

Harborough District Council

Report to Cabinet

Meeting of 6 March 2023



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| Title: | Report 5: Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact |
| Status: | Public |
| Key Decision: | No |
| Report Author: | Helen Chadwick, Environment Co-ordinator, Strategic Planning h.chadwick@harborough.gov.uk 07936 984624 |
| Portfolio Holder: | Cllr Jonathan Bateman, Planning, Environmental Services & Waste Management; Deputy Leader of the Council |
| Appendices: | A – Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact |

Summary

- i. The Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact sets out key principles for organisations in Leicestershire to sign up to work together to deliver on delivery of action.
- ii. It is a high-level commitment that supports action across all sectors. All organisations are being asked to sign up to the pact, with Local Government being a vital early adopter. The Pact recognises that delivery on the climate and nature emergencies is not something that one organisation can deliver alone.

Recommendations

- iii. That Cabinet approves the signing of the Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact set out in Appendix A.

Reasons for Recommendations

- iv. Harborough District Council has adopted its Climate Action Plan, but recognises that acting alone, it can only impact a relatively small portion of the emissions from the district. The council recognises the benefits of collaboration with other agencies to move towards net zero emissions across the district.
- v. The collaborative approach of the Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact supports the delivery of the council's climate action plan.
- vi. Signing the Pact highlights the leadership commitment of the council to delivering the climate action plan, including the recent collaborative working with the Leicestershire districts on projects such as Solar Together.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report presents the Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact and recommends that Cabinet approve signing up to the Pact, as part of the delivery of the Harborough Climate Action Plan.

2. Background

- 2.1 In July 2019, the council declared a climate emergency and the Climate Action Plan was approved by Cabinet in December 2021. The action plan sets out six core principles to support the goal of delivering net zero emissions from the council's operations as far as practicable by 2030. The plan also recognises that the council cannot influence the reduction of emissions outside of the direct control of the authority without working in partnership with others.
- 2.2 Leicestershire County Council adopted its Net Zero Strategy in December 2022 and also recognises that it has limited ability to reduce countywide emissions on its own. In recognition of the need for action on climate change, across all organisations, Leicestershire County Council has developed the Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact which outlines key principles for any organisation in Leicestershire to sign up to support the move towards net zero emissions across Leicestershire.
- 2.3 The Pact outlines 6 key principles that organisations can sign up to. The Pact will support organisations to work together to respond with urgency and momentum to the climate and nature emergency that has been recognised by many organisations.
- 2.4 Local Government has a vital role in leadership on climate and nature action and is recognised that as early adopters of the Pact it demonstrates their commitment to action on reducing emissions and protecting nature. This is also reflected in the commitments within the council's Climate Action Plan

3. Details

- 3.1 In July 2019, the council declared a climate emergency and the Climate Action Plan was approved by Cabinet in December 2021. The action plan sets out six core principles to support the goal of delivering net zero emissions from the council's operations as far as practicable by 2030. The plan also recognises that the council cannot influence the reduction of emissions outside of the direct control of the authority without working in partnership with others.
- 3.2 The Plan lays out 6 commitments for action.
 - The Council commits to demonstrate political and corporate leadership in acting on climate change
 - The Council commits to managing its own assets and services, with the aim of reducing carbon emission to net zero by 2030, as far as practical

- The Council commits to working with residents and communities to support their actions in reducing emissions and help them increase their resilience to the impacts of climate change
- The Council commits to working with businesses to support their actions in reducing emissions and help them increase their resilience to the impacts of climate change
- The Council commits to ensuring that new development is designed to mitigate emissions and be resilient to the impacts of climate change
- The Council commits to working in partnership to promote resilient natural systems that will help to reduce the impacts of climate change.

3.3 Leicestershire County Council adopted its Net Zero Strategy in December 2022 and recognises that it has limited ability to reduce countywide emissions on its own. Leicestershire County Council are directly responsible for around 2% of all the emissions in Leicestershire. The Net Zero strategy recognises that action on emissions is only possible if a whole range of organisations work together collaboratively on reducing emissions.

3.4 The Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact is designed to rally support and build momentum for action on climate change and nature recovery across the county.

3.5 The Climate and Nature Pact as detailed in Appendix A outlines 6 key principles:

- To constructively working together to strengthen climate action which supports sustainable development;
- To support a just transition which ensures equality, inclusivity and enables local communities to take climate action;
- To recognise the important role of civil society including youth and children in addressing and responding to climate change and the need for cooperative action;
- To recognise the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and other global events and the need for sustainable, resilient, and inclusive recovery and growth.
- To recognise and support the climate and ecological emergency and the need to take climate action alongside protecting and enhancing ecosystems and biodiversity.
- To commit to accelerating and taking decisive action to 2030.

- 3.6 These principles give the framework for common areas of commitment, including leadership, improving research, collaborative projects, and community engagement. The Pact will enable organisations to work together to respond to the climate and nature emergency.
- 3.7 The Pact does not place any additional burden on the council that have not already been approved through the Climate Action Plan. Whilst there are no specific requirements on reporting or delivery of the Pact, progression of actions will be reported on as part of the council's annual progress report of the climate action plan and progression will be monitored through key performance indicators.
- 3.8 Harborough District Council is already working collaboratively with other Leicestershire Councils to deliver on key environmental projects as part of the Green Living Partnership. This work includes energy efficiency improvements in homes through Government funded Home Upgrade Grants (HUGs) and Local Authority Delivery schemes (LADs), Solar Together and Electric Vehicle charging projects. This activity would fulfil the terms of the Pact and can be seen as a best practice case study for collaborative working.
- 3.9 The Pact recognises 6 requirements for action:
- **Science and Urgency:** the need to act on climate change.
 - **Mitigation:** reducing carbon emissions from own activities and decision-making processes
 - **Adaptation:** reducing the impacts of climate change
 - **Nature:** halting ecological decline and supporting nature recovery
 - **Finance:** supporting climate action
 - **Collaboration:** working together to deliver greater action

These requirements are the call to action for collaborative working across the county, building on individual organisational actions to build momentum and impact.

- 3.10 These principles and requirements provide a common framework to support different partners working together. For example, councils may work together with the Wildlife Trust, Natural England, universities, and other local groups to draw in funding to build knowledge of the biodiversity of the county and then use that knowledge to highlight specific projects that would improve biodiversity. This might involve identifying funding, land, and expertise, but may also involve informing policy such as biodiversity net gain in the Local Plan policies across the districts.

4. Implications of Decisions

Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report contributed to the following corporate priorities:

Priority 1: Community leadership to create a sense of pride and belonging by leading by example and ensuring as far as reasonably practicable council activities have minimum environmental impact.

Priority 3: Creating a sustainable environment to protect future generations by looking to reduce the council's carbon footprint and manage resources in a sustainable way, as well as encouraging others to do the same.

Financial

4.2 There is no specific budget for Climate Change action. However, where individual projects or initiatives are identified and where specific funding opportunities are available, such opportunities are followed up as necessary. The council's commitment support green initiatives is recognised in "environmental" capital schemes in the draft budget to be considered by Council on the 27 February 2023.

Legal

4.3 The council has a duty to consider the Climate Change Act 2008, in reducing its own emissions and influencing emission reduction across the district.

Policy

4.4 The council has adopted its own Climate Action Plan and is committed to reaching net zero as far as practical by 2030. In addition, the Council recognised the role it has as a leader to promote action on climate change. The impact of climate should be assessed in all the council policies and council decisions.

Environmental

4.5 The Climate Action Plan sets out the approach to meeting the emissions reduction target. Signing the Climate and Nature Pact supports the principles set out in the council's plan.

Risk Management

4.6 Climate Change has a variety of risks for council activities and lack of commitment has a reputational risk.

4.7 Not signing the Pact and the council not taking part in the countywide initiative would not support the council's commitment in the Climate Action Plan of demonstrating political and corporate leadership in acting on climate change

Equalities Impact

4.8 Whilst an equality assessment has not been completed in relation to this report, an assessment was undertaken as part of the consultation process and development of the Climate Action Plan prior to its approval in 2019.

Data Protection

4.9 No data protection issues related to this report.

Consultation

4.10 No consultation issues related to this report.

5. Alternative Options Considered

5.1 Not applicable for this report

6. Background papers

6.1 None

