

**REPORT UNDER RULE 2 (VI) OF THE CITY COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

**Report by Councillor Lucinda Preston, Sustainability Advocate**

Madam Mayor – Members of the Council:

**Overview**

It has been a pleasure to be the City Council's Sustainability Advocate over the past year. The role of an advocate is to be a champion of a particular strand of City Council work; at a time of continuing government cuts and with our services under so much pressure, I hope that I have supported the work of other members in giving a voice to this vital area of policy.

**Definition of Sustainability**

The definition of sustainability we commonly use originated with the Brundtland Report in 1987. It described sustainable development as one that 'satisfies the needs of the present without adversely affecting the conditions for future generations'. The report highlighted the interconnectedness of economic, social and ecological processes. The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 further embedded this concept and underscored the following:

- Economic, social and ecological processes are interconnected. The actions of both public and private stakeholders cannot be considered in isolation; instead the interrelationship between the three areas of environment, economy and society must be considered;
- Sustainable development means more than just environmental protection. To satisfy our material and immaterial needs, economic well-being and a society based on solidarity is needed;
- The effects of today's actions on the future must be taken into account so that future generations can also satisfy their needs.

**Sustainability and Lincoln City Council**

This report focuses on two questions:

- How is the City Council making a sustainable life more achievable for all residents of our city including those who are 'time poor' plus those who are poor in financial terms?
- How is the concept of sustainability being embedded in portfolios across the City Council?

Outlined is a summary of how sustainability is being embedded within Lincoln City Council's work, what has been done (with a focus on the past year) and where we would like to go next. It is an ongoing process.

Sustainability cuts across a number of portfolios and I would like to pay tribute to the work of all our Executive members who are committed to sustainability in all we do. I

would also like to take this opportunity to thank City Council officers: this report is a summary of the many conversations I have had with them, reports they have written and outcomes of their work. I continue to be impressed by the huge knowledge and expertise of our officers in this relation to this area. Their work is inspiring and never taken for granted. As a City Council we are also indebted to the many committed residents, organisations and groups in our city for whom sustainability is integral to everyday life including Plastic-Free Lincoln.

### **Sustainability: Tackling Climate Change (Key Points)**

We are in the middle of a climate emergency. For the future of our planet, it is vital for every council to do what it can to reduce carbon emissions.

On 23rd July 2019 Lincoln City Council agreed the motion to declare a Climate and Environmental Emergency. This included a commitment for our city to achieve a net zero carbon target by 2030.

Net zero means that the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere is no more than the amount taken out. This target was set on the basis of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report of 2018 in which the world's leading climate scientists warned that humanity had only 12 years left in which to cap temperature rise at 1.5C or face a higher risk of natural disasters such as drought, floods and heatwaves.

### **Lincoln Climate Commission (LCC)**

This is an embryonic group chaired by Cllr Metcalfe and attended by a range of local experts from the public and private sector, third sector and community to consider how to work together to address the climate emergency and create local solutions.

The LCC is currently focused on:

- setting up a formal application process for attendance on the commission to ensure attendees represent the public, private and third sector organisations (eight representatives from each) to ensure the commission has the experience and knowledge required;
- preparing the *Lincoln Roadmap to Zero Carbon*;
- setting up a citizens assembly to consult on that roadmap and communicate the concept of zero carbon to residents, businesses and organisations in Lincoln;
- setting up workshops to consult on that roadmap in March plus an event in May.

I was pleased to attend the 18th July conference with Councillor Metcalfe and Councillor Bushell, hosted by the University of Lincoln, in which representatives from these sectors discussed and debated some of the issues and looked at some best practice from other cities. So far ten other individuals with expertise in the field of climate change have applied to join the Commission and others have shown interest.

## The Scope of Lincoln's Roadmap to Zero Carbon

The LCC proposes has proposed that a science-based target and carbon reduction roadmap is developed to set out a clear path to how we will achieve net zero carbon by 2030. The roadmap will ensure that we target resources in areas where national actions are most likely to leave a gap in the net zero carbon target i.e. CO2 emissions from transport and gas used for heating.

This table outlines the actions required to complete the road map:

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Status</b>
Establish the source of Lincoln's CO2 emissions and the activities that show the slowest rate of reduction.	Complete
Identify national policy and actions that will impact on Lincoln's emissions over the next ten years.	Complete
Record and monitor local projects/policies in place and planned that will impact on Lincoln's future emissions.	Underway
Identify any gaps in planned local and national actions and policies that pose a significant risk to achieving a net zero carbon by 2030.	Underway
Identify additional local projects, policies and initiatives that will be necessary to meet the net zero carbon target.	The City Council is organising a series of workshops.

## Sustainability: Housing

### Lincoln City Council's actions to contribute towards a zero carbon target plus encouraging sustainability in its widest sense.

Lincoln City Council is one of the main providers of homes in the city and a key stakeholder in encouraging and developing more sustainable housing in the city.

The City Council is refreshing the housing strategy and the related thirty year business plan. This influences how we will manage our current housing stock over the next thirty years. We will be focusing much more on the impact our properties have on the local environment and climate and how we lift more people out of fuel poverty.

Contextually, it is also worth noting that the Government's Clean Growth Strategy announced a new target for all housing to be at least Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C by 2030.

- **Tackling Low EPC Rated Homes**

As of August 2019, 83 City Council dwellings were at EPC rating E and four dwellings at EPC rating F (due to tenants refusing entry).

There are always challenges when working with some of our older housing stock but the City Council is working hard to address these challenges. The Housing Investment Team is working on an Asset Management Strategy which

will form part of the HRA Business Plan and include a plan for bringing the EPC rating of 87 properties to rating D or above.

This is also important as it supports low income families and helps to reduce some fuel poverty.

- **Housing Repairs/Maintenance of Dwellings**

This is an exciting area of work for the City Council and demonstrates its forward thinking in this area.

Currently the City Council seeks to recycle as many materials as possible. For instance, if a property is being demolished or remodelled any materials that can be reclaimed will be retrieved from the site and removed to storage at Hamilton House. This not only saves the City Council money but reduces the carbon footprint. It is also worth noting that nothing that is a by-product of the HRS operation goes into landfill. There are separate skips for recycling. Initiatives like the eradication of single use plastic are already being undertaken and we also work with our partners e.g. Travis Perkins to deliver the same outcomes.

The City Council is also considering a number of other ideas though it must be emphasised that these are only in the research stage at the present time. Some of the ideas currently being investigated include reducing the frequency of repairs being carried out by using higher quality materials in kitchens and bathrooms. Better quality kitchen cabinets and bathroom tiles would have improved longevity. This would reduce the number of repair vehicle journeys across the city as well as the carbon footprint as the City Council would not have to buy as much stock from manufacturers. It is also envisaged that these products would be sourced from local suppliers reducing the need for long journeys, bringing the products into the city and boosting the local economy. This would also reduce the cost of repairs so that potentially more money could be put into improving other aspects of homes' environments. There is also an equality issue for tenants, many of whom hold long-term tenancies and would appreciate the use of better quality materials in their homes.

Another is the possibility of altering the way that non-urgent repairs/improvements are dealt with so that particular areas of the city are targeted in different months of the year. This would again reduce the number of vehicle journeys plus would mean that more stock could be pre-ordered. Urgent/emergency repairs would still be dealt with in the same way as now.

The City Council has also begun thinking about the re-wiring specification for existing City Council stock and how it could accommodate potential new charging points in the future.

- **New City Council Homes**

The DMD and DHI are committed to ensuring that 2020/2021 new build City Council homes have an EPC A rating through good design and specification i.e. through improved insulation to ensure houses maintain a low running cost.

As previously explained, this is also important for reducing fuel poverty.

- **The Local Plan Review**

This has provided a significant opportunity for strengthening planning's approach towards addressing climate change. It will have an impact on the City Council's work. The new local plan aims to be carbon neutral and includes a stronger policy for planners to refuse plans that are far from sustainable centres. We need new developments that allow residents to make 'sustainable choices'.

- **Western Growth Corridor (WGC)**

For Lincoln to grow and prosper then we need to build more housing. As outlined above, we need housing that offers opportunities for more sustainable living.

As well as providing much needed housing, the WGC also provides an opportunity to assist Lincoln in the transition to net zero carbon. As one of Lincoln's Sustainable Urban Extensions the WGC similarly provides a prime opportunity to embed principles of sustainability and carbon neutrality into a much needed residential housing scheme.

At present work is underway to develop a statement of carbon neutrality, to be attached to the planning application. This will set out how the WGC shall include a range of carbon neutral initiatives.

This aims to be an exemplar of sustainable housing following in the footsteps of initiatives in cities such as York. People need homes to live in but it is important that new build homes are sustainable homes.

## **Sustainability: Reducing Single Use Plastic**

Approximately **5,000 items** of marine plastic pollution have been found per mile of beach in the UK. Worldwide it is estimated that **400 million tonnes** of plastic is produced **every year** and **40%** of that is single-use plastic we'll only use once before it's binned. Everyday approximately **8 million pieces of plastic** are entering our oceans. It is surely incumbent upon councils to do what they can to reduce the consumption of single use plastic. Early in 2019 the City Council was approached by the campaign group, Plastic-Free Lincoln, to support the campaign and help to achieve Plastic Free Community Status for the city. On 24th September 2019, the City Council passed the motion to be a plastic-free City Council by 2022. Contained in the motion were these pledges:

- The preparation of a Christmas Market Environment policy for December 2020 to enforce a limit of single use plastic and work with stall holders to make the market an overall greener event;
- To aim to eliminate single use plastic from the supply chain wherever possible by 2022;
- To prepare an environmental policy to include a requirement for City Council contractors to stop using single use plastic from their own operations.
- To add a commitment to plastic-free initiatives and reduction in single use plastic to our Social Responsibility Charter;

- To elect a representative to join Plastic-Free Lincoln's Steering Group.
- To include a plastic-free information section on the City Council's website;
- Increase the supply of free drinking water in the city.

So far the City Council has undertaken a range of actions including the following:

- Undertaking an audit of City Council sites including buildings, parks, community centres, managed workspaces, the transport hub and the crematorium;
- Added the commitment to plastic-free initiatives to the Social Responsibility Charter
- Encouraged traders at the 2019 Christmas Market to decrease their plastic consumption and acting to make the 2020 market plastic-free;
- Worked on an environmental policy to include a requirement for City Council contractors to stop using single use plastics from their own operation;
- Councillor Bushell has recently attended the first Plastic-Free Lincoln Steering Group meeting.

A motion is only ever as good as the actions that follow it: these are early days but the City Council is already changing its practice both in terms of its own operations and the way it interacts with businesses and contractors and demonstrating a firm commitment to eliminating single use plastic, wherever that is possible.

### **Sustainability: Waste/Recycling**

This area has been covered in a lot of detail in Councillor Bushell's report. However, I would like to add that the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership is now looking at developing clear measures for how we are reducing our carbon footprint.

### **Sustainability: Improving our Urban Environment**

The City Council continues to look at other ways to reduce the carbon footprint but to also to make Lincoln an attractive place to live and work in. The value of attractive urban spaces for physical and mental wellbeing should never be underestimated, especially for those residents who do not have their own garden/open space. This is an economic and equality issue as well as an environmental issue.

- **Tree Planting** As outlined in Councillor Bushell's report the Woodland Trust is offering the City Council support in development of a tree policy. This will be drafted this year. Last year, the City Council ran a social media campaign to offer residents the opportunity to suggest places where trees should be planted.

Most people would like to see greater tree cover in the city. By working with the Woodland Trust we can develop a strategy that means we plant trees in the optimum locations and create an important legacy for future generations.

- **Wildflower Planting** There has been a lot of press coverage over the past few years about councils planting wildflowers on grass verges or open areas.

The City Council is keen to encourage this kind of planting in sensitively and sensibly placed locations. Initially a group of volunteers has been working off Breedon Drive.

In Boultham Park, volunteers have recently been preparing the ground for wildflower planting (near to the exit of St. Peter's Avenue).

There are many possibilities for this type of work in our open spaces although a pragmatic approach has to be taken to ensure that the most appropriate locations are chosen. For example, areas with high levels of anti-social behaviour may not be suitable.

## **Sustainability: Transport**

- **Lincoln Transport Plan**

At the time of writing I have seen the summary of the Lincoln Transport Plan. Lincoln City Council was one of the district City Councils that contributed towards the creation of this document. Obviously it is difficult to comment in full until the whole strategy is studied.

There are some promising proposals in the summary including the following amongst a wide range of 'interventions': providing 'green corridors' for pedestrians and cyclists; enhancing walking and cycling infrastructure; creating 'mobility hubs' (including the much requested park and ride schemes); expanding the electric charging network; prioritising buses by improving access and new routes; on-demand connections; education in relation to sustainability.

The summary includes some important and long-overdue steps to encourage modal shift from cars to other forms of transport. The summary states that "Funding will be key to achieving the objective and delivering the strategy". I would hope that the County Council and Central Government would prioritise steps towards sustainable living in terms of financial support.

- **Lincoln City Council Travel Plans**

In 2019 the City Council reviewed and updated the City of Lincoln Travel Plan (TP). It sets out a range of actions that seek to promote sustainable travel solutions for City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) employees when making their journey to and from their place of work and reduce car dependency. The TP has been undertaken in conjunction with Access Lincoln and is an accredited Travel Plan scheme.

It is worth noting that as part of the Lincoln Transport Task Force, the City Council has been working with a range of city partners in developing their travel plans and looking at opportunities to put in place city wide travel planning initiatives.

- **Electric Charging Points**

The City Council is in the process of drafting an EV infrastructure strategy to identify supply and demand for EV charge points and opportunities. There is a grant scheme available to support councils' work. Evidence is needed of a local demand.

The aim is to have potential sites mapped and feasibility work completed before a funding bid is put in. For funding reasons, the City Council is only able to consider areas where residents do not have access to off-street parking area so therefore work has to focus on Park ward, areas of Castle ward and the West End part of Carholme.

There has been much enthusiasm from residents: as stated at the beginning of this report, it is important that the City Council gives residents the opportunity to live a more sustainable lifestyle. At present, it is very challenging for people who live in terraced housing in our city to make the change to an electric car; hopefully this work will lead to them being able to consider the possibility of owning an electric car.

## **Sustainability - Food**

- **Allotments**

Information on the allotments has mainly been covered in Cllr Bushell's report.

To summarise, the City Council has over a thousand plots in the city over eighteen sites. Over a million pounds has been spent on our city's allotments. The new Melbourne Road plots are scheduled to be opened in the spring. Initially there will be twelve new plots but there will eventually be twenty eight.

As well as offering obvious opportunities for growing food, they show the possibilities for sustainable living. In addition, the low cost of hiring an allotment means that people on all different income levels have the opportunity to participate in an activity which supports healthy lifestyles.

- **Lincoln Food Partnership (LFP)**

Martin Walmsley, Head of Shared Benefits and Revenues at Lincoln City Council, sits as a board member for The Lincoln Food Partnership, alongside representatives from other organisations such as Lincolnshire Co-op. The Partnership aims to "link a wide range of city food activities and at the same time tackle problems of food security, the environment, food waste, food poverty and obesity – by reconnecting people with food." He brings to the role his knowledge and skills in leading a range of initiatives relating to anti-poverty, welfare reforms and Universal Credit support.

The Partnership has recently been awarded a grant of £10,000 from the Big Lottery Community Fund to assist in co-ordinating some of the projects of the LFP over the coming year. These projects including developing a central food hub for the city to redistribute surplus food to those in poverty; developing renewable energy projects; securing the future of Mint Lane cafe and developing food education in the city. These projects encompass many strands of sustainability and it is good to see the City Council working alongside other organisations in developing the sustainability agenda.



- **Fairtrade**

The city holds Fairtrade status and would like to go for that status again. The Lincoln Fairtrade City Steering Group meets once every quarter and includes representatives from the City Council, the University of Lincoln, local churches, Lincolnshire Co-op and Traidcraft. As of August 2018, over 80 businesses/cafes/churches/schools in the city use Fairtrade products. In the City Council committee rooms, Fairtrade sugar is provided.

The Group has been active in putting together ideas for this year's Fairtrade Fortnight which is on the last week of February and the first week in March. At the time of writing, initiatives for this fortnight include promoting Fairtrade in City Hall's reception; offering free Fairtrade bananas to City Council staff; a press release; a social media campaign; events at the university; the Co-op offering double dividend points on Fairtrade products.

Fairtrade is a key concept which underlines the importance of sustainability not just for the environment but to a fairer world. Arguably, there is some 'tension' between the desire to support communities around the world and the desire to consume more local products and I feel this particularly as a Co-operative City Councillor. However, there will always be some products that can't be produced closer to home so I believe there will always be an important place for Fairtrade products and, indeed, a necessity to champion the concept.

### **Sustainability - Information on Lincoln City Council Website**

Many people nowadays are time poor and I am always clear on the need for people to be able to access information relating to environmental and sustainability concerns quickly and efficiently.

Lincoln City Council's website is a well known and trusted source of information for the people of the city and when I took on the role of Sustainability Advocate I spoke clearly about the need to make the website a little more user-friendly so it could be a 'one stop shop' for information on sustainable living, for individuals, families and businesses alike. This was a view already shared by City Council officers and following an overall revamp of the website, information is now more clearly signposted. There is an 'Environment' section which includes sections on 'Climate change and zero carbon Lincoln' and 'Green and sustainable living'. Website development is an ongoing process.

### **Conclusion: Sustainability across the Portfolios**

Below is a summary of City Council-led projects and how they are embedded across portfolios either in terms of officer work or impact. The table considers the direct benefits of projects but also looks at them holistically.

<b>Sustainability area</b>	<b>Let's drive economic growth</b>	<b>Let's reduce inequality</b>	<b>Let's deliver quality housing</b>	<b>Let's enhance our remarkable place</b>
<b>Zero carbon specific projects</b>	*	*	*	*
<b>Reducing single use plastic (SUP)</b>	*	*	*	*
<b>Housing/repairs</b>	*	*	*	*
<b>Waste/recycling</b>				*
<b>City environment: trees/wildflowers</b>	*	*		*
<b>Allotments</b>		*		*
<b>Fairtrade</b>	*	*		

The City Council has a clear role in the drive for sustainability in the city and strives to be an example of best practice wherever possible.

**Councillor Lucinda Preston**  
**Sustainability Advocate**