



## Climate Change Strategy

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

<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Vision Statement 8: Be recognised as clean, green, and attractive; well on our way to becoming a net zero borough.
<b>Relevant Ward Member(s):</b>	All
<b>Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):</b>	22 November 2023
<b>Exempt Information:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Subject to call-in:</b>	Yes

### 1 Summary

- 1.1 Melton Borough Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and launched an initial consultation towards creating a Climate Change Strategy in Spring 2022. Utilising the outcome of the consultation in 2022, a draft Climate Change Strategy was developed, and a full public consultation was undertaken over winter 2023/24.
- 1.2 The Strategy that is the subject of this report has been amended and updated to represent and reflect the views of the public from the consultations that have been held, alongside the Climate Emergency Working Group Members.
- 1.3 The Strategy is led by Melton Borough Council; however it is a collective document, formed from the representations made to the Council through its consultations. Melton Borough Council will work with partners to use the Strategy to influence, encourage and

engage with the community and other organisations to bring forward climate change initiatives.

## 2 Recommendations

### That Cabinet:

#### 2.1 Approves the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

## 3 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 In 2019 Melton Borough Council declared a climate emergency, recognising the magnitude of the issue and, as a local authority, the role the Council must play in tackling climate change and reducing carbon emissions.
- 3.2 The Corporate Strategy (2024-2036) Vision '36 identifies long-term Vision statement 8 as “Be recognised as clean, green, and attractive; well on our way to becoming a net zero borough.”
- 3.3 Within the Corporate Delivery Plan (2024-2028), Theme 4 includes “Delivering a net zero borough” by the action of adopting a Climate Change Strategy.
- 3.4 To meet this aspiration the Council has developed the Climate Change Strategy 2024-2036 to set out how it and others can work together to tackle climate change across Melton borough. It sets out a framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and for making the borough more resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- 3.5 The Climate Change Strategy Vision is “to create a resilient, biodiverse, fair and more sustainable future for everyone in Melton borough; well on the way to net zero” and the Vision will be delivered through the key principles and action areas. The route to net zero means focusing our actions on what we can do to avoid and reduce emissions before we consider actions such as carbon offsetting as a last resort, which is clearly laid out in the Strategy.
- 3.6 The Strategy highlights the wider benefits that can come from climate action, to improve our health and wellbeing, reduce our energy costs, provide new green job opportunities and help to protect and restore nature.

## 4 Background

- 4.1 Since the climate emergency declaration in 2019 the Council has focused energy and efforts on our ambition for our own operations and functions to be carbon neutral, and to promote sustainability within the borough, with the aim that the borough will be carbon neutral by 2050.
- 4.2 A Climate Change Working Group of Members was formed in July 2019 and has most recently been chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Governance, Environment & Regulatory Services, Cllr Glancy. The group meet to discuss, oversee and progress the council's climate agenda and projects.
- 4.3 The Council undertook a consultation on climate change between 3<sup>rd</sup> February and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022. The key engagement activity undertaken was an online survey which was supplemented with six in person events, which aimed primarily to widen engagement with young people. The primary purpose of the engagement period was to better understand local views on climate change issues, to assist in the development of a Draft Climate

Change Strategy, and to better understand how local people wish to engage with the Council and others around climate change and environmental issues.

- 4.4 The consultation was extensive and the feedback highlighted overwhelming support for local action to tackle climate change, with a strong desire for the council to take on a strong local leadership role; embedding the climate change agenda and ensuring it influences decisions made, and leads by example, providing objective and impartial information.
- 4.5 This feedback was used to develop a draft Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan and to inform future engagement and communication plans. The draft Strategy went out to full public consultation between 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

## **5 Main Considerations**

- 5.1 This strategy sets out a long-term approach for action to be done with the support of the community and other organisations. It is a positive framework to tackle climate change through mitigation and adaptation, helping the community to share knowledge, take action together and support and learn from one another.
- 5.2 Six themes are set out the actions for delivery:
- i) Adapting to Climate Change
  - ii) Transport and Travel
  - iii) Homes, Buildings and the Built Environment
  - iv) Natural Environment and Farming
  - v) A Greener Low Carbon Economy
  - vi) Waste and the use of resources
- 5.3 We asked for public views on the draft Climate Change Strategy through a consultation undertaken by Melton Borough Council between 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. The plan for this consultation was based on raising general awareness and utilising existing connections and contacts (which had been gained through previous consultation) to reach as wide an audience as possible to help shape the Strategy.
- 5.4 Direct email contact was made with a large number of key stakeholders and members of the public who had previously registered interest in such types of council consultations. In total over 1,200 people were directly contacted via email and newsletters and asked to respond to the survey.
- 5.5 The Council's online platform Citizen Space was used for the consultation and there were 49 responses in total, mostly from local residents with input from other groups and organisations.
- 5.6 The consultation analysis showed that the strategy areas (Vision, Principles, Key Actions) were well supported overall as it was written or with some minor changes.
- 5.7 Some respondents wanted to see clearer targets and goals with dates, to contain timescales or high-level milestones (for example, for reaching net zero) within or alongside the vision statement, including to improve accountability. Three respondents suggested including additional wording to the principles to include resilience and biodiversity/environmental issues to better reflect the vision statement. Twenty-four

comments raised concerns and supported the need for increased walking and cycling infrastructure, better public transport and more EV charge points.

- 5.8 Some respondents wanted to see more emphasis on ‘greening’ the borough as well as Melton town centre as an objective and to recognise the depleted biodiversity across Leicestershire. A comment was made about local universities with skills in the green economy and building relationships with them to support key projects. In regard to the delivery of the strategy, there was a desire that action is needed on tackling climate change and this strategy and working together provides a route map for this, but also recognising the challenges ahead given resource limitations.
- 5.9 All comments made by respondents were read and where appropriate considered to help shape the Strategy document for approval by Cabinet. The draft Strategy took into consideration feedback from the 2022 consultation, which can be viewed on the council’s website.
- 5.10 Following the consultation on the Draft Strategy over the winter of 2023/24 only minor amendments were recommended to the Strategy which were considered and finalised by Members of the Climate Emergency Working Group. This included additional wording to the Strategy Vision to include “well on the way to net-zero” to give a clearer emphasis on tackling climate change.
- 5.11 Officers have worked with the Climate Emergency Working Group to develop a Climate Change Action Plan to provide a timeframe for the intended actions. For strategy delivery we all have a role to play in tackling climate change and we need to work together to deliver on climate action. This includes working with our communities and other organisations and authorities as Melton Borough Council has a limited ability to directly influence climate action.
- 5.12 The other authorities and organisations involved are detailed in the Action Plan where our role will be to facilitate, engage, encourage and promote positive climate action. The Action Plan will be owned and delivered by the wider Melton community and will be monitored by the Council’s Cabinet through performance reporting. The Action Plan is not yet funded but can be used by both Melton Borough Council and partners to seek future funding opportunities.
- 5.13 Officers will endeavour to set up a monitoring group with key external stakeholders and lead organisations for delivery. It is envisaged that this would be chaired by the Portfolio Holder.

## **6 Options Considered**

- 6.1 Option 1: adopt the Climate Change Strategy. This is the preferred option as it supports climate action across the borough and UK government target of net-zero by 2050. It also adheres to the Action Plan for the Corporate Strategy for Theme 4 to include “Delivering a net zero borough” by the action of “Adopt Climate Change Strategy”. Furthermore, in March 2023 the Council signed the Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact. The pact is a commitment, signed by a number of organisations, to tackle climate change and ecological decline throughout Leicestershire.
- 6.2 Option 2: not adopt the Climate Change Strategy. This is not the preferred option as it does not meet the above Corporate Strategy Action.

## **7 Consultation**

- 7.1 The Council undertook a public consultation on climate change between 3<sup>rd</sup> February and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022. The consultation was extensive and 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.
- 7.2 The outputs of this consultation were presented to Scrutiny Committee 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and a timeline for development of the Climate Change Strategy was set out.
- 7.3 This feedback was used to develop a draft Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan and to inform future engagement and communication plans. The draft Strategy went out to public consultation between 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024.
- 7.4 Following the consultation on the draft strategy only minor amendments were recommended to the Strategy which were considered and finalised by Members of the Climate Emergency Working Group. The final version is now presented to the Cabinet for consideration.

## **8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication**

- 8.1 All stakeholders will be advised of the adoption of the Strategy, and an annual report will be brought to Cabinet updating on the progress towards the Action Plan.

## **9 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 There are no additional costs to the Council in addition to what is already agreed as part of the budget process by adopting the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. The Action Plan is not funded but can be used by both Melton Borough Council and partners to seek future funding opportunities.

**Financial Implications reviewed by: Section 151 Officer, 3 June 2024**

## **10 Legal and Governance Implications**

- 10.1 The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is a non-statutory set of documents. The Cabinet is therefore entitled to adopt it to sit alongside the Corporate Strategy and Action Plan, to provide additional information as to the Council's approach to the climate emergency that was declared in 2019.

**Legal Implications reviewed by: Deputy Monitoring Officer, 4 June 2024**

## **11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications**

- 11.1 An EIA has been undertaken and any impact arising will be advised to Members at the Cabinet Meeting.

## **12 Data Protection Implications (Mandatory)**

- 12.1 Data protection in respect of the consultations has been undertaken in accordance with the relevant requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations. The software that the Council uses to undertake public consultations is compliant with the regulations.

## **13 Community Safety Implications**

- 13.1 It is not considered that there are any community safety implications associated with the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

## 14 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 14.1 The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan has no negative implications in respect of the environment and climate change. Indeed, the Strategy and Action Plan seek to drive positive impacts for the environment and reducing the impacts of and mitigating climate change, by enhancing the Council's ability to influence other organisations and support the community.

## 15 Other Implications (where significant)

- 15.1 It is not considered that there are any other significant implications in adopting the Strategy and Action Plan.

## 16 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	By the Council further acknowledging the climate emergency in adopting the Strategy and Action Plan there is a risk that those who disagree with the level of prioritisation given to this issue may challenge the council.	Very Low	Marginal	Low Risk
2	If the Council does not adopt the Strategy & Action Plan there is a risk that the Council does not fulfil its Corporate Strategy and act on the climate emergency declared in 2019, leading to a reputational risk.	Significant	Marginal	Medium Risk
3	An expectation amongst the public that the Action Plan will be delivered by the Council, and consequential impact upon reputation.	Significant	Critical	Medium Risk

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

Risk No	Mitigation
1	Climate change is recognised by the UK government, and the Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. It is considered that the reputational risk of not adopting a strategy to tackle climate change is higher than the potential reputational risk posed by those who disagree with this position.
2	Climate change is set out as a priority within the Council's corporate strategy and vision '36. It is considered that by adopting the Strategy and Action Plan that the Council is going some way to demonstrating that it is taking the issue seriously and has a plan to engage with the public and other organisations to drive change.
3	The Action Plan includes lead organisations and the Council will work with those partners to seek funding and deliver where possible the actions, and monitor delivery.

## 17 Background Papers.

17.1 None

## 18 Appendices

18.1 Appendix A – Climate Change Strategy

18.2 Appendix B – Climate Change Action Plan