



**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19 JANUARY 2023**

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021-22

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides details of the Council's environmental performance for 2021-22. The report provides an update on progress in delivering the targets in the Council's Environment Strategy 2018–2030 and on the performance of the Council's Environmental Management System.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Cabinet approved a new Environment Strategy 2018-2030 on 6 July 2018. 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. The Council 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."
3. A revised Strategy was subsequently adopted by the County Council on 8 July 2020, to account for the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in May 2019.
4. The declaration committed the Authority to achieving net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 for its own operations. Furthermore, the declaration committed the Council to working with partners and lobbying government to make the wider 2050 net zero target possible for Leicestershire and to limiting global warming to less than 1.5°C in line with the Paris Agreement.
5. Subsequently, the County Council signed up to the UK100 Race to Zero Pledge and committed to achieving net zero emissions for Leicestershire by 2045.

Background

6. Environment and Climate Change Risk Registers identify actions to reduce GHG emissions from service activities, especially high-risk areas such as Property and Highways.

7. Where circumstances have changed since the end of 2021-22 in relation to environmental risks, the current position is provided where appropriate. Reference is also made to more contemporary changes that may affect the environmental management system where this is appropriate.
8. An external ISO14001 Environmental Management System (EMS) recertification audit was carried out in January 2022. One minor non-conformity was found. Corrective action has since been taken and reported to the external auditor.
9. The environmental performance summary dashboard for 2021-22 is available at Appendix A.
10. The layout of the report follows the structure of the ISO14001 standard.
11. The 2021-22 reporting period took place during the global Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting UK lockdowns, and therefore, should be seen as the second year of an exceptional period. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a mixture of positive and negative impacts on the Council's environmental performance which is explained in the relevant sections of the report, for example decreased office printing and lower business mileage. Care should be taken not to make any simple extrapolations about future performance based on these two years alone. However, some of the changes, for example in ways of working, have the potential to become embedded and thus permanently improve performance.

Measures currently behind target

C2b – Gas/biomass consumption (weather corrected) per m² in LCC buildings

12. This Key Performance Indicator (KPI) looks at energy efficiency in Council buildings. Only the buildings that have been in the Council's portfolio for six years are included so that any annual reductions seen in both electricity and gas consumption represent genuine efficiency improvements.
13. Gas/biomass consumption per square metre has increased significantly for the second year in a row, while the target consumption has decreased. Hence, consumption is now noticeably above target. The actual figure for 2021-22 was 130.2 kWh/m² compared to a target of 109.1 kWh/m². This is believed to be due to the need to continue to heat many of the Council buildings while at the same time needing to increase ventilation in order to meet Covid-19 safety requirements. This has meant that more energy than usual has been used to heat the buildings. In addition, the biomass boiler was out of action during the autumn/early winter period, meaning more reliance on gas heating.

C17a - Renewable energy generated as a percentage of consumption on County Council land and properties

14. The amount of renewable energy generated as a percentage of total energy consumed was 10.1% at the end of 2021-22, significantly under the 24.7% target. The targets for this indicator reflect the Energy Strategy 2020-30, which

has a target of 50% on-site renewable or zero carbon energy generation as a percentage of annual consumption at corporate Council buildings.

15. The largest contributor to renewable energy generation is the biomass boiler at County Hall, which provides approximately three-quarters of the total renewable energy generated. During 2021-22, works took place as part of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to expand the biomass network and install a thermal heat store, alongside the replacement of a safety component to the boiler. As a result, the biomass boiler was out of commission for a significant part of the year, meaning there was less renewable energy generated.
16. At the same time, total heat (gas) consumption went up. This appears to be fundamentally because of increased ventilation at the same time as heating due to Covid-19 prevention policies. In addition, consumption did not drop despite overall milder weather conditions (fewer heating degree days) than in the preceding years. As a result, the weather-corrected gas consumption shows an even greater increase of 19% on 2020/21.
17. The works on the biomass boiler and the installation of additional solar panels on County Hall and other corporate Council buildings have increased the potential renewable energy generation by over 1,000,000 kWh per year, which is expected to lead to a significant improvement in this KPI in future.

R1 - Outstanding actions on climate change risk register

18. There are eight high risks on the register following the completion during 2021-22 of a review and assessment of the risks to the Council from climate change. The identified risks relate primarily to highways and property assets, business continuity and flood risk. See paragraph 66 for more details.

LW2 - % Recycled from LCC sites

19. The 12-month rolling recycling figure increased throughout 2021-22, rising from 48.9% to 59.7% by the end of the year after a significant fall due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This is below the target of 63.2% for 2021-22. The target is to achieve a 70% recycling rate by 2030.
20. The level of recycling performance is still slightly below target on a 12-month basis, but steadily improved during 2021-22 and was slightly above target in the final quarter at 64.6%. However, further improvements are possible. Discussions are currently taking place to explore how the kitchen composting scheme could be re-introduced in County Hall considering the new ways of working. Renewed staff engagement is also planned during 2022-23 and beyond.

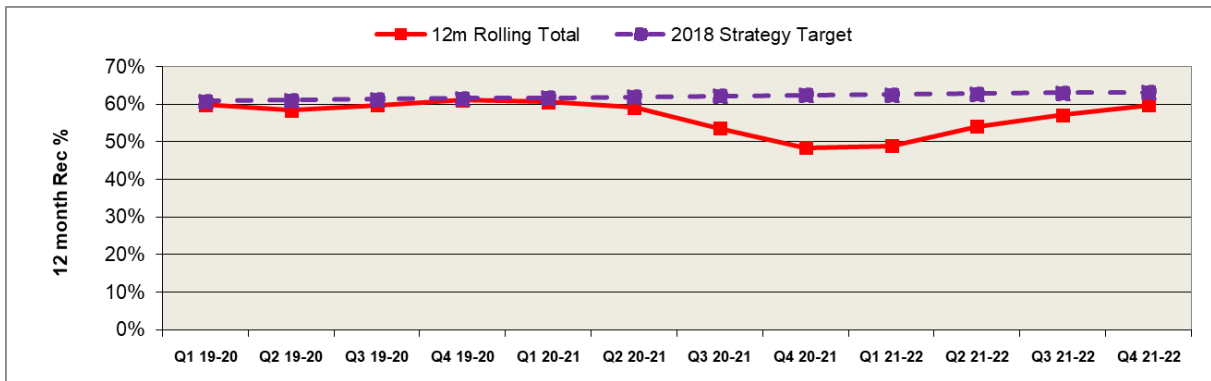


Figure 1: 12-month rolling quarterly recycling percentage

HW2 - % Household waste reused, recycled and composted

21. The annual household waste recycling figure was 43.4% for 2021-22. This is below the 50% recycling target which is in line with the Waste Framework Directive. Recycling performance has increased by 0.1% compared to the previous year.
22. A review of the Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy has largely been completed, subject to clarity on Government policy and regulations. The draft Strategy includes a pledge to ‘put in place collection systems to contribute towards the achievement of the national 65% recycling target by 2035.’
23. There are several reasons for the continued low performance, including national and local issues such as a fall in garden waste, light-weighting of packaging and economic factors.

WA1 - Water consumption per full time equivalent member of staff

24. The data for 2021-22 shows an apparent very large increase in total reported water consumption in corporate Council buildings to 74,046 m3, up from 40,743 m3 in the previous year. The number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff was broadly stable, so that the water consumption per FTE member of staff rose from 8.51 m3 in 2020-21 to 15.2 m3 in 2021-22. For the first time since 2017-18, the m3/ FTE staff target has been exceeded.

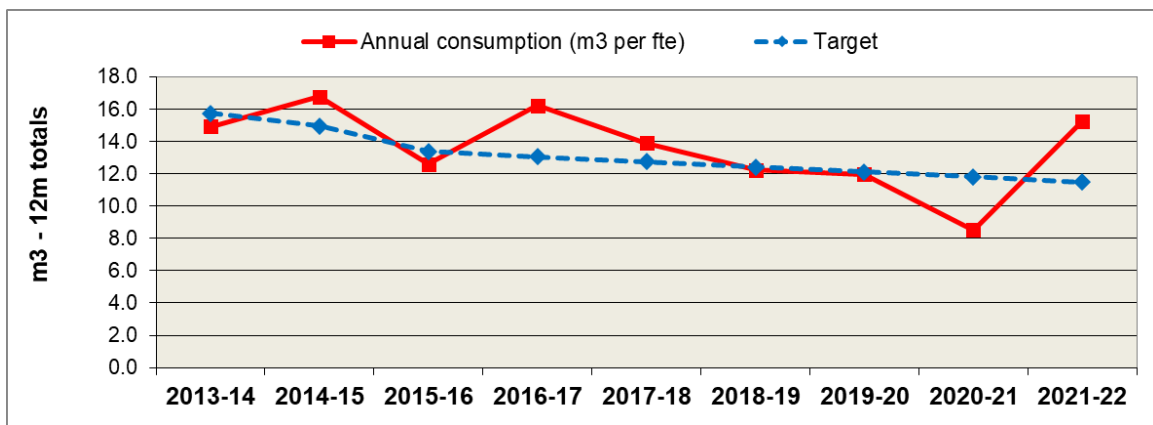


Figure 2: Water use per FTE Staff 2013-14 to 2021-22

25. However, most of the reported consumption is based on estimated billing, so it is not possible to say whether it reflects actual usage. It is recommended that efforts are made to improve the quality and reliability of readings in future.

M3 - Environmental risks scoring >15

26. At the end of 2021-22, there were a total of three environmental risks scoring 15 or more. These environmental risks relate to areas where the Council is not meeting legal requirements or Council policy is significantly failing to address Environment Strategy objectives.
27. All the remaining risks sit with the Environment and Transport Department and are summarised as follows:

- **Environment and Transport Department – previously 5 risks, now 3:**
 - Ensure Cleaner Road Vehicle Regulations 2011 are being considered in the procurement of vehicles (**1 risk**). A new process for vehicle procurement has been developed which takes environmental factors into account. This risk will be reviewed once the new process has been fully trialled.
 - Biodiversity considerations not sufficiently taken into account in Highways mowing regimes (**1 risk**). Urban verge trials are continuing and expanding, but still make up only a small proportion of the verge network. These are being used to inform possible changes to mowing regimes. There is increasing public interest in having wildlife verges, but further systematic change is needed. This risk will continue to be reviewed to determine if sufficient progress has been made to reduce this risk.
 - Operational risks at Recycling Household Waste Sites (**1 risk**). The risk relates to inadequate access to waste disposal outlets due to infrastructure closures. This risk will remain until the completion of future waste disposal procurement exercises.

Measures which are ahead of target

C2a – Electricity consumption per m² in LCC buildings

28. This KPI looks at energy efficiency in Council buildings. The actual figure for 2021-22 was 70.8 kWh/m² compared to the target of 77.3 kWh/m², so ahead of target (low is good). However, this was slightly higher than the 2020-21 figure of 67.2 kWh/m². This may be linked to increased use of ventilation due to Covid-19 precautions, and/or rising occupancy levels towards the end of the period. Lower solar PV output may have had a small effect too.

C14 - Total CO₂ emissions from Leicestershire (under local authority influence)

29. This data is provided by the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy for all UK regions and is two years in arrears. The data provided relates to 2020.
30. Emissions fell again in 2020 and there has been nearly a 40% reduction against the 2005 baseline. The figure for 2020 still showed that some 3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions were released in Leicestershire. The KPI is just ahead (low is good) of the 2020 target of 3.2 million tonnes. But it should be noted that some of this improvement will have been due to the Covid-19 pandemic, so some caution is needed in assuming that this rate of decline will continue.
31. The data for this KPI covers the 2020 calendar year when Covid-19 measures, such as lockdowns, mask wearing and restrictions on access to businesses and public services, were in full swing. These and other measures resulted in a reduction in traffic movements, closure of or restrictions on businesses and public services. This is reflected in the figures which saw transport emissions fall by 16.9%, commercial emissions fall by 13.2% and public sector emissions also fall by 6.6% compared to 2019. It will be interesting to see the extent of the expected 'bounce back' in the 2021 figures next year. However, an additional long-term driver of reduced emissions nationally is a change in the fuel mix for electricity generation, with a decrease in the use of coal and gas and an increase in the use of renewables.

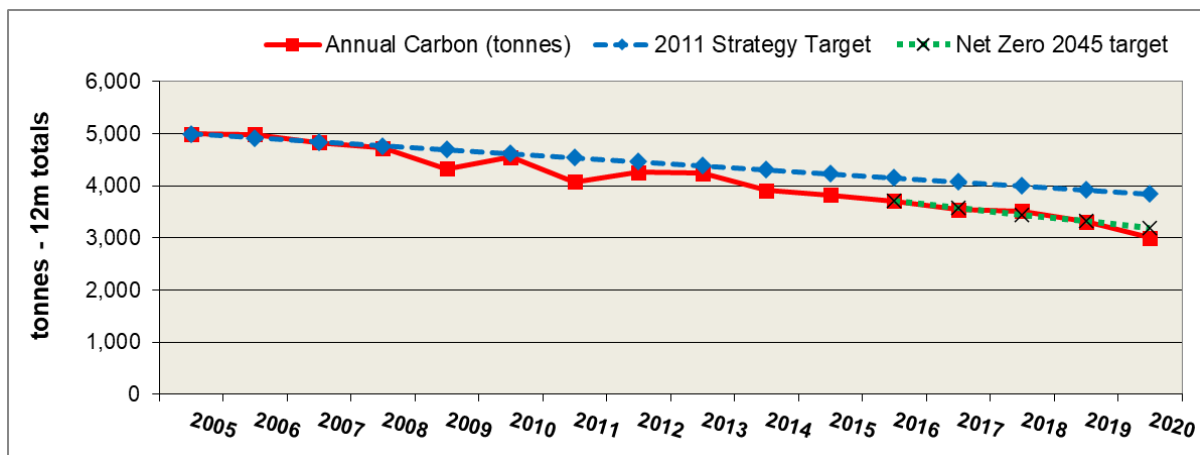


Figure 3: Total CO₂ emissions from Leicestershire (within scope of local authority influence) 2005-2020

C14b - Total CO₂ emissions from transport in Leicestershire (within scope of local authority influence)

32. This indicator is based on data provided by the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy for all UK regions and is two years in arrears. The data provided relates to 2020. The data reflects all emissions from transport within the scope of local authority influence and includes emissions from A roads, minor roads and other transport sources (e.g., LPG, lubricants).
33. In order to better align with the Council's new 2045 Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan for Leicestershire, the 'Total CO₂ emissions from transport in Leicestershire' indicator was used in this year's report.

- 34. Based on the 2020 data, there has been a decrease in CO₂ emissions in the Leicestershire local authority area originating from transport, falling by almost 17% to 1.005 million tonnes. The indicator has for the first time fallen below the net zero target of 1.089 million tonnes and is 7.8% lower than the target (lower is good). However, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic would have contributed significantly to this reduction and the figures should be taken with some caution as levels of traffic have now returned to near the pre-pandemic levels across the County. The data for 2021 and 2022 are likely to be more reflective of the real trends in transport emissions.
- 35. The Council's influence in this area is through Local Transport Plan (LTP) Sustainable Travel initiatives, which include working with businesses to encourage cycling, walking, and car sharing; personalised travel planning; providing walking and cycling infrastructure; contributing to the move to electric vehicles; and advocating for sustainable development in the planning arena. It is hoped that the production of the LTP4 will present an opportunity to better identify what action should be taken to reduce emissions.

C18 - Total business mileage

- 36. Annual business mileage claims rose by 57% in 2021-22 compared to 2020-21 with total business mileage of about 4.1 million miles. This rise was largely due to the expected 'bounce back' following the Covid-19 pandemic as Council services returned to some form of normality.
- 37. Business mileage claims are still 26% (almost 1.5m miles) less than the pre-pandemic level in 2019-20. This can largely be attributed to many Council staff taking advantage of smarter working policies, such as online and hybrid meetings, and flexible and home working. However, both the target and future plans to reduce business mileage will need to be reviewed in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the new ways of working at the Council.
- 38. Work will take place on developing an additional/replacement KPI that sets a target for reducing emissions from business mileage in line with the net zero carbon commitment. This should encourage both a reduction in mileage, as well as an increase in the use of lower emission vehicles.

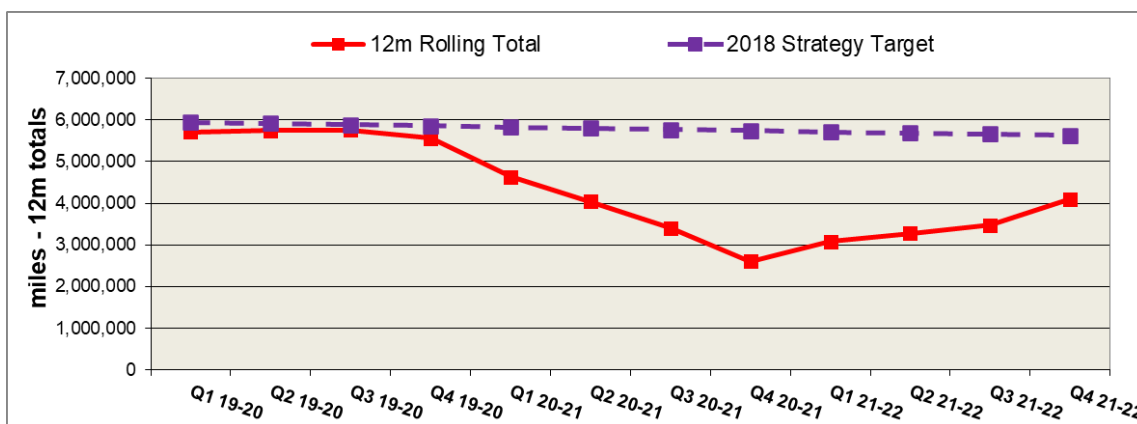
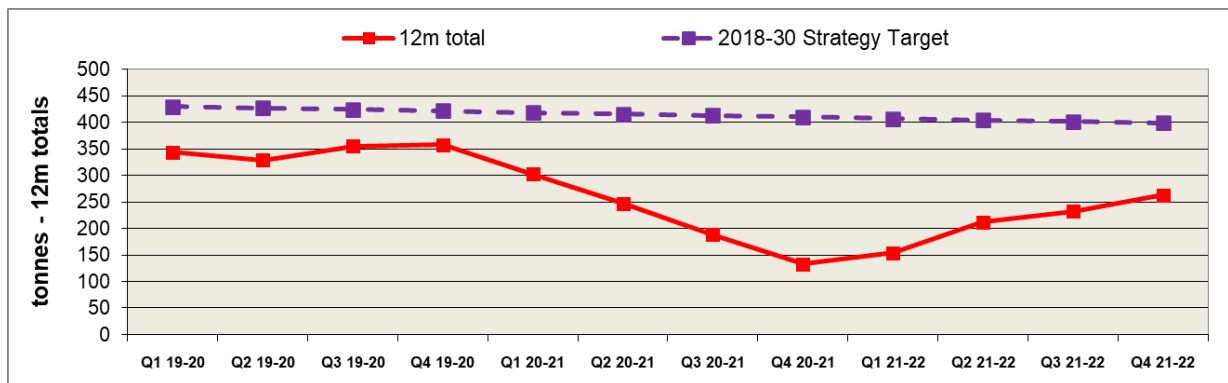


Figure 4: Rolling 12-month business mileage 2019-20 to 2021-22LW1 - Total waste from LCC sites

39. The rolling annual waste figure increased by 98% in 2021-22 compared to 2020-21, largely due to the expected 'bounce back' following the Covid-19 pandemic as staff, customers and services returned to normal. The figure of 263.2 tonnes is still ahead of the target of 398.7 tonnes. The figure is expected to rise as more staff return to the office, but it is not expected to rise significantly.

**Figure 5: 12-month rolling total LCC waste 2019-22 to 2021-22**P1a - Total office paper purchased

40. The data is received directly from the Council's primary paper supplier.
41. After decreasing by about 85% in 2020-21, the amount of paper purchased in 2021-22 has risen slightly to about 25% of previous levels. This reflects the persistence of changes arising during the pandemic, including the move to digital service delivery and working from home (now part of the Council's new ways of working). The 2021-22 figure of 2.4m A4 sheets is significantly less than the target of 16.4m A4 sheets. Given this large difference, a review of the target will be carried out in due course.
42. Work is and will take place to maintain the reduction in paper usage where possible. The reduction in paper use in part contributed to the fall in recycling performance, as there was less paper to recycle.

P2 - Commissioned print

43. During 2021-22 39.2 tonnes of paper were used for commissioned print, a significant increase (335%) from the 9 tonnes used in 2020-21. This is almost 50% below target (where lower is good). Volumes are moving back towards the 2019-20 pre-pandemic levels of 43.9 tonnes but are still 10.7% lower. It remains to be seen whether any decline is due to the temporary economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, or longer-term changes in demand for physical print materials.

E1/E2 - Staff engagement

44. As part of a refresh of the mandatory Environmental Awareness E-Learning training in 2017-18, a survey was included in the module to gather new data for this KPI. An updated module was introduced at the end of 2017-18.
45. Of the staff that completed the survey in 2021-22, 92% agreed that the Council was doing enough to reduce its impact on the environment and 94% agreed they understood how they can contribute to green issues at work.
46. While these results are positive, they have dropped by 1% and 2% respectively compared to 2020-21. This may be a reflection of the new ways of working and the fact that many staff are working from home so feel less able to contribute to green issues in the workplace.
47. A review has been carried out of the Council's staff environmental engagement scheme Go Green. A revamped scheme, including changes to the online training, will be launched in 2023. It will be more compatible with the new ways of working and with the need to encourage and enable staff to be more engaged in reducing the Council's and their own environmental impacts.

M5 - Environmental enforcements/prosecutions

48. There were no enforcement notices or prosecutions logged in 2021-22.

Measures which are not performance rated

HW 1 - Total household waste per household

49. The quantity of household waste per household fell by 0.6% at the end of 2021-22 to 1,014kg, compared to the previous year. This has also been affected by the fall in garden waste, light-weighting of packaging and a reduction in consumption due to current economic factors.

LW10 - % of recycled aggregates used in highways

50. The proportion of recycled aggregates used over 2021-22 as a whole was 63.5%, an increase from 51.6% the previous year. The amount of recycled aggregate used varies from quarter to quarter but there is a slight upwards trend.
51. Use of recycled aggregates is affected by availability and feasibility (e.g., not suitable for base layers) and is not always the best environmental option when processing, logistics and energy use are factored in. However, use of recycled aggregates in certain schemes can significantly reduce transportation and waste costs, and therefore, it is encouraged where suitable and locally available.

M1 - Environmental complaints

52. There have been three environmental complaints upheld during 2021-22 compared to two in 2020-21. All the complaints related to highways activities

and led to action being taken to remedy the problems and/or changes to procedures.

M2 - Environmental incidents

53. There were no environmental incidents reported in 2021-22.

Measures for which complete data is not available

54. None.

Changes affecting the Environmental Management System

External and internal issues that are relevant to the EMS

55. Uncertainties persist about the regulatory regime post-Brexit, the creation of the Office of Environmental Protection and the detail of the regulations and guidance that are to follow the Environment Act 2021.

56. Key recent Government policies and draft legislation, which may affect the environment include:

a) **Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill**

- Proposals to replace Environmental Assessment regime with new “environmental outcome reports” (Part 5 of Bill).

b) **Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill 2022**

- Published September 2022;
- Aims to “sunset” majority of retained law by 31 December 2023;
- Potentially far-reaching impacts on laws on habitat protection, environmental assessment, energy performance etc.

c) **Review of Environmental Land Management Scheme**

- Understood that review is being undertaken;
- Unclear if this will result in changes to the scheme.

d) **Energy cost support - non-domestic customers**

- Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS)¹ in place October 2022-March 2023;
- Automatic bill reduction – the Government reimburses suppliers;
- Review in three months - regime post-March 2023 unknown.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/energy-bill-relief-scheme-help-for-businesses-and-other-non-domestic-customers>

e) **Value Added Tax (Installation of Energy-Saving Materials) Order 2022 - policy paper**

- HMRC approach to reducing VAT on energy-saving materials from April 2022.

f) **Plastic Packaging Tax (on manufacturers)**

- Came into force 1 April 2022;
- Incentivises use of recycled material in plastic packaging;
- Detailed guidance issued October 2022.

57. Recent and current Government consultations on environmental policy include:

a) **Review of Net Zero**

- Designed to 'ensure that delivering the net zero target does not place undue burdens on businesses or consumers';
- Call for evidence closed on 27 October 2022;
- Report was due by the end of 2022 – not released yet;
- Aim is not to water down UK's Net Zero target but to ensure it becomes "an essential driver of economic growth".

b) **Reform of Waste Carrier, Broker, Dealer Registration System**

- Awaiting outcome of consultation (closed April 2022).

c) **Targets under the Environment Act**

- New legally binding targets were released on 16 December 2022;
- Targets are to protect the environment, clean up the air and rivers and boost nature.

d) **Nature Recovery Strategies and Biodiversity Net Gain (new duties on LAs and developers)**

- Awaiting outcome of consultations including regulations, metrics, guidance and funding.

e) **Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England and Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland**

- Awaiting outcome of consultations.

f) **Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging**

- Awaiting details of regulations;
- Expected to be implemented in 2024-25.

g) **UK Mandatory Water Efficiency labelling**

- Proposal to require water efficiency labelling on specific categories of domestic fittings and appliances.
58. With the development of the Council's new Strategic Plan 2022-26, new outcome boards have been formed, including a Clean and Green Outcome Board that will oversee delivery of the outcomes in relation to the environment. As a result, a review is taking place of the governance arrangements of the Environment Strategy Delivery Board to ensure that there is a coherent relationship with the Clean and Green Outcome Board.
 59. As part of this review, the Environment Strategy Action Plan is being updated and developed into a programme of projects to allow for improved project management, better understanding of the co-benefits and interdependencies between individual projects and improved assessment of progress.
 60. During 2021-22 work took place to develop the 2030 Net Zero Council Action Plan, which sets out how the Council plans to achieve net zero as an authority by 2030. This was completed during 2022. In addition, significant work took place in developing the 2045 Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan which sets out how the County could achieve net zero by 2045. This strategy was approved by the County Council on 7 December 2022.
 61. Work continues on quantifying the new biodiversity KPIs. This work is taking longer than expected due to the need to add additional data layers into the corporate property GIS system, to enable quantification of the amount of the Council land in better management for nature. However, it has been possible to generate indicative figures based on the currently available data. This shows that 3,844 hectares of the Council land is in better management for nature. This is where a conscious decision has been made to manage the land in a way that protects or enhances nature. This figure is equivalent to 97% of the Council land that could possibly be suitable to be in better management for nature.

The needs and expectations of interested parties, including compliance obligations and changes in political priorities/direction

62. During 2021-22 there was a growing political commitment to environmental issues across all political parties, both locally and nationally, in part associated with the COP26 conference taking place in the UK in 2021. However, the recent changes in the Government have raised questions about the Government's pledge to its various environmental policies and commitments. Following the changes in the Government in October 2022, conditions are now in place for the Government to clarify and progress policy items including those listed earlier.

Changes to statutory duties

63. There was one change in the Council's statutory environmental duties during 2021-22 with the Environment Act 2021 requiring local authorities within England to produce Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Leicestershire County Council has been appointed as the provisional 'responsible authority' for developing a strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland.

Relevant changes to environmental legislation

64. There were a significant number of additions or changes to general environmental Acts, legislation, regulations and guidance during 2021-22 with 120 identified as possibly being relevant to the County Council. A full list has been appended to this report. Many were linked to the retention of laws from the EU following the UK's departure. The main areas covered were in relation to waste, climate change and the local environment. However, few of these introduced significant changes affecting the Council, in contrast to several proposals under consultation (see paragraphs 56-57), which could have larger effects.
65. The Environment Policy and Strategy Team have access to a specialised Environmental Legislation Information and Register Service, which provides a database, alerts and training on energy and environmental law and regulations. The supplier also provides a regular quarterly update of the Council's legislation register, including notification of new potentially relevant legislation.

Environmental risks and opportunities

Any significant new/changed environmental risks or opportunities (such as new technologies or innovative solutions) relevant to this level of reporting

66. Risk of climate change affecting the delivery of Council services e.g., flooding and heatwaves. During 2021-22 the Environment Policy and Strategy Team completed an assessment and review of the risks from climate change to the Council. This assessment identified eight high risks across five service areas, as well as 56 medium risks. The report made several recommendations including the development of action plans for the identified high risk service areas and the development of a County level climate change adaptation and resilience strategy and action plan. Work is currently taking place to take forward the report recommendations.
67. The risk that KPIs may be negatively affected by future pandemic restrictions is currently low, as medical authorities are not warning of a return to pandemic conditions. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has had lasting impacts ranging from economic stresses and labour shortages to increased remote working and lower business mileage. How this affects long-term behaviour and performance is still uncertain.
68. Risk that some KPIs become less relevant, and new ones are needed, because of technological developments. For example, as low-carbon vehicles are introduced to the Council fleet, it will become important to monitor mileage and/or electricity usage instead of simply litres of fuel.
69. There is an opportunity to co-align environmental and health objectives through the Air Quality and Health Action Plan developed as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Discussions are taking place between the Environment Team and Public Health on how to do this.

70. Risks and opportunities for a green recovery and a new low-carbon economy, arising from the post-Covid-19 economic and societal changes. There is an opportunity to maintain the positive benefits for the environment e.g., reduced business mileage and less paper use. There may also be more awareness in society that change is possible, and the need for changes such as energy efficiency. On the other hand, economic difficulties mean less money to invest in long-term change. Within the Council, a 'bounce back' to the pre-pandemic levels of consumption has been noticed, though there is also some maintenance of positive benefits. For example, the Council's greenhouse gas emissions for 2021-22 remaining 13% lower than in 2019-20 (pre-Covid-19 pandemic).
71. Another combined risk and opportunity is the increased public awareness of and activism on environmental issues, particularly with the increasing concern about climate change and the loss of nature. This could provide an opportunity in terms of the public support for the Council in taking action on the environment but could also be a risk in terms of greater public scrutiny and expectations of the scale and nature of any actions taken.

Adequacy of resources

Any shortcomings in staff/revenue/capital resources that are affecting the efficacy of the EMS or environmental performance

72. During 2021-22 the Environment Policy and Strategy Team lost a member of the team. Due to difficulties in recruiting, the post was reconfigured to a career graded post and the job description revised to create a new post. This post was filled in September 2022. The recruitment difficulties resulted in capacity issues within the team and the need to prioritise workload.
73. During 2021-22 the new Carbon Reduction Team was put in place consisting of a Team Manager and a Senior Officer. This resource allowed good progress to be made in advancing work to meet the Council's net zero commitments. However, during 2022-23 the Team Manager left, and a junior officer was appointed. The Senior Officer is in a partial acting up role while a review of staffing resources is completed.
74. Implementing environmental actions for the Council impacts across the Authority and both staffing and financial resource to meet the Council's commitments over the coming years are likely to be challenging.

Relevant communications from interested parties

75. Levels of formal environmental complaints remain relatively low with three upheld during 2021-22.
76. There were no prosecutions or other relevant communications with regulators or stakeholders.
77. As public concern for environmental issues is increasing, it is anticipated that the Authority will receive more enquiries from the public regarding its

environmental performance and the impacts of its own operations. The Council is already seeing an increase in the number of Freedom of Information requests for environmental related information.

Internal and External Audit results

External Audits

78. External Audits are carried out by BM Trada annually to ISO14001 Environmental Management System Standard, with a full re-certification audit every three years.
79. An external ISO14001 EMS recertification audit was carried out in January 2022. One minor non-conformity was found at Beaumanor Hall, relating to records of fire alarm tests and fire drills. Corrective action has since been taken and reported to the external auditor.
80. Only those services externally certified to ISO14001 are subject to internal and external audits.

Internal Audits

81. An internal audit programme was carried out during 2021-22 as part of a 3-year schedule. This year's programme covered Forestry Services, Soft Facilities Management, Hard Facilities Management, Central Print, Beaumanor Hall and Strategic Property. No major non-conformities were recorded. One minor non-conformity was recorded at Beaumanor Hall (relating to availability of operator training records). A total of 17 observations (potential opportunities for improvement) were recorded across all the service areas.
82. Work continued to monitor action on two non-conformities in Property Services (Hard FM) that were closed in the previous year, relating to compliance with the air conditioning energy assessment requirements of the Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations 2012. Assessment reports have now been provided for all the relevant Council buildings. The Environment Team will continue to monitor the position through the regular Property environmental management meetings and regular audits.

Opportunities for continual improvement (EMS, including opportunities for improved integration with other business processes or environmental performance)

83. The development of the 2030 Net Zero Council Action Plan and the 2045 Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan will present further opportunities for improving the environmental performance of the Council and producing possible financial savings in some cases.
84. Continued access to the legislation update service that was procured in 2020-21 is improving the robustness and effectiveness of the EMS.

85. A new staff member was recruited to the post of Environmental Improvement Officer in the Environment Policy and Strategy Team. An aim of the post is to support continuous improvement of environmental performance, as required under ISO14001.
86. A procurement exercise was carried out during 2020-21 for new environmental sustainability performance monitoring and reporting software, to replace the current complex and vulnerable system based on interlinked spreadsheets and manual calculations. Work to set up the procured Rio system, which has been delayed by staff capacity issues and the complex nature of the data, continues. The new Rio system will provide a more effective and stable system for monitoring the Council's environmental performance.
87. Work is ongoing with colleagues to better understand the impact of severe weather events on the Council and County by improving the use of existing Council data from sources such as Flooding, Property and Highways. This work will inform updates of the Climate Change Risk Registers as well as the planned high risk service areas climate adaptation action plans.
88. The Climate Change Risk Review and Assessment report and the recommendations therein provide an opportunity to improve how the Council responds to the threats from the environment in the form of the impacts from climate change.

Resource implications

89. While there are no immediate resource implications from this report, the Environment Act 2021 and subsequent legislation is expected to place new or additional duties on local government. Once these are known, it will be necessary to assess whether there are any resource implications for the Council.
90. In addition, business cases will be developed for specific projects as required, which may identify resource implications.
91. The Director of Law and Governance and Director of Corporate Resources have been consulted on the content of this report.

Conclusions

92. The following conclusions can be drawn from the environmental performance for 2021-22 based on the targets in the Environment Strategy 2018-30 and the identified changes affecting the Council's environmental management system:
 - i) The number of indicators rated Green in 2021-22 has remained the same as last year at 10.
 - ii) The number of indicators rated Red has risen from 6 to 7 in 2021-22. No indicators were rated Amber.

- iii) The indicators that changed were 'CO₂e emissions from Leicestershire (within scope of local authority influence)' went from an Amber to a Green, largely due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the 'Outstanding actions on the climate change risk register' indicator which went from Green to Red, as a result of the completion of a review and assessment of the climate change risks to the Council.
- iv) Most Red indicators relate to areas which have been adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic or works to improve the environmental performance of the Council, where there is limited scope for quick change or where the target is zero.
- v) Some of the Green indicators relate to areas that have been positively affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, rather than solely Council actions.
- vi) There have been significant changes in legislation, regulations and guidance on the environment some of which affect the Council. There are significant new Government policies, legislation, regulations and guidance in the pipeline that could have an impact both positively and negatively on the ability of the Council to achieve its environmental objectives.
- vii) The uncertainty about what changes and when the Government will make such changes is affecting delivery of actions.
- viii) The production of the 2030 Net Zero Council Action Plan and the 2045 Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan presents a significant opportunity for the Council to take forward its net zero commitments.
- ix) The establishment of the Clean and Green Outcome Board and the subsequent review of governance for the Environment Strategy Delivery Board presents an opportunity for establishing a more effective delivery mechanism for the Environment Strategy.
- x) The increasing public interest and activism on environmental issues should be noted and utilised in a positive way to help support the Council in taking forward its environmental commitments and objectives.

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Equality Implications

93. This paper provides a report on the County Council's environmental performance and therefore in itself has no equality implications.

Human Rights Implications

94. This paper provides a report on the County Council's environmental performance and therefore in itself has no human rights implications.

Recommendations

95. The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

Background Papers

Environment Strategy 2018-30 -

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

Action for Nature document -

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2021/8/16/action-for-nature-strategic-approach-to-biodiversity.pdf>

Environmental Performance Infographic –

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-01/environmental-performance-2021-2022-summary.pdf>

Appendices

Appendix A: 2021-22 Environmental Performance Summary Dashboard

Appendix B: List of new and updated environmental Acts, legislation, regulations and guidance released during 2021-22

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