



**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE PERFORMANCE
REPORT TO JUNE 2023**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF
ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the latest performance update on the key performance indicators that the Council is responsible for delivering against the Council Strategic Plan (2022-26).

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The updates in this report reflect progress against the Council's Strategic Outcomes Framework within the Strategic Plan up to 2026, as well as the Environment and Waste performance framework and related high-level plans and strategies across the Authority which inform the current performance framework and indicators in this report.

Background

3. This report highlights how a variety of Environment and Climate Change performance indicators are performing against the Council's key outcomes, the 'Clean and Green' and the 'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure'.
4. The performance dashboards, appended to this report, include several indicators where the Council does not have direct control of delivery, such as air quality and river quality. The latter examples are within the scope of the Environment Strategy but are not directly delivered by the Council. They have been included to provide a greater oversight of the environment, inform policy making and help understand what life is like in Leicestershire. They include a mix of national and locally developed performance indicators. Measuring these may highlight areas for scrutiny of delivery by other Council departments, other agencies or the need for lobbying to influence Government policy and funding. It is expected that action by a range of agencies will improve a number of these metrics over time. Internal indicators, where the Council has the most control, are identified with an 'L' within the performance dashboards.

5. The Council monitors and assesses its performance by mainly considering its direction of travel (DOT), the RAG (Red, Amber or Green) rating, and quartile position when compared to other English Counties (where applicable).
6. The DOT arrows indicate an improvement or deterioration in performance compared to the previous result in the performance dashboards in the Appendix. Up arrows show an improvement in performance, down arrows show a decline in performance and horizontal arrows show no change. Grey empty circles mean there is no update available. This may be due to the time taken to obtain data from third parties and calculate the results or because some indicators are updated less frequently for example, annually.
7. The performance dashboards include information on the latest data against target (where relevant) which generates a RAG rating if applicable. Red indicates that close monitoring or significant action is required as the target is not or may not be achieved. Amber indicates that light touch monitoring is required as performance is currently not meeting the target or set to miss the target by a narrow margin. Green indicates no additional action is required as the indicator is currently meeting the target or on track to meet the target.
8. The Council's performance is benchmarked against 33 English county authorities which covers large, principally non-urban geographical areas. Where it is available, the performance dashboards within the Appendix indicate which quartile Leicestershire's performance falls into. The first quartile is defined as performance that falls within the top 25% of county councils. The fourth quartile is defined as performance that falls within the bottom 25% of county councils. The comparison quartiles are updated annually.
9. The frequency in which the indicators are reported varies as some are quarterly, others are annual, and some less frequent. Quarterly updates tend to have a data lag of one quarter or more. For clarity, the time-periods the data covers are contained in the performance dashboards in the Appendix.

Performance Update – latest data to June 2023

10. The quarterly performance dashboard shows Environment and Climate Change performance up to June 2023. Overall, there are 27 performance indicators included in this report which are aligned with the Council's Strategic Plan Outcomes. They are presented in the Environment and Climate Change performance dashboards within the Appendix. Where a DOT is available: four show performance improvements, three had declined in performance and five remained the same as the previous update.
11. The latest position shows that eight Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are green (they have met the target or are on track), two are amber (performance is currently not meeting the target or set to miss the target by a narrow margin) and two are rated red (where performance is currently not meeting the target or set to miss the target).

12. When compared to other English county councils, the Council has two indicators which are in the top quartile which include the 'Percentage of domestic properties with Energy Performance rating C+ (new homes)' and the 'Total fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 population' (listed in the Appendix with a green first quartile position). The Council performs below average for ten indicators listed within the third and fourth quartiles in the Appendix.
13. The following updates focus on the 12 indicators that have been updated in Quarter One.

Clean and Green

People act now to tackle climate change

14. The Council monitors the energy efficiency of new and existing homes within the County in the 'Percentage of domestic properties with Energy Performance Certificate rating C+' indicators. There are separate measures for new build properties and existing properties.
15. The latest data shows that 98% of new homes are energy efficient (energy performance certificate rating C+) in Quarter Four (2022/23), compared to existing homes of which only 53% were rated as energy efficient. The energy efficiency performance for new homes had remained static since the previous quarter compared to existing homes that had seen an improvement in performance (4 percentage points). Comparisons with other English county councils for 2021/22 show that the 'Percentage of domestic properties with Energy Performance certificate rating C+ (new homes)' falls within the first (top) quartile and the 'Percentage of domestic properties with Energy Performance certificate rating C+ (existing homes)' falls within the third quartile. The latter is an improvement on the last year's fourth quartile position (bottom). This represents a 27% increase in C+ ratings for existing homes since the same time last year (41.4% Quarter Four 2021/22) which is a significant improvement.
16. Although existing homes in the County would still benefit from more energy efficient incentives, the Authority does not have direct control over this, and further improvements will be contingent on national programmes, such as grant schemes, to improve insulation and energy efficiency. The Authority is partnered with YES Energy Solutions and the district councils to launch the Green Living Leicestershire scheme, which helps prioritise Leicestershire residents with low incomes to go green, reduce costs and tackle climate change through fully funded home improvements, including loft and wall insulation, solar panels, heat pumps and new efficient windows and doors. It follows on from previous successful funding bids, including the Green Homes Grant and Warm Homes Fund.
17. The latest results for the 'Percentage of staff who say the Council is doing enough to reduce its environmental impact (post-training survey)', declined slightly by 2% (from 91% in Quarter Two 2022/23 to 89% in Quarter Three 2022/23) but still met its 80% departmental target.

18. The Council's Community Insight Survey aims to understand public perceptions across areas of importance to the Council. It is a telephone survey of approximately 1,600 respondents annually. The quarterly reporting uses rolling 12-month results. The latest results show, that 94% of respondents agreed that 'protecting the environment is important' in the 12 months to Quarter Four (2022/23), which is similar to the previous update (95%). In the same period, 67% of respondents think that 'the Council should do more to help protect the environment' (including carbon reduction and helping tackle climate change), the same as the previous update.

Nature and local environment are valued, protected, and enhanced

19. Leicestershire is one of the least wooded areas of the country, currently with only around 6% woodland, which is well below the national average of 10% for England. As a major landowner in Leicestershire, the Council has identified areas of its own landholdings where trees, woodlands and hedgerows can be planted to increase overall tree coverage. The Council made a pledge for an 'ambitious project to plant 700,000 trees' by 2032, which is the equivalent of one for every resident of Leicestershire. This equates to 70,000 trees planted each year. To help achieve this pledge, the Tree Management and Planting Action Plan was updated in 2021 to ensure delivery of the pledge over a 10-year period. The latest tree planting provisional update shows that 248,643 trees have been planted by the Authority and its partners up to June 2023 and has greatly exceeded this year's 140,000-planting cumulative target (to June 2022/23), showing excellent performance. A detailed Tree Management Strategy update was provided to this Committee in November 2022.

Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way

20. The 'Percentage of household waste sent by local authorities across Leicestershire for reuse, recycling or composting' remained similar to the previous quarter at 42% for Quarter Three 2022/23 (data is two quarters in arrears) and missed its new 45% target, resulting in an amber rating. It lies within the third quartile position (2021/22) compared to other English county councils. This indicator has had relatively static performance over the past year at 43%, although the last two updates have seen a slight dip in performance to 42%. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, this typically tended to hover around 48% from January 2015 to December 2019. Results in Quarter Three perform worse than this. The probable cause of this recent reduction was reduced green waste tonnages collected during the summer 2022 heatwave. The Council has adopted the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy which includes a pledge to put in place collection systems to contribute towards the future national target of 65% recycling by 2035.
21. The 'Annual percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill (former NI 193)' met its target of 30% (rated green). Its performance has remained steady at 23% in Quarter Three 2022/23 since the previous quarter. Since the same time last year (26%), there has been a steady decline in waste sent to landfill

(and an increase in waste sent to energy from waste) resulting in an improvement in performance. When compared to other English county councils, this indicator remained in the fourth (bottom) quartile in 2021/22. In order to achieve an average position when compared to the other English county councils, performance would have to meet a more challenging 7% landfill rate. In the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy, the Council is committed to reducing waste to landfill to less than 5% by 2025, well in advance of the national target of 10% by 2030. The Council has recently awarded a new contract for the treatment of residual waste. The contract commenced on 1 April 2023 and it is anticipated that performance against this indicator will continue to improve.

22. The 'Total household waste per household (kg)' improved in performance slightly as waste decreased by 2% from 969kg in Quarter Two 2022/23 to 948kg in Quarter Three 2022/23 (data is two quarters in arrears) and met its target (that required a decrease). Performance has also improved over the year with waste levels having declined by 7% since the same time last year (1,024kg in Quarter Three 2021/22). In comparison to other English county councils, Leicestershire's performance was slightly below average as it remained in the third quartile for 2021/22, since the previous year.

The economy and infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly

23. The 'Electric vehicle charging locations per 100,000 population' improved in performance by 7%, from 38 in Quarter Two 2022/23 to 40 in Quarter Three 2022/23. This represents a 20% increase since the same period last year when the figure was 33.4 per 100,000 population, which indicates an improvement in the sectors EV infrastructure supporting greater renewable fuel options in Leicestershire. However, in terms of comparison with other English county councils, Leicestershire is in the fourth quartile (bottom) for 2022 (from third quartile in 2021). Whilst the Government currently expects the transition to electric vehicles (EV) to be led by industry and consumers, the Authority has played an active role in supporting residents in switching to EVs. So far, the Authority has:
- i. Installed electric vehicle charge points at Council's Park and Ride sites.
 - ii. Secured almost £1m of the Government's first portion of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure funding along with four other local authorities and Midlands Connect. It is expected that this support from the Government will attract additional private sector investment, with cumulative funds being used to deliver around 100 public charging points across the County over the next 12-18 months.
24. Future plans involve:
- i. Actively seek further opportunities to secure electric vehicle funding from the Government, which would allow the Council to install public charging points across the County.
 - ii. Continue to consider opportunities to introduce public charging points within the Country Parks.

- iii. Work with district councils, businesses and other stakeholders to help develop a countywide EV infrastructure strategy.
 - iv. Carry out a review of the Council's fleet vehicles identifying opportunities to transition to low emission vehicles and provide the necessary charging infrastructure, where this is practicable and cost effective.
 - v. Review EV schemes that other authorities have introduced, or are currently piloting, to learn from their experiences.
 - vi. Take opportunities to press the Government to set out a national approach and standards for EV charging infrastructure, which is appropriately funded.
25. The 'Electric vehicle ownership – Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) rate/10,000 population' improved in performance by a further 11% as ownership increased from 121/10,000 in Quarter Two 2022/23 to 133/10,000 in Quarter Three 2022/23. This has increased by 55% since the same period last year, which was 85.6/10,000. This continues to demonstrate a significant momentum of people moving from fossil fuelled vehicles to more sustainable electric alternatives. However, Leicestershire remains in the third quartile (below average) when compared to other English county councils for 2022 (the percentage of licensed ULEVs of all licensed vehicles in the County is approximately 1.67%).
26. The 'Carbon emissions per capita (within Local Authority influence)' has declined in performance by 7% as emissions increased from 4.3 in 2020 to 4.6 in 2021, however, despite this decline in performance, it has met its 4.7 target. This data is the estimate in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_{2e}) emissions per head of population for all sectors within the scope of influence of Local Authorities. Emissions had been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns during 2020, recent data is similar to the pre-pandemic rates of 4.7 in 2019 and this is the first rise in rates observed in the past five years. Compared with other English county councils, this indicator lies within the third quartile in 2020 (below average). Data is provided by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and is two years in arrears. This published data excludes emissions from motorways, diesel railways and net emissions from land use, land use change and forestry on the grounds that these are outside of local authority control.

Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure

Leicestershire has the infrastructure for sustainable growth

27. The 'NO₂ exceedances for Leicestershire' indicator includes the number of times NO₂ has exceeded the annual mean air quality objective of 40 micrograms per cubic metre. NO₂ is a gas that is mainly produced during the combustion of fossil fuels. It is published by district councils in their Air Quality Annual Status Reports. There are no new updates to this indicator for Quarter One as these are only updated annually. The reported zero exceedances for 2021 demonstrated very good performance on this.

Background papers

Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Outcomes Framework and Strategic Plan 2022-2026

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2022/7/13/LCC-Strategic-Plan-2022-26.pdf>

Environment Strategy 2018-30

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2020/7/13/Environment-Strategy-2018-2030-delivering-a-better-future.pdf>

Tree Management Strategy 2020-2025

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2021/2/16/Tree-Management-Strategy-2020-2025.pdf>

Improving Air Quality and Health across Leicestershire 2020- 2024: a multiagency partnership for joint action

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s157169/Appendix%20A%20Air%20Quality%20and%20Health%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Equality Implications

28. There are no specific equality implications to note as part of this performance report.

Human Rights Implications

29. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Appendix

Strategic Plan Performance Dashboards by Outcomes covering Environment and Climate Change Performance to June 2023.

Officers to Contact

Ann Carruthers
Director, Environment and Transport Department
Tel: (0116) 305 7000
Email: Ann.Carruthers@leics.gov.uk

Nicola Truslove
Business Partner, Business Intelligence Service
Tel: (0116) 305 8302
Email: Nicola.Truslove@leics.gov.uk

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