



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: WEDNESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2024 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Waddington - Chair

Councillor Bajaj

Osman

Councillor Rae Bhatia

Councillor Batool

Councillor Porter

Councillor Singh Sangha

In Attendance

City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby

Assistant City Mayor Councillor Geoff Whittle

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100. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

There were no apologies for absence.

101. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

No declarations were made.

102. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission held on 28 August 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

103. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair reminded the Commission that the last meeting of the informal scrutiny to consider bus lane operating hours would be on 7th November.

104. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

105. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

106. 20 MPH REVIEW - EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

The Chair of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Committee gave a verbal update on the Executive response to the 20 MPH Scrutiny review report.

The Chair provided a verbal update on the response from the Executive as follows:

- The City Mayor had given thanks and said that the Commission, through its informal review group, had clearly developed a good understanding of the issues and had put forward clear proposals.
- It was noted that good progress had been made delivering the bespoke design for different locations across the city and it was agreed that blanket solutions were not appropriate.
- The intention was to move as quickly as possible to full coverage in appropriate streets and areas.
- The executive was happy to accept all recommendations.

The Commission was invited to respond, no comments were given.

AGREED:

That the update be noted.

107. LEICESTER MARKET REDEVELOPMENT

The Director of Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment presented a report providing members of the commission with details of the proposed option for the redevelopment of Leicester market, the rationale behind the proposal and to invite members to comment as part of a consultation period that would run until 9th December 2024.

The City Mayor introduced the item and noted that:

- The Market had been an important space in the City Centre for over 700 years.
- The space over recent decades had been under cover and was seen as inflexible.
- The covered market of the twentieth-century had hidden buildings such as the Corn Exchange and the rears of the buildings on Gallowtree Gate and Cank Street.
- When the latest roof had been taken down for replacement, it had initially been planned to replace it like-for-like. However, once it had been taken down, many people had said that the space was something special. The removal of the roof had enabled views of the Corn Exchange and other architecture and facades at the rear of Gallowtree Gate, which had been retained due to planning intervention when the other side had been developed.
- Initially the following alternatives were considered:
 - Continuing with the original plan to reinstate a market in the whole area in front of the Corn Exchange.
 - Keeping the market on Green Dragon Square – this was seen as not viable as it was too constrained.
 - Constructing a new market space on Cank Street.
 - Discontinuing the market altogether
- Traders had been met with to discuss ways of creating flexible space and also bringing stalls back onto the site. The City Mayor noted trader representatives had proposed a smaller scheme than had been originally designed, with a new market building in front of the existing Food Hall.
- This plan would create around 48 stalls under cover which would be capable of being dismantled for special events, but would also be well covered and a good trading environment. This proposal was now out to consultation.
- The consultation would close on 9th December. It was noted that in the first week since the proposal had been released more than 800 responses were received, with more than half being positive about the proposed option.

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments. Key Points included:

- Concern was raised that there now only appeared to be one option out for consultation.
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) did not seem to be addressed in the plan. It was suggested that Jubilee Square had some of the highest levels of crime in the city.
- A question was asked about how traders had been engaged to have their views taken in to account.

Due to issues in the public gallery, the Chair, explained the process for representations and suggested that a separate meeting be held to discuss the issue.

AGREED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) That a separate meeting be held to allow scrutiny oversight of the issue.

108. HEART OF LEICESTER PLAN

The Director of Planning, Development and Transport submitted a report for the commission to consider issues and opportunities facing the city centre area, both now and over the coming years and contribute their thoughts and ideas to inform the development of a 'Heart of Leicester' Plan.

The City Mayor attended the meeting to assist with the discussion.

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation presented slides (attached) on the Heart of Leicester Plan. Key points to note were:

- This was a promotional tool, to attract avenues of investment hopefully including both the private and voluntary sectors and also potentially to secure government grants.
- The plan had been developed to consider three key areas; these being:
 1. The City Centre as a neighbourhood
 2. The City Centre as an accessible hub for work, shopping and leisure
 3. The City Centre as a thriving and well connected regional centre
- There were seven potential themes to focus on to be seen as an eco-system working together.

There had been many changes to Leicester over the past few years. The following factors were noted:

- Leicester's retail environment had altered significantly over the past few years. Some shoppers had moved to outer city areas such as Fosse Park and there had been a substantial growth in online purchasing. However, there had been a positive net gain of around 40 units within the City Centre. St Martin's now had a full occupancy of retail units. The new changes to the Market Place were also a key feature and there had been a significant investment to the Highcross Shopping Centre.
- The impact of Covid had been substantial with less office workers coming into the city centre now.
- Positive changes to the city centre had included, pedestrianisation, tree planting and the creation of the Richard III visitor centre.
- The public realm had received substantial investments. Jubilee Square for example had been converted from a carpark into a public open space.
- There were around three hundred events annually including Riverside and Pride.
- There has been investment around facilities at Leicester Tigers Rugby Ground and there has been planning permission for expansion at Leicester City Football Club.
- In terms of transportation, there was a heavy investment in buses, around 50% of which are now electric. The cycleways have also been developed significantly.

Upcoming change was examined as follows:

- There were around 45,000 students in Leicester, many of which were accommodated in the City Centre. There was a need to explore how to unlock further potential for the students to utilise city centre facilities.
- There were substantial changes coming to The Jewry Wall Centre and Leicester Cathedral with the Heritage and Learning Centre. There are around ten million visitors to the city. Five new hotels have been created with around six hundred new beds.
- Future developments for Leicester included developing brownfield sites into residential areas for some 6,000 new homes.
- A significant new development was coming to the railway station.
- Work would need to take place with the police surrounding risks posed by delivery cyclists. It was noted that engagement with operators had been problematic.
- Work was ongoing with Housing, Social Care and the Police in relation to street lifestyles.

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments. Key Points included:

- Points were raised about the branding of the areas of the city, noting that some areas of the city were older than the 'Old Town' which perhaps should be known as 'Greyfriars'.
- In response to issues raised about delivery bikes, it was noted that this was not an issue unique to Leicester, and therefore solutions were being explored, largely around the powers of the police and their ability to prioritise. It was a national issue that required regulation. Operators needed to be regulated and firms needed to apply regulation to the delivery riders and their bikes.
- In response to points made about housing in the city centre it was explained that a balance as needed. Houses needed to be built to avoid people having to travel long distances for work. Additionally, national space standards needed to be adhered to.
- In response to queries about how students, including international students, could be better engaged to make use of the city centre, it was acknowledged that students needed a good welcome to encourage them to use the city extensively, wherever they were from. The two Universities provided information packs, but it was also acknowledged that the universities could be worked with to draw students into the city centre. This could include the provision of workspaces in places such as cafes with welcoming staff. Collaborative action could connect students.
- Responding to a query about employment opportunities it was noted that it was not that people did not want to set up offices in the city centre, but rather that people did not want to invest in them. However, it was also noted that there was a strong commercial demand that was shown by the places that had been built with Government funding and the fact that these places had filled up quickly. It was an issue of the private sector being able to fund these developments commercially.
- In response to points made regarding play space for children in the city centre, it was recognised that finding play space could be challenging. Attention was drawn to the play area on Jubilee Square and it was suggested that the new market plan could possibly accommodate play space.
- Issues surrounding making good paving on Marble Street following utility works would be picked up by officers.
- With regard to school provision in the City Centre, it was noted that provision included four schools in the city centre and education colleagues were looking at sites to accommodate a special school.
- The importance of the night time economy was raised as part of what the city offers.
- It was suggested that the possibility of installing double-bike stands could be explored and delivery riders could be encouraged to make use of them. It was noted that there were funds to install secure bike stands including those provided now at St Margaret's Bus Station.

- In response to concerns raised about parking provision in the city, Councillors were assured that parking was adequate and there was in fact a surplus of parking spaces in the city centre. The NCP-owned car parks needed some improvement work.
- In response to points made about the need to incentivise businesses in the city it was noted that there was a small business rate relief, and additionally there were offers surrounding security measures and greening initiatives.
- It was stressed that masterplans needed to be manageable in scale and deliverable. The Waterside development had been a good example of this. The Old Town had also had a masterplan that had seen buildings brought back into use. Moving forward there was an arc of development opportunity that could include areas such as the former Matalan on Church Gate and the former Liquid Nightclub. Masterplans were made where appropriate. In terms of development opportunities around Lee Circle, it was acknowledged that many areas could benefit from development. Fleet House was near completion and Homes England had been approached to discuss grant monies.
- The importance of running costs was stressed as what was built would need to be maintained. This could be helped through the choice of materials, using durable materials such as porphyry and easily replaceable materials.
- The footprint of Leicester Royal Infirmary was acknowledged in terms of the numbers of workers and visitors. The hospital would feature in plans.
- The plan was intended to be promotional in nature to encourage investment in the city, sitting beside statutory plans. The plan would be updated periodically and available on the website to invite comment on an ongoing basis.
- The City Mayor stressed the need to acknowledge comments from members that may not fit in with the plan as these were issues that needed to be addressed.
- Progress was being made on the Granby Street works. The main works were aimed to be complete by the time the Christmas Market began, but works would return in the new year on the Dover Street entrance.

AGREED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) That a report be brought to the Commission on City Centre Maintenance, to include delivery bike regulation and issues around development and the areas that need it.

Councillor Porter left the meeting during the discussion of this item.

109. 24 HOUR BUS LANES - SCRUTINY REVIEW - VERBAL UPDATE

The Chair gave an update on the Scrutiny Commission's ongoing scrutiny review of 24 Hour Bus Lanes.

Key Points included:

- Having scoped out the issue, group members heard evidence from bus operators First and Arriva, and also received written representations from Kinchbus and Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire.
- Following this, some recommendations were drafted and considered at a third meeting on 7th October.
- Following this, it was requested that any further recommendations be sent to Senior Governance Officer by 25 October ahead of the final meeting to agree recommendations.
- This final meeting would take place on 7th November at 16:00.

AGREED:

That the update be noted.

110. WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

111. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other items of urgent business, the meeting closed at 7:28pm.



EDTCE 6th November 2024

Heart of Leicester Plan

Andrew Smith

Director Planning, Development and Transportation





IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON UK RETAIL

And the shift towards online





**A TEN
YEAR
PLAN.**



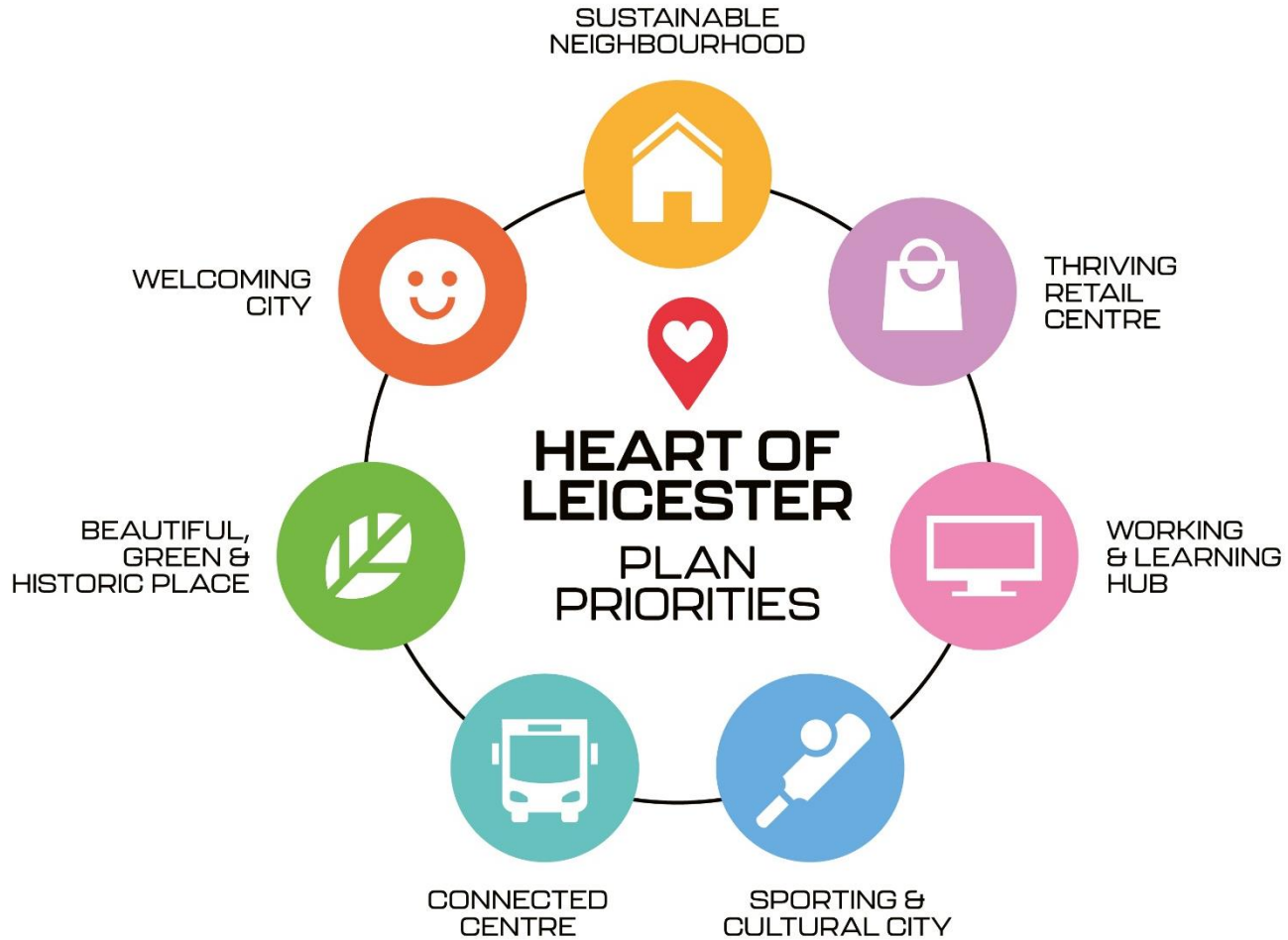
Heart of Leicester 10 Year Vision

An exciting new
neighbourhood
and place to live
and work

An accessible hub
for work, shopping
and leisure **for**
everyone in the city

A thriving and well
connected
regional centre

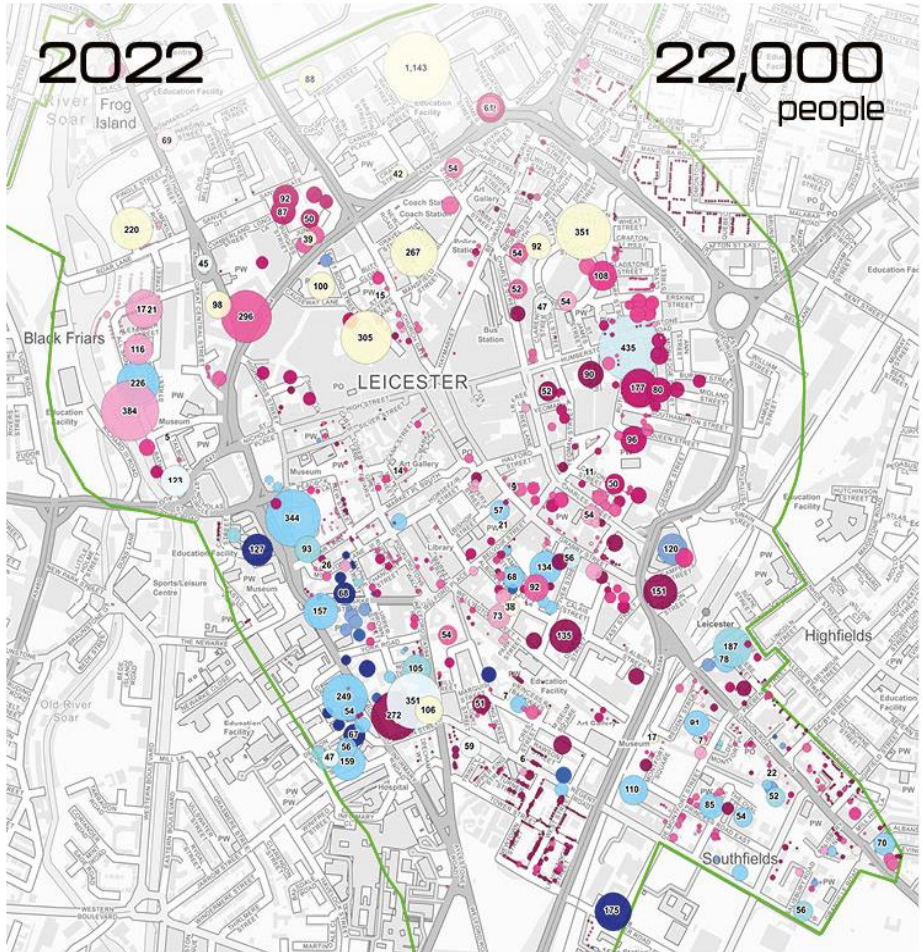
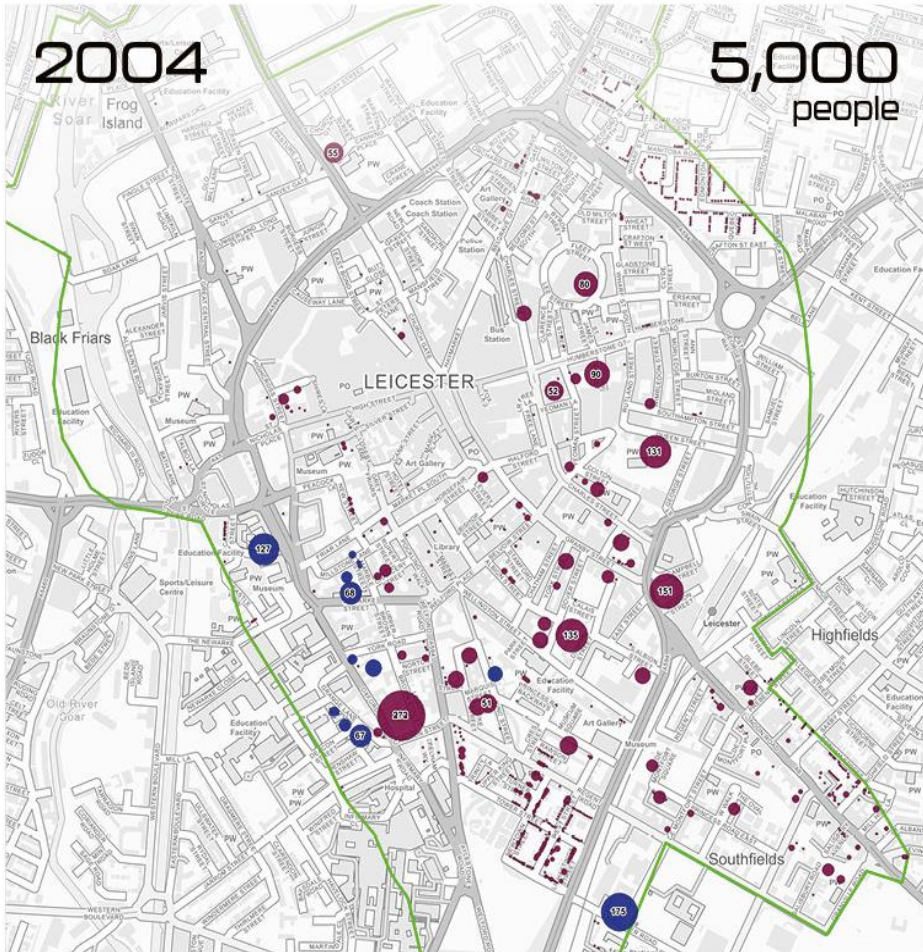




Sustainable Neighbourhood



Diagram showing growth in new development activity and proposals 2004-2022



Waterside area 10 years ago





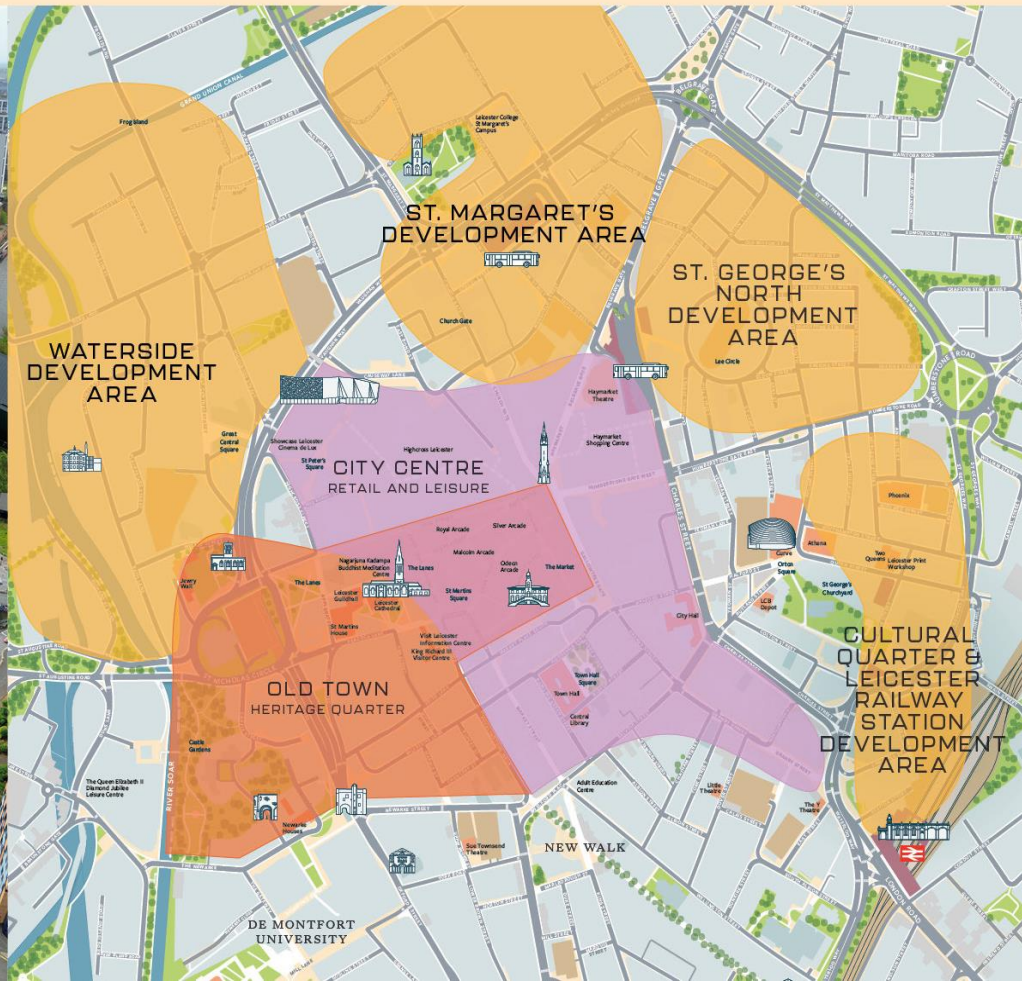


All Saints Rd





An aerial photograph of the Waterside area in Manchester. The River Mersey flows through the center, with a bridge crossing it. Modern residential buildings are visible on the left bank, and older brick buildings are on the right. The text 'Waterside' is overlaid on the right side of the image.



- Arc of housing development opportunity to north of city centre
- c6,000 new homes built on brownfield land by mid 2030s
- A central neighbourhood of c30,000 people



Working and
Learning Hub









Thriving Retail
Centre







Sporting & Cultural City









Connected Centre









Beautiful,
Green and
Historic Place









Willi Canes

Summer

King's St



1114

KØBEN
ESPRESSO BAR

KØBEN
ESPRESSO BAR

MONMOUTH
LIFE

dough

NOW OPEN
NEAPOLITAN
PIZZA

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leicester



High Street: 1978 - 2024



Welcoming City





A TEN YEAR PLAN.

leicester.gov.uk/heartofleicester

