims, objectives and targets which will be used to drive improved environmental performance.

The scope of the Strategy covers both the Council's own operations and also where it has control and influence within the county of Leicestershire. It includes the legal and statutory duties we must fulfil regarding the environment, what we need to do to embed environmental sustainability into the effective and efficient running of the Council and what we need to do to fulfil our leadership role in creating a better environment, improving the health and wellbeing of people and contributing to the sustainable economic development of the county.

Leicestershire County Council (LCC) has a longstanding commitment to the environment. This includes:

- **2006:** LCC signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change;
- **2008:** LCC was accepted into the Carbon Trust's Local Authorities Carbon Management Programme;
- **2009:** The first comprehensive Council-wide Environment Strategy and Action Plan was approved;
- **2011:** LCC established a robust Environmental Management System working to the ISO 14001 standard;
- **2012:** LCC signed up to Climate Local, an Environment Agency supported initiative;
- **2014:** The Council approved the Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan focusing on reducing carbon emissions in the County;
- **2018:** LCC signed up to UK 100 Pledge; and
- **2019:** LCC declared a climate emergency and committed to achieve carbon neutrality for its own operations by 2030.

With the making of these commitments, the development of these documents and systems, combined with the hard work of Council staff and partners, we have made measurable progress in reducing the Council's environmental impact. Of particular note has been:

- 63% reduction in the Council's own greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) since 2008-09;
- Significant increase in low/zero carbon energy generation on Council buildings and land. It is currently 16% of all Council building energy consumption (from zero in 2013-14); and
- Reduction in business mileage of 3.5 million miles since 2012. This is a saving of more than 1,150 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e.
- Within the County the following progress has taken place.
  - Domestic GHG emissions have reduced by 32% (against 2005 baseline), with electricity emissions reduced by 55%; and
  - Non-domestic (Industrial and commercial) electricity related GHG emissions have been reduced by 57%, gas emissions reduced by 23% and other fuels also reduced by 39%.

These achievements have been made at a time of considerable financial challenge for the Council, though many of them have contributed to significant financial savings including:

- **£1.1m** saved on electricity bills through the project to introduce LED streetlighting;
- **£505,000** saved through reduced business mileage; and
- **£78,000** saved through reduced residual waste and increased recycling performance from Council buildings.

The Strategy has been updated to take account of the commitments made in the climate emergency declaration and with the latest available information and figures. It will provide strong guidance for the Council's future actions and enable it to continue its leadership role in this area and help deliver an improved environment for both the people of Leicestershire and those living further afield who are affected by our actions.

## Environment Strategy key drivers

**The key drivers for action on the environment come from global, national and local levels. While this has long been the case, events in recent years have strengthened and brought into clearer focus the need for action.**

The urgent need for concerted international action on climate change has been recognised by over 170 countries globally.

The **Paris Agreement of 2015** requires countries to work together in limiting global temperature rise to below 1.5 to 2°C, the recognised level established by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to limit the risks and impacts of climate change.

The interconnection between economic development, social equity and inclusion and environmental impacts has also been recognised internationally via the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

It sets out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that Governments are expected to translate into national action plans, policies and initiatives.

The UK Government has committed to action under both the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its prioritisation of action on climate change can be seen in the **Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019**.

This set a legally binding greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 100% by 2050, i.e. net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. If this target is to be achieved transformational action is required.

In support of this, there are a range of policy initiatives designed to change the way we use and manage energy, water, resources, land and transport. This means contributions from everyone, including local government.

The UK Government's **Clean Growth Strategy** underlines the role that local government has in delivering and supporting our evolution to a low carbon society as we respond to these national and international commitments.

In recognition of this, Leicestershire County Council declared a climate emergency and commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 for its own operations.

The Council has also committed to work with others and to lobby government to support the target to achieve net zero carbon by 2050.

The **UK Government's 25-year Environment Plan** recognises that 'natural capital' – the air we breathe, water we drink, soil we cultivate and the ecosystem we rely on – is essential to economic growth and long-term productivity. It links to many of the themes in the Clean Growth Strategy. It acknowledges that delivery of the plan will require contributions from everyone, including local government. Its six goals are relevant to the impacts that we need to assess as a council in providing our services and fulfilling our broad range of environmental duties and responsibilities:

### Goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan

- Clean air;
- Reducing the risks of harm from environmental hazards;
- Clean and plentiful water;
- Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently;
- Thriving plants and wildlife; and
- Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

“Clean growth is not an option, but a duty we owe to the next generation, and economic growth has to go hand-in-hand with greater protection for our forests and beaches, clean air and places of outstanding natural beauty.”

[Clean Growth Strategy, Theresa May, 2017]



Cllr Nick Rushton after signing up to the UK 100 Clean Energy Pledge

“We’re proud to be a green council and we’re committed to tackling climate change and laying down the roots to protect local wildlife habitats. It’s clear there is a climate emergency and we’re committed to thinking globally and acting locally. That’s why we’re redoubling our efforts. The investment and long list of projects we’re exploring signals our determination to tackle this head on.”

[Cllr Nick Rushton, Leader of Leicestershire County Council, 2020]

The Government’s 25-year Environment Plan promotes the use and management of land in a sustainable manner, the enhancement and recovery of landscapes and the connection of people with the environment to promote health and wellbeing. It also promotes an increase in resource efficiency and a reduction in pollution and waste, securing a clean, productive and biologically diverse sea and ocean and protection and improvement of the global environment. It identifies that one of the key ways this will be implemented and achieved is through better local planning and more effective partnerships.

The Government has also launched a national **Clean Air Strategy**. A UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) concentrations was published in July 2017. The document notes the impact of poor air quality, not only on life expectancy but also in terms of wider health, productivity and wellbeing. It also notes the wider impact of pollution on the environment.

In the specific case of NO<sub>2</sub> it is noted that impacts relate to relative concentrations and therefore are very localised.

It is therefore up to local authorities in partnership to develop local plans to manage and reduce NO<sub>2</sub> levels where it is determined to be an issue.

The Government’s draft Environment Bill 2019 sets out how the Government will maintain environmental standards as the UK leaves the European Union and builds on the vision set out in the 25 year Environment Plan.

The Bill includes the creation of an independent body, the Office of Environmental Protection, which will scrutinise environmental law and the government’s Environmental Improvement Plan, and investigate complaints and take enforcement action on environmental law.

The Bill sets out air quality, water, nature and biodiversity and waste and resource efficiency as the four priority areas which will each have legally binding targets.

The **2019 State of Nature report** pools data and expertise from over 50 nature conservation and research organisations and gives a cutting edge overview of the state of nature in the UK. Its conclusions include that since 1970:

- 15% of species are under threat of extinction and 2% of species have already gone for good;
- 41% of UK species studied have fallen in numbers;
- Numbers of butterflies and moths are down 17% and 25% respectively;
- The average amount of mammals has fallen by 26%;
- 97% of the UK’s wildflower meadows have been lost in the last 100 years; and
- Only 13% of the UK land is covered by woodland, 66% of which is not managed sustainably.

“Escalating pressures, such as climate change and modern land management, mean that we continue to lose the precious wildlife that enriches our lives and is essential to the health and well-being of those who live in the UK.”

[State of Nature Report 2016, David Attenborough]

There are a number of pieces of legislation that place particular duties on local authorities regarding the conservation, management and access to the natural environment, for example the **Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981**, **Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW)** and the **Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006**.

At a local level, the **Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan** sets out the commitment to biodiversity and habitats from 2016 to 2026 and provides a framework for action for the county as a whole.

In the context of these drivers, the increasing societal movement to protect and improve the environment and to take action on climate change as well as the Council's leadership role, it is critical that we understand the environmental impacts of our activities and the benefits of having an Environment Strategy.

This Strategy allows us to demonstrate to all our stakeholders that we are an environmentally aware, responsible and committed Council. It allows us to communicate our strategic environmental direction and our environmental aims and objectives to all stakeholders.

Having an Environment Strategy benefits us as a Council by:

- Enabling us to comply with all relevant legislation and environmental laws;
- Supporting our staff in making more sustainable choices, keeping them informed about their environmental roles and responsibilities;
- Enabling us to identify opportunities to invest in initiatives that reduce our environmental impact and, in the longer term, save us money;
- Reducing the risk of environmental incidents that result in negative local impacts;
- Supporting national and international efforts in combatting the impacts of and adapting to climate change, reducing resource consumption and the generation of waste and addressing the loss of biodiversity;
- Improving our reputation;
- Supporting national and international efforts in combatting the impacts of and adapting to climate change;
- Improving the tracking of our environmental performance so we can identify both progress and problems and seek to continually improve;

- Improving the way in which we deliver services to reduce our impact on the environment;
- Reducing the public health impacts of climate change and a deteriorating environment; and
- Supporting efforts to develop a more sustainable economy for Leicestershire.

The Council's overall strategic vision is to 'work together for the benefit of everyone' and to make a positive difference in the lives of the people of Leicestershire. The development of this Environment Strategy and its subsequent implementation will contribute significantly to the achievement of this vision.

# The environmental issues and their context

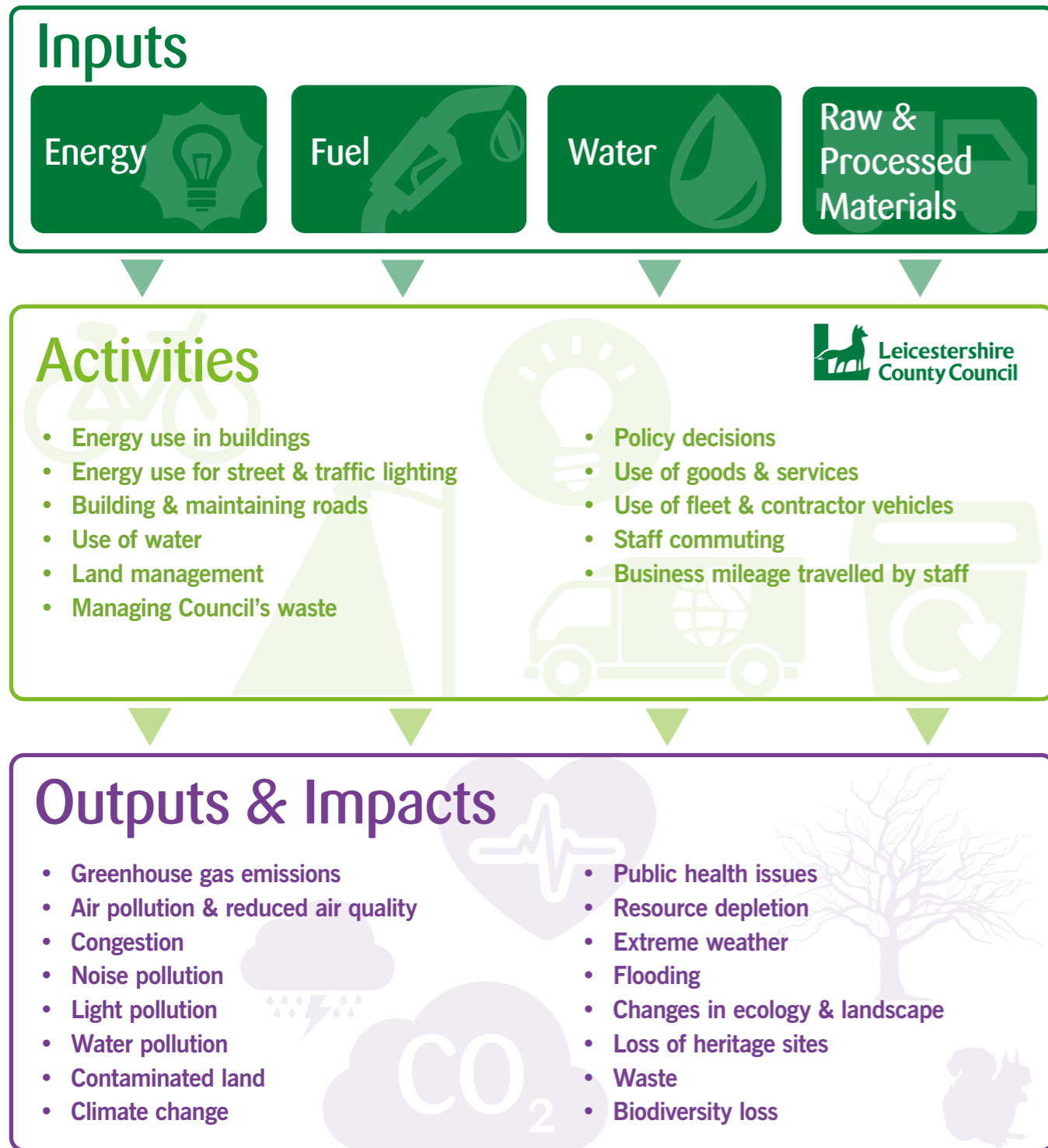
**As a County Council we are responsible for:**

- **Complying with legislation relating to the environmental impacts arising from our day to day activities, such as heating and powering our offices, using vehicles and generating waste;**
- **Carrying out statutory and non-statutory duties to enable effective management of certain environmental impacts arising from the activities of Leicestershire residents and businesses, such as air pollution from local transport and the reduction, recycling and disposal of household waste; and**
- **Enforcing environmental legislation on businesses, such as in relation to product packaging, banned substances and energy certificates.**

In addition to these responsibilities our actions are influenced by our wish to improve the efficiency of the Council, meet the financial challenges we are facing, be responsive to governmental policies and show leadership and provide a good example to the community.

In Figure 2 we illustrate how our use of resources and energy in the delivery of some of our Council activities has both environmental outputs and impacts.

Figure 2: Illustrative diagram of some of the adverse environmental impacts of council activities



We have carried out an assessment of the rationale for us to take action on environmental issues, taking into account our duties and responsibilities and the threats that environmental issues pose to the effective delivery of our services. This rationale is set out in Appendix 1.

# Environment Policy

The Council recognises the inter-dependency between environmental, social and economic well-being and the essential role it plays in balancing this inter-dependency through service delivery and in our wider leadership role.

This Environment Strategy sets out our policy position and the scope of our roles and responsibilities and states our vision, aims, objectives and targets. These will drive action to ensure we are meeting our environmental obligations and commitments, embedding environmental sustainability into the effective running of council services and fulfilling our leadership role in a way that recognises and minimises our environmental impact, improves the wellbeing of people and supports a resilient clean growth economy.

## Scope

The Environment Strategy recognises that the Council has different levels of control and influence in managing and protecting the environment, minimising its global environmental impacts and meeting the challenges and opportunities of climate change. The scope of the Strategy covers both the Council's own operations and also where it has control and influence within the county of Leicestershire.

The scope includes:

- The legal and statutory duties that we must fulfil regarding the environment and the national response to climate change;
- What we need to do to embed environmental sustainability into the effective and efficient running of council services;
- and
- What we need to do to fulfil our leadership role in a way that recognises and minimises environmental impacts, improves the health and wellbeing of people and contributes to the sustainable economic development of the county.

The Strategy also recognises the environmental issues that affect the Council and its ability to provide services and meet its obligations. The most significant issue is that of climate change and the related impacts such as an increase in the frequency and intensity of storms, flooding and heatwaves, prolonged cold periods and changes in pests and diseases.



These impacts are expected to include; damage to infrastructure and property, making the movement of people and goods more difficult, an increase in human death, disability and injury, and greater food shortages and rising food prices.

This Strategy coordinates the Council's overall approach to environmental management, recognising that there are a number of separate strategies and plans that deliver aspects of our environmental duties, responsibilities and commitments.


This Strategy is not a static document and it will be updated every five years. This five year timeframe is consistent with 'stocktakes' as agreed in the Paris Agreement and the timeframes used for the UK Government's carbon budgets. It will allow the Strategy to respond to changes in environmental policies and the wider context and circumstances in which it operates, coupled with a more agile Action Plan.



## Our Vision

**“Leicestershire County Council will minimise the environmental impact of its activities and will improve the wider environment through local action. We will play our full part to protect the environment of Leicestershire. We will tackle climate change and embed environmental sustainability into what we do.”**

[Leicestershire County Council]



## Our Aims

Our aims define what we as Leicestershire County Council want to achieve through the Environment Strategy.

### Carbon and Climate Change Impacts

- A. Reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions and those of the wider county where we have influence; and
- B. Take action to adapt to climate change and to minimise the impacts of extreme weather events across the county.

### Resource Use and Low/Zero Carbon Energy

- C. Reduce resource requirements and make more sustainable use of the resources consumed;
- D. Reduce the amount of waste produced and minimise its environmental impact by applying the waste hierarchy in the priority order of: prevention, preparation for reuse, recycling, other recovery and disposal; and
- E. Increase and support wider use and generation of low/zero carbon energy.

### Travel and Transport

- F. Reduce the environmental impacts of travel and transport.

### Biodiversity, Habitats and Local Environment

- G. Protect and enhance biodiversity as a natural capital asset throughout all our activities and seek to ensure that we achieve biodiversity net gain on our own land and influence improvements in the wider county;
- H. Support the creation, protection, enhancement and management of sustainable green infrastructure;
- I. Reduce pollution and contamination; and
- J. Conserve and enhance the character, diversity and local distinctiveness of Leicestershire landscapes and towns, and provide opportunities for public access and the enjoyment of green spaces.

### Community and Wellbeing

- K. Support the Leicestershire community in reducing environmental impacts and in enhancing green infrastructure for health and wellbeing benefits;
- L. Protect people from harm caused by climate change and the deteriorating condition of the environment; and
- M. Demonstrate and promote environmental good practice to show community leadership.

### Local Economy

- N. Support action for the development of a low carbon circular economy; and
- O. Support action for sustainable development and growth.



## Our Objectives

The objectives support and expand upon the aims set out previously, and have been set by:

- i. Considering the environmental impacts of our actions when carrying out our responsibilities and duties and when delivering our services (internal objectives);
- ii. Considering how our actions, within the limits of our control and influence, impact on the wider environment (external objectives); and
- iii. Considering the contributions that we can provide in supporting wider national and global actions.

Our overall objectives are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Internal and external objectives for each aim:**

Aims	Internal Objectives	External Objectives
<b>Carbon and Climate Change Impacts</b>		
<b>A. Reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions and those in the wider county where we have influence</b>	A1. The Council's greenhouse gas emissions are reduced.	A2. Contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions across the County.
<b>B. Take action to adapt to climate change and to minimise the impacts of extreme weather events across the county</b>	B1. The Council increases its resilience to the existing and predicted changes in climate.	B2. The Council contributes to increasing the resilience of the County to the existing and predicted changes in climate.
<b>Resource Use and Renewable Energy</b>		
<b>C. Reduce resource requirements and make more sustainable use of resources consumed</b>	C1. The Council's procurement of goods, works and services is environmentally sustainable.	C3. Seek opportunities and work with partners to encourage resource efficiency across the county.
	C2. The Council improves the efficiency of the resources it uses.	
<b>D. Reduce the amount of waste produced and minimise its environmental impact by applying the waste hierarchy in the priority order of: prevention, preparation for reuse, recycling, other recovery, disposal</b>	D1. The amount of waste produced from Council sites and services is minimised.	D3. Residual waste per household is reduced.
	D2. The percentage of Council waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting is increased.	D4. The percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting is increased.
<b>E. Increase and support wider use and generation of low/zero carbon energy</b>	E1. The Council increases its own use and generation of low/zero carbon energy.	E2. Work with partners to support the wider use of low/zero carbon energy in the County.

Aims	Internal Objectives	External Objectives
<b>Travel and Transport</b>		
<b>F. Reduce the environmental impacts of travel and transport</b>	F1. Reduce the mileage travelled in delivering Council operations and services.	F4. Work with partners to reduce greenhouse gas and other pollutant emissions from the local transport network.
	F2. Increase the proportion of the Council's fleet that consists of less polluting and more efficient vehicles.	
	F3. Support sustainable travel options for Council staff commuting to work.	
<b>Biodiversity, Habitats and Local Environment</b>		
<b>G. Protect and enhance biodiversity as a natural capital asset throughout all our activities and seek to ensure that we achieve biodiversity net gain on our own land and influence improvements in the wider county</b>	G1. Improve the biodiversity value and condition of natural capital features on Council managed land and assets.	G4. Work with partners to support wider biodiversity and natural capital feature improvements across Leicestershire.
	G2. The Council will manage its land with nature conservation designations (SSSIs and LWS) to maintain and enhance their biodiversity value.	
	G3. The Council seeks to demonstrate and support environmentally sustainable farming practices on its farms that support the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity and the condition of natural capital features.	
<b>H. Support the creation, protection, enhancement and management of sustainable green infrastructure</b>	H1. The Council will create, protect, enhance and manage sustainable green infrastructure on its estate.	H2. The Council will support the creation protection, enhancement and management of sustainable green infrastructure in Leicestershire.
<b>I. Reduce pollution and contamination</b>	I1. The Council reduces polluting emissions and contamination from its operations.	I2. The Council reduces pollution and contamination in Leicestershire through its Trading Standards service and other areas of control and influence.
<b>J. Conserve and enhance the character, diversity and local distinctiveness of Leicestershire landscapes and towns, and provide opportunities for public access and enjoyment of green spaces</b>	J1. The Council will respect, conserve and enhance the character, heritage and accessibility of the Leicestershire landscape on its estate.	J2. The Council will work with partners to support action that respects, conserves and enhances the character, heritage and accessibility of the Leicestershire landscape and towns.

Aims	Internal Objectives	External Objectives
<b>Community and Wellbeing</b>		
<b>K. Support the Leicestershire community in reducing environmental impacts and in enhancing green infrastructure for health and wellbeing benefits</b>	K1. Ensure that environmental impacts are considered, mitigated against and that ways to utilise and enhance the environment are explored for health and wellbeing benefits through the direct delivery and the commissioning of services.	K3. Capitalise on existing opportunities and council services which work with communities to ensure that environmental impacts are understood and considered, and that community capacity is harnessed.
	K2. Work with council staff and through our service delivery to encourage active and sustainable lifestyles.	K4. Provide support and opportunities for learning to local communities, schools and businesses that empower and promote positive environmental action and collaborative working, which results in constructive behavioural change.
<b>L. Work with staff and through our services to encourage active and sustainable lifestyles</b>	L1. Utilise the Council's duties to protect people from the harm caused by climate change and ensure effective communications.	L2. Work with partners to understand and address the impacts of poor air quality and its relationship with climate change.
		L3. Work with partners to address issues relating to climate change and health inequalities.
<b>M. Demonstrate and promote environmental good practice to show community leadership</b>	M1. Embed environmental good practice into the procurement and delivery of council services.	M2. Make others aware of our environmental performance and share good practice.
		M3. Work with others to increase awareness of the need to take action on climate change and ecological decline and to support residents and communities in taking the required actions.

Aims	Internal Objectives	External Objectives
<b>Local Economy</b>		
<b>N. Support action for the development of a low carbon circular economy</b>	N1. Minimise the impact on the environment of the Council's procurement and delivery of goods and services, including through the reduced use of raw materials and fossil fuels, the increased use of renewable energy and the deployment of smarter and more efficient processes.	N2. Work with partners and businesses to increase awareness of the need to take action on climate change, to measure and reduce the environmental impact of economic growth and to support affirmative carbon reduction and circular economy practices.
<b>O. Support action for sustainable development and growth</b>	O1. Utilising our own land and assets, the Council will ensure infrastructure growth and delivery does not harm the environment or contribute to climate change and instead actively seeks to improve biodiversity and reduce carbon emissions, thereby creating exemplars of sustainable development.	O2. Work with partners and developers to advance sustainable growth opportunities that embed developments which are low carbon, enhance biodiversity and are climate resilient.

## Environment Strategy Targets

**Here we set out the high-level environmental targets of the Council for the period up to 2030 where possible. Where this has not been done we will work with colleagues and partners to develop targets up to 2030 and to develop additional targets for the range of environmental aspects such as resource use, biodiversity, pollution, health and wellbeing and the local economy. It is important that any targets are ambitious yet realistic and this will take further discussion, analysis and agreement to accomplish.**

Achievement of these targets is supported by a prioritised Action Plan. In addition, to support the work to achieve carbon neutrality for the Council's own operations and for Leicestershire, a Carbon Reduction Roadmap will be produced setting out the key workstreams for achieving these targets.

We will also establish a suite of supporting targets where appropriate. These will be set out within the Action Plan.

Where possible, when setting the targets, a baseline of our performance as at 2016-17 has been established.

As a minimum we aim to reduce the county's GHG emissions in line with the UK Government's carbon budgets, as vital steps towards supporting the government's long-term target of net zero GHG emissions by 2050.

To support our climate emergency declaration commitments and the government targets, we commit to:

### Climate Change

- 64% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from LCC operations by 2025\*
- 100% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (net carbon neutral) from LCC operations by 2030
- Continuous improvement in reducing the number of climate change risks with a high-risk score (15 or more)
- 100% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (net carbon neutral) for Leicestershire by 2050

\* compared to 2016-17 baseline levels

It will not be possible to reduce the Council's greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2030 and a certain level of carbon offsetting will be required. This will be done after all reasonable efforts have been taken to reduce emissions.

In order to achieve these overall GHG emissions targets, initial supporting targets have been set for specific council operations where these emissions arise.

We have also set initial additional targets that will contribute to reducing the level of GHG emissions from within Leicestershire where we have a level of control and influence to do so. Work has also commenced on working with partners to develop plans for reducing emissions from within the County which will also contribute towards setting any targets.

As these and other targets are further developed and refined the suite of targets will be updated accordingly.

## Waste

- 10% reduction in waste produced from LCC sites by 2021\*
- 70% of source-separated office waste from LCC sites reused, recycled or composted by 2030
- 50% of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting by 2020<sup>1</sup>



## Transportation

- 11% reduction in total business mileage claimed by 2023\*
- Improvement in greenhouse gas emissions from transport (A Roads, Minor roads and other)



## Water

- 10% reduction in consumption of potable water by 2021



## Energy

- 15% of energy consumed to be from low/zero carbon energy generated on Council land and properties by 2021
- 100% clean energy by 2050
- Increased low/zero carbon energy generating capacity in Leicestershire (target TBD)



\* compared to 2016-17 baseline levels

We will periodically review these targets to consider relevant updates provided by the UK Government, and ensure

that the targets represent a continuous improvement in our performance.

<sup>1</sup> This target is under review since the government issued the National Resources and Waste Strategy. New target expected in 2021

# Performance Monitoring and Governance

**Performance monitoring of the Strategy will be managed through the Council's Environmental Management System, (which has been developed in line with ISO 14001 requirements), together with a number of supporting performance management systems. This will include performance monitoring of the high-level targets set out in the Strategy and the additional supporting targets and KPIs which form part of the Action Plan.**

Where targets, KPIs or monitoring systems have yet to be established these will be developed through the Action Plan process in consultation with relevant officers and partners.

In particular we will develop additional targets and KPIs to support environmental aspects such as resource use, biodiversity, pollution, health and wellbeing and the local economy. This will allow the targets to be measurable and monitored throughout the life of the strategy to demonstrate progress and achievement.

Progress towards the targets using the KPI data will be regularly reported to a range of internal stakeholders. In addition, an environmental performance summary report will be published on the Council's website each year.

**In terms of governance the ongoing delivery of the Environment Strategy will be overseen by chief officers sitting as the Corporate Management Team (CMT).**

The Environment Strategy will be implemented by the Environment Strategy Delivery Board.

Board members are drawn from service areas key to the delivery of the Environment Strategy. The board will engage with external partners to support the delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan and will promote partnership working where appropriate. Membership therefore, remains flexible to the priorities outlined in the Action Plan which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Environment Strategy Delivery Board will establish project-specific task & finish groups to drive progress which will be reported to the Environment & Transport Lead Member and to CMT, while Scrutiny Commission and the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive reports and review performance periodically.

With CMT's support, specific activities and programmes of work supporting the aims and objectives of the Environment Strategy will be the responsibility of relevant service area leads. This will reflect specific actions within the different service areas and wider initiatives with strategic partners and others.

# How the Environment Strategy contributes to the Council's Strategic Plan

Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2018-22 entitled 'Working together for the benefit of everyone' takes an outcome-based approach which focusses on the difference the Council wants to make. In doing so it has developed five strategic outcomes essential for achieving the vision of a good quality of life in Leicestershire.



Following the climate emergency declaration, the Strategic Plan 2018-22 has been revised so as to embed the commitments made as part of the declaration. This puts the Council's commitments to reduce carbon and to protect the environment at the heart of its strategic thinking.

**Table 2: Key contributions of the Environment Strategy to the Strategic Plan 2018-22 outcomes.**

Strategic Plan Outcome	How Environment Strategy contributes
<b>Strong Economy</b> Leicestershire's economic prosperity benefits everyone and supports resilient, clean growth.	By contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions and helping to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change which are predicted to have significant negative impacts on the economy.
	By identifying local business opportunities that will arise from the move towards a low carbon future e.g. renewable energy, sustainable transport, smart technologies, research and development.
	By seeking to address concerns around energy security and energy costs by identifying opportunities for local energy generation and distribution.
	By supporting the more sustainable use of resources and greater resource efficiency and enabling reductions in costs for businesses.
	By supporting efforts that recognise the valuable contribution that the natural environment makes to the economy particularly the rural, leisure and tourism economies.
	By supporting work to reduce biodiversity loss and increase biodiversity where possible and therefore supporting the local agriculture and food industries that depend on biodiversity.
<b>Wellbeing and Opportunity</b> The people of Leicestershire live in a healthy environment and have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing.	By identifying business opportunities that will arise from the move towards a circular economy.
	By supporting the creation, protection, enhancement and accessibility of sustainable green infrastructure which provides natural environments for people to enjoy and contribute towards their health and wellbeing.
	By taking action to mitigate and adapt to climate change and therefore contribute to reducing the risks from climate change on people's health and wellbeing particularly from severe weather events and disease.
	By supporting action to improve air quality and therefore reducing the health impacts associated with poor air quality.
	By taking action which will reduce biodiversity loss and help mitigate the consequences of food shortages and related health effects.

# Appendix 1 Summary of Council's rationale for taking action on environmental issues

Strategic Plan Outcome	How Environment Strategy contributes
<b>Keeping People Safe</b> People in Leicestershire are safe and protected from harm.	By taking action to mitigate and adapt to climate change and therefore contribute to reducing the risk of harm to people from climate change for example flooding and heatwaves.
	By supporting action to improve air quality and therefore contributing to reducing the number of deaths associated with poor air quality.
	By taking action to reduce pollution and contamination where possible and to mitigate their impact therefore reducing the risk of harm to people.
<b>Great Communities</b> Leicestershire communities are thriving and integrated places where people help and support each other and take pride in their local area.	By supporting communities to reduce their environmental impacts.
	By identifying opportunities for communities to support each other in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
	By working with communities to create, protect, enhance and manage local green infrastructure and biodiversity.
	By supporting communities with the move towards low emissions vehicles and technologies.
	By supporting opportunities for communities to be more self-sufficient and sustainable.
<b>Affordable and Quality Homes</b> Leicestershire has a choice of quality, sustainable homes that people can afford.	By working with partners to support action that respects, conserves and enhances the character, heritage and accessibility of the Leicestershire landscape and towns.
	By encouraging the provision of low carbon housing which can be cheaper to build and run.
	By encouraging the construction of more sustainable and lifelong housing.
	By supporting residents to be more resource efficient in terms of energy and water use therefore reducing the cost of running a home.
	By encouraging the provision of housing that enables more sustainable access to local services, green spaces, transport and employment and minimises and/or mitigates the impact of developments on the natural environment.

In order to achieve its overall strategic vision of 'Working together for the benefit of everyone' the Council has committed to a set of guiding principles which will shape its approach and define how it works as an organisation to achieve this vision.

These principles include a strengthened commitment that the Council will fulfil its leadership role for the environment by taking action to be carbon neutral by 2030 and to reverse the decline in biodiversity.

This Strategy provides a framework for how this commitment will be achieved.

Environmental Issue	Description	Rationale for Action
<b>Greenhouse Gas Emissions &amp; Climate Change</b>	The release of GHG into the atmosphere, mainly from the use of fossil fuels, results in them acting as a thermal blanket around the Earth. This in turn is causing an increase in average global temperatures and resulting in changes to the climate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased risk of disruption to our critical services from extreme weather events;</li> <li>• Vulnerable people in the community are particularly susceptible to the effects of climate change;</li> <li>• Increased risk of damage to the Council's highway assets;</li> <li>• Support our responsibilities as the Lead Local Flood Authority;</li> <li>• Responsibility to play an active role in helping to meet national and international carbon reduction targets; and</li> <li>• To support the local economy in moving to a low carbon future and minimise the financial and reputational costs that would otherwise occur.</li> </ul>

Environmental Issue	Description	Rationale for Action
<b>Air Pollution</b>	Increasing level of pollutants in the air that we breathe from road traffic, industrial processes and combustion of fuels for heating and electricity generation, resulting in serious public health impacts. Air pollution emanating in Leicestershire also affects people across a much wider area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased costs to Public Health and the NHS due to rise in illnesses caused by air pollution.</li> <li>Increased costs for Social Services supporting people living with debilitating diseases caused by air pollution.</li> <li>Increase in deaths linked to air pollution.</li> <li>The Council, in its role as the Highway Authority, has a statutory duty to address air pollution from traffic.</li> <li>The Council contributes to local air pollution through the operation of its buildings and vehicles.</li> <li>Responsibility to prevent harm.</li> </ul>
<b>Waste &amp; Resources</b>	The economy and society consume resources (e.g. energy, water, land, materials) in order to meet the needs of an increasingly growing population. This consumption causes a reduction in finite resources and a loss of, and damage to, natural resources. It also results in the production of an increasing amount of waste throughout the whole system. This largely linear economic model has significant environmental impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council is the statutory Waste Disposal Authority responsible for the recycling and disposal of the county's household waste.</li> <li>The Council is responsible for preparing a Minerals and Waste Local Plan to control the development of waste and minerals sites in the county.</li> <li>The Council's Trading Standards service is responsible for enforcing some waste regulations eg. Packaging Regulations.</li> <li>The Council uses a significant amount of resources and produces waste both from its offices and through its operations.</li> <li>To reduce the cost of managing the Council's waste and the County's household waste.</li> <li>Need to support the move to a circular economy that maximises the value of resources and minimises the environmental costs.</li> </ul>

Environmental Issue	Description	Rationale for Action
<b>Water &amp; Land Pollution and Nuisance (noise, dust, vibrations, odour)</b>	The release of pollutants and contaminants into water and land can pose a major health threat to humans and biodiversity. The use of machinery, equipment and products can also cause a nuisance by creating noise, dust and other impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council carries out activities that carry a risk of spillages and subsequent pollution;</li> <li>The Council is legally required to ensure the safe use of fuels and chemicals, to prevent pollution events and to have procedures in place for dealing with spillages;</li> <li>Reputational and financial cost of dealing with a pollution event; and</li> <li>The Council has a responsibility to avoid or minimise the nuisance caused to local people by its actions.</li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity Loss</b>	<p>There has been a major increase in the scale of biodiversity loss caused mainly by climate change, deforestation and habitat loss, overexploitation, invasive species, pesticides and pollution.</p> <p>This is also leading to a decline in ecosystem functioning and stability - resulting in reduced crop yields, increased soil erosion, loss of dependable water supplies, a decline in pollinators and ever more serious assaults by pests. This in turn leads to increased air pollution, reduced food production and a lowering of human life expectancy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council has a statutory responsibility to take due regard of biodiversity in all of its decisions and activities;</li> <li>The Council has specific responsibilities to care for its land where it has been designated as important for wildlife;</li> <li>As a significant landowner in Leicestershire, the Council has an opportunity to make a positive contribution to biodiversity protection and improvement;</li> <li>Leicestershire is a rural county and the food sector is one of the county's main industries so will be affected by any reductions in crop yields and difficulties in food production;</li> <li>Leicestershire has a number of significant natural assets such as the National Forest and Charnwood Forest which contribute to the local rural, leisure and tourism economy. These need to be protected and enhanced; and</li> <li>To protect Leicestershire residents from the consequences of food shortages and the health effects of biodiversity loss.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape &amp; Heritage</b>	The quality of the local landscape and the built environment are major contributors to health, wellbeing and quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council has a responsibility to provide a quality environment for Leicestershire residents through its role as the Highways Authority, its responsibility to control waste and minerals sites and management of its own land and buildings etc; and</li> <li>The Council manages several Country Parks that provide important accessible green spaces for leisure and contact with nature.</li> </ul>





## Glossary

Term	Definition
Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO <sub>2</sub> e)	A standard unit for measuring carbon footprints. It expresses the impact of each different greenhouse gas in terms of the amount of CO <sub>2</sub> that would create the same amount of warming.
Carbon Neutral	The action of removing as much carbon dioxide as possible from the atmosphere due to an organisation's operations, with any residual emissions addressed through carbon offsetting to achieve a net zero carbon footprint.
Carbon Offsetting	The action or process of compensating for carbon dioxide emissions arising from industrial or other human activity, by participating in schemes designed to make equivalent reductions of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
Circular Economy	A more resource efficient alternative to a traditional linear economy (make, use, dispose) where resources are used for as long as possible, the maximum value is extracted whilst in use, then products and materials are recovered, regenerated or recycled at the end of their service life.
Clean Growth Strategy	The UK's strategy for clean growth including opportunities for the UK and next steps to meet the future carbon budgets.
Climate Change Act 2008	The Act ensures that the net UK carbon account for all six Kyoto greenhouse gases for the year 2050 is at least 80% lower than the 1990 baseline. The Act aims to enable the United Kingdom to become a low-carbon economy and gave ministers powers to introduce the measures necessary to achieve a range of greenhouse gas reduction targets.
Climate Change Risk Register Score	All Council services and operations are subject to a Climate Change Risk Assessment based on a number of factors including criticality of the service, direct impacts from severe weather and vulnerable service users. The Climate Change Risk Register score is used to highlight any high risks to be reviewed further.
Climate Emergency	A state of emergency that recognises that a climate crisis exists due to human caused climate change and which requires urgent actions to be taken to address the situation.
Climate Local	Climate Local was an LGA initiative launched in 2012 which was supported by the Environment Agency Climate Ready service. The aim was to drive, inspire and support council action on climate change.
Ecological Decline	Also called Ecosystem Decline. The process by which an ecosystem suffers a drastic, possibly permanent reduction in the carrying capacity for all organisms. This can often result in mass extinction. This can happen slowly over time but more often occurs over a short timescale.
Environmental Management System	Refers to the management of an organisations environmental programmes in a comprehensive, systematic, planned and documented manner. In the UK, the Environmental Management Systems standard is based on ISO 14001.

Term	Definition
Euro VI standard	The most recent vehicle emissions standard which sets the level of emissions of carbon dioxide and a range of other pollutants that all new cars must meet.
Greenhouse Gases	A group of gases which contribute to global warming and climate change. Includes carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, sulphur hexafluoride, perfluorocarbons, and nitrogen trifluoride.
Green Infrastructure	The network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities. We also include 'blue infrastructure' (landscape elements linked to water) within our use of this phrase.
International Union for Conservation of Nature	A membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.
ISO 14001	Is the international standard that specifies requirements for an effective environmental management system. It provides a framework that an organisation can follow, rather than establishing environmental performance requirements.
Low Carbon Economy	An economy based on low carbon power sources that therefore has a minimal output of greenhouse gas emissions into the biosphere, reducing the principle cause of man-made climate change.
Natural Capital	The sum of all our ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, soils, minerals air and seas. They provide value by providing us with food, clean air and water, wildlife, energy, wood, recreation and protection from hazards. It is the source of all other types of capital whether it is manufactured, financial human or social.
Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change	A declaration signed by over 300 councils in the year 2000 signalling their political commitment to tackling climate change.
Natural Capital Features	These are many and varied but include hedgerows, woodlands, semi-natural grasslands, air and water quality.
Paris Agreement	A agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) dealing with greenhouse gas emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance starting in 2020. It aims to respond to the global climate change threat by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
Potable Water	Water that is safe to drink or to use for food preparation.
Resource Loss	Is the consumption of natural resources faster than they can be replenished. Natural resources are commonly divided between renewable sources such as soil, timber and non-renewable resources such as fossil fuels and minerals.
Sustainable Development Goals	In 2015, countries adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years. These goals are known as the Sustainable Development Goals.

## Acronyms

CMT	Corporate Management Team
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon Dioxide
CO <sub>2</sub> e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
CRoW	Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000
EMS	Environmental Management System
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LCC	Leicestershire County Council
LED	Light Emitting Diode
LWS	Local Wildlife Sites
NERC	Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TBD	To Be Developed



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