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# **Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan 2020 - 2023**

Decision to be taken by: Councillor Adam Clarke, Deputy  
City Mayor Environment and Transportation

Date of decision: 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Lead director/officer: Matthew Wallace, Director of  
Estates & Building Services

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency)
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- Report version number: 1

### 1. Summary

Following the council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in February 2019 and an extensive process of engagement – first internally and later externally with the public and other stakeholders – this report presents a three-year strategy for addressing the emergency, along with the first iteration of a three-year action plan, for approval and implementation.

### 2. Recommended actions/decision

The Deputy City Mayor for Environment and Transportation is recommended to:

1. Approve the implementation of Leicester's Climate Emergency Strategy 2020 – 2023 (Appendix 1) and Leicester City Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020 – 2023 Version 1 (Appendix 2).

### 3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

Development of the strategy and action plan has involved an extensive programme of stakeholder engagement and scrutiny under the title of Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation, as summarised below and in Appendix 1. The Conversation took an innovative approach based on 'deliberative democracy' principles and sought to involve a representative cross-section of Leicester's diverse population. This included an emphasis on engaging with young people, with the help of Leicester Young People's Council. An External Expert Commission was convened to provide a review and critique of emerging proposals and will have an ongoing role offering further advice and insight as the programme progresses.

A summary of engagement is given below. Further details are provided in Leicester's Climate Emergency Strategy (Appendix 1).

18 <sup>th</sup> November 2019 - 9 <sup>th</sup> February 2020	Community engagement through Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation (refer to Appendix 1 pages 3-4 and 21-23 for details).
4 <sup>th</sup> December 2019	EDTT Scrutiny Commission consulted.
13 <sup>th</sup> January 2020	Housing Scrutiny Commission consulted.
12 <sup>th</sup> February 2020	OSC consulted.
22 <sup>nd</sup> April - 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2020	External Expert Commission – panel of academic experts and sustainability professionals reviewed drafts of the

	strategy and action plan and provided a constructive critique and endorsement. Refer to Appendix 3.
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Further engagement with Scrutiny has since taken place in relation to the draft strategy and action plan, with EDTT Scrutiny Commission considering both documents on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and Overview Select Committee considering them on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

#### **4. Background and options with supporting evidence**

Climate change presents a critical threat to the wellbeing of the people of Leicester, and of humanity and biodiversity globally. The council recognised this when it declared a Climate Emergency and committed to respond to it. If nations and communities do not respond, scientists are warning of catastrophic consequences. This is therefore not an option.

Leicester's Climate Emergency Strategy (Appendix 1) sets out the nature and scale of action needed both to limit the extent of climate change and to protect communities from its impacts. It identifies the sources of greenhouse gas emissions caused by the city and opportunities for the council to reduce them. This information is used as the basis for a recommended set of overall aims and thematic objectives from which the actions in the action plan (Appendix 2) have been developed. These aims and objectives, along with the overarching vision, form the preferred options being recommended. The supporting evidence is directly provided and/or referenced throughout the strategy.

#### **5. Detailed report**

Leicester City Council has a strong track record of policy and action to make the city more environmentally sustainable including, since 2006, targets and programmes specifically addressing climate change. Substantial progress has been achieved through a combination of local action and national changes. As a result, the existing targets to halve both the city-wide and city council carbon footprints by 2025 are on course to be achieved.

However, emerging scientific evidence of the rate, scale and impacts of climate change under a 'business-as-usual' scenario have demonstrated the need for nations, cities and communities to go much further and faster. Drawing upon work by the Tyndall Centre at Manchester University to translate science-based targets for limiting global emissions down to a local authority level, it is recommended that Leicester needs to aim to become 'carbon neutral' by 2030 or sooner. This is discussed in more detail in the section: "Playing our part" in the strategy at Appendix 1 (pages 18-20).

The strategy acknowledges that becoming carbon-neutral within this timescale is hugely challenging and is not within the gift of the council to achieve on its own. As well as a city-wide effort involving the whole community including businesses, public sector, civil society and individuals, it will require an unprecedented increase in the level of government action and support too. For this reason, lobbying of, and engagement with, central government to press for this support is strongly emphasised.

It should be noted that by declaring an ambition for the city and the city council to become carbon-neutral by 2030, legal advice is that there is a risk of future legal challenge to actions by the council which are perceived to be incompatible with reaching the ambition. This risk applies in relation to any quantifiable goal for decarbonisation, including the current 50% reduction targets, and needs to be weighed against the reputational risk of not establishing a quantified ambition which is commensurate with what the science is

telling us needs to happen.

The strategy and action plan address 6 themes based upon the key sources of greenhouse gas emissions generated by the city and the council as well as the areas for adaptation to climate change:

- At home
- Travel and transport
- Consumer choices and waste
- At work
- Land use, green spaces and development
- The council (addressing Leicester City Council's own estate and operations).

Initial programmes of action around these themes are set out in Appendix 2, based on identified resources, and the action plan will be updated annually. A preliminary review of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and 'lockdown' measures on these actions has been undertaken and amendments made where necessary to timescales and outputs, although it should be emphasised that uncertainty about the course of the pandemic and the response to it means that further changes cannot be ruled out. The strategy includes a set of principles (Appendix 1, page 24) to guide the city towards a 'green recovery' in relation to the Climate Emergency. Careful consideration has also been given to the implications of the Climate Emergency and the council's response for addressing poverty and inequality in the city. The strategy aligns the approach in key areas such as fuel poverty and travel to ensure that climate actions wherever possible support efforts to reduce poverty and inequality.

Amongst the highlights of the action plan, the council will:

- Build 38 A-rated low-carbon council houses at Saffron Lane, achieving 70% carbon savings, as well as low running costs for tenants (Action 2.01)
- Install more than 800 energy saving measures on council housing estates saving nearly 580 tonnes of carbon emissions (Actions 2.02 - 2.04)
- Save over 530 tonnes of carbon emissions from schools, investing £2.2M including a £400K Climate Emergency Schools Capital Fund (Actions 7.06 - 7.08)
- Support 200 SMEs to save an estimated 1200 tonnes of carbon emissions through energy-saving and renewable energy measures in the second phase of the Green BELLE project (Action 5.01)
- Prepare feasibility studies and/or funding bids for 8 more flood alleviation schemes (Actions 6.16 - 6.21)
- Introduce 19 more electric vehicles into the council fleet (Action 7.19)
- Implement multi-million-pound programmes of investment in walking, cycling, public transport, electric vehicles and charge points, including over 40km of new permanent and pop-up cycleways, electric buses and £1.4M of grants for local businesses towards low-emissions vehicles (Actions 3.01 - 3.28)
- Provide 'carbon literacy' training to over 2100 young people, teachers and decision-makers (Actions 1.02 and 1.09)
- Establish a Young People's Climate Emergency Board (Action 1.11).

In addition to these and other immediate steps, the action plan sets in train important forward planning activities necessary to understand and prepare for the longer-term steps

towards carbon-neutrality. These include the development of carbon neutral 'roadmaps' for decarbonising the city and the council's own estate and operations (Actions 1.01 and 7.01 respectively).

Operational delivery of the action plan will be overseen by a newly created Climate Emergency Board chaired by the Chief Operations Officer, and with senior management representation from key divisions.

## **6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications**

### 6.1 Financial implications

The costs and benefits of the various aspects of the plan are wide ranging, and hence some may require little additional resource, others may require more resources but which are in place or confidently expected, and others will as yet have no funding identified. Such actions will need to be considered on a case by case over time, drawing on funding opportunities as may become available, building a business case to support investment, setting in the context of wider investment programmes, etc.

Colin Sharpe, Deputy Director of Finance. Ext. 37 4081

### 6.2 Legal implications

Advice has been provided in relation to the strategy throughout.

Emma Jackman, Head of Law (Commercial, Property and Planning).

### 6.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. Due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty should be paid before and at the time a decision is taken, in such a way that it can influence the final decision.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

In approving the content of the strategy and action plan, the decision maker must pay due regard proactively and with rigour. General regard to equality is not enough to comply with the duty.

A RAG rating has been undertaken to identify priority areas to target further work and is attached. The RAG rating is an initial assessment of the potential equalities implications or areas where further work is required based on basic evidence and assumptions which will need to be explored in more detail before actions are finalised or implemented. It will be an iterative process to ensure that we pay due regard to our Public Sector Equality Duty at every stage of decision making. The reason that this approach has been taken is because the actions identified in the plan often rely upon other service areas to develop proposals around the actions, in order to implement them.

As due regard has to be paid before and at the time a decision is taken, there needs to be a

continued flexibility in how these actions are achieved - for example at such a point as the service area starts to develop proposals around the action, equalities must be fully integrated into development of proposals and have sufficient influence in decision making, in order to allow for any disproportionate negative impacts identified on any protected characteristic/s (as part of more detailed assessments) to be responded to and mitigated appropriately. Continued engagement with a representative range of people on individual proposals will aid in assessing the equalities implications, although there may also need to be some targeted engagement on certain proposals where particular protected groups will be impacted, for example changes to street design may require specific engagement with disability access groups.

The Equalities Team previously recommended that involved service leads be contacted, to make them aware that they may need to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment to inform proposals around the actions assigned to them. Colleagues can book onto Equality Impact Assessment training to aid them in this and the Equalities Team will continue to provide support. Some of the actions identified have already been subject to a full equality impact assessment.

Hannah Watkins, Equalities Manager ext. 37 5811

#### 6.4 Climate Emergency implications

Contained in the body of the report and in Appendices 1 and 2.

Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency). Ext. 37 2249

6.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

Climate change presents a threat to people's health, for example through the increased risk of heatwaves. It is also likely to create further disadvantage for those already experiencing poverty – and who are less able to afford to protect themselves from its impacts. Responding to the Climate Emergency is therefore essential to prevent or limit future impacts on health, poverty and inequality.

The type of strategy chosen for responding to the emergency has implications for these issues, to ensure that no-one is 'left behind' as the city moves to decarbonise and adapt. This was a common concern raised during the Climate Emergency Conversation.

The approach being recommended in Appendix 1 is therefore based on addressing carbon reduction in ways which also support improved health and reduced poverty and inequality. Examples include a strong emphasis on energy efficiency in housing to prevent heating bills from rising and to reduce health problems arising from cold, damp housing, and following the 'travel hierarchy' to provide good access to services and facilities on foot, by bike and by bus for those without a car, rather than focusing only on ultra-low-emissions vehicles.

**7. Background information and other papers:**

**8. Summary of appendices:**

Appendix 1: Leicester's Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-2023

Appendix 2: Leicester City Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020-2023

Appendix 3: Feedback on Leicester City Council's Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan, Leicester Climate Emergency External Expert Commission.

Appendix 4: Equalities RAG Rating

**9. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

No.

**10. Is this a "key decision"? If so, why?**

Yes, due to the significant public interest in the issue of climate change, and the nature and extent of the council's response to it.