Net Zero Toolkit

For Leicestershire Town, Parish Councils and Community Groups

Green Living
Leicestershire

Introduction

Evidence has shown that high levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are the leading cause of climate change and will cause more extreme heatwaves, droughts, intense rainfall and other extreme weather across the world. There is now an urgency to reduce our emissions, and this has been recognised by many organisations in the county, including County, District/Borough councils, universities, and businesses, who have set ambitious targets and commitments to tackle climate change and protect nature.

Green Living Leicestershire (GLL) is a partnership between Leicestershire authorities who work collectively to deliver projects supporting sustainability and net zero delivery across Leicestershire. Together, with other key organisations, we have signed the Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact to work towards a common goal:

Town, Parish Councils and Local groups have an important role to support net zero delivery and help achieve this goal. Many Local Councils and Community Groups are already providing place-based, locally led action, alongside putting climate change on their agenda and actively looking for ways in which they and their communities can play their part in delivering net zero. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) continues to lobby government on the crucial role Local Councils have in achieving net zero targets.

Purpose

We need to act quickly to reduce carbon emissions to net zero, adapt to the impacts of climate change and halt ecological decline. The success of this relies on Leicestershire residents, communities, businesses, local authorities, and other organisations in the county all working together.

This toolkit aims to provide a starting point for town, parish councils and community groups to address net zero in their local community. It has been developed in partnership with Green Living Leicestershire and aligns to the Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact.

We anticipate the toolkit helping to:

- Support you in starting or furthering your net zero activities
- Give practical tips and advice to encourage and support local residents and businesses to adopt lower carbon practices
- Share examples of good practice within Leicestershire

Climate change action in Leicestershire

Leicestershire County Council has committed to working with Leicestershire residents and organisations to become a net zero county by 2045 or before and has taken significant steps towards this by launching the Net Zero Leicestershire Strategy and Action Plan in December 2022. Furthermore, many District and Borough authorities have implemented their own plans and policies to support climate action in their local areas.

To achieve net zero, we must all play our part and work together to make a difference. The Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact facilitates this, based on the principles of the Glasgow Climate Pact, by playing a crucial role in fostering collaboration among various stakeholders and has an ever-growing number of organisations and local groups signing up to it.

This collective effort brings together businesses, voluntary organisations, community groups, universities, the public sector, and the people of Leicestershire. The pact aims to achieve a shared objective:

> " *Leicestershire will end its contribution to global warming and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The transition to net zero will create a cleaner, greener Leicestershire for people, prosperity and planet; supporting healthy, resilient communities, enabling sustainable growth, and enhancing biodiversity.* "

What is climate change?

- Climate change refers to long term (decades or longer) shifts in temperature and weather patterns.
- Climate change is mainly caused by human activities that release greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide etc.) into the air.
- These gases act like a blanket, trapping heat from the sun and preventing it from escaping back into space. This is called the greenhouse effect.
- Climate change will cause more extreme heatwaves, droughts, intense rainfall and other extreme weather across the world.
- These impacts will increase the likelihood and severity of a variety of risks including flooding, migration of people, damage to infrastructure, food insecurity and loss of biodiversity.
- We have already started seeing the effects of a changing climate locally, with extreme weather events becoming more of an occurrence, such as the record-breaking temperatures of 39°C recorded in Summer 2022 and the increase in the number of storms being reported, causing mass disruption.
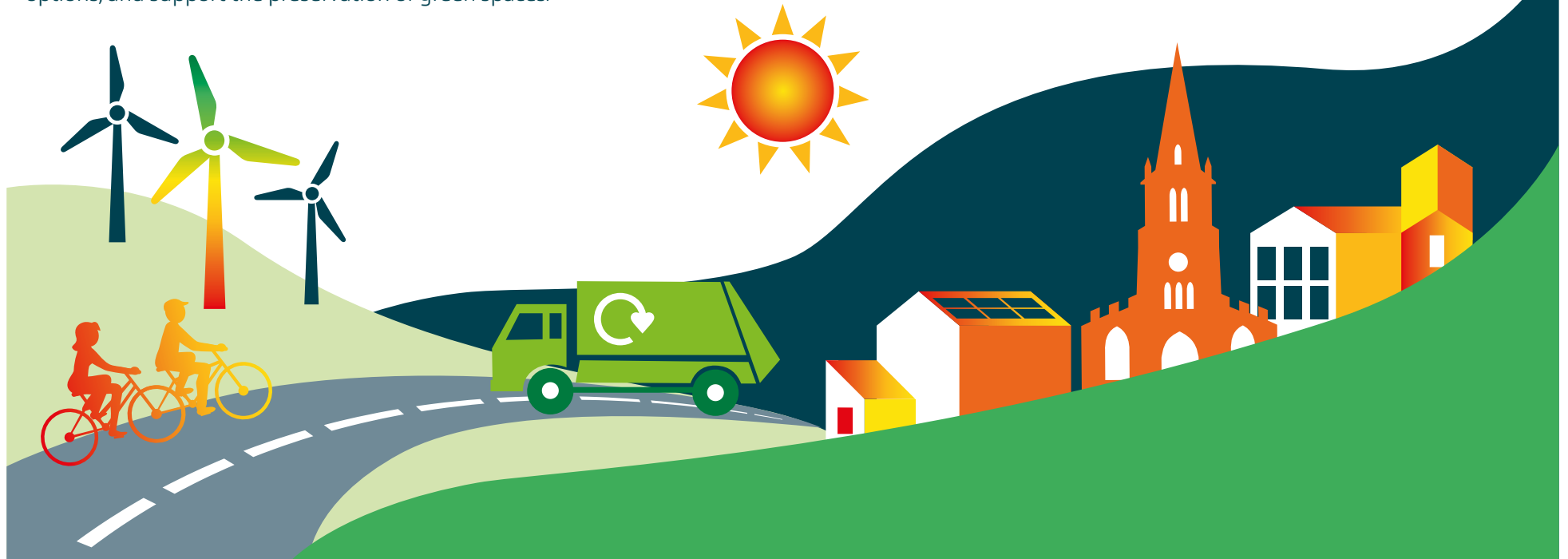
Why do we need to act on climate change?

- The urgent need for action on climate change has been recognised by over 197 countries globally and in response, the UK government set a legally binding greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 100% by 2050.
- The 2015 Paris Agreement signed countries up to work together in limiting global temperature rise to well below 2°C, with the aim of achieving a 1.5°C limit.
- This is the recognised level established by the Inter-governmental panel on climate change to limit the risks and impacts of climate change.
- Collaborative local action on climate change is crucial to prevent worsening impacts, protecting the environment, ensuring public health and safety, and promoting economic stability.
- By working together, we can mitigate climate change and prevent irreversible and increasingly severe consequences caused by rising temperatures.

The role of parish and town Councils

- Town and Parish councils are in a unique position to support action on climate change due to their close proximity to local communities and their understanding of local needs and priorities.

- As grassroots governing bodies, parish and town councils have direct access to residents and can effectively communicate the importance of climate change and it's mitigation and adaptation.

- Town and Parish councils also have the ability to implement practical initiatives at the local level. They can work on energy efficiency projects, promote renewable energy sources, encourage sustainable transportation options, and support the preservation of green spaces.

- They have the authority to influence local planning and development decisions, for example by advocating for new construction projects, having climate change policies within their Neighbourhood Plans, promoting environmentally friendly infrastructure and supporting policies that prioritise climate resilience.

- The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) have some more detailed information for Local Councils on their Climate Change web pages.

- The Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils (LRALC) are supporting Councils locally with Net Zero activities
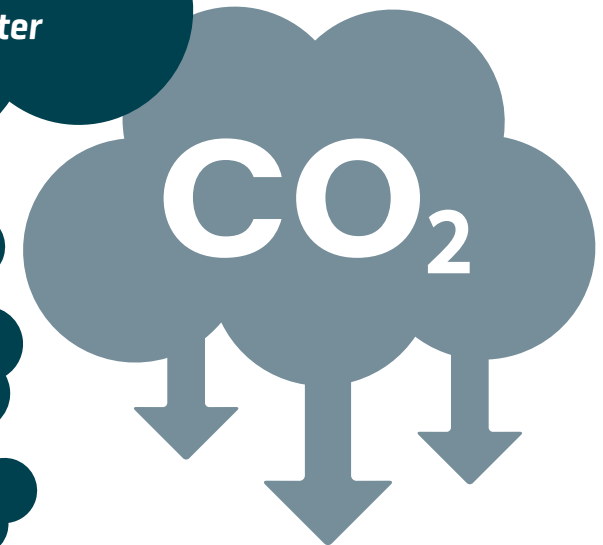
What is a tonne of carbon dioxide?

- A tonne of carbon dioxide (CO_2) is a unit used to measure the amount of CO_2 gas released into the air.
- It helps us understand the impact of human activities on climate change and develop ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Emissions are often reported in metric tonnes of CO_2 (CO_2e), which includes other greenhouse gases converted to their CO_2 equivalent.

What is net zero?

- The term "net zero" is used in the UK to describe the goal of achieving a balance between the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere.
- This is relevant for town, parish councils and community groups as they are key for supporting and implementing measures to reduce emissions and improve the local environment, in line with national targets.

1 Tonne of CO_2e is equivalent of driving the average UK petrol car 3,645 miles, or from Leicester to Egypt
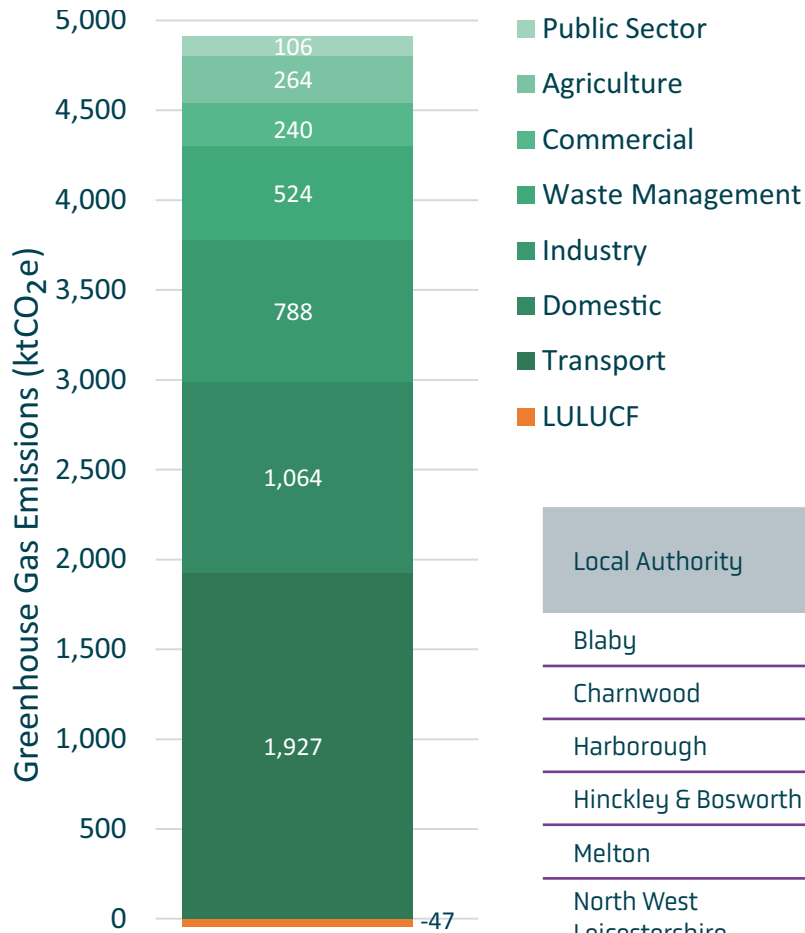
CO₂

Leicestershire's carbon footprint

- The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), publishes carbon emissions data at the local authority level annually. Based on this dataset and our baseline year of 2019, Leicestershire's emissions amount to 4.87 million tonnes of CO_2e.

- The sector breakdown of emissions (Figure 1) reveals that the largest contributors are transport (40%) and domestic (22%), followed by industry (16%) and waste management (11%).

- Analysing emissions by districts/boroughs (Figure 2) highlight that North West Leicestershire and Charnwood have the highest emissions in the county. This is primarily due to greater emissions in the transport sector for both districts, domestic emissions in Charnwood, and industrial emissions in North West Leicestershire.

- Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry (LULUCF) include activities that remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, acting as a carbon sink, which contributed to a 1% reduction in Leicestershire's emissions in 2019.

- For a further breakdown of Leicestershire emissions have a look at Leicestershire County Councils Net Zero Carbon Roadmap and Net Zero Leicestershire Strategy.

- It's important to note that these emissions represent the ones produced within the county and do not include emissions caused by activities outside the county, such as the production and transportation of goods and services outside of Leicestershire into the county

- These emission figures provide valuable insights into Leicestershire's carbon footprint and emphasise the need for targeted actions at the local level to reduce emissions.

- Town, Parish Councils and community groups should take note of these figures to understand the specific contributions of each sector and prioritise efforts to reduce carbon emissions within their communities.

- Understanding the emissions profile can help local communities make informed decisions and implement effective strategies to tackle emissions.

Leicestershire's scoped 2019 baseline emissions breakdown *(fig 1)*

Stacked bar chart, Greenhouse Gas Emissions (ktCO$_2$e):

- Public Sector: 106
- Agriculture: 264
- Commercial: 240
- Waste Management: 524
- Industry: 788
- Domestic: 1,064
- Transport: 1,927
- LULUCF: −47

Leicestershire's 2019 baseline emissions by district *(fig 2)*

Local Authority	Per Capita Emissions (tCO$_2$e)	Emissions per km² (ktCO$_2$e)
Blaby	6.5	5.0
Charnwood	5.2	3.5
Harborough	8.2	1.3
Hinckley & Bosworth	6.3	2.4
Melton	8.2	0.9
North West Leicestershire	10.9	4.1
Oadby & Wigston	3.8	9.1
Leicestershire Total	6.9	2.3

Local Authority	Transport	Domestic	Industry	Waste Management	Commercial	Agriculture	Public Sector	LULUCF	Total Emissions
Blaby	335	150	45	41	42	36	9	−2	656
Charnwood	342	261	156	65	49	62	36	−8	963
Harborough	333	153	39	34	34	177	10	−7	772
Hinckley & Bosworth	281	172	111	32	32	76	6	−11	709
Melton	117	83	61	18	18	121	5	−8	418
North West Leicestershire	468	159	345	53	53	48	30	−10	1,133
Oadby & Wigston	51	86	31	12	12	4	10	0	214
Leicestershire Total (ktCO$_2$e)	1,927	1,064	788	264	240	524	106	−47	4,866

Measure your carbon impact

In order to make reductions, it is important to know the greenhouse gas emissions your local community creates. By taking this first step, you'll be able to understand your community's carbon footprint and know which areas to begin to prioritise and action.

- Impact-tool.org.uk offers a free carbon footprint calculator which helps to calculate the carbon footprint for any UK town/parish ward.

- The tool offers comprehensive data analysis, allowing local communities to examine emissions from both territorial and consumption perspectives.

- It provides detailed breakdowns of emissions, including sub-categories related to food and diet and heating sources, and enables comparison between wards.

- The tool considers emissions associated with residents, such as flights and shipped goods, providing a comprehensive understanding of carbon impact which may fall beyond the local boundary.

- Local councils and community groups can use the Impact Tool to gain insights, identify areas for improvement, and develop strategies to reduce emissions, contributing to a cleaner and greener future for Leicestershire.

Where to start?

- **Identify emission sources –** analyse the breakdown of your community's carbon footprint and identify the major emission sources within your local area.

- **Prioritise reduction opportunities –** prioritise the emission sources based on their significance and potential for reduction. Focus on areas where emissions are the highest or where changes can be made more easily and cost-effectively.

- **Set reduction targets –** set clear and achievable reduction targets for each emission source. These targets should be specific, measurable, and time-bound, allowing you to track progress.

- **Implement changes –** begin exploring project ideas and create a roadmap for action. Look at our suggestions for each emission category for inspiration. Get the community involved by asking for their input and supporting their initiatives.

- **Recognise you can't do everything** all at once or on your own, share ideas and work with others in the community and other communities across Leicestershire.

Create the right environment

Declare a Climate Emergency

Many Town and Parish councils have already declared a climate emergency, and we are encouraging more to follow suit. Once this step has been taken, consider designing a climate action plan to ensure that all decisions made by the council are in line with tackling climate change.

Sign Leicestershire's Climate and Nature Pact

Demonstrate your commitment to helping to tackle the climate and ecological emergencies by signing Leicestershire's Climate and Nature Pact. Join other organisations in Leicestershire committed to reducing carbon emissions and protecting biodiversity. By signing the pact, your local council or community group can demonstrate its dedication to environmental responsibility and sets an example for others to follow.

Form a climate action group/network

Engage local councillors, community representatives and organisations to come together to address climate issues. Collaborate in brainstorming ideas, prioritising actions, raising awareness, and providing regular updates to council meetings.

Explore opportunities with local universities to engage students in supporting environmental projects

Engage, educate, and keep informed

By educating council members, involving the community, and integrating sustainability into decision-making processes, councils and local groups can ensure their choices consider factors like carbon emissions, resource consumption, and community well-being. By taking these steps, councils and local groups can demonstrate their commitment to accountability, sustainability, and the well-being of their communities.

Make a plan

Obtained the backing of your council or community group ✓

Identified colleagues and community champions to support you ✓

Analysed your local community's carbon footprint ✓

Then you are ready to create a net zero plan!

The next section provides some suggested actions under a number of themes that your town, parish council or community group could take.

Active travel

Choose to walk or cycle when you can. You could save £11 a year for every mile travelled, save 29kg of carbon and improve your health at the same time.

Reduce, reuse, repair, recycle

Lower the amount you throw away. Follow the four 'R's' to conserve natural resources.

Conserve water

An average person unknowingly wastes up to 30 gallons of water daily. Reduce usage by turning off taps when not in use and reusing waste water in the garden.

Try plant-based alternatives

Consider substituting meat with plant-based alternatives for some of your meals. A meat rich diet generates more carbon emissions than a plant-based diet.

Love Food Hate Waste

In Leicestershire, around a third of rubbish in black bins is food waste. Taking simple steps, like meal planning, can help reduce waste and save you money.

Shop local

By buying local, in-season produce, the goods you buy have not travelled the distances imported goods will have.

Recycle clothing

Give clothes another life by swapping, borrowing, renting or buying second-hand and wash clothes less, and at lower temperatures to give them a longer life.

Take fewer flights

Take a train rather than a plane for shorter journeys as it emits less carbon.

Switch off and unplug

Cut costs on your energy bills and reduce carbon by switching off appliances and avoiding stand-by when not in use.

Reduce single use items

Seek alternative reusable items where possible – from carrier bags to bottles to food packaging – to help cut waste and reduce emissions.
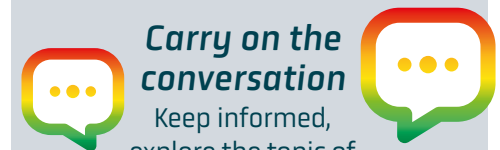
Check energy labels

Buy efficient appliances with top energy ratings. The scale goes from A (efficient) to G (least efficient).

Carry on the conversation

Keep informed, explore the topic of climate change and share what you've learnt. Search #NetZeroLeicestershire on social media.

Develop and support local planning policy

Neighbourhood Plans are a powerful way for Town Councils, Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums to control and design suitable housing for their community and protect and enhance their environment. Greener housing will enhance your community and ensure it is sustainable for future generations.

Enhancing the environment's ability of ecosystems to use carbon dioxide or reserve the degradation of an ecosystem so that it no longer emits harmful greenhouse gas emissions and once more becomes a 'net–sink' of carbon (meaning it stores more carbon than it emits).

More and more Neighbourhood Planning Groups are including Sustainable Design/Climate Action as part of their plans. This approach identifies measures that can mitigate climate change. An example of this can be seen in the Burton and Dalby Neighbourhood Plan and Design Guide.
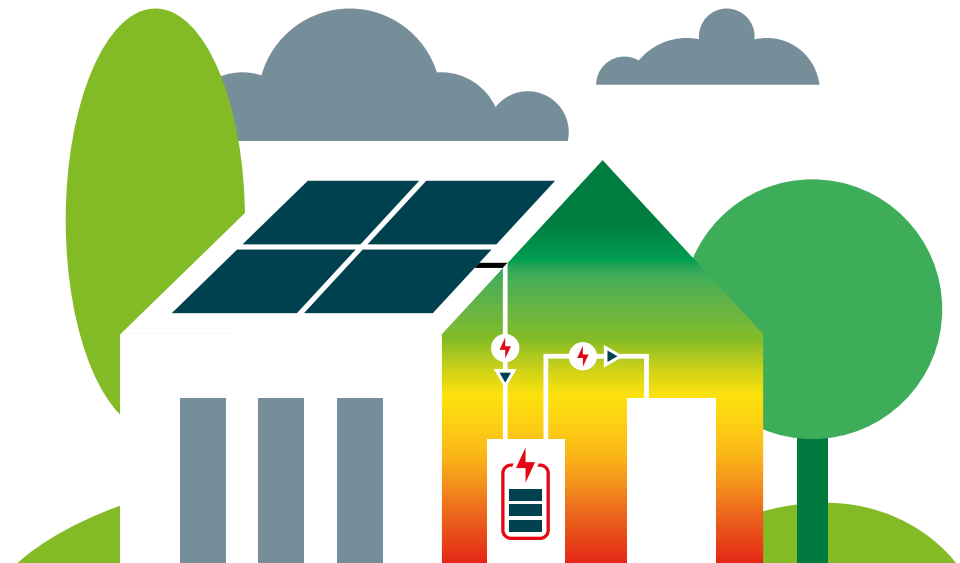
As a Town, Parish Council or Neighbourhood Plan group, you can actively support and influence small and large planning applications through policies that support sustainability within your neighbourhood plans.

Plan for a green community in a neighbourhood plan

The Centre for Sustainable Energy have published a guide to 'Neighbourhood Planning in a Climate Emergency'. This guidebook has been designed for Neighbourhood Planning Groups to guide them through what opportunities Neighbourhood Plans offer in setting positive and ambitious visions for a green and sustainable future.

Case study:

Burton and Dalby Parish Plan Group have included a Design Code, on 'Sustainable Design' within their revised Neighbourhood Plan. The Design Code includes several measures to mitigate Climate Change, including solar energy, energy efficiency, sustainable drainage systems, rainwater harvesting and permeable paving.

Buildings and energy

Developing and supporting green energy projects allows Town, Parish Councils and community groups to give back while making their communities more resilient. Local councils can switch energy suppliers to green energy suppliers, which will help investment in the green energy sector.

Save energy in council buildings

- Ensure that all council buildings are as energy efficient as possible, and that energy is not wasted through unnecessary heating and lighting. Develop a low-carbon heating plan for council owned buildings – start by carrying out an energy audit to evaluate their energy efficiency, carbon emissions and overall performance. This will also allow you to understand where you can make savings.

- Consider installing energy efficiency measures such as LED lighting, insulation, draught proofing, and cooling system.

- Look out for funding schemes such as the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and Low Carbon Skills Fund, to support identification and delivery of energy efficiency projects in public sector buildings.

- For further information and advice as to how to take these steps, visit the Energy Saving Trust website.
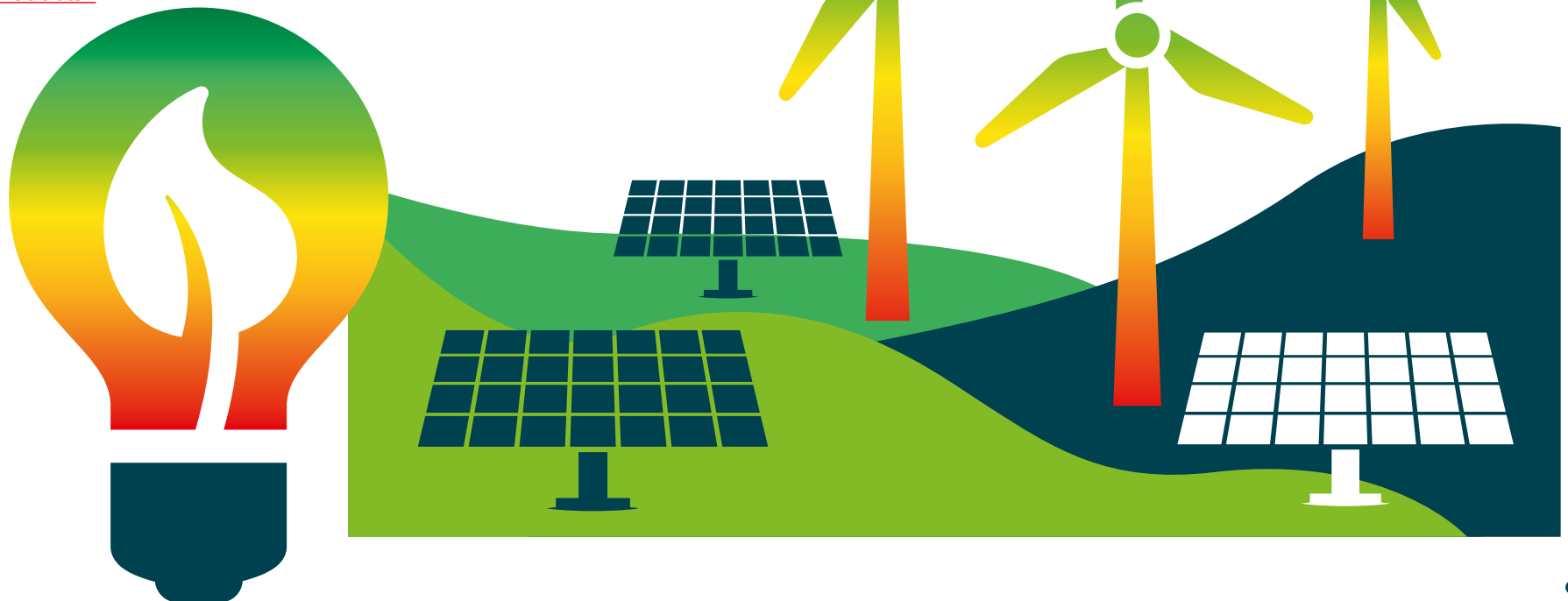
A B C D E F G

Raise awareness on how to save energy and reduce carbon emissions

- Collaborate with local schools and educational establishments to develop tailored programmes which focus on raising awareness amongst students and their families.

- Utilise social media and local newsletters to disseminate practical tips and advice on energy-saving behaviours, as well as available home energy grants. Use the county councils Warm Homes Newsletter as an example and sign up to keep up to date.

- Be loud and proud about success stories that have worked for those who have implemented changes and reduced their carbon footprint in the community as this provides inspiration and practical steps for others to follow.

- Make people aware of the co-benefits associated with reducing carbon – such as financial savings and improvement in health.

- Signpost residents to the Consumers Guide to 'Buying green heating and insulation products'.

Generate green energy

- Assess the feasibility of installing renewable energy systems such as solar panels or wind turbines in suitable locations within the town/parish council jurisdiction.

- If you are considering asset ownership, read the Renewable energy good practice guidance to understand the potential benefits and risks and how these can be managed.

- Benefit from smart export tariffs which pay for excess electricity generated through energy suppliers such as Octopus Energy and British Gas.

Transport

Transportation is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. By encouraging alternatives to private car use, such as cycling, walking, wheeling and public transport, local communities can reduce emissions and improve air quality. Investing in cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, supporting public transport initiatives, and promoting carpooling and electric vehicles contribute to greener and healthier communities.
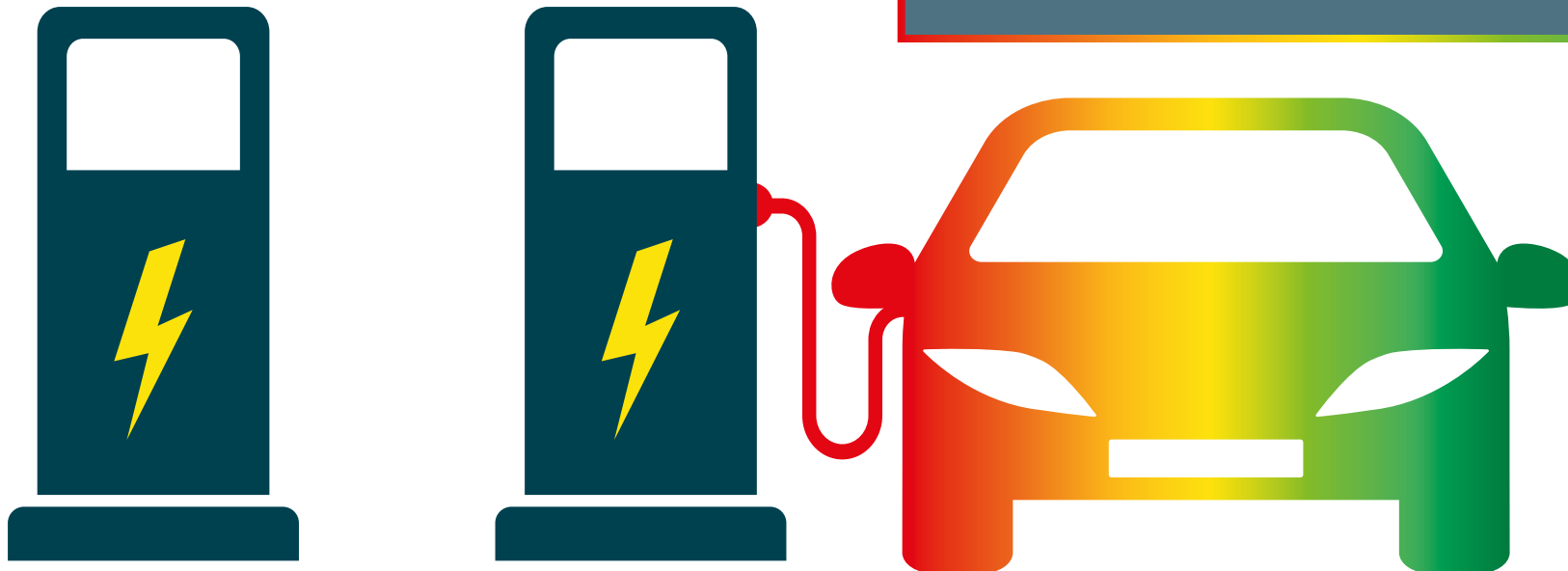
Promote active travel

- Create with support and maintain safe and accessible walking and wheeling routes, including footpaths, cycle lanes, and shared-use paths, to encourage active travel.
- Collaborate with local schools, businesses, and community organisations to promote initiatives such as walking buses, cycle-to-work schemes, and walking/cycling challenges.
- Promote "Choose how you move," a comprehensive travel information platform for Leicester and Leicestershire, to provide residents with diverse sustainable transportation options and opportunities for car-sharing, as well as a free journey planner.
- Promote local bus and rail services as part of longer journeys.
- Promote car sharing and car club schemes to enable people to share essential car journeys with others in the local community.

Engage with local district/borough councils

- Collaborate with district councils: Initiate regular meetings or forums to coordinate efforts and discuss active travel promotion across your community.

Electric Vehicle infrastructure

- Future-proof your community by installing electric charging points, supporting the government's goal to phase out petrol, diesel, and hybrid vehicles by 2040.

- When considering location – identify locations based on parking availability and residential needs. Ensure easy access to charging points for electric vehicles in the community.

- Explore government grants and funding opportunities to support the electric vehicle transition that your local community may be eligible for.

Case study:

Rural Electric Car Clubs

Green Fox Community Energy Co-operative are supporting parish councils and community groups to develop rural electric car clubs across Leicestershire. The car clubs are designed to be run by the community for the community and are aimed at reducing emissions and improving air quality. Supported strongly by the community the first club was developed at Tilton on the Hill with two cars and the installation of fast charging infrastructure. Now operational, the car club also provides significant social and economic benefit to the village.

greenfox
community energy

Resources and waste

Resource and waste management by local councils and communities is essential for tackling climate change. It helps to reduce the environmental impact of our communities by minimising waste, conserving precious resources, and protecting our ecosystems.

Encourage the prevention, reuse, and recycling of waste where possible

- Town Parish Councils and community groups can actively promote and support waste prevention activities – this can include initiatives such as community composting schemes and repair workshops or hosting a swishing event.

- The demand for reuse in your community. Do you have a venue which may be able to host a tool library, repair cafe or swap event?

- Provide residents with information and resources on topics such as food waste prevention, home composting and textile reuse; by doing this councils can help individuals make conscious choices to minimise waste.

- Environment Action Volunteers are available to attend events or give advice on a range of waste prevention activities, including home composting, food waste reduction and reusable nappies.

- Lead by example by promoting good recycling and composting behaviours on your own premises and encourage the local community to 'recycle right' at the kerbside to reduce contamination.

For further information about recycling and waste services in Leicestershire visit Lesswaste.

Educate through public awareness campaigns and local media

- Organise public awareness campaigns, workshops, and events to educate residents about waste prevention, reuse, recycling and home composting.

- Foster collaboration and involve local schools, businesses, and community groups in your activities. This will help spread the message wider and involve a range of audiences. Use one of the Lesswaste videos or request a talk.

- Share your success with your community – by showcasing successful waste initiatives such as recycling programmes, composting and minimising single–use items, local groups can inspire others to take similar actions.

- Promote sustainable seasonal campaigns – such as Christmas, Easter, or Halloween – through local publications and newsletters.

Futureproofing

- Neighbourhood plans state that any new development should have appropriate provision for the storage of waste and recyclable material in locations that are convenient and accessible for collection and emptying. As example in the Swannington Neighbourhood Plan, Policy H4(j).

Business and economy

Businesses have a significant role to play to help reduce carbon emissions across their operations, energy use, transportation, and supply chains. By supporting businesses to prioritise sustainability and carbon reduction, you align yourselves with their environmental values and make a greater collective impact.

Sustainable procurement

✓ When awarding contracts, local communities can go beyond considering just the price and consider the potential carbon emissions associated with the delivery of goods and services. This approach assures that sustainability and environmental impact are key considerations in the decision-making process.

✓ Assess suppliers based on their environmental policies, practices, and certifications. This includes evaluating their commitment to reducing carbon emissions, conserving resources, and promoting sustainable practices throughout their supply chains.

✓ Consider how social value can be incorporated into contracts to benefit the community.

Bulk-purchasing

✓ Facilitate and support the formation of bulk purchasing groups within the community, enabling residents and businesses to collectively purchase goods in larger quantities directly from local suppliers or producers. This reduces packaging waste, transportation emissions and promotes a more sustainable and low-carbon economy.

Support local businesses and farmers

✓ Promoting local businesses, particularly those focused on locally grown produce and restaurants helps drive down emissions. This helps to minimise the need for long distance transportation and reduce the carbon footprint associated with food imports.

✓ Consider partnering with local businesses to develop and implement green initiatives and incentivise customers to shop green. This can involve providing resources and support for businesses to act more environmental. Go a step further by recognising and rewarding businesses that demonstrate commitment to carbon reduction.

✓ Promote and provide logistical support for local farmer markets, helping to connect farmers and producers directly with the community, encouraging the consumption of locally grown and sustainable food.

Case study:

The 'Hex Card' is a shop local loyalty card currently being trialled across North West Leicestershire District. The scheme allows businesses to offer discounts to its customers for supporting local businesses. Further details, including how to join the scheme and a list of participating businesses can be found on North West Leicestershires Digitial High Street webpages.

Biodiversity, nature and land-use

Town and Parish Councils have a responsibility to conserve biodiversity and promote carbon reduction. Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, they are mandated to protect and preserve biodiversity. By fulfilling this duty, councils contribute to the preservation of natural habitats, supporting carbon sequestration and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Encourage the community to get involved and understand the benefits

- Foster a sense of pride in the local environment by involving residents in hands on activities. This can include community clean-ups, tree planting initiatives, and nature walks to connect people with the natural world and demonstrate the positive impact of their actions on carbon sequestration and biodiversity.

- Consider creating a community orchard or wildflower meadows together.

- Promote the creation and management of more green spaces

- Invest in the creation and maintenance of green spaces within the community. Encourage residents and businesses to participate in local conversation efforts, such as wildlife monitoring programmes or community gardens.

- Volunteer Tree Wardens across Leicestershire support communities with tree management and planning. For an overview of the role of tree wardens and to find out how it could benefit your community, visit the Tree warden webpage for more information.

- Collaborate with landowners such as farmers and private property owners to encourage the adoption of sustainable land management practices. Provide information, resources, and incentives for transitioning to organic farming methods and reducing pesticide use of their land. Promote the use of environmentally friendly alternatives and share success stories and best practices.

Promote sustainable practices

- Use peat-free compost, avoid pesticides and control light pollution to protect nature and biodiversity.

- Support initiatives like the National Blue Heart Campaign where selected urban verges are allowed to grow with grasses and flowers. 40 local councils have joined the scheme in Leicestershire – to find out how to get involved, contact parishgrass@leics.gov.uk

- Designate sites within your neighbourhood plan for trees and nature restoration.

Further information and step-by-step guides visit – Biodiversity information for Parishes and Communities.

Partnerships and community engagement

Speak up and champion

- Town, Parish Councils and community groups can be the catalyst to create and actively support and collaborate with climate-action groups and organisations within their community. By forming partnerships and working together, they can build support and momentum for community-led climate solutions.

- Town, Parish Councils and community groups can use their platform to raise awareness, advocate for sustainable practices and champion environmental initiatives. They can collaborate with like-minded organisations to share knowledge, avoid duplication and collaborate on bigger (possibly county-wide) projects.

- They should actively engage with other key stakeholders in their community, including businesses, schools, community groups and individuals. They can invite representative from these groups to speak at council meetings, share their expertise and collaborate on environmental initiatives. This fosters dialogue and collaboration, tapping into diverse perspectives and resources within the community, creating a collective effort towards carbon reduction.

Use your powers

- Shout about your successes! Use public meetings and events, social media, and the Town, Parish Council or local group website. This enables the building of a strong community identity to promote valuable skills and knowledge sharing.

- It is important for Town, Parish Councils and community groups to consistently address climate issues and integrate them into all council meetings, ensuring that sustainability and environmental concerns are given attention and consideration.

Be prepared

Communities can do a great deal to help themselves, to support each other and to safeguard their most vulnerable members. A Community Response Plan will help you to identify the skills, knowledge and resources that can be mustered to help those within the community who have been affected by events such as flooding, storm damage or a power outage. By proactively developing a Community Response Plan, communities can come together, mobilize their resources, and provide necessary support to the most vulnerable members in times of need.

See here for more information about how to create a Community Response plan for your community.

> ## Case study:
> ### Communities Network Foundation
>
> *The Communities Network Foundation (CNF) brings together community groups in and around Melton who all recognise the need to address the very real challenges our society faces in reducing our carbon footprints and encouraging sustainability and biodiversity. The network includes a range of net zero, environmental groups and spin-offs from Parish Council subgroups. The CNF website offers details on current and upcoming events and activities, information about each of the groups on the Network and future meeting information. To find out more or to get involved, please visit the Communities Network Foundation website.*

Summary note

This toolkit provides tips and guidance for Town, Parish Councils and community groups to actively reduce carbon emissions in their community. There is a wealth of information, advice and tips available from partner agencies to support you in your activities. The National Association for Local Councils (NALC) and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC) have worked alongside the Centre for Sustainable Energy to provide web–based support for Town and Parish Councils.

- Recognise you can't do everything all at once or on your own, share ideas and work with others in the community and other communities across Leicestershire and prioritise and pace your carbon reduction efforts.
- Take time to understand the impact of the projects you choose to take – by choosing projects that align with local needs and resources, you can maximise your effectiveness and encourage greater community engagement.
- The toolkit is supported by a Net Zero webpage that will host up to date information, advice, training and funding opportunities.

We would love to hear any feedback on the toolkit and your experiences with implementing the suggested initiatives in your local community and the impact it has on carbon reduction.

Could you share your activities and experience to inspire others? Contact us at communitiesteam@leics.gov.uk