

## ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE VISION 2025 PROGRESS UPDATE

As part of this vision 2025 priority the council have been leading and delivering strategic projects to drive corporate decarbonisation across our full carbon accounts (Scope 1, 2 and 3). In addition, we have been working closely with our partners to deliver our ambition target for Lincoln to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

From the outset this has involved embedding decarbonisation and aligning our ambitions into the council's policies and strategies. Since 2020 the following key policies and strategies have been prepared to contribute towards and compliment the council's objective to address the challenge of climate change and our net zero carbon ambitions:-

- Affordable Warmth Strategy 2021-2026. Setting out how we can support fuel poor households to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, reducing energy costs and carbon emissions.
- Environmental Policy – to establish our goals for protecting and improving the environment and tackling the climate and environmental emergency at the heart of every council decision.
- Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025– Detailed review of the council's carbon emissions and actions to deliver carbon emission reductions across all service areas.
- Central Lincolnshire Local Plan – Includes climate policies to ensure planning decisions support the council's net zero target.
- HRA 30 year business Plan – Aligning the council's long term investment plan for council housing with our net zero target.

These documents have been prepared to support the council's Climate and Environment Emergency Declaration and a Single use, Plastic free motion were passed by Full Council in 2019.

There are 12 projects currently being monitored in the Council's vision 2025 work programme for Climate Change. Further details on each project can be found in the monitoring table. A summary of the position of these projects is included below.

- **Work with partners on the Lincoln Climate Commission and deliver Lincoln Climate Action Plan.**

Since 2020 the City Council have worked closely with our partners to set up and support the Lincoln Climate Commission. Lincoln 2030 Climate Action Plan (2030 CAP) was published in 2022 and the council continue to work with our partners to deliver climate actions to address the challenges of climate change. Working groups have been set up to explore opportunities for community energy schemes, district heat networks, decarbonisation of public buildings, sustainable education programme in schools, Home Energy Advice scheme and community electric vehicle share scheme. In addition, a community outreach initiative 'Climate Hope Lincoln' has been formed made up of 80 individuals and organisations to increase community engagement, activity and involvement in local climate action.

The 2030 CAP and monitoring table are published on the council and climate commission websites. Overall, Lincoln's greenhouse gas emissions have reduced by 50% since the 2005 baseline year and 9% reduction since the Council declared a climate and environmental emergency in 2019. Emissions across all sectors have reduced, most significantly for electricity consumption by 74% however in 2022 for the first time since 2005 there has been an increase in emissions from transport of 3%.

- **Stop using single-use plastics and encourage our partners to do the same.**

The Council passed a Single Use Plastic (SUP) Motion in September 2019 and have been implementing the SUP Action Plan, monitoring progress within the Council's SUP Audit. The Council continue to work with Plastic Free Lincoln to support the campaign and encourage businesses to sign up to the plastic free pledge to secure plastic free status for Lincoln.

- **City of Lincoln Council to gain environmental accreditation.**

The Council have set up an Environmental Management System (EMS) to monitor green house gas emissions from council buildings and services and deliver ongoing carbon reductions across the authority. The council's EMS is externally audited by Investors in the Environment on an annual basis and accredited with a score based on evidence of continual environmental improvements. An external audit process helps the council to identify gaps environmental performance, evaluate the effectiveness of decarbonisation initiatives, plan and implement corrective actions.

In September 2023, following a detailed audit, the council's EMS scored 93% and were awarded a Green level accreditation. The Council were also nominated by Investors in the Environment for an 'Outstanding Achiever' award. The 2023 Environmental Performance report is published on the council's website and preparation for the 2024 report is currently underway and due to be published in September.

- **Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP)– Climate Policies.**

In 2022 the City of Lincoln Council worked alongside the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan team to prepare new climate and energy policies. The CLLP was approved by the Secretary of State in April 2023 and has been recognised as one of the most ambitious Local Plan's in the country in terms of climate change policies.

The Royal Town Planning Institute have named it the Best Plan in the 2024 East Midlands Planning Excellence awards. Stating that the CLLP pushes the boundaries of government policy and legislation in its ambition to deliver net zero carbon across the area and has been judged to be the region's best; targeting energy efficient buildings, renewable energy, adaptation and resilience to climate change, and much more.

- **City of Lincoln Council Travel Plan (2019-2025).**

The Council's Employee Travel Plan has been produced to support employees to adapt sustainable transport modes for both commuting to work and travel to meetings away from their normal place of work that can't be held effectively remotely for some or all participants. The Plan is updated annually and implementation of a range of actions are underway and completed actions include introducing the green car and cycle2work salary sacrifice schemes, increasing cycle storage and shower facilities at City Hall and Hamilton House, Lincoln BIG car share scheme and Lincoln BIG bus pass.

- **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure.**

In 2023 the council secured grant funding from the Office of Zero Emission vehicles as well as match funding from Connected Kerb to install a further 21 electric vehicle charge units (42 points) in six council car parks. In 2024 all charging points are operational and can be located on zap map. As of April 2024, Lincoln has 112 publicly accessible charging devices, the highest in Greater Lincolnshire.<sup>1</sup>

The City Council have been working closely with Lincolnshire County Council Sustainable Travel Team to review provision on street charging as part of the Low Emission Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund to ensure there is sufficient future provision for residents with limited access to off road parking in the city.

- **Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme.**

The council secured £2.3m funding from the Department for Net Zero in 2021 to deliver a private housing retrofit scheme to improve the energy efficiency of fuel poor homes. The scheme was completed in September 2023, 134 homes receiving retrofit measures such as internal/external/cavity wall and loft insulation and photovoltaic panels.

Government funding for 'on gas' homes ended in 2023, however the Home Upgrade Grant for 'off gas' homes continues until April 2025. As of July 2024, 5 households have completed installations and 3 installations are in progress, measures include low carbon heating, insulation and solar PV with a combined valued of £100 784. A further 96 'off gas' homes in Lincoln have been identified as eligible for the scheme and were sent letters in July to encourage them to come forward to access the grant funding.

The majority of Lincoln's homes are connected to the gas network and can still access Energy Company Obligation phase 4 (ECO4) funding through their energy supplier or an ECO4 provider. Through the Local Authority Flexible Eligibility scheme the council can approve applications for households with an income under £31k per year or anyone with a health condition that could be made worse from living in a cold home to access ECO grants. Since January 2024, the council have authorised 36 ECO4 flexible eligibility applications for

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<sup>1</sup> Next data release by the DfT due July 2024

Lincoln residents. The scheme is due to end in March 2026 or when all funding has been allocated.

A Nation Warm Homes Programme is expected to be introduced in 2025 to extend energy efficiency support to all households with an Energy Performance Certificate of C or below C. The City Council will be looking to secure funding with the Central Lincolnshire consortium and jointly procure a retrofit provider to enable Lincoln residents to access grant funding in 2025.

- **Make current and future business premises as energy efficient as possible.**

A City of Lincoln Council Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan has been completed, outlining projects across 6 decarbonisation pathways. The refurbishment of the Lincoln Crematorium in 2022 and Cornhill Market in 2023 included a range of energy efficiency measures, low carbon heating and new efficient cremators. Since the 19/20 baseline year green house gas (GHG) emissions for the crematorium have reduced by 31%. Energy consumption for the Cornhill market is being monitored since the building opened in 2024 to establish the extent to which GHG emissions have reduced.

In 2024 the council secured £670k from the Sports England Swimming Pool fund to reduce running costs by improving energy efficiency and install renewable energy to Yarborough Leisure centre, work is due to complete by April 2025.

Throughout 2024 the Council have been working to secure Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding to enable the delivery of future energy efficiency projects.

- **Climate conscious infrastructure projects developed as part of Town Fund Board vision**

The CoLC have been working with project leads to ensure all Towns Fund projects will include low carbon solutions as part of building refurbishment plans and sustainable road infrastructure projects. Projects include creating a green corridor through Sincil bank to improve the cycling and pedestrian route from South Park to Tentercroft St and create new areas of green space throughout the neighbourhood. A contractor has been appointed and work is due to start on site in September 2024 and complete by April 2025.

Plans have been completed and funding secure to decarbonise Greyfriars, Cornhill Market, the Barbican Creative Hub. A range of energy efficiency measures have been completed at the Drill to reduce electricity consumption.

- **Setting the Lincoln Standard for Zero Carbon Homes.**

A working group has been set up to identify and agree the standard for all new council home sites. In 2022 the 42 new homes in Ward Paddock, Moorland,

have an energy performance (EPC) rating of B, each home will emit an estimated 1.3 tonnes of CO2 compared to 6 tonnes for an average property.

In November 2023, the council approved the Housing Revenue Account 30 year business plan, which set the target for all new council homes to achieve an 'A' EPC rating. A housing task and finish group have completed a review of council housing stock to establish properties and suitable measures to improve the energy efficiency of all council homes.

A programme to decarbonise social housing has been included in the Council's HRA 30 year business plan with the target for all council homes to be EPC 'C' rated by 2030. Works to improve the cavity wall insulation and thermal comfort at Tangshan Court and Mary Sookias flats in Castle Ward were completed in 2023. As of 2024 84% of council homes are 'C' rated or above.

The Housing Investment team are in the process of reviewing the housing stock in preparation for the launch of the next round of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 3, due to be launched in Summer 2024.

- **Air Quality Management Plan.**

The Council submitted an Air Quality Annual Status Report in 2023 to DEFRA presenting air quality data provided by monitoring equipment located throughout the city. For the fourth year running all monitoring locations within Lincoln City reported NO2 annual mean concentrations below the Air Quality Strategy (AQS) objective of 40µg/m3. The maximum annual mean NO2 concentration being 24.2µg/m3 at site 3 (The Drill, Broadgate).

The reduction of NO2 emissions is due to an upgrade of signals at Canwick Road/South Park Junction resulting in improved traffic flow, ongoing efficiencies to fuel and newer vehicles and most significantly the opening of the Lincoln Eastern Bypass in early 2020. The bypass diverts large heavy goods vehicles, the main contributor to NO2 out of the centre of Lincoln, reducing traffic congestion and idling at major junctions.

Executive approval will be sought to consult with key stakeholders over revoking the AQMA during 2024, with the aim of formally revoking the AQMA by the end of 2024. Subject to the AQMA being revoked, the Air Quality Action Plan will be replaced by an Air Quality Strategy, a requirement for all Local Authorities without an AQMP.

## **Vision 2030**

Looking towards Lincoln 2030 the following new projects are either in the pipeline or are currently being set up:-

- Home Energy Advice Service – Funding secured by Central and South Lincolnshire councils to deliver a demonstrator energy advice and support service until 2025 and look to secure funding to extend the service if successful.

- Lincoln District Heat Networks - Working with key partners and private investors to undertake a feasibility study to establish a low carbon district heat network for new and existing homes, businesses, leisure and retail outlets. Funding has been secured from the Green Heat Network Fund, commercialisation due to commence Sept/Oct 2024 and construction is due to commence in August/Sept 2025 and complete by Q2 2027.
- To work with the Sincil Community Land Trust and Long Leys Residents Association to undertake a feasibility study to set up a community energy scheme. Funding has been secured from the Community Energy Fund, a consultant has been appointed from Savi Energy and the project will commence in August 2024.
- To co design and deliver a community engagement campaign #Climate Hope Lincoln with our partners.
- Secure funding to deliver a citywide Public Sector Decarbonisation programme with our public sector partners.
- Complete the actions in the Food for the Planet 'Every Mouthful Counts' Local Authority Toolkit.
- Support the Greater Lincolnshire Circular Economy objectives.
- Work with the Central Lincs Local Plan Team to set up a carbon offset fund.
- Subject to funding continue to deliver a social housing decarbonisation programme, commencing in April 2025 and running for 3 years.

**For projects where funding has yet to be secured, we await further guidance on forthcoming funding schemes under the new government.**