Leicester's Climate Assembly Saturday 18th January 2020: Results Report

Contents

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Headline Findings

- Using a 'Climate Assembly' approach allowed the council to engage in detail with a diverse group of local people who, in many respects, reflected the wider city.

- Across the council's proposals attendees were keen that many actions we were suggesting should be made stronger and more urgent.

- Attendees identified that many of the proposed actions offered potential benefits for health, wellbeing, community engagement and financial savings. They thought these should be promoted.

- In some cases, there were concerns about unintended negative impacts that will need to be tackled in order to take actions forward fairly and effectively.

- The impacts of the costs of actions and the lack of funding locally were among the most significant concerns with the proposals.

- There were also concerns about the difficulty and complexity of some actions and a lack of council influence over some areas.

- There was generally a good level of support for most actions, taking into account the concerns and barriers raised.

- Some of the highest priorities were; investment in sustainable travel, changes to the Local Plan, a national Government plan for insulation and low carbon heating and low carbon public transport.

- There were many ideas for ways that the council, businesses, communities and Government could communicate with everyone in Leicester on both why action is needed and what must be done.

- There were also lots of ideas on incentives and funding, legislation, penalties and projects that could be set up to encourage changes.

- Overall there was a very high level of support among attendees for Leicester to take urgent action on the climate emergency.

- Attendees were also very strongly supportive of using a similar 'People's Assembly' approach to look at other important issues in Leicester in the future.

Assembly Results

The main questions the Assembly sought to answer about the overall vision and the actions were:

- Which aspects of the vision, and which of the suggested actions did the attendees agree with or think would have further benefits for the city?

- Was there anything attendees disagreed with?

- Were there any concerns about the impact the visions and actions would have on people's lives, and ideas on how these concerns should be addressed?

- What barriers might there be to implementing the vision and actions, and ideas on how these could be overcome?

- What was the level of support for the actions?

- Was the anything missing from the vision and actions that should be added?

Through the event, we were particularly keen to identify barriers and potential negative impacts of the proposals, to prevent any actions we take from unfairly impacting on any people, groups and organisations.

To make this report readable we have had to summarise the findings from the day. However, a full transcription of the flipcharts has been made and is available on request from the council's Sustainability Team. See the contact details at the start of this report.

All of the comments and ideas we received from the Assembly are being used to help us develop our new strategy for responding to the Climate Emergency, along with our action plans for 2020-21 and beyond.

Our action plan will be launched in June 2020, and will be available on our webpages at: https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/policies-plans-and-strategies/environment-and-sustainability/climate-emergency/

The following sections present the results for each theme discussed.

At Home

Vision
More highly insulated homes
Heat pumps and no gas heating or hot water
Renewable energy sources like solar panels
Kept cool without air conditioning
Heat networks for neighbourhoods
Less water use and water butts

Possible Actions
The Council could improve insulation in its council housing stock, and housing associations could do the same in theirs.
The council could fit heat pumps and solar PV panels to its council housing stock, and housing associations could do the same.
Homeowners and private landlords could install more insulation in the houses they own to reduce heating demand.
Homeowners and private landlords could install solar PV panels on houses they own to generate green electricity.
Homeowners and private landlords could install heat pumps to replace gas powered heating.
Homeowners could choose water-saving fittings and appliances when replacing these items and install water butts.
Heating installers could prepare for the phase-out of gas by moving into low carbon systems (including heat pumps and renewables).
The government could make a national plan for insulation and low carbon heating in homes including helping house-owners and occupiers.

Was there anything attendees particularly agreed with or thought would have further benefits?

Participants thought that to achieve the largest possible impact, all the measures need to be pursued. Alongside reducing emissions, they would also save occupants money, make homes more comfortable, give people more control over their heat and power and, in the case of solar PV, could earn them money.

Was there anything attendees disagreed with?

Heating upgrades might not be worthwhile if they are not done alongside insulation, to avoid the heat being lost. There was also concern about the environmental impact of manufacturing new items like heat pumps and solar panels and replacing items like boilers that already work. It was also mentioned that the council should be careful about being seen to tell people how to live their lives.

Were there any concerns about the impact the vision and actions would have on people's lives, and ideas on how these should be overcome?

The largest concern was the high cost of measures, and the impact on less well-off occupants and private tenants, as well as landlords. There was concern that rents would be increased to pay for the measures. Grants and incentives could be provided to mitigate this impact.

There were also concerns about disruption from installing measures, especially for the elderly. There were concerns about untrustworthy installers, and scams, and suggestions the council could provide a list of approved and certified suppliers. Concerns were also raised about the failure of new technologies, which could also hurt installers, for example heat networks for whole areas. To avoid this, it was stated that systems need to be tried and tested before they are widely installed.

What barriers might there be to implementing the vision and actions?

One of the main barriers identified was a lack of regulations, penalties and government support to ensure the actions are carried out, with better enforcement and monitoring required. Another barrier is the cost of measures and the lack of funding and incentives available to homeowners and landlords, the council and housing associations to implement the actions.

The different needs of homes could also be a major barrier, such as those not suitable for solar PV, and the need for a different approach in flats. Older homes especially in conservation areas, which are most likely to need improvements, could be difficult to tackle. There were also concerns that heat pumps would cost more to run than gas boilers and that control systems may be hard to use.

Other barriers identified included:

- A lack of trained installers for the necessary measures.
- A lack of tenant influence over landlords.
- The need to take account of people's differing needs and backgrounds.
- Large landlords and businesses lacking a local connection.
- An increase in temperatures potentially raising the need for air-conditioning.

What was the level of support for the actions?

The action selected as a priority by most assembly members was for the Government to make a national plan for changes and help owners and occupiers to carry it out (18 votes). The next priorities were; a new action to bring more empty homes back into use (8), for the council to insulate its own stock (7) and for homeowners and landlords to insulate their houses (6).

Was the anything missing from the vision and actions that should be added?

One area suggested was for the council to lead by example and provide more information and guidance on the actions that can be taken, including those that are simple and low cost. Encouraging behaviour change was identified as a key area. LED lighting, more efficient appliances, double glazing and smart meters for all utilities should also be installed and promoted. The need to prevent gardens being paved over, and to use them for trees and planting was also identified.

It was suggested that installation schemes involve all homes in an area or a community. This would be more efficient, reduce costs and could improve community relations. Opportunities to provide training for local people to install and maintain measures could also provide further benefits.

Other ideas suggested included:

- Bringing more empty buildings back in to use as homes.
- Encouraging a reduction in water use from washing and sprinklers.
- Encouraging home composting and food growing.
- Using local companies to install measures to benefit the local economy.
- Relaxing planning regulations to make it easier to install new technologies.

Travel & Transport

Vision
More walking, cycling and public transport
Walking, cycling and public transport Infrastructure
Electric charging from renewables
Facilities and services accessible without cars
Car-sharing, car clubs and e-bike rental
Ultra-low emission vehicles (where needed)
Possible Actions
The council could continue to invest in infrastructure for walking, cycling and public transport and encouraging walking & cycling.
The council could consider an increase in the number of Park and Ride sites and convert more of the existing ones to use electric buses.
The council could look at further ways to reduce demand for private vehicle journeys (vehicle access to areas, and shared transport services).
More could be invested in replacing the council's vehicles with ultra-low emission ones.
Public transport providers could invest in ultra-low emission vehicles and improved services with smart ticketing and real-time information.
Instead of a petrol or diesel vehicle, individuals could buy an ultra-low emission vehicle. The council could install more public charging points.
Employers could replace their existing vehicles with ultra-low emission vehicles and install charging points for fleet & staff electric vehicles.
Employers could reduce carbon emissions from business travel and deliveries, and encourage commuting on foot, by bike or public transport
Individuals could walk, cycle or use public transport instead of using a car when possible
The government could increase the funding for walking, cycling, public transport and electric charging infrastructure

Was there anything attendees particularly agreed with or thought would have further benefits?

The positive impacts on health of increasing levels of walking and cycling were highlighted. Many of the actions would also improve air quality, further improving health in Leicester. In was also stated that using more active travel could make the city more pleasant and liveable, and if done fairly could reduce travel costs.

Was there anything attendees disagreed with?

There were a number of comments opposing electric vehicles, in part because they are too expensive for less well-off residents. There was also concern about other

negative impacts, including that they will still create congestion, that electricity may not be zero carbon and that their manufacture has a high environmental impact. It was also stated that Park & Ride sites encourage personal vehicle ownership and would also be a negative if built on existing green spaces.

Were there any concerns about the impact the vision and actions would have on people's lives, and ideas on how these should be overcome?

One of the main concerns was around the impact of the cost of the changes on the less well-off. There was also concern that public transport routes are not suitable for many people, who would not be able to get to work, school or other destinations.

Attendees were also worried that walking and cycling may be unsafe on roads and paths, especially for children, in more isolated places and during the night, especially for women. Some measures could also have negative impacts on those not able to walk, cycle or use public transport, in particular those with disabilities will who need support to ensure they are not prevented from traveling.

What barriers might there be to implementing the vision and actions?

One of the main barriers identified was the cost to the council and others of implementing the proposals, and the need for Government support and funding. The cost to individuals such as bus prices and buying electric vehicles will also be an issue. The limitations of public transport, including unreliability and a lack of evening and night services were also highlighted. Perceptions of public transport could also limit use, as people see other options as better and more pleasant.

Another barrier is likely to be the difficulty of persuading people to change, as people may not believe their action is important, and that their voices may not be heard. A campaign of education and engagement would be needed to tackle these issues. A number of issues with electric vehicles were also pointed out, including a lack of existing charging points, and the cost and difficulty of installing more.

Other barriers identified include:

- Some roads and walking and cycling routes are in poor condition.
- A lack of penalties and enforcement for parking and driving on cycle lanes.
- The perception that walking and cycling are too unsafe.
- Employers may not engage with the need to reduce employee car travel.

What was the level of support for the actions?

There were few objections to the actions, although there were two votes against individuals buying EVs and two votes against increased government funding for sustainable travel. The areas receiving the fewest votes within proposed transport actions were for the council and employers to invest in switching their fleets to EVs and for individuals switching away from cars.

The action most selected as a transport and travel priority, and in the assembly overall was for the council to invest in walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure and education (26), followed by public transport providers investing in

EVs and smart ticketing (13) and the council to look for ways to reduce demand for private vehicle journeys (10).

Was the anything missing from the vision and actions that should be added?

One of the main areas discussed was the need to change people's behaviours and attitudes. Doing this will require a stronger programme of communications, through channels like schools, businesses and libraries. This would need to cover both why people need to make changes, and advice and support on how to do so.

Ideas to reduce car use were also suggested, such as a congestion charge, increased parking fees and reducing the amount of parking. Other ideas included lowering speed limits in the city and enforcing them more strictly. Ways to increase train use and reduce emissions were also suggested, including re-opening the Ivanhoe Line, providing better buses to the station and switching to electric trains.

A number of suggestions were made around buses, especially reducing prices and having a single ticketing system or card for all buses. The possibility of having a Bus Alliance between the council and bus operators was also raised, to allow more integrated planning. Buses that run around and across the city and run later into the evenings were also highlighted as important.

Other suggestions included:

- The council to lead by example and collaborate with other local organisations.
- Providing more secure bike parking in the city and legalising electric scooters.
- Implementing the proposed Workplace Parking Levy.
- The Park & Ride service running later and more frequently.
- Limiting HGV access and encouraging sustainable last-mile deliveries.
- Employers providing travel discounts and allowing home working.

Waste & Consumption

Vision
Less air travel by people and businesses
More demand for low carbon products
Less meat and dairy, lower food miles
Business produce less waste, reduce packaging, recycle more
Council reduce, re-use, recycle more and promote waste services
Homes produce less waste, repair, reuse and recycle more
Informed about carbon impacts of consumption
Possible Actions
Schools could teach pupils about climate change and how this is affected by buying.
The council could ask its school meals service to offer more meat and dairy-free options, and to reduce the food miles of what it provides.
The council could lead by example with what it buys and see if its 'sustainable procurement guidance' needs updating.
Individuals could reduce their dietary impact by eating less meat, eggs and/or dairy produce, and food businesses could make this easier.

The council will need to produce a new Waste Strategy, following the UK Government's Waste and Resources Strategy. The government will need to support and fund this.
Individuals could find out more about the climate impacts of goods and services. The government could introduce a labelling system to show this.
Individuals could choose to fly less. They could buy less food that is transported here by plane.
Businesses and organisations could reduce the waste they generate. Waste that is produced could be sent to those able to use it.
Businesses and organisations could check their waste services provider correctly processes waste and recycles as much as possible.
People could recycle as much of their household waste as possible. The council could promote their household waste services more.
People could change buying habits to produce less waste by buying items that will last longer, have less packaging and can be easily re-used or recycled.
Things that people no longer want could be sold or donated and appliances, clothes and other things could be repaired instead of replaced.

Was there anything attendees particularly agreed with or thought would have further benefits?

Reducing meat and dairy consumption was seen as benefiting health and reducing costs. It was also stated that Leicester's vegetarian culture could be a local strength. Making sustainable choices easier and cheaper and providing more information could also benefit consumers. Educating school pupils would also have further benefits if they feed information back to their parents. Attendees were also keen for the council to lead by example and focus on where it can make the most impact.

Was there anything attendees disagreed with?

There was some disagreement over reducing meat and dairy consumption, with concern that alternatives may not be sustainable or affordable. It was also stated that moral choices should not be forced on people, but options given instead. There were requests to not focus too much on plastic use at the expense of other areas, and an objection to the use of 'energy from waste' plants.

There was also concern that the actions were not relevant for the less well-off. Similarly, using taxes to encourage behaviours was also questioned, as it could allow those with more money to continue living unsustainably.

Were there any concerns about the impact the vision and actions would have on people's lives, and ideas on how these should be overcome?

One of the main concerns was potential costs to consumers, and lack of availability of sustainable products. There was also concern that some of the proposals could be expensive for small businesses, at a time when many local shops have already closed. The solution to these issues could include government support and funding.

Other concerns included that flying is the only option for those with families in other countries. Providing information on offsetting for flights was suggested as a solution, although there was concern that offsetting might not have the intended impacts. There was also concern that processed vegetarian food could still be unhealthy, and that people should be supported to access healthy options.

What barriers might there be to implementing the vision and actions?

The reluctance of some people to change, and their perception that the proposals are too extreme was viewed as a significant barrier. The council's lack of influence over both people and businesses was also seen as a potential issue. There was also a worry actions may become fashionable, and then stop being so in the future.

As stated elsewhere, the cost of many actions was viewed as an issue by many, for example of train travel compared to flights. Charges for waste services, both for green bins and commercial waste and complexity of the waste system were also seen as existing issues. A lack of council control over school curriculums and language barriers in some schools and communities could also cause difficulties.

Other barriers identified included:

- Peoples attitude towards second-hand goods and charity shops.
- Safety and legal issues with item sharing and repair services.
- Lack of national Government action and lack of time to wait for changes.
- Lack of public influence over national policies on waste and consumption.

What was the level of support for the actions?

The only actions that a number of people objected to were for the council to provide more vegetarian options in schools, for individuals to fly less and eat less air-freighted food and for businesses to ensure their waste is properly processed.

The action chosen as a priority by most attendees was for schools to do more to educate pupils on climate change and the impacts of their consumption (15). The next most popular were for individuals to reduce meat and dairy consumption (9), and for households to recycle more of their waste, supported by the council (7).

Was the anything missing from the vision and actions that should be added?

The main area identified was educating the public on the need to make changes, the impacts of their purchases and on how to take action. This includes through events and festivals, religious groups and communities. Ideas for communicating included more use of social media, improving the information on the council website and using volunteers and community champions. It was also suggested that tours could be given of waste and recycling sites and an information pack provided to households.

More work with businesses was also requested, both to support them to change, and to hold those not taking action to account. One suggestion to do this was to use business rates to encourage sustainable practices. Attendees were also keen for more help on food growing and composting, and the need for more allotments.

Ideas for reducing waste and increasing recycling rates included more communication and incentives for recycling, providing recycling bins and introducing food waste collections. Waste sites could also accept more items and reduce wait times. There were also requests for the council to support sharing apps and websites, set up repair cafes, shops and item libraries and support existing repair and re-use groups.

Other ideas suggested included:

- A deposit return scheme for bottles and cans.
- A local carbon offsetting programme.
- Working on water consumption with the local water company.
- Working to promote domestic holidays and 'staycations'.
- Ensuring the NHS is involved with changes.

At Work

Vision
No gas heating or hot water
Solar PV panels and battery storage
Equipment and processes energy and resource efficient
Produce low carbon goods and services
Items / materials from sustainable sources
Highly insulated buildings

Possible Actions
The council could improve the energy efficiency of the business premises they own and rent out.
More could be invested in energy efficiency in the council and other public sector organisations buildings, including renewable energy systems.
The council could apply for more funding to support local businesses and organisations to help them increase their energy efficiency.
Employers could replace gas heating with low carbon heating, connect to district heating, improve insulation and install solar PV panels.
Organisations could design, manufacture and sell products that use sustainable materials, and are designed to be re-used and repaired.
The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership could integrate the climate emergency into strategies, direct national funding and lobby government for more support.
Individual staff could encourage their employers to take action on the climate emergency, e.g. through incentives and behaviour change.
Support and funding could be provided by the government for low carbon heating and other measures in businesses and organisations.

Was there anything attendees particularly agreed with or thought would have further benefits?

It was suggested that many of the proposals could help the local economy, for example supporting local shops and suppliers. A number of the measures also offer the opportunity to train people in new skills, decrease business bills, increase employment and improve working conditions. There was also support for the council taking a lead and demonstrating the savings and benefits to local organisations.

Was there anything attendees disagreed with?

One of the main concerns was around the need for a more overarching strategy for the proposals. There were comments that a more integrated approach would be needed to tackle areas like transport, land use and the wider economy to make actions practical. It was suggested this could be a full economic business case.

Another area where there were concerns was in asking employees to suggest change that their employers could make, as they could be made vulnerable or be

labelled as troublemakers. It was suggested that responsibility needs to lie primarily with businesses, and also that employees could work together through unions.

Were there any concerns about the impact the vision and actions would have on people's lives, and ideas on how these should be overcome?

The greatest area of concern was about the cost of investment to local businesses, for example of electric vehicles and replacements of whole heating systems. It was also commented that many businesses, especially shops, are already struggling, with people shopping out of town. The solutions could include financial help, but also demonstrating long-term cost and environmental benefits of many of the measures.

Other concerns included that some people would not be able to walk or cycle to work due to age or other factors and could be negatively impacted. There was also worry about charities in particular, which could end up in debt if they needed to install expensive measures without receiving grants or support.

What barriers might there be to implementing the vision and actions?

As in other areas, cost and a lack of funding and Government support were identified as some of the main barriers to the proposals, especially for small businesses. Whilst savings could be shown and achieved over the longer term there was concern that the payback times would be too long without financial assistance. There was also concern that producing sustainable products could increase business costs.

It was also suggested that people and organisations may resist change and being told what to do. This could potentially be as they are not aware of new technologies or support available or lack the time to research them. This connects to a wider issue identified as a lack of information on the need to act and what must be done.

Other barriers identified included:

- Changes to planning policy could be overruled by national government.
- District Heating only covering a small area of the city.
- Accurate measurement of carbon emissions especially from consumption.
- Conflict with the perceived need for local economic growth.
- Emissions from national and international businesses, and other countries.

What was the level of support for the actions?

None of the actions were opposed by many participants, although there was concern about employees encouraging their employers to take action, as detailed above.

The action selected as a priority by the most attendees was for the LLEP to integrate the climate emergency into their strategy, direct funding and lobby the government (10). The next most popular action was for the council and other public sector organisations to invest in making their own buildings more energy efficient.

Was the anything missing from the vision and actions that should be added?

There were many suggestions on how businesses could enable their employees to be more sustainable, included setting up travel sharing schemes, providing walking

and cycling incentives and allowing more flexible working. It was also suggested the council could lead by example on such schemes with its own workforce.

The importance of the council providing information and support to employers was also highlighted. This could include using positive case studies, providing incentives for sustainable businesses and investing in renewables with local businesses. The LLEP was also seen as a vital partner, and could consider alternatives to economic growth, and communicate the benefits of sustainable development to businesses.

There was also support for more collaborative working between the council and other local authorities to push for actions. It was also suggested the council create a climate task force, allow sustainable businesses to be set up in local shops, and provide an 'eco-rating' for businesses. A number of alternative energy sources were suggested for Leicester, including biogas and anaerobic digestors, small scale nuclear reactors, deep geothermal energy and hydrogen production and storage.

Other ideas included:

- Focussing more on water, particularly its use in manufacturing.
- Providing food waste and composting services for employers.
- Promoting sustainable procurement policies.
- Making manufactures provide repair and recycling schemes for their products.
- Challenging the assumption that environmentally friendly means expensive.
- Providing long-term low interest loans for measures.

Land Use, Green Space & Development

Vision
New buildings carbon neutral, with solar PV panels
No air conditioning in new buildings
Low carbon, sustainable and recycled building materials
Maintain and increase tree cover
Development accessible by low carbon transport
New buildings use less water and prevent flooding
Possible Actions
The council and other public sector organisations could lead by example, making their own building projects as close as possible to being carbon neutral.
When selling land for development, the council could seek an agreement with developers for new buildings to be as low-carbon as possible.
The council and other owners of green spaces could plant more trees to help keep the city cooler during heatwaves, reduce flooding and absorb carbon emissions.
Businesses commissioning premises could specify high standards of energy efficiency, low carbon emissions, renewable energy and facilities for cycles and electric vehicles.
The council could make sure that the new Local Plan addresses the climate emergency.
The government needs to make sure that its proposed Future Homes Standard and changes to the Building Regulations will raise carbon-saving standards quickly enough.

Was there anything attendees particularly agreed with or thought would have further benefits?

There was strong support throughout for embedding low carbon development into legislation, regulations and local and national plans. This would ensure actions were carried out and the climate emergency was considered at all points of development. More community involvement in decision making could also further benefit the city.

Other positives identified included the benefits of more trees and green space in Leicester. This could provide space for food growing, leisure and wildlife and benefit health and mental wellbeing. It was also suggested that sustainable businesses could be attracted to the city by the proposals, benefitting the local economy.

Was there anything attendees disagreed with?

There was concern that the proposals focussed too much on new development in the city. It was stated that this could have a negative effect, especially if it was leads to more loss of green spaces. There were also objections to the council allowing developers to build on its own land, and a suggestion that the council should lead on these projects itself. There was concern that more focus was needed on the large number of existing properties, although this is covered in the 'At Work' section.

Were there any concerns about the impact the vision and actions would have on people's lives, and ideas on how these should be overcome?

As in other areas one of the main concerns was costs, with some organisations unable to afford measures without support. This could have a negative impact on the economy, prevent development and result in costs, such as for new homes, being passed on to the public. It was suggested that funding might be needed, for example using business rates to encourage sustainable businesses, and ensuring good practise is publicised and shared.

There were also concerns about negative impacts of moving away from air-conditioning, including in NHS buildings, which could be made worse by increasing heatwaves. As discussed above there were also worries that, unless new development was limited, more green space and its many benefits could be lost.

What barriers might there be to implementing the vision and actions?

Many of the most significant barriers identified were around a lack of council control over changes. This included limits on changes to building regulations, lack of control over employers and other public sector organisations and the need for stronger enforcement powers. It was stated that a lack of consistent standards and an over-arching strategy might be confusing and increase costs.

As in other sections a lack of funding, and the long payback times of some measures were also seen as a potential barrier. In particular requirements on construction methods and sustainable materials might raise costs. There was also concern over the lack of builders and installers with the necessary skills and experience.

Other barriers identified included:

- The danger of new trees planted being felled in the future.
- The cost and resources needed to maintain new green space.

- Lack of power from solar PV panels in winter.
- That alternative sustainable buildings materials may have shorter lifespans.
- The difficulty of making developments truly zero carbon.

What was the level of support for the actions?

The most prioritised action, and the second most selected in the whole assembly, was for the council to make sure the new Local Plan addresses the climate emergency (25). Also popular were the new suggestions of scrapping and rewriting the Strategic Growth Plan (8) and for the council to seek agreements with developers for low carbon buildings on its own land.

Was the anything missing from the vision and actions that should be added?

One of the main areas where suggestions were made was around significantly strengthening planning regulations to ensure new developments are low carbon or carbon neutral, have green space and enable low carbon travel. The need for the council to lobby national government for this was highlighted. There was also a request for stronger enforcement to ensure regulations are followed, with penalties where this doesn't happen. There were also calls to scrap the existing Strategic Growth Plan, and set new policy using more public engagement.

There were many suggestions around trees, including that they should be planted on existing open space and existing trees protected, ensuring that the right trees are planted in the right places. and reviewing the council's Tree Strategy to encourage a significant increase in tree cover. Other ideas around green space included using green space for food growing, considering other habitats and ecosystems and educating people more on their importance and benefits.

A number of ways to encourage developers and employers to make changes were also suggested, including developing partnerships to share knowledge, setting up a carbon audit scheme to certify businesses and celebrating those making changes.

Other ideas suggested included:

- More consideration of green walls and roofs in development.
- Developing a carbon credit scheme to encourage measures.
- Learning from good practice in other UK cities.
- Investigating ways to use soil protection to absorb carbon.
- Designing a new exemplar 'eco-house'.

Feedback Forms

Attendees were also asked to fill out a feedback form at the end of the Assembly, and the results are show below. There was a very high level of support (4.85 out of 5) for Leicester to take urgent action on the climate emergency, which was rated 'Extremely Important' by 87% of respondents. Attendees also felt that taking urgent action was more important following the Assembly than before (4.02 out of 5).

Attendees felt that the Assembly had increased their knowledge of the climate emergency somewhat. This scored lower (3,5 out of 5) likely because some attendees already had a high level of knowledge, and as the focus was more around discussion and debate than learning. There was very high support for the Assembly approach (3 out of 3), with all respondents supporting using it to address other important local issues in the future.

Overall and Cross-Cutting Comments

Was there anything attendees particularly agreed with or thought would have further benefits?

Alongside the results detailed above, the most frequent comment across all areas was that more urgency and stronger actions were needed. This is supported by the results of the feedback forms. Attendees also highlighted further benefits of many of the actions. Better homes, more active travel, more green space and healthier diets could all improve health and wellbeing and save people money. Other benefits included better air quality, more information for people on what they buy, new skills and jobs and increased community involvement in decisions.

Was there anything attendees disagreed with?

There were few objections to specific proposals and actions. There were some concerns though that actions might not have the intended impacts, for example manufacturing emissions and congestion from electric vehicles, waste due to replacing working equipment or losses of green space.

Other concerns included that tenants and employees asking landlords and employers to make change could make them vulnerable, that using electricity instead of other fuels would still cause carbon emissions and that the council should be careful in telling residents how to live their lives.

Were there any concerns about the impact the vision and actions would have on people's lives, and ideas on how these should be overcome?

Across all of the themes the greatest concerns were about the costs of the proposals, and the impacts they might have. This includes the cost of the actions for residents, especially the least well-off who are already vulnerable, as well as the costs to employers and to the council. The solutions suggested covered incentives and funding both locally and from national Government, as well as ideas like free or low-cost loans and better education on the actions and potential payback times.

Some other concerns raised included unintended impacts of actions such as safety issues, difficulties for people unable to make changes, loss of green space and untrustworthy or disruptive installers. The solutions for these issues included ensuring they are taken into account and developing ways to avoid or minimise them.

What barriers might there be to implementing the vision and actions?

The most common barrier identified was the high cost of some actions and a lack of funding for them. This includes the upfront costs of measures and ongoing costs of more sustainable options, both to individuals and employers. The complexity of some of the proposals, and a lack of time and knowledge on what needs to be done was also viewed as an issue. Another barrier was a lack of council control over planning regulations, curriculums and the behaviour of people and employers.

What was the level of support for the actions?

There were few outright objections to the actions, although there were a number of concerns about some of them as detailed above. The most prioritised actions across the whole assembly were:

- The council could continue to invest in infrastructure for walking, cycling and public transport. It could also expand existing programmes to encourage people to walk and cycle.
- The council could make sure that the new Local Plan addresses the climate emergency.
- The government could make a national plan for fitting insulation and low carbon heating in homes (including helping house-owners and occupiers during the changeover).
- Public transport providers could invest in ultra-low emission vehicles and new and improved services with smart ticketing and real-time information.
- Schools could teach pupils about climate change and how this is affected by what we buy.

Was the anything missing from the vision and actions that should be added?

The area where the most suggestions were made was around education and communication on both why and how action can be taken. This included action by national government, the council, employers and communities. Methods suggested included working through schools, employers, community groups and social media, and setting up groups and schemes to share knowledge and skills.

There was support for measures to ensure the actions are carried out, including legislation, fines and charges and better enforcement. Similarly, ways to reduce the cost and difficulty of many positive actions were also suggested. Other ideas that came up over a number of areas included using the proposals as an opportunity to offer local skills and training, more collaboration between the council and other local and national organisations and work to increase the amount of tree cover and green space in the city.

Background to Leicester's Climate Assembly

Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation

Leicester City Council declared a climate emergency in February 2019 and between November 2019 and February 2020, we ran Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation. It gave people and organisations in Leicester their chance to have a say on our ideas for the council and the wider city to tackle the climate emergency, and to suggest ideas of their own.

The Conversation involved:

- Leicester's Climate Assembly- a one day event held on Saturday 18th January 2020 to engage directly with a representative sample of local residents.
- Young People's Climate Assembly- a one day event held on Monday 27th January 2020 to engage with local secondary school students.
- Online consultation through a questionnaire on the CitizenSpace platform and a discussion forum on the Dialogue platform.
- A Conversation Pack for local groups to hold their own discussion events.
- A series of one-to-one meetings with mainly larger local businesses and organisations.

The findings from these activities are being used to help us develop Leicester's Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Planning Leicester's Climate Assembly

Leicester is well known for its diversity, however some groups and communities in the city have historically been harder to engage on climate change issues. This issue is found in other places too.

To engage with a group of residents that was representative of the city as a whole the council decided to develop a 'People's Assembly' format. This aimed to deliver many of the 'deliberative democracy' benefits of a 'Citizens' Assembly', in in-depth engagement with a cross section of the public, while keeping the costs affordable and reducing the long lead-in time needed to plan a full Citizens Assembly.

We worked with the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), a charitable organisation who are experts in similar 'deliberative democracy' approaches, and expert facilitators from TalkShop to assist with the design and delivery of the Climate Assembly.

The event was organised by the council's Sustainability Team, with support from other council departments who provided additional facilitators to complete the team of 20 people needed on the day.

The assembly was held on a Saturday at a time that would allow as many people as possible to attend. It was held in the Attenborough Hall in the council's main city centre office building, which is easily accessible by public transport.

Participants were offered a £25 voucher for attending, to thank them for giving up their day. Cover for childcare costs and a £5 travel allowance were also offered, to ensure that any barriers to participation were reduced as much as possible. A free buffet lunch was also provided on the day.

Inviting Applicants

To reach a cross section of residents, a range of channels were used to publicise the event and invite applications. These included the council's website and social media, ward meetings and community-based council and voluntary sector staff with direct contact with a range of local groups and communities. Applications could be submitted online or by post. The form asked for demographic information including Ethnicity, Age, Disability, Gender, Religion, Ward, Housing Tenure and Transport Mode.

Participant Selection

Applications were received from 131 city residents, and measures were put in place to protect personal data and ensure a fair system for selecting those to invite.

A 'sortition' process was used in which applications were anonymised and put into a random order. A sample of attendees were selected to invite which achieved the best possible match with the city's population. Invitations were initially sent to 80 applicants, with 12 more later invited to replace those who declined.

By the day before 63 invitees had confirmed their attendance, 8 had not responded, and 7 more had declined. There were there 71 potential attendees expected at most. Those not selected to invite were also informed.

Overall a good match was achieved with the city's population in most areas. Where this was not achieved, it was mostly due to lower numbers of applications from people in those groups and some cases where attendees declined a place and could not be replaced. The least well represented groups from the 71 potential attendees invited were; those with a gender other than male or female, Sikhs, Christians and those from six wards. More could therefore potentially be done to ensure people with these characteristics are invited and enabled to attend future events.

On the Day

Prior to the Assembly, participants were sent a briefing pack. The pack contained a full summary of our proposals and actions to be discussed on the day.

On arrival attendees were asked to choose a table covered a theme within the proposals; 'At Home', 'Travel & Transport', 'Waste & Consumption', 'At Work' and 'Land Use, Green Space & Development'. Each table was led by two facilitators, whose guided the discussion and recorded responses.

The Assembly began with a welcome from Councillor Adam Clarke, Deputy City Mayor for Environment and Transportation. An overview of the day and background information on the climate emergency and Conversation were also provided.

Following a recap of the overall vision, attendees were asked for their initial reactions. Attendees were then asked to discuss their thoughts on the vision for each theme. This included whether the proposals were good or bad for the city, and how they might affect people's daily lives.

The discussion then moved on to the individual actions for each theme. Attendees were asked to say whether they supported or opposed the actions, and to discuss any concerns they had. They were also asked about barriers to carrying them out and ways they could be overcome, and other actions that should be added. After lunch attendees moved tables and repeated the process for two more themes.

At the end of the day participants selected up to six actions, from any theme, as priorities. A summary of the day was also provided by a member of Leicester's Young People's Council, and information on the next steps following the Assembly.

<u>Event Agenda</u>

09.30	Arrival & Registration
10.00	Introduction
10.20	Initial Reactions
10.50	Theme Visions
11.35	Break
11.45	Actions – First Theme
12.30	Morning Feedback
13.00	Lunch
13.45	Actions – Second Theme
14.30	Actions – Third Theme
15.15	Priority Voting
15.35	Consolidation
16.00	Event Finish

Analysis of Attendees

Of the 71 potential attendees, 53 (75%) took part on the day. Although the attendees were much more representative than achieved for previous events, those who dropped out tended to be more from the harder to engage groups, which were also less well-represented among initial applicants. This included younger people

Overall the attempt to engage a representative group of local residents was largely successful. Some gaps did remain however, and more work could be done to identify ways to ensure people from these groups were enabled and encouraged to apply and attend future events.