

**Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director – Place**

Report to:	<b>Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>25 February 2020</b>
Subject:	<b>Developing the Circular Economy in Lincolnshire</b>

**Summary:**

The report outlines the concept of the circular economy, and explores examples of ways of implementing a more sustainable approach to using resources across the county.

**Actions Required:**

The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the approach outlined, and the options available to move towards a circular economy approach within Lincolnshire County Council.

## **1. Background**

Lincolnshire County Council is committed to reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This is in line with national government targets, and is a challenging, but realistic, objective.

The Council's Carbon Management Plan, approved in 2019, sets out the first part of this journey with a carbon reduction target of 20% by March 2023, compared with a baseline of emissions in 2016-2017.

In developing the County Council's Green Masterplan, we are working with our partners on a clear road map towards meeting our commitment to net zero carbon by 2050, focusing on key areas which include energy, property, communities, waste management and transport.

A key part of delivering this agenda will consist of implementing what is often described as a circular economy approach. This can be described in broad terms as maximising use of a particular resource throughout its life cycle and maintaining or raising the economic value of the resource. This can also be broken down into pragmatic actions that individuals and groups can take. Individually and collectively these can contribute towards a more sustainable approach to using resources, and can also provide practical benefits in organisational and social terms.

Examples of these small scale actions in a work context might include

- Deciding whether or not you really 'need' certain items, or whether in practice you can do without it.
- Can you read documents from a screen instead of printing them out?
- Can you walk, use public transport or even car share to work?
- Do you need to travel to a meeting? Can it be done via a conference call?
- Make a packed lunch
- Can you recycle any cardboard, plastics and tins that you might use in the course of the working day?
- Use glasses instead of disposable plastic cups

Examples of circular processes LCC could start today include:

- Lease laptops and mobile phones that can be repaired and modules upgraded individually
  - This will reduce the need keep producing 'new' products, it keeps precious metals in the system rather than being disposed and constantly excavated, upgradable parts will be built to last therefore more 'repairable' and better quality
- Consider the requirement of 'core-hours' in order to enable people to travel to workplaces by public transport taking account of timetables that might be slightly out of sync
- Enable out-of-hours access to publicly owned buildings / multi use buildings for use as meeting rooms by local community groups (for free/nominal fee)
- Move towards reconfiguring buildings when the layout no longer meets the needs of the service

At home the following could be considered:

- Reduce what you buy, reuse where you can and give away or recycle
- Buy items that are second hand or made from recycled materials
- Prevent unnecessary food waste by making use of the freezer
- Buy locally sourced ingredients, or from independent retailers
  - Keeping money in the local economy boosts local activity, supporting all small businesses so communities can thrive
- Check your home is well insulated
- Switch to a green energy tariff
- Consider how you travel, could you walk or use public transport? Could you downsize your car or switch to one car where currently two or more are used?

Business could also play a significant role by shifting away from using virgin products, and instead look to reuse the wastes from other businesses. The verge biomass project is another example of circular economy, using the verge cuttings to generate green energy or biomethane that could then fuel the machinery used to cut the verges. The circular economy represents a significant opportunity for the Lincolnshire economy, to make savings, profits and environmental gain.

## **2. Conclusion**

The range of possible ways to promote more circular resource consumption is enormous, and the Council will be exploring those that are most effective in enabling its staff to play their part, as well as promoting the approach across Lincolnshire with our partners and communities.

While this will form only a part of our broad strategic approach to carbon reduction and environmental resilience, it is perhaps an area where people can be most directly involved and can make the most immediate practical difference.

## **3. Consultation**

### **a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?**

Yes

### **b) Risks and Impact Analysis**

Risk analysis has been undertaken as part of developing the approved Carbon Management Plan for Lincolnshire County Council.

## **4. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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