



**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 9 NOVEMBER 2021**

ENGAGEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the draft Strategic Plan (2022-26), a copy of which is appended to this report. A 12-week public consultation is set to commence on 1 November 2021, subject to approval being given by the Cabinet at its meeting on 26 October 2021.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Strategic Plan is complemented by the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which sets out a financial plan supporting the priorities in the Strategic Plan, as well as by the Strategic Change Portfolio which outlines how the Council will transform local services in response to national and local drivers for change whilst seeking to maintain or improve outcomes. The Plan is also underpinned by Departmental Business Plans and strategies which provide further detail on how the Council will deliver the aims and actions in the Plan.
3. On 6 December 2017, the County Council approved the current Strategic Plan (2018-22). This Plan was based on five aspirational outcomes which described the County Council's vision for Leicestershire. On 15th May 2019, the County Council declared a climate emergency. On 8 July 2020, the County Council approved a revised version of the Plan (still to expire in 2022) to reflect the Council's declaration of a climate emergency, with recognition that it would need to be revisited as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Background

4. The Strategic Plan sets out the Council's ambitions and priorities for the next four years. It outlines what it aims to achieve and how it intends to do it.
5. The current Plan is due to expire in 2022. Work has been undertaken to review and refresh the Plan and to re-assess the Council's strategic priorities, particularly in light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Plan Structure and Contents

6. The draft Plan (2022-26) is based on five strategic outcomes which describe the Council's vision for Leicestershire. Each outcome includes four or five sub-outcomes which will need to be achieved to deliver the outcome.
7. The outcomes are broad and aspirational, reflecting the County Council's significant and wide-ranging responsibilities and capacity to influence. Therefore, to ensure that the Plan provides a clear strategic direction for the Council, it also includes specific aims and actions to deliver each outcome over the next four years.
8. The Plan also includes a section on 'enabling services' which is intended to highlight the contributions of the County Council's corporate functions (e.g. Finance, Legal, HR) to outcome delivery as well as sustaining good governance. This is followed by a section on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which highlights the Council's aims and actions to maintain a balanced budget whilst protecting frontline services and weathering the coronavirus crisis. Finally, there is a section on the Strategic Change Portfolio, summarising the aims and actions of the four key pillars of this internal transformation programme.

Strategic Outcomes

9. The outcomes, which are detailed below, are intended to broadly reflect the remits of departments and the portfolios of lead members. However, successful delivery of the Plan will rely upon departments sharing ownership of the outcomes in addition to the outcomes being reflected in all relevant Council plans and strategies.

- 'Clean, Green Future' Outcome: *Reflects the need to protect and enhance the environment and tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and unsustainable resource usage.*

Sub-outcomes:

- People act now to tackle climate change;
- Nature and the local environment are valued, protected and enhanced;
- Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way;
- The economy and infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally-friendly.

- 'Great Communities' Outcome: *Aims to ensure Leicestershire has thriving, inclusive communities in which people support each other and take responsibility for their local area.*

Sub-outcomes:

- Diversity is celebrated and people feel welcome and included;
- People participate in service design and delivery;
- Communities are prepared for and resilient to emergencies;
- Cultural and historical heritage are enjoyed and conserved;
- People support each other through volunteering.

- ‘Improving Opportunities’ Outcome: *Aims for all children to get the best start for life and to have access to a good quality education. Also aims for everyone to have the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential.*

Sub-outcomes:

- Every child gets the best start for life;
- Every child has access to good quality education;
- Families are self-sufficient and enabled to be resilient;
- Everyone is able to aim high and reach their full potential.

- ‘Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure’ Outcome: *Aims to ensure that we build a productive, inclusive and sustainable economy at the cutting edge of science, technology and engineering. Also reflects the need for our infrastructure to meet the demands of a growing population and economy.*

Sub-outcomes:

- There is close alignment between skills supply and employer demand;
- Leicestershire has the infrastructure for sustainable growth;
- Leicestershire is an attractive place where businesses can flourish;
- Economic growth delivers increased prosperity for all;
- Leicestershire has the right homes in the right places to meet needs.

- ‘Keeping People Safe and Well’ Outcome: *Aims to ensure the people of Leicestershire have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing. Also reflects the need to ensure people are safe and protected from harm.*

Sub-outcomes:

- People are safe in their daily lives;
- People enjoy long lives in good health;
- People at the most risk are protected from harm;
- Carers and people with care needs are supported to live active, independent, and fulfilling lives.

Governance

10. The Council’s current Strategic Plan (2018-22) is also based on five strategic outcomes. Its implementation has been led by Outcome Advisory Boards (OABs) responsible for supporting alignment of Departmental Business Plans with the outcomes. A review of this approach identified that the OABs have not influenced Business Plans and seem to have lacked clarity on their specific roles and priorities. This has led to the increased focus in the revised Strategic Plan on defining specific aims for each outcome, as well as the development of a new governance model.
11. The revised model is based on Outcome Boards, which will no longer aim to advise Departments on the contents of their Business Plans. These Outcome Boards will instead focus primarily on monitoring the Council’s progress in delivering the aims of their respective outcomes, providing six-monthly reports to Corporate

Management Team to highlight key achievements, challenges and priorities. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees will continue to receive quarterly updates on performance for the areas they cover. The Outcome Boards will also have the capacity to review and inform Council strategies whilst they are being developed, to help ensure that they reflect the aims of their respective outcomes.

Environment and Climate Change

12. The revised Strategic Plan (2022-26) includes a new outcome, '*Clean, Green Future*' which reflects the Council's aspirations to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and unsustainable resource consumption. Additionally, the section in the Plan on the Strategic Change Portfolio includes a summary of the purpose, aims and actions of the Council's Carbon Reduction Programme.
13. Environment and Climate Change considerations are also embedded throughout the Plan. For example, the '*Great Communities*' outcome includes, for sub-outcome 6.3 'Communities are prepared for and resilient to emergencies', an action for the Council to take action to support the resilience of the County to the existing and predicted changes in climate. This outcome also includes, for sub-outcome 6.5 'People support each other through volunteering', an action to develop and maintain a volunteering offer across Council services including Environment and Waste.
14. Further, the '*Strong Economy and Infrastructure*' outcome includes, for sub-outcome 8.2 'Leicestershire has the infrastructure for sustainable growth', an aim for infrastructure capacity and capability to support growth and net zero carbon emissions. This is supported by an action to encourage and support active and sustainable travel options, where appropriate, by learning from best practice and encouraging the uptake and use of electric vehicles and micro-mobility as appropriate, including through provision of infrastructure. The '*Strong Economy and Infrastructure*' outcome also includes, for 8.5 'Leicestershire has the right homes in the right places to meet needs', an action to work with partners and developers to ensure that all housing developments are low carbon and enhance biodiversity.
15. Additionally, the '*Keeping People Safe and Well*' outcome includes, for sub-outcome 9.3 'People enjoy long lives in good health', an action to deliver a wider determinants programme of work to address the range of social, economic and environmental factors which influence health outcomes, thereby improving health and reducing health inequalities. This will include for example our work with partners to improve air quality.
16. The '*Clean, Green Future*' outcome includes the following aims and actions of relevance to Environment and Climate Change.

Sub-outcome 5.1 'People act now to tackle climate change and protect the environment'

Aims:

- Residents actively involved in tackling climate change and protecting the environment
- Reduction in the rate of CO2 emissions per capita (average per resident)

Actions:

- We will use our interactions with communities to raise awareness of environmental impacts and harness community capacity to address them
- We will provide support and opportunities for learning to local communities, schools, and businesses to promote positive environmental action and collaborative working, leading to constructive behavioural change
- We will support residents to be more resource efficient in their energy and water use, such as through our Warm Homes service which provides free advice and information on managing heating costs and staying warm at home well as grants to deliver first-time gas central heating systems
- We will work with partners to expand zero and ultra-low emissions vehicles and charging, including Heavy Goods Vehicle refuelling, and promote sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling

Sub-outcome 5.2 ‘Nature and the local environment are valued, protected and enhanced’

Aim: Increase in the percentage of county land which promotes diversity of habitat and species

Actions:

- We will support awareness raising and education on biodiversity and the value of natural capital to society and the economy
- We will create, protect, enhance, and manage sustainable green infrastructure and biodiversity on Council managed land and assets
- We will seek to improve the biodiversity value and condition of natural capital features on Council managed land and assets
- We will seek to demonstrate and support environmentally sustainable farming practices that support the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity and the condition of natural capital features
- We will work with partners through the LLEP to develop a Natural Capital Investment Plan, and deliver the roadmap the recent Natural Capital Review Report set out for Leicestershire, minimising the loss of habitats and the impacts of development and encouraging innovative land use

Sub-outcome 5.3 ‘Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way’

Aim: Increase in the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting and reduction in the percentage landfilled

Actions:

- Increase in the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting and reduction in the percentage landfilled
- We will reduce the tonnage of household waste produced in Leicestershire and minimise its environmental impact by applying the waste hierarchy in the priority order of prevention, preparation for reuse, recycling, other recovery, and disposal
- We will continue to encourage appropriate use of the Recycling & Household Waste Sites service
- We will provide a trade waste recycling, treatment and disposal service for businesses in Leicestershire, where practicable and cost-effective to do so
- We will work closely with other Waste Disposal Authorities to share ideas and opportunities for joint working / collaboration and innovation

Sub-outcome 5.4 ‘The economy and infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly’

Aim:

- Increase in the percentage of businesses taking action to reduce their carbon impact
- Reduction in CO2 emissions under the Council’s influence in the local area

Actions include:

- We will ensure that our Corporate Asset Investment Fund owns efficient assets which enhance the environment and biodiversity in the county
- We will reduce the impact of the Council’s procurement and delivery of goods and services on the environment
- We will work with businesses to raise awareness of the need to act on climate change and to support carbon reduction and circular economy practices
- We will identify and promote business opportunities arising from a circular economy
- We will work with partners to identify the investment requirements for zero carbon development and develop associated training and skills routes
- We will work with partners to create new, low-carbon business units and managed workspaces for start-ups and small companies
- We will work with partners and developers to ensure developments are low or zero carbon, climate resilient and enhance biodiversity
- We will ensure effective restoration of public transport services following the pandemic and identify opportunities to make transport more efficient
- We will encourage and support active and sustainable travel options by encouraging the uptake and use of electric vehicles and micro-mobility
- We will reduce pollution and contamination in Leicestershire through our Trading Standards service and other areas of control and influence
- We will continue to investigate and pursue opportunities to increase carbon sequestration through nature based solutions, such as tree planting

17. The section on the Strategic Change Portfolio includes, in sub-section 13.3, the following aims and actions to deliver the Council’s Carbon Reduction Programme.

Aims:

- Net-zero carbon emissions from the Council’s own operations by 2030, with an interim 64% reduction by 2025
- Leicestershire County Council is a climate active organisation – carbon reduction and adapting to climate change are included in decision making

Actions:

- We will complete an assessment of the cost and technology implications of achieving net zero carbon by 2030 for the council
- We will produce a Net Zero Carbon 2030 Plan for the council
- We will reduce our demand for energy, increase our use and generation of clean energy
- We will explore opportunities to remove carbon from the atmosphere through nature based solutions such as tree planting
- We will include net zero carbon criteria in our decision making

- We will create a culture for carbon reduction through communications, training, tools and guidance

Consultation and Timetable for Decisions

16. Development of the Plan has so far included engagement with lead officers for supporting strategies and the current (2018-22) outcomes, Department Management Teams, Corporate Management Team and Mrs. P. Posnett CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Community and Staff Relations.
17. Subject to Cabinet approval at its meeting on 26 October 2021, a 12-week public consultation on the Plan will begin on 1 November 2021 and run until 21 January 2022. As part of the consultation all of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Scrutiny Commission (from 1 -17 November), key partnership boards such as the Children and Families Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board (17 and 25 November respectively) will be provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft Plan.
18. Residents, community groups and partner organisations will also be invited to provide feedback on the draft Plan through a variety of methods including a public survey and meetings in which the Plan will be presented and reviewed.
19. Findings from the consultation will be used to inform development of the final Plan and it is intended that, in March 2022, a report will be presented to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration and then to the Cabinet presenting the outcome of the consultation and seeking agreement for the revised draft Plan to be submitted to the County Council for approval on 18 May 2022.

Resource Implications

20. All actions within the Plan are from existing service/business plans and strategies. As such, there should not be any additional resource investment required to deliver the Plan beyond that which has already been approved.
21. However, as referenced in Section 11 of the Plan ('Monitoring Outcome Delivery'), officer resources will be required to monitor delivery of the Plan and ensure that the strategic outcomes are reflected in and supported by all relevant underpinning Council plans and strategies. These tasks will be carried out by Outcome Boards, consisting of representatives from departments and corporate services. As delivery of the Plan will require continued collaboration with partner services, representatives from the Outcome Boards will interact with relevant partnership boards to monitor outcome delivery and promote integration of strategies.
22. The number of Outcome Boards has been reduced following a review of outcome delivery arrangements. Therefore, fewer officer resources will be required than have been utilised to monitor and support delivery of the current (2018-22) Plan.
23. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the Plan and will have a further opportunity to comment following the public consultation (prior to the March 2022 Cabinet meeting).

Conclusions

24. It is recommended that the Committee provides its views on the draft Strategic Plan (2022-26) as set out in the Appendix, including the content highlighted in this report.

Background papers

[Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan \(2018-2022\) \(Previous Plan\)](#)

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

25. None

Equality and Human Rights Implications

26. A screening assessment of the Strategic Plan concluded that a full impact assessment is not required. The Strategic Plan is a high-level document which reflects the content of existing Council plans and strategies in order to set out a clear summary of the Council's overall ambitions and delivery approach; it does not include new actions which could have Equality and Human Rights Implications.
27. The Plan will, however, have a positive impact as it promotes Equality and Human Rights, primarily by including, within the section on the '*Great Communities*' outcome (see sub-section 6.1), specific aims and actions to deliver the sub-outcome: 'diversity is celebrated, and people feel welcome and included'. This sub-outcome highlights issues around community cohesion and hate crime along with specific actions which the Council will deliver over the next four years to address these issues. Equality and Human Rights are also embedded throughout the Plan.

Other Relevant Impact Assessments

Crime and Disorder Implications

28. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report. The Plan promotes community safety by including, within the section on the '*Keeping People Safe and Well*' outcome (see sub-sections 9.1 and 9.2 of the appendix), specific aims and actions to deliver the sub-outcomes 'people are safe in their daily lives' and 'people at the most risk are protected from harm'.

Appendices

Appendix: Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan (2022-26) (**Revised Plan**)

Officer to Contact

Ashley Epps, Senior Policy Officer

0116 3050527

Ashley.Epps@leics.gov.uk