



Leicester
City Council

**MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND
CLIMATE EMERGENCY SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 31 JANUARY 2024

TIME: 5:30 pm

**PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street
Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

Members of the Commission

Councillor Waddington (Chair)

Councillor O'Neill (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Batool, Dawood, Osman, Porter, Rae Bhatia and Whittle

Members of the Commission are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Ed Brown (Senior Governance Support Officer)

Jessica Skidmore (Governance Support Officer),

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Jessica Skidmore, Governance Support Officer on 0116 4546350.
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AGENDA

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed on the agenda.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

**Appendix A
(Pages 1 - 12)**

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 7 December 2023 are attached and Members are asked to confirm them as correct record.

4. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer to report on any questions, representations and statements of case received in accordance with Council procedures.

Mr James Blackhall to ask:

“Given the council's commitment to Net 0 and supporting those who are economically disadvantaged is it truly acceptable that a flexi 4 week ticket is rising by nearly £10?”

5. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer to report on any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures.

6. DRAFT GENERAL REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25

**Appendix B
(Pages 13 - 40)**

The Director of Finance submits a draft report proposing the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2024/25.

Members of the Commission will be asked to consider and provide any feedback which will be submitted to the Council Budget meeting in February 2024.

7. DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25

**Appendix C
(Pages 41 - 70)**

The Director of Finance submits a draft report proposing the Capital Programme for 2024/25.

Members of the Commission will be asked to consider and provide any feedback which will be submitted to the Council Budget meeting in February 2024.

8. LABOUR MARKET: ECONOMIC INACTIVITY AND ESOL

**Appendix D
(Pages 71 - 94)**

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submits a report summarising the levels of economic inactivity and English language proficiency across Leicester's labour market, and the interventions commissioned in response to these issues by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

A presentation will be made by BYCS and the Council's Adult Education service at the meeting.

9. 20MPH ZONES INFORMAL SCRUTINY

**Appendix E
(Pages 95 - 122)**

The Chair submits a report providing an overview of the Commissions examination of the policy regarding the implementation of 20mph streets in Leicester.

10. WATERSIDE VISIT

The Commission will be consulted as to how they wish to proceed with the Waterside visit.

11. STORM HENK FLOODING UPDATE

**Appendix F
(Pages 123 - 140)**

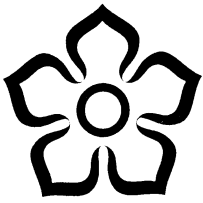
The City Highways Director submits a report updating the Commission on the response to the flooding impacts in the City arising from Storm Henk.

12. WORK PROGRAMME

**Appendix G
(Pages 141 - 146)**

For Members' consideration, the work programme for the Commission is attached.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS



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Minutes of the Meeting of the
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY
SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2023 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor O'Neill - Vice-Chair in the Chair

Councillor Batool
Councillor Osman
Councillor Whittle

Councillor Dawood
Councillor Porter

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36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Rae Bhatia and Cutkelvin.

Apologies were also received from the Chair, Cllr Waddington. Vice-Chair Cllr O'Neill chaired the meeting.

The Vice-Chair read out the following messages from the Chair:

"First congratulations to Kerry Grey and all the adult education staff for the "Good" rating. Adult Education opportunities are needed now more than ever so the report of the way ahead is welcome.

Secondly to say that our task group on 20mph streets has held two meetings and is going well and on track to report back at our next commission meeting. Constructive contributions from members ... stakeholders and officers.

Finally Happy Christmas to all and thanks for your work this year."

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

38. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Regarding the minutes from 18 October 2023, the clarity of the statistics showing an 18% increase in bus use due to a bus lane on Aylestone Road was questioned. It was questioned as to why other authorities who had put a lot of work into bus services had seen a smaller increase in bus use. It was suggested that other factors, such as increased bus services, had been more of a reason for the increased bus use than the bus lane on Aylestone Road.

Regarding the minutes from 16 November 2023, It was requested that it be noted that a point was raised concerning the relocation of some bus services to now stop at St Margaret's bus station which has had led to some people with limited mobility having difficulty getting into the city centre.

Other than the above it was:

AGREED:

That the minutes of the previous meetings held on 18 October 2023 and 16 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

39. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

It was noted that none had been received.

40. PETITIONS

It was noted that none had been received.

41. ENERGY EFFICIENCY FOR HOMES

Cllr Dawood arrived at the beginning of this item.

The Director for Estates and Building Services submitted a report on Energy efficiency schemes in private sector housing in the city.

The Service Manager for Sustainability attended the meeting to make the presentation and assist with discussion and the Team Leader for Energy Projects attended the meeting remotely to assist with discussion.

Slides were presented as attached in the agenda pack.

Key points included:

- A large percentage of housing within the city was terraced or semi-

detached and 36% was built before 1929. This meant that many of these had solid walls and as such were energy inefficient and needed work to bring up to standard, such as by applying external wall insulation with finishes that retained the character of the building.

- Co-benefits included:
 - Reducing fuel poverty and addressing the cost-of-living crisis – Vulnerable people in the UK spent a higher percentage of their income on energy than those in Europe.
 - Reducing damp and mould and improving internal air quality – Recent events as reported in the media had led to a big push on the issue.
 - Health benefits to residents – both physical and mental.
 - Climate justice – supporting vulnerable groups as climate change mitigation moved forward – lower carbon heating could mean higher costs, so there was a need to support the most vulnerable.
 - Creating local jobs in retrofit installation.
 - Improving the local economic buying power of residents – if residents had more disposable income as a result of lower energy bills, they could spend more in the local economy.
- There had not yet been much research into the impact on homes as the climate warmed, but a watching brief was being kept on research as it came in to ensure that retrofitting was appropriate.
- In a good retrofit, an assessment was undertaken both in needs of the physical aspects of the property and how the owners of the property were using that property. Following this a whole-house plan was prepared. Once that plan was complete, options were considered such as upgrading the fabric of the building, looking at heating options and looking at renewable technologies.
- Barriers to retrofit included:
 - Solid wall properties – these required internal or external insulation.
 - Inaccessible lofts.
 - Disrepair – such as loose gutters and pipes that would need to be fixed prior to external insulation being installed.
 - Homes in conservation areas – in these cases it was necessary to ensure that actions fitted the planning requirements.
 - The cost of redecoration following works.
 - Compliance with the requests of the occupant – some occupants may pay more for a brick-strip effect.
 - Overall costs – these had increased since the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.
 - Ensuring the availability of properly trained staff.
- If all retrofitting was completed as desired in the city, 86% of city properties could be brought up to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) level C or above, however, the cost of this would be prohibitive.
- In terms of grant schemes since October 2020 – Schemes had been difficult to administer and run and had taken time to get going. Figures

were relatively low for Phase 1. Whilst lots had been achieved in phase 2, this also covered social housing which was easier to achieve. The Local Authority Delivery (LAD) 3 had been the most successful scheme in both Leicester and nationally. This had been delivered well in the private sector. The Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) scheme was only available for off-gas properties, and there was no national scheme from the government for vulnerable houses on gas.

- ECO was a government efficiency scheme funded through energy company obligation. This was money from energy suppliers that installers could apply for and was not run by Local Authorities.
- In terms of achievements through the Green Homes Grant (GHG) and LAD schemes, LAD 3 had been the most successful. All of the money given to them had been spent and a further £1.3m had been bid for at a later stage and then used. Since it had been difficult to identify off-gas homes for the HUG scheme, the surplus money had been spent in LAD 3.
- Residents in New Parks who had benefitted from the schemes were happy, but it was recognised that there was more to do in terms of what was needed.
- The HUG 2 scheme was coming up, however, there were not many off-gas homes in the city.
- Schemes were promoted to landlords through libraries and neighbourhood centres. Stalls had been run in various locations and an email had been sent out showing the schemes available for Leicester residents.
- Warm Home Surveys would let householders know what needed to be done and would refer people to grant schemes. This was being promoted through multiple channels including local radio.
- The Council were working with EON on retrofit schemes. In addition, currently creating a scheme with EON using ECO funding on particular streets. This will reduce number of rogue installers as LCC is confident that EON installers will work to PAS2035 standard. and in line with Planning policies. Data would be obtained on what was being completed.
- Information on projects in progress, links and joined-up working, and how far was still needed to go, was presented in the slides as attached to the agenda pack.
- It was clarified that the figures had been updated since the slides had been produced. There were now 59 homes that had applied for the HUG 2 grant and 38 homes that have applied for the Warm Homes Survey. 647 Homes had now registered under ECO 4.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and make comments. Key points included:

- The take-up of grants from landlords had not been high, and of those that had enquired many had not followed through when they were

informed that they would need to contribute a third of the costs. Despite this, the Council were still trying to promote the scheme.

- External wall insulation had proven difficult to deliver within costs, and many had not been in favour of internal wall insulation when external wall insulation had not been possible. It was not thought that there would be much success in delivering internal wall insulation as it required lots of work with windowsills, shelves and sockets, which could be obstructions. The Planning team had tried to be flexible where possible and were trying to come up with as many compromises as possible to have external insulation.
- Many buildings had detail on their facades and contractors were being engaged to influence activity prior to planning applications. The Council led by example by demonstrating through council properties what could be achieved.
- A trial was being carried out by the Housing department retrofitting on a terraced house in a way that retained detail but also complied with the standard for retrofitting. Since all retrofits needed to meet the standard, this was important to address. Poor practice in other authorities had shown potential issues, such as water getting behind insulation that caused severe problems, therefore it was important to fully think retrofits through.
- In terms of property licensing, there was a condition for properties to be EPC level 3 or above to obtain a licence.
- Regarding concerns that landlords may have over losing more money than they got back, it was clarified that landlords only had to pay £3k before they could apply for an exemption.
- The slides laid out what would be achieved if all energy efficiency measures could be completed. However, it was reiterated that the cost was prohibitive. The exact figures would be obtained.
- In terms of barriers to retrofitting. Funding was an issue, however, there were other barriers such as disruption to tenants. However, as energy costs increased, people would not want to spend so much of their income on staying warm, therefore it was thought that retrofitting would rise up people's agendas. Even if all the desired funding was available, there would still be barriers, however there were ways of working with tenants to overcome them.
- The current level of EPC level C homes was 36% and the potential was 86% if all stock was retrofitted. This was an aspiration rather than a target and it showed the nature of the challenge.
- Some homes that had been upgraded early had been disqualified from future schemes.
- The figures were from the national data set and were not broken down by city. The most relevant data therefore was the data for the East Midlands.
- It was suggested that it might be useful for officers to come to Ward Community Meetings to disseminate information to tenants and residents, perhaps with a brief presentation on what could be offered

and what could be offered to that Ward in particular.

- Hydrogen-powered heating was not yet being considered as the technology was still in development, however the research was being followed closely. Many people had not wanted to take part in trials due to safety concerns. It was thought that the technology would not be available for a long time and as such heat pumps were unlikely to become obsolete in the near future. At this time there were not many other options than heat pumps.
- The team were not involved in delivering district heating but would endeavour to find out whether metering would be a big burden on tenant's budgets.
- Currently there were no schemes aimed at middle-income households. However, National Energy Action had held a conference and there were loan schemes available whereby loan companies offered low-interest loans to private householders to take measures and make repayments. There were currently no schemes from central government, however, it was thought that the Department of Energy were putting work into Green Finance and 'green mortgages' were offered by some banks. Additionally, energy advice could help to save money on intervention.
- Staff (including front-line staff) across the Council were working to keep the community informed. Part of the reason for the Warm Home Survey was to ensure that retrofits were done correctly, and advice could be given.
- Regarding issues with contractors conducting work before planning permission was granted, the Council were working closely with EON regarding where grants went and ensuring people had correct advice. The Council tried to be as involved as possible so as to mitigate issues. Installers were registered by the Council, but it appeared as though some had done work without informing tenants that planning permission was required. Both the Council and EON were working to ensure that tenants were informed correctly. If it became apparent that contractors were informing tenants incorrectly and including the Council logo on their leaflets, Trading Standards would be informed.
- The timeframe was to reach net zero by 2030, however, it was noted that the costs involved in reaching this would be high.
- It was not thought that all homes would be retrofitted by 2030, however, there was no alternative way of doing it as homes needed to be retrofitted. It was important that the Council did all it could before 2030.
- The idea of heating a person rather than a house (i.e. with electric blankets etc.) had been discussed with energy firms and the national grid. However, it was noted that to do so would risk damp, mouldy houses and the associated health risks. All options were considered to address the heating issue. It was requested that alternative options be laid out in future reports.
- It was difficult to obtain data on individual energy bills to assess the benefits of retrofitting and the relative benefits of different forms of retrofitting, however, modelling software appeared to favour external

insulation over internal due to thermal mass (bricks retaining heat after heating had been switched off). It was suggested that an attempt to gather such data could be made in relation to the works in New Parks.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the comments of the Commission be noted.

42. DRAFT ADULT EDUCATION 'ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT'

The Director for Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submitted a report reviewing the 2019 Adult Education Service plan and to present the 2022-23 Adult Education self-assessment plan.

The Commission were also consulted regarding the draft Accountability Agreement, which laid out planning priorities and targets for 2024-25 and would form the basis of the service's Adult Education Budget contract with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

The Assistant City Mayor - Communities, Adult Learning, Jobs and Skills, the Director for Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment and the Head of Adult Education attended the meeting to assist with the discussion.

Key points included:

- The ESFA Accountability Agreement laid out priorities for use of funding for 2024/25. It was currently in the planning stage, and this was an opportunity for members to learn about the developments and for comments and suggestions that could be incorporated into the Adult Education and Skills Boot Camp programmes for 2024-25.
- An additional £2 million of Skills Bootcamp funding was being applied for.
- Many of the objectives in the plan for 2019-23 had been achieved despite the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Self-Assessment report, as was required by Ofsted, highlighted the impacts post-Covid and had shown good progress with numbers of learners increasing by 28% and achievement by nearly 5%. New funding was being sought in order to get more funding for the long-term viability of the service. The Multiply programme had started and grants from Public Health to expand the service had been secured. Key strengths included a diverse curriculum, the way funding was used, and how additional funding was brought in. Partnership work was outstanding. The team were looking to how they could support other departments' agendas in adult education.
- Areas for improvement included a lower-than-expected attendance,

which was partly explained by sickness and learners having conflicting commitments. Another area for improvement was a shortage of tutors. A trainee tutor programme was under way as part of the Multiply programme, which was working well but was relatively expensive.

- Skills Boot Camps were being trialled.
- The Accountability Agreement that identified priorities was not due until June 2024, but had been brought to the commission well in advance.
- New key points in the Agreement included:
 - The Green Skills Agenda
 - The priorities set out in Leicestershire Learning and Skills Improvement Plan
 - Digital skills
 - The needs of small businesses
 - English as a Second Language (ESOL)
 - Healthy Living and Wellbeing as part of the Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Skills Bootcamps were short intensive courses with a minimum of 60 hours of learning over a maximum of 16 weeks. These were at Level 3 or above (equivalent to A-Level).
- Slides were presented (attached).

The Committee were invited to ask questions and make comments. Key points included:

- Most funding came from national funding, the Community Learning Grant and Skills Budget Funding with was paid according to results. Fees made up part of the funding but not the bulk. Grants were also sought in partnership with other services.
- The Multiply programme provided a flexible way for people to get to GCSE level in mathematics, but the Functional Skills qualification was more relevant to adult needs and had a real-world focus. There was one more year of funding which would be used in ways to ensure that people who had an interest would go on to achieve. Partner organisations were being worked with to engage people on that journey.
- A challenge to gaining skills in mathematics could be a lack of skills in English, as it was necessary for learners to understand the questions.
- Three training providers had signed up for the Boot Camps pilot. The residency criteria was the same as for the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). There was not a requirement to be unemployed to take part. All learners were self-referred.
- Where someone was listed as having no qualifications, it was possible that they had qualification(s) that might not be recognised in the UK. A programme of qualifications was offered and it was aimed to see as

much improvement as possible with what was available. Part of the role of the service was to inform learners of how overseas qualifications become recognised, however this was an expensive process for individuals.

- Around 80% of students were female and many of them were from ethnic minorities. This was often driven by the locations that the service worked out of.
- The Ofsted inspection was overdue, but it was not known when it would happen.
- The scheme for ex-offenders had become sub-regional and had its funding changed. Ex-offenders were still worked with, but data on them was not captured.
- Regarding employability and digital skills, this was based on a referral partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). There was a need to tailor the service so that people came on course. One qualification had a new online exam system, this had not worked well and required improvement.
- Linking with the previous item, it was noted that there was a need for retrofit assessors and a Boot Camp based at Nottingham Trent University trained such assessors. Boot Camps were free to the learner, although if they were employed then the employer made a contribution. Bootcamps were aimed at getting people better trained so as to obtain better roles, ideally with a job ready for them to move into. It was possible for people to gain qualifications independently for personal use, the cost was around £3k. A Boot Camp in retrofitting would be discussed.
- In terms of distinguishing between enrolments and learners, it was clarified that one learner could enrol on multiple courses.
- Regarding engagements with communities, there was a whole-city approach. There was a Local Skills Improvement Plan to provide more provision and more engagement was being sought. There were different providers in different locations, such as WEA, Leicester College and voluntary organisations. It was acknowledged that the system could be difficult to navigate.
- There was a need to seek additional funding for ESOL so as to support refugees and asylum seekers and to provide informal engagement with communities.
- It was clarified that 'surrounding areas' referred largely to the county of Leicestershire. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, there had been a decline in learners from the county coming to the city to learn. It was thought that this was partly due to people working from home and not coming into the city as a result. Statistics would be obtained.
- The service was delivering in more than 100 venues this academic year.
- The Local Skills Improvement Board was led by the Chamber of Commerce. One meeting had taken place made up of people from the county, people from universities, employer representatives and organisations. Under this came sector-focussed groups. Employer

voices were coming into the education system to shape the curriculum and a key part of this was to meet future needs. The National Careers Service had involvement. There were no elected member representatives on the board, although a link to the plan would be circulated.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the comments of the Commission be noted.

The Chair agreed to an agenda variance, Informal Scrutiny Work was taken before EV Charging.

43. EV CHARGING

The Director for Planning, Development and Transportation gives a verbal update on progress with informal work to inform the Commission of progress on current informal scrutiny and to help them decide about priorities for upcoming informal scrutiny.

It was noted that two meetings had taken place for the informal scrutiny on 20mph zones and that a final meeting was taking place in January. Two other informal scrutiny groups had now been proposed, on Electric Vehicle Charging Points and on 24-Hour Bus Lanes. The Commission were asked to decide the priorities for the next informal scrutiny.

It was further noted that the next informal scrutiny could not take place until the informal scrutiny on 20mph zones was complete. It was uncertain as to when guidance from the Department of Transport would come through. It was thought that the government may produce guidance on bus lanes in the future, however, there was none at this time.

By way of an update on the 20mph zones informal scrutiny it was reported that the first session considered baseline information on what was currently done and what could be done, the second meeting had looked at representations from other bodies, and the final session in January would consider recommendations to take to formal scrutiny.

AGREED:

That Electric Vehicle Charging be the next topic of informal scrutiny.

44. INFORMAL SCRUTINY WORK - VERBAL UPDATE

AGREED:

That the presentation on EV Charging be shown at the first informal

scrutiny meeting on the topic.

45. WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted, including the arrangements on informal scrutiny that had been discussed at the meeting.

46. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting ended at 19:41.

Skills Bootcamps 2024-25

These are short, intensive courses that support individuals to change direction or update their skills. (minimum 60 hours, max 16 weeks, Level 3 (A Level) or above)

30% of the funding is linked to participants achieving a relevant job outcome (new job, new responsibilities, improved self-employment opportunities), therefore employer demand needs to be identified at the outset.

Approx. 500 places across Leicester and Leicestershire



Priority Sectors

- **Digital** – cyber security, digital marketing, software development, data analytics
- **Technical** – advanced textiles / knitwear
- **Construction** – groundworks
- **Green Skills** – retrofit, agriculture
- **Logistics** – HGV driving
- **Creative industries** – sound and light engineering
- **Other** – up to 30% of the funding can be used for ‘other sectors’



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Key questions

- Which industries offer potential for quick re-skilling?
- Which sectors are facing rapid changes?
- Which sectors have significant skills gaps/ recruitment challenges?



Next steps

- Confirmation of funding – end of Dec
- Expressions of interest – Jan/Feb
- Review of recruitment on 2023-24 pilot - Feb
- Procurement 24/25 – March
- Delivery from May 24 – March 25

Revenue Budget 2024/25

Decision to be taken by: Council

Date of meeting: 21 February 2024

Lead director: Amy Oliver, Director of Finance



City Mayor

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected:
- Report author: Catherine Taylor/Kirsty Cowell
- Author contact details: catherine.taylor@leicester.gov.uk
kirsty.cowell@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. **Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the City Mayor's proposed budget for 2024/25 and to describe the future financial outlook.
- 1.2 The proposed budget is described in this report, subject to any amendments the City Mayor may wish to recommend when he makes a firm proposal to the Council.

2. **Summary**

- 2.1 The medium term financial outlook is the most severe we have ever known. Like many authorities, we face the real probability of not being able to balance our budget in 2025/26, necessitating a formal report under section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (indeed, some authorities appear to be in that position already). In previous years, we have used a "managed reserves policy", by which specific reserves have been set aside to support budgets and buy us time to make cuts. Without new money from the Government, the proposed budget will exhaust these reserves. The Council also holds a £15m emergency reserves balance, some of which looks like it will need to be spent in 2024/25.
- 2.2 The background to this severe outlook is:
 - (a) a "decade of austerity" between 2010 and 2020 in which services other than social care had to be reduced by 50% in real terms. This has substantially reduced the scope to make further cuts;
 - (b) the covid-19 pandemic where we set "stop gap" budgets whilst we dealt with the immediate emergency. Budgets in 2021/22 to 2022/23 were supported by managed reserves;
 - (c) recent cost pressures, shared by authorities across the country. These include pressures on the costs of children looked after and support for homeless households, as well as the long-standing pressures in adult social care and the hike in inflation. The budget for 2023/24 was supported by a further £34m of managed reserves;
 - (d) a new round of austerity is expected, which will lead to further cuts to local authority funding from 2025/26. Meanwhile cost pressures have continued to mount since we set the 2023/24 budget, most notably in children's services and support for the homeless.
- 2.3 As yet, we only have national information, and have had to prepare a draft budget without the benefit of our own local funding settlement. This has required us to

make assumptions based on a share of national amounts. The report assumes that no new Government funding will be forthcoming.

- 2.4 The “fair funding” review of local government finance has been continuously delayed, meaning that most of the data on which our funding is based is now at least 10 years old (and disregards, for instance, increases in the city’s population).
- 2.5 The Government’s chosen measure of a council’s ability to spend is “core spending power”. This core spending power consists of a number of funding sources with only a small element being provided by Government Grant. This budget implies a core spending power increase of £23.8m being 6.9%. The Government may point to this as a reason why local authorities have a received an above inflation increase, but as this report indicates it does not come close enough to fund our forecast pressures.
- 2.6 Additionally, core spending power is predominantly raised locally and not provided by central government. In 2023/24 only 25% of core spending power came from government grant
- 2.7 The budget reflects savings of £10m which have been achieved during 2023/24 and approved separately. This, however, is dwarfed by the £40m of unavoidable service growth we have had to build in, and which is further explained in section 6 below. The City Mayor has made national representations about the extremely serious effect current government funding policy will have on the entire sector, but so far there has been no indication that this will be addressed.
- 2.8 We will continue to make further savings. However, it is clear that the budget needs a root and branch review if we are to have any hope of balancing the budget for 2025/26. Inevitably, this means a lot of discretionary services will be under threat. Such a review will commence in January. We have also commissioned a peer review which will be carried out early in 2024 by the Local Government Association. This will either help us identify additional savings, or provide evidence of the impossibility of the challenge.
- 2.9 The budget proposes a tax increase of just under 5%, which is the maximum we believe we will be allowed to set without a referendum.
- 2.10 The medium term outlook is attached as Appendix Four and shows the escalating scale of the financial pressures facing the council.

3. **Recommendations**

- 3.1 At its meeting in February, the Council will be asked to:
 - (a) approve the budget strategy described in this report;
 - (b) approve a formal budget resolution, which sets the council tax level for 2024/25;
 - (c) approve the budget ceilings for each service, drafts of which are shown at Appendix One to this report;

- (d) approve the scheme of virement described in Appendix Two to this report;
- (e) note my view on the adequacy of reserves and the estimates used in preparing the budget;
- (f) note the equality implications arising from the proposed tax increase, as described in paragraph 11 and Appendix Three;
- (g) note the medium term financial strategy and forecasts presented at Appendix Four, and the significant financial challenges ahead;
- (h) note that the Executive is not recommending any changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme in 2024/25, but intends to consult on a new “banded scheme” in time for the 2025/26 budget (section 8). The making of savings in the cost of the scheme will be explored at the same time.
- (i) subject to consultation, approve any changes in Council Tax premiums that will be described in a separate appendix.

4. **Budget Overview**

4.1 The table below summarises the proposed budget for 2024/25 (summary projections for a three-year period are included in the medium term strategy at Appendix Four):

	2024/25 £m
Service budget ceilings	375.5
Corporate Budgets	
Inflation provisions and contingencies	25.2
Capital Financing	2.7
Miscellaneous Corporate Budgets	2.0
Demographic pressures provision	8.0
Total forecast spending	413.4
Rates retention scheme:	
Business rates income	76.4
Top-up payment	62.0
Revenue Support Grant	34.7
Other resources:	
Council Tax	153.1
Collection Fund surplus	0.6
Social Care grants	32.1
Other grants	2.0
Total forecast resources	260.9
Underlying gap in resources	52.5
Use of Managed Reserves	43.6
Use of General Fund Emergency Balance	8.9
Gap in resources	NIL

4.2 The draft budget forecasts are uncertain, because we have had to prepare them before getting details of funding from the government. However, it is clear that the future financial position is very serious.

5. **Construction of the Budget and Council Tax**

- 5.1 By law, the Council's role in budget setting is to determine:
- (a) The level of council tax;
 - (b) The limits on the amount the City Mayor is entitled to spend on any service ("budget ceilings") - proposed budget ceilings are shown at Appendix One;
- 5.2 In line with Finance Procedure Rules, Council must also approve the scheme of virement that controls subsequent changes to these ceilings. The proposed scheme is shown at Appendix Two.
- 5.3 The draft budget is based on a proposed Band D tax for 2024/25 of £1,924.63, an increase of just under 5% compared to 2023/24. This is believed to be the maximum which will be permitted without a referendum.
- 5.4 The tax levied by the City Council constitutes only part of the tax Leicester citizens have to pay (albeit the major part – 84% in 2023/24). Separate taxes are raised by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Combined Fire Authority. These are added to the Council's tax, to constitute the total tax charged.
- 5.5 The actual amounts people will be paying, however, depend upon the valuation band their property is in and their entitlement to any discounts, exemptions or benefit. Almost 80% of properties in the city are in band A or band B, so the tax will be lower than the Band D figure quoted above. The Council also has schemes for mitigating hardship.
- 5.6 The Police and Crime Commissioner and Combined Fire Authority will set their precepts in February 2024. The formal resolution will set out the precepts issued for 2024/25, together with the total tax payable in the city.

6. **Departmental Budget Ceilings**

- 6.1 Budget ceilings have been prepared for each service, calculated as follows:
- (a) The starting point is last year's budget, subject to any changes made since then which are permitted by the constitution (e.g. virement);
 - (b) An allowance is made for non-pay inflation on a restricted number of budgets. Our general rule is that no allowance is made, and departments are expected to manage with the same cash sum that they had in the previous year. Exceptions are made for the budgets for independent sector adult social care (2%) and foster care (2%) but as these areas of service are receiving growth funding, an inflation allowance is merely academic (we pay from one pot rather than another). Budgets for the waste PFI contract have been increased by RPI, in line with contract terms. A sum of £5m has been allocated to reset budgets based on current energy prices.
 - (c) Unavoidable growth has been built into the budget, as described in the sections below;

- (d) As discussed in the summary, action is being taken to reduce budgeted spend, and where decisions have already been taken budget ceilings have been reduced (this process will continue up to approval of the final budget).
- 6.2 The proposed budget ceilings are set out in Appendix One.
- 6.3 The local government pay award for 2023/24 was agreed in November 2023. Modelling of the cost suggests it will be an average 6.2% across the Council's (non-schools) employees. For this draft budget, the amount is held in a central provision, but will be added to service budget lines for the final budget. A further central provision is held to fund the 2024/25 pay award, forecast at 5%. Additionally, reflecting the extreme volatility of some budgets, a further £8m has been set aside in a central provision which will only be released if needed.
- 6.4 The role of the Council is to determine the financial envelopes within which the City Mayor has authority to act. Notwithstanding the way the budget has been constructed, the law does not enable the Council to determine how the City Mayor provides services within these envelopes: this is within his discretion.

Adult Social Care

- 6.5 Adult social care services nationally have been facing severe cost pressures for some years, and these are expected to continue.
- 6.6 The demand for service looks to continue accelerating in future years, as a consequence of increases in the level of need of the average care recipient and pressure on providers due to National Living Wage increases, as well as ongoing rising numbers of adults requiring care. For 2024/25 the budget has been increased by £13.7m as a result of these impacts.
- 6.7 The government has generally responded to growth pressures on an ad-hoc basis, making one-off resources available year by year. Indicative (national) funding totals for 2023/24 and 2024/25 were announced in autumn 2022, and our estimate of our share is included in this draft budget. We have no indication of any further increases in funding.
- 6.8 The Autumn Statement is on 22nd November 2023, and this report will be further updated with any announced additional funding for pressures in adult social care.
- 6.9 The proposed budget includes growth of £13.7m in 2024/25 (net of standard inflation of 2%) for the increased costs of packages of support, estimated to rise to £30.5m by 2025/26. The 2024/25 growth takes account of the continuation of the government's discharge and workforce improvement grants totalling £4.6m. However, it is not expected that these grants will increase in 2025/26 hence the larger cost increase in 2025/26.
- 6.10 In year increases in package costs for people with existing packages of care has been a substantial ongoing budget pressure. Significant work is now being undertaken to reduce future pressures in this area. This work includes reviewing existing working practices and identifying best practice and embedding that across all social work teams together with increasing alternative non-adult social care provision to support increased needs. This includes change and

improvement to support designed to reduce people's need for formal care, social work assessment, and commissioning practice. The budget assumes that this work will have a positive impact, but this will be challenging and clearly there remains a risk of exceeding the budget.

Education and Children's Services

- 6.11 In common with authorities across the country, increased demand for children's social care services has created substantial budget pressure for many years.
- 6.12 A forecast of placement costs in 2024/25 and 2025/26 has been made, and £17.2m added to the budget for 2024/25. The forecast builds on a budget that is already under pressure (it is expected to overspend in 2023/24). It assumes that non-UASC (unaccompanied asylum seeking children) entrants into the care system continue at the same level as in 2023/24, and that there is further growth in UASC children becoming looked after until the government target of 0.1% of the city 0-17 population is reached. 2023/24 has been notable for the unusually high average placement costs of new entrants. This is as a result of some particular placements requiring high levels of support, together with price pressure from providers.
- 6.13 Work is continuing to take place to reduce placement costs:
- (a) Regular review of long-term, emergency and high cost placements;
 - (b) Substantial work began in August 2023 with the consultancy firm Impower who were commissioned to undertake an analysis of placements and the match between costs and assessed needs. This helpful analysis of a large cohort of children in higher cost placements (182, 20% of the overall population), has already identified several cohorts of placements that will be the subject of targeted activity to address mismatches in cost versus level of need to generate significant savings. This work will take place in 2023/24 and 2024/25.
 - (c) An extensive review of our internal resources (fostering and children's homes) to ensure that the capacity and resilience of these are maximised.
 - (d) Business cases will be put forward for capital investment to expand our internal children's home resources over the next 5 years.
 - (e) The need to increase the number of foster carers is clear and work is ongoing to make the council website more accessible to attract more enquiries. The training and support levels will also be reviewed to avoid placement breakdown.
 - (f) A review of council resources deployed to prevent entry into care will also be completed with a view to refocusing/retargeting resources to have

greater impact for those children and young people at greater risk of becoming looked after.

- (g) A strengthening of the role of commissioning in sourcing placements will also take place and a tighter focus on contract management and capping cost inflation will be deployed to limit the impact of demands by providers for uplifts.
 - (h) Work with the ICB to agree joint funding solutions for complex, high-need children;
- 6.14 The budget assumes a lower average placement cost for new entrants in 2024/25. In part this is because of the work outlined above; but also there is a variation in the percentages of different placement types (and therefore average cost) from year to year and therefore it is more appropriate to look at average placement percentages over a longer period to determine future entrance costs to smooth out this variation. There is of course a risk with this approach if a particular variation is a new ongoing trend, but placement cost will continue to be monitored through routine budgetary control reports.
- 6.15 A further £2.5m has been added to the department's budget. £0.5m of this relates to increasing pressure on legal and translation budgets for children's social care. Legal has had significant difficulties in recruiting permanent staff and has had to rely on locums to meet demand which is more costly.
- 6.16 £1.4m of the £2.5m is to address the continued pressure on home to school transport budgets mainly for SEND children but also for children looked after. These pressures have been highlighted in the 2023/24 revenue monitoring report which are a result of increasing numbers of pupils with education, health and care plans (EHCPs) requiring transport support and continued price pressure from taxi firms.
- 6.17 The remaining £0.6m of the £2.5m addresses equally a rising demand for respite payments for disabled children together with a substantial loss of previously traded casework with schools by the Education Welfare service. The DfE have made this work a statutory duty for local authorities and have decided, inexplicably, that the change does not meet the threshold for new burdens funding.
- 6.18 In addition to the General Fund budget, Dedicated Schools Grant (High Needs Block, HNB) budgets for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities continue to be under severe pressure. In common with most authorities, the Council has a deficit on its DSG reserve estimated to stand at £11.7m by the end of 23/24 resulting from unavoidable overspends. This is a national issue and in fact, most authorities are in a significantly worse position than Leicester.
- 6.19 In 2020, the government introduced a statutory override for a period of 3 years to the end of March 2023 which meant that local authorities' DSG deficits could not

be funded from their general reserves. The intention was to prevent council tax services being cut to fund these DSG deficits. Of course, whilst this means that the LA does not have to 'fund' these deficits on a permanent basis currently, it does have to find the cash to pay for the deficits, meaning the LA's cash position is lower than it would otherwise be. Following a 'gathering of evidence' from LAs in the summer of 2022, government confirmed in the local government finance policy statement published in December 2022, that the statutory override would be extended for a further 3 years to end in March 2026. This budget has been prepared on the basis of that extension.

- 6.20 In keeping with other local authorities we have prepared a draft deficit recovery plan, which all authorities with deficits are required to do. We are currently still in discussion with the DfE regarding the details of the plan, however the DfE have confirmed that it is not currently their intention to put Leicester into one of their two intervention programmes – the 'delivering better value' programme or the 'safety valve' programme. Leicester is however part of the 'SEND and alternative provision change programme partnership' with LLR and the DfE which begins late 2023. This DfE funded programme is intended to allow local authorities to 'road test' the ideas and approaches outlined in the DfE's SEND improvement plan to bring high needs costs under control alongside wider SEND system reform.
- 6.21 The main issue for Leicester is the step change in demand for EHCPs post pandemic. Numbers of plans agreed have doubled since the years immediately prior to the pandemic. We need a system wide change to address this which, whilst still recognising the child's needs, means that those needs can be addressed to a much greater extent within existing resources within mainstream settings. This will require a culture change and the adoption of the best practice for inclusivity across all schools.

City Development and Neighbourhoods

- 6.22 Homelessness is currently a significant pressure in 2023/24, as a consequence of insufficient homes being available for rent at or below the level of the local housing allowance, meaning more families cannot afford a roof over their heads. This will be compounded by the Government's plans to fast-track the cases of asylum seekers currently being housed in hotels in the city.
- 6.23 Growth of £5m has been added to the budget to meet costs of accommodation for increasing numbers of families presenting as homeless. This remains a high risk area – if demand continues to increase at current rates, further growth will be required. There is a plan to address the needs of homeless families through the Housing Revenue Account, which will provide partial relief.
- 6.24 Other areas of the department's budget are relatively predictable (compared with social care and homelessness services), and the department is expected to be able to live within its resources.

Health and Wellbeing

- 6.25 The division, together with a number of services provided by other departments, is paid for from the public health grant. This grant is ring-fenced for defined public health purposes wherever they are provided in the Council. General Fund monies have also been spent on public health services, both before and after 2013/14 when the function transferred from the NHS.
- 6.26 The future of public health grant is unclear. It is not known whether it will remain as a separate grant when local government funding reforms are eventually introduced: previous proposals have suggested it will be included in general funding arrangements.
- 6.27 The department is able to live within its resources in 2024/25, and no budget growth is proposed.

Corporate Resources Department

- 6.28 The department primarily provides internal support services together with leading on good corporate governance, but also some public facing services such as benefits, collection of council tax, customer contact and sports services. The department has made considerable savings in recent years in order to contribute to the Council's overall savings targets. It has nonetheless achieved a balanced budget each year.
- 6.29 Whilst the budget is broadly balanced, a number of factors may lead to budget pressures in the department, most notably in respect of the cost of living crisis affecting demand for Revenues & Benefits and Customer Services; and pressures in Legal Services.

7. Corporately held Budgets and Provisions

- 7.1 In addition to the services' budget ceilings, some budgets are held corporately. These are described below.
- 7.2 The budget for **capital financing** represents the cost of interest and debt repayment on past years' capital spending, less interest received on balances held by the council. The net cost has reduced recently due to increasing interest rates leading to better returns on balances (while the majority of our borrowing is on fixed rates and is not affected by interest rate variations in the short term). As we spend our reserves, however, interest on balances will fall. As shown in the Treasury Management Strategy (elsewhere on your agenda) it is likely we will need to borrow in 2024/25, and these costs are reflected in the budget.
- 7.3 **Miscellaneous central budgets** include external audit fees, pension costs of some former staff, levy payments to the Environment Agency, bank charges, general insurance costs, money set aside to assist council tax payers suffering hardship and other sums it is not appropriate to include in service budgets. These budgets are partially offset by the effect of recharges from the general fund into other statutory accounts of the Council.

8. Resources

- 8.1 At the time of writing, the local government finance settlement for 2024/25 has not been published. Current estimates of government funding we will receive are therefore based on information included in the government's fiscal statements, and are liable to change.
- 8.2 The majority of the council's core funding comes from business rates; government grant funding; and council tax. Service-specific sources of funding, such as fees & charges and specific grants, are credited to the relevant budget ceilings, and are part of departmental budgets.

Business rates and core grant funding

- 8.3 Local government retains 50% of business rates collected locally, with the balance being paid to central government. In recognition of the fact that different authorities' ability to raise rates do not correspond to needs, there are additional elements of the business rates retention scheme: a top-up to local business rates, paid to authorities with lower taxbases, and Revenue Support Grant (RSG).
- 8.4 Government decisions in recent years have reduced the amount of rates collected from businesses, by limiting annual increases in the multiplier used to calculate rates and by introducing reliefs for various classes of business. The government's practice is to compensate authorities for lost income due to changes to the scheme. So many changes have been made in recent years that by 2023/24 compensation made up around a third of the "rates" income received by the Council. The complexity of these changes, and the fact that a single ratepayer may be affected by several overlapping changes, makes it difficult to accurately estimate rates income; the estimates in this draft report are the best we can make at present. In practice, we believe that the system of business rates is becoming unsustainable in its current form.
- 8.5 The figures in the draft budget assume no significant growth or decline in "rates" from the current position, apart from inflationary increases. In effect, we are assuming we will get £ for £ compensation for all changes the Government is making which affect payable rates (which is likely). These figures will be revised for the final budget to be approved in February.
- 8.6 The majority of other funding streams in previous budgets, including the New Homes Bonus and Services Grant, have been sharply cut in recent years.

Council tax

- 8.7 Council tax income is estimated at £153.6m in 2024/25, based on an assumed tax increase of just below 5% (the maximum allowed without a referendum). The proposed tax increase includes an additional "social care levy" of 2%, designed to help social care authorities mitigate the growing costs of social care. Since our tax base is relatively low for the size of population, the levy raises just £2.9m per year.

- 8.8 The estimated council tax base has remained largely flat since last year's budget; this appears to be the result of slower housebuilding numbers, and a growing number of exempt properties (mostly student accommodation).
- 8.9 It is proposed that no changes to the council tax support scheme are made in 2024/25, but we intend to consult on a "banded scheme" to be introduced in 2025/26. Such a scheme works by placing claimants' weekly income into a band. Council tax support is awarded by reference to the band, without differentiation. If a claimant's income changes, no recalculation of support is required unless the change is significant enough to place them in a different band. Claimants benefit from such a scheme as they know in advance what support they will get from month to month, and our own administration process would be simpler. The scheme can be devised so that certain types of income are disregarded to protect the most vulnerable customers (e.g. disability living allowance or personal independence payments). Significantly, the approach provides more flexibility when seeking to achieve savings. It allows for local priorities to be considered, and the effects forecast: following analysis an informed decision can be reached. The current model does not facilitate this.

Other grants

- 8.10 The majority of grant funding is treated as income to the relevant service departments and is not shown separately in the table at paragraph 4.1. The most substantial grant held corporately is the **Social Care Grant**, which has been provided each year since 2016/17 to reflect national cost and demographic pressures. It has been increased several times since then, and is now a significant amount. In 2023/24, our share of this funding was over £28m, and a further increase is planned for 2024/25. We do not yet know how this will be allocated to authorities; the budget assumes a share similar to previous social care funding allocations.

Collection Fund surplus / deficit

- 8.11 Collection fund surpluses arise when more tax is collected than assumed in previous budgets. Deficits arise when the converse is true.
- 8.12 The Council has an estimated **council tax collection fund deficit** of £1.0m, after allowing for shares to be paid by the police and fire authorities. This largely relates to numbers of exempt properties being higher than expected when the budget was set.
- 8.13 The Council has an estimated **business rates collection fund surplus** of £1.6m. Because of changes to reliefs in recent years that were funded by government grants, the actual collection fund position is distorted and various technical accounting adjustments (that will balance out over the years) are required.

9. **Managed Reserves Strategy**

- 9.1 Since 2013, the Council has employed a managed reserves strategy, contributing money to reserves when savings are realised and drawing down reserves when needed. This policy has bought time to more fully consider how to make the recurrent cuts which have been necessary in nearly every budget year.
- 9.2 As at April 2023, resources available for the strategy totalled £65.8m. A significant proportion of this will be required to balance the budget in the current financial year. A review of one-off resources available has identified £8.5m that can be released from the capital reserve to support the revenue budget.
- 9.3 Unless further savings are found, or the Government provides more money, the draft budget will require £52.0m of support from reserves in 2024/25, which exceeds the amount available, and will require the use of the General Fund emergency balance. This also leaves no resources to offset pressures in 2025/26, and indicates that a section 114 report will become a probability:

	£m
Available to support budget as at 1/4/2023	65.8
Additional funding identified	8.5
Estimated amount Required in 2023/24	(30.7)
Estimated amount required for 2024/25 budget	(52.5)
Shortfall for 2024/25 to be funded from Emergency Balance	(8.9)

- 9.4 The Council has long held a £15m minimum working balance of reserves (the emergency pot). As can be seen, we look set to draw from this reserve in 2024/25.

10. **Earmarked Reserves**

- 10.1 In addition to our general reserves, the Council also holds earmarked reserves which are set aside for specific purposes. These include ringfenced funds which are held by the Council but for which we have obligations to other partners or organisations; departmental reserves, which are held for specific services; and corporate reserves, which are held for purposes applicable to the organisation as a whole.
- 10.2 A review of earmarked reserves is being finalised to identify any that can be released to minimise the call on the General Fund Emergency Balance for 2024/25. The final report will include a summary of earmarked reserves currently held, as well as their planned usage.
- 10.3 The planned use of earmarked reserves will be monitored through the regular revenue budget monitoring process, and reported to members throughout each financial year.

11. **Budget and Equalities**

- 11.1 The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for its residents; both through its policies aimed at reducing inequality of outcomes, and through its practices aimed at ensuring fair treatment for all and the provision of appropriate and culturally sensitive services that meet local people's needs.
- 11.2 In accordance with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must "have due regard", when making decisions, to the need to meet the following aims of our Public Sector Equality Duty :-
- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 11.3 Protected groups under the public sector equality duty are characterised by age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 11.4 When making decisions, the Council (or decision maker, such as the City Mayor) must be clear about any equalities implications of the course of action proposed. In doing so, it must consider the likely impact on those likely to be affected by the recommendation; their protected characteristics; and (where negative impacts are anticipated) mitigating actions that can be taken to reduce or remove that negative impact.
- 11.5 The budget does not propose any service changes which will have an impact on residents. Where appropriate, an individual Equalities Impact Assessment for any service changes will be undertaken when these decisions are developed.
- 11.6 The budget does recommend a proposed council tax increase for the city's residents. The City Council's proposed tax for 2024/25 is £1,924.63, an increase of just below 5% compared to 2023/24. As the recommended increase could have an impact on those required to pay it, an assessment has been carried out to inform decision makers of the potential equalities implications. This includes the potential impacts of alternative options.
- 11.7 A number of risks to the budget are addressed within this report (section 12 below). If these risks are not mitigated effectively, there could be a disproportionate impact on people with particular protected characteristics and therefore ongoing consideration of the risks and any potential disproportionate equalities impacts, as well as mitigations to address disproportionate impacts for those with particular protected characteristics, is required.

12. **Risk Assessment and Estimates**

- 12.1 Best practice requires me to identify any risks associated with the budget, and Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires me to report on the adequacy of reserves and the robustness of estimates.
- 12.2 This requires a judgement to be made, which is now hard given the volatility of some elements of the budget and the depletion of our reserves. In practice, the budget is replete with risk.
- 12.3 The most significant issue in developing the 2024/25 budget has been ongoing cost pressures in demand-led service areas, particularly social care and support for homeless households. These have risen very steeply during 2023/24 and there is no guarantee this will not happen again.
- 12.4 Setting the final budget will also depend on the funding settlement from central government, expected in December, current indications are that there is no additional grant funding for local authorities.
- 12.5 The budget seeks to manage these risks as follows:
- (a) £6m of emergency balances remain;
 - (b) A provision for demographic pressures of £8m per year has been included in the budget;
 - (c) In theory, the Council can also draw on the capital finance reserve. This is essentially a capital resource that has been “switched” with revenue (behind the scenes) over many years, in part to provide flexibility for times such as these. Using it would, however, force us to cut the approved capital programme or borrow, leading to future revenue cost, so it must be seen very much as a last resort.
- 12.6 Subject to the above comments, I believe our reserves can just about be considered adequate and that the estimates made in preparing the budget are sufficiently robust to allow the budget to be approved. If demand pressures again rise in the way that they have in 2023/24, I will need to consider whether section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1988, requires me to write a formal report on the basis that our spending is likely to exceed our resources. In practice, this is more likely to be a consideration in respect of the 2025/26 budget.
- 12.7 Looking further ahead, we need to identify and approve options for further savings (and to reduce growth) so that we can ensure we are financially sustainable beyond 2024/25. Work to identify options is taking place, but we will need to delve more deeply than we have ever had to before.

13. **Financial, Legal and Other Implications**

13.1 **Financial Implications**

This report is exclusively concerned with financial issues.

13.2 **Legal Implications** *[to follow]*

DRAFT

Budget Ceilings (provisional)

	2023/24 latest budget £000's	Savings £000's	Growth Planned in Budgets £000's	Non-Pay Inflation £000's	24/25 budget ceiling £000's
<u>1. City Development & Neighbourhoods</u>					
<u>1.1 Neighbourhood & Environmental Services</u>					
Divisional Management	243.0				243.0
Regulatory Services	2,008.8	(318.0)			1,690.8
Waste Management	22,915.3	(135.0)		262.8	23,043.1
Parks & Open Spaces	4,734.1	(573.4)			4,160.7
Neighbourhood Services	5,827.5	(153.0)			5,674.5
Standards & Development	1,694.2	(185.8)			1,508.4
Divisional sub-total	37,422.9	(1,365.2)	0.0	262.8	36,320.5
<u>1.2 Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment</u>					
Arts & Museums	3,726.6	(71.0)			3,655.6
De Montfort Hall	461.4	(25.0)			436.4
City Centre	26.0				26.0
Place Marketing Organisation	39.4				39.4
Economic Development	64.8				64.8
Markets	(286.5)	(30.0)			(316.5)
Adult Skills	(861.2)				(861.2)
Divisional Management	186.6	(32.0)			154.6
Divisional sub-total	3,357.1	(158.0)	0.0	0.0	3,199.1
<u>1.3 Planning, Transportation & Economic Development</u>					
Transport Strategy	9,802.6	(605.0)			9,197.6
Highways	2,887.5	(83.0)			2,804.5
Planning	1,123.0	(40.0)			1,083.0
Divisional Management - PDT	141.5				141.5
Divisional sub-total	13,954.6	(728.0)	0.0	0.0	13,226.6
<u>1.4 Estates & Building Services</u>					
	4,860.5	(1,004.7)		0.0	3,855.8
<u>1.5 Housing Services</u>					
	4,449.0	(542.0)	5,000.0	0.0	8,907.0
<u>1.6 Departmental Overheads</u>					
	575.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	575.4
DEPARTMENTAL TOTAL	64,619.5	(3,797.9)	5,000.0	262.8	66,084.4

Budget Ceilings (provisional)

	2023/24 latest budget £000's	Savings £000's	Growth Planned in Budgets £000's	Non-Pay Inflation £000's	24/25 budget ceiling £000's
2. Adults					
2.1 Adult Social Care & Safeguarding					
Other Management & support	764.8				764.8
Safeguarding	242.1				242.1
Preventative Services	5,141.7				5,141.7
Independent Sector Care Package Costs	153,472.2		13,664.0	2,723.1	169,859.3
Care Management (Localities)	10,528.8				10,528.8
Divisional sub-total	170,149.6	0.0	13,664.0	2,723.1	186,536.7
2.2 Adult Social Care & Commissioning					
Enablement & Day Care	3,076.0	(813.0)			2,263.0
Care Management (LD & AMH)	5,324.8				5,324.8
Preventative Services	719.5				719.5
Contracts, Commissioning & Other Support	6,580.5				6,580.5
Departmental	(34,309.4)				(34,309.4)
Divisional sub-total	(18,608.6)	(813.0)	0.0	0.0	(19,421.6)
DEPARTMENT TOTAL	151,541.0	(813.0)	13,664.0	2,723.1	167,115.1
3. Education & Children's Services					
3.1 Strategic Commissioning & Business Support					
	2,239.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,239.3
3.2 Learning Quality & Performance					
Raising Achievement	393.8				393.8
Learning & Inclusion	1,363.6				1,363.6
Special Education Needs and Disabilities	17,828.4		1,400.0		19,228.4
Divisional sub-total	19,585.8	0.0	1,400.0	0.0	20,985.8
3.3 Children, Young People and Families					
Children In Need	15,358.7		600.0		15,958.7
Looked After Children	44,287.1	(155.0)	17,200.0	214.1	61,546.2
Safeguarding & QA	2,595.3	(18.0)	500.0		3,077.3
Community Safety	809.5	(160.0)			649.5
Early Help Targeted Services	4,897.0	(2,000.0)			2,897.0
Early Help Specialist Services	3,667.7				3,667.7
Divisional sub-total	71,615.3	(2,333.0)	18,300.0	214.1	87,796.4
3.4 Departmental Resources	1,537.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,537.3
DEPARTMENTAL TOTAL	94,977.7	(2,333.0)	19,700.0	214.1	112,558.8

Budget Ceilings (provisional)

	2023/24 latest budget £000's	Savings £000's	Growth Planned in Budgets £000's	Non-Pay Inflation £000's	24/25 budget ceiling £000's
4. Health and Wellbeing					
Adults' Services	9,001.6				9,001.6
Children's 0-19 Services	9,289.5				9,289.5
Lifestyle Services	1,257.3				1,257.3
Staffing & Infrastructure & Other	2,595.4				2,595.4
Sports Services	2,552.5	(390.0)			2,162.5
DEPARTMENT TOTAL	24,696.3	(390.0)	0.0	0.0	24,306.3
5. Corporate Resources Department					
5.1 Delivery, Communications & Political Governanc	5,408.4	(116.0)	0.0	0.0	5,292.4
5.2 Financial Services					
Financial Support	4,865.5	(205.0)			4,660.5
Revenues & Benefits	7,590.5	(1,100.0)			6,490.5
Divisional sub-total	12,456.0	(1,305.0)	0.0	0.0	11,151.0
5.3 Human Resources	3,880.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	3,880.1
5.4 Information Services	10,734.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	10,734.2
5.5 Legal Services	3,751.2	(200.0)	400.0	0.0	3,951.2
Legal Services					
DEPARTMENTAL TOTAL	36,229.9	(1,621.0)	400.0	0.0	35,008.9
TOTAL -Service Budget Ceilings	372,064.4	(8,954.9)	38,764.0	3,200.0	405,073.5
<u>Note</u>					
less Public Health grant					(29,564.8)
Service expenditure as at paragraph 4.1					375,508.7

Scheme of Virement

1. This appendix explains the scheme of virement which will apply to the budget, if it is approved by the Council.

Budget Ceilings

2. Directors are authorised to vire sums within budget ceilings without limit, providing such virement does not give rise to a change of Council policy.
3. Directors are authorised to vire money between any two budget ceilings within their departmental budgets, provided such virement does not give rise to a change of Council policy. The maximum amount by which any budget ceiling can be increased or reduced during the course of a year is £500,000. This money can be vired on a one-off or permanent basis.
4. Directors are responsible, in consultation with the appropriate Assistant Mayor if necessary, for determining whether a proposed virement would give rise to a change of Council policy.
5. Movement of money between budget ceilings is not virement to the extent that it reflects changes in management responsibility for the delivery of services.
6. The City Mayor is authorised to increase or reduce any budget ceiling. The maximum amount by which any budget ceiling can be increased during the course of a year is £5m. Increases or reductions can be carried out on a one-off or permanent basis.
7. The Director of Finance may vire money between budget ceilings where such movements represent changes in accounting policy, or other changes which do not affect the amounts available for service provision.
8. Nothing above requires the City Mayor or any director to spend up to the budget ceiling for any service.

Corporate Budgets

9. The following authorities are granted in respect of corporate budgets:
 - (a) the Director of Finance may incur costs for which there is provision in miscellaneous corporate budgets, except that any policy decision requires the approval of the City Mayor;
 - (b) the Director of Finance may allocate the provision for pay awards;
 - (c) The City Mayor may determine how the demographic pressures contingency can be applied.

Earmarked Reserves

10. Earmarked reserves may be created or dissolved by the City Mayor. In creating a reserve, the purpose of the reserve must be clear.

11. Directors may add sums to an earmarked reserve, from:
 - (a) a budget ceiling, if the purposes of the reserve are within the scope of the service budget;
 - (b) year-end budget underspends, subject to the approval of the City Mayor.
12. Directors may spend earmarked reserves on the purpose for which they have been created, but must obtain the agreement of the Director of Finance before the spend is committed.
13. When an earmarked reserve is dissolved, the City Mayor shall determine the use of any remaining balance.

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Equality Impact Assessment

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This appendix presents the equalities impact of a proposed 4.99% council tax increase. This includes a precept of 2% for Adult Social Care, as permitted by the Government without requiring a referendum.
- 1.2 The alternative option for comparison is a freeze on council tax at 2023/24 levels. It would of course be possible to set a council tax increase between these two levels, or indeed to *reduce* the Band D tax.

2. Who is affected by the proposal?

- 2.1 As at October 2023, there were 132,019 properties liable for Council Tax in the city (excluding those registered as exempt, such as student households).
- 2.2 All non-exempt working age households in Leicester are required to contribute towards their council tax bill. Our current council tax support scheme (CTSS) requires working age households to pay at least 20% of their council tax bill and sets out to ensure that the most vulnerable householders are given some relief in response to financial hardship they may experience.
- 2.3 Council tax support for pensioner households follows different rules. Low-income pensioners are eligible for up to 100% relief through the CTSS scheme.

3. How are they affected?

- 3.1 The table below sets out the financial impact of the proposed council tax increase on different properties, before any discounts or reliefs are applied. It shows the weekly increase in each band, and the minimum weekly increase for those in receipt of a reduction under the CTSS for working-age households.

Band	No. of Properties	Weekly increase (£)	Minimum Weekly Increase under CTSS (£)
A-	339	0.98	0.20
A	77,914	1.17	0.23
B	26,471	1.37	0.27
C	15,237	1.56	0.47
D	6,504	1.76	0.66
E	3,385	2.15	1.05
F	1,525	2.54	1.44
G	606	2.93	1.84
H	38	3.51	2.42
Total	132,019		

- 3.2 In most cases, the change in council tax (around £1.37 per week for a band B property with no discounts; and just 27p per week if eligible for the full 80% reduction under the CTSS) is a small proportion of disposable income, and a small contributor to any squeeze on household budgets. A council tax increase would be applicable to all properties - the increase would not target any one protected group, rather it would be an increase that is applied across the board. However, it is recognised that this may have a more significant impact among households with a low disposable income.
- 3.3 Households at all levels of income have seen their real-terms income decline due to cost of living increases, and wages that have failed to keep up with inflation. These pressures are not limited to any protected group; however, there is evidence that low-income families spend a greater proportion of their income on food and fuel (where price rises have been highest), and are therefore more affected by current price increases.
- 3.4 At the time of writing, it is not clear what level of inflation uplift will be applied to benefits . [NB council and housing association tenants are not affected by this as their rent support is calculated differently and their full rent can be compensated from benefits].
4. **Alternative options**
- 4.1 The realistic alternative to a 5% council tax increase would be a lower (or no) increase. It should be noted that the proposed increase is below inflation, and therefore represents a real-terms cut in council tax payable and therefore our income. A reduced tax increase would represent a permanent diminution of our income unless we hold a council tax referendum in a future year. In my view, such a referendum is unlikely to support a higher tax rise. It would also require a greater use of reserves and/or more cuts to services in 2024/25.
- 4.2 The budget situation is already extremely difficult, and it seems inevitable that further cuts will have severe effects on front-line services. It is not possible to say precisely where these future cuts would fall; however, certain protected groups (e.g. older people; families with children; and people with disabilities) could face disproportionate impacts from reductions to services.
5. **Mitigating actions**
- 5.1 The Council has a range of mitigating actions for residents. These include: funding through Discretionary Housing Payments, Council Tax Discretionary Relief and Community Support Grant awards; the council's work with voluntary and community sector organisations to provide food to local people where it is required – through the network of food banks in the city; through schemes which support people getting into work (and include cost reducing initiatives that address high transport costs such as providing recycled bicycles); and through support to social welfare advice services. The "BetterOff Leicester" online tool includes a calculator to help residents to ensure they are receiving all relevant benefits.
- 5.2 Mitigating actions will be kept under review and updated for the final report to Council in February.

6. **What protected characteristics are affected?**

- 6.1 The table below describes how each protected characteristic is likely to be affected by the proposed council tax increase. The table sets out anticipated impacts, along with mitigating actions available to reduce negative impacts.
- 6.2 Some protected characteristics are not, as far as we can tell, disproportionately affected (as will be seen from the table) because there is no evidence to suggest they are affected differently from the population at large. They may, of course, be disadvantaged if they also have other protected characteristics that are likely to be affected, as indicated in the following analysis of impact based on protected characteristic.

7. **Armed Forces Covenant Duty**

- 7.1 The Covenant Duty is a legal obligation on certain public bodies to 'have due regard' to the principles of the Covenant and requires decisions about the development and delivery of certain services to be made with conscious consideration of the needs of the Armed Forces community.
- 7.2 We have considered the duty and have not identified any direct impacts on armed forces or their families; but will continue to monitor for specific proposals.

Medium Term Financial Outlook 2024/25 – 2026/27

[to follow for final report]

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Earmarked Reserves

[to follow for final report]

DRAFT

Council Tax Premiums

[to follow for final report]

DRAFT

DRAFT Capital Programme 2024/25

Decision to be taken by: Council

Date of meeting: 21 February 2024

Lead director: Amy Oliver, Director of Finance

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Kirsty Cowell
- Author contact details: Kirsty.Cowell@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1.0

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask the Council to approve a capital programme for 2024/25.
- 1.2 Capital expenditure is incurred on works of lasting benefit and is principally paid for by grant, tenants' rents, and the proceeds of asset sales (capital receipts). Money can also be borrowed for capital purposes, but the scope for this is limited as borrowing affects the revenue budget.
- 1.3 For the past four years the Council has set a one year capital programme, due to uncertainty over future resources. This uncertainty is greater than it has ever been. This is on account of the following, with the revenue budget being by far the most significant:
- The revenue budget outlook, which requires significant savings
 - Volatility and inflationary pressures in the construction industry
 - The Council's technical capacity to support a large programme

We are therefore presenting another one year programme, of limited scale. This will enable capacity to be focussed on key schemes and allow time to see the long-term impact of inflation. It has also been designed to avoid putting additional pressure on revenue.

Schemes already approved and in the current programme will continue.

- 1.4 The report seeks approval to the "General Fund" element of the capital programme, at a cost of £33.1m. In addition to this, the HRA capital programme (which is elsewhere on your agenda) includes works estimated at £25.9m, £15m of which relates to the affordable homes programme.

- 1.5 The table below summarises the proposed spending for capital schemes starting in 2024/25, as described in this report:-

	<u>£m</u>
<u>Proposed Programme</u>	
<u>Schemes – Summarised by Theme</u>	
Grant Funded Schemes	14.8
Own buildings	5.3
Routine Works	5.9
Match Funding	3.0
Feasibility and Contingencies	4.1
Total New Schemes	<u>33.1</u>
 <u>Funding</u>	
Unringfenced Resources	31.0
Monies ringfenced to Schemes	2.1
Total Resources	<u>33.1</u>

- 1.6 The table below presents the total spend on General Fund and Housing Revenue Account schemes:

	<u>£m</u>
General Fund	33.1
Housing Revenue Account	25.9
Total	<u>59.0</u>

- 1.7 The Council's total capital expenditure now forecast for 2024/25 and beyond is expected to be around £256m, including the HRA and schemes approved prior to 2024/25.

- 1.8 The capital programme is split into two parts:-

- (a) Schemes which are “**immediate starts**”, being schemes which directors have authority to commence once the council has approved the programme. These are fully described in this report;
- (b) Schemes which are “**policy provisions**”, where the purpose of the funding is described but money will not be released until specific spending proposals have been approved by the Executive.

1.9 Immediate starts have been split into three categories:-

- (a) **Projects** – these are discrete, individual schemes such as a road scheme or a new building. These schemes will be monitored with reference to physical delivery rather than an annual profile of spending. (We will, of course, still want to make sure that the overall budget is not going to be exceeded);
- (b) **Work Programmes** – these consist of minor works or similar schemes where there is an allocation of money to be spent in a particular year;
- (c) **Provisions** – these are sums of money set aside in case they are needed, but where low spend is a favourable outcome rather than indicative of a problem.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Council is asked to:-

- (a) Approve the capital programme described in this report and summarised at Appendices Two to Five, subject to any amendments proposed by the City Mayor;
- (b) For those schemes designated immediate starts, delegate authority to the lead director to commit expenditure, subject to the normal requirements of contract procedure rules, rules concerning land acquisition and finance procedure rules;
- (c) Delegate authority to the City Mayor to determine a plan of spending for each policy provision, and to commit expenditure up to the maximum available;
- (d) For the purposes of finance procedure rules:
 - Determine that service resources shall consist of service revenue contributions; HRA revenue contributions; and government grants/third party contributions ringfenced for specific purposes (but see below for LLEP investment programmes);
 - Designate the operational estate & children’s capital maintenance programme, highways maintenance programme and transport improvement programme as programme areas, within which the director can reallocate resources to meet operational requirements.

- (e) As in previous years, delegate to the City Mayor:
- Authority to increase any scheme in the programme, or add a new scheme to the programme, subject to a maximum of £10m corporate resources in each instance;
 - Authority to reduce or delete any capital scheme, subject to a maximum reduction of 20% of scheme value for “immediate starts”; and
 - Authority to transfer any “policy provision” to the “immediate starts” category.
- (f) In respect of Government investment programmes for which the Council receives grant as the accountable body to the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) (or which the Council receives in its own right as part of the Government’s policy to cease funding via LLEPs) :-
- Delegate to the City Mayor approval to accept Government offers of funding, and to add this to the capital programme;
 - Delegate to the Strategic Director, City Development and Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Director of Finance, authority to allocate the funding to individual schemes (in effect, implementing decisions of the LLEP whilst the LLEP continues to make them);
 - Agree that City Council schemes funded by the programme can only commence after the City Mayor has given approval;
 - Delegate to the Director of Finance authority to reallocate programme funding between schemes, if permissible, to ensure the programme as a whole can be delivered; and
 - Note that City Council contributions to schemes will follow the normal rules described above (i.e. nothing in this paragraph permits the City Mayor to supplement the programme with City Council resources outside of normal rules).
- (g) Delegate to directors, in consultation with the relevant deputy/assistant mayor, authority to incur expenditure up to a maximum of £250k per scheme in respect of policy provisions on design and other professional fees and preparatory studies, but not any other type of expenditure;
- (h) Approve the capital strategy at Appendix 6.

3. Proposed Programme

Key Policy Issues

- 3.1 The key focus of the 2024/25 capital programme is to deliver strategic objectives as far as possible. It is a limited one year programme, but nonetheless complements the existing programme and aims to support the City Mayor's delivery plan. However, the main constraint is to protect the revenue budget as far as possible.
- 3.2 The programme supports the Council's commitment to tackling the climate emergency, most obviously but not exclusively within the Transport Improvement Works, Operational Estate and Children's capital maintenance programmes.

Resources

- 3.3 Resources available to the programme consist primarily of Government grant and capital receipts (the HRA programme is also supported by tenants' rent monies). Most grant is unringfenced, and the Council can spend it on any purpose it sees fit.
- 3.4 Appendix One presents the resources required to fund the proposed programme, which total some £33.1m. The key unringfenced funding sources are detailed below.
 - (a) £5.4m of general capital receipts. At the time of writing, this includes £2.8m of receipts already received, It has been our previous policy to budget for capital receipts only when they are received, but pressure on resources is currently such that a further £2.5m has been targeted for delivery before the end of 2024/25;
 - (b) £13.0m of unringfenced grant funding. Some of these figures are estimated in the absence of actual allocations from the Government (the figure for 2025/26 represents a first call on that year to enable school schemes to be planned); and
 - (c) £12m of resources brought forward, consisting of money set aside in previous years for, insurance claims no longer required, savings from uncommitted policy provisions, savings from completed programmes and previous years' underspends.
- 3.5 For some schemes the amount of unringfenced resources required is less than the gross cost of the scheme. This is because resources are

ringfenced directly to individual schemes. Ringfenced resources are shown throughout Appendix Two and include the following:

- (a) Government grant and contributions made to support the delivery of specific schemes;
- (b) £150,000 of borrowing. Because borrowing has an impact on the revenue budget, it is only used for reasons detailed in capital strategy at Appendix 6 of this report. The only borrowing in this programme is to support purchase of grounds maintenance equipment, for which there is revenue provision (previously, equipment would have been leased, but borrowing is cheaper).

- 3.6 Only funding required to finance the schemes in this capital programme is included.
- 3.7 Finance Procedure Rules enable directors to make limited changes to the programme after it has been approved. For these purposes, the Council has split resources into corporate and service resources. These are similar to, but not quite the same as, ringfenced and unringfenced resources. Whilst all unringfenced resources are corporate, not all ringfenced monies are service resources. Borrowing, for instance, is treated as a corporate resource requiring a higher level of approval.
- 3.8 Directors have authority to add schemes to the programme, provided they are funded by service resources, up to an amount of £250,000. This provides flexibility for small schemes to be added to the programme without a report to the Executive.

Proposed Programme

3.9 The whole programme is summarised at Appendix 2. Responsibility for the majority of projects rests with the Strategic Director of City Development and Neighbourhoods.

3.10 £14.9m is provided for grant funded schemes. These schemes are funded either from unringfenced grant (where we have discretion) and ringfenced resources.

- (a) £7.1m has been provided to continue with the **Schools Capital Improvements Programme**. The programme will include routine maintenance and spending is prioritised to reflect asset condition and risk. This will be a two year programme to allow for better forward planning. The proposed programme is shown at Appendix 5: detailed schemes will be developed following consultation with schools.
- (b) £3.3m is provided as part of the continued **Highway Capital Maintenance Programme**. This is a rolling annual programme and spending is prioritised to reflect asset condition, risk and local neighbourhood priorities. The proposed programme is shown at Appendix 4.
- (c) £2.6m is provided in 2024/25 to continue the rolling programme of works constituting the **Transport Improvement Programme**.

Some of the priority areas include:

- Delivering cross cutting cycling, walking and public transport benefits
- Local safety schemes
- 20mph schemes in Neighbourhoods
- Delivery of the Local Transport Plan

- (d) £1.9m has been provided for **Disabled Facilities Grants** to private sector householders which is funded by government grant. This is an annual programme which has existed for many years. These grants provide funding to eligible disabled people for adaption work to their homes, and help them maintain their independence.

3.11 £5.3m is provided for the Council's own buildings.

- (a) £2.5m has been provided to support the annual **Operational Estate Capital Maintenance Programme** of works to properties that the Council occupies for its own use. This is a rolling annual programme and spending is prioritised to reflect asset condition and risk. The proposed programme is shown at Appendix 3 but may vary to meet emerging operational requirements.

- (b) £1.5m is provided for the **Corporate Estate** to support the council's property portfolio.
- (c) £1.0m has been provided for council owned **Leisure Centres** for the refurbishment and improvements to changing facilities.
- (d) £0.2m has been provided to support the **Depot Relocation** project which will result in a centralised location for the parks depot.
- (e) £0.1m has been provided for relocation of the **Pest & Dogs Depot** to an existing depot to enable the disposal of its current premises.

3.12 £5.9m is provided for Routine Works.

- (a) £3.8m has been made available for the annual **Fleet Replacement Programme**. Wherever possible, ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) will be sought to support the Council's climate emergency response.
- (b) £0.4m has been provided for **Local Environmental Works** in wards. This scheme will focus on local neighbourhood issues including residential parking, local safety concerns, pedestrian routes, cycleways and community lighting to be delivered after consultation with ward members.
- (c) £0.3m is provided for **Grounds Maintenance Equipment** of which £0.2m is funded by prudential borrowing and £0.1m funded by corporate resources. This scheme is to replace ageing machinery with up to date, energy efficient models. The replacement of this equipment is met from borrowing, and a revenue budget exists for this purpose.
- (d) £0.3m has been provided for the **Growing Spaces** project for the development and improvement of community gardens and allotments across the city.
- (e) £0.3m is provided to continue the **Flood Risk Prevention** scheme into 2024/25. The programme supports the local flood risk management strategy and action plan, and the delivery of our statutory role to manage and reduce flood risk in collaboration with the Environment Agency & Severn Trent Water.
- (f) £0.2m is provided for **Foster Care Capital Contribution Scheme** to support foster carers with alterations to their property to allow fostered children to remain living with their carers or to increase the capacity to look after more children.

- (g) £0.2m has been provided for the **Front Walls Enveloping Scheme** and is a continuation of previous schemes. It involves the enclosure of small spaces in front of housing. Enveloping schemes can make a significant improvement to local neighbourhoods and enable occupiers to tend house fronts more effectively.
- (h) Following the success of the current scheme, £0.2m has been put aside for the extension of the **Heritage Interpretation Panels Programme**. This scheme uses digital technology to interpret heritage stories in new ways, e.g. via mobile devices.
- (i) £0.1m has been provided for a **Historic Building Grant Programme**. This will provide match funding to city residents and organisations to support the repair of historic buildings and the reinstatement of lost original historic features.
- (j) £0.1m is included as part of the continued programme to refresh **Festival Decorations**.

3.13 £7.1m is provided for feasibility and contingencies:

- (a) £3.0m is provided for **Match Funding** for new government programmes.
- (b) A **Programme Contingency** of £3.0m has been set aside for cost pressures arising from construction inflation, or (if not needed for this purpose) for any emerging capital needs.
- (c) £1.1m is provided for **Feasibility Studies**. This will enable studies to be done, typically for potential developments not included elsewhere in the programme or which might attract grant support.

Proposed Programme – Policy Provisions

3.14 Policy provisions are sums of money which are included in the programme for a stated purpose, but for which a further report to the Executive (and decision notice) is required before they can be spent. Schemes are usually treated as policy provisions because the Executive needs to see more detailed spending plans before full approval can be given.

3.15 Executive reports seeking approval to spend policy provisions must state

whether schemes, once approved, will constitute projects, work programmes or provisions; and, in the case of projects, identify project outcomes and physical milestones against which progress can be monitored.

- 3.16 Where a scheme has the status of a policy provision, it is shown as such in the appendix.

Capital Strategy

- 3.17 Local authorities are required to prepare a capital strategy each year, which sets out our approach for capital expenditure and financing at high level.

- 3.18 The proposed capital strategy is set out at Appendix 6.

4. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

- 4.1.1 This report is exclusively concerned with financial matters.

- 4.1.2 There is proposed prudential borrowing in the programme for replacement grounds maintenance machinery for £150k. The anticipated revenue costs arising will be £34k per year, for which revenue budget exists. Conversely, the scheme to make improvements to foster carers' homes is expected to secure revenue savings.

4.2 Legal implications

- 4.2.1 As the report is exclusively concerned with financial matters, there are no direct legal implications arising from the report. In accordance with the constitution, the capital programme is a matter that requires approval of full Council. The subsequent letting of contracts, acquisition and/or disposal of land etc all remain matters that are executive functions and therefore there will be the need to ensure such next steps have the correct authority in place prior to proceeding. There will be procurement and legal implications in respect of individual schemes and client officers should take early legal advice.

Kamal Adatia, City Barrister & Head of Standards

4.3 Equalities implications

- 4.3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have statutory duties, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions they have to pay due regard to the need to

eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

- 4.3.2 Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- 4.3.3 People from across all protected characteristics will benefit from the improved public realm arising from the proposed capital programme. However, as the proposals are developed and implemented, consideration should continue to be given to the equality impacts of the schemes in question, and how they can help the Council to meet the three aims of the PSED.
- 4.3.4 The capital programme includes schemes which improve the city's infrastructure and contribute to overall improvement of quality of life for people across all protected characteristics. By doing so, the capital programme promotes the PSED aim of fostering good relations between different groups of people by ensuring that no area is disadvantaged compared to other areas as many services rely on such infrastructure to continue to operate.
- 4.3.5 Some of the schemes focus on meeting specific areas of need for a protected characteristic: Disabled Facilities Grants (disability), and the Children's Capital Improvement Programme (age).
- 4.3.6 Other schemes target much larger groups of people who have a range of protected characteristics reflective of the diverse population within the city. Some schemes are place specific and address environmental issues that also benefit diverse groups of people. The delivery of the capital programme contributes to the Council fulfilling our PSED. For example, schemes which support people in being able to stay in their homes, to continue to lead independent lives, and to participate in community life help promote equality of opportunity, another one of the aims of the PSED.
- 4.3.7 Where there are any improvement works to buildings or public spaces, considerations around accessibility (across a range of protected characteristics) must influence design and decision making. This will ensure that people are not excluded (directly or indirectly) from accessing a building, public space, or service, based on a protected characteristic. All schemes should consider the PSED and conducting Equality Impact Assessments where relevant to inform the process.

Kalvaran Sandhu, Equalities Manager

4.4 Climate Emergency implications

- 4.4.1 The Council declared a climate emergency in February 2019 and is delivering its Climate Emergency Strategy & Action Plan, which sets an ambition for the council and city to achieve net zero carbon emissions. The council is one of the largest employers and landowners in the city, with a carbon footprint of 16,415 tCO₂e from its own operations in 2022/23. The council therefore has a vital role to play in reducing emissions from its operations, working with its partners and leading by example on tackling the climate emergency in Leicester. The report notes the importance of tackling the climate emergency through the capital programme, with a number of the projects outlined directly playing a positive role in reducing carbon emissions in the city.
- 4.4.2 There is not sufficient information within this report to provide specific details of climate change implications for individual projects, which may have significant implications and opportunities. Detailed implications should therefore be produced for individual projects as and when plans are finalised. At a high level, there are some general principles that should be followed during the planning, design and implementation of capital projects, as detailed below. A toolkit is also being developed to support the achievement of reduced carbon emissions in council capital construction and renovation projects.
- 4.4.3 New buildings should be constructed to a high standard of energy efficiency, and incorporate renewable energy sources where possible, with projects aiming to achieve carbon neutral development or as close as possible to this. Maintenance and refurbishment works, including replacement of systems or equipment, should also seek to improve energy efficiency wherever possible. This will reduce energy use and therefore bills, delivering further benefits. Major projects will also need to meet Climate Change policy CS2 in the Leicester City Core Strategy planning document, which requires best practice in terms of minimising energy demand for heating, ventilation and lighting, achieving a high level of fabric efficiency, and the use of low carbon or renewable sources of energy.
- 4.4.4 Projects involving procurement, including for construction works, should follow the Council's sustainable procurement guidelines. This includes the use of low carbon and sustainable materials, low carbon equipment and vehicles and reducing waste in procurement processes. Transport projects should seek to enable a greater share of journeys to be safely and conveniently undertaken by walking, cycling or public transport wherever possible, and many of the planned works will directly contribute to this. Flood risk and environmental works are also a key part of increasing resilience to a changing climate in the city.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer

4.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

Equal Opportunities	Yes	Paragraph 4.3
Policy	Yes	The capital programme is part of the Council's overall budget and policy framework, and makes a substantial contribution to the delivery of Council policy.
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	Paragraph 4.4
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	Yes	A number of schemes will benefit elderly people and those on low income.

5. Background information and other papers:

6. Summary of appendices:

- Appendix 1 Capital Resources.
- Appendix 2a Grant Funded Schemes
- Appendix 2b Own Buildings
- Appendix 2c Routine Works
- Appendix 2d Feasibilities and Contingencies
- Appendix 3 Operational Estate Maintenance Capital Programme
- Appendix 4 Highways Maintenance Capital Programme
- Appendix 5 Children's Capital Improvement Programme
- Appendix 6 Capital Strategy 2024/25

7. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)? No

8. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why? No – it is a proposal to Council.

Report Author: Kirsty Cowell

DRAFT

Appendix One

Capital Resources

	24/25 {£000}	25/26 {£000}	Total {£000}
<u>Resources Brought Forward</u>			
Previous years' savings	11,952	0	11,952
Total One Off Resources	11,952		11,592
<u>Capital Receipts</u>			
General Capital Receipts	5,424	0	5,424
Total Receipts	5,424	0	5,424
<u>Unringfenced Capital Grant</u>			
Education maintenance	1,148	6,000	7,148
Integrated Transport	2,576	0	2,576
Transport maintenance	3,262	0	3,262
Total Unringfenced Grant	6,986	6,000	12,986
Service Transformation Fund	698	0	698
TOTAL UNRINGFENCED RESOURCES	25,060	6,000	31,060
Ringfenced resources			
Disabled Facilities Grant	1,861	0	1,861
Prudential Borrowing	150	0	150
TOTAL RINGFENCED RESOURCES	2,011	0	2,011
TOTAL CAPITAL RESOURCES	27,071	6,000	33,071

Grant Funded Schemes

	Division	Scheme Type	Corporate Programme Funding	Ringfenced Funding	Total Approval
			{£000}	{£000}	{£000}
<u>Grant Funded Schemes</u>					
Children's Capital Maintenance Programme	CDN (EBS)	WP	7,100	-	7,100
Highway Capital Maintenance	CDN (PDT)	WP	3,262	-	3,262
Transport Improvement Works	CDN (PDT)	WP	2,576	-	2,576
Disabled Facilities Grants	CDN (HGF)	WP	-	1,861	1,861
TOTAL			12,938	1,861	14,799

Key to Scheme Types : WP = Work Programme

Summary of Ringfenced Funding

	{£000}
Disabled Facilities Grant	1,861
TOTAL RINGENCED FUNDING	1,861

Own Buildings

	Division	Scheme Type	Corporate Programme Funding	Ringfenced Funding	Total Approval
			{£000}	{£000}	{£000}
<u>Own Buildings</u>					
Operational Estate Maintenance	CDN (EBS)	WP	2,501	-	2,501
Corporate Estate	CDN (EBS)	PP	1,500	-	1,500
Leisure Centres Improvements	CDN (PH)	PJ	1,072	-	1,072
Depot Relocation	CDN (NES)	PJ	200	-	200
Pest & Dogs Depot Relocation	CDN (NES)	PJ	48	-	48
TOTAL			5,321	-	5,321

Key to Scheme Types : PJ = Project ; WP = Work Programme, PP = Policy Provision

Routine Works

	Division	Scheme Type	Corporate Programme Funding	Ringfenced Funding	Total Approval
			{£000}	{£000}	{£000}
<u>Routine Works</u>					
Fleet Replacement Programme	CDN (HGF)	WP	3,805	-	3,805
Local Environmental Works	CDN (PDT)	WP	400	-	400
Grounds Maintenance Equipment	CDN (NES)	WP	95	150	245
Growing Spaces	CDN (NES)	PP	301	-	301
Flood Risk Prevention	CDN (PDT)	WP	300	-	300
Foster Care Capital Contribution Scheme	CDN (ECS)	WP	250	-	250
Front Walls Enveloping	CDN (PDT)	WP	200	-	200
Heritage Interpretation Panels Programme	CDN (TCI)	WP	195	-	195
Historic Building Grant Fund	CDN (PDT)	WP	75	-	75
Festival Decorations	CDN (TCII)	WP	50	-	50
TOTAL			5,671	150	5,821

Key to Scheme Types : WP = Work Programme, PP = Policy Provision

Feasibilities and Contingencies

	Division	Scheme Type	Corporate Programme Funding {£000}	Ringfenced Funding {£000}	Total Approval {£000}
<u>Feasibilities and Contingencies</u>					
Match Funding	CDN (Various)	PP	3,000	-	3,000
Programme Contingency	All Divisions	PP	3,000	-	3,000
Feasibility Studies	CDN (Various)	WP	1,130	-	1,130
TOTAL			7,130	-	7,130
<i>Key to Scheme Types : PP = Policy Provision ; WP = Work Programme</i>					
GRAND TOTAL – ALL SCHEMES			31,060	2,011	33,071

Operational Estate Maintenance Capital Programme

Description	Amount £000's
Building Works - Essential maintenance at the Council's operational and investment buildings. Key works include pathway replacements at parks, repairs at leisure centres and works to heritage sites.	1,035
Compliance Works - Generally consisting of surveys to gain condition data across the estate and works arising from the various risk assessments that are undertaken.	422
Electrical Works - Replacement switch gear, alarms and lighting works.	449
Mechanical Works - Ventilation systems, building management systems and heating controls.	424
Emergency Provision – Provision for emergency reactive works that could be required across the Council's estate	171
TOTAL	2,501

Proposed Highways Maintenance Capital Programme

Description	Amount £000's
Principal Roads – Narborough Road, Uppingham Road	185
Classified Non-Principal Roads – Saffron Lane continuation, University Road.	280
Unclassified Neighbourhood Roads, Large Area Patching & Pothole Repairs – Target large carriageway defect repairs to provide longer term repairs in readiness for surface dressing.	1,272
Footway Relays and Reconstructions – Focus on neighbourhood street scene corridor improvements in district centres; Narborough Road footways refurbishment, Melton Road uneven footway improvements.	400
Strategic Bridge Deck Maintenance & Replacement Works Includes feasibility studies and structural surveys to assess St. Margarets Way half joint replacement and Burleys Way Flyover maintenance.	150
Bridge Improvement & Maintenance Works – Kitchener Road & Chesterfield Rd Bridge Maintenance. Various parapet replacements, structural maintenance works and technical assessment review project.	235
Traffic Signal Installations Renewals and Lighting Column Replacements – Signalling Upgrades, Lamp Column Replacements, Illuminated Bollards and Sign Replacements.	240
DfT / Whole Government Accounting Lifecycle Asset Management Development Project – Strategic asset management development, data analysis, lifecycle planning and reporting in support of DfT Challenge Funding bidding linked to asset management performance.	500
TOTAL	3,262

Children's Capital Improvement Programme

Description	Amount £000's
Building Works - Typical works include roof replacements, sports hall floor replacements, playground resurfacing and window replacements.	1,435
Compliance Works - This work stream will mainly be used to ensure the playing fields and pavilions used by schools are fully compliant with current regulations and to conduct health and safety works.	694
Electrical Works - Replacement switch gear, alarms and lighting works.	144
Mechanical Works - schemes being undertaken within the programme typically consist of re-piping heating systems and end of life ventilation replacements.	185
Safeguarding Works - building works to ensure sites are secure.	320
Sustainability Works - to carry out works to aid the decarbonisation of the Council's estate. Including works to support the energy efficiency technology programme that is in the current capital programme.	2,385
Individual Access Needs Works - This is a provision to allow works to be carried out to enable children with additional needs to access mainstream school.	300
Emergency Provision - This is provision within the programme to allow for emergency unforeseen works to be carried out.	1,637
TOTAL	7,100

Capital Strategy 2024/25

1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is a requirement on local authorities to prepare a capital strategy each year, which sets out our approach to capital expenditure and financing at a high level. The requirement to prepare a strategy arises from Government concerns about certain authorities borrowing substantial sums to invest in commercial property, often primarily for yield and outside the vicinity of the council concerned (something the Council has never done).
- 1.2 There is also a requirement on local authorities to prepare an investment strategy, which specifies our approach to making investments other than day to day treasury management investments (the latter is included in our treasury management strategy, as in previous years). The investment strategy is presented as a separate report on your agenda.
- 1.3 This appendix sets out the proposed capital strategy for the Council's approval.

2. Capital Expenditure

- 2.1 The Council's capital expenditure plans are approved by the full Council, on the basis of two reports:-
- (a) The corporate capital programme – this covers periods of one or more years, and is always approved in advance of the period to which it relates. It is often, but need not be, revisited annually (it need not be revisited if plans for the subsequent year have already been approved);
 - (b) The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme – this is considered as part of the HRA budget strategy which is submitted each year for approval.
- 2.2 The capital programme is split into:-
- (a) Immediate starts – being schemes which are approved by the Council and can start as soon as practical after the council has approved the programme. Such schemes are specifically described in the relevant report;
 - (b) Policy provisions, which are subsequently committed by the City Mayor (and may be less fully described in the report). The principle here is that further consideration is required before the scheme can start.
- 2.3 The corporate capital programme report sets out authorities delegated to the City Mayor. Decisions by the City Mayor are subject to normal requirements in the constitution (e.g. as to prior notice and call-in).

- 2.4 Monitoring of capital expenditure is carried out by the Executive and the Overview Select Committee. Reports are presented on 3 occasions during the years, and at outturn. For this purpose, immediate starts have been split into three categories:-
- (a) **Projects** – these are discrete, individual schemes such as a road scheme or a new building. These schemes are monitored with reference to physical delivery rather than an annual profile of spending. (We will, of course, still want to make sure that the overall budget is not going to be exceeded);
 - (b) **Work Programmes** – these will consist of minor works or similar schemes where is an allocation of money to be spent in a particular year.
 - (c) **Provisions** – these are sums of monies set aside in case they are needed, but where low spend is a favourable outcome rather than indicative of a problem.
- 2.5 When, during the year, proposals to spend policy provisions are approved, a decision on classification is taken at that time (i.e. a sum will be added to projects, work programmes or provisions as the case may be).
- 2.6 The authority does not capitalise expenditure, except where it can do so in compliance with proper practices: it has never applied for directions to capitalise revenue expenditure. Given the current revenue position, this stance will be kept under review.
- 2.7 The table below forecasts the past and forecast capital expenditure for the current year and 2024/25. It therefore, includes latest estimates of expenditure from the 2023/24 programme that will be rolled forward.

Department / Division	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 & Beyond Estimate £m
All Departments	1.7	3.0
Corporate Resources	1.3	2.2
Planning, Development & Transportation	66.7	45.4
Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment	18.9	28.1
Neighbourhood & Environmental Services	3.0	4.5
Estates & Building Services	11.8	11.2
Adult Social Care	0.5	5.5
Children's Services	22.2	29.3
Public Health	0.2	0.0
Housing General Fund	5.3	4.6
Total General Fund	131.6	133.8
Housing Revenue Account	52.9	121.7
Total	184.5	255.5

- 2.8 The Council's Estates and Building Services Division provides professional management of non-housing property assets. This includes maintaining the properties, collecting any income, rent reviews, ensuring that lease conditions are complied with and that valuations are regularly updated at least every 5 years. A capital programme scheme is approved each year for significant improvements or renovation.
- 2.9 The Housing Division provides management of tenanted dwellings. Apart from new build and acquisitions, the HRA capital programme is almost entirely funded from tenants' rents. The criteria used to plan major works are in the table below:-

Component for Replacement	Leicester's Replacement Condition Criteria	Decent Homes Standard: Maximum Age
Bathroom	All properties to have a bathroom for life by 2036	30 - 40 years
Central Heating Boiler	Based on assessed condition	15 years (future life span of new boilers is expected to be on average 12 years)
Chimney	Based on assessed condition	50 years
Windows & Doors	Based on assessed condition	40 years
Electrics	Every 30 years	30 years
Kitchen	All properties to have an upgraded kitchen by 2036	20 - 30 years
Roof	Based on assessed condition	50 years (20 years for flat roofs)
Wall finish (external)	Based on assessed condition	80 years
Wall structure	Based on assessed condition	60 years

3. Financing Capital Expenditure

- 3.1 Most capital expenditure of the Council is financed as soon as it is spent (by using grants, capital receipts, revenue budgets or the capital fund). The Council will only incur spending which cannot be financed in this way in strictly limited circumstances. Such spending is termed "prudential borrowing" as we are able to borrow money to pay for it. Circumstances in which the Council will use "prudential borrowing" are:-
- (a) Where spending facilitates a future disposal, and it is estimated that the proceeds will be sufficient to fully cover the initial costs;
 - (b) Where spending can be justified with reference to an investment appraisal (this is further described in the separate investment strategy). This also includes social housing, where repayment costs can be met from rents;

- (c) Other “spend to save” schemes where the initial cost is paid back from revenue savings or additional income;
- (d) Where, historically, the Council has used leasing for vehicles or equipment, and revenue budgets already exist to meet the cost;
- (e) “Once in a generation” opportunities to secure significant strategic investment that will benefit the city for decades to come.

3.2 The Council measures its capital financing requirement, which shows how much we would need to borrow if we borrowed for all un-financed capital spending (and no other purpose). This is shown in the table below:-

	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m
HRA	272	297	322	347
General Fund	257	251	242	234

(The table above excludes PFI schemes).

3.3 Projections of actual external debt are included in the treasury management strategy, which is elsewhere on your agenda.

4. **Debt Repayment**

4.1 As stated above, the Council usually pays for capital spending as it is incurred. However, this has not always been the case. In the past, the Government encouraged borrowing and money was made available in Revenue Support Grant each year to pay off the debt (much like someone paying someone else’s mortgage payments).

4.2 The Council makes charges to the general fund budget each year to repay debt incurred for previous years’ capital spending. (In accordance with Government rules, no charge needs to be made to the Housing Revenue Account: we do, however, make charges for newly built and acquired property).

4.3 The general underlying principle is that the Council seeks to repay debt over the period for which taxpayers enjoy the benefit of the spending it financed.

4.4 Where borrowing pays for an asset, debt is repaid over the life of the asset.

4.5 Where borrowing pays for an investment, debt is repaid over the life of the Council’s interest in the asset which has been financed (this may be the asset life, or may be lower if the Council’s interest is subject to time limits). Where borrowing funds a loan to a third party, repayment will never exceed the period of the loan.

4.6 Charges to revenue will be based on an equal instalment of principal, or set on an annuity basis, as the Director of Finance deems appropriate.

4.7 Debt repayment will normally commence in the year following the year in which the expenditure was incurred. However, in the case of expenditure relating to the construction of an asset, the charge will commence in the year after the

asset becomes operational or the year after total expenditure on the scheme has been completed.

4.8 The following are the maximum asset lives which can be used:-

- (a) Land – 50 years;
- (b) Buildings – 50 years;
- (c) Infrastructure – 40 years;
- (d) Plant and equipment – 20 years;
- (e) Vehicles – 12 years.

4.9 Some investments governed by the treasury strategy may be accounted for as capital transactions. Should this require debt repayment charges, an appropriate time period will be employed.

4.10 Authority is given to the Director of Finance to voluntarily set aside sums for debt repayment, over and above the amounts determined in accordance with the above rules, where she believes the standard charge to be insufficient, or in order to reduce the future debt burden to the authority.

4.11 In circumstances where the investment strategy permits use of borrowing to support projects which achieve a return, the Director of Finance may adopt a different approach to debt repayment to reflect the financing costs of such schemes where permitted by Government guidance. The rules governing this are included in the investment strategy.

4.12 The ratio of financing costs to net revenue budget is estimated to be:-

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	%	%	%	%
HRA	11.6	13.3	13.8	14.2
General Fund	0.0	0.6	1.0	1.3

5. **Commercial Activity**

5.1 The Council has for many decades held commercial property through the corporate estate. It may decide to make further commercial investments in property, or give loans to others to support commercial investment. Our approach is described in the investment strategy, which sets the following limitations:-

- (a) The Council will not make such investments purely to generate income. Each investment will also benefit the Council’s service objectives (most probably, in respect of economic regeneration and jobs). It will, however, invest to improve the financial performance of the corporate estate;
- (b) The Council will not make investments outside of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland area (or just beyond its periphery) except as described below. We would not, for instance, borrow money to buy a shopping centre 100 miles from Leicester;
- (c) There is one exception to (b) above, which is where the investment meets a service need other than economic regeneration. An example

might be a joint investment, in collaboration with other local authorities; or investment in a consortium serving local government as a whole. In these cases, the location of the asset is not necessarily relevant.

- 5.2 Such investments will only take place (if they are of significant scale) after undertaking a formal appraisal, using external advisors if needs be. Nonetheless, as such investments also usually achieve social objectives, the Council is prepared to accept a lower return than a commercial funder might, and greater risk than it would in respect of its treasury management investments. Such risk will always be clearly described in decision reports (and decisions to make such investments will follow the normal rules in the Council's constitution).
- 5.3 Although the Council accepts that an element of risk is inevitable from commercial activity, it will not invest in schemes whereby (individually or collectively) it would not be able to afford the borrowing costs if they went wrong. As well as undertaking a formal appraisal of schemes of a significant scale, the Council will take into account what "headroom" it may have between the projected income and projected borrowing costs. In practice, our ability to carry out commercial activity is now limited by our revenue position.
- 5.4 In addition to the above, the Council's treasury strategy may permit investments in property or commercial enterprises. Such investments may be to support environmental and socially responsible aims, and are usually pooled with other bodies. For the purposes of the capital strategy, these are not regarded as commercial activities under this paragraph as the activity is carried out under the treasury strategy.

6. **Knowledge and Skills**

- 6.1 The Council employs a number of qualified surveyors and accountants as well as a specialist team for economic development who can collectively consider investment proposals. It also retains external treasury management consultants (currently Arlingclose). For proposed investments of a significant scale, the Council may employ external specialist consultants to assist its decision making.

Labour Market: Economic Inactivity and ESOL

Economic Development, Transport and Climate
Emergency Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 31st January 2024

Lead director: Mike Dalzell

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Peter Chandler
- Author contact details: peter.chandler@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Purpose of Report

This report on Leicester's labour market focuses on levels of economic inactivity and English language proficiency, summarising the interventions that have been commissioned via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in response to these issues.

2. Summary

Two distinctive features of Leicester's labour market relate to levels of economic inactivity and English language proficiency.

Leicester has a relatively high proportion of the working age population that is economically inactive (28.4% in September 2023). Although this has fallen from a rate of 30.5% in September 2022, this is still considerably higher than the 21.2% national average. As of September 2023, 67,400 people are economically inactive in Leicester. Of these, 9,500 want a job, and one quarter are long term sick (16,800 people).

English language skills are a key barrier for many in the city looking for a job. 7.0% of Leicester's population cannot speak English, ranking Leicester 3rd out of 331 Local Authorities. English is spoken as a first language by 70% of Leicester's residents, compared to 91.1% for England & Wales.

Leicester's UK Shared Prosperity Fund has specifically focused on interventions that help to address these two issues.

3. Recommendations

Members are invited to comment on the report and the interventions being delivered.

4. Report/ Supporting Information

4.1 Economic Inactivity

A focus on official unemployment figures does not fully reflect what is happening in the labour market. Nationally, the UK's relatively low unemployment figures do not include more than three million working-aged people that are involuntarily economically inactive.

Analysis by the Centre for Cities (Cities Outlook 2023) showed that nationally if the economically inactive are added to official unemployment figures then this would more than triple the number of people who are out of work, from 1.2 million to 4.7 million people. And it would take the unemployment rate from 3.7 per cent to a 'hidden' unemployment

rate of 12.7 per cent. This is because the official rate only measures those who are actively looking for employment and does not include people who are neither in work nor looking for a job due to circumstances outside of their control.

Economic inactivity refers to individuals who are not actively participating in the labour market. This includes people who are not employed, seeking work, or available for work due to various reasons such as students, retirees, homemakers, and those who have given up searching for a job.

Since the pandemic a rising number of 'economically inactive' people have withdrawn from the labour market and are not looking for a job. For some, economic inactivity is a choice, for example students or early retirees. People looking after family or with caring responsibilities may also be unable to enter the labour market.

There are still however a significant number of the working age population who are involuntarily inactive. The involuntarily economically inactive may have left the labour market and stopped looking for a job if they are discouraged, believe there are no jobs (or no good jobs) available, or cannot work because of health issues.

Government policy is now focusing on this group of involuntarily economically inactive to see if they can be supported to re-join the labour market, look for work and gain employment. This has included both new support being delivered or commissioned via the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), but has also been a specific focus for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund that is being delivered by local authorities.

4.2 Labour market data – employment

The April 2023 evidence base commissioned by the City Council to inform Leicester's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme included the following commentary on employment:

- Employment in Leicester has grown from 158,000 in 2011 to 174,000 in 2019, a rise of 10.1%. Over the same period employment grew in England by 12.8%, across Leicester and Leicestershire by 13.7% and in Leicestershire by 15.7%.
- The local employment rate has historically lagged behind the national rate and continues to do so with employment rates in Leicester standing at 65.6%, compared to a national average of 75.7%.
- Employment amongst women is much lower (59.2%) than it is for men (79.2%) in the city.
- The latest unemployment figure is 5.6% which is higher than the national average (3.8%) and the average across Leicestershire (2.2%). The unemployment rate in Leicester has traditionally been above the national average.
- Leicester's unemployment claimant count (4.7%) also sits above the national average (3.7%).
- The rate of employment (economic activity excluding full-time students) is lowest amongst Leicester's Chinese (29.6%), Gypsy or Irish Traveller (34.3%) and Arab (34.6%) populations.
- The rate of employment is highest amongst the city's White (68.0%), Indian (62.3%) and Other Asian (51.1%) populations.
- The greatest gender imbalance in the employment rates in Leicester exist within the Bangladeshi (13.6% gap), Roma (12.3%), Any other ethnic group (11.3%) and Pakistani (11.1% gap) populations.

The latest published economic data relating to the labour market for September 2023 relating to employment/ unemployment is as follows. This illustrates a rise in unemployment in Leicester since the UKSPF evidence base was commissioned (from 5.0% in September 2022 to 6.1% in September 2023) yet a fall in the proportion of Leicester's working age population that is economically inactive (from 30.5% to 28.4% over the same period).

Table 1: Employment and unemployment (Oct 2022-Sep 2023)				
	Leicester (Numbers)	Leicester (%)	East Midlands (%)	Great Britain (%)
All People				
Economically Active†	174,500	71.6	77.8	78.8
In Employment†	160,200	65.5	75.1	75.8
Employees†	146,100	60.0	65.9	66.3
Self Employed†	14,100	5.6	9.0	9.2
Unemployed (Model-Based)§	10,400	6.1	3.5	3.7
Males				
Economically Active†	94,000	78.3	84.1	82.7
In Employment†	86,000	71.4	81.2	79.3
Employees†	74,700	62.1	68.5	67.2
Self Employed†	11,300	9.3	12.4	11.8
Unemployed§	8,000	8.5	3.4	4.0
Females				
Economically Active†	80,500	65.1	71.6	74.9
In Employment†	74,200	59.9	69.0	72.3
Employees†	71,400	57.9	63.2	65.4
Self Employed†	#	#	5.6	6.7
Unemployed§	6,300	7.8	3.5	3.4
Source: NOMIS/ ONS annual population survey				
# Sample size too small for reliable estimate (see definitions)				
† - numbers are for those aged 16 and over, % are for those aged 16-64				
§ - numbers and % are for those aged 16 and over. % is a proportion of economically active				

4.3 Labour market data - Economic Activity

The April 2023 UKSPF evidence base included the following commentary:

- Leicester’s economically inactive population was 30.5% (in September 2022), considerably higher than the 21.3% national average.
- Of the male working age population 22.4% were economically inactive. Of the female working age population 37.7% were inactive.
- The share of economically inactive residents who want a job is lower in Leicester (13.8%) people than the national average (18.4%) – equating to 15,405 people. Most economically inactive residents in the city are students (40.5%) or looking after family/home (26.1%).
- Economic inactivity rates illustrate a significant gender imbalance – adult women are proportionately much more likely to be economically inactive. A distinctive feature of Leicester’s labour market is the gender imbalance regarding economic participation.
- Economic inactivity includes those looking after the home or family. This is most prevalent in Bangladeshi (20.5%), Arab (17.5%), Gypsy or Irish Traveller (17.3%) and Pakistani (15.9%) communities, in which the role is dominated by women.
- Economic inactivity is also attributed to those defined as long-term sick or disabled. This is highest amongst Gypsy or Irish Traveller (13.8%); White and Black Caribbean (9.3%), and White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British (8.8%) populations.
- There are huge disparities in the proportion of students across different ethnic groups. Whereas the majority of Leicester’s Chinese population are students (52.9%), comparatively few of the city’s Gypsy or Irish Traveller (6.0%), Roma (6.4%), Indian (9.2%) or Irish (10.3%) populations are also students.

The latest published economic data (September 2023) relating to economic inactivity is as follows. This shows that Leicester still has a relatively high proportion of the working age population that is economically inactive (currently 28.4% in September 2023), which is considerably higher than the 21.2% national average. Levels of female economic inactivity are particularly marked in Leicester, with 37.7% being economically inactive. 22.4% of the male working age population were economically inactive, which while still an issue is relatively comparable to national averages.

As of September 2023, 67,400 people are economically inactive in Leicester. Of these, 9,500 want a job, and one quarter are long term sick (16,800 people).

Table 2: Economic inactivity (Oct 2022-Sep 2023)				
	Leicester (Number)	Leicester (%)	East Midlands (%)	Great Britain (%)
All People				
Total	67,400	28.4	22.2	21.2
Student	18,600	27.7	26.3	26.8
Looking After Family/Home	22,000	32.6	21.7	19.4

Temporary Sick	#	#	2.2	2.3
Long-Term Sick	16,800	24.9	27.1	26.9
Discouraged	!	!	!	0.2
Retired	#	#	13.9	12.7
Other	5,900	8.7	8.5	11.5
Wants A Job	9,500	14.1	13.8	17.5
Does Not Want A Job	57,900	85.9	86.2	82.5
Source: NOMIS/ ONS annual population survey				
Notes: numbers are for those aged 16-64.				
# Sample size too small for reliable estimate				
% is a proportion of those economically inactive, except total, which is a proportion of those aged 16-64				

4.4 English language proficiency

According to the 2021 Census, Leicester has been confirmed as the first plural city in the UK where no ethnic group has a majority. 59.1% of people living in Leicester are from an ethnic minority group.

In the 2021 Census 24.1% of Leicester's population specify a non-UK identity (compared with just 10.0% nationally), reflecting the number of people who have settled in the city from abroad. This has increased by 6.3% (from 17.2%) in the last 10 years, far exceeding the national average over the same period (1.8%). Leicester saw England's joint second-largest percentage-point rise (after London and alongside Boston).

One feature of these high levels of migration is that 7.0% of the population cannot speak English, ranking Leicester 3rd out of 331 Local Authorities. English is spoken as a first language by 70% of Leicester's residents, compared to 91.1% for England & Wales.

English Language proficiency is a key requirement to joining the labour market, and Leicester's demographic structure makes this a particular feature of Leicester's economy that limits job prospects.

4.5 UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Leicester City Council is the lead organisation for Leicester's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme. This has involved the development of an Investment Plan, which has been signed off by government, and this prioritises specific labour market interventions to address economic inactivity and ESOL/ basic skills. Interventions are being delivered directly by the City Council or by commissioned external delivery partners/ consortia.

Overall, the commissioned UKSPF programme comprises 6 business support projects and 6 people, skills and communities projects. In total more than 30 external organisations are

involved in the delivery of the overall UKSPF programme, as well as several Council services.

4.6 UKSPF Delivery partners

The following projects have been commissioned as part of the UKSPF programme to deliver support for the economically inactive or to deliver ESOL/ basic skills:

Priority theme	Lead Organisation	Consortium Partners	Contract value
Support for Economically Inactive	Futures	None, although several referral partners	£312,500
Support for Economically Inactive	Positive Communities Partnership (led by BYCS - Bangladesh Youth and Cultural Shomiti)	Pakistan Youth and Community Association (PYCA), Somali Development Service, Shama Women's Centre, Wesley Hall, Youth Education Project, Ethical Business Exchange	£312,500
ESOL/ Basic Skills	Leicester City Council – Leicester Adult Education	Leicester Museums and Art Galleries, Libraries and Neighbourhood services Community venue partners - PYCA, Shama Women's Centre, Somali Development Service, Wesley Hall, Sikh Community Centre, Leicester Turkish Community Education Centre, Community Shop at Stocking Farm	£275,000
ESOL/ Basic Skills	Twin Training	None	£275,000

All commissioned projects have been contracted in late 2022 and are delivering support to the end of the current UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme in March 2025.

Collaborative working has been agreed between organisations working within each respective theme.

Projects will monitor and report on delivery of a range of outputs and outcomes throughout the programme, and capture demographic details of project beneficiaries. Project targets for these projects include the following output targets:

Number of economically inactive people engaging with keyworker support services

- Positive Communities (BYCS) – 420 individuals
- Futures – 220 individuals

Number of people supported to access basic skills (ESOL)

- Adult Education – 266 individuals
- Twin Training – 190 individuals

Representatives from BYCS (focusing on the economically inactive) and the Council's Adult Education service (ESOL) are delivering presentations summarising their respective UKSPF funded delivery projects – see Appendix. The Adult Education presentation also

includes a broader commentary on participation in ESOL across the city, the location of ESOL classes and financial and practical barriers.

4.7 Positive Communities project

The Positive Communities project led by BYCS aims to provide a range of personalised support services for key target groups to help them address any barriers or issues they have which prevent them from moving from being economically inactive to a more active status within the labour market. This will include concentrated one to one wrap support aimed at those areas with a high percentage of economically inactive Asian females (e.g. Greater Highfields), and other target groups including those who are looking after the home or family, those who long-term sick or disabled, those who are 50+ and 16-24 year olds.

The service offer will include high quality confidence building skills, Information, Advice and Careers Guidance (IAG), basic skills support (but not maths or English), employability and employment orientation advice and onward progression support to help beneficiaries engage with the benefits system and /or Job Centre Plus and employers.

Joint working arrangements have been developed between the two projects focusing on the economically inactive - BYCS and Futures - to enable the effective coordination of support across the city, including cross referral and joint marketing.

4.8 Leicester City Council – Leicester Adult Education

Everyday English is an innovative ESOL programme led by Leicester Adult Education and delivered in partnership with local community organisations aimed at engaging and supporting Leicester residents with limited English skills. Enrichment activities as well as bespoke employability and digital skills courses are also on offer to boost participants' confidence and increase their independence.

A caseworker will be providing learners with individual support to remove barriers and raise awareness of existing services and promote further learning and volunteering and employment opportunities. Classes are free and accessible in the city centre in Leicester Adult Education College and in numerous venues across Leicester.

Joint working arrangements have been developed between Leicester Adult Education and Twin Training to enable the effective alignment of ESOL delivery. The majority of learners for both projects are anticipated to be currently economically inactive.

4.9 Emerging DWP funded opportunities

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is introducing a new package of measures to address both economic inactivity and the barriers and disadvantages preventing people from joining the workforce. This is intended to complement existing provision for individuals who require more intensive support than that offered by Job Centre Plus.

This package will include Universal Support - a large scale supported employment programme that will primarily target the economically inactive who are either disabled or have additional barriers to work; and Work Well – providing support for disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay and succeed in work being led by Integrated Care Boards.

The Universal Support programme is funded for 3 years and is intended to support 100,000 people nationally a year once it is fully up and running at a cost of around £800m. Universal Support will be delivered using the Supported Employment model, a flexible and continuous approach to employment support, tailored to individuals and employer's needs.

The expectation is that Universal Support will be delivered through grants to local areas, and it will be for Local Authorities to decide which groups of individuals from their area are most suitable for Universal Support. This will be based on local circumstances but will also need to complement other existing provision such as UKSPF funded provision.

The delivery timetable is still being confirmed by DWP and will differ between lead authorities. Some areas will begin delivery of Universal Support in Autumn 2024, but some may not begin until 2024/25. DWP is currently designing the scheme and will confirm the allocation of Universal Support funding to local areas in due course. There may be a greater role in this for the City Council, working with other local authorities and partners, but this is not yet clear.

6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

6.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

6.2 Legal implications

The report details several projects where the Council is collaborating with third parties in order to assist projects or programmes that are being delivered using funding from the Council, central government and other sources. In relation to each of these, consideration must be given to subsidy control issues, joint working arrangements and the procurement of services under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Subsidy Control and Grant Funding

Where the Council is in receipt of grant funding from another public authority, it must consider whether there are any issues under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and in this respect, Legal Services should be instructed to undertake a subsidy control assessment.

Where the Council is required to enter into a grant funding agreement with the grant provider, then Legal Services should review the terms and conditions and dependant on value be involved in the execution of the agreement.

Where the Council is awarding any grant funding then a subsidy control assessment should be carried out to ensure the proposed grant award is lawful.

Legal Services can also advise on appropriate grant funding terms and conditions to attach to any grant funding awarded by the Council.

Joint Working Arrangements

If any of the projects involve joint working arrangements with any other public sector bodies or other third parties, it will be necessary to consider whether a formal joint working agreement is required and advice should be sought from Legal Services

Where any such joint working arrangements involve organisations in the private sector, then care should be taken to ensure that the joint working is legally compliant.

Consideration should be given to the Council's obligations under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 to ensure that no joint working could be considered to be a services contract which should have been procured, or that any information is given to an enterprise gives them an advantage in any forthcoming procurement. Advice should be sought from Procurement and Legal Services in this respect.

Services Contracts

Where the Council is requiring a third party to provide services, then as mentioned above, it should carry out a compliant procurement process and involve Procurement and Legal Services as required by the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Tracey Wakelam
Principal Lawyer
Commercial, Property and Planning

6.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Under UKSPF local authorities are being encouraged to tackle inequalities, increase opportunities and improve public services. This can include people with protected characteristics, those living in poverty and furthest away from the jobs market. The council has duties under the Equality Act, and must therefore consider how investments and decisions will tackle inequalities, prevent discrimination and foster good relations with different communities.

The paper provides detail on Leicester's labour market and the levels of economic inactivity and English language proficiency, it summarises the interventions that have been commissioned via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in response to these issues. The fund is designed to help deliver enhanced outcomes and recognises that support is needed in boosting core skills and supporting adults to progress in work.

The initiatives aim to help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education and provide people with the skills needed to progress in life and work. Targeting adults with no or low-level qualifications and upskilling the population along with supporting disadvantaged people to access the skills they need to progress in life and into work and reducing levels of economic inactivity should lead to positive impacts for people from across many protected characteristics and help to foster good relations. The initiatives support the council to embed equality, diversity and inclusion and tackle local inequalities, increase opportunities and improve public services for those living in poverty and furthest away from the jobs market.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated with this report.

As service delivery generally contributes to the council's carbon emissions, any impacts of delivering these projects could be managed through measures such as encouraging and enabling low carbon travel by staff and service users, using buildings and materials efficiently and following sustainable procurement guidance, as applicable to the project.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

6.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

None

7. Background information and other papers:

N/A

8. Summary of appendices:

Presentation slides

- Positive Communities project
- Access to ESOL provision

9. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

10. Is this a "key decision"? If so, why?

No

Access to ESOL provision

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Participation in ESOL funded by the Department for Education

In 2022/23

- **3080** Leicester residents participated in formal ESOL courses funded by the ESFA
- 73% studied at Entry Level
- 18% studied at Level 1
- 9% studied at Level 2

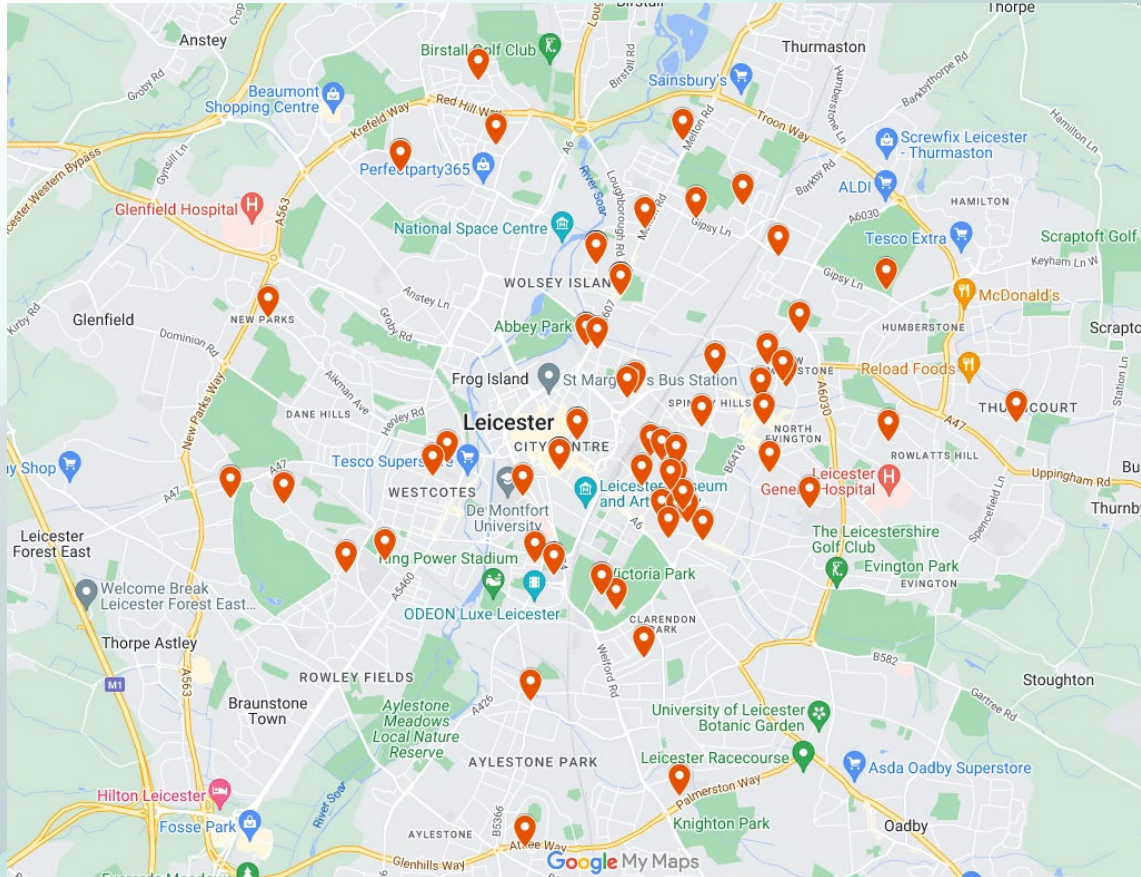
Location of ESOL classes

ESOL is currently available in at least 60 locations across the city.

The main providers are

- Leicester City Council Adult Education Service (36)
- Voluntary and Community Organisations (14)
- Leicester College (5)

[An interactive map is available using this link](#)



Financial barriers to ESFA funded ESOL

Course fees – [complex residency and eligibility criteria](#) limit access to free courses.

- 3 years residency in the UK or EU settled status required.
- g• asylum seekers waiting for their claim to be processed are not eligible to work and therefore not eligible for full funding but have no income to pay reduced fees.
- People who are economically inactive and not seeking work are not eligible for free courses

Other costs – transport, childcare, lost opportunity to earn

Practical barriers

- Shift work
- Agency work
- 91 • Relocation / housing issues
- Caring responsibilities

Online learning can help



Leicester
City Council

Twin Training	Leicester Adult Education
Courses are shorter and there is also a focus on majority gaining qualifications, whilst on programme	Short courses (20 GLHs) that engage hard to reach and new to ESOL learners. Learners will not achieve a qualification whilst on programme. Longer qualification courses will be offered as part of the progression opportunities
Our learners are mainly those that are economically active. Referrals are likely to be from JCP and other organisations that we work with.	We anticipate that the majority of the learners will be economically inactive.
All courses will be delivered by Twin in its city centre campus. 92	Courses will be delivered by Leicester Adult Education in the city centre, libraries and community centres across Leicester. Leicester Adult Education will also commission some partner organisations from the voluntary and community sector to deliver courses in different parts of the city.
	Funding for a limited number of asylum seekers to attend mainstream ESFA funded courses.
Residents from all parts of the city are able to join the programme.	Residents from all parts of the city are able to join the programme.
A caseworker will be providing employability support	A caseworker will be providing learners with individual support to remove barriers and raise awareness of existing services and promote further learning and volunteering and employment opportunities.

Other issues

- Not all levels available in all locations
- Lack of Pre-Entry ESOL opportunities and informal ESOL (UKSPF Everyday English is addressing this)
- Courses fill up quickly in September, limited flexible start dates
- Some providers reducing/ceasing delivery due to very low funding rates.
- Lack of tutor capacity
- Different short term funding streams from different parts of government.
- New - East Midlands Councils Strategic Migration Partnership - ESOL Programme Board



UKSPF – ESOL Projects

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Leicester
City Council

UKSPF – Everyday English

- Everyday English is an innovative ESOL programme led by Leicester Adult Education and delivered in partnership with local community organisations aimed at engaging and supporting Leicester residents with limited English skills.
- Enrichment activities as well as bespoke employability and digital skills courses are also on offer to boost participants' confidence and increase their independence.
- A caseworker will be providing learners with individual support to remove barriers and raise awareness of existing services and promote further learning and volunteering and employment opportunities.
- Classes are free and accessible in the city centre in Leicester Adult Education College and in numerous venues across Leicester



Partners

PYCA – Pakistani Youth and Community Association	Shama Women’s Centre	Somali Development Services
Wesley Hall	SOCOPA – Somali Community Parents Association	Sikh Community Centre
Leicester Turkish Community Education Centre	BYCS – Bangladeshi Youth and Community Shomiti	

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Activities

- Visit local museums: Leicester Museum and Art Gallery and Newarke Houses
- Volunteering Opportunities: Visits to food bank, animal sanctuary, charity shops
- Take part in a wide range of learning opportunities to maximise exposure and use of English. E.g. pottery, painting, creative writing, music



Feedback

Feedback from learners who took part in ESOL classes and enrichment activities:

- *"I know about many places in Leicester now. I visited many museums and the market. I am more confident to take the bus to go to the city centre now."*
- *"I never ordered in cafes or restaurants before because my husband ordered. Now I order myself."*
- *"I learnt how to speak to people and ask questions because I talked to new people. I can do it now without being scared."*
- *"I learnt something new through these activities. It was really helpful and feel more confident to speak to other people I don't know."*

Feedback from ESOL learner volunteering

- *"I helped others with their learning goals and it also benefitted me in gaining more confidence in my abilities. I would like to work in the future to help people."*



Leicester City Council

Scrutiny Review

Examining 20mph streets in Leicester

**A Review Report of the Economic
Development, Transportation & Climate
Emergency Scrutiny Commission**

January 2024

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Economic Development, Transportation and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission

Participating Commission Members

Councillor Sue Waddington (Chair)
Councillor Molly O'Neill (Vice Chair)
Councillor Geoff Whittle
Councillor Abdul Osman
Councillor Hemant Rae-Bhatia

Evidence to the Commission was provided by:

Andrew Smith, Director of Planning, Development & Transportation, Leicester City Council
Daniel Pearman, City Transport Director, Leicester City Council
Graham Seaton, Leicestershire Police
Sally Williams, Leicester Disabled People's Access Group
Zina Zelter, Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire
Nicola Royle, Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire
Anna Semlyen, 20's Plenty for Us

FOREWORD

I'm delighted to present the final report of the findings of the Economic Development, Transportation and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission's work in examining the policy regarding the implementation of 20mph streets in Leicester.

The implementation of 20mph streets across the city, covering over 1,500 streets and a programme to expand further, has undoubtedly had an impact on addressing traffic issues and promoting safety for our residents. Given some time has passed since the policy was reviewed, and given the national interest, I was very keen for the Economic Development, Transportation and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission to investigate this matter further.

Our work was a focused exercise to gain clarity around the rationale and benefits of implementing 20mph streets and the policy in creating 20mph zones. Crucially, we wanted to find out more about how the programme has been developed locally and how it compares with other cities to achieving the desired outcome of safer streets.

The work of the task group was relatively short and focussed. I'm very thankful for the input of my commission colleagues and officers from within the City Council's transportation division who provided us with their knowledge and expertise. I am also very thankful to the stakeholders who took the time to submit evidence to the review, this was fundamental to understand external views and I'm grateful for the input of those involved.

I was delighted that from a closer inspection of the current programme and from examining a range of evidence, that colleagues and I were able to form a number of recommendations that I hope will ensure further commitment to the implementation of 20mph streets in Leicester. I feel that the policy is crucial to ensuring safer streets for residents whilst also benefiting our environment and it is vital that the Commission continue to engage with the service and provide feedback to ensure suitable streets are identified for 20mph zones and that they are effective.



Councillor Sue Waddington
Chair of Economic Development, Transportation & Climate Emergency
Scrutiny Commission

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background to the Review

- 1.1.1 As of August 2023, Leicester’s rolling 20mph programme had converted over 50% of suitable streets to 20mph, equivalent to over 1,500 streets, with a commitment to aim for coverage of 80% of suitable streets over the next four years.
- 1.1.2 Whilst broadly supporting the implementation of 20mph speed limits, Members of the Economic Development, Transportation and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission sought greater detail in terms of the approach to the programme.
- 1.1.3 To enable the level of examination deemed necessary, the Commission resolved to establish a Task Group to gather the evidence required in order to reach a clear view in respect of the benefits of 20mph streets, the current programme and proposed schemes to achieve the commitment of converting 80% of suitable streets to 20mph.
- 1.1.4 The Deputy City Mayor welcomed the review by the Commission as timely given the national scrutiny of 20mph streets.
- 1.1.5 The Task Group held three sessions to gain a more in-depth understanding of the current approach, gather evidence: hear from officers and stakeholders, including emergency services and voluntary and community sector organisations. These sessions provided the opportunity to probe, question and ultimately form conclusions to make several recommendations for the future delivery of the programme.
- 1.1.6 This review serves as an example of short, focused piece of work. Sections 2.4 and 2.5 set out more detail of the evidence gathered and summarises how conclusions were reached.

1.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.2.1 At the task group meeting on 15 January 2024, members endorsed the following set of proposed recommendations:

- a) The 20mph streets programme to continue to be implemented on a bespoke basis, in order to consider and be coordinated with complementary sustainable highway improvements where appropriate.
- b) The Council is committed to introducing 20mph streets in 80% of non-strategic roads by 2027, however the Task Group would like to see an ambition to achieve 100% of appropriate residential streets to be converted to 20mph zones by 2030.
- c) The 20mph programme should generally exclude A/Strategic roads.
- d) The 20mph implementation process should incorporate post completion feedback to understand how the scheme is operating and review whether any changes may be required to the area itself or adjacent areas. Consideration should be given to further engagement with local residents.
- e) Air quality in 20mph schemes to continue to be monitored and reported where possible.
- f) The 20mph schemes should incorporate appropriate measures to ensure as much as possible they are self-enforcing.
- g) When maintaining existing traffic calming measures implemented in the earlier 20mph schemes consideration should be given to replacing them with modern products as required in order to minimise problems such as traffic noise and vehicle damage.

2. REPORT

2.1 Review Rationale

- 2.1.1 The Economic Development, Transportation and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission initiated the review to examine the benefits and Council's approach to implementing 20mph streets in the city.
- 2.1.2 As of August 2023, Leicester's 20mph programme had converted over 50% of suitable streets to 20mph. A programme of work to continue implementing 20mph streets, aiming for coverage of 80% of suitable streets in the next four years had been identified.
- 2.1.3 The effectiveness and value for money of 20mph schemes in Leicester was previously considered by the Transport and Climate Change Scrutiny Commission in February 2012 who expressed support for the introduction of 20mph zones across the city and concluded that schools should be prioritised alongside accident cluster sites when implementing 20mph speed zones.
- 2.1.4 The Deputy City Mayor welcomed the review by the Commission as timely given the national scrutiny of 20mph streets.
- 2.1.5 The rationale and scoping document for the review is attached at Appendix A.

2.2 Review Approach

- 2.2.1 The intention of the review was made clear from the outset by the Chair in that the Task Group were keen to look at the approach and benefits to implementing 20mph streets in the city in order to reach a clear view in respect of the current programme and commitment to convert 80% of suitable streets to 20mph.
- 2.2.2 It is relatively commonplace for scrutiny commissions to request further detail in relation to proposed policy and this often results in additional information being provided to subsequent commission meetings. In this particular case, the Commission received an overview of services within its terms of reference on 27 July 2023, including the 20mph programme. A subsequent report was presented to the Commission on 21 September 2023 in response to the request by the Chair to examine the programme in more detail given concerns raised by residents to tackle traffic issues and the time elapsed since the topic had been considered by a scrutiny commission.
- 2.2.3 The preferred approach was to exercise the ability to engage with relevant officers and stakeholders away from a formal meeting setting and to gain sufficient evidence in order for a clearer view from the commission to be brought back to a future meeting.

- 2.2.4 The review was relatively short in comparison to other reviews performed previously but consistent with the current approach being explored by scrutiny commissions. The Commission held three separate informal meetings as part of the review, including:
- A detailed presentation by the transport division in respect of the current approach undertaken in Leicester and case studies for other areas implementing 20mph streets.
 - Evidence gathering from stakeholders and other identified witnesses, including the discussion of a verbal submission and review of written submissions.
 - A final session to draw conclusions from the evidence and in-depth understanding that had developed to form recommendations.

2.3 Current Arrangements

- 2.3.1 A session was arranged to allow the Task Group to receive the level of further detail required to understand the policy for the 20mph programme more fully. A comprehensive overview was provided by the Director for Planning, Development and Transportation and City Transport Director, a copy of the slides can be found in Appendix B. Members were also provided the opportunity to question officers on the current arrangements and proposed schemes.
- 2.3.2 Members were informed that rather than introducing a blanket speed limit policy which some other parts of the country are adopting, the potential for 20mph zones in Leicester has been considered on an area-by-area basis. The rationale for this is such that structured assessments can be undertaken of each potential new zone. Whilst taking longer overall, this is considered a more effective way of delivering bespoke 20mph zones to ensure a more robust and positive outcome.
- 2.3.3 Potential schemes are subject to detailed technical street by street assessment including analysis of accident statistics and speed surveys.
- 2.3.4 Consideration in each area is given to controls over vehicle speeds and safety using 20mph speed limit signage, but also complementary physical traffic calming measures such as speed cushions. The potential for wider safety benefits and complementary improvements, such as for schools and more generally for cyclists, pedestrians and disabled people on streets, is also considered.
- 2.3.5 All 20mph schemes require a traffic regulation order and therefore follow a standard approach to consultation by engaging key stakeholders, such as the emergency services, bus operators, active travel representative, the lead Executive member and local ward members. Schemes are generally approved under specific Executive decisions.

2.3.6 Over 50% of suitable streets in the city are now 20mph, equivalent to over 1,500 streets, with a rolling programme and commitment to reach 80% of suitable streets over the next four years - this generally excludes A roads and strategic routes.

2.3.7 The programme is continuously reviewed to forward plan schemes and reprioritise where necessary. The Department for Transport provides funding each year that is utilised to deliver 20mph schemes and whilst other funding sources, such as S106 monies, may sometimes also be used, government funding is generally matched with internal resources to implement 20mph zones.

2.4 Evidence Gathering

2.4.1 In compiling evidence for the Task Group, officers carried out investigatory work and presented information to Members. This included gathering data and evidence from internal sources and by undertaking desktop research to understand the impact of 20mph streets and share the policy approach at other local authorities in terms of comparing the implementation of 20mph streets in Leicester.

2.4.2 Members also undertook investigatory work and shared findings of research and examples of case studies within their wards and across the wider city.

2.4.3 In consultation with the Task Group, the Chair also invited a number of organisations to submit evidence and participate in the review who had knowledge and expertise as well as sharing views of the public. Stakeholders were invited to either submit evidence in writing or present information to the Task Group at a dedicated session.

2.4.4 Evidence was submitted on behalf of Leicestershire Police, Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire, Leicester Disabled Access Group and 20s Plenty for Us. A representative also attended the evidence gathering session on behalf of Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire to present evidence and engage with Members.

2.4.5 The sessions allowed Members to seek clarity and ask questions on various matters such as the local and wider policy and the benefits of 20mph streets to road safety and protecting the environment. This level of investigation allowed sufficient evidence to be gathered to enable a set of recommendations to be established as outlined in paragraph 1.2.

2.5 Review Findings

2.5.1 By introducing 20mph speed limits, it is expected that vehicles will travel no more than 20mph in designated zones. This can involve changing signage but can also include the installation of traffic calming measures.

- 2.5.2 In receiving evidence, it was made clear to the Task Group that the implementation of 20mph speed limits was wholly supported and in broad agreement with the identified benefits.
- 2.5.3 There was consensus that implementation of 20mph streets create safer streets, increase uptake in walking and cycling and reduce frequency and severity of road traffic accidents.
- 2.5.4 Local data showed that during 2016-2020 (noting subsequent years was not included due to the pandemic), there had been a 43% reduction in collisions, average speeds had reduced by 2.3mph, and there had been an increase in local walking and cycling facilitated by the bespoke design of schemes.
- 2.5.5 Emerging evidence of reduced air pollution by reducing CO2 in 20mph zones was reported, although recognition was given that this is still be monitored.
- 2.5.6 The main observation of difference was the approach to introducing 20mph streets and the use of traffic calming measures.
- 2.5.7 Over 1,500 streets in the city have been converted to 20mph using a bespoke scheme-by-scheme basis. There is also a commitment to aim to reach 80% of suitable streets over the next four years in which the Task Group received further detail on the proposed programme of streets.
- 2.5.8 Assessment of data and the local environment is considered to design appropriate schemes to control vehicle speeds and safety by solely using 20mph speed limit signage or including other physical traffic calming measures.
- 2.5.9 All 20mph schemes require a traffic regulation order and therefore involve consultation. There has been a consistent level of support from emergency services and members of the public are generally in support of 20mph schemes with objections usually relating to specific elements, for example a speed cushion in a specific location. This was consistent with evidence received relating to surveys in other cities implementing 20mph streets.
- 2.5.10 Evidence received from the Police, who are a key stakeholder in the Road Safety Partnership across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland, was consistent with this finding of supporting the implementation of 20mph streets and the commitment to achieve reduced speed limits for 80% of suitable streets, subject to compliance with Department for Transport Guidance.
- 2.5.11 It was found that there has been no conflict with implemented 20mph schemes on emergency response and few complaints had been submitted to the Police regarding compliance.

- 2.5.12 20s Plenty for Us, Climate Action Leicester & Leicestershire and Leicester Disabled People's Access Group support a default 20mph speed limit in which the local authority could create exceptions for particular streets in order to reduce speed limits more quickly and improve safety, particularly in residential areas.

Benchmarking

- 2.5.13 The Commission were keen to understand the approach to implementing 20mph streets across other local authorities and national guidance to compare the approach taken in Leicester.
- 2.5.14 Most local authorities, including Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool and York take a similar approach to Leicester in delivering 20mph schemes – this includes using data to implement in areas where 20mph and where necessary traffic calming measures will be of benefit.
- 2.5.15 Leeds was identified as a city who have not introduced a default 20mph speed limit but introducing larger zones to achieve 20mph streets in comparison to the smaller clusters implemented on a phased approach in Leicester.
- 2.5.16 Cities such as Portsmouth and Edinburgh have implemented a default 20mph speed limit in residential areas but has required retrospective implementation of other measures as signs alone do not always control speeds. Wales had also implemented a national default speed limit of 20mph, although the policy had only recently been introduced and evidence of compliance is still at an early stage.
- 2.5.17 The Plan for Drivers announced by Government indicated blanket speed limits is likely to be prevented although this is subject to legislation. The service will continue to engage with the Department for Transport to ensure its policy complies with national guidance and legislation, although the current approach taken in Leicester would be consistent if it were introduced.

2.6 Summary of Task Group Conclusions

- 2.6.1 As a result of the evidence received and the ability for members to probe and engage with officers and witnesses as part of this work, the Task Group concluded that they were in broad agreement with the policy of implementing 20mph streets on a bespoke basis, although issued a number of recommendations as set out in paragraph 1.2.
- 2.6.2 The benefits of 20mph streets, particularly on road safety and preventing serious traffic collisions, was recognised by the Task Group and whilst there is a commitment to convert 80% of eligible streets to 20mph, Members concluded from the evidence gathered that the current programme commitment should be reviewed with a recommendation to

achieve 100% of appropriate residential streets to be converted to 20mph zones by 2030.

- 2.6.3 Drawing on the evidence, the Task Group recognised that the use of traffic calming measures were not wholly supported but concluded that such measures were important to ensuring compliance and self-enforcement of 20mph speed limits but that they should only be installed in streets when necessary. The Task Group also recognised the advancement of traffic calming measures over recent years and concluded that consideration be given to installing more modern products as required.
- 2.6.4 Overall, the Task Group found that the bespoke approach taken by the council in implementing 20mph streets was preferential to a default 20mph speed limit policy. It considered the approach taken in other authorities and evidence submitted by stakeholders but concluded that the assessment and consultation of 20mph zones on a scheme-by-scheme basis enabled suitable design and greater compliance although found that the process should be amended to incorporate post completion feedback along with consideration of the other recommendations.

3 Financial, Legal and Other Implications

3.1 Financial Implications

The cost of implementing 20mph zones largely relates to signage, consultation, regulation orders, and where necessary, calming measures. The roll-out of these measures is funded from the Transport Improvement Works (TIW) budget within the Council's capital programme, which is approved by Full Council each year.

Kirsty Cowell, Head of Finance, Ext 2377

3.2 Legal Implications

While there are no specific legal implications relating to the report, Traffic Regulation Orders can be introduced under various sections of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedures) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. The procedure contained in these regulations details the consultation requirements when enacting new TROs.

In determining the restrictions to be recommended Officers should have regard to the requirements under Section 122 of the 1984 Act to ensure the safe and expeditious movement of traffic, whilst considering the requirements for parking facilities on and off the highway. When making further 20mph decision, the Council will also have to comply with the

statutory requirements for consultation as required in accordance with the Act and Regulations.

Towards the end of 2023, the Government stated it intended to review the use of blanket 20mph speed limits and it is understood that Government guidance was also to be reviewed.

Zoe Iliffe FCILEx, Principal Lawyer, Ext 2180

3.3 Equality Implications

There are no direct equality implications arising from the report.

The report notes that for each scheme residents' views are sought and this is vital in giving due regard to any potential equality implications. Any larger schemes may warrant the need for an equality impact assessment.

Kalvaran Sandhu, Equalities Manager, Ext 6344

3.4 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Implications

As noted within this report, evidence shows that 20mph zones are successful in improving road safety and lead to an increase in walking and cycling levels. This is expected to lead to a reduction in overall carbon emissions from travel, and should therefore make a positive contribution to implementing the council's Climate Emergency Strategy and ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

4 Summary of Appendices

Appendix A: Report to the EDTCE Scrutiny Commission on 21 September 2023.

Appendix B: Presentation by city transport services provided to task group meeting on 13 November 2023.

5 Officers to Contact

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Senior Governance Officer
Georgia.Humby@leicester.gov.uk
0116 454 2971

20MPH STREETS – INFORMAL SCRUTINY PROPOSAL

EDTCE Scrutiny

Date of meeting: 21 September 2023

Lead director/officer: Daniel Pearman

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All Wards
- Report author: Daniel Pearman
- Author contact details: [0116 454 3061](tel:01164543061)
- Report version number: 01

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide members of the commission with some background information and a suggested approach for informal scrutiny in relation to the Council's approach to delivering 20mph streets in Leicester and a proposed future programme for new schemes.
- 1.2 To provide members of the commission with the opportunity to comment on the scope for the work, suggest items to include, and consider joining the working group.

2. Context

- 2.1 Leicester's 20mph programme has, as of August 2023, converted over 50% of suitable streets to 20mph (See Appendix 1 plan of existing 20 mph schemes in the city). Currently a programme of work is envisaged to continue this work, aiming for coverage of some 80 % of suitable streets in the next four years.
- 2.2 Rather than introduce blanket speed limits which some other parts of the country are doing, in Leicester the potential for 20mph zones has been considered on an area by area basis. There is a clear rationale for this, such that structured assessment can be undertaken of each potential new zone. Whilst taking longer overall this is a more considered a more effective way of delivering bespoke 20mph zones to ensure a more robust and positive outcome.
- 2.3 Potential schemes are subject to detailed technical street by street assessment including analysis of accident statistics and speed surveys.
- 2.4 Consideration in each area is given to controls over vehicle speeds and safety using 20mph speed limit signage, but also complementary physical safety measures such as speed cushions. The potential for wider safety benefits and complementary improvements, such as for schools and more generally for cyclists, pedestrians and disabled people on streets, is also considered.
- 2.5 Each scheme follows a standard approach to staged consultation engaging key stakeholders, such as the emergency services, bus operators, active travel representatives and the lead Executive member and local ward members. Schemes are generally approved under specific Executive decisions.
- 2.6 The Transport and Climate Change Scrutiny Commission considered the effectiveness and value for money of 20mph schemes in Leicester and in February 2012 and expressed support for the introduction of 20mph zones across the city and concluded that schools should be prioritised alongside accident cluster sites when implementing 20mph speed zones.

3. Scope of the 20mph Streets Review

3.1 A suggested scope for some separate, informal scrutiny is set out below for consideration by the Commission:

- The current area by area approach to the delivery of 20mph zones,
- The methodology used to determine areas that are appropriate for 20mph zones,
- The process by which engagement and consultation is undertaken for 20mph zones,
- The usage of traffic calming when delivering 20mph zones and the reason why certain types of traffic calming are considered,
- The impact and benefits of 20mph zones on motor traffic, passenger transport, emergency services, cyclists, pedestrians and disabled people,
- The impact and benefits of 20mph zones on road safety, air quality, decarbonisation and public health
- Comparisons and findings from other local or national authorities,
- The proposals for the next stage of the programme, to ensure at least 80% of streets in the city are made 20mph in the next 4 years,
- The potential benefits through inclusion of additional local safety and active travel improvements as part of 20mph speed limits or zones, for instance benefiting schools and more generally for cyclists, pedestrians and disabled people.

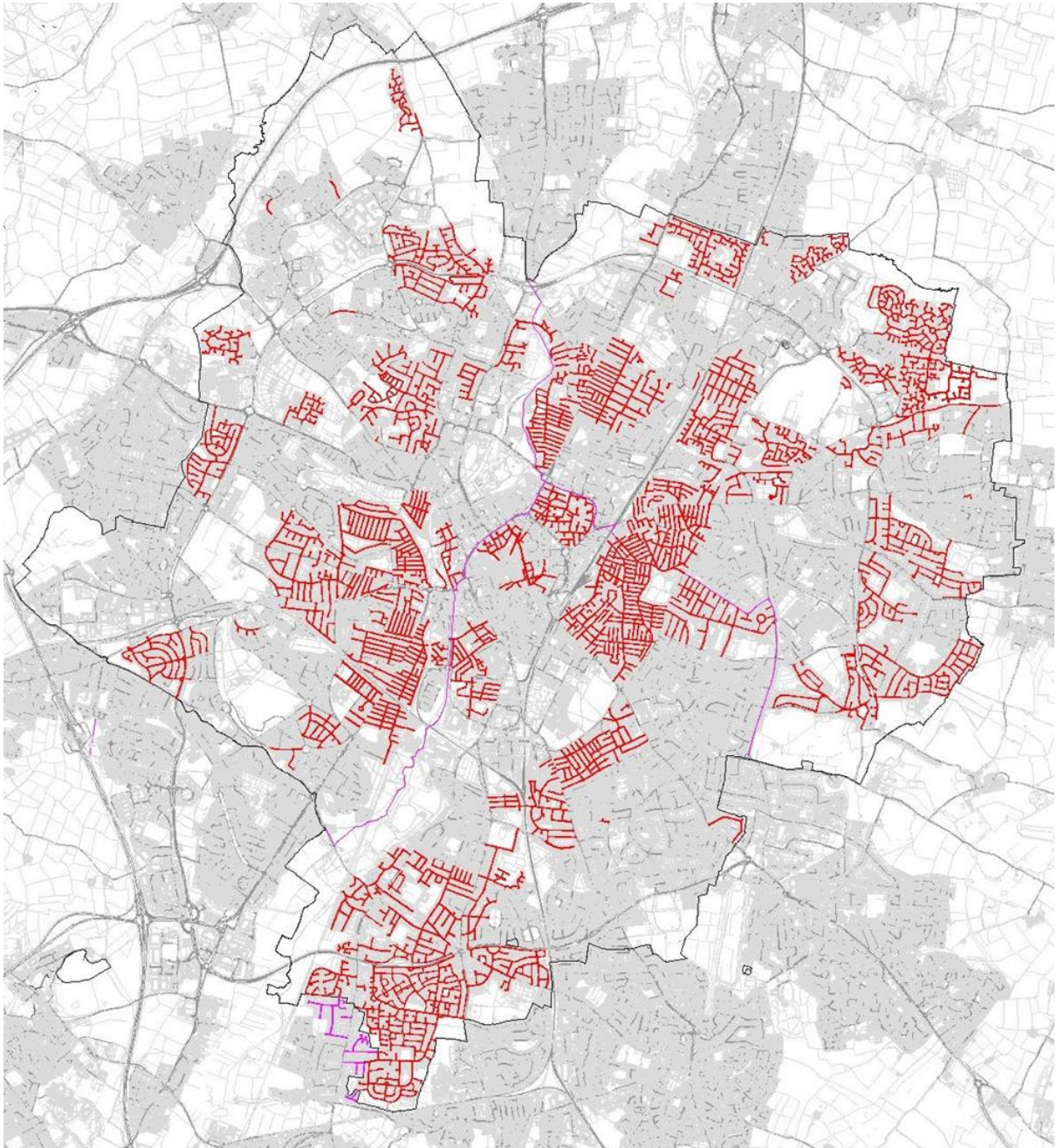
3.2 Scrutiny member's comments are requested on the proposed approach to some informal scrutiny on this matter. Volunteers are sought to attend meetings to carry out the review. It is anticipated that at least three meetings will be held with the intention of completing the stages by the end of the calendar year:

1. Overview/Background review.
2. Consider issues in depth, including potential to invite participants e.g. Road Safety Partnership, Police and representative users such as cyclists, pedestrian and disability groups.
3. Draw conclusions on findings and recommendations.

Members can consider the approach to this work in more detail at the first meeting, including requests for participants.

3.3 The findings of the informal scrutiny and any recommendations that arise will be reported back to the EDTCE Scrutiny Commission for comment and subsequent reference to the Lead Executive member for consideration.

Appendix 1 - plan showing existing coverage of 20 MPH schemes



20mph

EDTCE Scrutiny Commission Working
Group
13th November 2023

Scrutiny Considerations

- The current area by area approach to the delivery of 20mph zones,
- The methodology used to determine areas that are appropriate for 20mph zones,
- The process by which engagement and consultation is undertaken for 20mph zones,
- The usage of traffic calming when delivering 20mph zones and the reason why certain types of traffic calming are considered,
- The impact and benefits of 20mph zones on motor traffic, passenger transport, emergency services, cyclists, pedestrians and disabled people,
- The impact and benefits of 20mph zones on road safety, air quality, decarbonisation and public health
- Comparisons and findings from other local or national authorities,
- The proposals for the next stage of the programme, to ensure at least 80% of streets in the city are made 20mph in the next 4 years,
- The potential benefits through inclusion of additional local safety and active travel improvements as part of 20mph speed limits or zones, for instance benefiting schools and more generally for cyclists, pedestrians, and disabled people.

What is a 20mph area?

- A 20mph area is an area where traffic is expected to be travelling at no more than 20mph, and the posted speed limit has been changed accordingly.
- Some areas will have traffic calming features to reduce vehicle speeds, others will have signage only. This will depend mostly on average vehicle speeds.



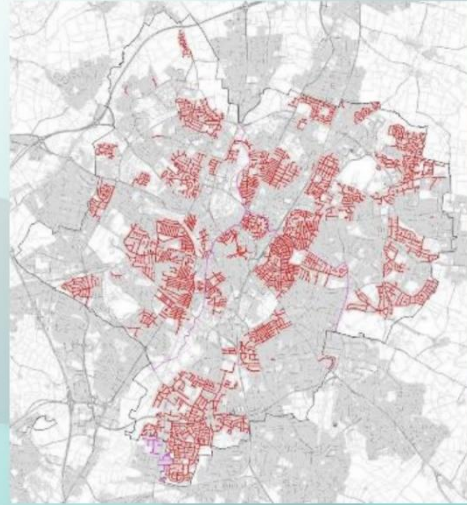
Benefits of 20mph

- Safer streets for pedestrians and cyclists
- Increased uptake of walking and cycling
- Reduced rat running
- Reduced frequency and severity of road traffic collisions
- Emerging evidence of reduced pollution



Context

- As of November 2023, just over 50% of suitable streets in the city are under 20mph restrictions – over 1500 streets total.
- Leicester’s first 20mph – Bede Island, 1999. Current programme started 2012.
- Suitable streets are those that are not category “A” roads – these are main roads like London Road.



The Leicester Approach



- Rather than introduce a blanket speed limit, we have delivered 20mph schemes as discrete zones – installing traffic calming features such as speed humps or cushions where needed.
- All streets that are not main roads (class A) are in scope and taken to at least assessment/engagement.

Identification and Scoring

- Potential areas are identified by clustering together similar local streets into an area. This can vary from one or two roads, through to larger estates of thirty plus streets.
- A scoring system is then used to arrange scheme priority, taking into account:
 - Local support (based on requests from ward councillors or residents)
 - Whether other works are scheduled in the area
 - Whether there is a planning condition in place for speed restrictions
 - How deliverable the proposal is
 - The number of schools within the proposed area
 - The potential cost of the scheme
 - The number of accidents per km, per year.

Assessment



- Speed data for streets within a proposed area is sourced from sat nav data and point surveys.
- Officers also use experience, guidance, and any previous information shared from the public to identify where potential issues may be.
- This data lets us identify where we may need to take action to reduce speeds by installing traffic calming before making streets 20mph.

Traffic Calming

- Specific meaning in law – road humps, build-outs, chicanes, gateways, islands, overrun areas, pinch-points, or rumble devices.
- Speed cushions, tables, bumps, are all forms of road hump
- Must always be designed to suit the environment. Most residential traffic calming will take the form of speed cushions – some wider wheelbase vehicles are less deterred.

Traffic Calming - Examples



Engagement/Consultation

- 20mph schemes will always require a traffic order, and therefore a consultation exercise.
- Stage 1 consultations are with local ward councillors, the emergency services, Logistics UK, and the Road Haulage Association.
- Stage 2 consultations are undertaken with all residents living within the impacted area.
- Comments and feedback are considered at each stage and shape the design – for example, features may be altered for fire/ambulance routes to ensure emergency vehicles are not hindered.

Levels of Support



- 20mph speed limits continue to be well supported by residents and emergency services.
- Around 18-25% response rate per scheme, around 75-80% of responses in favour.
- Objections tend to focus on scheme design concerns (placement of speed cushions, for example), potential for vehicle damage, lack of value, or concerns over enforcement.

What are Others Doing?

- Authorities including Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Leeds, Oxfordshire, York, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Bristol are delivering 20mphs on a staged, data led approach similar to ours.
- London Boroughs mostly adopt the same practice, though have different legislation requirements.
- These areas have delivered quite substantive areas under this approach, whilst ensuring environments are suitable.
- A minority of authorities have undertaken wider, wholesale changes to speed limits.

Citywide or Default Changes

- Wales have recently changed default speed limits to 20mph on residential roads.
- Portsmouth deployed a citywide 20mph limit that covered 94% of the city in 2008 – the first city in the country to do so.
- Edinburgh deployed a similar programme, completing the transition for most of the city by March 2018.
- Portsmouth and Edinburgh have both delivered programmes to introduce traffic calming since.

Findings Since Completion

Portsmouth

- 22% reduction in the number of casualties
- Average speed reduction of 1.3mph
- High (>24mph) speed roads continued to display noncompliance.
- Strong public support associated with an increase in likelihood to walk or cycle.

Edinburgh

- 30% decrease in collisions, and a 31% decrease in casualties.
- Largest speed reductions on streets that were physically changed. Overall average speed reduction of 2mph
- Frequency of walking or cycling trips up – frequency of car or van journeys down
- Air pollutants – continuing downward trend.

Wales

- Average speed reduction of 3mph
- 51% increase in active travel use on journeys to school.
- Reported change in driver behaviour to be more pro-pedestrian.
- No negative impact on air quality.
- Mixed reports on bus service punctuality, too early and sample size too small to conclude.

Benefits to our approach

- Allows us to deliver a rolling programme alongside traffic calming, maximising resource availability and deployment.
- Removes much of the need for police enforcement.
- Minimises the need for intervention after installation and ensures that speed limits evidence good compliance.
- Creates opportunity for other local improvements in the area when delivering/designing schemes.



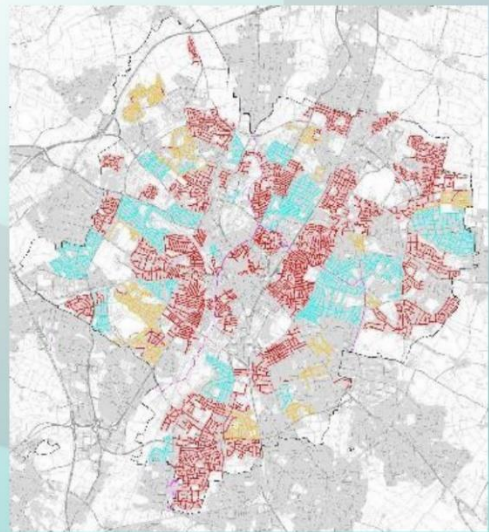
Our findings

- 43% reduction in collisions on converted roads.
- Average speed reduction of 2.6mph
- Increase in local walking and cycling journeys – most evident in areas with traffic calming installed.



Next Stages

- City Council are committed to ensuring 80% of the network are made 20mph within the next 4 years.
- Map opposite shows:
 - Current limits (red)
 - Programmed schemes (cyan)
 - Proposed additional (mustard)
- Cyan projects are at various stages of design and consultation, mustard projects are currently being scheduled.
- Plan for Drivers – a promise to “update 20mph zone guidance for England to help prevent inappropriate blanket use”



Planning, Development and Transport

EDTCE Scrutiny Commission Briefing

Date: 18/01/2024

From: Martin Fletcher, City Highways Director

Ext: 374965

Subject: Storm Henk Flooding – 2nd/3rd January 2024

1. Purpose of Briefing:

1.1 To update the EDTCE Scrutiny Committee on the response to the flooding impacts in the City arising from Storm Henk.

2. Incident Phase – Tuesday 2nd January and Wednesday 3rd January:

2.1 Heavy rainfall over the new year period combined with existing saturated ground conditions saw river levels rise rapidly on Tuesday 2nd January leading to the Environment Agency issuing flood warnings for eleven areas in Leicester.

2.2 The timeline of key events and information leading up to and during the flooding on 2nd and 3rd January is attached at **Appendix A**.

2.3 The Council's Highway and Emergency Management Teams were active during the incident phase monitoring river levels and responding to reports of highway and property flooding, with consideration being given to the establishment of potential rest centres.

2.4 During the incident several streets were affected by flood water from the River Soar and a number of properties had to be evacuated, particularly in the Thurcaston Rd area of the city.

2.5 Council Teams and the Fire Service focussed on supporting affected residents and the Council's Incident Response Plans were activated. A control room was established at City Hall to handle calls and enquiries and co-ordinate our response.

3. Recovery Phase – Thursday 4th January and Ongoing:

3.1 There has been significant property flooding in the city as a result of Storm Henk, predominantly a result of flooding from the River Soar in the Thurcaston Rd area.

3.2 We have confirmed 137 properties have flooded internally. The details are as follows:

Storm HENK 2-3 January 2024 - Internal Property Flooding list - Leicester City		
Street Names	Ward	Confirmed
Abbey Lane	Abbey	5
Beaumanor Road	Abbey	55
Corporation Road	Abbey	1
Thurcaston Road	Abbey / Belgrave	18
Wesley Street	Abbey	4
Marsden Lane	Aylestone	3
Middleton Street	Aylestone	1
Day Street	Belgrave	9
Marjorie Street	Belgrave	3
Palmer Street	Belgrave	3
Ross Walk	Belgrave	1
Victoria Park Road (Medical Centre and Dentist)	Castle	2
Columbine Road	Humberstone & Hamilton	1
Batten Street	Saffron	3
Gwendolen Road	Spinney Hills	1
Gleneagles Avenue	Rushey Mead	8
Roseway	Rushey Mead	15
Wintersdale Road	Thurncourt	3
Glengarry Close	Western	1
Total		137

These locations are shown on the map at **Appendix B**.

3.3 Key roads affected by flooding during Storm Henk included:

- Braunstone Lane East/Middleton Street
- A6 Abbey Lane between Redhill Circle and Beaumont Leys Lane/Corporation Road
- Thurcaston Road between Abbey Lane and Loughborough Road
- Beaumanor Road
- Wesley Street
- Day Street
- Ross Walk
- Holden Street

3.4 Following the flooding, the Council has established a cross-departmental Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG) to manage the Council's response to the issues arising and provide support to affected residents.

3.5 The aims and objectives of the RCG are set out in **Appendix C** but can be summarised as follows:

- Undertake Recovery Impact Assessment.
- Full investigation to identify flooded properties.

- Support vulnerable people.
- Support with temporary accommodation where needed.
- Aid clean-up:
 - 'Bulky item' removals
 - Highway cleansing
 - Parks cleansing
 - Council land/property
- Support local residents and businesses with properties affected by flooding in making flood recovery grant applications where eligible.
- Work with utility companies to ensure all properties services reinstated as soon as possible.
- Assist affected residents with insurance claims and in making contact with landlords.
- Support residents back into homes.
- Promote flood awareness messaging and communications.
- Feed back to the Local Resilience Forum.

3.6 In the immediate days following the flooding, the RCG activities included:

- Visits to all known affected properties by the Flooding and Drainage team took place from Thursday afternoon, with known vulnerable adults prioritised.
- City Wardens also knocked on doors of all those affected to offer support and advice on coping with the aftermath.
- City Cleansing organised the collection of flood damaged property (carpets, furniture, etc) that residents were leaving on the footway. Efforts concentrated on Beaumanor Rd area, but all known flooded locations have now been visited and contact leaflets left if residents were not present.
- City Cleansing commenced cleaning the highway in the affected streets.
- City Highways prioritised the cleaning of gullies on flooded streets (concentrating around the Beaumanor Rd area).
- Contact made with utility companies as both electricity and water reported to be off in the Beaumanor Rd/Thurcaston Rd area.
- A significant clean-up operation was implemented at Ellis Meadows, Aylestone Meadows and elsewhere along the River Soar, where unprecedented levels of waste debris and litter were left by the floodwater.

3.7 As we move further into the recovery phase, a key objective of the RCG is to support residents and businesses whose properties have been flooded internally with accessing grant funding through the Governments Flood Recovery Framework scheme. This has been made available to districts affected by Storm Henk where over 50 properties have been flooded. Details of the Government scheme can be found at:

[Government payments for communities affected by flooding - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/payments-for-communities-affected-by-flooding)

3.8 We continue to respond to enquiries and support affected residents. The Flooding and Drainage team are consolidating all data collected and responding to requests for service that they have received, prioritising where internal property flooding has occurred. The team are also assisting local ward Councillors with patch walks.

3.9 At this time and from the data available, the primary cause of the flooding is considered to be from the River Soar. However, over the coming weeks, the council will be undertaking a full investigation into the cause of the flooding in liaison with the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water.

3.10 The Environment Agency are the lead organisation with responsibility for managing flood risk from the River Soar. The EA have begun to engage with the affected communities, and we have requested that they continue to liaise with us in doing so.

3.11 For reference purposes, our Councillors' guide to Leicester's flood risk, weather warnings, flood warnings and flood preparedness is attached at **Appendix D**.

3.12 The Council website also contains detailed information about flooding: [Flooding and watercourses \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/flooding-and-watercourses)

4. Recommendations.

4.1 The EDTCE Scrutiny Commission is asked to note the contents of the briefing paper and feedback any comments.

Appendix A.

Storm Henk Flooding – Key Information and Chronology

EA/Met Office Flood Guidance Statements:

Date	Time	Leicester Risk Category (High Level)
Mon 1/1/24	10.30am	Green – low
Tues 2/1/24	10.30am	Yellow – medium
Tues 2/1/24	15.30pm	Yellow – medium
Weds 3/1/24	10.30am	Green – low

N.B. Whilst there was a yellow warning in place for rainfall across the region, there was no specific National Severe Weather Warning Service “heavy rainfall warning” issued for Leicester ahead of, or during, Storm Henk. The rainfall amounts experienced are not unexpected at this time of year, but the saturated ground conditions since Storm Babet in October make catchments extremely flashy and the rainfall run-off quickly reaches watercourses.

EA Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings Timeline:

Date	Time	Category	Location
Sat 30/12/23	10.37am	Flood Alert	Upper Soar Catchment (incl. Leicester)
Sun 31/12/23	11.46am	Flood Alert	Leicester Tributaries
Tues 2/1/24	2.24pm	Flood Warning	Thurnby Brook upstream of Dakyn Rd
Tues 2/1/24	2.58pm	Flood Warning	Bushby Brook upstream of Dakyn Rd
Tues 2/1/24	4.39pm	Flood Warning	Bushby Brook downstream of Dakyn Rd
Tues 2/1/24	5.57pm	Flood Warning	Melton Brook in Rushey Mead
Tues 2/1/24	7.03pm	Flood Warning	River Soar at Willow Brook, Melton Brook, Belgrave – Cannock St
Tues 2/1/24	11.54pm	Flood Warning	River Soar at North Aylestone
Tues 2/1/24	11.57pm	Flood Warning	River Soar at Rushey Mead
Tues 2/1/24	11.58pm	Flood Warning	River Soar at Aylestone
Weds 3/1/24	00.01am	Flood Warning	River Soar at Frog Island
Weds 3/1/24	00.17am	Flood Warning	River Soar at Abbey Meadows
Weds 3/1/24	00.18am	Flood Warning	River Soar at Belgrave – Ross Walk

Response Co-ordination Meetings, Key Actions & Issues:

Date	Time	Meetings, Key Actions & Issues	Notes/Issues:
Tues 2/1/24	2.24pm	First flood warning received	Thurnby area
Tues 2/1/24	3.00pm	Highways Flood Response Mtg following receipt of first two flood warnings	Operational Response Planning – activities and resources.
Tues 2/1/24	3.42pm	Escalation Discussion between City Highways Director & director for Corporate Service following receipt of first two flood warnings	Agreed to request multi-agency Tactical Co-ordinating Group meeting (TCG)
Tues 2/1/24	5.00pm	Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland (LLR) Multi-Agency TCG	City Council Chaired

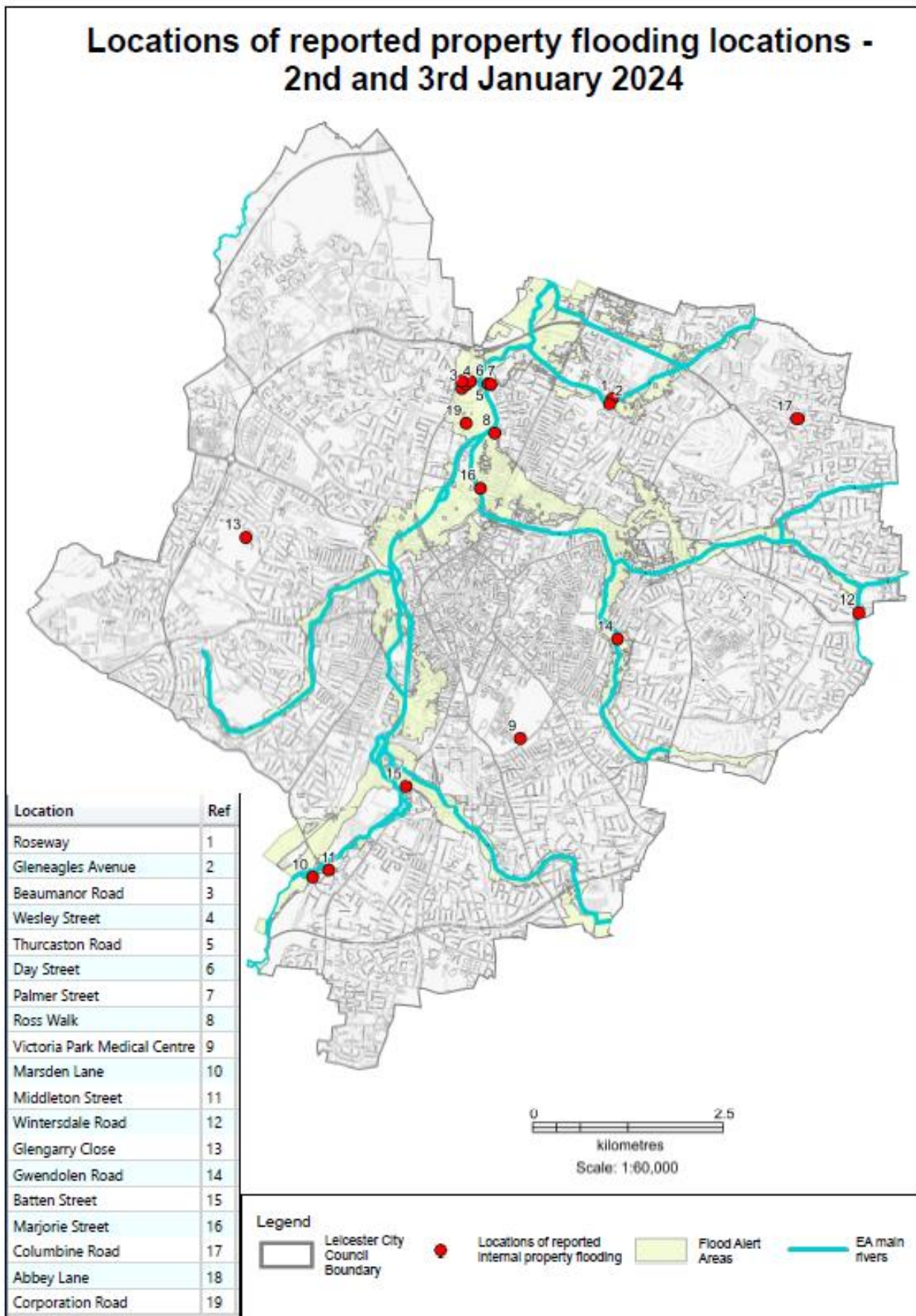
Tues 2/1/24	5.30pm	Leicester City Council (LCC) Incident Log Commenced	
Tues 2/1/24	6.45pm	Emergency Centre (EC) identified in Thurnby and put on standby along with EC volunteers: Thurnby Lodge Community Centre	EC identified in response to Flood Warning for Thurnby and reports of highway flooding in Wintersdale Rd and Abbots Rd.
Tues 2/1/24	11.15pm	LCC Resilience Manager sought advice from Highways Director regarding two calls received relating to residents concerned about flood water rising	Aylestone (Marsden Lane) area
Weds 3/1/24	2.00am	Emergency Centres identified in Aylestone but stood down quickly as no evacuations taking place	
Weds 3/1/24	5.33am	<p><i>Collated summary of key issues provided by Highways Standby Supervisor:</i></p> <p>Marsden Lane: Flooded. Including properties. Water surging from gullies. Unable to take positive action to assist at this stage.</p> <p>Bath Street: Flooded. Not yet reached properties. Possible manhole covers blow. Sandbags to be deployed outside properties. Road closed.</p> <p>Oaklands Avenue: Not flooding.</p> <p>Boundary Road: Not flooding.</p> <p>Ross Walk: Flooded. Not yet reached properties. Sandbags to be deployed outside properties. Road closed.</p> <p>Thurcaston Road: Flooded. Not yet reached properties. Sandbags to be deployed outside properties. Water flowing from park. McDonalds car park flooded.</p> <p>Marjorie Street: Not flooding.</p> <p>Corporation Road: Beginning to flood.</p> <p>St Stephenson's Road / Fosse Road North (beneath Rally bridge): Flooded. Not yet reached properties.</p> <p>Middleton Street / Narrow Lane: Flooded. Including properties. Water surging from gullies. Unable to take positive action to assist at this stage.</p> <p>Day Street: Flooded. Including properties. Unable to take positive action to assist at this stage. Fire brigade on site.</p> <p>Repton Street: Not flooding.</p>	
Weds 3/1/24	8.15am	Highways Flood Response Mtg	
Weds 3/1/24	9.00am	LLR Multi-Agency TCG	City Council Chaired
Weds 3/1/24	10.00am	TCG meeting declared a major incident	
Weds 3/1/24	10.45am	LCC Incident Response Plan triggered and City Hall Control Room established	
Weds 3/1/24	2.00pm	LLR Multi-Agency TCG	City Council Chaired
Weds 3/1/24	2.00pm	Emergency centre established at Belgrave NHC and remained	In response to evacuation of flooded properties in

		open until 9.00pm but nobody attended	Day Street, Thurcaston Road and Beaumanor Rd
Weds 3/1/24	4.00pm	Highways Flood Response Mtg	
Weds 3/1/24	4.30pm	LLR Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group meeting	County Council Chaired. Chief Operating Officer rep for LCC
Weds 3/1/24	6.00pm	LLR Multi-Agency TCG	County Council Chaired
Weds 3/1/24	7.00pm	LCC Internal Flood Response Meeting Review	

Weds 3/1/23 – Core Actions and Activities Summary:

- City Hall Control Room collated information and responded in coordination with partners to people stranded in homes / evacuated / vulnerable people. Last of these centred on Day Street which was resolved by LF&RS and LCC about 7-00 pm
- Ongoing multiagency oversight and coordination with series of LRF TCG's / SCG's. Limited LF&RS specialist water response teams made prioritisation of people stranded necessary. Lives at risk in County areas and intensity of issues in Charnwood relevant to Leicester response context
- Ongoing operational response by Highways teams to reports of flooding, continuous monitoring of watercourse and areas at risk.

Appendix B – Map of Locations of Property Level Flooding during Storm Henk



Appendix C – RCG Aims & Objectives

Leicester City Council Flood Recovery Coordinating Group Strategy

The aim of the Leicester City Council Flood Recovery Coordinating Group is to support those directly affected by the serious flooding that occurred in Leicester during 03/01/24 and thereby return the community to a state of normality, mitigating the worst impacts of the flooding where possible.

This will be achieved by:

- Coordinating the provision of appropriate advice, guidance, and where appropriate, signposting to Council Services and other organisations.
- Coordinating the provision of appropriate material, and psychological support to victims in line with the Council's responsibilities.
- Monitoring impacts and ensuring these, and actions to mitigate them are recorded.
- Coordinating communications to the public, councillors, and other organisations.
- Cooperating with Local Resilience Forum partner organisations engaged in the recovery process across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland. Coordinating their direct engagement in Leicester where value can be added to the local recovery process.
- Attend LRF Recovery Groups when relevant and requested.
- Provide relevant data to the Multi Agency Information Cell (MAIC) to allow an LRF wide impact / recovery picture to be developed.
- Coordinate information to allow a bid to secure financial support from Central Government.

Appendix D: Councillors' guide to Leicester's flood risk, weather warnings, flood warnings and flood preparedness

This Guide is designed to provide flood risk advice to members in their community leadership role:

- to give general information about flood risk in the city
- to give advice which can be passed to residents
- to provide important information about the council's preparedness for major flooding events
- to provide information about how to sign up to the Environment Agency's flood alerts and warnings

Leicester's flood risk

Leicester is a nationally significant flood risk area because of the number of people at risk from a severe rainfall event. As climate change leads to more frequent intense rainfall, addressing flood risk is a key part of our work to make Leicester a climate-adapted city.

Historic interventions, such as canalising the mile straight of the River Soar and the many brooks throughout the city, have no doubt prevented previous heavy rainfall events from damaging property and therefore negatively impacting on residents' lives.

Recent interventions including high quality sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) in new developments, increasing of the capacity of the flood plain along the river corridor and a schools campaign to reduce the amount of litter entering water courses, have all helped to reduced flood risk. Work with our partners like this will continue, but given Leicester's geography and the threat of severe weather events (exacerbated by climate change), there will always be a need to be prepared for a major flooding event in parts of Leicester.

Being prepared for flooding

Residents can become more prepared for flooding by:

- Understanding the flood risk to their property
- Signing up to the EA's flood warning service if they are at risk.
- Having sufficient buildings and contents insurance to cover their flood risk
- Having a flood plan in place listing what to do should a flood warning be issued
- Storing important documents in a safe place such as upstairs or off the floor
- Ensuring that valuables and sentimental items are safe from flooding
- The plan should include how you will move family and pets to safety.

The Environment Agency has further guidance on what to do when the flood warnings are received here: [What to do in a flood - GOV.UK \(flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-to-do-in-a-flood).

The Council's role

Leicester City Council typically carry out the following as part of the emergency planning procedure for events such as flooding:

- We liaise with our colleagues in the county, the Emergency Services and the Environment Agency on a regular basis and when the risk of severe weather or flooding is predicted.
- We monitor river levels through our own river gauges and the network of partner agencies.
- We deploy resources to address localised flooding issues during severe weather events, such as clearing trash screens, reacting to blocked gullies, closing roads when flooded.
- For major flooding events where properties may be at risk of flooding, a multi-agency response may include evacuating residents to temporary accommodation.
- Work together through the recovery stage. Review the response.

During a major flooding event, sandbags are placed by Leicester City Council on a priority basis based on the flooding situation as it develops. The supply of sandbags is limited and in the event of significant flooding it is unlikely that we would be able to supply to private residences. **Key infrastructure (e.g. Health Centres) will be prioritised.** Property owners who wish to protect their property can do so by purchasing flood defence products from their local builders' merchants or other providers.

When weather forecasts and flood warnings indicate that a weather event is very likely to severely impact on residents and businesses in the city, the lead member and city mayor will be informed and ward members will then be contacted and briefed accordingly. However, it is also advised that members sign up for flood alerts and warnings. A 'step-by-step' guide is set out below.

Surface water flood risk

Surface water flooding occurs when the amount of rainfall is too great for the drains or the ground to cope with. This can occur very quickly and therefore it is important to monitor weather forecasts of potential heavy rainfall. The city council is responsible for highway drainage, however most of the highway drainage in the city is connected to the public sewers. During heavy rainfall events, the capacity of the highway drainage and sewer systems can be overwhelmed, leading to water backing up, flowing out of manholes and standing water accumulating in streets. Heavy rainfall causing surface water flooding can also mean that drainage ditches, streams and minor watercourses overflow.

Flood alerts and warnings warn of the risk of flooding from rivers, the sea and groundwater. National flood warnings don't currently cover surface water flooding, however warnings of extreme weather (including thunderstorms) are issued by the Met Office. Residents can also find out if they are at flood risk, including the risk from surface water flood flooding, here: [Check the long term flood risk for an area in England - GOV.UK \(flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/met-office/pages/check-the-long-term-flood-risk-for-an-area-in-england)

Weather forecasts and warnings

Weather forecasts and weather warnings are issued by the Met Office, which warn of possible impacts caused by severe weather. The warnings are designed to let people, businesses, emergency responders and governments know what weather is predicted and what impacts that weather may have. The Met Office operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year so warnings can be issued at any time, day or night. The weather warnings are provided up to seven days ahead for rain, thunderstorms, wind, snow, lightning, ice and fog.

These warnings are given a colour (yellow, amber or red) depending on a combination of both the impact the weather may have and the likelihood of those impacts occurring. More information can be found at: [Weather warnings guide - Met Office](#)

Current weather warnings can be also found on the Met Office website here: [UK weather warnings - Met Office](#).

A Guide for signing up for the Environment Agency's Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings

Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings are issued in the UK by the Environment Agency and inform members of the public via phone, email or text when flooding is expected.

There are three levels of Flood Warnings that can be issued:

1. Flood Alert – this means you need to prepare; flooding is possible.



2. Flood Warning – this means you need to act; flooding is expected

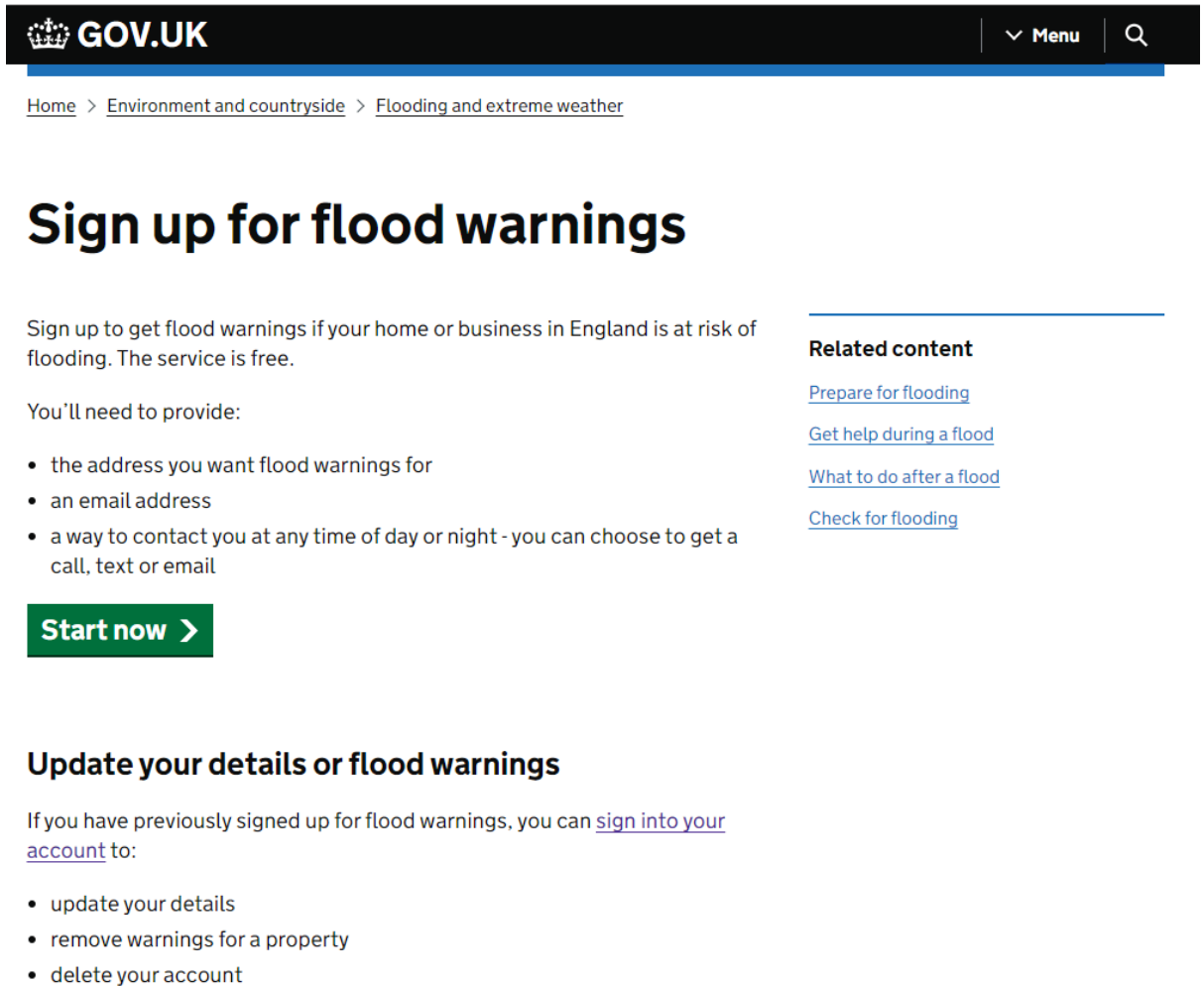


3. Severe Flood Warning - this means there is danger to life; you must act now



A step-by-step guide to signing up for the Environment Agency's Flood Alerts and Warnings is set out below:

1. Navigate to: <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings> and click on "Start now"



The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website interface. At the top, there is a black navigation bar with the GOV.UK logo on the left, a 'Menu' dropdown on the right, and a search icon. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Environment and countryside > Flooding and extreme weather'. The main heading is 'Sign up for flood warnings'. The text below the heading states: 'Sign up to get flood warnings if your home or business in England is at risk of flooding. The service is free.' It then lists the information needed to provide: 'You'll need to provide:'. A bulleted list follows: 'the address you want flood warnings for', 'an email address', and 'a way to contact you at any time of day or night - you can choose to get a call, text or email'. A prominent green button with white text says 'Start now >'. To the right of the main content is a 'Related content' section with four links: 'Prepare for flooding', 'Get help during a flood', 'What to do after a flood', and 'Check for flooding'. Below the main content is a section titled 'Update your details or flood warnings' with the text: 'If you have previously signed up for flood warnings, you can [sign into your account](#) to:'. A bulleted list follows: 'update your details', 'remove warnings for a property', and 'delete your account'.

2. Click on "Sign up for flood warnings"

BETA This is a new service - your [feedback](#) will help us to improve it

Sign up for flood warnings

Get flood warnings

[Sign up for flood warnings](#)

Update your details or cancel warnings

[Sign in to your flood warnings account](#)

3. On the next page, select “Search by town or city” rather than entering a postcode

BETA This is a new service - your [feedback](#) will help us to improve it

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Check if you can get flood warnings for your address

We'll check if the address is near an area that we give warnings for.

Postcode

Find address

[Or search by town or city](#)

4. Type “Leicester” on the next page and click “Find town or city”

GOV.UK Sign up for flood warnings

BETA This is a new service - your [feedback](#) will help us to improve it

[Back](#)

Check if you can get flood warnings for your area

We'll find the nearest flood risk areas that we give warnings for.

Town or city

Find town or city

5. When given the options on the next page, click on “LEICESTER”

GOV.UK Sign up for flood warnings

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Choose an area for flood warnings

Town or city

LEICESTER

[LEICESTER FOREST EAST, LEICESTER](#)

[LEICESTER FOREST WEST, LEICESTER](#)

6. Click “Sign up to Flood Warnings” for the areas you want to sign up for. For Leicester, the following areas are given:
- a. River Soar at Aylestone
 - b. River Soar at Belgrave
 - c. River Soar at Braunstone
 - d. River Soar at Frog Island and riverside areas of Leicester
 - e. River Soar at Leicester Abbey Meadows
 - f. River Soar at Leicester City
 - g. River Soar at North Aylestone
 - h. River Soar at Rushey Mead
 - i. River Soar at Thurmaston
 - j. Upper Soar catchment

You can look at the map to see which area it covers. Then sign up.

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Areas you can get warnings for

Area	Warning type	Map	Sign up
Black Brook at Thorpe Acre	Flood Warning	View map	Sign up for this area
Medbourne Brook in Medbourne	Flood Warning	View map	Sign up for this area
River Sence at Blaby and Glen Parva	Flood Warning	View map	Sign up for this area
River Sence at Great Glen	Flood Warning	View map	Sign up for this area
River Soar at Aylestone	Flood Warning	View map	Sign up for this area
River Soar at Barrow upon Soar	Flood Warning	View map	Sign up for this area

7. Enter your name and email address

What is your name and email address?

Area or address

River Soar at Aylestone

Flood Warning

River Soar at Aylestone including properties on the riverside of Aylestone Road

[Change location](#)

First name

Last name

Email

We'll send a confirmation to this email address

8. Enter your phone number (this can be a mobile or landline)

Telephone numbers for warning calls

Flood messages can be sent at any time so we need numbers where we can reach you 24 hours a day.

Telephone number for warning calls

This can be landline or mobile.

Make sure this number has no inbound call barring.

Second telephone number (optional)

Continue

Further information and guidance

More information is provided on the council's web pages <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-environment/flooding-and-watercourses/>

Leaflet <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/178256/1flood-a5-for-appro-2.pdf>

And Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland resilience forum <https://www.llrprepared.org.uk/>

**Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission (EDTCE)
Work Programme 2023 – 2024**

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
27 July 2023	An overview presentation of EDTCE services and key issues.		
21st September 2023	1) Flooding update Report 2) Sector Skills 'Bootcamps' 3) 20 mph Streets topic, informal scrutiny proposal report.	3) To set up an informal 'task group' to focus on this work	3) A programme of meetings for members has now been set up. A final report/recommendations will be brought to EDTCE in early 2024.

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
18 October 2023	1) Bus Lanes Progress Report 2) A6 Bus Lanes/Red Routes TRO Report 3) Rally Park Active Travel Scheme Report	1a) Data to be provided on usage of buses since implementation of bus lane on Aylestone Road. 1b) Data to be provided on income collected through enforcement and where/how this has been spent. 1c) Data to be provided on breakdown of appeals regarding enforcement. 1d) Officers to liaise with Members on possible timeframe for Task Group on 24/7 Bus Lanes informal scrutiny. 2) Officers to consider further public engagement with objections received to scheme. 3a) Officers to consider best approach to retain trees and improve visibility/safety as part of design process. 3b) Officers to consider liaising with Parks about possibility of voluntary group in area for biodiversity gain and enjoyable space. 3c) Further details to be shared with the Commission once scheme designed for comment.	1a) Document shared with Commission members. 1b) Information available on council open data platform 1c) Information shared with members. 1d) Presentation on EV Charging to be given to determine if that or 24hr bus lanes is next informal scrutiny work. 2) Meeting/drop-in session for objectors to be arranged. 3a) Will be included in design work. 3b) Will be carried out as part of scheme. 3c) Noted.

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
16 November 2023 - special meeting	Climate Change Strategy Plan – consultation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) List of members of the Leicester Climate Emergency Partnership to be updated to include Active Leicester and to update the NHS representation. 2) Climate impact of the pension fund and the Council's previous urging of the County Council / support for the County Council to address the issue to be acknowledged in the document. 3) Consider lengthening the time-frame for the consultation and making the consultation documents more accessible and easier to engage with (it is acknowledged that this might be difficult due to time constraints). 4) Consider more venues other than schools for Tiny Forests. 5) Consider adding an appendix on how Leicester could be 'greened'. 6) Consider options on the Food Plan such as diets and ingredients. 7) Consider use of a 'Kite Mark' for businesses to show that they are climate ready. 8) Consider scope for joint work with Public Health. 9) Clarify in report why parking levy and road use charges were referred to. 	

<p>7 December 2023</p>	<p>1) Energy Efficiency for homes – including green homes scheme, solar panels, insulation of private homes and LCC offer/grants. 2) Draft Adult Education ‘Accountability Agreement’ 3) EV Charging Points Presentation 4) Informal Scrutiny Work – Verbal Update</p>	<p>1a) Obtain data on what EON were completing with ECO funding. 1b) Obtain figures on the cost of retrofitting all desired properties. 1c) Officers to come to Ward Community Meetings to disseminate info to tenants and residents, perhaps with a brief presentation on what could be offered and what could be offered to that Ward in particular. 1d) District Heating System – find out if metering on LCC properties would be a big burden on tenants budget-wise. 1e) Alternative heating options (i.e. heating a person rather than a house) to be laid out in future reports. 1f) Energy bill data to be gathered from New Parks work so as to measure benefits of retrofitting and relative benefits of different kinds of retrofitting.</p> <p>2a) Retrofitting Boot Camp to be considered. 2b) Obtain statistics on the number of people coming from the county to the city to learn, particularly in terms of post-Covid decline. 2c) Local Skills Improvement Board – link to plan to be circulated to members.</p> <p>3/4) EV Charging to be next topic of informal scrutiny.</p>	<p>1a) Data will be obtained from EON as this scheme progresses. 1b) A very approximate estimate of funding required will be provided. 1c) The team are in discussion with Member services about attending a selection of Ward meetings where there are suitable off-gas properties that might benefit from HUG 2 funding. Further information to be provided about which wards will be covered in due course. 1d) In progress with Housing. 1e) LCC will not be promoting heating of individuals rather than housing units because of risks to health. Air temperatures below 15C have adverse effects on respiratory health. Unheated housing is prone to damp and mould which also creates health issues. We will be pursuing all opportunities to bring in further funding for energy efficiency schemes in private sector housing. 1f) Energy billing data for New Parks scheme cannot be obtained retrospectively, as it was not included as a requirement of the scheme that residents have signed up to. We will investigate collecting energy data as part of any new schemes that we seek funding for in future.</p> <p>2a) Currently being considered. 2b) There has been a 2% increase in the proportion of enrolments from city residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2018-19 80% were city residents, • In 2023-24 82% are city residents. <p>2c) Link circulated to members.</p>
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Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
31 January 2024	1) Annual Council Budget reports re: EDTCE budget position 2) Labour market - jobs and skills; barriers; access to ESOL; (invite appointed SPF partners to present and discuss these issues). -To Include Shared Prosperity Fund. 3) 20mph Task Group Report. 4) Waterside visit. 5) Update on flooding.		
20 March 2024	1) TROs – standing item (if any) 2) Major Regeneration Site Update (Waterside, Ashton Green, Railway Station, Pioneer Park) 3) Brownfield Land development approach 4) Labour market - workers that might be exploited; outside the hosiery sector; access to workers' rights (<i>of interest to other scrutiny areas e.g. community safety; culture & n/hoods scrutiny</i>). 5) LLEP Arrangements		

Forward Plan items (suggested topics)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
EV Strategy consultation	Likely to form part of informal scrutiny work in 2024.	tbc
Bio-Diversity Net Gain		tbc
Connecting Leicester programme		tbc
Local Transport Plan		tbc
Inward investment and place marketing		tbc
20mph Streets – Informal Work – scrutiny report/recommendations		Early 2024
Electric Vehicle Charging Points – Overview Presentation/Report		tbc - ASAP