

A row of green Park Ride buses parked in a lot. The buses are lined up, and the word "park ride" is visible on the front of each. The background shows trees and a cloudy sky.

Leicester Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-2023

Executive summary

September 2021



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Playing our Part

Tackling climate change is a critical and urgent challenge for all of humanity. It poses a significant threat to the future viability of cities, including Leicester - its people and its places. We believe that Leicester must play its part in national and international efforts to deliver the Paris Agreement on climate change which aims to limit global temperature rise well below 2°C and ideally below 1.5°C.

Based on the latest scientific estimates we need to reduce Leicester's carbon emissions to as close to zero as possible over the next decade. By declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019, the city council has demonstrated its commitment to leading Leicester towards a more sustainable and resilient future. This three-year strategy sets out the initial stages of our journey to become a carbon neutral and climate adapted city by 2030 or sooner.

**Leicester City Mayor,
Sir Peter Soulsby**

**Deputy City Mayor
Environment and Transportation,
Cllr Adam Clarke**





Leicester's Climate Emergency Strategy

In Leicester, we have been working on climate change for nearly 15 years. City-wide carbon emissions have already halved from their 1990 levels and the council's own emissions have decreased by a similar amount in the past decade. Successful schemes have included the installation of LED bulbs in street lighting and connecting our main city centre office buildings to a new low carbon heating network.

The Leicester Climate Emergency strategy covers all the city's greenhouse gas emissions and includes a plan for action by the council over the next 3 years. One of the first actions will be to develop a roadmap setting out the steps required on our carbon neutral journey for both the

council and the city. And in order to achieve such a large scale of ambition, we will need to work in partnership with a wide range of local stakeholders and communities across Leicester and beyond.

The council's strategy has been shaped by detailed discussions with residents, community groups, businesses, local schools, universities and public sector partners through Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation held during the winter of 2019/2020. The resulting document sets out a collective vision for a carbon neutral and climate adapted Leicester and will work alongside other council strategies, including the new Anti-Poverty strategy, local transport plan and the emerging local plan.

This executive summary document is complemented by a more detailed technical document outlining the full strategy, together with an action plan that will be reviewed and updated annually. These documents are available at leicester.gov.uk/climateemergency



Our Aims

Leicester City Council will:

1. Improve existing housing, workplaces and community buildings in the city to enable them to become carbon neutral, energy and water efficient
2. Improve environmental standards of new development towards a carbon neutral standard
3. Increase renewable energy generation and encourage storage of surplus to meet peak demand
4. Reduce carbon emissions from travel and transport towards our carbon neutral goals through walking, cycling, improved public transport and ultra-low emissions vehicles
5. Tackle carbon emissions from the city's use of goods and raw materials, including food and waste
6. Protect Leicester from increased risk of heatwaves and flooding by using nature-based solutions wherever possible
7. Enhance and protect biodiversity, green spaces and trees from climate change impacts
8. Increase the amount of carbon locked up in soil, trees and other vegetation
9. Respond to climate change impacts in ways that reduce poverty and inequality, improve health and wellbeing, and stimulate the local economy and green job creation
10. Engage meaningfully with residents, groups, organisations and businesses across the city and form effective partnerships to encourage everyone to play their part in tackling the Climate Emergency

The Six Themes

The objectives of the strategy are structured around six key themes where urgent and significant action is needed to reach our carbon reduction ambitions.



1 At home

2 Travel and transport



3 Consumer choices and waste



4 At work

5 Land use, green space and development



6 The council

Theme 1: At home

Around a third of carbon emissions from energy use in the city come from housing, 70% of this is from gas used for heating and hot water and the rest from electricity.

Leicester City Council will:

- Improve our understanding of how to make housing carbon neutral, safe and comfortable in a changing climate
- Reduce emissions from council houses through energy efficiency improvements
- Engage with tenants, owner-occupiers, landlords and housing associations to raise awareness of energy saving measures
- Increase renewable energy generation and install low carbon heating into council houses
- Enforce national minimum standards for energy efficiency and affordable heating in private rented houses
- Continue to support owner-occupiers in fuel poverty to access funding to improve energy efficiency and replace inefficient or faulty boilers
- Lobby central government to improve regulations and funding for energy efficiency, carbon reduction and affordable warmth across all housing tenures





According to data held on the Environmental Performance Certificate (EPC) register for Leicester, there are 52,567 domestic properties constructed with solid walls in the city and more than 49,500 of these require insulation as part of the retrofit measures needed to make our homes carbon neutral. This represents approximately 40% of the total number of Leicester properties on the EPC register.

Actions for 2020–2023 include:

- 38 new A-rated low carbon council houses at Saffron Lane phase 2
- Invest £3.2m per year to replace boilers in council housing with A-rated, energy efficient boilers
- Continue to install LED lighting in communal areas on council housing estates
- Develop a programme to replace electric storage heaters in council houses
- Carry out feasibility and develop a programme to install solar PV panels on council housing
- Run Leicester's Warmer Homes, Greener Homes scheme to help vulnerable residents in fuel poverty
- Install energy saving and renewable energy measures in over 500 homes through the Green Homes Grants scheme which will reduce fuel bills for homeowners and save up to 300 tonnes of carbon emissions





Theme 2: Travel and transport

Transport is responsible for around a quarter of Leicester's carbon emissions from energy and fuel use within the city.

Leicester City Council will:

- Encourage an increase in walking and cycling through improving and promoting infrastructure and services
- Work with bus companies to increase use of public transport and introduce ultra-low emission buses
- Expand the network of electric vehicle charging points across the city
- Support car and bike sharing schemes such as car clubs
- Work with taxi and private hire operators to reduce carbon emissions and air pollution
- Enforce planning policies that encourage provision of essential services close to where people live and work along with access to walking, cycling and public transport
- Include climate emergency aims in transport policies and management of car parking and the highway network
- Continue to improve online access to council services and offer facilities in neighbourhoods to reduce the need for car travel





Actions for 2020 – 2023 include:

- Implement a Covid-19 transport recovery plan including cycling and walking programme
- Deliver safe, high quality cycling and walking infrastructure across the city
- Set up an e-bike share scheme
- Provide a new park and ride scheme at Beaumont Leys
- Develop a city centre electric shuttle bus
- Promote sustainable transport through engagement with businesses and schools
- Consult on the introduction of a workplace parking levy to provide funding for sustainable transport projects
- St Margaret's bus station is a new carbon neutral redevelopment which will provide energy efficiency measures as well as roof solar panels, electric bus charging points and secure storage for 150 bikes. Around 46 tonnes of carbon will be saved annually from the new bus station.



Theme 3: Consumer choices and waste

The choices we make as consumers and the type of goods we purchase contribute to both the city's carbon emissions and our waste problems

Leicester City Council will:

- Raise public awareness of the climate impact of buying and disposing of products and ways to reduce that impact, particularly for food, electrical products and clothes
- Continue to use locally sourced ingredients in school meals to reduce emissions from food miles and introduce more plant-based meals
- Increase local growing of food and raise awareness of the impact of air-freighted food
- Support reuse and repair schemes for household items
- Work with Biffa to increase participation in recycling, including the orange bag scheme and garden waste service
- Explore opportunities to reduce emissions and air pollution from the collection and processing of Leicester's household waste in partnership with Biffa
- Improve household waste services in line with government's new Resources and Waste Strategy, including a major increase in recycling
- Ensure that land use policies align with the need for facilities to reuse, recycle and compost food waste
- Lobby central government to provide stronger incentives for reuse and repair of products and improve the market for recyclable materials particularly plastics



Cities are thought to be responsible for around 70% of global carbon emissions, including direct emissions and those generated through the production and consumption of goods and services.





Over the last three years almost 700 tonnes of items have been diverted from landfill through a Reuse shop set up in Leicester with local charity LOROS.

Actions for 2020-2023 include:

- Deliver the Metal Matters communications campaign to increase the volume of recyclable metals being placed in the orange recycling bags and communal bins
- Promote home composting by continuing to provide discounted compost bins to residents
- Extend and develop the Reuse shop
- Implement a recycling improvement project for flats
- Develop a multi-stream media campaign to encourage residents to put the right waste in the right bin
- Produce a new waste and recycling strategy for the city
- Love your Clothes is a new online campaign to raise awareness of sustainable clothing, including information about buying clothes, care & repair, upcycling, and recycling of garments
- Install free drinking water refill points across the city
- Develop and implement a communications and engagement plan for the Food for Life award
- Create a strategy and project plan for school meals that covers food and packaging waste and opportunities for more plant-based meals





Theme 4: At work

This covers the impact of businesses, public services such as the NHS and police, further and higher education and voluntary and community organisations. The impacts of the council and schools are covered separately.

Leicester City Council will:

- Seek to influence national and local economic strategy and funding to encourage a carbon neutral and climate adapted economy for Leicester
- Work with partners, including universities to help SMEs address the Climate Emergency
- Support business tenants in council-owned shops, business units and workspaces to move towards zero carbon business practices
- Encourage and support fleet operators to reduce their carbon emissions
- Enforce planning policies so that new development sites are designed with sustainable and low carbon travel in mind
- Ensure that employment skills training and vocational education respond to the needs of a low carbon economy
- Engage with businesses and organisations to encourage them to develop and implement their own Climate Emergency plans and initiatives

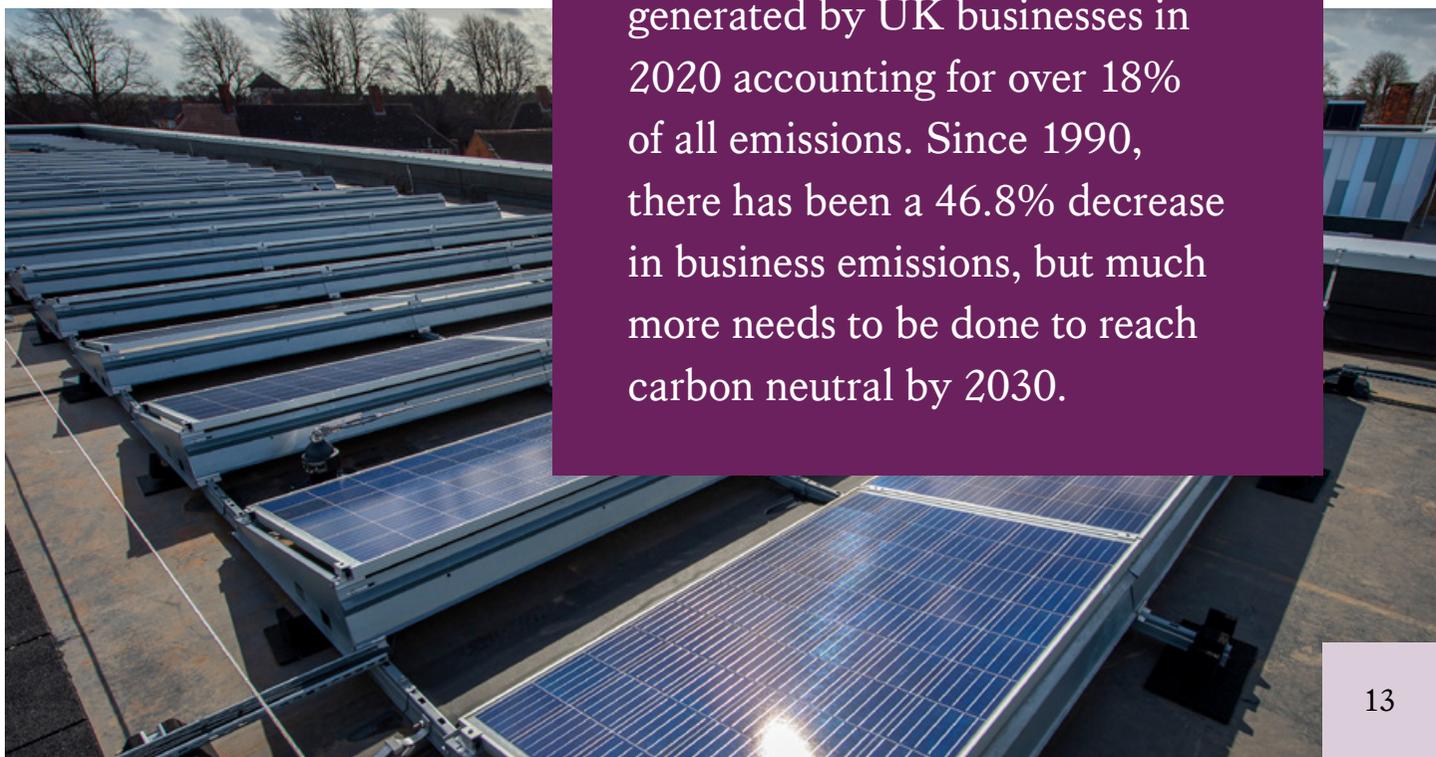




Almost 60 million tonnes (Mt) of carbon emissions were generated by UK businesses in 2020 accounting for over 18% of all emissions. Since 1990, there has been a 46.8% decrease in business emissions, but much more needs to be done to reach carbon neutral by 2030.

Actions for 2020-2023 include:

- Deliver phase 2 of the Green BELLE scheme for SME businesses to reduce their carbon emissions and costs through energy saving efficiencies
- Provide support and advice to organisations about carbon reduction, energy saving and waste through the business gateway
- Redevelop Pilot House to create low carbon office space and business units for start up enterprises
- Explore options for the sustainable redevelopment of the Ian Marlow centre for employment use
- Engage with local businesses and organisations to encourage them to develop their own climate emergency plans and share these online



Theme 5: Land use, green space and development

Leicester is a compact city with a growing population. Existing housing and employment sites are responsible for 75% of the city's carbon emissions from energy use. More homes and employment space are needed over the next few years which will increase emissions unless new development is designed to be sustainable and carbon neutral

Leicester City Council will:

- Encourage and where possible enforce low carbon standards for all new development
- Achieve a carbon neutral standard for development on land disposed of by the council as well as a reduced carbon footprint from construction materials
- Support opportunities to expand local heat networks to provide affordable, low carbon heat to homes and businesses and reduce emissions from the existing district heat system
- Support proposals for renewable energy generation and storage where appropriate
- Improve our understanding of how trees, wetlands and green spaces can protect the city from heatwaves and flooding
- Encourage use of sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS) in new developments
- Continue to implement flood risk management schemes that protect homes, businesses and infrastructure from flooding and contribute to biodiversity and amenity
- Implement the council's Tree Strategy
- Deliver the local Biodiversity Action Plan to address threats to wildlife from climate change
- Improve our understanding of carbon storage in soils and different habitats and use this to inform land use, green space and development policies and practices



Actions for 2020-2023 include:

- Adopt new Local Plan following completion of consultation process and independent examination
- Ensure large strategic council-owned sites proposed in the Local Plan contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Secure a low carbon housing development at Ashton Green
- Design and develop an exemplar low carbon, social housing scheme on land owned by the council in the North West Leicester regeneration area
- Develop our understanding of sustainable methods of construction
- Secure proposals from ENGIE for future decarbonisation of the local district heating network
- Develop and encourage implementation of a technical guide for developers on SuDS
- Maintain a publicly available register of flood risk assets
- Undertake a feasibility study for a surface water flood alleviation scheme at Leicester Royal Infirmary
- Work with partners and stakeholders including the Environment Agency to deliver flood mitigation schemes across the city
- Deliver workshops and engagement through Eco Schools and the 'Sea starts here' campaign to increase awareness of the impact of climate change and waste on the water environment



Without urgent action we could see global temperatures rise by as much as 6°C by the end of this century.



Theme 6: The Council

These objectives and actions will address the impact of the council's own activities on climate change and includes schools.

Leicester City Council will:

- Identify a roadmap for the council to become carbon neutral by 2030
- Reduce emissions from our office buildings and invest in energy efficient public lighting and low carbon heating systems
- Consider opportunities for renewable energy generation and storage
- Continue to work with schools to reduce their carbon emissions
- Reduce our emissions from council business travel and decarbonise our fleet
- Address the climate impact of goods and services we buy
- Apply the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse, recycle/compost when dealing with our waste
- Improve working practices and provide communications and guidance to staff to minimise our climate impact
- Develop resilience measures that address the risks to our customers, assets and services from climate change



Actions for 2020 – 2023 include:

- Develop a carbon neutral roadmap of actions to enable council to achieve zero carbon by or before 2030
- Create agile working practices and use mobile technology to reduce business travel
- Develop and implement a carbon literacy training programme for staff, including senior leaders in the council
- Implement a £1.8m scheme to replace heating systems, boiler controls and windows at a number of schools and childrens' homes across the city
- Develop and deliver a £25M capital investment programme to reduce energy use, generate renewable energy and install low carbon heating in 55 schools and 37 other council buildings
- Expand the BESS energy programme (Built Environment Services for Schools)
- Develop and implement a climate emergency toolkit and carbon tracker for capital projects
- Deliver a net zero building as part of the Oaklands school extension
- Introduce 19 new ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) into council fleet





Monitoring and Reviewing this Strategy

The city council has set up governance arrangements to oversee monitoring and review of the Climate Emergency strategy and action plan. An internal board of directors, the Climate Emergency Board, carries out 6-monthly monitoring of the council's actions set out in its action plan, and publishes an annual review and update of the plan on the council's website.

A process for reviewing the city-wide strategy will be developed at the end of year 3 of the strategy and will include input from partner organisations and Leicester's Experts Commission, as well as other stakeholder groups and individuals.







This document is based on information that was available and correct at the date of publishing.



Leicester
City Council