

**Submission to Cabinet**  
25<sup>th</sup> October 2022



From the Labour Group

#### **Item 4: Net Zero Leicestershire Strategy and Action Plan**

Two defensive themes run through this paper. One is that central government is holding us back from things we want to do, for example in our local plans. The other is that within the county at large we cannot do much alone. This rather questions whether the administration has confidence in the plan.

There are repeated references to “not being able to do it alone” but in the two years since the Tranche 2 policy was announced no partnerships have been forged with businesses or other public sector bodies.

Surely it would be far better to implement practical measures with local partners in the immediate term, following the five year carbon budgets.

**Domestic energy use** in Leicestershire. This is a case in point.

Only 41% of existing homes have an energy efficiency rating of C or higher. That would present a challenge, but sadly you won't find that in the report. Top of the list of actions should be a major campaign for better home insulation and revitalising the Solar Together programme.

Given soaring energy bills, there is a shocking gap in policy for better insulated homes. Government promised significant public spending in 2019 and committed to new policies last year, neither has yet occurred.  
*Climate Change Committee: June 2022*

**Transport** is another urgent case, one in which you might think we had some control.

The plan wants to offer low carbon choices for all but there is no plan to ensure they are used. For many years the county council has encouraged us to leave the car at home and use alternatives for short journeys but mere encouragement has not, unfortunately, cut the mustard.

The Government has acknowledged the need to limit traffic growth, shifting travel to public transport and active travel, but action is now required to ensure this.  
*Climate Change Committee: June 2022*

There are easy pickings like tree planting which are regularly trumpeted, but an unwillingness to address more difficult measures head on. As a predominantly rural county it also has much to say for farming.

Agriculture and land use have the weakest policies in the CCC's assessment. *Climate Change Committee: June 2022*

A successful action plan needs to focus on clear outcomes with SMART<sup>i</sup> actions. There are too many actions (163 so far!) Very few actions are specific or measurable. Many rely on further investigations and studies into question to which we already know the answers. There are copious good examples to follow, look no further than action being taken in other local authorities.

It's clear that the financial position the County faces, we need to challenge ourselves with an approach to Climate Change and Net Zero that is clear and concise, rather than spending scarce resources on the maintenance of a strategy which is unlikely to deliver change beyond our "our own operations" which represent little more than 2% of the county's emissions.

We recommend that the Action Plan is stripped down to a limited number of short term targets which are achievable and measurable. Base these on the five year cycle of Carbon Budgets<sup>ii</sup> and use those to track progress.

The Committee on Climate Change could not be clearer about what we must do to meet carbon budgets with cleaner energy, home insulation, less red meat, sustainable transport, better building and so on.

We need to make this task easier by working with others in practical and more focused ways, making the best use of the funds allocated

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<sup>i</sup> SMART: *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound.*