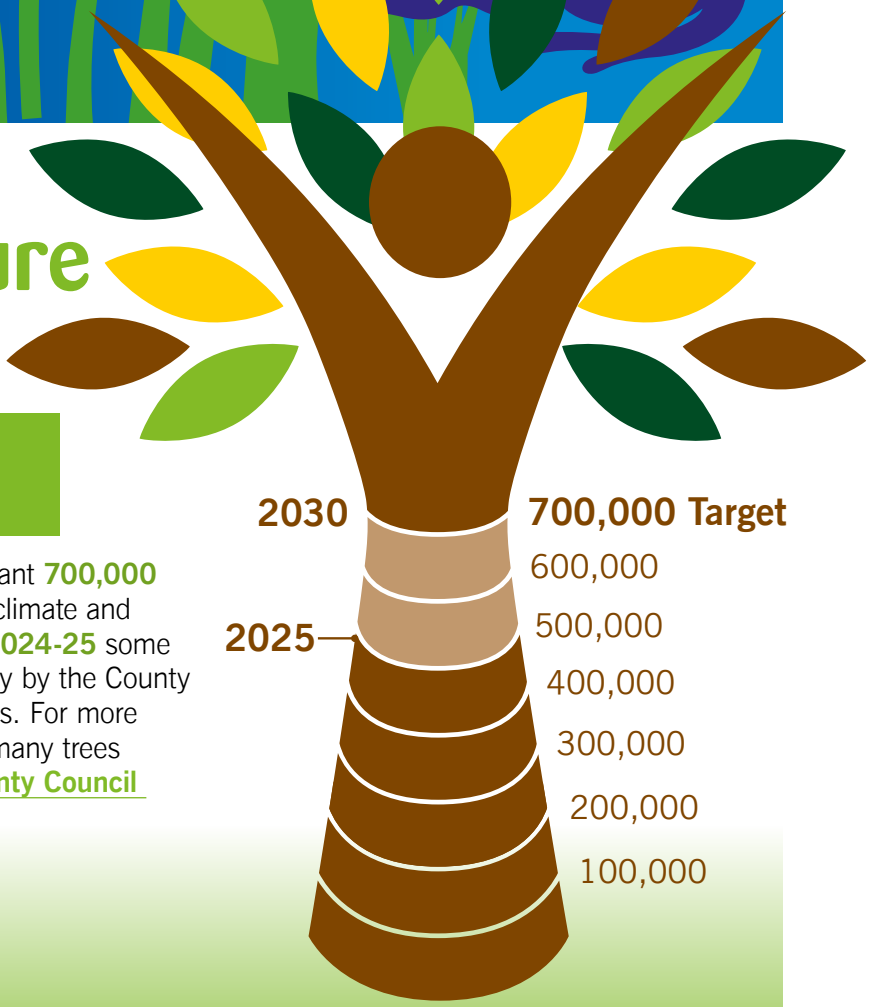
Leicestershire County Council

Environmental Performance 2024-25 - Summary

Action For Nature Performance

Number of Trees Planted in Leicestershire

The County Council has set a target to help plant **700,000 trees** in Leicestershire by **2030** as part of its climate and nature recovery commitments. At the end of **2024-25** some **494,240 trees** were planted across the county by the County Council and other organisations and individuals. For more information on this and to keep track of how many trees are being planted visit the **Leicestershire County Council website**.



ACTION FOR NATURE

Hectares of Council Land in Better Management for Nature

Total Land in Better Management for Nature 2024-25

3,729 hectares

County Farms **2,038** hectares

Highway Verges **1,071** hectares

Country Parks **585** hectares

Playing Fields **35** hectares

Wildlife Verges

2024 - 25

81 verges

54 parishes participating

These metrics are **under development** and are seeking to show how much of council land is in **better management for nature**, in area terms and as a percentage of the total council land that could be in better management for nature.

Only land where there is a **conscious decision made to manage the land in a way that protects or enhances nature** is included. The figures do not say anything about the quality of that land from a nature perspective. The figures presented are based on the **current available data** so are not definitive figures but are **indicative of the position**. Further refinement of the data will be carried out on an ongoing basis.

The available data shows that **3,729 hectares** of council land are in better management for nature and include county farms and highway verges. This is equivalent to **97%** of the land that could possibly be suitable.

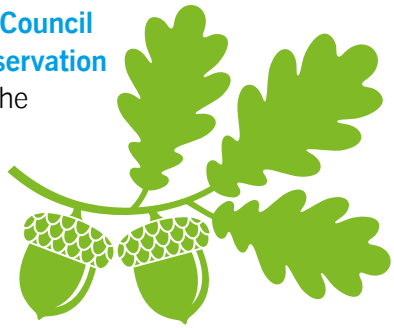
% of Suitable Council Land in Better Management for Nature

The County Council started the **Urban Wildlife Verge scheme** as a pilot in **2020**. At the end of **2024-25** there were **81 verges** in the scheme managed by **54 parishes**. These verges are managed by reducing grass cutting, which is also done at the best time of the year for wildlife. Since the scheme started in **2021-22, 4,258 volunteer hours** were spent undertaking baseline surveys and **3,966 wildlife record**s were generated.

For more information on the scheme go to the **Leicestershire County Council website**.

Projects on the Ground

Improving County Tree Preservation Order Records



Leicestershire County Council manage 264 Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) across the county that range from individual trees to woodlands. Most of the trees fall within private gardens or open spaces. TPOs are used to protect selected trees if their removal would have a significant impact on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public.

Some county TPOs were made as early as 1949 and due to their age no longer reflect the actual on-site situation. It is for this reason that the Council have recently started a complete review of their TPOs starting with the North West Leicestershire District. Of the 44 sites inspected 14 were found to be inaccurate and needing updating. This is just the start of a detailed and lengthy process to make sure the Council is fulfilling its duty to properly manage protected trees across the County.

A Swift Success!

A successful two-year project has seen the installation of **364 swift nest boxes** on buildings across Leicestershire to try and help boost the numbers of these threatened and declining birds by providing additional and alternate nesting opportunities. As part of the box installations over **150 specialist bird callers** were also erected, which help to attract swifts by emitting swift calls.

Whilst it can take several years for mature birds to return, and for boxes to be potentially utilised, one nest box has already been occupied by a breeding pair this year, thanks to the efforts of a local resident who was extremely enthusiastic about the project and attended several of the talks delivered by our partner, the Leicestershire & Rutland Ornithological Society (LROS).

Additionally, we had a good number of sites in July/ August where several birds were seen prospecting nest boxes with a view to returning to breed at a future date. This can take up to 3-4 years for mature birds, so whilst we are unsure on the longer-term occupation at this stage, the prospects look good. **Two thermal imaging cameras** also purchased as part of the project will help with longer term nest box monitoring and vital research into swift conservation.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy - Driving Nature Forward

The **Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Local Nature Recovery Strategy** (LNRS), was published in August 2025 after 18 months of hard work by partners, stakeholders and residents. The strategy is now live on the **Leicestershire County Council website**. Alongside the strategy, you'll find an **interactive Local Habitat Map** - a powerful tool to guide nature recovery across our region.

Whether you're a farmer, land manager, developer, local authority, business, or community group, the LNRS provides clear, practical guidance to help you integrate nature into everyday decisions.

What's happening now?

- Building a pipeline of **deliverable projects**
- Enhancing the **online habitat map**
- Developing **toolkits** for planners, developers, farmers, and residents
- Establishing **specialist working groups** focused on data, monitoring, farming, funding, and priority species recovery

Coming soon:

- An **online project submission form**
- **Quick-win projects** with local communities
- Advanced **mapping tools** to support decision-making

Together, we're turning plans into action and making nature recovery a reality.

Explore the strategy and interactive map here:

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Leicestershire County Council's Performance

Main Sources of County Council Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Since **2008-09** the County Council has reduced its operational greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)[1] by **76.5%**. In **2024-25** the Council reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by **9.5%** compared to **2023-24**.

76.5% REDUCTION GHG EMISSIONS FROM COUNCIL OPERATIONS

08-09	35,778t
23-24	9,282t
24-25	8,404t

TOTAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS 2024 - 25 FROM COUNCIL OPERATIONS

BUILDINGS 34%

STREET LIGHTING & TRAFFIC SIGNALS 23%

WATER & WASTE <1%

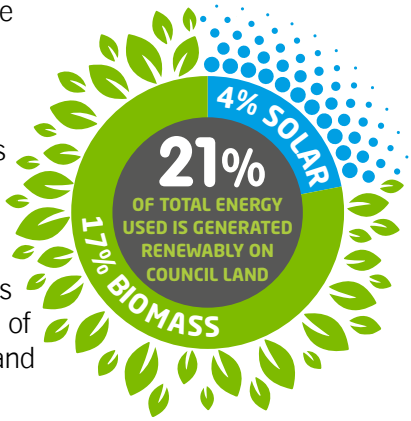
BUSINESS TRAVEL 15%

FLEET VEHICLES 27%

The main sources of greenhouse gas emissions for the County Council in **2024-25** were buildings, fleet, streetlighting & traffic signals and staff business travel. All the main sources saw a reduction compared to **2023-24**. Overall, emissions from street lighting and business travel increased as a proportion of total emissions, while building and fleet emissions reduced.

Renewable Energy

The amount of renewable energy generated on council land, as a percentage of total energy consumed, rose significantly to almost **21%** in **2024-25**. Of that, **4%** was generated from solar power and **17%** from a biomass (woodchip) boiler. The generation of on-site renewable energy avoided **595 tCO_2e** of emissions - equivalent to **6.6%** of the council's emissions. Steps taken to address technical problems and improve the operating arrangements of the biomass boiler much improved the boilers operation and availability. The biomass boiler generated **2,922 MWh** of energy in **2024-2025**, this represents a **81%** increase from 2023-2024.



Business Mileage

REDUCED BUSINESS MILES BY 2.9m

7.6m 2013 - 14

4.7m 2024 - 25

The Council has reduced its business miles by **2.9 million miles** since **2013-14** saving over **600 tonnes** of greenhouse gas emissions. Business mileage fell for the first time since the Covid pandemic, falling by **122,812 miles (2.5%)**.

Office Recycling

The County Council recycled almost **59%** of its total office waste[2] in **2024-25**. The total amount of waste generated in 2024-25 increased by **35%** to **372 tonnes**. The rise in total waste was due to a **47%** increase in residual waste to **154 tonnes**, and a **28%** increase in recyclable materials to **218 tonnes**.

Footnotes:

[1] The GHG emissions consist of a mix of gases in addition to carbon dioxide, including methane, nitrous oxide, and hydrofluorocarbons. These make up the Council's overall greenhouse gas figure, which is expressed as carbon dioxide equivalent or CO2e. GHG reporting follows HM Government's Environmental Reporting Guidelines.

[2] Excludes waste from operational activities e.g. highways maintenance and forestry waste.

Leicestershire's Environmental Performance

Leicestershire's Carbon Emissions

20%
0.8m tonnes
DOMESTIC

39%
INDUSTRY, COMMERCIAL, PUBLIC & AGRICULTURE
1.7m tonnes

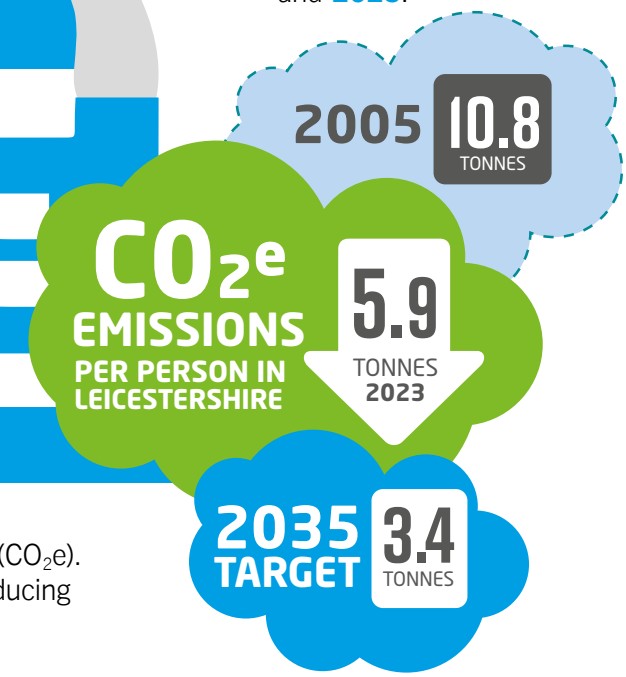
TOTAL CO_2e EMISSIONS 4.33m
FOR LEICESTERSHIRE

TRANSPORT
42% 1.8m tonnes

Based on figures provided by the Government[3], the carbon emissions for Leicestershire were **4.33 million tonnes** in **2023**. Emissions are split between industrial, commercial, public sector & agriculture, transport, and domestic sources. Emissions have reduced by **35%** between **2005** and **2023**.

Carbon Emissions Per Person

The Government figures show that in **2005** each person in Leicestershire emitted the equivalent of **10.8 tonnes** of carbon (CO_2e). This reduced to **5.9 tonnes** in **2023** with a current target of reducing this to **3.4 tonnes** by **2035**.



Household Waste & Recycling

During **2024-25** the amount of household waste generated per household fell by **0.8% to 952kg**.

The amount of household waste recycled in Leicestershire in **2024-25** was **44.7%, a 1.1% increase from 2023-24**.

Footnote:

[3] Data is provided by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero for all UK regions and is two years in arrears. This includes emissions from industrial, commercial, public sector, agriculture, transport and from domestic sources (i.e. homes). More information on the figures can be found here www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics

Projects on the Ground

Championing Community Energy

Leicestershire County Council was named **Supportive Local Authority of the Year** at the 2025 Community Energy England Awards for championing community energy initiatives. This was recognition for championing community energy initiatives as part of the GreenerFuture Leicestershire Project.
This coincided with the launch of the **Local Area Energy Plan** (LAEP) and LAEP Lens, an innovative, free interactive tool that helps residents and organisations across Leicestershire identify local energy solutions. These include home retrofits, insulation upgrades, electric vehicle charging, and solar panel potential. The plan aims to make our energy systems more secure and resilient, help to make homes warmer, healthier, and more affordable to run and attract funding and investment into Leicestershire.
The LAEP and LAEP Lens were **funded by Innovate UK** and developed in partnership with key stakeholders including National Grid, local authorities, community energy groups, and industry partners.
Access both the LAEP and the LAEP Lens Tool on the **GreenerFuture Leicestershire website**.

Not So Dim

From January 2024 to June 2025, most of the county's **70,000 streetlights** were dimmed to **30% brightness** between 8pm and 7am, while maintaining full lighting in town centres, at zebra crossings, and areas with safety concerns as part of the 18-month street lighting dimming trial. This has saved nearly **£540,000** and reduced electricity use by **12.5%** which is enough to power 500 homes for a year!

The scheme will now be permanently adopted following Cabinet approval in September 2025. Plans for the future include converting **illuminated signs** to LED with smart management systems which will further improve efficiency and reduce operating costs.

Going Veggie

HVO (Hydrotreated vegetable oil) is a renewable fuel which can be used in unmodified internal combustion engine vehicles, as a substitute for diesel. As a sustainable fuel, which is the product of waste from agriculture and food production, using HVO dramatically decreases the amount of **carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide** and other emissions when compared to using diesel.

In 2024-25, the County Council's use of HVO fuel rose to **202,853 litres**, an increase of 538% on 2023-24's figure of 29,692 litres. By replacing diesel with HVO, the Council was able to reduce its diesel usage by 163,730 litres, a 16% fall in the space of a year.

By using HVO instead of diesel, the County Council has helped to **improve air quality** in the County and reduced its impact on the environment. Other benefits of HVO are that it can be left in bunkered storage for up to ten years and remain usable. HVO fuel also burns more cleanly, reducing engine wear and **improving vehicle longevity**.

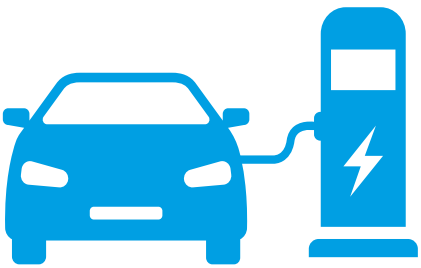
Not Going That Extra Mile

As a source of emissions, business mileage is responsible for approximately **15%** of the County Council's total annual carbon footprint.

Business mileage emissions are closely linked with Council activity. Initial steps have therefore been taken this year to understand how the Council might best facilitate or incentivise either the **reduction of business mileage** or the **reduction of associated emissions**.

A number of pilot staff workshops have been held within the Environment & Transport Department to hear directly from staff how business mileage is a part of their work and what **barriers** are faced when considering different options for reducing overall mileage. The workshops also enabled an understanding of what **solutions** to these barriers might work for staff as individuals or within their teams.

It is hoped that the data gathered will enable identification of the most effective and practical interventions that the Council may be able to implement to **reduce emissions and the cost of business mileage**.



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