

Feedback on Leicester City Council's Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan

1. Introduction

This document summarises the view of members of the External Expert Commission (EEC) to Leicester City Council on their Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan documents.

The EEC comprises members of staff at De Montfort University (DMU) and the University of Leicester (UoL) with professional expertise in responses to climate change.¹ EEC members have provided critique and feedback to the City Council through a series of meetings from April to June 2020.²

2. Overall Comments

Overall, the EEC commends the Strategy and Action Plan put forward and the high level of ambition articulated through the future vision for the city. The analysis reported is in line with current understandings of how UK cities can mitigate and adapt to climate change and makes good reference to a science-based carbon budgeting analysis of emissions in Leicester by the Tyndall Centre, which highlights that on current trends Leicester's carbon budget for this century would be exhausted within seven years.

Although the agency of the City Council to directly influence carbon emissions in Leicester is limited, particularly by central Government policies and resources, the strategy and action plan do reflect a meaningful commitment and a significant increase in strategic focus. The proposed governance arrangements should enable consideration of the climate emergency to become embedded in existing policies and processes across the city council's operations.

The City Council responded very positively and constructively to initial feedback from EEC members. This included: ensuring that a science-based carbon budget for the city informs planning and reporting of progress; committing to develop roadmaps to outline specific plans of action in relation to key themes (e.g. housing, transport); and committing to a collective approach that will engage with local citizens and organisations to co-develop activities.

3) Next Steps with Implementation

The EEC meeting on June 23rd 2020 highlighted three issues relating to next steps with the Strategy and Action Plan:

- EEC members suggested that the development and use of 'Roadmaps' should be a dynamic activity, that is able to respond and adapt to changes in policy, technology and community engagement, whilst being structured by the city's carbon reduction commitments and principles about how activities are governed, developed and managed.
- Implementing the strategy will require significant staffing resources, in particular for external engagement with organisations beyond the city council and for collaborative project development.
- Several examples of collaborative opportunities were highlighted with EEC members from De Montfort University and the University of Leicester, such as supporting businesses to understand their carbon footprint and sharing technical expertise to aid the development of Roadmaps.

¹ The membership comprises: Ljiljana Marjanovic-Halburd, Mark Lemon, Birgit Painter, Rupert Gammon, Andrew Reeves and Karl Letten (De Montfort University); and Sandra Lee, Chrispal Anand and Emma Kemp (University of Leicester).

² Leicester City Council shared draft versions of the city's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan with members of the EEC and representatives from Leicestershire County Council in April 2020. A joint meeting was held on April 22nd where feedback was shared and discussed with members of the City Council's Environment Team, represented by Anna Dodd, Nick Morris, Duncan Bell and Aidan Davis. Leicestershire County Council's Donna Worship and James O'Brien also contributed feedback at this meeting as 'peer reviewers' from another local authority. Feedback and recommendations were put forward by EEC members, leading to a revised version of the Strategy and Action Plan being produced in June 2020 and discussed with EEC members at a meeting on 23rd June 2020. This document summarises EEC members' views on the final revision of the Strategy and Action Plan.