

**REPORT UNDER RULE 2 (VI) OF THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES****Report by Councillor Lucinda Preston, Sustainability Advocate****Overview**

A year ago most people were aware of Coronavirus and some its dangers but I don't think any of us could have imagined the impact it would have on our lives and how day to day life would alter for the next 12 months.

Every area of life has been affected by the pandemic and the City Council's Sustainability agenda has been no different. From the operational difficulties that every organisation has faced to the huge financial constraints placed upon the Council because of loss of income, this year has been challenging for us as an environmentally aware council. However, the City Council has still been able to progress many of its goals and initiatives because of the commitment of officers and councillors alike and also the organised plans and initiatives that were already in place pre-pandemic.

Sustainability cuts across a number of portfolios as well as linking directly to the Vision 2025 strand 'Let's address the challenge of climate change'. As last year, 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 thank our superb City Council officers for their excellent work plus thank them for helping me put together this report. 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.

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

The pandemic has understandably been at the forefront of people's minds over the past year. However, it is important to remind ourselves that we remain 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.

In 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. Despite the unprecedented challenge of the past year, the City Council has made some progress towards this goal.

The City Council's commitment to tackling climate change has been underlined by the appointment of Kate Bell as a dedicated Climate Change Manager.

**Lincoln Climate Commission (LCC)**

- The Roadmap to Zero Carbon Lincoln was completed and approved by Lincoln Climate Commission in July 2020. This sets out the projections for Lincoln's Carbon Dioxide emissions to 2030, our carbon budget (how much carbon we

can emit per annum to remain carbon neutral), the gap between our current CO2 emissions and net zero and the actions we need to deliver to remain within our carbon budget.

- The Lincoln Climate Commission was formalised in September 2020. The commission now has 36 members from the public, private and community sector and a range of sub-groups focused on delivering climate awareness and climate action in Lincoln and more widely, Lincolnshire.

### **Further Initiatives**

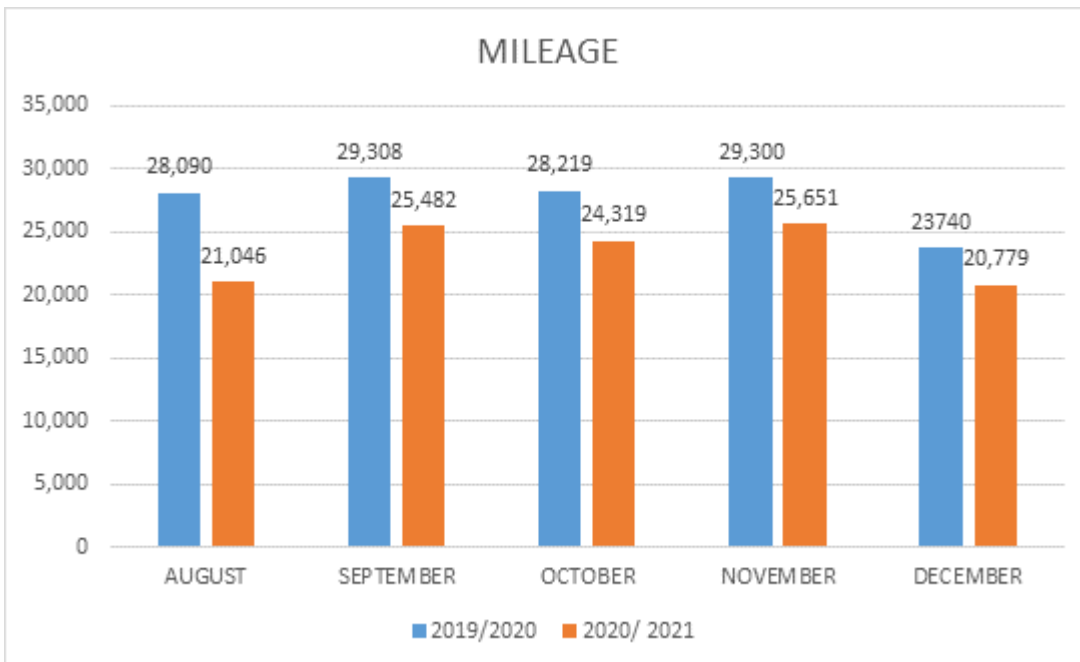
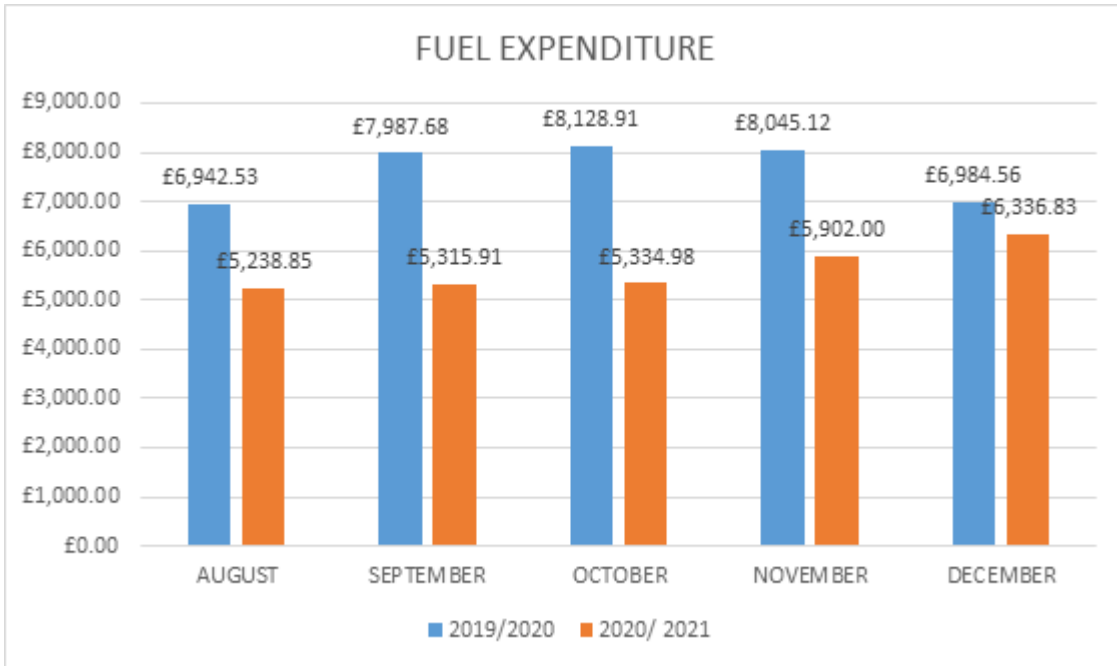
- In September 2020 Lincoln City Council also submitted its Environmental Management System for external audit and was delighted to be accredited with a Silver award. The City Council is now preparing a Decarbonisation Plan and is looking to achieve a Green award in 2021.
- The City Council has submitted a Roadmap to Net Zero programme as part of the Towns Fund Bid. At the time of writing we are awaiting the outcome (due in March 2021).
- In January 2021 Councillor Ric Metcalf signed the UK100 Net Zero membership pledge. The Council will be able to share knowledge and best practice with fellow members of the network.

### **Sustainability: Housing**

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/living in the city.

### **Council Housing Provision**

- The City Council is currently in the procurement stage for new vehicle fleet provision. The manufacturers interested at the moment offer a mixture of fuel types including petrol/diesel and hybrid (a mild hybrid not a full hybrid). The fuel choice will depend upon vehicle type and usage. Mild hybrid will offer a 2% cut on emissions.
- The Housing Repair Service has decreased mileage on average of 4,200 miles a month with a fuel reduction on average of 2k per month during the pilot (please see the graphs below). This demonstrates the financial benefits of the new system, not just the sustainability benefits. Once the new fleet is introduced the City Council will be looking into further ways of offsetting the carbon footprint, including driver training and green initiatives.



- With regards to products, all timber is sustainably sourced. The department recycles 100% of materials that go into skips and have started the introduction of waterproof boarding instead of tiling finishes to properties (please be aware that the department is potentially changing managed store providers so some delay will be inevitable). The department is also reviewing our van stocks to ensure we only carry the correct number of materials and has recently introduced a Research and Development group that focuses on the next generation of materials and products within the housing stock.
- From the Housing Strategy side, the EPCs for Swift Gardens (Markham House) are all EPC rating B They perform at very good in most areas. The gas, heating

and hot water are classed as good (giving the B rating) and is an area we will need to consider in the future.

- On new builds such as Rookery Lane we are:
  - Putting in electrical vehicle charging points to new properties
  - Houses built with fabric first approach to reduce energy usage
  - A sustainable 'Urban Drainage Scheme' as part of the site drainage management.
  - Mechanical heat recovery system
- In other areas the department has used recycling of material from demolition, where useful.

## **Local Plan**

The following is useful to know simply in terms of wider context. It is worth noting that it is only a very brief overview of part of the Local Plan

At the time of writing, the emerging local plan, for consultation in summer 2021, is likely to set its aim to be a Local Plan which assists the Central Lincolnshire area on a path towards becoming a carbon net zero sub-region. One goal will be to encourage better designed, higher quality sustainable housing.

In relation to housing, consultant recommendations for the new plan include, amongst others, the need to regulate development beyond 'basic' Building Regulation requirements. The City Council is very supportive of such recommendations.

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

The City Council remains committed to reducing single use plastic having previously passed a motion for the city to be plastic-free by 2022. There has been some progress over the past year though the pandemic has inevitably had some impact.

- The City Council's Plastics Audit was completed April 2020.
- Single Use Plastic Action Plan was put in place May 2020.
- Previously the City Council has undertaken substantial work towards making the Christmas Market plastic-free (for example, by enforcing a limit on the use of single use plastic). However, the 2020 Christmas Market was obviously unable to go ahead because of the pandemic.
- Promotion of plastic-free events remains a priority but as with all events, these have not been taking place because of the pandemic. A shorter-term goal is to promote plastic-free aspirations more in our parks.

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

More on waste/recycling is covered in Cllr Bushell's report (to be considered at Council on 2 March 2021). The Lincolnshire Waste Partnership is still including a review of carbon footprint as a part of its performance measures. This is however proving more

difficult to assess and measure than anticipated, so is taking longer to set up than expected. COVID measures have not helped, but it still remains as a clear objective.

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

As outlined last year, 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. It cannot be emphasised enough that this is an economic and equality issue as well as an environmental issue.

As a part of the recent street scene contract extensions, work groups have been set up to look at how services should develop, and what should be prioritised in future years. Recognising the Council's environmental agenda, the open spaces group has given priority to two key areas: tree planting and wildflowers.

- **Tree Planting.** Due to demands on staff and partner agencies this year it has not been possible to make progress on the development of a Tree Strategy as had been hoped. As outlined in Cllr Bushell's report (to be considered at Council on 2 March 2021), this remains an objective of the Council, and so is worth a mention here, as is the fact that the City Council has remained true to its policy of "1 for 1" for tree replacements this year. This year's trees are currently being planted.
- **Wildflower Planting.** A work group headed by the council's Senior Ranger in Hartsholme Country Park is developing a comprehensive list of sites that are sustainable for different types of wildflower planting. There will be two key approaches developed based on either annual wildflower mixes into open ground, or perennial wildflower mixes into permanent grassland. The site list is being carefully checked now, as it is vital that we don't cause any environmental damage inadvertently. As a part of the site reviews grass cutting regimes will also be reconsidered. It is hoped that some of the first sites will be seeing changes this spring.

The exciting Boultham Park Restoration project continues. This has funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and includes the restoration of the lake and surrounds in the park. This project has a strong environmental focus, and is being delivered with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust as a key partner. Capital works are in progress now, but there will be a legacy of engagement with the community until the end of March 2023.

### **Sustainability: Transport**

Sustainable transport is a key element of sustainability and our City Council continues to look for ways to support residents in travelling sustainably.

- **Infrastructure** The Government invited authorities to submit applications to the Emergency Active Travel Fund for temporary or trial road closures and cycle routes. This was followed by a second funding round called the Active Travel Fund. As part of the preparation for this bid the City Council worked with the

County Council to identify priority routes in Lincoln – Sincil Bank, Wigford Way and Brayford Wharf East - and submitted a proposal. Unfortunately once the funding was secured the county councillors would not approve any cycling infrastructure in Lincoln and allocated all the funding to other areas. This was disappointing for our city. We hope that more money will become available at some point.

- The City Council has submitted a plan for a Sincil Bank green travel corridor and infrastructure improvements to Wigford way as part of the Towns Fund projects. Unfortunately, the County Council decided not to offer any match funding for these schemes.
- **Electric Car Charging Points** The City Council remains committed to increasing the number of electric car changing points across the city. As part of an OLEV (Office for Low Emission Vehicles) funded project, in the autumn the City Council launched a residents' survey to find out more about demand from residents for on-street electric vehicle charge points.
- **City Council Staff Travel** Even when the pandemic comes to the end, the City Council is expecting to see a reduction in commuter travel. There will be a staff travel survey in the spring. As part of the Council's Environmental Management System it also monitors working car/train journeys; there has obviously been a large reduction of these as people haven't been attending conferences and meetings around the country.
- The introduction of MS Teams and roll out of remote working devices will mean that this reduction in journeys will also be a long term phenomenon as many people will continue to have virtual meetings, training and conferences as it saves so much time not having to travel. This will continue to be monitored along with energy consumption (e.g. the reduction in the number of IT servers has reduced electricity consumption at City Hall) as part of the EMS for 2020/21 which will be completed in the Summer. The City Council now has a revised baseline year for 2018/19 and 2019/20 so it will be using these to compare our energy consultation and green house gas emissions. All these sustainability measures and the carbon reduction outcomes will be covered in detail in the new Decarbonisation Plan due later in the spring.

### **Sustainability: Food**

- **Allotments** These have retained high numbers of letting, with waiting lists. This is an interest that was seeing a growing demand pre-COVID, and lockdowns have understandably seen this further increase.
- The service benefitted from significant investment last year, but has recently seen consideration of price increases for next year due to the continuing impact of COVID on the City Council's finances. A year's notice of increases has been given to tenants, and although not welcome, most feedback has been understanding and pleasingly has not led to a reduction in tenancies.

- **Fairtrade** The City of Lincoln continues to retain its accreditation as a Fairtrade City by the Fairtrade Foundation. To help retain this accreditation, there is a Lincoln Fairtrade City Steering Group which has representation on the group from City of Lincoln Council, Lincolnshire Co-op, University of Lincoln and the Centre for Reconciliation. This group is chaired by Councillor Gary Hewson.
- As of February 2021, 84 business premises, cafes, churches, schools in the city support Fairtrade and use/sell a number of Fairtrade products.
- The pandemic has restricted the work of the Fairtrade City Steering Group considerably, however it has continued to raise awareness of Fairtrade where it can and will be supporting Fairtrade Fortnight 2021 (22<sup>nd</sup> February and 7<sup>th</sup> March 2021). The group will increase its work on Fairtrade over the coming year as restrictions start to lift.
- The city is due to renew its Fairtrade City accreditation in the Autumn of 2021.
- **Lincolnshire Food Partnership.** Lincoln City Council continues to support the work of the Lincolnshire Food Partnership (previously the Lincoln Food Partnership), with our Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits sitting on the Board, supporting and inputting into various projects. The Partnership's stated aim, is: "We're a partnership of local organisations working together for fairer, healthier, greener food for all, through sustainable local action". As the City Council, our role on this board focuses on promoting and helping to deliver food poverty related initiatives, as well as supporting sustainable of food models in Lincoln.

### **Sustainability: Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter (includes a green section)**

The charter was launched in 2018 with the aim of recognising organisations in the city which go the extra mile to support their employees and the local community. Sign up to the charter is free of charge. The City Council asks that each organisation demonstrates in their application that they deliver a range of socially responsible activities, above the statutory minimum, which benefit their employees and the local community. The number of activities required varies in line with the size of the organisation. This includes 'green' activities.

As of February 2021, 83 local organisations have committed to the principals of the charter and have gained accreditation as a socially responsible employer. A number of socially responsible sustainable activities undertaken by accredited organisations include: initiatives to reduce travel/air miles, using local suppliers/local products, initiatives to reduce food waste, use of electric or hybrid vehicles, recycling initiatives and initiatives to reduce energy consumption and waste.

Again, due to the pandemic, the City Council has been restricted on the amount of promotional activities it has been able to undertake; however, it will look to increase the number of activities once restrictions lift.

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

The City Council's website continues to develop. There is both a Climate Change section and a Green and Sustainable Living section. The latter contains clearly signposted sections including 'Making your home more energy efficient'; 'Single use plastic-free Lincoln'; 'Electric vehicle charge points' and 'Composting' to name but a few. It is a very useful resource for residents who have the time to scan multiple websites or would just prefer a simple click to obtain the information they need.

At the time of writing, our Climate Change officer has begun the process of putting together a 'toolkit' website. Over the coming months she will be working with members of Lincoln Climate Commission to furnish this with information that residents will find useful.

### **Conclusion**

This is a snapshot of the City Council's work over the past year but I hope members find it useful. Given the context of the pandemic, a huge amount has been achieved in meeting sustainability objectives. Further progress will undoubtedly be made in the months to come.

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