



Leicester
City Council

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

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 22 APRIL 2026

TIME: 5:30 pm

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

Members of the Committee

Councillor Waddington (Chair)

Councillor Cassidy (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Bonham, Clarke, O'Neill, Osman, Porter and Rae Bhatia

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

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

**Ed Brown (Governance Services) Edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk and Julie Bryant
(Governance Services) Julie.bryant@leicester.gov.uk or E-mail:**

**Governance@leicester.gov.uk Address: Leicester City Council, City Hall, 115 Charles
Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

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If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact: Ed Brown or Julie Bryant, Governance Services on Edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk or Julie.bryant@leicester.gov.uk. Alternatively, email governance@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

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

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Appendix A

The minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission held on Wednesday 11th March 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

Huzaifa Lorgat asks:

1. Coleman Road hosts our General Hospital and has an Emergency Ambulance station. Yet it is absolutely littered with potholes. Can the road be resurfaced as a matter of urgency?
2. Residents including myself have made many reports via the love clean street app for this issue amongst many potholes across Leicester, but they get closed as 'resolved', but issue remains. How does your department quality check to ensure reports that are 'closed' are actually resolved?

6. PETITIONS

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

7. PARKING FEES AND USAGE UPDATE [Appendix B](#)

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation submits a report to feedback to the EDTCE Scrutiny Committee on the impact of increase to on-street and off-street parking charges implemented on 2nd June 2025. This was an action arising from the Committee meeting held on 23rd April 2025 which requested *“for a report to be brought to Commission, to include car park usage since the increased charges”*.

8. TRANSPORT AFFORDABILITY EDTCE SCRUTINY [Appendix C](#)

The City Transport Director submits a report providing members of the commission with information on the affordability of transport options in the city, with particular reference to passenger transport.

9. ADULT EDUCATION - PATHWAYS TO DEVOLUTION [Appendix D](#)

The Director of Tourism Culture and Economy submits a report to update the Commission on The Leicester Adult Education service being invited to participate in a DfE programme called the Pathways to Devolution Pilot.

The paper sets out the proposed approach to utilise additional funding and highlights the opportunities and key risks it presents.

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 BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Appendix A

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

Held: WEDNESDAY, 11 MARCH 2026 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Waddington – Chair

Councillor Bonham
Councillor Clarke
Councillor O'Neill

Councillor Osman
Councillor Porter

Councillor Gopal as substitute for Councillor Rae Bhatia

In Attendance:

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin
Assistant City Mayor Councillor Whittle

* * * * *

202. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

Apologies were received form Cllr Rae Bhatia. Cllr Gopal substituted.

Apologies were also received form Cllr Cassidy.

Young People's Council representatives had been due to attend this meeting but had needed to give their apologies.

203. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed. Nothing was declared.

204. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was suggested that it had been noted in the item on the Call in of the Land Exchange to enable regeneration at Midland Street/Southampton Street in the Cultural Quarter, that the value of the land had been mentioned, and it was requested that this be noted in the minutes.

It was noted that Cllr Cassidy had been present at the previous meeting but was not marked as such.

AGREED:

- 1) That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission held on 14th January 2026 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the agreed corrections.

205. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

It was noted that there would be a short break during the meeting so that those observing Ramadan could break their fast.

Professor Nik Hammer of the University of Leicester was welcomed to the meeting.

206. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

207. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

208. TRANSPORT AFFORDABILITY

The City Transport Director submitted a report to provide members of the commission with details as to the affordability of transport options across the city and to provide members of the commission with details on the actions being undertaken by the city council and partners to make passenger transport more affordable across the city.

It was suggested that since YPC members were unable to attend, that the item be deferred to the next meeting and YPC members invited again.

It was requested that the report at the next meeting include information on costs of schemes and modelling to see if they were indeed affordable.

AGREED:

- 1) That the item be deferred.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.

209. PLANNING SERVICE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation submitted a report providing an overview of planning performance.

The Head of Planning summarised the report with a slideshow. Key points to note were as follows:

- It had been a difficult few years in terms of the national economy, the report set out comments on the government's activities and policy actions to retrieve the position. Other factors included the cyber-attack, recruitment challenges and a backlog of applications which had since recovered.
- The levels of planning applications received were at a low level compared to previous years.
- Appeal performance remained strong, reflecting the overall quality of decisions made.
- Income figures were set out in the report, the Council was below the budget expectations, but this was a function of the development market. It was hoped that government actions on policy would lead to an upturn.

In response to member questions and discussion, the following was noted:

- Confidence to sustain performance was high, there was now a fully staffed team with swift applications processing.
- Performance figures, prior to the introduction of the pre-application charges, could be circulated together with figures on the numbers of applications.
- The department had traditionally relied on recruiting Planning Graduates. Under a Government initiative, Pathway to Planning, 2 new officers had been recruited and were progressing well.
- Government legislation was in place regarding fee setting, but was not yet enacted.
- Regarding skills shortages, there was concern around big developers impacting on smaller businesses.
- A new category of medium sized development would be introduced.
- A consultation under the National Policy Framework saw a preference for developing within settlements. New urban design guidance would follow to counterbalance potential risks.
- It was hoped that local government reorganisation could help to alleviate existing boundary issues for the city and would allow for strategic planning opportunities, the Government was introducing new spatial development strategies. There would be some short-term pressures and work to ensure a smooth transition.
- Members were reminded of an invite to join a presentation on the inspector's report.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.
- 3) Performance figures from before pre-application charges were introduced would be provided to members.

210. EDTCE SCRUTINY TASK FORCE - LABOUR MARKET WORKER EXPLOITATION - EXECUTIVE RESPONSE REVISITED

The Executive Response to the recommendations made by the Task Group on Worker Exploitation was considered by the Commission.

Professor Nik Hammer of the University of Leicester attended the meeting to assist with the discussion.

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Economy made the following points:

- Members and Professor Hammer were thanked for their work on the task force.
- It was noted that exploitation was not an issue exclusive to Leicester, and Local Authorities did not have a formal role in Labour Market enforcement. However work could be done when resources were available to focus on particular sectors such as the garment industry.
- The UK Director of Labour market Enforcement had published independent review of Operation Tacit (OpTacit) which had noted that allegations of widespread exploitation in the garment Leicester had been unfounded.
- The Task Group had looked at where exploitation was likely to be prevalent in a city such as Leicester.
- There had been a change in national policy on labour market enforcement with the pending establishment of the Fair Work Agency. The city had experienced first-hand the fragmented nature of the enforcement landscape in coordinating activity, so it was good that this was being brought together. The establishment of the Fair Work Agency would be tracked.
- Partnerships on the labour market had been developed over the past year. As part of the Get Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Working Plan, new and existing partners had been engaged around this agenda.
- This presented opportunities to work with partners in communities to help get people into work, and through this there could be opportunities to raise awareness of workers' rights.
- The task force had also identified sectors in which exploitation was more likely to be prevalent such as in social care and in the 'gig-economy' (such as delivery drivers). These could be areas on which to focus efforts, subject to funding.
- The Local Authority had influence on procurement to drive employment standards, which was delivered via the Social Value Charter.

The Chair summarised the recommendations made by the task group as set out in the report.

In discussions with Members, the following was noted:

- In response to a query regarding overseas workers in social care, it was noted that the task group had received witness statements from the Adult Social Care (ASC) department and they had highlighted some issues that they were aware of in residential homes. It was noted that work had been done with care workers from overseas to ensure that they were fulfilling their criteria with regard to Work Permits and meetings had been held with care workers to ensure that they understood what was required of them.
- With regard to routes on commissioning in social care, evidence had come from Council colleagues. There was a challenge to support people in employed by other providers, even if conditions in Council services were above board.
- In terms of education on workers' rights, it was noted that national enforcement bodies had run programmes to raise awareness of rights and how to report issues. Specific programmes had been commissioned to raise awareness of workers' rights in the textiles sector.
- It was noted that one of the recommendations of the task force had been to develop information campaigns. Jobs fairs could create opportunities for enforcement bodies to engage with local people.
- It was important not to forget about the garment sector, but it was also necessary to recognise that allegations against the sector had damaged the industry as well as damaging the view of Leicester as a manufacturing base for textiles and this had impacted on orders being placed with local manufacturers, which has a knock on impact for local workers.
- The organisation Fashion Enter had been supported to establish the Fashion Hub in the city centre, and they have been delivering skills programmes for the sector.
- A Leicester Made industry trade event had been held at Athena last year, at which many manufacturers and brands had attended, which focussed on the textiles sector and the need to grow it further. The focus needed to be on the future and positive jobs and employment.
- It was noted that the Commission had been told that many jobs in the textiles sector had gone abroad, whereas the focus of the task group was on the labour market in Leicester.
- In response to points raised about other areas such as construction and small businesses and the need for corporate businesses to be part of the approach, it was noted that the way different sectors were organised was different and the issues were very complex.
- Responding to points made about apprenticeships, it was noted that the Local Authority created and promoted apprenticeship opportunities
- Responding to points made about journalistic investigations into exploitation in the garment sector, it was acknowledged that exploitation

had taken place, but Leicester was not exceptional in this respect, as per the findings of the OpTacit report.

- The evidence of the OpTacit report had been looked at, as well as the evidence presented to the task force on where exploitation may be prevalent. The task force had not discounted exploitation in textiles, but had looked at where it may be more prevalent and had been evidence-based wherever possible.
- Points were raised about the comparison in evidence needed for a criminal prosecution compared to a journalistic investigation.
- It was noted that there was a wide spectrum of exploitation, and it was necessary to understand that many citizens worked in fields where these problems existed and it was necessary to think about how the Council could assist.
- It was further noted that people may be reluctant to report exploitation but may instead approach trusted voluntary sector organisations regarding matters such as income or health.
- It would be necessary to see how the Fair Work Agency evolved.
- With regard for the need for finances and resources to support this work, the Local Government Association (LGA) had undertaken work on Modern Slavery and had asked the government that national ambitions be matched with local resources. There were nine modern slavery coordinators across the country and the LGA had asked that these be funded across all Councils
- Worker exploitation could be considered as part of the Get LLR Working agenda as this will provide a framework to bring partners together. Get LLR Working was not primarily focused on this agenda as it was about getting people into work, however, in the agenda there was a requirement to build collaborative partnerships on the labour market, including with health partners, voluntary organisations, universities and other Local Authorities. Rather than having different partnership groups funded by short-term funding, it may be possible to draw in stakeholder partners that wished to engage with local communities on workers' rights. Partners could be invited into this agenda, which could include data gathering to understand the wider picture of the labour market.
- Looking again at the issue of resources, there was a broader issue around Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and devolution whereby devolved funding could be provided by the government. If authorities were fully devolved, they could receive powers and resources to deal with local affairs.

AGREED:

- 1) That the response be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.
- 3) That further updates on progress be reported to the Commission.

211. CONNECT TO WORK PROGRAMME

The Director of Tourism Culture and Economy submitted a report providing an overview of the start of the Connect to Work programme for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland.

The Regeneration Projects & Programmes Manager gave a slide presentation which is attached to the agenda. The following key points were noted:

- The programme would be active across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland between 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2030.
- There was an overall allocation of £17m to support the employment model which was voluntary based with funding from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).
- The programme would support people both in and out of work for those that are eligible.
- Intensive support for individuals would be provided and work with employers was planned.
- The service was currently open to those with learning disabilities and Autism, but would expand to provide support to a range of people with different needs and experiences.
- The DWP had designed 2 models:
 - The Individual Placement Support Model (IPS) - normally for those with health conditions and complex needs.
 - The Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF) – e.g. for those with learning disabilities and Autism.
- Eligibility checks were completed by the DWP.
- The Connect to Work website was available through the Leicester Employment Hub.
- Enquiry forms were available for partners on via the website.
- The team were looking to go live with the remaining cohort towards the end of April 2026.
- The targets for this year had been for 78 individual starts. However, due to a later commencement than expected, there were now 34 starts. A significant number of enquiries, and referrals were coming through. Marketing would increase once fully live.
- The County Council team had not been in place until February. ‘Starts’ did not count until the finalised approval from the DWP came through.
- The full outlined targets were provided in the report.
- Preparation was in place for a Fidelity Assurance review.

In response to member discussion and questions, the following was noted:

- DWP funds could not be used for wage subsidy support.
- Staff within council’s staff would be providing the employment SEQF provision.
- Challenges could arise due to the current economic climate and issues with low vacancy rates. It would be a case of showing the benefits of employing people with disabilities. Employer engagement would be a key factor.
- Participants were likely to be unknown the Job Centre and not in receipt

of their services. The scheme could provide more intensive individual support than the Job Centre offer.

- Avenues into the service included referrals from local community and voluntary organisations, social care teams, DWP, Work Well GP programme.
- Regarding AI, it was noted that many entry level jobs could be impacted and it was difficult to predict outcomes, more conversations would follow.
- A number of elements were considered in the calculations. Participant numbers were capped at 1,600 in the peak year, with delivery ramping up and down across the programme. The peak numbers, together with the unit cost set by the DWP, were used to determine the total value. The DWP had set high targets.
- The Council had decided on the best delivery approach. The IPS service had been commissioned out. The SEQF service could be supported by existing in-house services with an expansion to current the offer.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.

212. WORK PROGRAMME

- A future report was requested to update on the status of the textiles sector .
- It was requested that an overview of the development of an economic growth strategy is added to the work programme.
- It was requested that the upcoming report on car park usage include information on on-street parking.
- It was noted that the Pride in Place programme was an issue for Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny.

The work programme was noted.

213. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 19:50.

Parking fees and usage update

EDTCE Scrutiny

Date of meeting: 22 April 2026

Lead director/officer: Andrew L Smith

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All Wards
- Report author: Martin Fletcher, City Highways Director
- Author contact details: 37 4965
- Report version number: 01

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To feedback to the EDTCE Scrutiny Committee on the impact of increase to on-street and off-street parking charges implemented on 2nd June 2025. This was an action arising from the Committee meeting held on 23rd April 2025 which requested *“for a report to be brought to Commission, to include car park usage since the increased charges”*.

2. Background

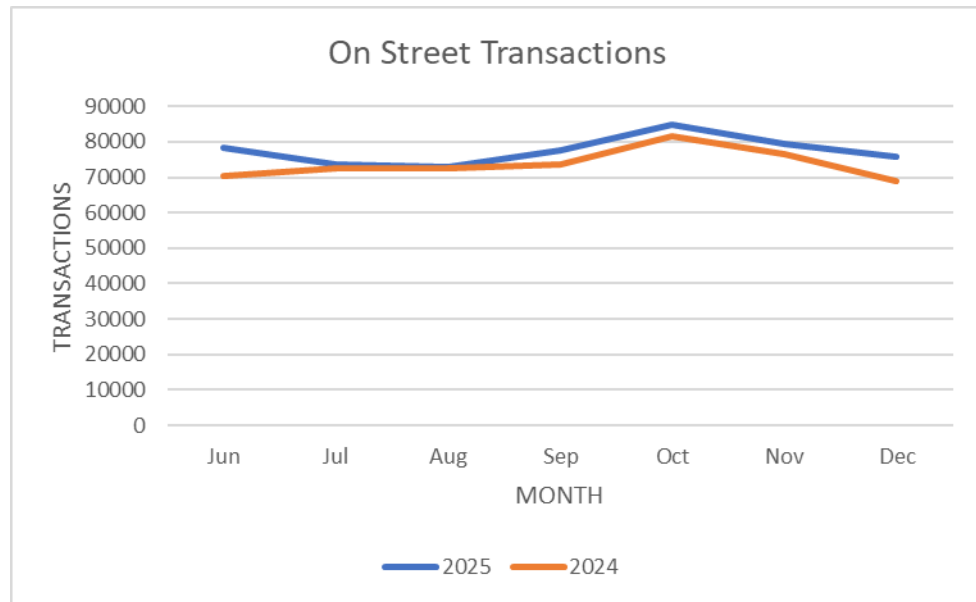
- 2.1 On-street and off-street parking charges were increased on the 2nd of June 2025 to:
- Address increases in costs for the management, operation and enforcement of parking facilities.
 - Address revenue budget cost pressures across Highways & Transport, accounting for increases in operating costs between Summer 2022 and 2025 and forecast increases.
 - Bring council parking tariffs into line with other similar local authorities and private car parking operators.
 - Further support and encourage modal shift toward sustainable transport, recognising increasing bus operator fares and the increase in the national capped fare from £2 to £3.
 - Further support and encourage the take up of the Pay by Phone payment method.
 - To simplify the tariff structure and avoid confusion by customers.
- 2.2 In taking the decision to increase tariffs, this was not expected to have a significant impact based upon the experience of other authorities, benchmarking data, and the increase in January 2023.
- 2.3 A review of the impact of the increase was requested by the EDTCE Scrutiny Committee after suitable period of time. Officer have now collated and reviewed the first seven months of usage and income data since the increase was implemented, June to December 2025 and compared with the same period in 2024.

3. On-Street Review

3.1 Usage/Transactions

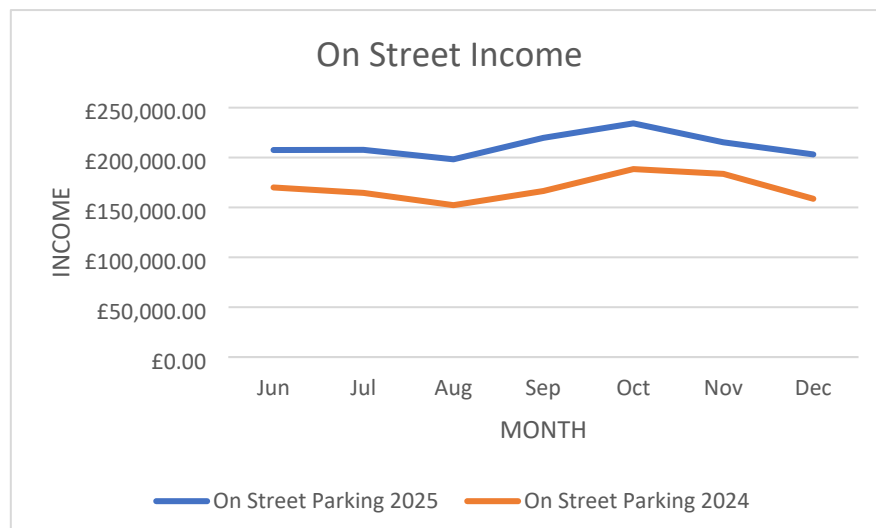
- Average monthly usage (June-December 2025): 77,590 transactions

- Average monthly usage (June-December 2024): 73,785 transactions
- **Change: +5%**



3.2 Income

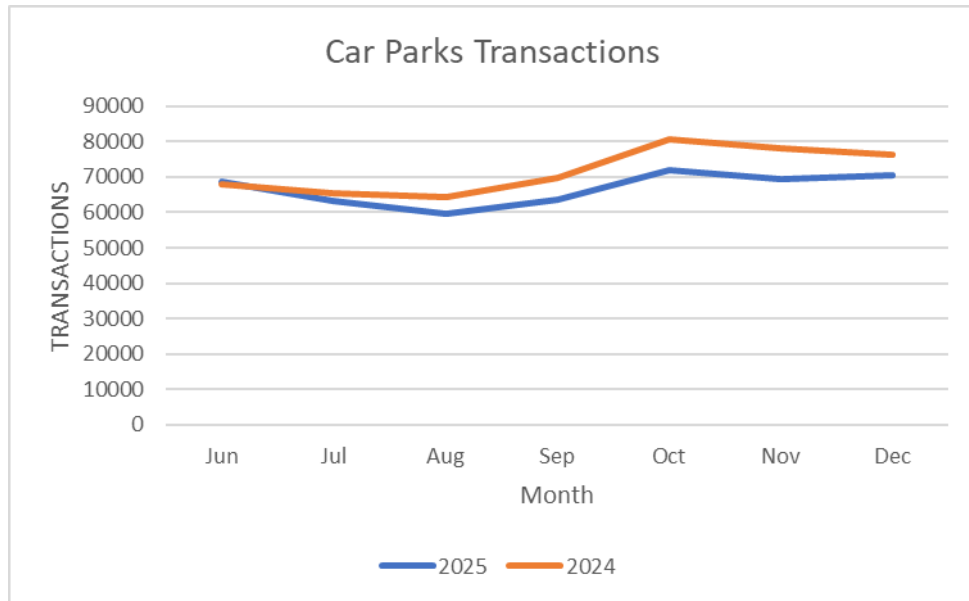
- Average monthly income (June-December 2025): £212K
- Average monthly income (June-December 2024): £169K
- **Change: +26% (£301K additional income).**



4. Off-Street Car Parks Review

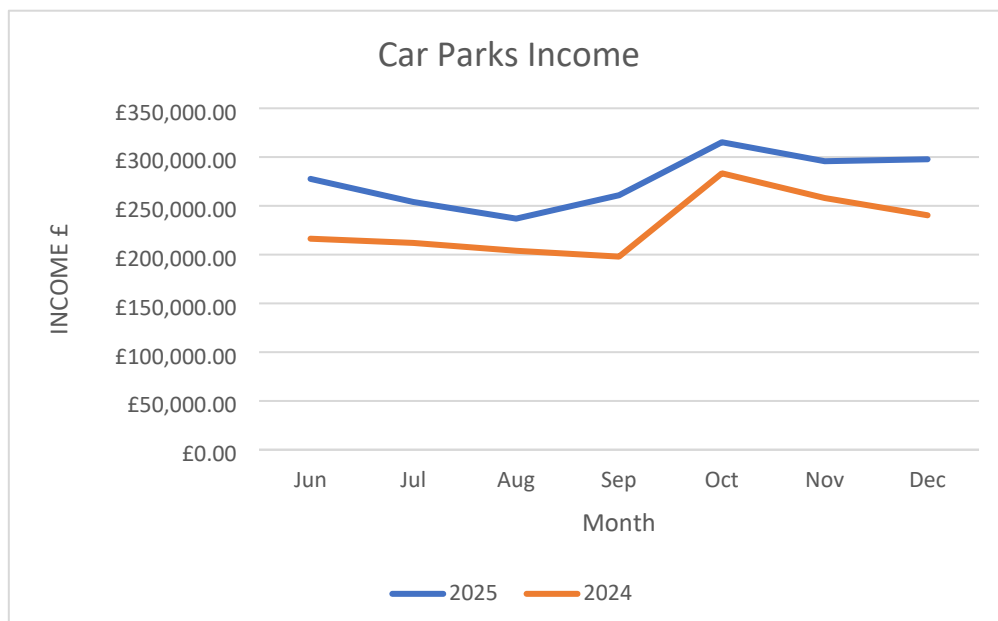
4.1 Usage/Transactions

- Average monthly usage (June-December 2025): 68,810 transactions
- Average monthly usage (June-December 2024): 72,174 transactions
- **Change: -7%.**



4.2 Income

- Average monthly income (June-December 2025): £277K
- Average monthly income (June-December 2024): £230K
- **Change: +21% (£326K additional income).**



5. Summary

- 5.1 On-street income has increased by 26%. Transaction data is not comparable as this now includes Sunday payments. However, there remains strong usage of on-street payment bays.

5.2 Income from the off-street car parks has increased by 21%. Usage (Transactions) is down by 7% which is in line with expectations and factored into budget profiling when taking the decision.

5.3 Overall combined income for period June to December (7 months):

- June to Dec 2024 was £2.8m
- June to Dec 2025 was £3.4m
- Growth in Income = £0.6m (7 months)
- Projected Growth over 12 months = £1.0m

Income growth is in line with projections and usage is broadly stable.

6. Financial, Legal, Equalities, Climate Emergency, and Other Implications

6.1 Financial Implications

The decision report in April 2025 to amend parking charges indicated a projected increase in annual income of £1m in 25/26, rising to £1.1m by 27/28. This report summarises the impact for the 7 month period from June to December 2025 which is broadly in line with the original projections. Significant variances against budget will be reported through quarterly budget monitoring reports.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy - Head of Finance

Dated: 1st April 2026

6.2 Legal Implications

Under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the highway authority has the power to charge a fee for parking in designated on-street and off-street parking spaces subject to a legal Order.

Increases in parking charges introduced by Order can be made either by Amendment Order or, under section 35C or 46A of the 1984 Act (as appropriate), by Notice.

Signed: Zoe Iliffe, Legal Services

Dated: 7th April 2026

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, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, 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.

The report provides an update on the impact of increase to on-street and off-street parking charges implemented on 2nd June 2025. There are no direct equalities implications arising from the update report. Blue Badge holders remain able to park for free in on-street P&D bays, council car parks and on some parking restrictions across the city.

Signed: Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer

Dated: 30th March 2026

6.4 Climate Emergency Implications

Car usage is a major source of carbon emissions in Leicester, with the transport sector as a whole accounting for nearly a third of emissions in the city, and a key area to address following the council's declaration of a climate emergency and ambition to reach net zero emissions in the city.

Parking charges can play a role in levels of car usage, and it could therefore be expected that an increase in charges could potentially encourage use of alternative transport options. Any switch to lower carbon alternatives such as walking, cycling and public transport could therefore lead to a reduction in carbon emissions as a result.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer

Dated: 30 March 2026

6.5 Other Implications

None

7. **Appendices**

None

Transport Affordability EDTCE Scrutiny

Date of meeting: 22 April 2026

Lead director/officer: Daniel Pearman

Useful information

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

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide members of the commission with a report concerning the affordability of transport options in the city, with particular reference to passenger transport.

2. Background and context

- 2.1 Following a representation from young people on the cost of bus travel across the city, citing examples of significant subsidy schemes such as Greater Manchester's Our Pass, officers were asked to consider the affordability of passenger transport in the city.
- 2.2 As part of this overview, officers considered the relative cost of transport modes – accounting for set-up and per trip costs – such that bus fares were considered in context with other transport modes.

3. Non-Passenger Transport Costs

- 3.1 Of all modes, walking and cycling are the lowest cost per trip. Ongoing investment in expanding the city's network of safe, segregated infrastructure directly supports the uptake of these modes.
- 3.2 Whilst the initial purchase of a cycle – and especially an adapted or electric cycle – can be a barrier to entry the city council has a number of initiatives designed to improve access to equipment, including extended cycle loan or discount schemes for those on a low income.
- 3.3 As may be expected, there is a high-cost barrier to private vehicle ownership – especially for electric vehicles. This is matched by relatively high trip costs, although research has suggested that for most users these costs are hidden and mostly only seen at the pump or charging station.

4. Passenger Transport Costs

- 4.1 Nationally, the £3 bus fare cap operates until March 2027. This replaced the previous £2 fare cap, introduced by the previous government, and continues to represent a substantial subsidy to passenger journey costs.
- 4.2 Whilst it is recognised that cost remains a barrier to travel, the National Travel Attitude Survey notes this is not as much of a barrier as concerns over crowding or unreliability. The authority has delivered and will continue schemes to improve on these matters via our Enhanced Partnership Plan commitments to [Frequent](#) and [Reliable](#).

- 4.3 We are aware that cost disproportionately effects lower income households and may lead to exclusion from other opportunities. Equally, it is recognised that the reliance these households have on passenger transport further exacerbates the impact of costs.
- 4.4 Reducing the perceived cost barrier to bus usage can increase the attraction of bus use over private cars, which benefits not only congestion but also city air quality and our decarbonisation goals.
- 4.5 The city council, either directly or via the Leicester Buses Partnership, provides a number of initiatives to support ticket pricing, including:
- i Discretionary local enhancements to the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, allowing disabled pass holders free travel before 9:30 should the journey begin in Leicester alongside free train travel between certain stations.
 - ii The Travel Aid scheme, which allows unemployed travellers access to half price fares for two months.
 - iii A variety of flexible ticket options that operate across the Greater Leicester area, which allow for fare capping at day or weekly rates (whatever provides best value) across multiple operators.
 - iv Student and concession ticket options which represent a 75% and 66% reduction when compared to the adult ticket respectively.
- 4.6 The authority has held flexi ticket costs for 2026 and is continuing to investigate options to work with partners to further reduce the premium.
- 4.7 In addition to the above, discounted student ticket schemes are administered by education establishments directly.

5. Benchmarking

- 5.1 It should be noted that there is a significant variance in local bus markets, including areas served, market composition, maturity, and level of concessions which impacts the commercial fare revenue that is set. This has been further complicated by the increase in franchised authorities, and the significant government funding made available to some metropolitan areas that has enabled the introduction of discount fare schemes in some areas.
- 5.2 Benchmarking has been undertaken against the adult flexi day ticket – as a multi-operator day ticket, it is a product commonly found across other networks. Prices are accurate as of website information at the time of publication.

Example	Authority	Cost
1 day Bee Bus	Greater Manchester Combined Authority	£5
nbus (West Midlands)	West Midlands Combined Authority	£5.20

Solo Ticket (Merseyside)	Merseytravel/Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	£5.70
West Yorkshire DaySaver	West Yorkshire Combined Authority	£6
Leicester Flexi	Leicester City Council	£6.30
Derby Spectrum	Derby City Council / East Midlands Combined Authority	£7

5.3 As can be seen, most areas offering lower costs are part of combined authorities or are larger areas that have more opportunity to cross-subsidise bus fares.

6. Example Fare Subsidy Schemes

6.1 Fare subsidy schemes are limited nationally. Officers have specifically looked at targeted fare subsidy schemes in operation – notably the Greater Manchester Our Pass and the Barnsley MiCard.

	Our Pass	MiCard
Eligibility	16-18 year olds	<18s
Eligible Area	Greater Manchester Combined Authority	Barnsley residents
Cohort Size	~69,000	~30,000
Operating Cost	~£15.9m per annum	~£3m per annum

6.2 Similar offers at a different scale are being operated by Transport for London as part of the various Zip Oyster cards and the Scottish government's offer of free bus travel for those under 22.

6.3 In terms of wider value there are no longitudinal studies that provide detail on lasting travel behaviour changes as people move beyond the age thresholds, nor any wider economic or societal benefits.

6.4 The cost of introducing and operating these schemes is very high and they are therefore deployed by national governments, authorities with access to high and relatively secure levels of government funding, or where there is a low level of eligibility and where opportunities for joint or cross funding are available.

7. Opportunities for local schemes

7.1 As noted, the city council currently offers discounted schemes that would be suitable for many young people across the city.

7.2 As part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan, the authority is committed to investigating potential additional options for a targeted fare subsidy scheme, which could for example include:

- i An overall fare subsidy – this would look to uniformly reduce all fares. Given limited available funding, this may not result in a significant enough difference to current bus fares to make them more attractive.

ii A targeted fare subsidy/discount scheme – this would look to specifically reduce the price of one ticket or type of ticket. For example, reducing the flexi family ticket pricing so that groups may travel at a reduced cost.

iii A discount focused primarily on student tickets – this would look to specifically target student tickets, for example introducing a student day ticket that provides a similar level of discount to the student annual ticket.

7.3 More work needs to be done to assess which – if any – of these options would be financially viable, deliver a meaningful outcome, and also not direct funding away from delivery of a reliable and frequent service network. We would welcome input from those present and members of the commission.

7.4 The authority is continuing to work in partnership with bus operators to ensure services in the city provide great value – via new buses, increased reliability, increased punctuality, and supporting the expansion of services to ensure both higher frequency and later hours of operation.

8. Financial, Legal, Equalities, Climate Emergency, and Other Implications

8.1 Financial Implications

The current programme of bus investment is maintained through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) grant, to be replaced by the Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG) from 26/27 onwards. Statutory provision - the English National Concessionary Travel scheme - is funded by the authority. Potential future discount or fare arrangements will need to be affordable within the envelope of the budget and available grant funding.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

Dated: 25 February 2026

8.2 Legal Implications

Conditions of any external funding will need to be complied, where available to the Authority. Where relevant procurement exercises will need to be conducted so as to comply with the Council's policy and legal obligations, specifically in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement Act 2023 and supported by relevant officers. Likewise, any distribution of funds (including the need to match fund) to bus operators will be subject to an agreed Grant Funding Agreement in each case and prior assessment of Subsidy

Control will need to be addressed during the process ensuring the necessary arrangements are in place to ensure all projects are compliant with appropriate regulations for subsidy control ensuring robust due diligence has been undertaken

Signed: Mannah Begum, Principal Lawyer, Commercial Legal

Dated: 23 February 2026

8.3 Equalities Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires us to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, age) and those who do not.

The affordability of transport is closely linked to equality of access to employment, education, health and leisure opportunities. Evidence indicates that transport costs can disproportionately affect people from lower income households, disabled people, younger and older residents, and some ethnic minority communities who are more likely to rely on public transport.

Current and proposed initiatives to improve the affordability of travel, including discounted and concessionary schemes, are expected to have a positive impact by supporting inclusion and reducing financial barriers. Continued investment in walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure also provides low-cost and accessible alternatives which can benefit a wide range of residents, including those with mobility needs.

Any future proposals to introduce or amend fare discount schemes should be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that benefits are applied fairly across protected groups and that no group is unintentionally disadvantaged.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 17 February 2026

8.4 Climate Emergency Implications

Over half of all transport emissions are generated from the use of passenger cars. It is therefore important to support solutions to increase active travel, the use of public transport, and shared mobility where the need to travel is unavoidable.

Reducing the barrier to bus travel that cost can present is an important part of achieving net zero within an acceptable timeframe. As sources of electricity are increasingly low carbon (renewable), increasing the number of bus users, supported by current and future development of electrical infrastructure in terms of increasing electrification of transport, compounds the potential positive impact of increased bus use where users would have otherwise travelled using a private vehicle.

It is also important to note the potential co-benefits of improved public health and wellbeing by reducing congestion and improving city air quality.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37224

Dated: 13 February 2026

8.5 Other Implications

No other implications identified

9. Appendices and Other Papers

None

Adult Education – Pathways to Devolution

Economic Development, Transport and Climate
Emergency (EDTCE) Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 22nd April 2026

Lead officer: Kerry Gray

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Kerry Gray
- Author contact details: Kerry.gray@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

The Leicester Adult Education service have been invited to participate in a DfE programme called the Pathways to Devolution Pilot. The aim of the initiative is to enhance local decision making about provision to address local skills gaps. To achieve this the DfE have decided not to procure national providers of Adult Skills Funded courses in the pilot areas, and from 1st August 2026 they will reallocate that funding to the local authority's Adult Education service to manage as an extension to their existing Adult Skills Funding grant.

This will be an increase of around £1.95M per annum and trebles the existing £950K Adult Skills Fund grant to £2.9M. In year 1 £290K of the funding can be used for preparatory work and capacity building.

This paper sets out the proposed approach to utilise the additional funding and highlights the opportunities and key risks it presents.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- (a) To note the Adult Education service's participation in the pilot
- (b) To consider the proposed approach and make recommendations regarding priorities.

3. Background and options with supporting evidence

3.1 Adult Skills Fund – Pathways to Devolution pilot

The Leicester Adult Education service has been invited to participate in a DfE programme called the Pathways to Devolution Pilot. The aim of the initiative is to enhance local decision making about provision to address local skills gaps. To achieve this the DfE have ceased to procure national providers in the pilot areas, and from 1st August 2026 will reallocate that funding to the local authority's Adult Education service to manage.

The funding will be subject to the existing, [national funding rules](#) and [Ofsted](#) requirements:

- Selected, nationally determined, qualification courses up to Level 3
- for those aged 19+ in non-devolved areas (Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland).
- for those who meet the residency requirements
- Fees and fee remission criteria are nationally determined.
- The flexibilities that are available through full devolution do not apply.
- All courses delivered using this funding will be part of the Leicester City Council Adult Education programme and therefore likely to be inspected in 2028.

- Funding is on a payment by results basis, with any underachievement recovered in the following academic year.

3.2 Nationally procured places

This funding was previously used by the DfE nationally to procure training provision. In the latest full year with data available (2024-25) this was delivered by 40 organisations to Leicester City residents.

No of enrolments in 2024-25	No. of providers	Total enrolments
Fewer than 10	12	43
10-49	14	381
50-99	6	422
100-199	2	238
200-299	4	927
300-399	1	338
400-499	0	
500-599	1	506
Total	40	2885

The smaller providers were mainly delivering generic, online courses and there was a lot of duplication of the same courses. One provider has now closed, and one has been investigated and found not to have complied with DfE funding rules.

3.3 Principles

In 2025, the Assistant Mayor for Jobs and Skills endorsed five overarching principles to underpin Leicester City Council’s Adult Learning and Skills Development programmes. These principles draw together the **UNESCO Learning Cities framework**, the **Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)**, the **Tailored Learning Grant** purposes, and the **Get Leicester Working Plan**. They provide a clear foundation for programme design, delivery, and partnership working.

Principle 1: Empowerment and Inclusion

Ensure all adults have equitable access to learning that empowers individuals, tackles barriers, and promotes social cohesion across diverse communities.

Principle 2: Relevance and responsiveness

Design and commission high-quality adult learning and skills programmes that meet individual, business and community needs and embrace modern technologies.

Principle 3: Collaboration and Partnership

Strengthen cross-sector partnerships between education providers, employers, communities, and government to co-design skills solutions and maximise shared resources.

Principle 4: Lifelong and Life-Wide Learning

Foster a culture of learning at every stage of life — in families, communities, workplaces, and formal education — to build resilience, adaptability, and wellbeing.

Principle 5: Leadership and Sustainability

Demonstrate strong political will, good governance, and effective resource use to embed skills development as a driver of inclusive economic growth, health, and social value.

3.4 Proposed priorities for 2026-28 and alignment with other strategies and existing programmes

The additional grant funding will be used to extend existing, successful provision and develop or commission new provision to meet identified skills gaps. The priorities draw upon the research and analysis completed as part of the [Get LLR Working plan](#), the work of the Chamber of Commerce who have consulted with local employers to develop the [Local Skills Improvement Plan](#) and the development of the [Connect to Work](#) programme which is aiming to address economic inactivity in the region.

Over the next twelve months there will be further significant changes to the employment and skills landscape, including the introduction of the Lifelong Learning entitlement which extends the student loan system to a wider variety of courses and a more modular approach at Level 4 and above.

This funding is for courses at levels up to Level 3 (A Level standard) and therefore the additional provision will focus on developing core, transferable, essential skills and first steps into technical vocational pathways, including Skills Bootcamps.

Places funded through this programme will be prioritised for Leicester city residents, as they will no longer be eligible for nationally procured programmes, however county residents are eligible for any remaining places.

Once the funding allocation is confirmed further work is required to develop a detailed delivery plan, however the type of courses that could be developed include:

Leicester Adult Education – Direct delivery

- Existing over delivery - The grant was cut in 2025-26 and the service is on track to over-achieve the allocation. Funding of over-delivery is at the discretion of the DfE. This delivery (mainly ESOL) will be funded in 2026-27 with an increased allocation.
- Additional Essential Skills provision to meet current unmet demand– ESOL, English, Maths and Digital skills.
- Development of practical construction and craft skills at Bishopdale Adult Learning Hub in Beaumont Leys as part of the Leicester Construction Hub.
- Programmes to extend the Connect to Work and Work Well offer and those who are NEET at age 19 – 25.

Partnership or sub-contracted provision –

- Provision previously subcontracted nationally which has proven, local impact and meets the principles outlined above.
- Additional Essential Skills provision to meet current unmet demand– ESOL, English, Maths and Digital skills.
- Vocational progression opportunities that complement an existing Adult Education or Skills Bootcamp programme e.g. Accountancy L3
- Specialist vocational courses which meet sectoral priorities in the Local Skills Improvement plan and Get LLR working plan.
- Skills to support the Creative Industries aligned to the Council's Creative Industries Strategy
- Programmes to support digital and management skills for efficiency and productivity in the small business, public and VCS sectors.

3.5 Sub-contracting and partnership provision

There are 3 models for delivery of Adult Skills –

- **in house delivery** (LCC directly employ all the staff and manage all aspects of the courses),
- **partnership provision** (LCC directly employ the teaching staff but commission partner organisations to host the courses and recruit the participants),
- **sub-contracted provision** (a third-party training provider recruits learners, hosts and teaches the courses)

It is proposed to use a mixture of these approaches; however, the Adult Education service is not currently approved to be a Lead Provider which sub-contracts its Adult Skills Fund grant. The DfE has indicated that an application would now be considered in the light of this pilot.

There are significant, known risks in subcontracting provision from failure to deliver and poor-quality provision to fraud. The DfE therefore have strict [subcontracting rules](#).

The education rationale for subcontracting must meet one or more of the following aims:

- enhances the opportunities available for learners
- fills gaps in niche or expert provision or provides better access to training facilities
- supports better geographical access for learners
- offers an entry point for disadvantaged groups; or
- gives consideration of the impact on individuals with shared protected characteristics, where there might otherwise be gaps

All partnership or subcontracted provision will be specific, additional activity managed and marketed as part of the LCC Adult Education programme.

All subcontracted provision will be commissioned using the established Skills Bootcamp process.

3.6 Use of the development grant

In year 1, £290K of the funding will be used for preparatory work and capacity building including:

- Data analysis, stakeholder engagement, research and consultation on a Skills Strategy for Leicester City. We will work closely with the chamber of commerce to align this to the LSIP and help them meet their objective of engaging more SMEs and more diverse business perspectives.
- Procurement & Legal costs
- Recruitment, induction and training of a new subcontracting management, quality assurance and administration team members for the Adult Education service.
- Website development and marketing strategy for the expanded programme.

- MIS and data collection systems upgrade to enable management of subcontractors. Report writing to adapt performance management systems to incorporate subcontractors.
- Costs associated with expanding direct delivery – venues, marketing, recruitment of learners, exam registration costs for new qualifications.

3.7 Risks

- Under-delivery and clawback of funds – especially in year 1 when new processes need to be implemented and time frames are tight. In line with the existing Adult Skills Fund grant any funding which has not been earned through delivery of courses in the 2026-27 academic year needs to be accrued as it will need to be paid back in the spring of 2028.
- Quality of subcontracted provision – the provision will be inspected as part of future Adult Education Service Ofsted Inspections.
- Fraud – there is history of fraud within the sub-contracted provision sector and with some of the nationally procured training providers.

3.8 Timeline

April 2026 – confirmation of funding allocation.

May 2026 – revised Accountability Agreement and acceptance of the revised contract.

June 2026 – sub-contracting approval application, stakeholder engagement for partnership delivery. Procurement of subcontracted provision.

Autumn 2026 – delivery can start

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

4.1 Financial implications

The following points need considering:

- We need more detailed costing as the additional grant will need to cover all Council costs, including any additional overheads which will now be incurred e.g. additional IT equipment and support.
- Do we have any draft contract / partnership agreement / memorandum etc? We will need to review these for any financial aspects.
- The income & payment arrangements will need to be reviewed. What is the basis of the income we receive, when will we be paying the providers and under what conditions could we find ourselves repaying?
- There needs to be a bit more of a focus on potential risks which may arise e.g. could we find ourselves expending money which cannot be recovered if there are insufficient learner numbers? What happens if the pilot period ends and we incur redundancy costs for the additional staff which have been recruited?
- Are there VAT implications which could affect LCC partial exemption status? These need further exploration to determine the extent of this - VAT expertise should be sought.
- Is there a requirement by DfE for the sub-contracting arrangements to be internally audited? Due to the fraud risks cited by DfE and grant sub-contracting of teaching

being a new arrangement to Adult Education, this may be worth considering in any case.

Signed: Joel Martin

Dated: 3 March 2026

4.2 Legal implications

Commercial Legal

It is understood the Authority currently receives Adult Skills Funding directly from the Department for Education under its designation as a local authority adult education provider.

This funding is governed by an annual contract, which sets out the terms, conditions, and performance expectations for delivery. As the report suggests the increase will taking the funding to £2.9 million allocation for 2025–2026 will be amalgamated into the Authority's existing annual contract with DfE, with revised delivery expectations and performance measures. Any additional conditions of funding should be reviewed before accepted and appropriate advice sought on this and subsidy control compliance.

The report suggests three models of Adult Skills delivery utilising the DFE funding. In respect of the partnership and sub-contracted provision, the Authority should appoint through a compliant procurement process to deliver the commissioned activity in compliance with the relevant Procurement Legislation and internal Contract Procedure Rules. There is also mention of website development, therefore Procurement teams both Corporate and where relevant ICT Procurement should be engaged too.

Signed: Mannah Begum, Principal Solicitor, Commercial Legal Team

Dated: 24 February 2026

Employment Legal

There are no direct employment legal implications arising from this recommendations sought in this report. However, it is noted that there will to be further report(s) regarding how the provision might be delivered. It is therefore recommended that employment legal advice is sought as to any implications that arise as the proposals develop.

Signed: Julia Slipper, Principal Solicitor (Employment & Education)

Dated: 26 February 2026

4.3 Equalities implications

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.

Decision makers need to be clear about any equalities implications of the proposed changes. In order to consider the likely impact on those likely to be affected by the recommendation and their protected characteristics.

Protected groups under the Equality Act are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Leicester Adult

Education service have been invited to participate in the Pathways to Devolution Pilot. The aim of the initiative is to enhance local decision making about provision to address local skills gaps.

The proposed expansion of ESOL, English, maths, digital skills, construction and employability programmes is likely to benefit people who face barriers in the labour market, including many from minority ethnic communities, recent migrants, disabled people, women returners and young adults who are NEET.

Prioritising Leicester city residents could help reduce local inequalities. A fuller equalities analysis should be completed as the detailed delivery plan is developed, using participation and outcome data and feedback from stakeholders and community organisations. It is important that any planned engagement is accessible.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 25 February 2026

4.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report, however the funding may provide an opportunity to further embed sustainability principles in adult education to further develop green skills pathways, net-zero literacy and strengthen provider readiness for green skills delivery.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

Dated: 24th February 2026

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

N/A

5. Background information and other papers:

6. Summary of appendices:

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

8. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

**Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission (EDTCE)
Work Programme 2025 – 2026**

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
25 June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Introduction to EDTCE. 2) Connecting Leicester programme – Local Transport Grant 3) Bus Service Improvement Plan 4) Local Cycling and Walking infrastructure plan – approach to informal sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1a) Breakdown of running costs of bus stations to be produced for members. 1b) Item on Workspaces Funding (Dock and Canopy) to come to Commission. 2a) Breakdown of costs of work in Rally Park to be shared with members. 2b) Copy of proposal for Aylestone Road to be shared with members 2c) Details of 10 highest priority crossings to be shared with members. 2d) Progress reports to come to the Commission. 4) Informal Scrutiny to be arranged on this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1b) On workplan TBA 2d) On workplan TBA 3) Arranged for 15th July.
27 August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Market Place Verbal Update 2) Update on Leicester and Leicestershire Business Skills Partnership 3) Get Britain Working 4) Workspaces Capital Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Members to be kept updated on progress with the project. 2) Review membership of the Business Board, to check representation from large local employers and businesses of South Asian origin. 	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
5 November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Worker Exploitation – Verbal Update 2) Development Areas in Heart of Leicester Plan 3) Cycle lane demarcation. 4) EV Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Written executive response to come to meeting on 14 Jan. 3a) Issues to be considered around concrete blocks obstructing turning and issues surrounding cyclists avoiding cycle tracks around driveways. 3b) Legal advice to be sought on the requirements for consultation on cycle lane/track instalment under government legislation and report to be produced on this. 3c) To investigate any sign of pedal-impaction concrete blocks and other signs of potential hazards. 4a) Research on the most efficient ways to generate electricity (i.e. at-source or from a power station) to be carried out. 4b) Consideration to be given to offering EV users certain perks to encourage use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) On workplan 3a) Response sent to members 3b) Legal advice sought and response is being awaited. 3c) Response sent to members. 4a) Response sent to members. 4b) Under consideration and will be kept under review.
14 January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Call in - Land exchange to enable regeneration at Midland Street / Southampton Street in the Cultural Quarter 2) Budget 3) Get LLR Working update 4) Worker Exploitation – Executive Response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3a) Information to be provided on grants or funding support available for individuals such as university leavers intending to start businesses. 3b) A further report be brought to Committee clarifying the relationship between initiatives aimed at reducing economic inactivity and trends in unemployment data, to enable the Committee to assess impact before reaching conclusions. 	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
11 March 2026	1) Transport affordability 2) Planning Service Performance Review 3) Connect to Work 4) Worker Exploitation – Executive Response re-visited	1) To include information on affordability for young people.	
22 April 2026	1) Car Park Usage 2) Transport Affordability 3) Adult Skills – Pathways to Devolution	1) To show figures of Council car park usage to ascertain if car park usage has increased or decreased since charges have increased. To include information on on-street parking. 2) Deferred from 11 March.	

Forward Plan items (suggested topics)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Labour Market – Worker Exploitation.		
Textiles Sector		
Growth Strategy Overview		
Get LLR Working update.	To include information on clarifying the relationship between initiatives aimed at reducing economic inactivity and trends in unemployment data, to enable the Committee to assess impact before reaching conclusions.	

Local Transport Funding Progress		
Bio-Diversity Net Gain		
Local Plan Modifications Consultation.	To be briefed to all members following report from inspectors.	
Levelling up - Railway Station update.		
Budget reductions and areas under review	Requested at meeting of 31 st January 2024 when discussing Revenue Budget.	tbc
Market place update		