

# Executive Decision Report

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## **Declaration of Climate Emergency**

Decision to be taken by: Deputy City Mayor, Environment,  
Public Health and Health Integration

Decision to be taken on: 1 February 2019

Lead director: Matthew Wallace Estates and Building  
Services

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**City Mayor**

## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Anna Dodd/Nick Morris
- Author contact details: 4542247/4542229
- Report version number:

### 1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to explain why Leicester City Council is proposing a Climate Emergency for the city and to issue a formal Declaration of Climate Emergency.

### 2. Recommendations

The Deputy City Mayor with responsibility for Environment, Public Health and Health Integration is recommended to:

1. Declare a Climate Emergency for the city.
2. Address this state of emergency by developing a new programme of action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for a changing climate in the next Sustainability Action Plan for the city.
3. Commission a review and updating of the council's climate change targets, in light of the Climate Emergency.

### 3. Supporting information including options considered:

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) produced a special report in October 2018 which estimates that there are only 11 years left to act decisively on climate change, to be able to keep global warming within 1.5°C. This is critical to the well-being of our planet and our city.

*The IPCC Summary report states that Pathways limiting global warming to 1.5°C with no or limited overshoot would require rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban and infrastructure (including transport and buildings), and industrial systems (high confidence). These systems transitions are unprecedented in terms of scale, but not necessarily in terms of speed, and imply deep emissions reductions in all sectors, a wide portfolio of mitigation options and a significant upscaling of investments in those options (IPCC report)*

*The urban and infrastructure system transition consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5°C with no or limited overshoot would imply, for example, changes in land and urban planning practices, as well as deeper emissions reductions in transport and buildings compared to pathways that limit global warming below 2°C (medium confidence). Technical measures Summary for*

*Policymakers 18 SPM and practices enabling deep emissions reductions include various energy efficiency options. In pathways limiting global warming to 1.5°C with no or limited overshoot, the electricity share of energy demand in buildings would be about 55–75% in 2050 compared to 50–70% in 2050 for 2°C global warming (medium confidence). In the transport sector, the share of low-emission final energy would rise from less than 5% in 2020 to about 35–65% in 2050 compared to 25–45% for 2°C of global warming (medium confidence). Economic, institutional and socio-cultural barriers may inhibit these urban and infrastructure system transitions, depending on national, regional and local circumstances, capabilities and the availability of capital (high confidence).*

Leicester City Council already has targets in place for reducing both the carbon emissions of the council and of the whole city, and actively monitors progress towards these. These targets were very ambitious when they were set in 1994 and still go beyond those currently required by the UK Government. Leicester City Council is targeting a 50% reduction in carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) emissions from its own estate and operations by 2025, compared to a 2008/09 baseline. In 2017/18 our CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions fell by 10.8% year on year. This is a reduction of 37.2% compared to the 2008/09 baseline, putting us well on track to meet our 50% reduction target.

We also have a target of reducing CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions for the city of Leicester by 50% by 2025, from a 1990 baseline. The UK Government's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) published figures show that city-wide emissions for 2016 (the most recent year available) have already reduced by 44%, putting the city on course to exceed our target.

However, the latest IPCC analysis and predictions show that despite the overachievement of Leicester's targets, these targets will not be consistent with the global level of reduction needed to keep warming within 1.5°C and therefore we need to increase our action. In December 2018 Extinction Rebellion contacted local authorities across the UK and asked them each to declare a Climate Emergency in their locality. So far 13 areas have done so, including Greater Manchester and Bristol.

At Full Council on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019 Cllr Clarke stated his intention to declare a Climate Emergency for the City of Leicester.

Leicester is already measuring and reporting on progress towards our existing climate change targets through Leicester's Sustainability Action Plan, which is updated and published on the council's website each year. The plan sets out the carbon reduction and climate change adaptation actions we are taking, alongside other goals such as increasing levels of walking and cycling, improving air quality, minimising waste, increasing recycling, and protecting and enhancing biodiversity and our open spaces. The current plan finishes in March 2019, and a new plan will be developed, to begin later in the year.

It is therefore proposed to use this new Sustainability Action Plan to accelerate our action to address the Climate Emergency. The plan will be developed over the next few months, to achieve this. It will look at good practice and innovation in other cities and organisations and best practice within the international Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP). It will involve discussing potential themes and key areas of action with other areas of the council and also external partners in the city. LCC's ambition is for Leicester to be carbon neutral in the quickest time possible, consistent with the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's findings that in order to keep warming to no more than 1.5 degrees we only have 12 years to act. This will only be able to be achieved with the support from national government.

#### **4. Details of Scrutiny**

None

#### **5. Financial, legal and other implications**

##### 5.1 Financial implications

There are currently no quantifiable financial implications arising from this declaration. The impact of any specific proposals or actions that may arise should be considered as they are brought forward.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, ext. 37 4081

##### 5.2 Legal implications

The declaration of a Climate Emergency is an international movement aimed at local government in order to ensure their influence on central government can be utilised. There is no legal basis or framework concerning the declaration however there is nothing preventing the Council making such a declaration and taking action, provided there are no other general constraints on the steps it intends to take as a consequence. It is a decision which can be taken as an Executive Decision due to the delegation of powers in the Constitution.

The guidance from the organisations promoting these declarations states that a Climate Emergency Declaration needs to make clear:

- what outcomes are expected to flow from the declaration action;
- any special powers that are switched on by the declaration;
- any limitations that are placed on the emergency mode flowing from the declaration eg. any time limits and what governs any change to the time limits.

It should be noted this guidance is not binding and has no legal status however.

The 'implementation' of the measures to address the declared emergency should be supported in policy and developments of the Council.

The commissioning of a review, as outlined in the recommendation, should be done in accordance with the Council's procurement rules and legal services should be engaged in relation to resulting policies prior to adoption/confirmation.

Emma Jackman, Head of Law (Commercial, Property and Planning)  
Ext 1426

### 5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

By declaring a climate emergency and responding to that emergency through appropriate new targets and actions, the council will be able to step up its work to safeguard Leicester's present and future communities from the threat of climate change.

Duncan Bell, Corporate Environmental Consultant. Ext. 37 2249

### 5.4 Equalities Implications

No EIA has been done on the implications of declaring a Climate emergency. However there is evidence from research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in the UK that the most disadvantaged groups in society are also those most likely to be impacted by climate change effects (overheating, flooding). Therefore by declaring a Climate Emergency and increasing activity to reduce climate change, will potentially benefit these groups. Each activity within a programme will be assessed for its equality impact.

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

#### **6. Background information and other papers:**

None

#### **7. Summary of appendices:**

None

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

No

#### **9. Is this a "key decision"?**

No. However, subsequent actions may lead to Key Decisions being taken in the future.