

Sustainable Schools Newsletter

July 2026



What is Sustainable Schools Leicester?

Leicester City Council has a dedicated Sustainable Schools team based in the Energy & Sustainability team who provide *free* support to schools to help them become more sustainable in all that they do.

As well as one-to-one support and environmentally linked projects, schools can engage through EcoTeachMeets, staff training, resource planning & workshops, assemblies, Eco-Schools roadshows & celebration events and through dedicated social media, monthly eBulletins and termly newsletters.

The Eco-Schools Green Flag award provides opportunities for students to take an active role in their school community and work on environmentally minded projects that matter to them. Each schools' journey with Eco-Schools will be unique but the Sustainable Schools team are here to support you in any way that we can!



Welcome to the July Sustainable Schools Leicester newsletter.

As we come to the end of the 2025/26 academic year, we would like to say a huge thank you and well done to everyone for their continued hard work.

This newsletter will showcase some of the fantastic work achieved by you and will also share upcoming events and information.

We look forward to a successful 2026/27!

As always, get in touch if you need any support – Marc, Vicky and Laura.

Have a wonderful Summer Holiday!



How to find out more Sustainable Schools Team

City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester LE1 1FZ

✉ SustainableSchools@leicester.gov.uk

 schools.leicester.gov.uk/eco-schools

 [EcoSchoolsLCC](https://twitter.com/EcoSchoolsLCC)

 [EcoSchoolsLCC](https://www.instagram.com/EcoSchoolsLCC)

 [EnvEducationLeicester](https://www.facebook.com/EnvEducationLeicester)

☎ 0116 454 6746



Newsletter

Our newsletters are published 4 times per year. If you would like to submit an article for the next ebulletin or newsletter, the deadline is **Friday 28th August 2026**. We ask for around 200 words, at least 1 photo, and contact details e.g. name and email address to: SustainableSchools@leicester.gov.uk

Finished reading? Pass on to a colleague

Dates for your diary – Upcoming Eco events July-Oct 2026



Event Details	Date	Month
<u>Plastic Free July</u>	All month	July
<u>National Marine Week</u>	25 July - 9 Aug	July / Aug
World Nature Conservation Day	Tuesday 28	July
<u>National Allotments Week</u>	10 - 16	August
<u>Organic September</u>	All month	September
<u>Second Hand September</u>	All month	September
<u>Zero Waste Week</u>	7 - 11	September
<u>Recycle Week</u>	14 - 20	September
<u>World Cleanup Day (Litter)</u>	Sunday 20	September
<u>World Car Free Day</u>	Tuesday 22	September
<u>Start of Seed Gathering Season - Tree Council</u>	Monday 21	September
<u>Fair Trade Fortnight</u>	21 Sept - 4 Oct	Sept / Oct
<u>FSC Forest Week</u>	21 - 27	Sept
<u>Eco-Schools Training Session 1, 4-5:15pm on Teams</u>	Tuesday 22	September
<u>International Walk to School Month</u>	All month	October
<u>Carbon literacy training (in person, City Hall)</u>	Friday 2	October
<u>Eco-Schools Training Session 1 , 4-5:15pm on Teams</u> (for those who can't make the Sept one)	Thursday 8	October
<u>World Animal Day</u>	Saturday 4	October
<u>World Teacher Day</u>	Sunday 5	October
<u>Just One Tree Day</u> (see below)	Friday 16	October
<u>World Food Day</u>	Friday 16	October

- [Leicester - staff training/information](#)
- [Leicester - student activities/events](#)
- **National / International events**

Look out for a full 2026/27 calendar in the September newsletter



Eco-Schools Award

application portal open now!



Eco-School Award application window open until 31 July!

Don't forget to complete and send off you Eco Schools Application for this 2025/26 academic year.

The application form is all done online, with options to apply for Merit and Distinction on top of your Eco-Schools Green Flag award.

Leicester City Council **subsidise the cost** of the Eco-Schools Green Flag for Leicester Schools, **making it just £50 per school (we will invoice you in September).**

The online application window open until 31 July 2026.

Register now for 2026/27

Registrations are now open for schools to sign up for the 2026/27 academic year.

Whether a new school to Eco Schools, or a renewal, register today at: www.eco-schools.org.uk



Well done to all schools who have already achieved the award this year! Can we get more than last year's 42 awards in Leicester?



Support for Eco-Schools

If you need any support with your applications or registration, or trying to go for Merit and Distinction but not sure how to, please do contact Vicky at victoria.brown@leicester.gov.uk

We also look forward to working with you next year!



Eco-Schools Training Session 1

What is Eco-Schools and how do we gain or renew our Green Flag Award?

FREE Online Training course:

Tuesday 22 September OR

Thursday 8 October 2026

Both from 4-5.15pm via Teams (only need to attend one)

Sign up using the [eform](#)

- Are you wanting to find out about Eco-Schools and how your school can gain their Green Flag Award?
- Do you want to find out about national and local environmental events and projects to help you achieve the award?
- Are you wanting to connect with other school staff in Leicester schools and support each other to gain your Eco-Schools Green Flag Award?

If the answer to any of these questions is “Yes”, then come along and find out more!

This training, delivered by the Sustainable Schools team at Leicester City Council, will explain the Green Flag Award process including the 7 steps, provide top tips for working on Eco-Schools, and ideas for new projects

Save the date! Upcoming Eco-Schools training

Session 2 – Wednesday 20 January 2027, 1:00-3:00pm –

Next steps and Going for Merit or Distinction

Session 3 – Friday 30 April 2027 1:00-3:30pm (venue TBC)

– Completing the application and planning for next year



**Sustainable
Schools**

LEICESTER

In Leicester over two thirds of schools have achieved their Green Flag in the last few years. It's a fantastic programme that helps schools to focus their environmental work – join this group of schools and start working on your award this year!

For more information, please email
Vicky Brown at
Victoria.brown@leicester.gov.uk



**CLIMATE
READY** →
LEICESTER

Carbon Literacy Training for School Staff and Governors



In February 2019, Leicester City Council declared a climate emergency. We are working to develop a climate emergency programme of action to reduce carbon with the aim of the city becoming zero carbon.

In order to raise awareness of the climate emergency, we are using the Carbon Literacy Project as a way of accrediting school staff in becoming Carbon Literate. Since 2025, each school should have a sustainability lead who will have taken part in Carbon Literacy Training. By joining us, you will help keep your school to join the wider movement!

In Person:

Friday 2 October 2026, 9am – 4pm
at City Hall, Charles Street, Leicester.
Complete the [eForm](#) to sign up.

Who would benefit from this project: All school staff, including premises officers, and governors with an interest in becoming carbon literate, especially those involved in teaching about climate change and the climate emergency.



Why participate?

- Gain a **better understanding of how climate change will affect you and those around you**
- **Become an accredited Carbon Literate individual**
- Acquire knowledge and skills to develop your own responses to lowering your carbon footprint, and the carbon footprint of others

Your commitments

- Create at least **one significant action, as an individual**, to reduce your own personal carbon footprint
- Create at **least one significant action involving other people** to reduce the collective footprint of your workplace, community or place of education
- **Encourage your school to participate in Carbon Literacy**

Carbon Literacy Training - 2026/27



The cost of the training course is £50 for school staff/governors or £70 for non-school staff and staff outside of Leicester City. This includes the individual and course accreditation fees from the Carbon Literacy Project.

For more information, contact Victoria.Brown@leicester.gov.uk.

Good Life Schools is a programme supporting students to reclaim control of their decisions about what makes a sustainable 'good life' for them, their community and our shared planet vs a 'goods life' and consumerism. It has provided opportunities for young people to share their experiences and solutions to excessive consumption with others, through events in the local community, workshops with community partners, meetings with policy makers, films, news articles (and even TV appearances!).

Congratulations to the schools for taking part this year and making a difference!

- Beaumont Leys School
- Brook Mead Academy
- Ellesmere College
- Lancaster academy
- Millgate School
- Redmoor Academy
- Sir Jonathan North Girls' College



Pupils' upcycling scheme helps lower cost of prom



Students have been busy creating projects for their schools, from second hand prom shops, music projects, wellbeing and pollinator gardens, bike maintenance training , to makeup recycling schemes and more.

To celebrate their success, students from the schools joined us for a Celebration Event at Leicester Space Park on 23rd June, to showcase their amazing work and share it with guests and visitors, including community partners and councillors.

They did a fantastic job and everyone was really impressed.

Photos of all their amazing work are on the next page!



Grow Your Own Grub 2026 Results

Thank you to all schools who took part in this year's Grow Your Own Grub Mealbarrow Competition! We've loved seeing your interpretations of the 'rainbow' theme for your menu and mealbarrow designs.

The extravaganza event at Abbey Pumping Station was a great success with around 300 members of the public coming along to view and vote for the mealbarrows!



The overall winners of the 2026 competition are:

First Place: Inglehurst Junior School



Second Place: Stokeswood Primary School

Third Place: Mellor Community Primary School



Litter Less Poster Competition results

The Sustainable Schools and Housing teams ran a poster competition for schools in the St Matthews area of Leicester, for students to design a poster to encourage residents not to litter and to recycle.

We are pleased to announce the winner is **Leon from Charnwood Primary**, whose poster caught the attention of the judges with its clear message and bright colours.

Congratulations to Leon who has won a family pass for the Space Centre and his design will be appearing on posters in the area soon.



WOW Walk to School Challenge – funded places available

Did you know that thanks to Active Travel England, your school could be eligible to take part in WOW - the walk to school challenge - for free?



[WOW – the walk to school challenge](#) is a pupil-led initiative from UK charity, Living Streets. Pupils self-report how they get to school every day on the WOW Travel Tracker. Those who walk, wheel, cycle, scoot, or Park and Stride at least once a week each month are awarded collectible WOW badges.

WOW has been helping to reduce congestion and pollution at thousands of schools for 20 years. Last academic year, the Walk to School Outreach project helped create 17.8 million new walking journeys and removed over 3.4 million car km from the roads at peak times.

Visit our enquiry page [Join WOW](#) to find out more about WOW during 2026-2027. (We can check eligibility for funding when you get in touch. Spaces on this funding stream are limited and allocated on a first-come, first-served basis so do get in touch at the earliest opportunity if you are interested to find out more)

Ideas for next year!

Litter Picking Equipment

Litter picking is always a fantastic way of engaging students in environmental work and can be a particularly good way of working alongside the local community. So far this year, schools in Leicester have hosted 643 litter picks, with over 1,500 young people involved! As with last year, we have 7 litter picking kits that we can lend out to schools who would like to borrow them. This is a FREE service for schools in the city.



To register for a kit, simply sign up through the [eForm](#).

1.2k Kg of waste diverted from landfill.	1.5k Young people participating in a litter pick.	4.5k People engaged in Litter themed activities.
368 Bags of litter collected.	19 Settings who feel there is now less litter around their site.	643 Litter picks delivered.



Plastic Clever Schools – Day of Action

Plastic Clever Schools' International Day of Action is back for the third year... this time, with a special theme!

Last year, 38,630 students from 541 schools across 32 countries came together to tackle plastic pollution. We would love to see schools from across Leicester joining in with the challenge.

The International Day of Action is a global event for collective action that brings together schools, teachers and young people from around the world to tackle plastic pollution.

For more information and to get your school registered, visit the [Plastic Clever Schools website](#).



BY



Common
Seas

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School news and stories

Castle Mead Academy Wear it Forward event

On Wednesday 7th May, we held our very first Wear it Forward: Second Hand Fashion event, and what a fantastic success it was! We were overwhelmed by the generosity of our families and staff, who donated huge quantities of high-quality items. Donations included clothing in all sizes, from babywear through to adult fashion, as well as homeware items such as bedding and towels.

The event was extremely well attended, with many families enjoying the opportunity to browse, share and take home items while supporting a more sustainable approach to fashion and reducing waste within our community.

A huge thank you goes to everyone who donated, attended and supported the event. We would also like to give special thanks to the members of staff who stayed behind to help organise and run the evening, your support and hard work made the event possible.

We are delighted with the positive response and hope this will be the first of many Wear it Forward events at our school!



Montrose School – our Ravine is now open!

Montrose School have now opened the newly redeveloped Montrose Ravine, with schools and groups being able to use the space for nature studies, lesson space and eco events. They very kindly hosted our Eco Teach meet there in June, with staff from several schools coming to see how they can book the space and use it themselves. We even had a go at some pond dipping!

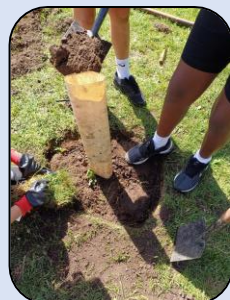
If you would like to find out more on how to book the space to use for you and your own group, visit: [Montrose School - Visiting the Ravine](#)



St Thomas More Primary – 60th Anniversary oak tree

Students at St Thomas More planted acorns from the large oak tree in their schools' grounds, with the saplings growing really well. Vicky was invited in to help plant one of the saplings in the field to celebrate the school's 60th anniversary. A group of Year 6 students did a great job digging the hole and planting the tree in the heatwave, but knowing the tree would grow and provide shelter for students in the future.

They have some spare oak saplings available if anyone else would like one for their school grounds! Just email Victoria.brown@leicester.gov.uk to enquire.



School news and stories



Brook Mead Academy updates

Our Good Life Schools prom project has really grown; we have had emails about donations from members of the public and lots have already come in. We met with a business after the scholars completed their prom sale about continuing the project on next year, which we are sure will be more successful - we already have reservations on dresses and suits, the latter we hope to get more in as they were so popular.

We have also had a very successful relationship with Walk Wheel Cycle Trust come in to teach our scholars to learn to ride and about bike confidence, as well as running bike maintenance workshops.

We are also still collecting plastic tops for Dove Cottage and we recently delivered 3 bin bags to their shop!

We are also looking into getting an allotment to increase our growing and outdoors opportunities.



Ellesmere College Eco Club



This year our Eco Club wanted to do something about the 'Butterfly Emergency' declared in 2024. We used money from the Good Life School project to decorate benches with information about butterflies and the plants they need.

Just 15 minutes in nature reduces anxiety, stress and blood pressure so encouraging people to sit down and enjoy the wildlife around them would be good for everyone.

Everyone at school thinks they look great. We emailed the City Mayor, Pete Soulsby, and Councillor Geoff Whittle about putting some information about butterflies in Aylestone Meadows, and we were thrilled they both replied with their support. We are now hoping to work with Leicester City Council's Parks team to create an information board in Aylestone Meadows.

We've also recorded poetry and stories to educate people of the plight of our butterflies and are giving away plants to support butterflies.



Registration now open for JUST ONE Tree Day – Friday 16th October 2026 (or do any time of the year)

Last year 33 schools across Leicester took part!

Inspire your pupils to tackle climate action and grow a greener future with JUST ONE Tree Day – a fun, educational non-uniform day where every £1 raised plants a tree in a reforestation project in Africa, Asia & South America.

It's **free** for schools to take part, comes with **curriculum-linked resources**, and helps children feel empowered rather than anxious about the planet.

Run by non-profit JUST ONE Tree – proud partner of the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration** and **Eco-Schools England** – the initiative tackles climate change head-on by growing forests, regenerating oceans and educating future generations.

Over 250,000 pupils have already taken part, helping plant **442,000+** trees.

“In a recent Student Council meeting, pupils said they thought that supporting Just One Tree was a great idea and, because of that, they were proud to be part of Oakwood Community School!”

“We've met the team at JUST ONE Tree and believe this is a fantastic and high-impact project for all schools to get involved in.”

Unite with schools across the world and make sure your school is part of this growing movement. Sign up today at www.justonetree.life/schools-sustainability



Supporting nature and biodiversity in education – we need your help!

For many of our local education settings, now is the time to think about making improvements to support nature across their sites. But they cannot do it alone!

If you are passionate about nature, biodiversity and helping people to connect to the world around them, joining the [Climate Ambassadors Scheme](#) as a **nature and biodiversity champion** is the perfect opportunity for you to share your knowledge and skills this spring.

Through tailored training sessions delivered by the team at [National Education Nature Park](#), you will receive ready-made activity guides and resources to use with your local education settings, whether it is mapping/creating habitats, aiding planting schemes, or rejuvenating a pond!

Please complete the [expression of interest form](#) to receive further information and training dates. If you have any questions or would like to know more, please email ca-eastmidlands@nottingham.ac.uk.





Energy Sparks



Energy Sparks is an online platform which monitor schools' gas and electricity consumption. The platform includes an educational programme which can be used with classes or small groups of children, such as your eco-committee. Energy Sparks can help to reduce carbon emissions and work towards addressing the climate emergency.

How can Energy Sparks help you?

- Using smart meter data will show you how much energy your school uses.
- Pupils and staff can use information to help save energy.
- A scoreboard is in place for schools to compare energy savings with others nearby.
- Online, email and text notification of changes in energy consumption, with recommended energy saving actions tailored just for your school.
- Energy saving interventions and investments are suggested to maximise cost and energy savings.
- Over 70 energy related activities for eco-teams or class-based learning.



For more information about Energy Sparks, please visit the website at <https://energysparks.uk/>



*Supports the Eco-Schools
energy topic*



Built Environment School Service (BESS) Energy Academies 2026-27 Annual Energy and Carbon Report



From 1 April 2020, academy trusts will need to report on environmental reporting regulations. Regulations require large companies that consume more than 40,000 kWh of energy in a reporting period to include certain information about energy efficiency measures. Large companies are defined by sections 465-466 of the Companies Act 2006 as companies which meet 2 out of the following 3 criteria:

- Gross income of £36 million or more;
- Balance sheet assets of £18 million or more; and
- 250 employees or more

The reporting period for academy trusts will be **1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026**.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-reporting-guidelines-including-mandatory-greenhouse-gas-emissions-reporting-guidance

Academies in Leicester City that also subscribe to BESS Energy Core or BESS Energy Enhanced will receive a discounted rate of £170 (instead of £185) per academy.

What is included in the service?

Reports which covers:

- Annual carbon and energy usage reports
- Analysis of energy trends/patterns of usage
- Identifying the impact of energy efficiency improvements
- Data in a format required as part of Energy and Carbon Reporting regulation (from September 2020):
 - UK energy use (in kWh) including purchased electricity, gas and transport fuel
 - Associated greenhouse gas emissions (in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent)
 - At least one 'intensity ratio' that expresses the academy trust's annual emissions in relation to a quantifiable factor associated with its activities
 - Information about energy efficiency action taken during the year
 - Methodologies used in the calculation of disclosures
- Provision of a collated MAT report provided
- Provision of data for school's preferred Display Energy Certificate (DEC) provider

This offer is open to all Multi-Academy Trusts in England

**Priced at £185 per academy
£170 for Leicester BESS Energy schools**

For more information please contact:

- ✉ Marc.tench@leicester.gov.uk
- ☎ 0116 454 6746
- 🌐 schools.leicester.gov.uk/BESS-Energy

This service is available from September 2026

Sign up to BESS Energy by 31 July 2026 by
completing our [online form](#)



To provide Leicester with a high quality, efficient, effective and sustainable built environment

BESS Energy Core 2026-27 12 Month Subscription



Worried about increasing energy costs? Wanting to save money and improve your environmental credentials?

Energy makes up one of the biggest spends for schools after staffing. Leicester City Council has worked closely to develop an offer as part of BESS schools to **develop tools and reports to empower staff and students to take control** of their energy use.

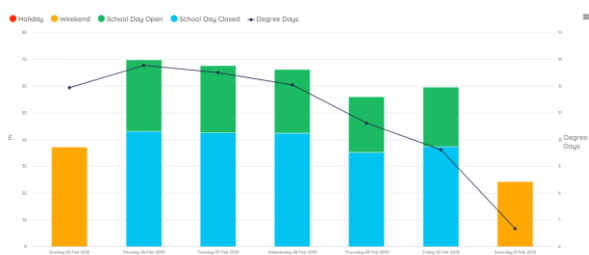
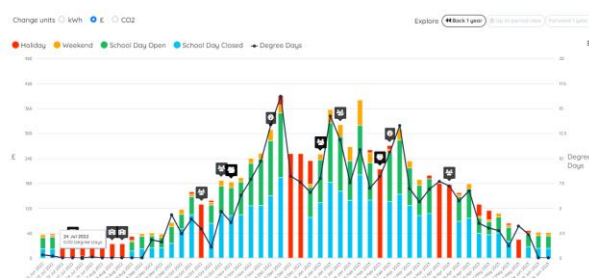
This offer is open to all schools in Leicester City at cost price as part of our Climate Emergency Declaration commitment

What is included in the service:

- **Online monitoring of gas and electricity via Energy Sparks.**
- **Wrap around support** by the Sustainable Schools' team for onboarding, general advice, educational and energy specific support
- **Provision of data** for school's preferred DEC provider

About Energy Sparks

- An online energy analysis tool and energy education programme specifically designed to help schools **reduce their electricity and gas usage through the analysis of smart meter data.**
- Using a school's electricity, gas and solar data, shows staff (and pupils) how much energy the school is using. The online tool presents bespoke analysis of the energy data **with suggestions of actions the school could take to save energy and reduce carbon emissions.**
- **Provides adult and pupil dashboards** tailored to meet the specific needs of the students and staff at a school.
- **Automated alerts** to let schools know when energy use changes



Adult Dashboard

Summary of recent energy usage

		Use (kWh)	CO2 (kg)	Cost (£)	Potential savings	% Change
Electricity	Last week	1,450	154	£218	n/a	+58%
	Last year	64,900	3,850	£9,750	£4,270	-43%
Gas	Last week	3,020	405	£93.60	n/a	-25%
	Last year	270,000	56,800	£8,310	£2,770	-34%

Electricity data: 19 Mar 2020 - 1 May 2022. Gas data: 23 Jan 2019 - 30 Apr 2022. [More information](#)

Act on your energy usage

Well done, you are making progress towards achieving your target to reduce your electricity and gas usage! [Review progress](#)

Oh no! Your school's weekly electricity use in the Easter holidays increased by 17% compared to the Spring half term. This has cost an extra £30 which you can switch off to save energy in the next holidays! [Find out more](#)

For more information please contact:

Marc Tench

✉ marc.tench@leicester.gov.uk

☎ 0116 454 6746

🌐 [schools.leicester.gov.uk/BESS-Energy](https://www.schools.leicester.gov.uk/BESS-Energy)

This service will start in September 2026
Priced at £820

Sign up to BESS Energy by 31 July 2026 by completing our [online form](#)



To provide Leicester with a high quality, efficient, effective and sustainable built environment

BESS Energy Enhanced 2026-2027 12 Month Subscription



Worried about increasing energy costs? Wanting to save money and improve your environmental credentials?

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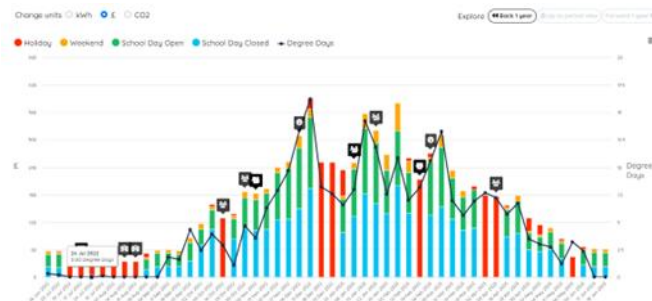
What is included in the service?

All the benefits of BESS Energy Core:

- **Online monitoring of gas and electricity via Energy Sparks.**
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- **Provision of data** for school's preferred DEC provider

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- **Provides adult and pupil dashboards** tailored to meet the specific needs of the students and staff at a school.
- **Automated alerts** to let schools know when energy use changes



Plus BESS Energy Enhanced:

- **Identification and reporting** of excessive use/wastage (including visits)
- **Provision of your annual DEC certificate** (or subsidised 7 year DEC certificate)
- Online or face to face training
- **10 hours of bespoke support** per school (including technical, analysis and education support for staff and pupils) – **see our separate flyer on next page**

"Through monitoring our electricity we discovered our thermal heater timers had a fault, meaning that they were being left on at the weekend - once resolved, this saved hundreds of pounds over the school holidays" **Business Manager, Leicester**

**For more information please contact:
Marc Tench**

✉ marc.tench@leicester.gov.uk

☎ 0116 454 6746

🌐 schools.leicester.gov.uk/BESS-Energy

Priced at £1195

This service will start in September 2026

Sign up to BESS Energy by 31 July 2026 by completing our [online form](#)



To provide Leicester with a high quality, efficient, effective and sustainable built environment

