



CARBON FOOTPRINT: PUBLIC QUIZZED FOR THE FIRST STUDY OF ITS KIND

Exactly how green are we?

by **JENNY CORNISH**
CHIEF POLITICAL REPORTER

Hundreds of people will be asked how green they are as experts calculate Leicester's carbon footprint.

The £2.6 million project, run by De Montfort University's Institute of Energy and Sustainable Development, is believed to be the first of its kind.

Experts will investigate how much carbon the city produces – and look at ways it can be cut.

A carbon footprint is a measure of people's impact on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced by their activities.

Professor Kevin Lomas, institute director, said: "This is a very ambitious project and we believe it will be the first time the carbon footprint of an entire city has been reliably measured.

"As the problem of climate change becomes more apparent, we have to look at ways to reduce carbon emissions.

"The project will allow us to



LEADER: Prof Kevin Lomas

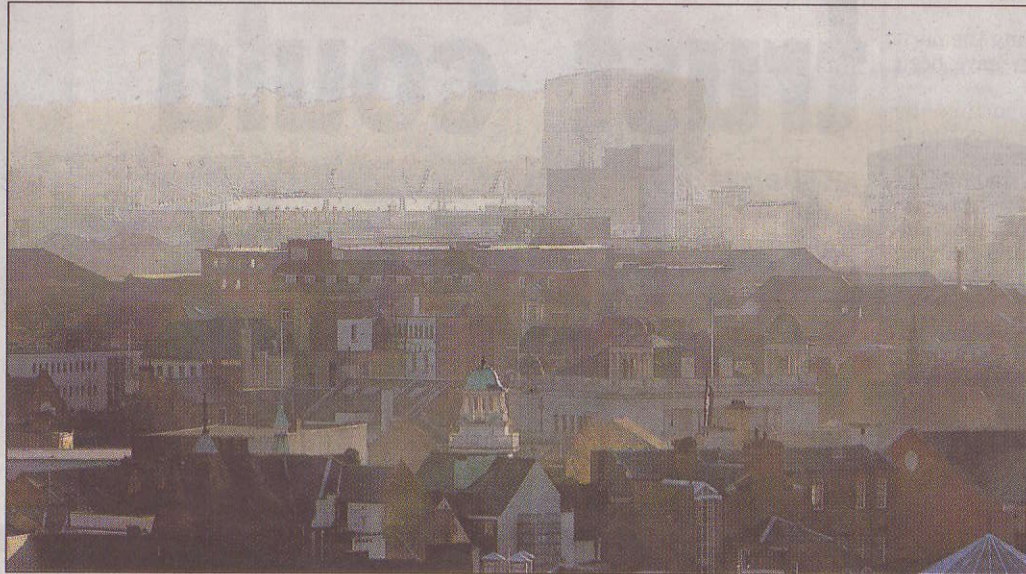
look at how it can be done city-wide.

"Leicester was chosen as it is an average-sized city so the findings can relate to similar cities across the country."

About 400 households will be selected for face-to-face interviews.

People will be asked how they heat and light their home, what electrical appliances they use and their travel habits.

A smaller group could be asked to keep travel diaries or



PICTURE: ANDY BAKER / 676379-7

INVESTIGATION: Pollution haze over part of Leicester – a visible sign of the carbon we produce

have a sensor put on their car. Researchers will also use satellite images to look at green spaces and energy use in public buildings and businesses will be calculated.

The study will investigate how Individual Carbon Trading

Schemes – where households are given an annual carbon allowance – would work.

Researchers will work with schools and businesses to help develop green travel plans.

The study is set to run for four years.

Councillor Matt Follett, Green Party group leader on the city council, said: "It's the sort of thing we have been talking about for years now.

"We look forward to the results. I hope they are acted upon."

Weather linked to arson rise

HOT weather is being linked to a spate of arson attacks over the weekend.

Fire crews were called to 40 incidents between Friday morning and Tuesday morning – most of them in the city.

The worst attacks at the weekend, when temperatures reached 26C, included a car destroyed by flames in Braunstone Park, Leicester, in the early hours of Saturday.

A van was damaged in Wilson Road, South Wigston, at 2am on Sunday, while other attacks saw vandals set fire to rubbish in bins and patches of grass and trees.

The figure is double that of the same weekend last May, when temperatures were in the mid-teens.

Police and the fire service said hot spells tended to cause an increase in arson reports and experts warned even small fires could put lives at risk.

A spokesman for the Arson Task Force said most of the blazes were "opportunistic" and, from experience, were more likely to be caused by young troublemakers than adults.