Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: **THURSDAY, 3 APRIL 2025**
TIME: **5:30 pm**
PLACE: **Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

Members of the Committee

Councillor Mohammed (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Aldred, Chauhan, Halford, Haq, Joshi and Singh Johal

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

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For Monitoring Officer

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PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

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1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

   To issue a welcome to those present, and to confirm if there are any apologies for absence.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

   Members will be asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**   **Appendix A**

   The minutes of the meeting of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission held on 27th February 2025 have been circulated, and Members will be asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

   The Chair is invited to make any announcements as they see fit.

5. **QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

   Any questions, representations and statements of case submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures will be reported.

6. **PETITIONS**

   Any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures will be reported.

7. **LEICESTER TOURISM ACTION PLAN 2020-2025**   **Appendix B**
   UPDATE REPORT

The Director for Tourism – Culture and Inward Investment submits a report providing an overview of the progress made on the actions outlined in the Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025 since the last report tabled in April 2024.

8.   **TREE STRATEGY**   **Appendix C**

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submits a report incorporating the 2025-2030 Tree Strategy, 2019-2024 Tree Data and Communications Launch Information.

9.   **MUSEUM SERVICE VISION & STRATEGIC**   **Appendix D**
   **PRIORITIES**

The Director of Tourism - Culture and Inward Investment submits a report on the new Museums Service Vision and Strategic Priorities for 2025-29, which is to be implemented on 1st May 2025.

10.   **WORK PROGRAMME**   **Appendix E**

Members of the Commission will be asked to consider the work programme and make suggestions for additional items as it considers necessary.

11.   **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**
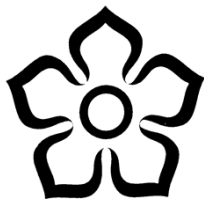
Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Mohammed Vice-Chair-in-the-Chair

Councillor Aldred
Councillor Haq   Councillor Modhwadia
Councillor Singh Johal

In Attendance:

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin
Assistant City Mayor Councillor Dempster (online)

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111. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Halford.

Apologies were received from Cllr Joshi – Cllr Modhwadia substituted.

Apologies were received from Cllr Chauhan – Cllr Gopal substituted.

112. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

There were no declarations of interest.

113. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Culture and Neighbourhoods

Scrutiny Commission held on 15 January 2025 be confirmed as a correct record.

114. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Vice-Chair in the Chair noted that the Chair had now joined the executive and would no longer Chair the Commission. The Vice Chair would Chair the meetings until the end of the municipal year.

The Chair noted that members of Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission had been invited to the meeting to help with the discussion on the item on Project Harmony and Public Space Protection Order Updates, as the topic was relevant to their Commission.

115. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

116. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

117. PROJECT HARMONY AND PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER UPDATES

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services and The Head of Safer Communities presented a report to provide the Scrutiny Commission with updates and an overview on the work of Project Harmony.

Members of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission had been invited to the meeting to assist with the discussion of the item.

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services and noted that the report looked at what was being done to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the city centre.

The Service Manager for Safer Communities presented the report.

Key points other than those on the slide (attached with the agenda pack) included:

- A partnership approach was taken.
- Significant patch walks took place, looking to disrupt ASB where possible. An example of this was an encampment that had been covered in graffiti and waste. This had been cleared up and the people involved had been engaged with and given support from different

agencies.

- An incremental approach was taken. It was aimed to work with individuals on a trauma-support basis, signposting to services where possible.
- Legal proceedings for injunctions for aggressive beggars were underway.
- The Community Safety Partnership Bus was used for events where staff would engage with people, distributing leaflets and advice, both in estates and in the city centre.
- Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) were a power the Council had under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, aimed at protecting people from ASB in public spaces. It aimed to restrict activities associated with ASB by issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) of £100. If these were then breached and a prosecution was made, this could go up to a £1000 fine.
- Consultations had taken place regarding: Loitering, begging, charity and subscription collectors, e-scooters, alcohol, loudspeakers and temporary structures. The results had been collated and the implementation phase was commencing. Signage was being put up ready for enforcement.
- The Steet Lifestyle Operational Group (SLOG) discussed problem individuals and how they could be supported.

The Deputy City Mayor for Housing, Economy and Neighbourhoods added that the PSPOs were a good step forward, but further consultation would be necessary on other parts of the city in order to avoid displacement from the city centre. The scheme needed to be joined up with partners such as the Police. Further to this it was acknowledged that this was a difficult space to work in, however it was good that the approach was trauma-informed as the people dealt with were vulnerable, with potential issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Therefore, it was necessary to take people's circumstances into account and protect public safety at the same time.

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services added:

- Patch walks took place around once a month with up to thirteen officers, including partners.
- With all interventions, when taking an incremental approach, it was necessary to understand issues. As such, the Homelessness team were often the first point of contact. Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners were also involved.
- The steps up the incremental approach could happen quickly. Where it was right to move on people perpetrating ASB, it was necessary to deal it there and then.
- There had been some recent good results. Encampments around Churchgate had been approached firstly by the Homelessness Team and then by the Community Safety Team. This had then been followed up by the City Warden who had moved these people on with permission

from the manager of a nearby bank. This was then followed up by Community Safety and the Police.   Cleansing Services had then cleaned the area. This was an example of effective action that happened regularly.

- Not every encampment could be dealt with as it happened. A trauma approach was necessary as there was a need to understand who these people were and why they were there. Sometimes they were allowed to remain so that support could be given to get them back into society.

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

- All enquiries to Community Safety were screened the same day. This was then dealt with either on the day or within five days, depending on the risk involved. The first port of call was the Outreach Team who would see the person involved. If this was in the city centre it would usually be on the same day, if it was on the outskirts of the city, it would usually be the following day. It was necessary to find out if these people had accommodation and the reasons as to why they were on the street. It was also necessary to find out what their needs were and what effect their ASB had on those visiting the area.
- If they refused to move, then the action taken depended on the circumstances as each case was different. If they were in a tent it was classed as an encampment and the incremental approach was taken. If they still refused to move, the next step would be taken.
- There was a strong principle on the homelessness service. Regularly, when people were seen who were rough sleeping, they did not wish to engage with authority. However, these people would not be given up on and multiple attempts were made to engage with them. If enforcement action was necessary, then it would be proceeded towards, however, attempts to engage were made first.
- It could get to a point where an injunction was sought, however, engagement was pursued first, and the desired outcome was to get people into housing. Some people did not engage by choice, and this could result in an injunction. Partners and the Police were worked with effectively to move people on.
- It was understood that bikes and e-scooters were a problem in the city centre. It was understood that a number of e-bikes had illegal modifications, when it reached this stage, it became a police issue.
- Any electric cycle with power over 250W was illegal. Additionally electric bikes needed to be plated as a manufactured product, pedal assisted and equipped with lights. The Police had countered the issue with 'Operation Pedalfast', whereby the City Centre Force had been taking them off the road. A total of 64 had been taken off the road so far this year and had been crushed. Other forces had also taken them off the road. From a Council perspective, the public had been consulted

- with and the Council could deal with the ASB aspect of cyclists in the city. If a PSPO was enforced, then the owner of any bike or scooter at the root of ASB in the city could be issued with an FPN. If the FPN was broken, then the case could go to magistrate's court and a £1000 fine could be issued.
- It was for the Police rather than the Council to remove illegal cycles and scooters from the streets. When this was done there could be serious consequences for the owner, such as nullification of road insurance and points on a driving licence.
- Many of these e-bikes were used by delivery riders, and modifications were made to allow faster delivery to make more money. As such, businesses were being engaged with on business ethics to ensure that there was support for the riders in the fast-food industry. It was necessary to persuade businesses that control on e-bikes was good for the city.
- The rules were clear as there were signs in the city to say that such modifications were illegal.
- Part of the issue was that the nature of the high street was changing and as such there were more takeaways in the city centre as it was a strategic location for them. It was hoped that this could be counterbalanced by more housing in the city centre.
- It was acknowledged that stretched police resources made the situation more difficult.
- The situation regarding illegal e-bikes was not unique to Leicester, and a change in legislation would be needed to address this, in part due to the ease of purchasing modification kits.
- With regard to conventional bikes using pavements, work could be done when a PSPO was brought in to ensure that authority was delegated to the right officer. It was hoped to have more powers and staff to work on this. Once illegal vehicles were dealt with, other types of behaviour could be looked at.
- With regard to a query about the possibility of extending the enforcement area east of London Road (e.g. Gotham St and Conduit St) it was suggested that this could be considered as the final order had not yet been written and here was still an opportunity to shape it., however it was noted that the area would need to stop somewhere as many issues would be local and the order could not be pushed out across the city. There had been 95% support for the PSPO, and 56% of respondents suggested there were issues that were similar where they live. As such there would need to be a separate consultation on a second zone.
- In response to a question on how additional officers would be paid for, it was reported that there were vacancies that could be recruited into, and these staff could be given the delegation to enforce PSPO. Officers were trying to be creative with the limited budget.
- Councillors could join on patch walks to help them understand the issues.
- With regard to a query on homelessness, it was explained that the

'Everybody In' campaign during the Covid-19 lockdown had meant that may individuals who had not previously engaged with Council services chose to take part in the scheme. Including those with complex mental health issues and potential drug and alcohol issues. It had then been necessary to find more permanent accommodation for these people and some of these people had not necessarily been ready to live on their own. Work had been conducted on using community assets such as multi-service hubs, additionally, Police and Housing had worked together to tackle localised issues. Work had come to fruition on housing provision and work was being developed for those better suited for temporary accommodation. Work had been seen on a smaller scale whereby people had gone through homelessness and had gone into temporary accommodation before going into permanent accommodation. More housing options were needed to service this. It was aimed to have gone through the process of identifying individuals and getting them into more permanent accommodation. This had come about as a result of the pandemic.

- The concentration of Cuckooing incidents in Thurncourt should not be a problem again. The Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Team) worked well and had prevented offenders from finding new victims.
- The existing set of city wardens and similar roles in place could be trained and provided with PSPO powers.
- Analysis of the implementation of the PSPO could be provided to Scrutiny.
- Consideration would be given to how to publicise that PSPOs are in place and how incidents could be reported.
- In terms of how people could access services online, QR codes were sent out which people could scan and report through. They could also call customer services. Staff at libraries cold offer help and support to those who had issues with technology.
- It was necessary to think about local issues and how they could be dealt with and who was the right person to deal with them.
- It was suggested that it was necessary to think about legislative and cultural changes. It was further suggested that more support was needed from the government and the Police. It was also necessary to think about changing demographics.
- A multi-agency approach was needed to tackle issues.

AGREED:
    1) That the presentation be noted.
    2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken.
    3) That an update report be brought to Scrutiny.
    4) That members be provided with analysis of the results.

118. COMMUNITY SERVICES & LIBRARY NEEDS ASSESSMENT: ENGAGEMENT REPORTS

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services introduced the report which presented the findings of the needs assessment of the previous year.

Engagement with residents had explored how to best meet their requirements.

Regular engagement was anticipated moving forwards, due to the positive outcomes of this work.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services gave an overview of the report. Key points to note were as follows:

- This was an overview of engagement work over 18 months, incorporating two substantial reports.
- The assessment was scoped around neighbourhood services, buildings and facilities. This included 25 libraries, community centres and multi service centres.
- There was a strong push for communities to be involved in running a local setting.
- Ward funding was not considered in the report, as this had come to scrutiny in the previous year.
- The programme followed a strategic planning approach as laid out on the Government / DCMS website.
- Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act, there was a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive library service. The Local Authority determined how to best develop this provision.
- The main public facing engagement work had taken place between July and September 2023, this was the initial primary research and public engagement.
- The engagement and secondary research reports were published in October 2024.
- Consultation on transformation proposals was planned for the first half of 2025.
- Engagement had been scoped to explore 4 considerations:
  - Where greatest needs were within the city and how these mapped to current service provision.
  - How people were using community services and libraries.
  - What residents thought about future Neighbourhood Services needs.
  - Models and good practice.
- There was a significant response to the engagement work which included a public engagement survey, a children's version of the survey, 12 focus groups and stakeholder interviews.
- Representation had been positive with engagement from all communities. More women had responded than men, the largest group respondents by age were in the over 65 age group. A separate survey

for children and young people under 16 showed respondents spoke multiple languages, with English being the most frequently spoken language (92%), then Gujarati (60%). Many spoke more than one language.

- The greatest concerns raised by residents were cost of living, physical health and mental health.
- When asked what residents wished to change for their future, responses included wanting to become more physically active and to meet more people.
- The post-Covid impact on physical and mental health was noted. Library and community centres were well placed to support in this.
- Residents felt the most important things on offer at libraries were books, digital services, social space, advice / information, children's and family activities.
- At community centres people wanted to attend community groups, to meet people and experience events.
- People most needed health and well-being support from the centres and libraries.
- It was evident that residents perceived libraries as being much more than books and reading. A high value was placed on Core Universal Offers and Children's provision, for example school holiday activities were in high demand.
- Regarding models and good practice, respondents thought the council should explore multi-service centres, involving community organisations more in running services, and reviewing opening hours to match peak demands.
- Secondary research was based on service and benchmarking data.
- Neighbourhood Service Centres were broadly based in the areas of greater disadvantage within the city according to mapping should the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.
- In terms of demographics, there were more female library users than male. Children and young people aged 0 – 19yrs were disproportionately high users of libraries, with people returning to use the libraries when they had families.
- Trends since lockdown showed a strong usage recovery over last 4 years.
- Patterns of use had changed with the public tending to bring their own devices to use within the facilities, and far fewer using the public access computers.
- There was a significant and consistent growth in usage of e-resources.
- Residents were well served in terms of facilities. Access to libraries and community centres with 30 minutes bus or 20 minutes walk was very good.
- National benchmarking showed that there were more library service points for Leicester than most other "near neighbour" local authorities. Leicester had the highest opening hours of all comparator local

authorities.

- Regarding Community Centres, many neighbouring local authorities were no longer directly running community centres.
- The Central Library tended to be used by residents from across the whole of the city.

The Chair invited questions from the commission, Reponses to note were as follows:

- The review had not currently resulted in the creation of specific targets. The needs assessment had shown areas of higher need in the city and the services people needed most from libraries and community centres. Upcoming proposals would be based on this work after wider consultation.
- Footfall was measured electronically. When comparing centres, it was necessary to bear in mind that some were multi-use centres and opening times differed.

AGREED:

1) That the report be noted.
2) That future proposals be brought to scrutiny.

119. WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

120. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 7:07pm.

Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025 Update Report

3 April 2025

Lead director/officer: Mike Dalzell

1. Summary

1.1 This briefing provides an overview of the progress made on the actions outlined in the Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025 since the last report tabled in April 2024.

1.2 The **Leicester City Tourism Plan 2020-2025** has made significant progress in positioning the city as an attractive and sustainable tourism destination. The economic impact of the tourism visitor economy in Leicester is showing positive signs of growth, even as the UK tourism industry continues its recovery from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Key achievements include the growth of tourism infrastructure, enhanced visitor experiences through events, stronger local partnerships, and a focus on developing a skilled tourism workforce. The plan's emphasis on cultural diversity and inclusivity, alongside its commitment to sustainability, ensures that Leicester's tourism sector will continue to thrive, drawing visitors from near and far. Moving forward, the plan's continued focus on community engagement, innovation, and strategic partnerships will be key to achieving its long-term goals. Several factors are contributing to this positive progress, including:

Increase in Hotel Bed Spaces: The expansion of accommodation options in Leicester is a critical factor. With more hotel bed spaces, the city can now cater to a wider range of business and leisure tourists, encouraging longer stays and boosting local hospitality businesses.

Effective Place Marketing: Over the period of the Plan the numbers of people regularly using the online tools that promote the city has grown massively. Visitors to the core Visit Leicester website have grown from 283,892 in 2020 to 842,075 in 2024 – a 196.6% increase whilst downloads of itineraries and trails are now more than 7,000 with nearly 40,000 views.

Growth in Tourism Venues and Attractions: The growth in existing tourism venues and attractions in Leicester is driven by a combination of innovation, investment, and operational improvements. These efforts are helping the city strengthen its tourism economy, attract more visitors, and ensure that Leicester remains a dynamic and competitive destination.

Recognition by the Industry : Leicester and Leicestershire have been shortlisted and finished twice in successive years in the national Group Travel Awards which are voted for by the Group Travel Industry. We have been shortlisted again for the 2025 version. The Leicester Museum Team have been shortlisted by Visit England for the

prestigious Tourism Superstar Award which is the currently the subject of a national public vote.

New Attractions Under Development: The investment in new attractions provides fresh experiences for tourists, making Leicester more attractive as a tourism destination. This not only increases the variety of things to do and see for visitors but also creates jobs in construction, operation, and maintenance of these attractions.

Net Gain of 43 New Businesses: The net gain of 43 new businesses in the city centre since March 2020 reflects a growing confidence in Leicester's tourism potential. These businesses, spanning hospitality, retail, and leisure sectors, contribute directly to the local economy by creating jobs and offering products or services to visitors.

Festivals and Events: Leicester's tourism landscape is significantly enriched by a comprehensive programme of festivals and events that bring vibrancy to public spaces and streets. These events not only animate the city but also draw a diverse, multicultural audience. Large-scale, high-quality events like *Bring the Paint* and *Light Up Leicester* are key attractions, drawing visitors from across the UK and internationally. These festivals and events help to position Leicester as a dynamic cultural destination, enhancing its appeal and boosting tourism.

Tourism Ambassador Schemes: The introduction of tourism ambassador schemes helps to enhance the visitor experience by providing personal recommendations and insights. This can improve the satisfaction of visitors, leading to positive word-of-mouth, repeat visits, and longer stays.

Local Visitor Economy Partnership Recognition by VisitEngland: Achieving Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) recognition by VisitEngland for Leicester and Leicestershire is a significant milestone. It highlights the collaborative efforts between local businesses, tourism bodies, and authorities to improve Leicester's tourism offering. This recognition brings both credibility and access to support, promotional opportunities and funding from VisitEngland, to help attract more visitors to the region.

Skills, Networking, and Support: Considerable progress has been made in this area. Leicester College offers various tourism-related courses, from entry-level to degree programmes, and partners with local businesses to bridge skills gaps. The courses cover customer service, event planning, marketing, and sustainable tourism. The college collaborates with Leicester City Council to offer volunteer tourism ambassador opportunities. De Montfort University provides two programmes in Tourism and Hospitality Management, focusing on international tourism and hospitality management.

Leicester & Leicestershire Business and Skills Partnership (LLBSP)
The LLBSP Careers Hub works with schools and colleges to raise career aspirations and connect young people with local job opportunities. It includes over 88 senior business volunteers helping schools and colleges with career guidance. Initiatives like "Unbox Your Future" engage students with tourism sector insights. There is potential for further collaboration between the Careers Hub and the tourism sector.

Skills Support and Workforce Development
The LLBSP provides a snapshot guide for employers on skills support, offering details on work placements, internships, and industry programs. Leicester City Council has

secured funding for Skills Bootcamps to upskill adults in various sectors with potential for the tourism sector to benefit from such bootcamps. The Employment Hub helps tourism employers with recruitment and skills, offering personalised services to bridge the gap between local employers and job seekers. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) offers further support for tourism businesses in recruitment, training, and employment initiatives.

2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 To note and comment on the scope, impact, and accomplishments of the Leicester City Tourism Plan 2020-2025

3. Background

3.1 Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025

Leicester Tourism Action Plan was developed closely in parallel with the Tourism Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire. Both plans are designed to complement each other. The city plan helps to deliver priorities for the wide area, for example product investment, improved productivity and in particular it supports the strategy for creating a strong, distinctive and visible destination through the campaign brand entitled *Uncover the Story.* Leicester Tourism Action Plan.

3.2 Tourism Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire

The framework of the five-year Tourism Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire developed by the jointly funded Place Marketing Team has helped focus effort, reduce duplication, inform, guide and influence decisions on investment and bring individual partners together to increase impact. By visualising the area as a single, integrated visitor destination, the sector can achieve more growth, more visitors, more economic value and more jobs. Leicester Leicestershire Tourism Growth Plan.

3.3 Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) Accreditation

The Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) and Visit England (VE) have introduced a new tiered structure of accredited tourist boards to manage and promote destinations. The Place Marketing Team (PMT) successfully secured Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) accreditation January 2024, establishing a direct and strategic relationship with Visit England. Accreditation as an LVEP provides the PMT with the opportunity to promote Leicester nationally with government recognition and to participate in national marketing and travel trade activities. The Partnership includes key stakeholders, such as visitor economy businesses, and cultural and heritage attractions. The status also offers opportunities for skills development, commissions, and access to grant funding.

3.4 LVEP Advisory Board

A public/private sector Board was established to shape the delivery of the Leicester and Leicestershire Tourism Growth Plan 2020-2025 and the work of the LVEP is guided by the LVEP Advisory Board (previously Tourism Advisory Board) and is overseen by the Place Marketing Coordination Group. The Board includes

representatives from across the city and county, including businesses such as National Space Centre, King Richard III Visitor Centre, Great Central Railway and Everards Brewery.

3.5 Leicester Tourism Forum

Its primary function is to work in partnership to support and enhance Leicester's tourism sector. The Forum serves as an advisory body, pooling expertise and intelligence from across the tourism and hospitality sectors to inform strategic decisions and initiatives.

3.6 Leicester Tourism Action Plan Performance Indicators

Source: STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity

The tourism sector in Leicester continues to recover after the Covid pandemic and the value of tourism is ahead of the 2025 target.

Performance Indicator	2022	2023	Target 2025	2023 vs 2025 target
Value of Leicester Tourism (£m)	724	844	792	+6.6%
No of overnight stays inc VFR (m)	5.0	5.2	5.6	-7.7%
No of visitors to Leicester (m)	9.9	10.24	14.0	-26.8%
No of jobs created and safeguarded (000)	7.2	8.0	9.2	-12.8%

4. Summary of Recent Activity (2024-2025)

Theme 1: Product – Improving the tourism product offer in terms of quality, diversification, productivity and profitability

Jewry Wall: A Real Roman Experience

- The Grade II listed Vaughan College designed by Trevor Dannatt is to be the home of Jewry Wall: a real Roman experience – a museum telling the stories of Roman Leicester associated with the archaeology discovered across the city. With cutting edge interactive multi-media displays, a large immersive Roman experience entrance hall, a new shop, private hire and education facilities, and a public café with views over the Roman ruins of the scheduled ancient monument, Jewry Wall, a Bath House complex dating back to the 2nd Century AD, it is one of the tallest surviving sections of civic Roman masonry in Britain, standing over 9 metres high.

- The museum has been closed since 2017 for refurbishment which includes the upper levels of the former Vaughan College, Adult Education Department of the University of Leicester and a new pedestrianised bridge making the site physically accessible for all for the first time in its history.

- We are celebrating all things Roman at the Old Town Festival: Roman Edition over the Easter Holiday weekend of April 26th and 27th 2025 as we prepare for the reopening of Jewry Wall, with lots of activities including, a roman chariot tricycle race and the building of a encampment of re-enactors, a roman chariot tricycle race and the building of a Roman Triumphant Arch by the artist Olivier Grossetete with help from the public.

- Jewry Wall is due to reopen to the public for Summer 2025.

Leicester Cathedral and Heritage and Learning Centre

The first full year of Cathedral reopening has seen over 120,000 people visiting and engaged with our various events and services.

The Cathedral hosted a varied and full programme in 2024 which is being built on in 2025 - reaching a lot of new audiences and an overwhelming positive response to things like the Journey's Festival Swing installation and the Luxmuralis Light Show. Family programming is growing significantly with large numbers attending the school holiday programmes.

2025 sees the 10th anniversary of the reinterment of Richard III with a 3-week programme of events at the end of March, the return of Luke Jerram with his installation Mars in May and much more later in the year. We will also be working with Art Reach again on Journey's Festival in October.

Work is regularly taken out into the community including attending several libraries, the Haymarket Shopping Centre and John Lewis.

Works are due to finish on site by the end of March and the gardens will be turfed. The fencing has now been taken down to reveal the new Heritage and Learning Centre extension.

A confirmed opening date is yet to be shared.

Phoenix Cinema and Arts Centre

Phoenix completed an £8M capital project to expand its venue in 2023 and won Medium to Large Non-residential Scheme of the Year at the ProCon Leicestershire 2024 awards in November 2024. Audience figures for Q1-Q3 in 2024/25 are 46% up on the whole of the previous year and with our busiest period, Q4, well underway we expect total visitors across all business areas to reach 250,000 in 2024/25, a 25% increase on 2019/20 (the last year of 'normal' trading before the pandemic).

Phoenix's year-round cultural programme comprises cinema, digital arts, and related courses, workshops and other enrichment events for all ages. Phoenix also operates facilities for business and private hire, conferencing and a large vibrant café bar that serves exceptional food and drink.

Throughout 2024/25 Phoenix has developed a complementary programme of exciting events – including spoken word, music, comedy and dance.

Phoenix is enhancing Leicester's creative economy through its year-round cultural programme and active support for local filmmakers, digital artists, and creative businesses. The **PLATFORM programme**, launched in November 2024, is funded by UKSPF and hosts bi-monthly events featuring talks from industry professionals, networking opportunities, and a space for creative exchange. PLATFORM aims to foster collaboration among current and future creative networks, contributing to a vibrant community of creatives in the city.

Additionally, Phoenix is delivering the **Create Growth programme**, which provides business support to filmmakers and digital creatives from Leicester, Leicestershire, and the East Midlands. This is part of a national initiative led by the UK government's DCMS and Innovate UK.

Phoenix's **Community Outreach Office** and **Associate Curators** have made a significant impact, helping to surpass audience attendance targets and increase diversity in attendance. Their efforts have also contributed to sold-out community-focused events, reinforcing Phoenix's reputation as an inclusive space and boosting returns for its film program and wider business.

Leicester Museum and Art Gallery

- Work is continuing to carry out improvement works at LMAG. This includes improved visitor flow routes, a suite of new art galleries, opening up previously hidden architectural features and the creation of a new café.

- Funding of £411k has been awarded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to support the development of new gallery designs at LMAG. The galleries will include two new Story of Leicester Galleries and an Environment Gallery. Subject to the

successful submission of a Round 2 application, the galleries will be created and open in 2028.

- The museum is currently hosting 'A World of Colour & Emotion: Satta Hashem', a major retrospective of Leicester based artist Satta Hashem. Hashem's work reflects his Iraqi heritage, using deep saturated colours to explore how art can make sense of life, death and war and the role of the artist in conflict.

- Popping to the Shops: Saffron Lane will open on 22nd March and explore the history of Leicester's Saffron Lane in the words of the people who live and work in the area.

- The team at Leicester Museums & Galleries is in the running for VisitEngland's Tourism Superstar 2025.The team is among 10 national finalists who have been selected for providing unforgettable visitor experiences. The annual awards, now in their 13th year, seek to find the unsung heroes of English Tourism and the winner will be announced at the end of March

Leicester Market

Plans to rebuild a permanent market in front of the Corn Exchange were put on hold last year after the removal of the old infrastructure opened up views of the attractive heritage buildings that surround the market area and highlighted the scale of the space.

Following a public consultation, the City Mayor announced recently that his intention is to move forward with a scheme to create a new market building next to the existing Food Hall, housing 48 stalls that could be fully dismantled, if necessary, together with a new flexible event space that would become a focal point for outdoor events in the city.

If Leicester Market is to have a viable future it is also planned that the redeveloped market should focus on food, which will also complement the range of quality produce on sale in the food hall.

Subject to planning permission being granted and a formal decision to proceed, works could start on site in Summer 2025 with the new market building opening by the end of 2026. The market will continue to operate from Green Dragon Square in the meantime .

King Richard III Visitor Centre

- Celebrations of the 10th Anniversary of the rediscovery, identification and the reinterment of Richard III comes to an end in 2025, but monthly RIII lectures and talks continue, tickets include access to the exhibition and food and drink offers from their award-wining White Boar Café. Investment is planned to relocate the café which will mean it is not behind the pay barrier. This will also enable the reception team to operate the catering offer and deliver significant cost savings.

- The **Voice for Richard** project will soon be unveiled as the second installation of this national initiative. It features a reconstructed bust of Richard III, accompanied by a recording of him reading a prayer from his *Book of Hours* in his reconstructed voice. Additionally, a new display of 15th-century religious artefacts will be added to the exhibition.

- The centre is the recipient of the Travellers Choice Award from TripAdvisor, Gold Accolade from Visit England, History Museum of the Year from Luxury Travel Group, Quality Food & Drink Award from Visit England, Small Visitor Attraction of the Year from Leicestershire Promotions and nominated for the Visit England Tourism Superstar Award. Celebrated the milestone of receiving their 70th award since opening in 2014.

- The 2023/23 financial year recorded 78,599 and continues to see a rise in visitor numbers in peak season.

Visit Leicester Information Centre – KRIII Visitor Centre

- **The Visit Leicester Information Centre** experienced a slower recovery in visitor numbers post-pandemic, primarily due to the decline in international visitors. However, the centre has now bounced back significantly, with visitor numbers in 2023/24 surpassing 35,000.

- Retail Income from the Leicester themed books, gifts and souvenir continue to improve and are the best they have ever been, both in total value and average spend per head.

National Space Centre

The Centre saw our third busiest year since opening in 2024, with 314,013 visitors, 78,437 school visitors, and 19,570 venue hire visitors. This was also the year two huge records were broken for our Venue Hire team… first year to £1million revenue, and the first time we hosted 10 exclusive day hires.

- We launched a brand new Fulldome show in the UK's largest planetarium, The Great Solar System Adventure. The show won the Audience Award at the Brno Fulldome Film Festival 2024 a week prior to launching to the public in Leicester.

- In 2024 we launched a brand new event, To Boldly Game, which focuses on STEM, family, ad space themed board gaming. It was a huge success, with sell out audiences, which was repeated in 2025. Our Dark Side of the Moon official Pink Floyd fulldome show has now been seen by over 1 million people, with more shows programmed into the Sir Patrick Moore Planetarium.

- The centre's Community Engagement programme continues to grow and develop, with afterschool clubs, library sessions, school holiday outreach, and in-person summer schools all being offered at no cost to over 6.300 individuals who struggle financially to access educational content of this kind.

Great Central Railway

- Great Central Railway ended 2024 on a high note, welcoming a record number of visitors to the much-loved Santa Express. This festive success, combined with an excellent Winter Steam Gala in January and strong visitor numbers throughout March, has played a key role in helping the railway recover significantly from previous challenges.

- The attraction is continuing to invest in new experiences that will captivate visitors. A particular focus has been placed on enhancing the experience for families, with the introduction of itinerary-driven Explorer products designed to offer a more immersive and engaging visit. In addition, the food and drink options are expanding with the launch of a casual dining offer, complementing our already popular First-Class Dining experiences.

- A new website will launch this Spring along with a refreshed brand identity.

Curve

- In 2023/24 over 250,000 tickets were sold for performances at Curve and over 1.2million tickets were sold on tour.

- In January 2024, Curve was the only regional theatre to showcase work on The National Lottery's Big Night of Musicals - which was broadcast on BBC One. A CHORUS LINE, THE WIZARD OF OZ and GREASE were all featured.

- Across the year, 27,000 participants were engaged in Creative Programmes for schools, colleges, universities, community groups, young people, families and artists.

- Over 1,000 creatives, theatre-makers, practitioners and artists from the Midlands took part in development sessions, projects and performances at Curve.

- The second year of our Neighbour-hubs programme across New Parks, Saffron, Braunstone, Evington, Highfields and St-Matthews took place. In each area, we delivered a range of free, bespoke creative projects in partnership with primary and secondary schools, SEND and alternative education providers and community groups.

De Montfort Hall

- Between 1st February 2024 and 31st January 2025 attendance numbers were 222,371.

- A Membership scheme has been introduced rewarding loyal customers with money off at the Hall and in local restaurants and hotels. The scheme now has over 700 members.

- A packed programme offers something for everyone with both familiar favourites and brand-new shows coming through the doors.

Leicester Comedy Festival

- Leicester Comedy Festival 2025 featured 1017 performances, with 753 shows taking place in 76 venues across Leicester and Leicestershire.

- The UK Kids' Comedy Festival 2025 featured over 65 events across 30 venues,

- The festival also worked with 5 local schools as over 100 students performed comedy for the first time at The Y Theatre as part of its Loving Laughing initiative.

- The festival delivered eight joke spots, attracting hundreds of young participants, and 22 young people (aged 11-18) spent their half-term at Laugh Academy workshops developing their stand-up and performance skills.

- The annual awards take place on 31st March recognising multiple awards.

Itineraries and Trails

A Heritage Panel Trail has been created which is available both online and in print. Heritage Panel Trail - Visit Leicester. There are currently 367 heritage panels in place and the brochure will be updated when the 400th panel is in place.

A guided walk through the city centre of Leicester, created by the Leicestershire and Rutland Society of Architects in 1984 and re-instated by the LRSA in 2024 is marked by 37 terracotta plaques depicting foxes. Each of the plaques marks a vantage point, from which to observe the townscape, their purpose is to identify panoramic views of interest, not just individual buildings.

Additional trails currently under development are, a Faith Trail for the city centre area, Suffragettes trail, an Old Town trail and a new Street Art trail.

Three Leicester riverside maps (North, Central and South) created in partnership with the Canal and River Trust provide riverside trails to encourage walkers, cyclists and those travelling on the water to enjoy the area by following the course of the River Soar and the Union Canal. Leicester Riverside Trails - Visit Leicester

New Leisure Venues

The city continues to benefit from the increase of new leisure venues. Recent additions include, the live escape rooms Escape Leicester on Market Street, Game of Throwing, an Axe Throwing venue on Hotel Street and Roxy Ballroom on Humberstone Gate.

New Restaurants

The new restaurant and café guides reflect the diverse independent food offering in the city centre with over 100 restaurants LCC Restaurant Directory and over 70 cafes LCC Cafe Directory.

Recent openings include, Sangeeth, a modern South Indian restaurant and bar on Hotel Street in the unit previously occupied by the Case Restaurant, Zait and Zaatar, a Middle Eastern restaurant on Abbey Street, Amrut Indian Fine Dining on Church Gate and Peara, Asian cuisine on Market Street.

The recent improvements to Granby Street have attracted new businesses offering a wide range of food offers and the major Heritage Action Zone project has sensitively restored the shopfront around the Grand Hotel project.

Serviced Accommodation

- The number of bed spaces in the city centre has increased by 47% since 2020 with the addition of five new serviced accommodation providers. The occupation rates remain high.

- The Grand Hotel Leicester, previously owned and operated by Jupiter Hotels and Mercure Hotels, will be rebranded as The Grand Hotel Leicester by The Unlimited Collection, as part of a strategic repositioning by S Hotels and Resorts partnering with The Ascott Limited starting in Q2 of 2025.

- BID Leicester has funded a feasibility study to look at the appetite for establishing an Accommodation BID (ABID) in Leicester. An ABID is a specific type of Business Improvement District (BID) focused on improving the area where accommodations, such as hotels, are located. It operates similarly to a traditional BID, where property owners within a defined geographic area agree to pay a charge to fund services that can enhance the visitor experience and support accommodations. Services could be marketing campaigns, enhanced public realm initiatives, securing large events and conferences to drive overnight stays.   Projects are funded through a supplementary charge per room, per night for guests, which is added to the accommodation cost.   A decision by the Leicester serviced accommodation providers on whether to proceed to a ballot will be made later in 2025.

Theme 2: Place – Delivering the place and connectedness

Connecting Leicester

Connecting Leicester continues to be central to the vision of creating and providing a connected, safe and family-friendly city centre. There have been a number of significant improvements to enhance the connections between shopping, leisure, heritage, housing and transport facilities in Leicester for the good of the city.

Highcross Leicester

Highcross has revealed plans to invest in new designs for its four city centre entrances to revitalise and enhance its visibility. The design take inspiration from Leicester's fashion and textiles history.

Animating public spaces programme to deliver high quality events

Festivals bring people together and promote a sense of belonging and community. They are a vibrant expression of a community's cultural heritage promoting unity and boosting the local economy. The city centre has seen a substantial step change in the quality and scale of festivals and events.

- **Bring the Paint** the award-winning international street art festival returned in May 2024. The festival brings together internationally acclaimed painters to transform the city centre with world-class mural paintings. Supported by Arts Council England, Leicester City Council, BID Leicester and other organisations.

- **Light Up Leicester** saw the city centre lit up over four nights with extraordinary, illuminated artworks from the 12-15 March together with a nightly programme of events. The festival attracted 93,000 visitors.

Safe Night Time Economy

The city's night time economy has been boosted with the opening of new restaurants and leisure venues. The Night Time Venue Forum and Night Time Economy Strategic Group bring public and private members together to work in partnership to deliver a safe and welcoming night out.

- **Purple Flag Accreditation** has been regained in January 2025. Purple Flag status is awarded to towns and cities that meet or surpass the standard of excellence in managing the evening and night time economy.

- **Best Bar None awards** took place for the second year running with 50 city centre venues accredited and seven venues crowned winners across various categories at an awards event in November 2024. The Best Bar None national scheme is dedicated to recognising and celebrating establishments that go above and beyond in ensuring a safe, enjoyable and inclusive environment for all patrons.

- **St John's Ambulance** first aid and support service operates in the city centre from 10pm – 5am. The scheme is match funded by BID Leicester and the Community Safety Partnership. 50 medical sessions were delivered in 2024. The most frequent outcome for discharge routes was 43% discharged at the scene, 18% transported to hospital by SJA reducing the pressure on EMAS and the LRI.

- **Walk Away Campaign** funded by the Home Office and developed through the VRN police team and supported by the city centre night time venues. The campaign aimed to reduce night time violent incidences by changing behaviour. Evaluation carried out in August 2024 reported that crime data showed a 16.4% overall reduction in violent incidences in key locations in 2023 vs 2022.

Theme 3: Positioning – Developing a strong identity to position Leicester as a desirable destination attracting first-time visitors

Tourism Campaigns

The **Uncover the Story** tourism marketing campaign remains an important way to create a strong, distinctive identify for Leicester and Leicestershire as a visitor destination and bring cohesion to the visitor offer. Recent publications *The Cultural Quarter Guide **and** Leicester Leading* creative and cultural strategy integrated this brand identity into the wider city centre marketing activity to increase brand recognition.

Themed trails promote over 70 different local attractions to encourage exploration by visitors of the wider area. campaign.
www.visitleicester.info/ideas-and-inspiration/trails

Taste the Place campaign launched in March 2023 to promote the area's food and drink reputation through themes such as *The World on a Plate*. The first ever Leicester Food Festival was held in Abbey Park in August 2024, attracting thousands of people over two days. The event is returning in 2025.   Leicester was crowned England's Curry Capital in 2024.

Conferences: Marketing to the Group Travel market has resulted in Leicester securing the Association of Group Travel Operators (AGOT) conference in February 2026.   Also, The International Council of Museums conference in conjunction with De Montfort University is being held in Leicester in October, the first time it has been hosted in the UK.

Social Media and Visit Leicester Newsletter. The Place Marketing team continues to grow the number of followers and engagement rate on social media platforms and work in partnership with influencers and bloggers resulting in a wider reach. The Visit Leicester Newsletter remains a valuable tool for engaging with and communicating to a long-term interested audience who have signed up to receive the newsletter.

Visit Leicester Website Over the last year, the site was visited by over 830,000 users and viewed over 2.2 million times.   A new Visit Leicester website is being created and will go live by May 2025.

Marketing Collateral - Funded by Shared Prosperity Funding,

Legible Leicester maps have been created in two formats: tear-off A3 maps for distribution at the Visit Leicester Information Centre, hotel receptions, transport hubs, and the Highcross customer service desk to assist customers with directions, as well as free small fold-out maps that are readily available for visitors to help them navigate the city**.**

Restaurant and Café Guides are available in print and online at Visit Leicester promoting the independent businesses with a hygiene rating of 3 or more.

Venues and Attractions leaflets are being created advertising over 40 city venues and attractions. The fold out leaflets include a city map and distances from the Clock Tower together with information to help visitors plan their itineraries.

Old Town Brochure and Leaflet: The brochure will offer a historical timeline of the area while highlighting the attractions and venues available for visitors to enjoy today. The leaflet will feature the local attractions and venues, along with a new Old Town trail currently being developed to encourage visitors to explore the area further.

Theme 4: People

Volunteer Tourism Ambassadors

- A Volunteer Tourism Ambassador (VTA) scheme has been developed in partnership with Leicester College. The team of fifteen volunteers are recruited from Leicester's neighbourhood area, universities and businesses reflecting diversity, inclusion and equality through the council's Assemble platform, VAL, universities and colleges and the businesses.

- Volunteers have received a Level 2 Customer Service certificate from leicester College following their training and induction tours carried out at (at least) four tourism venues and two hotels.

- The Volunteer Tourism Ambassadors (VTAs) support the promotion of the city's tourism venues and attractions and festivals and events programme. The focus will be on the visiting friends and relatives market (VFR).

- A further element of the tourism ambassador programme is a team of existing staff in customer facing roles have received training on the tourism offer. The first session was well attended with fifty individuals representing a wide range of sectors including shopping centre customer service personnel, taxi drivers, bus drivers, hotel staff and museum staff.

- The VTAs have supported University Open Days, Freshers, Riverside, Leicester Cathedral events, Christmas Light Switch On, Light Up Leicester and conferences and events.

Skills, Networking, Support and Engagement from Tourism Businesses

Leicester College

At Leicester College offers a range of courses designed to equip students with the skills, knowledge, and behaviours as well as provide practical and relevant learning experiences needed for success in the tourism and travel industry. Our strong industry links, ensure students gain real-world insights and opportunities. Our curriculum is designed in collaboration with local employers to address identified skills gaps.

In addition to formal qualifications, Leicester College focus on developing practical skills through:

- Industry Guest Speakers & Employer Engagement with local tourism expert
- Work Placements and Live Projects giving students hands on experience
- Specialist Training such as sustainable tourism and customer experience excellence
- Work with industry partners to align courses and explore opportunities for collaboration

De Montfort University

There are currently two Tourism programmes at De Montfort University:

- Ba (Hons) International Tourism and Hospitality Management, link
- L6 Top Up International Tourism and Hospitality Management, link

Leicester & Leicestershire Business and Skills Partnership (LLBSP)

LLBSP Careers Hub

Since the 2020-2025 action plan launch the LLBSP Careers Hub has been working with all secondary schools and colleges across Leicester and Leicestershire, leading a community of best practice around careers education and raising the career aspirations of young people to help them take their next best steps. The Careers Hub leads the partnership of schools, colleges, local authorities, businesses and careers providers to help young people connect closely to local skills and economic needs through a responsive careers education programme.

All local schools and colleges are part of the LLBSP Careers Hub with over 88 senior business volunteers each working with one school or college as an Enterprise Adviser supported by a LLBSP Enterprise Coordinator and offers a range of innovative ways that employers from the sector can readily engage with area schools and colleges to convey opportunities in area sectors, whether their size or availability.

For example, one option to engage is **Unbox Your Future is an innovative workplace experience**, and to date the Space Centre, Highcross shopping, and Haymarket shopping have already delivered careers insights into the sector, supporting over 200 city students. There are plans in place for Visit Leicester / KR111 museum to deliver Unbox Your Future in the summer term of 2025.

There is scope for further activity between the Careers Hub and city tourism going forwards.

World of Work Leicestershire guides

The LLBSP produce a short guide for both young people and adults, updated yearly, to convey key area sectors. The 36-page guides summarise area industries to help young people and adults to be more aware of career opportunities across Leicester and Leicestershire. Both guides include a page devoted to tourism and hospitality careers.

Skills support

Building the workforce of the Future

The busy tourism sector needs an easy use guide to area skills offers. The LLBSP has worked with local colleges, universities, and skills provider partners to create a FREE snapshot guide for employers about support for a range of common employer skills challenges.

The guide has all the information employers need to offer experience of the workplace, work placements and internships, and T Level industry placements, and how these programmes can benefit employers in the long term**.** Information and Resources for Employers | LLEP

FREE or low-cost skills support for tourism

Skills Bootcamps

Leicester City Council have been successful in securing regional Skills Bootcamps funding, since 2023, working with LLBSP and the county council on these short courses to help employers achieve the skills that they need. Adults (19+) can be upskilled at any age, there are a range of sectors, people can be unemployed, career changers, work PT or be in work full time, some local and national provision. There is potential for the tourism sector to benefit from such bootcamps, either through tourism specific bootcamps, or utilising other bootcamps such as marketing or digital skills. Skills Bootcamps

Employment Hub

The Employment Hub continues to support employers in Leicester with recruitment and skills, run by Leicester City Council. The project team is dedicated to bridging the gap between local employers and people seeking meaningful employment opportunities. This

free, personalised service can support tourism businesses. [Home | Leicester Employment Hub](#)

DWP offers

DWP can support tourism employers with bulk vacancies through sector-based work programmes (tailored pre-work training), along with advertising vacancies free of charge and offer a range of free initiatives such as Work Trials, Disability Confident Support, and a Small Business Recruitment Service, along with In Work Progression support**.**

5. **Future Priorities**

- **Destination Management Plan 2026 -31**

  Work on a new Destination Management Plan for 2026-2031 has begun, to be ready to launch in January 2026. This will establish the new strategic direction, aligning with Visit England's priorities as set out in the forthcoming strategy. The LVEP will work closely with its stakeholders to help shape its development and ensure relevance to the sector. The DMP will set out ambitions for the visitor economy across Leicester and Leicestershire positioning the region as a leading destination for leisure and business tourism. It provides a framework for the city to attract an increasing number of leisure and business visitors to the area, whilst encouraging those visitors to stay longer and spend more.

- **Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2026-31**

  While aligning with the new Destination Management Plan to reflect Visit England's priorities, the Leicester Tourism Action Plan will emphasize the unique aspects of the city's tourism offerings, such as Jewry Wall, King Richard III, the National Space Centre, and the Leicester Museum and Art Gallery. The plan will consistently highlight the city's rich cultural and heritage offerings. Its timeline is coordinated with that of the Destination Management Plan, and it includes extensive consultation with tourism venues and attractions to ensure that partnership goals and actions are effectively incorporated**.**

- **Volunteer Tourism Ambassador and Tourism Ambassador Programmes**

  To continue the partnership with Leicester College to train more Volunteer Tourism Ambassadors to grow the team to 30.

To hold another event to secure a further 50 Tourism Ambassadors who are employed in customer facing roles and can support promoting the city's tourism offer.

- **Skills, networking, support and engagement from tourism businesses**

To continue to work with partners to promote tourism as a career of choice and to provide work experience opportunities for students and access to training and future employment.

Appendix I: Challenges to the Tourism and Hospitality Sector

Appendix 2: Tourism Trends

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

6.1 Financial implications

Whilst tourism contributes positively to the finances of the Council, there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance Ext 4004

6.2 Legal implications

There are various strands of works being undertaken in achieving the tourism action plan. General comments in relation to commissioning of services/goods/consultancy would be to ensure that engagement with Legal and Procurement teams to ensure compliance with Procurement Legislation and internal Contract Procedure Rules. Further, Legal support and advice to be sought in respect of funding and any partnership initiatives and arising implication. Advice to be sought on a project by project basis.

Mannah Begum, Principal Solicitor, Commercial Legal, Ext 1423
Dated: 20 March 2025

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.

This briefing provides an overview of the progress made on the actions outlined in the Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025. There are no direct equality implications arising out of it.

The tourism sector, along with the arts, entertainment and recreation, has been one of the sections of the economy that was most impacted by COVID-19. Leicester is the largest city in the East Midlands and the most diverse, the city has a rich mix of cultures, languages, and communities, making it a vibrant and diverse place to live and visit. Culture presents an opportunity for authentic cultural exchange between locals and visitors and for destinations it encourages local communities to embrace their culture and boost economic growth. Thus, providing an opportunity to foster good relations between different protected characteristics.

One in five people in the UK has an impairment and those with health conditions, and their travelling companions, are estimated to spend £12 billion on trips in England each year. Half a million British adults cited 'lack of accessibility provision' as the reason they did not take a domestic trip in the last 12 months. It is important to consider inclusive design principles in relation to accessibility for people from across all protected characteristics.

Moving forward, the plan's continued focus on community engagement and innovation alongside efforts to promote equality and diversity should have a positive impact on visitors from across all protected characteristics. Having accessible safe and inclusive places to visit that helps to create an environment that encourages as many people to access services and participate fully, helps to advance equality.

Equalities Officer Surinder Singh Tel 37 4148

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

Tourism, like other economic sectors, contributes to carbon emissions and, as highlighted in Appendices 1 and 2, an increasing proportion of visitors and potential visitors are concerned about the carbon footprint of their visit and looking for sustainable options. So, there is an economic imperative to reduce the climate impact of Leicester's offer and to effectively market that. This is in addition to the policy imperative of the council's 2019 climate emergency declaration to reach net zero.
Broadly speaking, to respond to these imperatives the council and its partners need to be working towards the sector:
  a. Maximising visits on public transport and use of public transport or active travel modes during visits;
  b. Providing EV charging infrastructure at accommodation and other locations where visitors will need it;
  c. The continued decarbonisation of local transport services for visitors including electrification of rail, taxi and private hire services, and availability of cycle and e-bike hire services;
  d. Decarbonising visitor accommodation and attractions by improving energy efficiency, replacing fossil fuel systems with electric heating and hot water and increasing renewable energy generation where possible;

     e. Sustainable management of tourism-generated waste;

     f. Making tourist infrastructure resilient to the changing climate, including targeted planting of trees to enhance shade during heatwaves and the use of passive cooling measures to prevent overheating in accommodation and attractions;

     g. Enhancement and sustainable management of green spaces, including regular conservation and other activities providing visitor opportunities;

     h. Basing marketing of our 'sustainable tourism' offer on our existing sustainability achievements and USPs, and on independently verified sustainability credentials of accommodation and attractions – giving visitors confidence in our sustainability offer.

From the early stages of developing the new Destination Management Plan and Leicester Tourism Action Plan, reference should be made to the council's Climate Ready Leicester Plan to ensure that they are contributing to delivering the plan. Consideration should be given to adopting appropriate performance indicators to allow monitoring of progress and outcomes in creating a sustainable tourism sector.

Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency). Ext. 37 2249.
20th March 2025.

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

None

8. 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

Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025 Update Report

Appendix I : Challenges for Tourism and Hospitality Sector

The tourism and hospitality sectors face a range of challenges, many of which are influenced by both global and local factors. Some of the key challenges include:

Impact of Global Pandemics (e.g., COVID-19) • The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted travel, leading to massive losses in revenue for the tourism and hospitality sectors. Even post-pandemic, recovery has been slow due to shifts in consumer behaviour and heightened health concerns. • **Source of Information**: World Health Organization (WHO), World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).	**Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability** • Increasing awareness of climate change has led to greater scrutiny of the environmental impact of tourism. More tourists are seeking sustainable travel options, putting pressure on destinations to reduce their carbon footprint. • **Source of Information**: United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), International Ecotourism Society (TIES),
Changing Consumer Preferences • As traveller's expectations evolve, the demand for personalized, experience-driven travel increases. This requires businesses in the hospitality and tourism sectors to invest in technology and improve service offerings to meet these expectations. • **Source of Information**: Reports from Expedia Group, Nielsen, Statista and IBISWorld.	**Staffing Shortages and Labour Issues** • The tourism and hospitality sectors are heavily reliant on skilled labour. However, many regions face labour shortages, particularly in entry-level and skilled positions. The COVID-19 pandemic worsened this issue, and recovery has been slow in some areas. • **Source of Information**: Hospitality Industry reports (National Restaurant Association, U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics), academic journals, and labour market reports.
Rising Operational Costs • Inflation, rising fuel costs, and supply chain disruptions are increasing operational costs for hotels, airlines, and other travel-related businesses. This affects pricing strategies and profit margins.	**Security and Safety Concerns** • Safety concerns, including political instability, terrorism, and natural disasters, can deter tourists from visiting certain destinations. Security issues also pose operational

• **Source of Information**: Reports from industry associations like the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) and global consultancy firms.	challenges for businesses in these sectors. • **Source of Information**: International Crisis Group, local government and tourism authorities, and travel advisories.
Technology Integration and Cybersecurity • The rapid adoption of technology in the form of mobile apps, online booking systems, and digital check-ins has transformed the industry. However, this also increases the vulnerability of businesses to cyberattacks. • **Source of Information**: Reports from cybersecurity firms like Kaspersky, McAfee, and the International Tourism & Hospitality Technology Forum.	**Overtourism** • Popular destinations face overcrowding, which leads to environmental degradation, strain on local infrastructure, and a decrease in the quality of the tourist experience. • **Source of Information**: Research from organizations like the UNWTO, National Geographic, and local government tourism agencies.
Cultural and Ethical Considerations • The influx of tourists can lead to cultural erosion, as local traditions may be overshadowed by mass tourism. Additionally, there are ethical concerns about responsible tourism and the impact of tourism on indigenous communities. • **Source of Information**: Academic papers on cultural tourism, UNWTO reports, and ethical tourism organisations like The Travel Foundation.	**Regulation and Compliance** • Compliance with regulations and laws, such as safety standards, environmental guidelines, and licensing, can be complex, particularly when operating in multiple countries with different legal frameworks. • **Source of Information**: Local and international tourism regulatory bodies, as well as industry associations like the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).

Appendix D

Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025

Appendix II : Tourism Trends

Tourism Trends

Tourism trends are constantly evolving, and several factors like technology, global events, and changing consumer preferences can shape them.

Sustainable and Eco-Tourism	Travellers are increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of their journeys. Many are opting for eco-friendly accommodations, nature-based experiences, and sustainable practices like reducing plastic use, supporting conservation projects, and choosing destinations with strong sustainability credentials.
Bleisure Travel	A blend of business and leisure travel, this trend is gaining momentum as remote work and hybrid work models continue to rise. Professionals are extending their business trips for personal leisure time or working remotely from scenic or unique destinations.
Wellness Tourism	Wellness-focused travel is on the rise, with more people seeking trips that offer health and wellness benefits such as yoga retreats, meditation, spa experiences, and fitness vacations. Post-pandemic, people are more aware of the importance of mental and physical well-being.
Digital Nomadism	As more people embrace remote work, the trend of digital nomadism is expanding. Locations around the world are catering to remote workers, offering co-working spaces, long-term stays, and a welcoming environment for those who want to work while exploring new places.
Authentic & Local Experiences	Travellers are shifting from traditional sightseeing to more immersive, local experiences. This includes activities

	such as cooking classes, local craft workshops, or staying with locals through platforms like Airbnb. There's a growing interest in experiencing a destination like a local rather than a tourist.
Slow Travel	Instead of rushing through multiple destinations, slow travel emphasizes spending more time in one place. This allows travellers to immerse themselves in the culture and environment of a location and focus on meaningful experiences rather than ticking off a long list of attractions.
Multigenerational Travel	More families are traveling together across multiple generations. These trips often involve a mix of ages and interests, with destinations offering activities for all family members, such as resorts with childcare, wellness programs, and cultural experiences.
Micro Trips	Shorter, weekend getaways are becoming more popular. With time being a valuable resource, travellers are opting for shorter trips that are more affordable and less time-consuming, allowing for a quick break from everyday life without requiring long planning.
Staycations	Staying close to home or exploring nearby destinations has gained traction, especially after the pandemic. People are rediscovering the appeal of local attractions, nature spots, or even unique accommodations within their own country or region.
Adventure Travel	Activities like hiking, cycling, scuba diving, and extreme sports are becoming more popular. Travelers are seeking unique and physically challenging experiences that offer a sense of accomplishment and connection with nature.

Crowd-Free Destinations	Post-pandemic, many travellers are now avoiding overly crowded tourist spots and are seeking more secluded or lesser-known destinations. This trend is helping off-the-beaten-path locations thrive, as tourists look for less crowded, more serene vacation spots.
Food Tourism	Culinary travel is on the rise, with people seeking destinations known for unique food experiences. This includes street food tours, wine and food pairings, cooking classes, and exploring traditional cuisines.
Cultural and Heritage Tourism	Interest in cultural heritage and historical tourism is growing, as people seek to connect with different histories, art, architecture, and traditions. UNESCO World Heritage Sites are especially popular for this type of travel.

Tree Strategy 2025 - 2030 & Comms Information. Tree data 2019 – 2024.

Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 3 April 2025

Lead director: Sean Atterbury

1. Summary

1.1 Copies of the Tree Strategy 2025-2030, Tree Data 2019-2024 and Comms Information appended.

2. Recommended actions

2.1 Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission is recommended to note the launch in April of the revised Tree Strategy and comms launch information. Also, the tree data compiled between 2019/20 to 2023/24.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

3.1 Documents are appended of the revised tree strategy to be launched in April and the associated comms information. Also, tree data from 2019/20 to 2023/24. The Trees & Woodlands Manager will present the information.

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

5.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from the adoption of the Strategy. The work will be managed within existing budgets, alongside grant funding as it becomes available. The cost of Ash die back is one that will need to be monitored and is likely to represent an on-going budget pressure.
Signed: Stuart McAvoy
Dated: 18.03.2025

5.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from the issuing of this Strategy.
Signed: Kamal Adatia
Dated: 12.03.2025

5.3 Equalities implications

There are no direct equality implications arising from this report. However, we need to ensure any information/literature/engagement is accessible, for example as part of the planning process, planning applications, protected tree regulation and community engagement.

Signed: Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer
Dated: 13 March 2025

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

The council's tree stock makes a very important contribution to addressing the climate emergency in several ways:

- Trees moderate the impacts of heatwaves – which are getting more frequent and extreme through climate change – by creating shade and cooling the air through evaporation of water from their leaves;
- They slow the rate of run-off of rainwater, helping to reduce the risk of flooding following heavy downpours – which are also becoming more frequent and intense due to climate change;
- They help maintain biodiversity and reduce the pressures on nature caused by climatic changes including periods of drought, heatwaves and changes in seasonality;
- Where increases in tree numbers and good management are combined, the carbon locked up in the tree stock can increase, removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and hence compensating for a small amount of the city's emissions.

As noted at the top of page 7, the new Tree Strategy draws on the Climate Ready Leicester Plan, and the strategy's implementation is reflected in the plan through the inclusion of actions on Leicester's 'Climate Woodland' (action 5.05), Tiny Forests (3.11) and Tree Planting in School Grounds (3.13).

There is an opportunity to highlight the contribution the Tree Strategy is making to addressing the climate emergency as part of the communications launch by including the Climate Ready Leicester branding in comms materials.

Signed: Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency). Ext. 37 2249.
Dated: 13th March 2025.

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

6. Background information and other papers:

- Tree Strategy 2018 - 2023
  Leicester Tree Strategy
- Tree Strategy Review 2018 - 2024
  Review of tree strategy 2018 - 2024

Tree Strategy Data 2018 - 2023

Actions	2019/20 Totals	2020/21 Totals	2021/22 Totals	2022/23 Totals	2023/24 Totals	2019 – 2023 Combined Totals	5-Year Strategy - Annual Average Totals
Tree Surveys Undertaken	194	174	350	285	225	1,228	246 (19% of 1290 sites with trees)
Large Planting	445	303	658	412	272	2,090*	418 large trees planted
Small Planting	3,313	5,458	11,076	10,580	5,907	36,334*	7,266 small trees planted
Fells	591	463	613	714	586	2,967*	593 trees felled
Complaints (formal)	4	5	1	0	2	12	2.5 none upheld by ombudsman
Proactive Works	53%	55%	67%	71%	61%	N/A	61% was programmed works
Reactive Works	47%	45%	33%	29%	39%	N/A	39% was reactive works
Successful Tree Establishment Rates - Small	97%	96%	97%	60%**	97.5%	N/A	89% establishment success
Successful Tree Establishment Rates - Large	98%	97.5%	98%	96.5%	98%	N/A	98% establishment success
Ash Dieback - Fells	0	0	26	276	172	474	95 infected ash trees felled ***
Biomass (tonnes)	1,015	911	607	615	802	3,950	790 tonnes of woodchip ****
Planning Applications Processed Involving Trees	118	159	200	215	185	877	175 planning apps - trees
TPO & Conservation Area Applications Processed	134	159	155	159	150	757	151 TPO & CA apps processed
Emergency Tree Work Responses attended	454	316	347	295	416	1,828	366 emergency tree responses
Out Of Hours Emergency Responses Attended	69	41	90	25	47	272	54 out of hours responses
Planning Contraventions Received	14	30	11	8	19	82	16 planning contraventions
Trees & Woodlands Team Training Courses Attended	152	42	117	140	147	598	120 T&W training certifications

*This equates to 12 trees planted for every tree felled over the 5-year strategy.

**Exceptional drought year resulted in more loses than normal.

***The number of ash dieback fells will significantly increase over the next 10 years.

****An estimated 100 tonnes of woodchip are used annually as new tree planting mulch and Parks shrub bed mulch.

Appendix G

LEICESTER
tree strategy
2025 – 2030

Executive Summary

Trees bring enormous environmental and ecological benefits to our city.

_____

They enhance our streets and grace our parks, making a huge contribution to our

health and wellbeing.

_____

Leicester City Council's first Tree Strategy was launched in November 2018 with a 5-year plan to guide us in sustaining and increasing our tree stock and help us improve the quality of the city's trees.

_____

The strategy helps to promote the important role trees can play in maintaining a high-quality city environment, reducing air pollution, and contributing to flood risk management.

_____

The involvement of the community with engagement and participation in all aspects of tree issues and projects is a key aim to celebrate the benefits of trees within the community.

_____

Following on from the success of the first strategy this revised strategy will also be a 5-year plan running from 2025 to 2030.

_____

I am very proud to be the executive lead for the wonderful trees within our city and I hope that you take the time to visit some of our beautiful parks and gardens and joins us in the community events that take place throughout the year.

Cllr Vi Dempster

Assistant City Mayor – Culture, Libraries & Community Centres

Gallery

Aylestone Playing Fields, new woodland planted by Leicester Environmental Volunteers, February 2024

City Mayor attending the replanting of the Peace Trees at Victoria Park on 14th February 2024. The event was organised by members of CND & the Peace Group
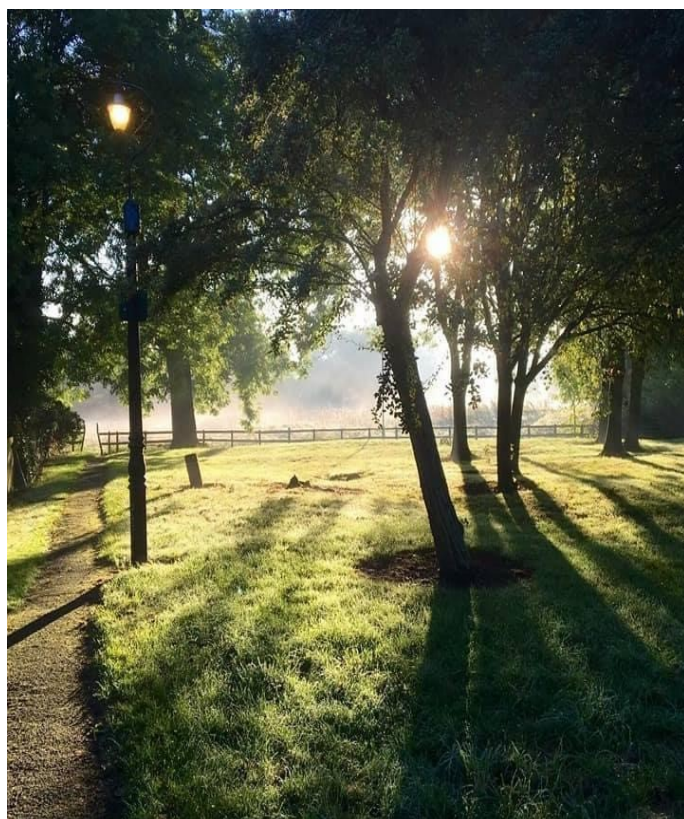

To access the council's tree trails, scan the QR codes on the park information signs or download from the council's web pages

New Walk, Leicester's Monster Eyes trail event held in October & November 2023

Cressida Place with morning sunshine coming through the trees

Newly planted Cherry trees at Western Park

Ash dieback tree works at Highway Spinney

Introduction

Following years of significant and sustained investment by the city council, over 16% of Leicester's 28 square miles is now covered with trees. Since the 1980s, the council has been responsible for the planting of more than 97,000 trees.

During the 5-years of the first tree strategy between 2018 – 2023 over 38,000 new trees were planted.

As a result, the city's woodland has more than doubled in size — from around 40 hectares to 113 hectares (or over one million square metres) today.

From schemes like the award-winning Ellis Meadows, where more than 600 trees have been planted, to the now well-established woodlands in Castle Hill Country Park, we have taken direct action to increase the city's tree canopy, improve its biodiversity and create some wonderful outdoor spaces.

At Watermead Country Park, on derelict gravel pits, thousands of trees have been planted and a cluster of lakes has been created. On Aylestone Meadows an open waste tip has been transformed into woodland and a network of footpaths created.

New wooded areas have been created in many of our parks, including Aylestone Meadows, Aylestone Playing Fields, Knighton Park, Monks Rest Gardens and Western Park. These new trees were the result of successful applications to government planting schemes, such as the Local Authority Treescapes Fund and Urban Tree Challenge Fund.

Smaller schemes have had an impact too. The city now has community orchards within many of its parks, with more recent additions at Western Park, Evington Park, St Marys and the Washbrook Nature area. There has also been the creation of over 25 Tiny Forests, a scheme run by Earth Watch where 600 trees are planted within the size of a tennis court, these tiny forests are located at various schools and public open spaces.

In an urban environment like our city, trees are an important natural resource — but it's a resource that must be actively managed. As new trees are planted, others may need to be pruned or sometimes removed.

Tree Management

Managing such a large stock of predominately mature trees will inevitably lead to difficult management decisions. The changing climate is affecting the health of our trees with increased droughts, flooding, storms, pests and pathogens, milder winters, and changes in seasonal timings. This is having a significant impact on the city's trees.

The effects from ash dieback are now clearly visible, this disease will have a devastating impact on the ash trees within the city, which make up 15% of all council trees. It is the most significant disease to affect the UK since Dutch Elm disease. It is estimated that we will eventually lose around 80% of all our ash trees, as there is no cure once a tree is infected. Ash dieback (leicester.gov.uk)

At Western Park major tree works were recently undertaken as a direct result of these pests and pathogens which had made many of the trees unsafe. Over two seasons 100 dangerous trees were removed. A comprehensive tree replacement scheme was carried out with over 200 new trees planted within the park.

All council trees are managed within cyclical cycles, and we will always aim to manage our trees in a way that removes the conflict and hazard its trees can cause. Though this must be undertaken within the bounds of the council's available resources.

We recognise that in owning a large stock of trees they are likely to cause some level of inconvenience to some individuals at certain times, and complaints will be inevitable when certain requests for tree works are declined. On balance it takes the view that in some circumstances this can be acceptable given the benefits trees impart to the wider community and given the council's broader policy objectives.

Further details explaining tree issues can be found within our Tree Policy, section 4.4 resolving conflict and problems and priority management guides part 1 & part 2. (add in link to policy)

The city council's aim of planting more than one replacement for any significant tree that is felled ensures that our total tree stock is maintained — and means that future generations will be able to enjoy the sight of mature trees in our city too.

Protecting the trees and areas of woodland that enhance our environment is an important responsibility, and the council has more than 500 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) in place that cover many thousands of trees in private ownership. These TPOs provide protection for important trees, as well as for large areas of woodland.

From saplings to ancient oaks, the 189,600 trees in the council's ownership are expertly maintained by our highly skilled workforce, who prune, tend, and nurture the trees on our streets, in our parks and in our woodlands.

With the expertise of our arboricultural team Leicester City Council was one of the first cities to be awarded 'Queens Green Canopy, Champion City' which recognises cities that dedicate themselves to green initiatives, having trees and woodlands as a central part of its plans. The council is also a proud signatory of the Woodland Trust's Tree Charter.

Maintaining Leicester's tree stock is a huge responsibility and every year the city council spends around £2million planting, protecting and managing trees in our city. That investment is our commitment to ensuring that our tree stock is sustained, maintained and replenished for present — and future — generations to enjoy.

Ash Dieback

The early signs of infection started to be found within the city's tree stock in 2020. In 2021 when it was clear that infection levels were rising significantly it was decided that a plan was required to establish the course of action that the council would need to take to manage the disease. The council's Ash Dieback Action Plan was adopted in January 2023, followed by an information page on the disease going live on the council's website in March 2023. Ash dieback (leicester.gov.uk)

The management of ash trees within the council's ownership is a long-term plan, as the progress of the disease is affected by many factors. It is estimated that management works to remove infected trees that are a public danger will be ongoing for an estimated 10 years.

The loss of so many trees will require a comprehensive replanting scheme. In wooded areas we will manage the site to encourage natural regeneration from other tree species. We will also utilise the available government led schemes which can be used to restock larger areas with new planting. The council has already been successful in utilising schemes such as the Local Authority Treescape Fund within the city. The replacement planting of stand-alone ash trees, with new species suitable for their location, will be undertaken when available resources allow.

Aims and Objectives

Leicester's tree strategy

Our strategy builds on existing tree policy, and draws particularly from the Air Quality Action Plan, Biodiversity Action Plan, Green Infrastructure Strategy, Sustainability Action Plan and Climate Ready Leicester. It is complemented by a supporting strategy document and Tree Policy.

The strategy will help to ensure that Leicester's 'urban forest' will continue to be a major asset for generations to come.

OUR AIMS

The city council will:

- Ensure community engagement and participation to celebrate the benefits of trees in the community, with information and events to help further the knowledge, education and enjoyment of our valuable trees.

- Ensure that the current level of tree canopy and tree numbers under the city council's control are extended and the quality improved.

- Ensure trees under the council's control are managed with the intention of resolving conflicts and problems in a rational, consistent, and economic way - listening to different views, taking them into account but ultimately taking responsibility for, sometimes difficult, decisions.

- Encourage other landowners to plant and manage their trees through advice, guidance and, where necessary, the use of tree protection legislation.

- Compensate adequately for the loss of significant trees in the landscape by planting more than one replacement - wherever practical.

- Ensure that public realm infrastructure schemes that involve tree removal or tree planting will incorporate quality planting and design and that designers and lead agents liaise with the council at appropriate stages of planning, design, and implementation.

PROMOTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The city council will:

- Work in partnership with the Woodland Trust to support best practice.

- Support volunteer Tree Wardens, providing training, advice and guidance to enable individuals to provide a supporting role to officers.

- Develop a range of tree trails across the city's parks, as a fun and educational tool for all ages.

- Encourage volunteers via the Leicester Environmental Volunteer scheme to participate in the maintenance and management of our tree stock, including tree planting and the vegetation management of mass tree planting sites.

- Work with partners to develop and expand our community orchards.

- Work with schools and colleges to develop and maintain a network of 'Tiny Forest's' with a social science programme to provide a variety of ecosystems that offer both environmental and social benefits.

- Promote the Celebration Tree programme, giving people the opportunity of alternative memorial and burial of cremated remains along with marking anniversaries, birthday's and significant events.

- Provide comms and marketing on key projects, tree losses and disease impacts to ensure service users and the wider community understand the reason for works being undertaken.

- Consult the public before felling a tree or trees on Highways (unless the work is exempt under section 96A of Highway Act & section 115 Environment Act).

PROMOTING AMENITY

The city council will:

- Monitor the health of the council's trees.

- Maintain trees with the aim of reducing nuisance, hazard and complaint.

- Use a variety of species and cultivars.

- Reduce problems that can be associated with the presence of trees when making decisions about planting design and the positioning of trees in the landscape

- Purchase planting stock of good quality and prepare an underground environment that is conducive to good tree growth.

PROMOTING HABITAT AND WILDLIFE

The city council will:

- Encourage the planting and management of woodland and groups of trees.

- Where it is compatible with amenity and health and safety, seek to retain old tree stock, including trees in decline, and manage them in a way that promotes their value to wildlife.

- Favour native trees over exotics when specifying, planning and implementing new planting.

- Protect and conserve protected or rare species through appropriate compensation when loss cannot be avoided.

RESPONDING TO GLOBAL OBLIGATIONS

As the city council increases the city's overall canopy cover, it will:

- Respond appropriately and proportionately to the threat of pest and disease epidemics.

- Recycle the materials that arise from the management of trees.

MANAGING THE PRESSURE ON TREES IN OTHERS' OWNERSHIP

The city council will:

- Seek to preserve amenity afforded by trees when considering our response to tree work applications made under planning controls.

- When assessing planning applications, take into account the effect on trees and protect them where the balance of factors favours preservation.

- Where landscaping that includes tree planting is made a condition of planning consent, incorporate quality design and specification.

- Work directly with landowners and developers to support them with the management, inclusion and retention of trees affected by the planning process.

- Provide a 24/7 call-out service ensuring a response to tree emergencies at any time. Dealing with these quickly and proportionately - making appropriate resources available.

- Respond within 24 hours to reports of contraventions to protected trees and taking appropriate action.

- Be bound by the relevant planning practice guidance when managing protected tree regulation.

DELIVERING THIS STRATEGY

The city council will ensure that it makes available:

- Adequate financial resources from council budgets and income generation.

- Appropriately qualified, skilled, motivated and experienced staff.

- The organisation, systems, depots, facilities and good quality equipment that our staff need.

- Support from all appropriate sections of the council.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING THIS STRATEGY

The city council will:

- Annual report will be published on the council's website.

2025 - 2030 Tree Strategy Comms Launch

April 2025

- **Press release** - in late March information on the release of the revised Tree Strategy 2025 – 2030 will go out. Details will be given on the councils trees (numbers/planting in 2024 season/future projects by the Tree Wardens, such as revision of the city's veteran trees etc.) & events as below.

- **Schools tree picture/photo competition** – run by the sustainable schools & trees & woodlands teams. Open to 5 – 18 years of age, prizes for 1st to 3rd of national garden gift vouchers and national geographic British trees book. The winning pictures will be posted on schools web page. Closing date of entries 14th March. Judging of entries by Cllr Dempster/Cllr Pantling/sustainable schools & T&W team. Results of winners on Tuesday 1st April.

- **Tree Wardens** - 4th April Plum pruning event with tree wardens at The Orchards LNR linked to the Mapping Edible Leicester, Community Orchard project.

- **Tree Trails launch** – the trees & woodlands team with and tree wardens we will be releasing 2 new tree trails at Castle Gardens & Spinney Hill Park, to compliment the 6 existing trails (Abbey Park, CHCP, Evington Park, Humberstone Park, Victoria Park & Western Park).

- **Tree Carving & Tree Planting** – The large beech stump (below) will be carved into a throne seat by Paul from the T&W team. There will also be the planting of a replacement tree close to felled beech. The planting will be attended by Cllr Dempster, the tree wardens and members of the T&W team and will mark the launch of the revised tree strategy. Date of this event is 2nd April at 2pm.

Stump of recently felled dieased beech to be carved into a throne seat

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Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

**Museum Service
Vision & Strategic Priorities**

3rd April 2025

Lead director/officer: Mike Dalzell

1. Summary

The new Museums Service Vision & Strategic Priorities 2025-29 is to be implemented on 1st May 2025. A printed version of this is currently being developed.

The vision is a high-quality cost-effective museum service with fewer, but much improved buildings and collection displays resulting from very significant capital investment.

Including contributions from external funders more than £20m has been invested over the last decade, with a further £8.8m of investment underway and planned.

Investment of £411k has been secured from The National Lottery Heritage Fund for a development stage grant at Leicester Museum & Art Gallery.

Taken together this represents a total of £29.2m capital investment in the museum service.

The service has secured Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) investment every year since 2018 with funding in place until 2026. Investment between 2018-23 was £2m in total and for 2023-26 is £1.2m, giving a total investment figure of £3.2m. This funding is being used to develop and deliver a range of inclusive and accessible activities and programmes, including exhibitions, co production programmes, income generation, collections access, offsite museums activity and volunteer development.

The museum service will also continue to operate a mixed portfolio of free access and charged for sites that will be financially self-sustaining. We are concentrating significant capital investment at both the free flagship museum, Leicester Museum & Art Gallery and at museums which will be financially self-reliant (Jewry Wall and KRIII Visitor Centre). This ambition and investment will significantly improve the visitor experience at these museums and will increase access to collections. At the meeting there will be a slide deck presentation on progress with both the LMAG and Jewry Wall schemes.

There will be improved access to Leicester's social history collection through the creation of new Story of Leicester galleries at Leicester Museum & Art Gallery. A development stage National Lottery Heritage Fund grant has recently been secured for this project. New art galleries that will be fun, informative and interactive are currently being created at the site.

The museum service has been working to increase the level of activity it undertakes across the city beyond our museum sites. Through a hub and spoke model, museum services are being delivered outside of museum buildings and developing our non-traditional audiences, a core objective of our strategy. The museum service has already established a successful programme taking the museum and collections out into

communities outside of the city centre to reach non-traditional museum visitors and to make museums more accessible, for example, to Neighbourhood Centres, Libraries, shopping centres and festivals. There has been a 28% increase in offsite engagement from 61,609 in 2018/19 to 79,017 in 2023/24. These numbers are higher than at the sites where there will be operational changes. All activities are free to participate in and examples include the Doorstep Museums initiative in 2024 at The Brite Centre has engaged with 1,800 visitors and at St Barnabas Library with 500 people.

Arts & Museums Service Vision 2025-29

- Connecting people & communities with the *Story of Leicester*, unearthing 2,000 years of the city's rich history & heritage.

- Inclusive museums & collections which reflect and share the lived experiences of our diverse local communities.

- Taking museums into communities to increase access and widen audiences.

- Creating exceptional visitor experiences through capital investment at Leicester Museum and Art Gallery & Jewry Wall.

- Using Leicester's global collections to play our part in addressing the climate crisis.

- Supporting the development of the city's future generations, sparking children & young people's imagination and curiosity, developing their skills & tackling the inequalities which many of them face.

- Developing the financial sustainability of both paid for and free museums.

Operational Changes

Within the new vision we recognise the need to change how we deliver our service so we can continue to provide a high-quality museum function. Leicester Museums & Galleries currently runs 8 buildings and for a city of our size, this is a comparatively large number. Some are costly to maintain, have low usage and displays are relatively outdated, which impacts upon the visitor experience. The Service's long-term strategy is to realign resources to use them more efficient and develop the museum service, making it more relevant to Leicester people and better showcasing our history, community stories and world class collections.

From 1ˢᵗ May 2025 the key changes will be:

- **Focusing delivery on key museum sites** (Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, Jewry Wall, King Richard III Visitor Centre and Leicester Guildhall).

- **Continued engagement outside of museum buildings**, making collections more accessible across the city.

- **Operational changes at 3 museum sites:**

Abbey Pumping Station – Reduction of opening days to peak visitor times. In 2023 32.5% (13,259) of visitors attended on event days which is the busiest period for this site.

Future opening days per year will be:
4 steam days, 16 railway days, 3 bookable Steam with the Team days and 13 Mondays during Leicester school holidays (excluding Christmas). This is a total of 36 days.

School visits will continue to be provided at a total 12 days per year in line with current provision. On average 426 school pupils visit per year.

The total number of days of public access will be: 48 (Site: 36 days & school visits: 12 days).

Access will be provided for the Leicester Museum Technology Association volunteers to continue their work programme on Mondays to ensure the volunteering programme continues and the working collections and beam engines are maintained.

The total number of volunteer-only access days will be 37 per year (On Monday school holiday days access will be provided to the volunteers. These days are not included in this figure because the site will be open to the public).

There is also the potential for other activities to be transferred from Belgrave Hall, e.g., the food fair and for other events to be developed. This would increase the number of public access days to the site.

- Visitor figures are forecast to be reduced from 41,000 to c13,400
- Number of school visits forecast to continue: 426
- **Total public access forecast: 13,426**

There is a revenue saving of £112k which will arise as a consequence of these changes.

Newarke Houses Museum – Reduction of opening days to Saturdays from May to August, providing access on the busiest day of the week during the summer school holiday period.

School visits will continue to be provided in line with current provision at 66 days per year. On average 1,757 school pupils visit per year.

The total number of days of public access will be: 84 (Site: 18 days & school visits 66 days).

- Visitor figures are forecast to be reduced from 41,000 to c3,000
- Number of school visits forecast to continue: 1,757
- **Total public access forecast: 4,757**

The revenue saving is £134k

Currently Newarke Houses offers access to important social history collections though some displays are now outdated. A key part of the rationale for investment at Leicester Museum & Art Gallery is to update and improve the interpretation and display of our social history

collections and make them available to more people via new Story of Leicester Galleries. The city's flagship museum, Leicester Museum & Art Gallery has 249,000 visitors per year compared to 41,000 at Newarke Houses Museum and following investment this is forecast to grow to 300,000.

Belgrave Hall – Suspension of the site as a heritage venue which is currently open c32 days per year. Colleagues in Estates and Building Services are exploring potential alternative uses for the site, and it is hoped that one can be found that would allow public access to continue in some way. This is the site with the lowest visitor figures at c9,000 per year. Popular events such as the food fair could be transferred to Abbey Pumping Station.

The revenue saving is £42k

The total saving for all 3 sites is £288k. This contributes to the savings targets that are required of the Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment division to deliver the council's financial strategy.

The rearrangement of the service is not an overall reduction of the museum service. Across all sites and for offsite activities our visitor figures in 2023/24 were 515,241 and once we have completed the capital improvement works at key sites, we anticipate this figure will increase to around 560,000. This includes an adjustment reflecting the changes at the above sites.

In order to implement the changes, we will be undertaking a staffing review of the Operations Team. It is expected that, with the number of vacancies we are carrying at present and the staffing requirement at Jewry Wall, we will be able minimise the impact and find posts for all current staff.

2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 To note and comment on this report.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

Stakeholders have been informed of the operational changes.

5. Timescale

19th February – Budget approved by Full Council.

3rd March – Meetings with funders – Arts Council England (ACE) & National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).

13th March – Arts & Museums Service Staff Briefing.

13th & 14th March – Stakeholders notified of operational changes.

3rd April – Present new Museums Vision & Strategic Priorities to Culture & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission.

April – Commence Organisational Review.

1st May – Implement operational changes - new opening hours.

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

6.1 Financial implications

The budget for 2025/26 set a target saving of £2.3m for Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment, to be achieved by 2027/28. The report proposes actions to make savings of £288k in a full year, which will contribute to this target. The breakdown, and the profile of the saving, is provided in the table below:

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Full Year
Net Saving	£168k	£288k	£288k	£288k

Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance
14th March 2025

6.2 Legal implications

The commissioning or loans of works of art to the Museums and other visitor venues including expenditure on transportation, storage and insurance costs will need to be undertaken on a competitive and value for money basis wherever possible taking into consideration protection of intellectual property and ownership rights and social value issues and in compliance with the Council's own internal Contract Procedure Rules.

Signed: *Steven Lowry-Smith*

Steven Lowry-Smith - Contracts & Procurement Solicitor
(Commercial) Ext. 37 1395

Dated: 18 March 2025

(Legal Commercial).

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 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.

This paper provides an overview of the Museums Service Vision & Strategic Priorities 2025-29. Initiatives that aim to create experiences that involve and inspire residents and visitors, sharing the city's significant collections, that celebrate the stories of Leicester's diverse communities and the unique places, art and heritage which shape the city's identity and showcasing these to the world should lead to positive impacts for people from across all protected characteristics. Involvement in art, heritage and culture has the potential to enrich people's lives, having accessible experiences should help to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. To ensure that equalities considerations have been taken into account in regards to the changes at the sites mentioned in the paper, equalities impacts have been undertaken. It is important that as the changes outlined will also affect staffing, we work in conjunction with HR in line with the Organisational Review Policy and Procedure.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh Ext 37 4148

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

The operation of the council's portfolio of museums and art galleries, and the wider outreach work to take the service out into communities, generates carbon emissions through the use of gas, district heating and electricity to heat and power the buildings, and the use of diesel and petrol for transport.

In 2023/24 the emissions from operating the museum buildings - excluding Jewry Wall, which was closed for refurbishment and the Euston Street Store, are estimated to have been 347 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e). Of that figure, Abbey Pumping Station, Newarke Houses Museum and Belgrave Hall accounted for 223 tonnes. The closure of Belgrave Hall and the reduction in opening hours of Abbey Pumping Station and Newarke Houses Museum will therefore reduce the council's carbon footprint and energy costs. The exact level of reduction will depend on the baseline level of energy use needed to maintain appropriate temperatures and systems on the non-opening days. The Arts & Museums Service should work with Estates & Building Services to ensure that heating and other controls are adjusted when the new operating hours are introduced, to optimise the energy and carbon savings while maintaining the buildings and collections. Periodic checks should also be made to ensure that these adjustments are achieving the expected results.

Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency). Ext. 37 2249.
20th March 2025.

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

None

8. 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

Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission
Work Programme 2024 – 2025

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
8 July 2024	1) Terms of Reference 2) Leicester Museum and Art Gallery – Call-in 3) Introduction to Culture and Neighbourhoods Services Scrutiny Commission 4) VCSE Delivery Plan	4) A) Members encouraged to attend VCSE event. B) Members to let officers know of any small organisations in their ward that could benefit from the VCSE strategy.	4) A) Invitation will be sent out when ready B) Meetings being worked through with Cllrs to discuss their wards and groups within them.
22 August 2024	1) Culture and Creative Industry Strategy 2) Community Safety and ASB informal response.	1) A) Consideration to be given to stencilling directions between attractions on pavements B) Meeting to be convened for members to inform the final report. 2) A) City Centre On-Street Issues to be added to the work programme. B) Update on HASBO and CRASBU to be brought back in 12 months - potentially to include Cuckooing	1B) meeting has taken place. 2A) Community Safety Update scheduled 2B) On forward plan.

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
4 November 2024	1) Burial Strategy – Annual Report 2) Heritage Lottery Fund (Place Programme Funding) 3) Study Zones and Library IT Provision 4) Ward Funding Annual Report – Including policy update.	1a) Six-monthly written update on the search for places to be brought to the Commission. 1b) Commission to be informed of outcome of CDS Findings. 1c) Commission to be updated on workplan for Gilroes Cemetery. 1d) Commission to be made aware of findings of the Law Commission 1e) Information to be provided on number of graves left in each Cemetery and the financial position. 2a) Commission to be kept informed of how communities can bid to be part of the project. 2b) If Stage 1 is successful, updates to come to the Commission on the next stage and the findings of the Audience Agency. 3a) Report to be brought in 12 months on how sustainable and successful the scheme has been, areas for development, and provisions in case of funding cessation. 3b) Information on the age profile of users to be provided to members of the Commission.	1e) Information on number of new graves used circulated to members.

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
15 January 2025	1) Draft Capital Programme 2025/26 and Draft General Revenue Budget	1a) Points made on about the City Mayor's Delegated powers, and the suggestion that the amounts the City Mayor has authority over be reduce so as to give the Council more of a say over how money was used to be taken into consideration. 1b) Questions over whether money put aside for flood drainage is sufficient to be directed to the relevant officer.	1b) Members updated via email.
	2) Fly-tipping strategy.	2a) Data on the number of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) to businesses in comparison to households to be shared with members. 2b) Consideration to be given as to whether recycling sites needed to be there or if they invited fly tipping. 2c) Information to be shared on which wards made the most use of the Love Leicester app. 2d) Findings of the review to come back to the Commission, including ward-by-ward correlations.	2d) Added to forward plan 3) Added to forward plan
	3) Museum Strategy - Engagement in Museum Teams	3) Report on outcomes and conclusions to come in 2026, to include consideration for an open weekend.	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
27 February 2025	1) Community Safety Update. 2) Library and Community Needs Assessment	1a) Consideration be given to expanding the enforcement area east of London Road (eg. Gotham St and Conduit St). 1b) Councillors to be brought on Patch Walks to help them understand the issues. 1c) Existing set of city wardens and similar roles in place to be trained and provided with PSPO powers. 1d) Report to come to scrutiny in three months' time once implemented to see how this PSPO has worked. 1e) Consideration to be given to how to publicise that PSPOs are in place and how incidents could be reported. 1f) Analysis of results to be emailed to Commission.	
3 April 2025	1) Tourism Strategy Update 2) Tree Strategy 3) Museum Strategy including Capital Investment – including Jewry Wall/LMAG		

Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Business case for the KRIII café.	Requested at OSC on 30 January 2025 – To go to first meeting of new municipal year	
Public Space protection Orders	Report to come to first meeting of municipal year to see how PSPOs have worked.	
Engagement of Community Organisations	Report on how community organisations could be engaged to help the Council run services as requested at the meeting of 29 January. – To go to first meeting of new municipal year	
Waste Arrangements	To go to first meeting of new municipal year.	
Sports Strategy – Including Active Leicester and Women in Sport – Annual Update	Following discussion at the meeting of 5 December 2023, it was requested that the report come back to the commission around 6-months later when it was fuller and the findings of the seminar were known. It was later decided to combine this with the report on Women in Sport, To include indicators of success, information on bodies that can help promote Women's engagement in sport, other groups with protected characteristics such as disability sport and data broken down into, for example, age and ethnicity, as suggested at the meeting on 24 October 2023, with a possibility of a Board looking at this.	
Museum Engagement Schemes – Outcome on findings and conclusions.	To include considerations for an open weekend.	
Findings of fly-tipping review.	To include ward-by-ward correlations.	

Grassland Strategy	To include seed and produce exchange and to include areas for recreation and sports.	
Growing spaces strategy		
Festivals and Events Review update		
Heritage Places Funding - National Lottery Heritage Fund – Update on next stage.	To include findings of Audience Agency. If Stage 1 is successful.	
Burial Strategy (6-monthly update)	To include information on the search for places, the work plan for Gilroes Cemetery and the findings of the Law Commission	
Update on HASBO and CRASBU	To be brought back in 12 months from 2024 report.	
Heritage panels, inviting members suggestions for new panels		
CCTV Overview	Moved from November	