



# ***Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation***

For consideration by: Overview Select Committee

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Lead director: Matthew Wallace

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) All
- Report author: Duncan Bell, Corporate Environmental Consultant
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### 1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform Members about draft proposals for the city's response to the climate emergency, as well as the associated programme of community consultation and engagement entitled "Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation".
- 1.2 To invite comments on the proposals, for consideration as part of preparations for a new council action plan to respond to the emergency.

### 2 Report

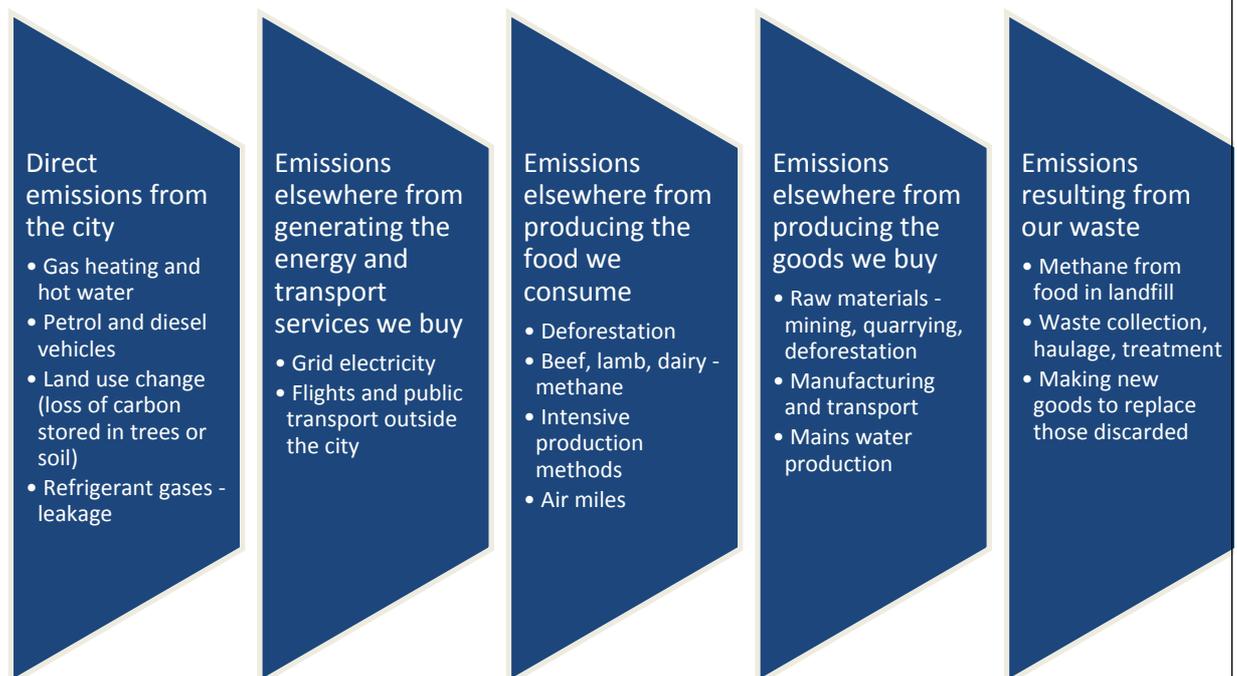
#### Background to the council's proposals

- 2.1 On 1st February 2019 Leicester City Council declared a climate emergency, in recognition that urgent action is needed to prevent global heating from exceeding 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. This is the limit beyond which scientists believe we could see climate change become irreversible, with catastrophic implications for humanity and the natural world.
- 2.2 In its declaration the council committed to produce a new action plan to address the emergency, and to review its existing climate change targets. This report addresses the first of those commitments.
- 2.3 Following the declaration, research was undertaken to identify:
  - How Leicester would need to change to become a carbon neutral and climate-adapted city
  - What the key opportunities are for the council to address the emergency through its own powers, responsibilities and service delivery
  - What current and forthcoming actions by the council will help address the emergency, and what the key opportunities for further action could be.
- 2.4 The research identified that far-reaching changes will be needed if Leicester is to become carbon neutral, affecting every individual, business and organisation. These include:
  - Homes and workplaces becoming much better insulated and gas heating systems being replaced with low-carbon heating
  - A lot more renewable energy being generated in the city – on homes, workplaces and other buildings

- A big increase in the role of walking, cycling and public transport, as well as all petrol, diesel and LPG vehicles being replaced with ultra-low emissions vehicles
- Dietary choices shifting towards more plant-based foods, with a much-reduced emphasis on meat, eggs and dairy produce
- Consumer demand driving a transformation of manufacturing, distribution and service delivery towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient and low waste model producing long-lasting, sustainable products
- A greener city, proactively using tree planting and green spaces to protect the city from the impacts of climate change, including heatwaves and flood risk – while at the same time increasing biodiversity.

2.5 The research highlighted that Leicester’s carbon footprint includes those emissions it causes indirectly outside the city boundaries (refer to Figure 1), as well as the direct emissions from within the city. Many of these emissions caused outside the city cannot currently be measured, but all the city’s emissions will need to be reduced if the city is to become carbon neutral.

**Figure 1: Components of the carbon footprint of a city**



### **Leicester’s Climate Emergency Conversation**

2.6 Based on the research, a set of proposals has been developed and published. A 12-week programme of consultation and engagement activities about the proposals took place from 18th November 2019 to 9<sup>th</sup> February 2020 entitled “Leicester’s Climate Emergency Conversation”.

2.7 Through the conversation, the council sought to gain the views of the widest possible range of people, businesses and organisations in the city. The

programme therefore combined traditional consultation methods with more innovative approaches, as summarised below:

**Online questionnaire** Available throughout the conversation period (18<sup>th</sup> November 2019 – 9<sup>th</sup> February 2020) on the council's Consultation Hub and open to individuals, businesses and other organisations.

**Community discussions** A conversation pack was available throughout the conversation period for any group of people wanting to run their own discussion event and to feed back the results. The pack was available by emailing [sustainability@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:sustainability@leicester.gov.uk)

**Leicester's Climate Assembly** A one-day workshop event on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2020 was run in partnership with the RSA. The event was designed to find out the views of a cross-section of Leicester's population. It aimed to help people to learn more about the climate emergency and our proposals, and to share their views directly. Anyone interested in applying to take part could complete an online or paper form. Delegates were selected from the applications using an anonymised process to get a cross-section of people reflecting the city population.

**Young People's Climate Assembly** A one-day workshop event on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020 for city secondary schools, organised by the Sustainability Section of Estates and Building Services and supported by Leicester's Youth Council. 12 schools booked to take part.

**Primary School discussions** A conversation pack was made available for primary schools, along with a flier for parents. Primary schools could also book a climate change presentation by contacting Lee Jowett.

**Dialogue** The council's online moderated forum opened for discussion of a series of climate emergency 'challenges' starting on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December. In addition to challenges posted by the council, participants could post their own ideas too for comment.

- 2.8 The conversation was publicised via print and social media, as well as officer attendance at events including Ward Community Meetings where these fell within the conversation period. Presentations were made at the Eyres Monsell, Humberstone and Hamilton, Castle, Stoneygate, Spinney Hills, Western and Aylestone. In addition, briefing papers were provided for the Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields and the Abbey meetings, which Sustainability Section officers could not attend due to the Climate Emergency Conversation launch taking place on the same evening.
- 2.9 A number of key organisations from the business community, further and higher education and the public sector, selected based on their opportunities to help address climate change in the city, were also approached individually. They were invited to meet with the Deputy City Mayor for Environment and Transportation to discuss the climate emergency, and were encouraged both to respond to the Conversation and to develop their own action plans. More of these meetings are continuing beyond the end of the formal consultation period.
- 2.10 A report on the Climate Emergency Conversation was taken to the Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission on 4<sup>th</sup> December and to the Housing Scrutiny Commission on 13<sup>th</sup> January. In response to a suggestion at the EDTT meeting, the Conversation Pack for Primary Schools

was developed and presentations offered to Primary Schools as described at 2.7 above.

### **Next steps after the conversation**

2.11 Following the Climate Emergency Conversation, feedback from the public is now being analysed and will inform the development of a draft action plan for the council's response to the emergency.

2.12 The action plan will be adopted in 2020.

## **3 Recommendations**

3.1 Members are asked to:

1. Note the progress made since the climate emergency declaration, including the consultation and engagement programme recently completed.
2. Note the involvement of the Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission and the Housing Scrutiny Commission.
3. Comment on the proposals in Appendix C1, including their implications for the city and for the council.
4. Note the next steps for the development and adoption of a council action plan to address the climate emergency.

## **4 Financial, Legal and other implications**

4.1 There are no immediate significant financial implications. However, the costs of any future specific initiatives should be identified at the time, and similarly the costs of any required changes to embed climate change considerations in 'business as usual' activity.

*Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance. tel. 0116 454 4081*

4.2 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations of the report however legal advice must be sought as this work progresses.

*Emma Jackman, Head of Law (Commercial, Property & Planning). tel. 0116 454 1426*

4.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

Contained in the body of the report and in Appendix C1.

*Duncan Bell, Corporate Environmental Consultant. tel. 0116 454 2249*

4.4 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.

The report outlines the programme of community consultation and engagement entitled "Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation" to contribute towards the development of the approach and actions to address the climate emergency. An initial RAG rating has been undertaken to identify priority areas to target further work to understand the equalities impacts of possible approaches, however the RAG rating should be viewed as an initial assessment based on basic evidence and assumptions which will need to be explored in more detail before actions are implemented, rather than it being viewed as a comprehensive examination of the equalities and human rights impacts. 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 due to the breadth of areas that the proposals will cover. The evidence and views gathered as part of the community consultation and engagement outlined within this report should be utilised to inform the equality impact assessment/s of different proposals along with other relevant evidence. Efforts to ensure that the engagement and consultation targets groups who may be disproportionately impacted by any of the proposals or suggestions, and to ensure that we receive views from a wide range of people with different backgrounds, identities, protected characteristics and needs will be vital in paying due regard to the general aims of the PSED.

As work progresses, service area leads looking at the feasibility of any suggestions coming from the engagement and consultation will need to robustly assess the equalities impacts of any proposals which may be taken forward, prior to a decision being taken. Where any disproportionate negative impact is identified on any protected characteristic group/s or individuals, steps must be taken to reduce or remove that impact.

The Equalities Team will provide continued advice and support to the sustainability team and service leads as required.

Hannah Watkins, Equalities Manager tel. 0116 454 5811

## **5 Supporting information / appendices**

5.1 Appendix C1: Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation – Proposals for discussion – November 2019.

**6 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

**7 Is this a “key decision”?**

No

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