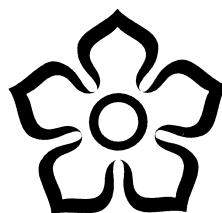




Leicester's Climate Emergency

**Primary School**

**Conversation Pack**



Leicester  
City Council

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# How to use this resource pack

1. Read through this guide to understand what the Climate Emergency is
2. Select your topics for discussion. We recommend one or two topics.
3. Carry out the activity.
4. Collect as much feedback as is feasibly possible.
5. Report your feedback back to the Environmental Education Team.

Support is available from the Environmental Education Team in planning and delivering the activity.

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# Introduction

## What the Council has done?

On 1 February 2019 Leicester City Council declared a Climate Emergency. The declaration is an acknowledgement that:

- climate change is happening, and threatens the wellbeing of everyone in Leicester and worldwide
- the speed and scale of global and local action to tackle the problem needs to be dramatically increased.

In its declaration, the Council committed to developing a new action plan to address the emergency through our own services and projects – to follow on from our recently-completed Sustainability Action Plan. We also want to inspire others to join us and take action too.

## What is a climate emergency?

Scientists now agree that the climate is changing as a result of human activity. Global average temperatures have increased by 1°C from pre-industrial levels and sea levels are rising.

World leaders have set a target in what's known as the Paris Agreement to stop the temperature increase from going beyond 1.5°C. This is what scientists believe is needed to prevent catastrophic impacts.

It will require major changes over the next decade and beyond to stop temperature rise going past this limit. It has become clear that the speed and scale of change will need to be much greater than anything that's been done so far to tackle climate change.

Many people think that if humanity doesn't act decisively now, climate change could threaten the lives of many millions of people as well as much of the world's wildlife. This is why the term 'climate emergency' is now used.

In Leicester, the City Council took the decision to declare a Climate Emergency for several reasons.

- We believe that climate change poses a very great threat to the wellbeing of present and future residents of the city, and to Leicester's future success and prosperity.
- Cities including our own have been estimated to be responsible for about 70% of worldwide carbon dioxide emissions. We believe that the Council and the rest of the city has a responsibility to play our part in tackling the challenge.
- Leicester has a lot to gain from acting decisively now, rather than waiting for other cities and other countries to act first. For example, many of the clean technologies required will make the city a healthier place to live. By adopting them as soon as we

can, we think this could help our economy get a head-start in the new emerging low-carbon economic sectors, and the jobs being created in them.

- This could be the last opportunity to put the world on the right path in a planned and manageable way, rather than in a chaotic way which risks causing negative impacts – particularly on the more vulnerable members of society. We think Leicester should plan for change now, not wait for outside events to force change upon us.

## **Why is this important?**

Records show that global average temperatures have increased by around 1°C from pre-industrial levels already. Sea levels around the UK have risen by an average of 16cm since 1900 and they will continue to rise for centuries, even if we stop creating carbon emissions, due to time lags in the climate system.

For central England, the Met Office is predicting that average summer temperatures could rise by between 1.1 and 5.8°C by 2070 compared to the period 1981-2000 in a ‘high emissions scenario’. Hotter summers are expected to become more common, with the chance of seeing temperatures similar to the 2018 heatwave increasing to around 50% by mid-century.

Summers could become drier and winters wetter on average, but with increasing variability. This means that Leicester and the surrounding area will need to cope with more frequent intense rainfall, and also prolonged dry periods.

Amongst the implications of these changes for Leicester:

- More frequent and severe heatwaves could present a risk to health. Children, older people and those with a pre-existing health condition tend to be more vulnerable.
- The risk of overheating and the need for, and expense of, air conditioning in buildings could increase if steps are not taken to adapt them. Public spaces could also be at risk – particularly those with little or no shade or vegetation in the most built-up areas.
- Key infrastructure can also be at risk during heatwaves.
- With more frequent intense rainfall, the city’s drains and rivers are expected to come under greater pressure. Steps are already being taken to deal with these pressures in the River Soar corridor and elsewhere. Measures to slow rainwater run-off or disperse it in other ways will also be needed.
- While central England is not expected to be as severely affected by drought as the south-east, there will still be a greater need to conserve mains water to avoid the eventual need for new reservoir capacity.

Globally, sea level rise will increasingly threaten the safety of many millions of people living in lower-lying coastal areas. Changes in weather patterns will affect the productivity and even viability of farmland in some areas, threatening food production.

At the same time, biodiversity is already being affected over large areas and this will intensify. While some species may benefit from changes, a lot more are expected to be threatened by them. Many could be unable to respond quickly enough – resulting in potentially large-scale population reductions and extinctions.

The exact impact of these changes on Leicester are not known, but what we can say is that the city's future is bound up with that of the rest of the world in almost every aspect of life. Through the goods we import, family links between continents and in countless other ways, local interests and global interests are the same.

# Activity instructions

We have tried to make a pack that works for children and young people of any age, but we appreciate that teachers will need to make adaptations depending on the group. Please just capture as much as is feasible of your groups' thoughts on the plan and feed this back to us.

The wording of Action Points may well be beyond the age of your children but the files are editable so you are able to make them more accessible.

We suggest that you tackle only one or two of the topics. Provided with the pack is

- PowerPoint presentation that introduces the topics
- A pack on each topic which includes Action Points and Questions

## Suggested process

### 1. Choose the theme that the group want to focus on.

This decision could be made as a group with a voting exercise or the facilitator might have made this decision in advance, if, for example, each class is focussing on a different theme.

We would welcome groups looking at more than one theme, but as there are a lot of proposals, we suggest only focussing on one or two topics. We have divided the proposals into 6 sections:

- a. Travel and Transport
- b. At home
- c. At work
- d. Waste
- e. Our choices as consumers
- f. Land use, green space and development of the city

### 2. Print out the relevant resources for your chosen topic/s

The Word file includes:

- Cut-out Action Points cards
- Question and Answers sheets
- Blank proposal cards

You may choose to divide the into smaller groups and printing out one set per group or printing out Action Points for each group and conducting the Q&A as a class activity.

### 3. Read the title page and vision for your chosen theme (from PowerPoint)

#### Question 1 (whole group)

Using the QUESTION CARD, ask the group the following questions and record the responses:

- a. Do you have any comments on the vision?
- b. Do you have any extra or different suggestions?

Check that everyone understands the vision.

### 4. Reading the proposals

In groups of 4-8 people, each with a facilitator, read through the ACTION POINTS together. Check that everyone understands what they mean.

#### Question 4 (whole group) – YES THIS IS NUMBER 4, even though it's out of order, trust us!

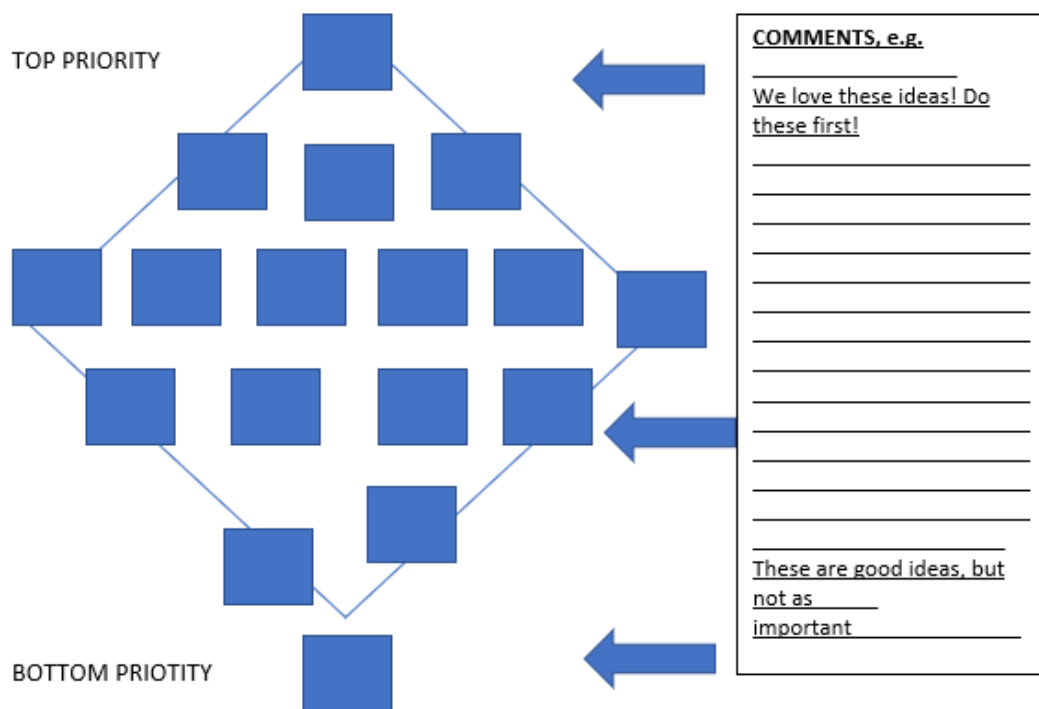
Using the BLANK PROPOSAL CARDS, ask the group the following question and if there are any other ideas, include them in the proposals going forward:

- a. Are there any other actions you would like to suggest?

### 5. Prioritising the Proposals Activity (small groups)

Sort the proposals together into which ones you feel are the best, and most important actions that should be prioritised, and those that your group thinks are less important or have problems with them, into a diamond, as follows. Please try and record as much of the conversation as possible, especially if the group identify problems with some proposals. The facilitator can help the group think through possible issues that might affect them personally. **Please photograph each group's diamond and send this to us.**





**Question 2 (small groups)**

Using the QUESTION CARD, ask the group the following questions and record the responses:

Do you have any comments on these actions? For example:

- a. Which ones are most important?
- b. Are there any that you don't support? If so, why?
- c. Are there any that might not be possible? If so, what would need to happen to make them possible?

### Question 3 (small groups)

Using the QUESTION CARD, ask the group the following questions and record the responses:

- a. How do you think these actions might positively or negatively affect people in your group?
- b. What, if any, support do you think people will need?

## Additional activity

### 6. Vote on best / most important proposals (whole group)

As a group, do an axis of agreement for each of the proposals to gauge which are the most popular. This is done by reading each of the proposals and asking people to stand at a different place in the room depending on how they feel about the proposal.

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Bad idea / not important



Good and important idea



From this, you will be able to tell the 5-8 most and least popular proposals. Do a vote to identify which of these are the 3 most or least popular and record this to tell us.