



Climate Change: Draft Strategy Consultation

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Lead Member/Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Margaret Glancy - Portfolio Holder for Governance, Environment and Regulatory Services (Deputy Leader)

Corporate Priority:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect our climate and enhance our natural environment - Delivering sustainable and inclusive growth in Melton - Connected and led by our community
Relevant Ward Member(s):	All
Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):	All member briefing on climate change 19.07.21
Exempt Information:	No

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report presents a draft Climate Change Strategy for Melton borough. It is a high level strategic and evidence led document, a community focused strategy which considers and reflects the views of the local community and wider partners, collected through community consultation in 2022.
- 1.2 The Strategy seeks to provide a framework for the whole community and Melton as a place, to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to our changing climate. It seeks to bring together the local community to tackle the causes and impacts of climate and it is expected to be delivered in many different ways and by many different people.

The Council plan to use the strategy to inform its policies and decision making and also encourage others to do the same.

- 1.3 The Draft Strategy was released for public consultation on the 22nd November 2023. Scrutiny Committee members are now asked to consider the draft Climate Change Strategy. Comments and feedback provided by the Committee will be used to shape the final document, ahead of its consideration for approval by the Council.
- 1.4 The strategy will be supported by the Council through the development of two action plans. An internal action plan will focus on how the Council as an organisation will become more sustainable, including how it will move towards net zero emissions. A second boroughwide action plan will support actions to help the wider borough to do the same. These plans will be subject to scrutiny and consideration by members in 2024, after the strategy has been finalised. Progress on the action plans and tackling climate change will be reported to members at least annually thereafter.

2 Recommendations

That Committee:

- 2.1 Consider the draft Climate Change Strategy for Melton borough and provide feedback to support the further development and finalisation of the document.

3 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 A Climate Change Strategy is not a statutory document and the Council could choose to not develop one. However, the Council made a commitment when it [declared a climate emergency in 2019](#) to promote the cutting of emissions across the wider Borough alongside reducing its own organisational emissions. The Council more recently strengthened its commitment when it became a signatory to the [Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact](#) in March 2023, where it re-committed to tackle climate change alongside ecological decline throughout Leicestershire. Protecting our climate and enhance our rural, natural environment is a key priority in the Council's corporate strategy 2020-2024.
- 3.2 The Climate Change Act (2008, as amended) sets out a legal commitment for the UK to reach net zero emissions by 2050. The Government have been introducing a variety of regulations and requirements for local authorities to plan and prepare for climate change, reduce emissions and support nature recovery. These will have to be implemented at a local level and the development of a strategic boroughwide climate change strategy provide a consistent framework for the Council and others to consider in developing plans, policies and making decisions that impact Melton borough. It also provides a means to focus attention on the actions needed at a local level and foster community engagement and participation.
- 3.3 The draft Climate Change Strategy can be found at Appendix A. It is recommended because it has been developed based on local evidence on both the likely impacts of climate change within the Melton Borough and what we need to do to adapt to our changing climate. It also sets out the key local challenges and actions required to reduce local area greenhouse gas emissions, which are the key driver of climate change, in line with the governments net zero targets. It has been developed to take into account local community views about climate change. It reflects the feedback from a comprehensive Council led community [consultation on climate change](#) held between February and April 2022.

- 3.4 The Draft Climate Change Strategy has been developed with support of the Council's Climate Emergency Working Group as well as taking into consideration feedback from a Scrutiny Committee climate change workshop held on the 8th March 2023.

4 Background

- 4.1 In 2019, against a backdrop of increasing concern over climate change, Melton Borough Council acknowledged the climate emergency and declared a Climate Emergency, and committed to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions and work towards making Melton borough a more sustainable place. In March 2023 the Council became a signatory to the Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact, which reaffirmed its commitment to tackling climate change alongside working to help restore nature locally.
- 4.2 Scientific evidence, built up over many years, shows that the planet's climate is changing as a direct result of human activity which has increased greenhouse gases in the atmosphere by around 45% since the industrial revolution. The main causes of this are the burning of fossil fuels for energy, agriculture and deforestation, and the manufacture of cement, chemicals, and metals.
- 4.3 The UK government has set out legally binding targets to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and to reduce emissions by 68% by 2030 and by 78% by 2035 (from 1990 levels; to date national greenhouse gas emissions have fallen by around 50%). This strategy proposes Melton's approach to support its communities and businesses in achieving these ambitious targets.

5 Main Considerations

- 5.1 The Council has developed the Climate Change strategy, set out in Appendix A, to set out how it and others can work together to tackle climate change across Melton borough. It sets a framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and strengthening the resilience of the borough to climate change.
- 5.2 **A community focused high level and strategic document**
- 5.3 The strategy is high level and simple to encourage a wide readership. The [Council's climate change webpages](#) complement the strategy, they include a fuller discussion of the local issues, challenges and evidence about climate change alongside to links to further information.
- 5.4 Many local people, businesses and other organisations in Melton borough have told us that they are or want to take action individually to tackle climate change. But no single person or organisation can tackle it alone and many of the action needed are not all within the control or influence of the Council. It requires a whole community response. Also whilst climate change is a global problem, it is in our local communities, workplaces, schools and families, where both the impacts will be felt and where many solutions lie.
- 5.5 The strategy is intended as a foundation for considering how the local community can come together to tackle climate change across the Melton borough as effectively as possible. It is very much a community rather than Council focused strategy and it seeks support from everyone to work together to deliver the actions and changes needed locally. The strategy is also considered a starting point, in that it recognises that it will need to be

delivered in many different ways and by many different people, and that we expect it will evolve as we learn.

- 5.6 The strategy's focus on local actions and achievements, that can help us all feel like we can make a difference, also recognises that the power of local action is how it can make climate change relatable and the solutions tangible. Its central theme is that we need to listen to local people and then collaborate and work together to tackle climate change, to do things 'with' local communities rather than individual organisations working separately and doing things in isolation. It is set out as a framework for the whole community including external organisations to work towards.

Evidence led and based on community feedback

- 5.7 The strategy has been developed based on a wide variety of local evidence and data. It takes into consideration the individual characteristics of Melton borough, and its resources, to set out local opportunities to tackle climate change that align with local peoples aspirations. It highlights areas where we can best influence change at a local level, to both reduce local area greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change.
- 5.8 This strategy has also been developed to reflect local people's views, expressed in a widescale public consultation on climate change undertaken in 2022. Local people have told us that they are really concerned about climate change and overwhelmingly support local action to tackle it. They expressed a strong desire for local council's and other local organisations to show local leadership and do more and faster. Local people also felt strongly about wider sustainability ambitions, including the need to reduce waste, litter and plastic pollution and to protect and enhance nature and the local natural environment, so these issues are also considered within the strategy.
- 5.9 This background work identified the following key local challenges to tackling climate change;
- a) The rural sparse nature of the borough means travel and transport will be harder to decarbonise, with more limited options in rural areas to enable people to choose to walk, cycle or use public transport to meet their everyday needs. We are also starting from a point of higher car ownership, use and dependency than many other areas.
 - b) Our houses and buildings are overall older, more diverse and less energy efficient than average. They are overall expected to require more works and cost more to retrofit, particularly if we are to preserve our many valued characterful and historic buildings.
 - c) Future electric grid capacity is uncertain in many places and it may cause additional challenges, both to connect new renewable energy to the grid and meet increased future demand for electricity to increasingly power transport and buildings.
 - d) The Melton borough is already considered a water stressed area, and unless action is taken water supplies are predicted to fall below what is needed to meet local needs before 2050.
 - e) Our large agricultural sector has high emissions that are regarded as hard to reduce. It is hard to influence these emission at a local level because the sector is highly dependent on global economic pressures, national regulations and wider consumer demand.
 - f) Our growing and aging population is expected to increase energy and water demand, produce more waste and need housing as well as travel and use of local infrastructure and services, all of which can increase local emissions. Our aging population is

expected to increase the number of people who are most vulnerable to impacts of climate change, particularly from overheating.

- 5.10 The strategy also identifies some local strengths and opportunities in relation to tackling climate change;
- a) Parish councils, local residents, community groups, businesses, farmers and other organisations that are enthusiastic in supporting climate action. Many are already taking action locally. Strong local partnerships also already exist, with organisations working together at all levels across the borough and wider area.
 - b) Local people highly value our natural environment and rural landscape and there is potential for nature based actions to help tackle climate change, both to reduce emissions and to become more resilient to overheating and flooding.
 - c) Local businesses, business networks and local leadership that wants to move towards a greener, less wasteful and more circular economy and new local economic opportunities could deliver over 400 new local green jobs, particularly in the retrofitting sectors.
- 5.11 **Council led actions and update on the work done so far:**
- 5.12 Alongside the Borough-wide Strategy we have also undertaken a review of the carbon emissions through council's operations. This provides a good comparison with the data collected in the baseline study in 2019 and demonstrates reduction of emissions through Council's actions over the last three-year period. Key messages include a reduction in overall emissions, a reduction in energy consumption within council own assets, other findings will be given as a verbal update. Using this data as a basis we are also preparing an Internal Climate Change Action Plan to reduce our own emissions, we have consulted with all departments within the Council to understand what they are already doing, what they can do and what they will be required to do. As the Council have the greatest influence over Scope 1 and Scope 2 (emissions through council's direct influence and actions) emissions the action plan places greater emphasis on reducing scope 1 and 2 emissions over scope 3. In addition, to the action plan the Climate Change Working Group has provided steer that the Council should align our target with the national agenda, the Local Plan timescales and the emerging Corporate Strategy. The proposed target is as follows "The Council will become net zero in scope 1 and 2 emission for council operations by 2036". Any actions arising from the climate change strategy and corporate strategy priorities will be considered as part of the budget process for resource allocation.

6 Options Considered

- 6.1 A local area Climate Change Strategy is not a statutory requirement. The option to not develop one however is not considered appropriate because;
- a) The development of a strategic boroughwide Climate Change Strategy provides a framework to help ensure joined up action to tackle climate change across Council services and decision making. It also seeks to help join up action with wider partners and the local community, which is expected to help to deliver efficiencies and increase impacts.
 - b) The Council has a variety of regulatory requirements that require it to have regard to climate change in its decision making, including in its Local Plan, and a strategic climate change strategy can help to ensure these are considered appropriately and coherently across the organisation.

- c) Local People have told us that they are concerned about climate change and want to see the Council do more to tackle it locally. The adoption of a strategic Climate Change Strategy demonstrates to the local community a commitment to tackling climate change in line with its [climate emergency declaration](#) and its signing of the [Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact](#).
- d) The Council has a trusted local leadership role. Local government play an essential role in meeting national net zero ambitions because it is best placed to integrate activity on the ground and to inspire action by, local businesses, communities, and civil society. No other layer of government is closer to people or better able to tailor climate action to meet the needs of local communities.
- e) Many of the funds allocated to climate action are delivered through local authorities. A strategic document helps to ensure that the Council prioritises the most appropriate actions and measures to use such funding effectively.

7 Consultation

7.1 The draft strategy has been informed by the following consultations;

Community consultation February - April 2022

The draft strategy has been informed by an extensive community consultation the council undertook between February and April 2022. The council engaged with a variety of people, including young people, through holding six in-person consultation events and running a three month online survey which over 200 people responded to.

Key takeaways from the community consultation

- 7.2 It was clear that respondents were on the whole fairly or extremely concerned about climate change. Four out of five people felt that climate change was both important to them and that they will have to change the way they live their lives to tackle it. The top concerns included;
 - a) The scale of the potential impacts of climate change, particularly on the natural environment.
 - b) That there is no time to wait to take action.
 - c) The impacts on future generations and their way of life, including the respondents own children and grandchildren.
- 7.3 Even the very small percentage of respondents who were not concerned about climate change tended to express strong concerns regarding our care for the natural environment and around waste, including through overconsumption.
- 7.4 Many of the main takeaways in terms of what people want the Council to do were around how it operates as an organisation and its local leadership role. They wanted to see climate change embed within the Council and the decisions it makes, they want to see the Council lead by example, and they want it to help provide them with honest and impartial information.
- 7.5 Measures to reduce waste and increase recycling and enhance and protect the natural environment received the strongest level of support overall. However there was a good level of support for a wide range of actions. The five key actions and issues that people wanted to see addressed locally have been summarised into the categories shown below;

- a) **Get planning right** – put the environment first in all planning decisions; solar panels on roofs, no more fossil fuel heating systems, make space for nature, build for people not cars.
- b) **Support for householders** – provide householders with support and information, on schemes and funding for insulation, EV cars and chargepoints, solar panels and heat pumps, and better guidance for listed building retrofitting.
- c) **Cut the rubbish** – ditch plastic, explain what can be recycled, recycle more types of things, including food waste, and make getting rid of waste easier.
- d) **Make choosing how you move a reality** – reduce car dependency, better public transport options, safe cycleways and footpaths and more EV chargepoints, realise opportunities of MMDR
- e) **Enhance and protect the natural environment** – environmentally friendly management of green and open spaces, create more and better places for nature, improve the waterways, no solar farms on agricultural land.

7.6 The climate change [consultation feedback report](#) has been published and is available to view on the Council's website.

Wider consultation feedback

7.7 The Strategy has also taken into consideration feedback received from wider Council consultations; including those on the draft Housing Strategy (where climate change is one of four key themes) and the Council's Design of Development Supplementary Planning Document (that aims secure more sustainably designed new development).

Internal Consultation

7.8 The draft strategy has also been informed by ongoing feedback from officers and elected members, including;

- a) Ongoing feedback from the Council's Climate Change Emergency working group, who have reviewed and shaped the draft strategy presented in this report.
- b) All members climate change briefing session held on the 19th July 2021.
- c) Scrutiny Committee workshop on climate change held on the 8th March 2023.

Public consultation on the draft Strategy

7.9 The draft strategy presented in this report is subject to public consultation from the 22nd November until the 31st January 2024. This will provide an opportunity for the local community and wider partners to help shape and finalise the strategy.

8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication

8.1 The consultation on the draft strategy will end on Wednesday 31st January 2024.

8.2 Feedback from the Committee will directly inform the final stages of development of a strategy alongside feedback from received as part of the consultation process.

8.3 The responses to the public consultation alongside a finalised strategy will then be presented to the Climate Emergency Working Group in late February 2024. Subject to their consideration, a finalised strategy will then be presented to Cabinet in April 2024.

9 Financial Implications

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications of the draft strategy however once the action plans are developed the actions contained within are almost certain to have financial implications. These will need to be prioritised against other Council priorities in order to ensure they can be funded.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Director for Corporate services

10 Legal and Governance Implications

- 10.1 Adopting a Climate Change Strategy is not a statutory requirement.
- 10.2 This report sets out the intended approach to establishing policies, procedures and programmes that confirms with the objectives set out in the Council's Climate Emergency resolution and Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact to which it is a signatory.
- 10.3 The draft strategy itself does not have any direct legal implications. It is a high level and strategic document that is proposed to be used in part to help shape Council services and decision making alongside increasing engagement and action across the wider community. Therefore many of the actions will not be delivered directly by the Council.
- 10.4 The legal and governance implications of any individual actions, including any set out in the supporting action plans that will help to deliver the Climate Change Strategy, will be reported upon when brought forward in due course. Any significant Council led projects will also be subject to their own business case, performance monitoring and evaluation processes that will consider any legal and governance implications.
- 10.5 Modifications to any policies, procedures and programmes that arise from the strategy will be made pursuant to the General Power of Competence contained in sections 1-6 of the Localism Act 2011 and where relevant additional statutory powers including, the Climate Change Act and indirect local powers such as the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Regulations.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Interim Assistant Director for Governance & Democracy (Monitoring Officer)

11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

- 11.1 Achieving the strategic aims of this strategy will impact upon everyone who lives, works and travels in the borough, including residents and communities, staff and public and private sector organisations.
- 11.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the consultation process prior to finalising the strategy.

12 Data Protection Implications (Mandatory)

- 12.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed for the following reasons; because there are no risks/issues to the rights and freedoms of natural persons.

13 Community Safety Implications

- 13.1 The draft strategy does not have any direct community safety implications.

14 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

14.1 The proposed climate change strategy is expected to lead wide ranging positive outcome environmental and climate change implications as set out in the strategy document. The strategy promotes actions that conserve our use of energy and natural resources, including water and those that will reduce waste and pollution. It also promotes climate actions that respect, protect and enhance nature and improve biodiversity. The Climate Change Strategy has been developed to deliberately have a positive impact on the natural environment alongside tackling climate change. It rightly recognises what the local community have told us, that tackling climate change and protecting and enhancing nature and the natural environment are co-dependent, that one cannot be achieved without achieving the other.

15 Other Implications (where significant)

15.1 The adoption of the strategy by the Council could have an influence over actions of all council service delivery and major projects including the review of Local Plan policies, energy efficiency measures for council's property and assets, communication with council tenants, approaches to digitalisation etc.

16 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	The Strategy is not evidence led leading to limited ability to demonstrate impact and outcomes	Low	Critical	Medium
2	Lack of partnership approach to delivery and/or lack of wider community buy in.	Low	Critical	Medium
3	Lack of money and resources to undertake actions identified as required to tackle climate change.	High	Critical	High

		Impact / Consequences			
		Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Score/ definition	1	2	3	4
	6 Very High				
	5 High			3	
	4 Significant				
	3 Low			1, 2	
	2 Very Low				
	1 Almost impossible				

Risk No	Mitigation
1	The Strategy has been developed based on extensive data analysis, insights and consultation feedback.
2	The strategy has been developed based on feedback from extensive community engagement, which has shown interest from a wide variety of stakeholders to work collectively to address climate change locally. The action plan will consider the need for engagement and actions to foster community and partner buy in.
3	The strategy has identified the need to work together to lobby Government for the funding, policies and powers required to tackle climate change locally and more quickly. It has also recognised the need to work together across sectors and partners, both public and private sector, to help address wide ranging funding and resource gaps; a key reason why it is set out as a community and not organisational strategy.

17 Background Papers

17.1 None.

18 Appendices

18.1 Appendix A: Draft Climate Change Strategy