



Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 9 JULY 2025

TIME: 5:30 pm

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

Members of the Committee

Councillors Batool, Dave, Joel, Kitterick, March, O'Neill, Osman, Pickering, Porter, Rae Bhatia, Waddington and Zaman

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

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Julie Bryant and Ed Brown (Governance Services),
E-mail: edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk
Leicester City Council, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Information for members of the public

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- ✓ to ensure that the sound on any device is fully muted and intrusive lighting avoided;
- ✓ where filming, to only focus on those people actively participating in the meeting;
- ✓ where filming, to (via the Chair of the meeting) ensure that those present are aware that they may be filmed and respect any requests to not be filmed.

Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact:
Julie Bryant (julie.bryant@leicester.gov.uk) and **Ed Brown** (edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk)

For Press Enquiries - please phone the **Communications Unit on 0116 454 4151**.

PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

NOTE:

This meeting will be webcast live at the following link:-

<http://www.leicester.public-i.tv>

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<http://www.leicester.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcasts>

FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION

If the emergency alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building immediately by the nearest available fire exit and proceed to the area outside the Ramada Encore Hotel on Charles Street as directed by Democratic Services staff. Further instructions will then be given.

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.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

[Appendix A](#)

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview Select Committee held on Thursday 1st May 2025 have been circulated, and Members will be asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE 2025/26

Members will be asked to note the membership of the committee for 2025/26 as follows:

CHAIR	Councillor Ashiedu Joel
	Councillor Melissa March
	Councillor Misbah Batool

	Councillor Sue Waddington
	Councillor Karen Pickering
	Councillor Syed Zaman
	Councillor Molly O'Neill
	Councillor Hemant Rae Bhatia
	Councillor Abdul Osman
	Councillor Bhupen Dave
	Councillor Patrick Kitterick
	Councillor Nigel Porter

5. DATES OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE 2025/26

Members will be asked to note the meeting dates of the committee for 2025/26 as follows:

9 July 2025
24 September 2025
3 December 2025
28 January 2026
18 March 2026
29 April 2026

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Appendix B

The Committee will be asked to note the Terms of Reference.

7. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATION AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

Dr Patel asks:

As a member of the public, I would want to engage with the democratic process as much as I possibly can. However, the current policy requires the public questions to be submitted five working days before a scrutiny meeting. However, the agenda for the meeting is also only published five working days in advance. This means members of the public have no way of knowing whether their questions will be relevant to the agenda.

Will the Overview Scrutiny Commission consider reviewing this process to improve meaningful public engagement and allow questions to be submitted after the agenda is published?

Possible solutions -

1. Change deadline for questions to be submitted 4 working days prior to committee.

or

2. Publish a provisional agenda front sheet earlier. Provide a draft or indicative agenda 10 working days before the meeting. Mark it clearly as "subject to change".

8. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

9. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer to report on any petitions received.

10. TRACKING OF PETITIONS - MONITORING REPORT [Appendix C](#)

The Monitoring Officer submits a report that updates Members on the monitoring of outstanding petitions. The Committee is asked to note the current outstanding petitions and agree to remove those petitions marked 'Petitions Process Complete' from the report.

11. QUESTIONS FOR THE CITY MAYOR

The City Mayor will answer questions raised by members of the Overview Select Committee on issues not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

12. CUSTOMER SERVICES - PERFORMANCE REPORT [Appendix D](#) 24/25

The Director of Corporate Services submits a report providing an overview reminder of the corporate customer service arrangements we have in place, update on the performance of the customer contact centre, and update on some of the improvements that have been made to the operational arrangements during the last 12+ months, particularly to the Customer Service Line operations.

13. OVERVIEW OF THE REVENUES & BENEFITS SERVICE [Appendix E](#)

The Director of Finance submits a report providing the Overview Select Committee with an overview of the Revenues and Benefits Service, summarising its performance, impact, and strategic direction.

14. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING OUTTURN 2024/25 [Appendix F](#)

The Director of Finance submits the final report in the monitoring cycle for 2024/25 and reports performance against budget for the year.

15. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING OUTTURN 2024/25 [Appendix G](#)

The Director of Finance presents a report giving the final position of the capital programme for 2024/25.

16. INCOME COLLECTION OUTTURN 2024/25

[Appendix H](#)

The Director of Finance submits a report detailing progress made in collecting debts raised by the Council during the year 2024-25 together with debts outstanding and brought forward from the previous year. It also sets out details of debts written off under delegated authority that have not been possible to collect at reasonable effort and expense.

17. REVIEW OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES 2024/25

[Appendix I](#)

The Director of Finance submits a report reviewing how the Council conducted its borrowing and investments during 2024/25.

18. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

[Appendix J](#)

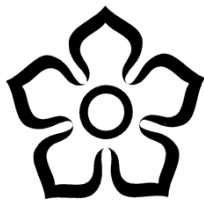
The City Barrister and Head of Standards submits a report providing a summary of the Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25.

19. OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

[Appendix K](#)

The current work programme for the Committee is attached. The Committee is asked to consider this and make comments and/or amendments as it considers necessary.

20. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

Held: THURSDAY, 1 MAY 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Cassidy - Chair

Councillor Adata
Councillor March
Councillor O'Neill
Councillor Porter

Councillor Batool
Councillor Mohammed
Councillor Osman
Councillor Sahu

* * * * *

117. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Kitterick - Cllr Sahu substituted.
Apologies received from Cllr Waddington

Cllr Pickering was present online

118. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to disclose any pecuniary or other interests they may have in the business on the agenda, none were declared.
agenda.

119. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19th March 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

It was noted that Cllr Westley was erroneously noted as the substitute for Cllr Osman under the Apologies item. The substitute was Cllr Singh Patel (as correctly noted in the meeting attendance).

120. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair asked members to note that a session of informal scrutiny on

workforce representation would take place on the 14th May at 5pm.

The Adventure Playgrounds Task Group was also noted.

121. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATION AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations and statements of case had been submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

122. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

123. TRACKING OF PETITIONS - MONITORING REPORT

Three petitions were marked as red:

Further update on Peebles Way petition:

For speed control measures/traffic calming, this had been mostly solved by inclusion in the 20mph programme, but the response was with Cllr Whittle.

Further update on the Oakland Avenue petition:

A site meeting had been scheduled with Cllr Dave and the Rushey Mead Ward Cllrs for the 9th May with officers that will formalise the response.

Items of relevance to both petitions went to EDTCE on 23rd April, so we will be in a position to close out one (Peebles Way) shortly.

Basketball Courts on Victoria Park

A pro-forma had been produced:

The proposed action was to support the petition request with the following response:

Developer contributions have been secured specifically for the purpose of providing a new full-sized basketball court on Victoria Park.

Detailed design proposals for the new court have been prepared and a planning application for this will be submitted in May.

The new court will be constructed a part of the wider MUGA investment programme scheduled to be completed by the end of December 2025.

Investigations will be undertaken to identify if additional maintenance works are required to address the concerns raised about insufficient traction provided by

the playing surface on the existing half-sized basketball court.

AGREED:

That members note the status of the petitions.

124. QUESTIONS FOR THE CITY MAYOR

Youth Council Representative Mario Duda asked:

What is the City Council doing to improve social life for young people, especially teenagers because there has been a growing interest in including more investment in venues, bars and creating a safe night life in the city centre as there are a lot of coffee shops and corner shops, but not enough places that actually attract young people. With places like Fosse Park growing, how are we making the city centre more appealing and competitive?

The City Mayor responded:

- There were many positive amenities available to young people, but there was room for improvement.
- There was a national issue whereby financial cut-backs had resulted in a reduced youth service offer.
- Across the city, facilities such as the multi-use games areas and basketball courts were available, but budgets meant that staffing might not be available.
- Within the city centre, activities such as bowling, axe throwing and e-games were on offer.
- The recent Roman event had attracted a range of ages.
- The new skateboard park was almost in completion.
- Looking ahead, it was hoped that a youth-service could be reinstated at some point.

Youth Council Representative Mario Duda asked:

What specific plans are in place to protect and enhance green spaces in Leicester, and how will these efforts contribute to improving the overall quality and sustainability of the city centre?

The City Mayor responded:

- Leicester benefited from previous investments to the city parks, including Victoria Park, the East and Western parks and a series of smaller parks across the city.
- Previous waste lands had been converted into nature reserves, such as Aylestone Meadows and Watermead Park.
- Further opportunities to create green space would be explored.

- FA charity money had enabled the creation of high quality football pitches, some of which were 3G.

125. INDEPENDENT CARE HOMES IN LEICESTER CITY

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education provided an overview of the report. Key points to note were as follows:

- The report had been requested due to the number of planning applications received, particularly in relation to children's residential homes.
- The Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted had declined invites to attend the Scrutiny meeting.
- Of recent applications, the majority were submitted by companies or private individuals recently presenting as agents for children's care homes. Steps were in place to delve further to ensure risk assessment was in place and to manage any likely anti-social behaviour for prospective neighbourhoods.
- There were some current planning submissions for extensions to existing homes for the elderly or those with disabilities.
- Any questions that couldn't be answered by the executive could be forwarded to the DfE and Ofsted on behalf of the scrutiny commission.

The Chair welcomed questions and comments from members. Key points were as follows:

- The report had come to OSC, rather than to the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Scrutiny Commission, due to the wider ramifications.
- Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) had declined to attend the meeting, citing the overwhelming number of requests received from Local Authorities. Concerns regarding the DfE could be forwarded to the Secretary of state and any complaints regarding the CQC could be submitted via their complaints process.
- Matters concerning area saturation were of consideration. Under safeguarding ruling, Ofsted did not release information on the location of children's care homes. Details could be ascertained via the planning department to monitor saturation levels.
- The regulation and inspection of care homes came under the Ofsted remit. Work was underway to allow for further examination of practice within unregistered homes by the local authority.
- There was a combination of situations for children being placed within city carehomes. Those from Leicester would have a careplan delivered by a Leicester City Council Social Worker. Those placed within the city by another Local Authority (LA) were supported by the placing authority. Any concerns raised would be flagged to the LA or regulating bodies appropriately. Concerns often originated via community intelligence.
- Some LA planning committees granted permissions for limited time

periods which meant there was an inbuilt opportunity to review performance.

- Further analysis could take place to map the location of all children homed within the authority. This could be achieved through collaboration with Planning Colleagues and via in-depth data analysis.
- Multi-agency working with, for example the CQC and NHS, could be explored further, where there were individual issues within care homes.
- Strategies were in place to prevent profiteering, anticipated updates from central government were welcomed.
- Planning colleagues were looking into developing guidance on applications in line with commentary from Adult Social Care, and also around saturation levels.
- Upon reaching the age of 18, looked after children placed in Leicester by other LA's, usually remained under the responsibility of the placing authority. However, they may develop housing rights within the placed area. Many of these young people would have been unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- Planning colleagues were welcomed to come to scrutiny to clarify points raised.
- The most recent children's scrutiny report on placement costs would be circulated. Councillor Batool proposed that the Planning Department findings could come back to OSC scrutiny in 3 month's time, Councillor March Seconded this and members voted in favour of this proposition.
- A time limit on the change would mean that the planning consent would need renewal and reconsideration after a period when issues such as parking and anti-social behaviour have been better assessed

Recommendations:

- Planning look at the pattern of applications for these smaller care homes to try get a fuller picture.
- Officers to ensure mapping is done to know where children outside the care of LCC are being placed.

AGREED:

- That the report be noted.
- Assurances to be given to OSC that analysis of data as to where children are placed is being compiled and captured
- That the Planning Department come back to OSC in 3 month's time with details on the above points raised in the discussion.

Councillor Porter left during the consideration of this item.

126. CORPORATE ESTATE ANNUAL REPORT

The City Mayor gave a brief introduction to the item, noting the following:

- The corporate estate was a long-established element of the land and property portfolio that was not held for specific operational purposes. Specifics had been established under the local parliamentary act of 1956 and were incorporated from the 1971 local government act.
- The capital portfolio was now worth over £100m which brought in significant revenue.
- Continued reinvestments were required for maintenance and procurement purposes.
- Previously, annual reports were produced, with this was no longer being the case, it was deemed appropriate to bring a report to formal scrutiny.
- The Corporate Estate had enabled the development of Beaumont Leys and Hamilton.

The Director of Estates & Building Services provided an overview of the report. Key points to note were as follows:

- Yields had improved year on year, and results compared favourably against the national benchmark.
- Acquisitions such as The Haymarket Shopping Centre and The Heathers Industrial Estate had significantly increased the value of the portfolio.
- The industrial sector continued to be the largest in terms of both area and value.
- Occupancy of the estate was at around 95%.
- There were challenges with city retail sites, but returns had remained high.
- Running costs had been heavily impacted by inflation in 2023-24, made worse by the energy bill increases.
- Gross income had increased to £11.27m. This was attributed largely due to performance at the Haymarket Shopping Centre and a structured lease review.
- Rents were moving in line with the market.
- Several assets had been repurposed such as the previous council office space at Phoenix House which was now let to external providers.
- The estate totalled 1.5% of council revenue.
- Debt had reduced dramatically and would continue to be tackled.
- The next annual report was upcoming.

The Chair welcomed questions from members. Key points to note were:

- Cost savings would always present a challenge. The aim was to grow the portfolio mindfully, with an emphasis on sustainability.
- In terms of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG), there were nuances due to all of the different sectors covered.
- When letting properties, it was vital to consider whether it would be suitable for the area and community.
- The service charge rate was not flat; instead, service charges in multi-let buildings reflected the costs specific to each building.

- Portfolio administration fees were considerably high. A new computer system had been invested in which would improve the day to day running.
- Asset performance was monitored, disinvestments occurred when appropriate.
- Ownership of The Haymarket Shopping Centre meant that there was no longer a lease payment for the carpark and that revenue now came to the Local Authority. Also, leases were not required for the Sexual Health Centre and Haymarket Theatre.
- The Haymarket Shopping Centre was about 20% vacant. Community use had been popular.
- There were promising prospects for the City Centre with Loseby lane, vacant units were not expected to remain so for long.
- A breakdown of occupancy figures by area could be provided.
- Historically, key retail areas such as Beaumont Leys Shopping area, the Hamilton Shops and the St Martins shopping area had been possible due to the acquisition of the land.
- When considering lettings, security was sought, this could be in the form of a parent company or director guarantee.
- Cost cutting opportunities were a key consideration, the recovery of service charges was vital and capital bids to invest in the portfolio were made to reduce asset running costs.
- Figures for portfolio sites could be provided annually.

AGREED:

- That the report be noted.
- Examples of marketing strategies would be provided.
- A breakdown of occupancy figures by area be provided.
- Figures for portfolio sites be provided annually.

127. OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

It was noted that it was the final meeting of the municipal year. Members and Officers were thanked for their contributions.

AGREED:

- That the Forward Plan be noted.
- That members make suggestions and suggestions for items to be considered in the new municipal year.
- An item on planning issues for Children's Residential Homes come to scrutiny in 3 month's time.

128. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

No other business was discussed and therefore the meeting ended at 19:42

SCRUTINY COMMITTEES: TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

Scrutiny Committees hold the Executive and partners to account by reviewing and scrutinising policy and practices. Scrutiny Committees will have regard to the Political Conventions and the Scrutiny Operating Protocols and Handbook in fulfilling their work.

The Overview Select Committee and each Scrutiny Commission will perform the role as set out in Article 8 of the Constitution in relation to the functions set out in its Terms of Reference.

Scrutiny Committees may:

- i. review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the City Mayor, Executive, Committees and Council officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time.
- ii. develop policy, generate ideas, review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas.
- iii. question the City Mayor, members of the Executive, committees and Directors about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to their initiatives or projects.
- iv. make recommendations to the City Mayor, Executive, committees and the Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process.
- v. review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Scrutiny Committee and local people about their activities and performance; and
- vi. question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent). •

Annual report: The Overview Select Committee will report annually to Full Council on its work and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate. Scrutiny Commissions / committees will report from time to time as appropriate to Council.

The Scrutiny Committees which have currently been established by the Council in accordance with Article 8 of the Constitution are:

- Overview Select Committee (OSC)
- Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission
- Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission (which also sits as the statutory Education Committee)

- Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission
- Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission
- Housing Scrutiny Commission
- Public Health and Health Integration Scrutiny Commission

The key work areas covered by each Scrutiny Commission are to be found here <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/decisions-meetings-and-minutes/overviewand-scrutiny>

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

The Overview Select Committee **will**:

- Scrutinise the work of the City Mayor and Deputy City Mayors and areas of the Council's work overseen by them.
- Consider cross cutting issues such as monitoring of petitions
- Consider cross-cutting issues which span across Executive portfolios.
- Manage the work of Scrutiny Commissions where the proposed work is considered to have impact on more than one portfolio.
- Consider work which would normally be considered by a Scrutiny Commission but cannot be considered in time due to scheduling issues.
- Report annually to Council.
- Be responsible for overseeing the work of scrutiny and the commissions and to refer certain matters to particular commissions as appropriate.

SCRUTINY COMMISSIONS

Scrutiny Commissions **will**:

- Normally undertake overview of Executive work, reviewing items for Executive decision where it chooses.
- Engage in policy development within its remit.
- Normally be attended by the relevant Executive Member(s), who will be a standing invitee.
- Have their own work programme and may make recommendations to the Executive on work areas where appropriate.
- Consider requests by the Executive to carry forward items of work and report to the Executive as appropriate.
- Report on their work to Council from time to time as required.
- Be classed as specific Scrutiny Committees in terms of legislation but will refer cross cutting work to the OSC.

Tracking of Petitions – Monitoring Report

Overview Select Committee

Date of meeting: 9th July 2025

Lead officer: Jessica Skidmore

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All Wards – Corporate Issue
- Report author: Jessica Skidmore
- Author contact details: Jessica.Skidmore@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Purpose of the Report

To provide Members with an update on the current status of responses to petitions against the Council's target of providing a formal response within 3 months of being referred to the Divisional Director.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the current status of outstanding petitions and to agree to remove those petitions marked 'Petition Process Complete' from the report.

3. Detailed report

The Committee is responsible for monitoring the progress and outcomes of petitions received within the Council. An Exception Report, showing those petitions currently outstanding or for consideration at the current Overview Select Committee meeting is attached.

The Exception Report contains comments on the current progress on each of the petitions. The following colour scheme approved by the Committee is used to highlight progress and the report has now been re-arranged to list the petitions in their colour groups for ease of reference:

- **Red** – denotes those petitions for which a pro-forma has not been completed within three months of being referred to the Divisional Director.
- **Petition Process Complete** - denotes petitions for which a response pro-forma has sent to the relevant Scrutiny Commission Chair for comment, subsequently endorsed by the Lead Executive Member and the Lead Petitioner and Ward Members informed of the response to the petition.
- **Green** – denotes petitions for which officers have proposed a recommendation in response to a petition, and a response pro-forma has been sent to the relevant Scrutiny Commission Chair for comment, before being endorsed by the Lead Executive Member.
- **Amber** – denotes petitions which are progressing within the prescribed timescales, or have provided clear reasoning for why the three-month deadline for completing the response pro-forma has elapsed.

In addition, all Divisional Directors have been asked to ensure that details of **all** petitions received direct into the Council (not just those formally accepted via a Council Meeting or

similar) are passed to the Monitoring Officer for logging and inclusion on this monitoring schedule.

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

There are no legal, financial or other implications arising from this report.

7. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

The Council's current overall internal process for responding to petitions.

8. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Table of Current petitions.

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

No

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

No

Date Petition referred to Divisional Director	Received From	Subject	Type - Cncr (C) Publi c (P)	No. of Sig	Ward	Lead Divisional Director	Current Position	Current Status
11/04/2024	Cllr Dave	Peebles Way	(c)	45	Rushey Mead	Sean Atterbury	<i>Petition is in the last stages of being finalised and would be sent out for sign off in due course.</i> Petition has been chased and is awaiting update.	RED
17/06/2024	Marcia Stewart	Oakland Avenue	(p)	137	Rushey Mead	Andrew L Smith	<i>A meeting is due with Cllr Dave prior to being presented to Executive Lead Member, Cllr Whittle. It is expected to be finalised by the end of April 2025.</i> Petition has been chased and is awaiting update.	RED
06/12/2024	Lucas Mouat	Renovate Basketball Court in Victoria Park	(P)	21	Castle	Sean Atterbury	Petition pro-forma has been issued to the Scrutiny Chair for comment and sign off.	AMBER
05/03/2025	Viren Desai	Residential Parking on Doncaster Road	(p)	124	Belgrave	Andrew L Smith	Petition has been finalised and the final response has been issued to the Lead Petitioner	COMPLETE



07/04/2025	Shabir Sheikh	Objection to Proposed Residential Parking in Stoneygate	(p)	171	Stoneygate	Andrew L Smith	Petition pro-forma has been issued to the Scrutiny Chair for comment and sign off.	GREEN
30/04/2025	Cllr Singh Patel	Road Humps on Rosedale Avenue	(c)	34	Rushey Mead	Andrew L Smith	Petition has been sent to Lead Director	GREEN
25/06/2025	Mr / Mrs Jadeja	Parking Issues on Melton Road	(p)	10	Rushey Mead	Andrew L Smith	Petition sent to lead Director	GREEN
25/06/2025	Lezley Finch	New Residential Parking Scheme in South Highfields Zone E	(p)	79	Stoneygate	Andrew L Smith	Petition sent to lead Director	GREEN

Overview Select Committee

Customer Services – Performance Report 24/25

Date of meeting: 9th July 2025

Lead officer: Andrew Shilliam, Director of Corporate
Services

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All Wards
- Report author: Andrew Shilliam, Director of Corporate Services
- Author contact details: 0116 454 0131 / andrew.shilliam@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: V1

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Council continues to operate a multi-channel corporate customer services function, with people able to make contact face-to-face, by phone, by email/webform, and through an increasingly comprehensive digital offering made available by other Council services.
- 1.2. This report provides an overview reminder of the corporate customer service arrangements we have in place, update on the performance of the customer contact centre, and update on some of the improvements that have been made to the operational arrangements during the last 12+ months, particularly to the Customer Service Line operations.

2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny

- 2.1. To note the 24/25 performance of the customer contact centre.
- 2.2. To note and comment on the improvements made to the operational arrangements.
- 2.3. To make any recommendations for further action and/or consideration regarding the customer services offer at the Council.

3. Supporting Information

- 3.1. The Council continues to operate a multi-channel Customer Service provision which enables citizens of Leicester to contact the Council by telephone, in person at the Customer Service Centre, and through numerous online platforms for those who want and can self-serve.
- 3.2. Providing citizens or customers with an open and accessible front door to services offered by public and private sector organisations continues to be an important opportunity to engage positively.

National Trends in Customer Contact

- 3.3. When considering how we perform and some of the changes taking place in our own contact centre environment specifically, it's useful to understand the wider context when it comes to providing customer contact services. The following few paragraphs outline some of the current challenges and trends when it comes to this provision.
- 3.4. Despite the increasing prevalence of digital channels and self-service, the preference for phone contact as the first port of call, particularly for complex and urgent matters, isn't going away. This preference, combined with the cost of phone

interactions being higher than digital and self-serve channels, means that we need to consider what we can do to make phone contact more effective.

- 3.5. Call recording continues to be one of the most widely used contact centre technologies, with many organisations regularly exploring improvements to their call recording solutions. These include real time and post call speech and sentiment analytics capabilities (classed as interaction analytics) to improve the quality assurance arrangements and the effectiveness of overall call handling. Public sector contact centre operations lag other sectors when it comes to the use of interaction analytics.
- 3.6. Many contact centre operations have compliance orientated teams who undertake call monitoring and analysis duties, and to look for identifiable business or service improvements and failure demand information.
- 3.7. One of the greatest challenges to managing performance and quality continues to be not having sufficient time to analyse and use call data and information, and therefore a greater level of automated analysis and insights would enable targeted and more productive quality and performance interventions.
- 3.8. The longer-term view of customer contact is one of a polarised arrangement that sees citizens choosing to use websites or self-serve mobile orientated apps for every day, mundane, and more straightforward tasks and enquiries, leaving contact centres to deal with interactions that are more complex or emotive for citizens. It's recognised also that there will be a demographic for whom contact centres will continue to be their channel of choice.
- 3.9. The use of voice Bot technology is increasingly appealing to contact centre providers. These applications are a combination of Artificial Intelligence and a natural language understanding model, and convert speech to text, analyse it, and respond accordingly using text-to-speech. These applications require training, and large volumes of appropriate and clean data from which to learn.
- 3.10. Although many contact centres still operate as single sites, commercial pressures and technical advancements have provided opportunities for organisations to work in alternative ways. The use of wholly virtual contact centres contact has become more normal, often because homeworking has been fully harnessed.
- 3.11. That said, it remains much more typical for public sector organisations to operate in-person contact centres. That said, making use of a hybrid arrangement is well used feature of these in-person contact centres.
- 3.12. Multi-channel contact centres are increasingly common, where inbound contact is made possible by webchat, mobile messaging, phone, social media, email, phone self-service, and letter. In ascending order, phone – live agent, email, and webchat represent the most significantly used channels of contact into organisations.

Operational changes to LCC Customer Service arrangements

- 3.13. Since 23/24, the service has made several changes to the staffing structure and the operational arrangements to improve the standards and efficiency of our customer service provision.
- 3.14. After several years of temporary arrangements, the Customer Service Manager role has been permanently recruited to. Doing so has removed a reliance on interim arrangements and means that a dedicated operational resource is now in place that ensures day-to-day service delivery is maintained.
- 3.15. Other changes at the Customer Service Team Leader level have allowed us to recruit two Team Leaders with customer service and contact centre experience from outside the Council, and we've added a further role that sits between the customer service agents and the Team Leaders that makes our leadership arrangements more resilient.
- 3.16. Recognising the negative impact on staff morale and wellbeing of operating the Customer Service Line from the 2nd floor of York House, mainly due to extreme heating related challenges, we took the opportunity to create an area on the 4th floor of City Hall specifically for our contact centre operation. This was well received.
- 3.17. A refreshed approach to the training of our customer service staff has been put in place, which provides a for a more focused approach on the knowledge and skills being trained. Staff are gradually introduced to handling enquiries related to the training they've received and are provided with better post-training feedback as we more regularly monitor their performance. The dedicated training team play a greater role in providing post-training support to the call handlers.
- 3.18. Prior to the beginning of 2025, the Customer Service Line used to operate between the hours of 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday, with most full-time staff working a 7.5hr shift patten within those hours. Due to the limited availability of staffing resources between the hours of 8 – 9.15am and 4.15 – 6pm, the opening lines of the service were staggered.
- 3.19. Whilst this format of phased queue opening provided some benefits in managing staffing resources across an 8am – 6pm operation, it caused calls to be focused to within core hours when staffing levels were at their lowest.
- 3.20. It also created confusion for customers as opening times differed based on the nature of the enquiry. We were also unable to transfer calls within the service for areas in which they are not trained, causing repeat contacts. This resulted in a poor customer experience overall.
- 3.21. To improve things, the service operating hours were adjusted to 8:30-5pm Monday to Thursday, and 8:30-4.30pm on Friday, bringing the service largely in line with other council departments. Operationally, no new calls are now added to queues 30 minutes prior to the end of day. This allows call handlers to wrap up their working day without having to rush unnecessarily. So far, we've seen an improvement in call wait times across all lines because of these changes.

3.22. Feedback from staff about the changes that have taken place to our service operating hours and the shift arrangements has been positive and we think has improved their overall wellbeing. Though it's too soon to make a strong relationship back to this definitively, we've seen an improvement in the absence rates in the service in recent months. A fuller account of that will be able to be provided midway through 25/26, if required.

Customer Service Line

3.23. The Customer Services function relies heavily on our people resources to handle incoming contact in all forms. The sector contends with recruitment and retention challenges on a perennial basis, and our own service is no different.

3.24. Over the last 12 – 18 months, the service has experienced significant change at management level as 4 of our Team Leaders have left the service for roles elsewhere. In response, we've recruited to 2 FT Team Leader replacements, both of whom have proven to be strong appointments, promoted to 1 Team Leader position from within our most experienced staffing pool, and have created a temporary floor walker/supervisory role which we intend to make a permanent feature of the team.

3.25. Likewise, the contact handling staffing resource has seen some change over the last 24 months. In April 2023 the total number of contact handling staff across all grades was 47 FTEs. At the end of March 2025, that resource had reduced to 35.5 FTEs. Those reductions are the result of a combination of better absence and performance management of staff, and employees choosing a future outside of the service as they look to further develop themselves (or) choosing to leave the Council altogether.

3.26. Given our efforts to balance the Council's budget, and the Corporate Services division especially, in many cases those leavers have not been able to be replaced, and the resulting saving is being used to contribute to the overall savings required within the division of £2m by 2027/28.

3.27. Because all incoming enquiries into the Customer Services function are handled by the staffing team in one way or another, and we don't currently make use of any automated technology to handle any contacts coming in, not replacing these people would have had a significant and detrimental effect on overall performance if we didn't take action to improve things elsewhere. Many of those improvements have been covered earlier in this report already.

3.28. In terms of operational performance, call volumes in 24/25 (357,000) were higher than 23/24 (336,000), despite being unable to handle incoming enquiries during the service closure resulting from the cyber-attack in Spring 2024.

3.29. And though we've had to reduce staffing, we continue to answer 72% of all calls presented, which is the same answer rate as the previous year. That call answer performance has increased more recently too, as we answered over 80% of calls presented from Nov 24 – March 25, a direct result of the changes to our opening hours and adjusting our resource scheduling.

- 3.30. Average time to answer (the length of time spent in a call queue) increased from an average across all lines of 7m 19s in 23/24 to 12m 52s in 24/25.
- 3.31. Encouragingly though, and again because of the changes to the opening hours and adjusting our resource scheduling, the average time to answer between Nov 24 – Feb 25 dropped significantly, to nearer the 6-minute mark and which is an improvement on the previous year. We expect that trend to continue but will monitor arrangements closely over the coming months.
- 3.32. As we approach the start of the new financial year, we almost always experience a significant increase in calls to the Council during the months of March and April every year. This is very much down to the new Council Tax billing cycle beginning and other financial assessments taking place which typically drive-up contact. March '25 was a busier month as a result.
- 3.33. Feedback from the service also continues to highlight the increasingly complex and difficult nature of some of the calls coming in. Despite that, handling time (the time from the start of the call to moving on to taking another) has remained at about the same level as 23/24, at 6m 10s. This performance compares well to benchmarkable information available, and that suggests the average call duration for service-based contact centres in the UK is 6m 56s.
- 3.34. In terms of incoming telephony contact, the following table shows how this contact is distributed across our lines/services for the 24/25 period.

	YTD	% of Total
Housing Repairs	67462	19%
Council Tax Tier 1 Calls	65266	18%
General Switchboard	34998	10%
Housing Benefits Tier 1 Calls	27287	8%
Housing Management	27000	8%
Housing Options	29242	8%
Social Care Switchboard	20898	6%
Parking Bus Passes and Blue Badges	15374	4%
Payments and Rent Enquiries	13592	4%
Waste Management Service Line	15239	4%
School Admissions	11747	3%
Electoral Registration	6827	2%
Environment Service Line	8066	2%
General Enquiries	7303	2%
CSG General Enquiry	4902	1%

- 3.35. Overall, the following is a summary of the current 24/25 position:

- We received more calls than the previous year
- Call handling time is broadly the same as the previous year
- Our intelligence suggests many incoming calls are complex in nature

- We've further reduced the level of Team Leader and call handling resource to help balance the Council's budget
- Average time to answer over the whole year has increased significantly
- We've changed our opening times and staff scheduling, which has made us more resilient
- These recent changes have seen an increase in the time it takes us to answer calls, bringing us below 23/24 levels

Customer Service Centre

- 3.36. We continue to operate our face-to-face customer service centre on Granby Street and between 09:30 – 16:30, Tuesday to Thursday. That involves dealing mainly with walk-in enquiries from members of the public, and often by triaging their needs and signposting appropriately to services across the Council.
- 3.37. We also enable other service led activities to take place from the centre, including Housing Options advice, Licensing & Regulatory services interviews, providing private rented sector housing advice, making support payments for those with challenging life circumstances, and we have a crisis room for people fleeing domestic violence and that present as a walk in.
- 3.38. Payment kiosks are available for those who prefer to make payments in person and/or in cash, though the use of that function has diminished significantly in recent years. There are also a small number of self-service computers that members of the public can access, and which the Customer Service team can assist with.

Customer Service function – further improvements

- 3.39. We're currently working towards the introduction of a digitally transformed contact centre, which will mean better use of self-service technology like chat bots or automated voice agents for routine enquiries, chat/email functions for enquiries that need a live agent but don't necessarily have to be done by phone, and which allows us to use our phone contact for the most complex enquiries.
- 3.40. With changes to the way we provide services in our neighbourhoods and communities elsewhere in the Council in mind, we're about to start a review of options for the preferred future model of face-to-face customer service provision at the Council and expect to report our initial findings to CMB in September for review.
- 3.41. That review will look specifically at whether and how we can move towards providing focused elements of our customer service offer in Council operated community buildings/assets across the city in some way or another, and that might be targeted towards the needs of areas as we understand them.
- 3.42. Many Councils have made very clear statements about and plans setting out how they will improve their citizens experiences of good service at all stages of interacting with their Council. As a Council, we could be clearer about our positive commitments towards treating our citizens when they are trying to access and

receive our services, and like many other places that is often captured in an action orientated Customer (Citizen) Experience Strategy.

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

4.1 Financial implications

As an update on the performance of Customer Services, there are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report. As noted in the report, staffing vacancies within the service will assist in contributing to the Corporate Services division's £2m savings target by 2027/28.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy

Dated: 1st July 2025

4.2 Legal implications

In reviewing different models/delivery of services - officers should seek support from the relevant internal departments as part of scoping options, out including Procurement and Legal in terms of any procurement activity required, consideration of any data protection related policies/issue to reflect any new proposed model and any proposed amends to operational elements of service delivery will need to be managed internally through DDaT with escalations being supported by the Council's Procurement Team.

Signed: Mannah Begum, Principal Lawyer, Commercial and Contract Legal

Dated: 16 June 2025

4.3 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.

The report provides an update on the performance of the corporate customer services function. Our customer service function is often the first point of contact for city residents, and we need to ensure it is inclusive and open to all and considers people's needs and not exclude people because of their protected characteristics. The council can be contacted in a number of ways, such as face to face, telephone and online, all these need to continue to ensure we are meeting the aims of the PSED.

Signed: Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer

Dated: 11th June 2025

4.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no climate emergency implications arising from this report.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext: 372246

Dated: 17 June 2025

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:

N/A

6. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A – Leicester City Council Customer Services Annual Performance 24/25

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

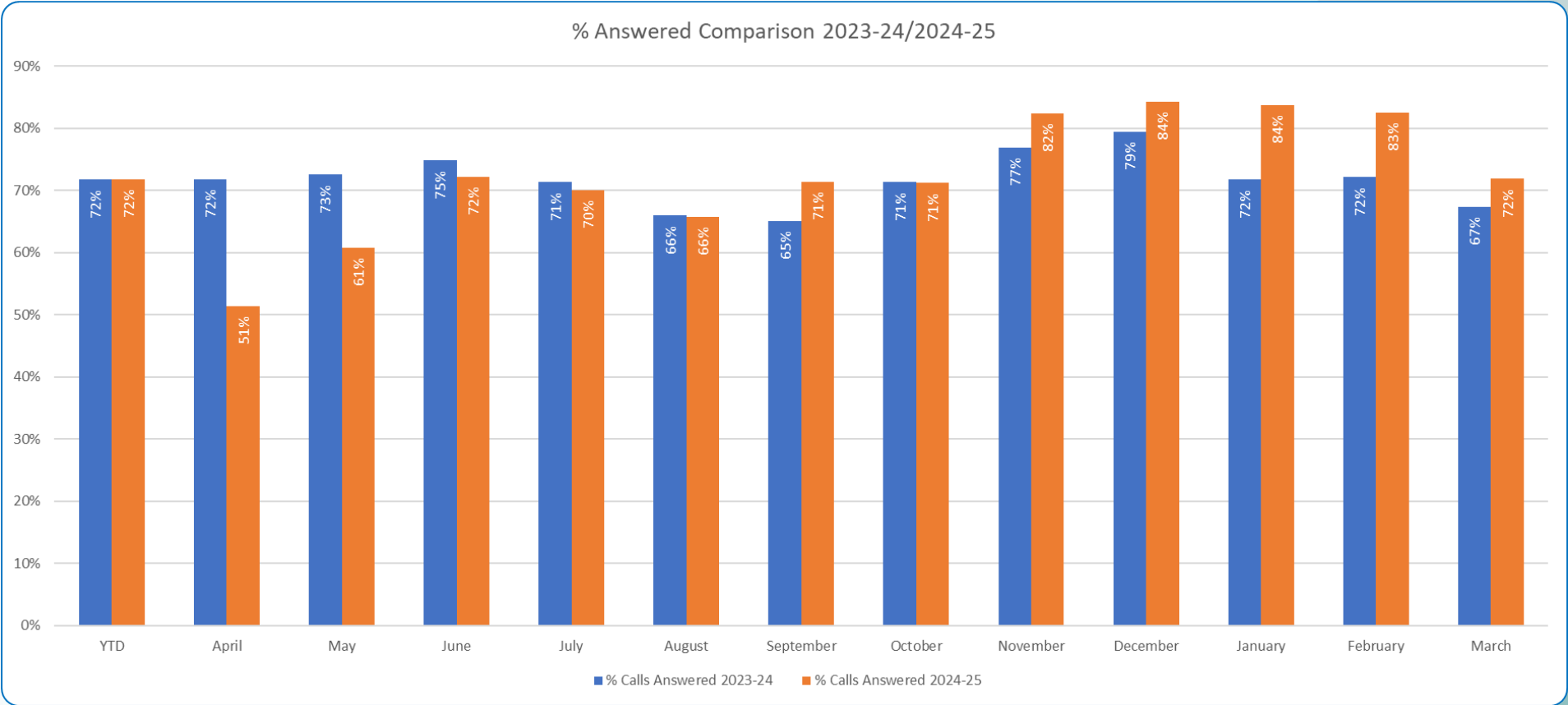
No

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

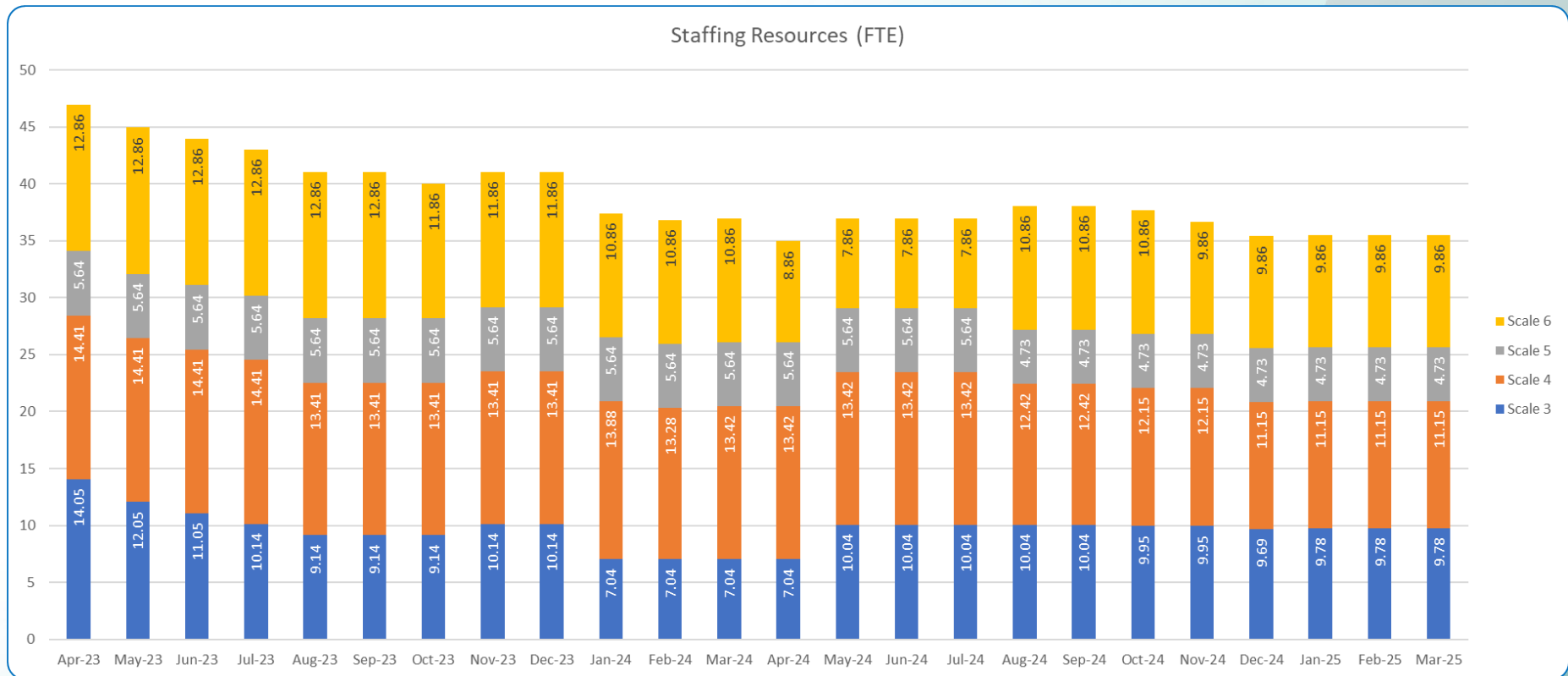
No

LCC Customer Services – Annual Performance 24/25

Customer Contact – Performance Snapshot

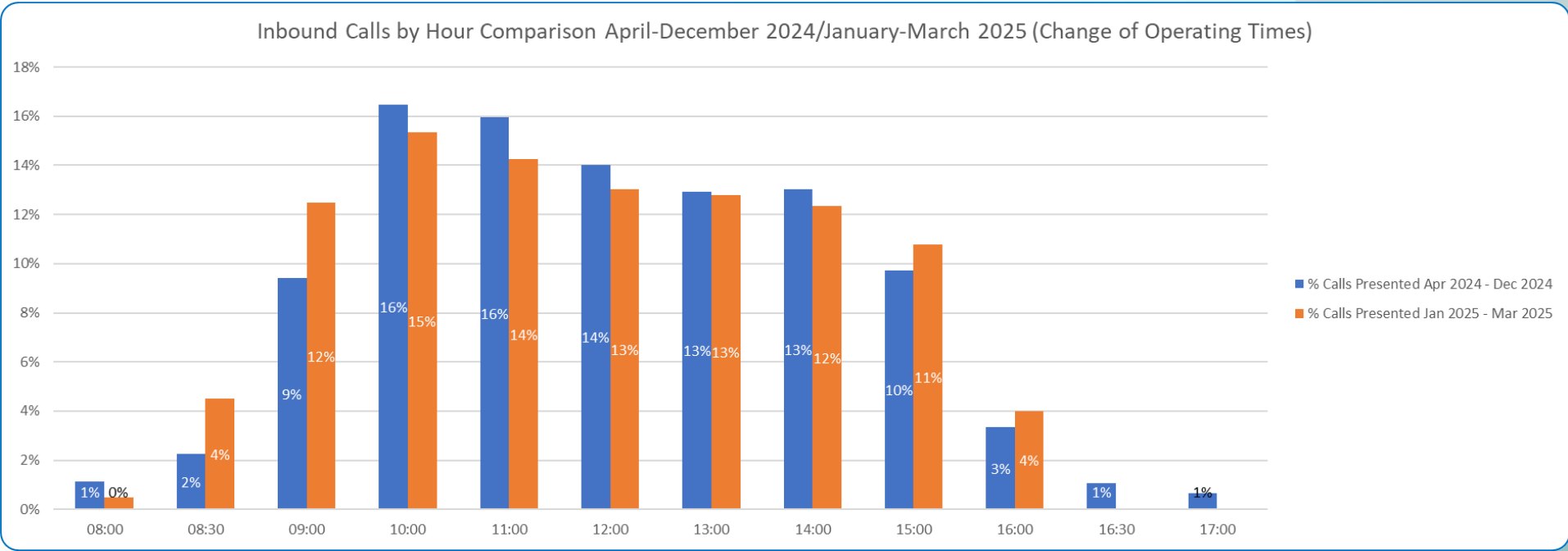


Customer Contact – Performance Snapshot



Customer Contact – Performance Snapshot

29



Line by Line Performance 23/24 – 24/25

	Calls Received				Queue Time				Handle Time		
	23/24	24/25	+/-		23/24	24/25	+/-		23/24	24/25	+/-
Electoral Registration	5669	6827	↑		00:01:15	00:01:31	↑		00:08:29	00:07:49	↓
Environment Service Line	7837	8066	↑		00:10:45	00:16:22	↑		00:08:04	00:07:40	↓
General Enquiries	6531	7303	↑		00:16:01	00:21:27	↑		00:05:56	00:06:02	↑
General Switchboard	39122	34998	↑		00:14:19	00:16:02	↑		00:01:36	00:01:33	↓
Housing Benefit	21943	27287	↑		00:18:36	00:24:05	↑		00:07:39	00:07:28	↓
Housing Management	27440	27000	↓		00:15:45	00:20:10	↑		00:07:13	00:07:21	↑
Housing Options	28485	29242	↑		00:02:05	00:02:07	↑		00:06:50	00:06:08	↓
Housing Repairs	61360	68030	↑		00:09:46	00:08:22	↓		00:07:20	00:07:23	↑
Council Tax	55658	65266	↑		00:14:56	00:19:45	↑		00:06:55	00:06:45	↓
Parking, Bus Passes, and Blue Badges	14013	15374	↑		00:17:56	00:23:44	↑		00:06:43	00:06:22	↓
Payments and Rent Enquiries	13243	13592	↑		00:16:25	00:18:26	↑		00:07:40	00:06:48	↓
Social Care Switchboard	19933	20898	↑		00:01:54	00:01:28	↓		00:05:30	00:05:03	↓
Waste Management Service Line	15037	15239	↑		00:13:46	00:16:25	↑		00:06:43	00:06:42	↓
School Admissions	13985	11747	↓		00:13:10	00:12:58	↓		00:06:29	00:06:04	↓

Customer Contact – Improvements

23/24 – 24/25

Other immediate work:

- CSM recruitment
- Review of management team roles + Team Leader structure
- Relocation of the Customer Service Line team to City Hall
- CSL opening hours review + amend
- Refreshed Training Programme
- Refreshed Quality Monitoring arrangements
- Digital Contact Centre
- Future of face-to-face customer service provision – options



Overview of the Revenues & Benefits Service

Decision to be taken by: N/A

Date of meeting: 9th July 2025

Lead director/officer: Amy Oliver

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Cory Laywood
- Author contact details: cory.laywood@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1.Summary

- 1.1. This paper provides Overview Select Committee an overview of the Revenues and Benefits Service, summarising its performance, impact, and strategic direction.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 The Overview Select Committee is asked to note the report and make comments to the Director of Finance.

3. Background

- 3.1 The revenues and benefits service cover the following areas:

- Council tax billing and collection
- Business Rates billing and collection
- Housing Benefits
- Social Welfare and Advice including Household Support Fund
- Fraud Prevention & Compliance

4. Overview of Revenues & Benefits

- 4.0 The Service manages the collection of over £300m of income from Council Tax and Business Rates.

- 4.1 The Revenues and Benefits Service supports over 50,000 households annually through key welfare services. The key welfare support we provide is detailed below:

- We administer Housing Benefit (HB) to 20,000 pensioners and vulnerable residents.
- Providing Council Tax Support (CTS) to around 24,500 low-income households.
- Supporting households struggling with rent by providing approximately £625k to support Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP): During 2024/25 we provided support to 2,041 households struggling with their rent.

- We provided £500k of Council Tax Discretionary Relief (CTDR) to 1,415 households during 2024/25, this has increased to £750k in 2025/26 following changes in the Council Tax Support Scheme.
- We have provided over £30m of support through the Household Support Fund (HSF), over six phases, this has provided support to over 100,000 households

4.3 Council Tax - A local taxation on households within the city. The Council is responsible for administering and collecting Council Tax for LCC, Fire & Police. The administration of Council Tax is nationally prescribed in relation to evaluation bands, and enforcement powers.

4.4 During 2024/25 we were responsible for collecting £185m of Council Tax from over 140,000 households across the city. In the 2024/25 financial year, the service collected £173m and achieved a collection rate of 93.37%. Further details on Council Tax collection are provided in the income collection report elsewhere on the agenda.

4.5 Key Initiatives to support council taxpayers:

- Streamlined Billing Processes – we use digital systems to improve the accuracy and timeliness of our billing.
- Flexible Payment Options – we offer different ways to pay and flexible arrangements to those struggling to pay.
- Assistance for Vulnerable Residents – we work closely with other internal and third-party services to ensure that those facing financial hardship receive the help they need.
- Proactive Arrears Management – where someone is getting into arrears, we try early intervention strategies to prevent arrears from escalating.
- Data-Driven Collection – we use data to identify trends to assist with identifying appropriate recovery measures.

4.6 Collection of Debt - We strongly encourage any resident struggling to pay Council Tax to contact us as early as possible. Early engagement allows us to explore affordable payment plans, offer tailored advice, and refer individuals to external support if needed. Our aim is to prevent debt from escalating unnecessarily by collaborating constructively with residents to resolve arrears before enforcement action is considered.

4.7 Although local authorities have significant legal powers to recover Council Tax debt including the use of enforcement agents (bailiffs) under the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992. We exercise these powers with caution and responsibility.

4.8 The Council does not routinely deploy Enforcement agents. We make extensive efforts to avoid their use wherever possible. Residents known to be in financial hardship are not referred to enforcement, and we actively promote early engagement, affordable repayment plans, and referral to advice and support services.

- 4.9 Enforcement agents are only instructed when all other reasonable attempts to engage the taxpayer have failed, and there is unmistakable evidence of both their ability to pay and a refusal to do so. This ensures that action is taken proportionately and only where necessary to protect public funds.
- 4.10 Business Rates - Also known as National Non-Domestic Rates are charged on most non-residential properties and are a vital source of income for local services. During 2024/25 we were responsible for collecting £101m of business rates from over 12,500 businesses across the city. In the 2024/25 financial year, the service collected £104m and achieved a collection rate of 95.36%. Further details on Business Rates collection are provided in the income collection report elsewhere on the agenda.
- 4.11 Key support and collection strategies include:
- Accurate Billing and Reliefs: Ensuring timely billing and administering small business, charitable, and retail reliefs.
 - Digital Access: As with Council Tax, providing online account management and flexible payment options.
 - Arrears Prevention: Applying early intervention principles and working with businesses to prevent escalation.
 - Support and Advice: Offering guidance on liability queries and entitlements.
- 4.12 Internal/External Social Welfare and Advice - The service provides targeted financial and welfare advice both internally (within the Council) and externally (to residents), helping individuals access support such as benefits, discretionary funds, and other assistance to improve financial resilience and prevent hardship.
- 4.13 Internal Advice Services - Our in-house Social Welfare Advice team plays a pivotal role in supporting residents experiencing financial hardship. In 2024/25, the team supported over 8,000 households, delivering more than £5.2 million in financial gains. These gains were achieved through:
- Assistance with benefit applications (including Universal Credit, disability benefits, and pension credits)
 - Personal budgeting support and money management advice
 - Direct help with reducing household debt and maximising income
 - Referrals to specialist legal, housing, or mental health services where appropriate
- 4.14 The team's work is central to improving financial resilience, stabilising household incomes, and preventing escalation into crisis. By providing trusted, personalised support at the point of need, the team contributes to both individual wellbeing and broader social and economic stability across the city.
- 4.15 External Advice Services - To enhance and broaden access to advice provision, we also commission external providers to deliver social welfare and financial advice in

community-based settings. These third-party services ensure that residents can receive timely support across a range of accessible formats including:

- Face-to-face appointments in local venues
- Telephone advice lines
- Digital and online support options

4.16 This external provision complements the Council's internal offer by reaching residents who may be less likely to engage with formal services or who prefer community-based support.

4.17 Additional Discretionary Support - We administer a range of discretionary support schemes to assist residents facing financial hardship, particularly those not fully supported by mainstream benefits. These schemes offer vital safety nets to prevent crisis, promote financial stability, and support independent living.

4.18 Discretionary Housing Payments are a national scheme funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to support residents facing housing-related financial pressure. This includes shortfalls between Housing Benefit or Universal Credit and rent, as well as help with deposits or moving costs. In 2024/25, the council allocated £625,000 in DHPs to assist 2,041 households at risk of homelessness or severe housing stress.

4.19 Council Tax Discretionary Relief is funded locally by Leicester City Council, CTDR provides additional assistance to residents who are struggling to meet their Council Tax liability but are not fully supported by the main Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme. In 2024/25, £500,000 was allocated to the scheme, increasing to £750,000 in 2025/26 following the introduction of the new banded CTS model. CTDR offers flexible, case-by-case relief where households are experiencing exceptional hardship.

4.20 The Household Support Fund was introduced by government in 2021 to provide direct financial support to low-income households most affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Since launch, Leicester City Council has delivered six phases of the scheme, with over £30 million distributed to date. The fund supports households with food, energy, and essential items, using both direct applications and targeted referrals from professionals.

4.21 Key 2024/25 outcomes include:

- Preventing eviction in 1,873 cases by clearing £1.7 million in rent arrears
- Distributing 49,482 utility vouchers to ensure access to energy and water
- Supporting 45,806 households with children through targeted grants
- Delivering 78,500 school holiday meals via Pop-Up Pantries
- Issuing over 1,800 essential white goods to help families maintain safe and stable homes

4.22 The council continues to prioritise early intervention and collaborative delivery of HSF through trusted community partners such as schools, food banks, and housing support agencies.

4.23 Fraud Section - The Corporate Investigations Team investigate potential financial irregularities within Revenues & Benefits.

- During the financial year 2024/25 they identified £1.7m of cashable and notional savings across the authority
- Within the Revenues Benefits area they identified savings of £406,000 of Council Tax and Housing Benefit.
- Assisted with by overseeing the council's participation in the National Fraud Initiative and provide advice and assistance on counter fraud measures.

4.27 Key Priorities for the Service

- Digital transformation to ensure records are updated automatically and contact with the team is smooth with real time information available.
- The collection of income is targeted on early engagement with Customers.
- The service remains responsive to changes in national welfare policy, including the managed migration of claimants from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit and the potential impacts of future reforms.

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

6 6.1 Financial implications

7 This report is an overview of the Revenues and Benefits Service. The Revenues and Benefits service operates within a net budget of £4.58 million, and supports the collection of over £300 million annually, delivering targeted support that reduces financial pressure on wider council services.

8 Signed: Jade Draper – Principal Accountant

9 Dated: 13/06/2025

10 10.1 Legal implications

11 There are no direct legal implications for this report which provides a detailed overview of the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service

12 Signed: Jenis Taylor - Project Lawyer (Commercial), Legal Services

13 Dated: 16/06/2025

14 14.3 Equalities implications

15 The report provides a detailed overview of the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service, there are no direct legal implications arising from it. It is important to regularly

collect and review data on service usage, complaints, and outcomes disaggregated by protected characteristics to identify any trends or disparities.

16 Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

17 Dated: 27 June 2025

18 18.1 Climate Emergency implications

19 There are no climate emergency implications arising from this report.

20 Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext. 372246

21 Dated: 27 June 2025

22 22.1 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

23 None

24 Background information and other papers:

25 Income Collection Outturn 2024/25

26 Summary of appendices:

27 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

28 Is this a “key decision”? No

Executive Decision- Revenue Budget Monitoring Outturn 2024/25

Overview Select Committee

Decision to be taken by: City Mayor

Decision to be taken on: 9th July 2025

Lead director: Amy Oliver, Director of Finance

Useful information

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

1. Summary

This report is the final one in the monitoring cycle for 2024/25 and reports performance against budget for the year.

The final outturn is a £15.4m saving against the budget for the year (4% variance compared to the final budget). The amount saved has increased since period 9 and reflects a lot of work done to both reduce spending and constrain cost growth. Specifically:

- (a) The growing number of homeless families is a huge cost pressure in most urban authorities, and we included £10.6m of growth in the budget together with a £6m contingency. Nonetheless, at period 9 a £7m overspend was still anticipated which has now been brought down to £4m. The Council has invested in new housing and other measures which we believe will avoid £40m of additional cost by 2027/28 and which has also reduced the overspend in 2024/25.
- (b) Transformation work in adult social care enabled us to reduce the budget in-year (it now stands at £16m less than the original budget). Whilst slightly less than expected at period 9, the service has still saved £5m compared to the reduced level of budget.
- (c) There were lower placement and other costs in education and children's services primarily due to lower numbers of looked after children compared to last year. Successful taxi procurement has reduced cost to the SEND transport service (the underlying trend of growing SEND need of course continues).
- (d) Through use of other funding streams and continual scrutiny of requirements, a further £6.3m of earmarked reserves can be released to support future budgets.

The upshot is that, whilst the budget for 2025/26 estimated we would have £25m of reserves left to support the budget after 2027/28, the figure is now estimated to be £55m. Of course, it is still very early days, and the situation is volatile, but this is encouraging. Nonetheless, the projected £68m gap between income and expenditure in 2027/28 is unaffected and cannot be sustained indefinitely with one-off savings. The whole budget position will be reviewed in the autumn, prior to setting the budget for 2026/27.

The projected gap of £68m is dependent on achieving the £23m of savings required by the 2025/26 budget strategy – decisions in relation to £9m of savings have already been taken, together with further cost constraint measures in demand led services.

A more worrying issue in the report is the continued increase in the number of working age people with a care package, and the continued increase in the level of need of those already in receipt of a care package.

Outside of the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account has saved £3m compared to budget for the year.

The costs of educating pupils with high needs continues to outstrip the grant we receive from the Government. The annual deficits are being accumulated: a special Government dispensation allows us to treat them as a negative reserve without impacting our budget, given the impact this issue is having nationally. The dispensation is due to be reviewed in March 2026 – whilst it is difficult to see how the Government could do anything other than extend it, not doing so would require us to take a charge to our budget reserves: the cumulative deficit is forecast to be £45m by then.

2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 The Executive is recommended to:

- Note the outturn position detailed in the report.
- Approve the transfers between departmental budgets and reserves requested in Appendix B, and to transfer the total underspend to the budget reserve.
- Approve the changes to earmarked reserves proposed at Appendix C
- Approve a reduction in the budget of £240,000 per year for the Connexions Service, as referred to at Appendix B; and a reduction in the budget for post 16 SEND transport consequent to an executive decision of 13th May, and as referred to at Appendix D
- Note the savings achieved to support the 2025/26 budget strategy, as shown at Appendix D.

2.2 The OSC is recommended to consider the overall position presented within this report and make any observations it sees fit.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

N/A

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

The General Fund budget set for the financial year was £429m, before the use of managed reserves. Following savings identified since the budget was set, this has been updated to £405m.

- Appendix A summarises the original budget, current budget and outturn spending in 2024/25.

- Appendix B provides more detailed commentary on the forecast position for each area of the Council's operations.
- Appendix C sets out the Council's earmarked reserves and proposed changes.
- Appendix D sets out savings achieved to support the 2025/26 budget strategy.

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

5.1 Financial implications

This report is solely concerned with financial issues.

Signed: Amy Oliver

Dated: 2/6/2025

5.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

Signed: Kevin Carter, Head of Law – Commercial, Property & Planning

Dated: 10 June 2025

5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have statutory duties, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions they have to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. This report is the final one in the monitoring cycle for 2024/25.

While this specific budget monitoring report identifies no direct equality implications, it's important to note that future policy changes are possible. Should the Council propose alterations to existing services, particularly in response to cost pressures and ongoing savings initiatives, these changes should be assessed through the Council's equality impact assessment process. This ensures that equality considerations are integrated into all decision-making.

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

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 4 June 2025

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no climate emergency implications directly associated with this report, as it is a budget monitoring report and is solely concerned with financial issues.

Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

30 June 2025

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

No other implications are noted as this is a budget monitoring report, and therefore no policy changes are proposed.

6. Background information and other papers:

Report to Council on 21 February 2024 on the General Fund Revenue budget 2024/25

Revenue Outturn Report for 2023/24 presented to OSC on 31 July 2024

Revenue Monitoring Period 3 Report presented to OSC on 26 September 2024

Revenue Monitoring Period 6 Report presented to OSC on 12 December 2024

Report to Council on the General Fund Revenue budget 2025/26 on 19 February 2025

Revenue Monitoring Period 9 Report presented to OSC on 19 March 2025

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A - Outturn (April 2024-March 2025) Budget Monitoring Summary.

Appendix B - Divisional Narrative – Explanation of Variances.

Appendix C - Updated reserves position.

Appendix D - Sets out savings achieved to support the 2025/26 budget strategy.

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?

TBD

Revenue Budget at Outturn, 2024-25

2024-25	Original Budget £000's	Current Budget £000's	Outturn £000's	Variance £000's	Variance %
Financial Services	12,167.3	11,502.8	11,056.4	(446.4)	-3.9%
Information Services	11,062.7	11,305.3	11,305.3	0.0	0.0%
Human Resources & Delivery, Communications & Corporate Services	7,534.0	9,911.5	8,205.5	(1,706.0)	-17.2%
Legal Services	6,309.6	5,972.5	5,565.4	(407.1)	-6.8%
Corporate Resources & Support	37,073.6	38,692.1	36,132.6	(2,559.5)	-6.6%
Planning, Development & Transportation	14,251.3	16,313.7	15,182.6	(1,131.1)	-6.9%
Tourism Culture & Inward Investment	3,801.1	4,574.2	4,421.2	(153.0)	-3.3%
Neighbourhood & Environmental Services	38,456.4	43,646.6	43,861.1	214.5	0.5%
Estates & Building Services	4,397.7	6,055.9	6,282.8	226.9	3.7%
Departmental Overheads	582.4	588.0	776.3	188.3	32.0%
Housing Services	15,098.6	21,384.8	25,359.1	3,974.2	18.6%
Other Grants	0.0	0.0	2.5	2.5	0.0%
City Development & Neighbourhoods	76,587.5	92,563.2	95,885.5	3,322.3	3.6%
Adult Social Care & Safeguarding	196,402.1	188,772.3	186,631.6	(2,140.7)	-1.1%
Adult Social Care & Commissioning	(22,989.5)	(30,997.7)	(34,287.7)	(3,290.0)	10.6%
Sub-Total Adult Social Care	173,412.6	157,774.6	152,343.9	(5,430.7)	-3.4%
Strategic Commissioning & Business Support	2,428.7	2,196.7	1,687.5	(509.2)	-23.2%
Learning Services	21,967.7	22,510.6	21,564.8	(945.8)	-4.2%
Children, Young People & Families	89,413.2	91,092.5	86,119.1	(4,973.4)	-5.5%
Departmental Resources	1,794.1	715.3	650.5	(64.8)	-9.1%
Sub-Total Education & Children's Services	115,603.7	116,515.1	110,021.9	(6,493.2)	-5.6%
Total Social Care & Education	289,016.3	274,289.7	262,365.8	(11,923.9)	-4.3%
Public Health	24,965.6	23,611.0	23,611.0	0.0	0.0%
Total Operational	427,643.0	429,156.0	417,994.9	(11,161.0)	-2.6%
Corporate Budgets	21,089.2	2,211.4	420.5	(1,790.9)	-81.0%
Demographic Pressures	8,000.0	2,000.0	0.0	(2,000.0)	-100.0%
Capital Financing	2,118.0	2,118.0	1,700.5	(417.5)	-19.7%
Total Corporate & Capital Financing	31,207.2	6,329.4	2,121.0	(4,208.4)	-66.5%
Public Health Grant	(29,832.1)	(30,433.3)	(30,433.3)	(0.0)	0.0%
TOTAL GENERAL FUND	429,018.1	405,052.1	389,682.6	(15,369.4)	-3.8%

1.1 Changes since the original budget are summarised in the table below:

	Total General Fund £000's
Original budget	429,018
Savings approved - Period 9 2023/24	(621)
Savings approved - Period 3 2024/25	(23,105)
Savings-Connexions	(240)
Latest budget	405,052

1.2 The original budgets split between employees, running costs and income are available at [2024/25 Budget Summary \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk/2024/25-Budget-Summary)

Divisional Narrative – Explanation of Variances

Corporate Resources and Support (Chief Operating Officer: Alison Greenhill)

Corporate Resources Department spent £36.1m, £2.6m less than the budget. This is a further improvement on the £1.6m underspend reported at Period 9. The majority of this relates to holding vacancies to meet our savings targets set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

1. Finance (Director of Finance - Amy Oliver)

- 1.1. The Financial Services Division spent £11.1m which is £0.4m under budget. The saving relates to vacancies and additional income received during the year.

2. Corporate Services, (Director of Corporate Services – Andrew Shilliam)

- 2.1. Taken together, these divisions spent £19.5m which is £1.7m under budget, after the planned use of reserves in IT.
- 2.2. This is due to staffing vacancies across the service, together with higher than budgeted income, including amounts charged to schools.
- 2.3. City Catering has achieved a breakeven position.

3. Legal, Coronial and Registrars, Members and Democratic Services (City Barrister – Kamal Adatia)

- 3.1. Legal services spent £5.6m, which is £0.4m under budget. Of this, Members' and Democratic Services spent £1.2m, £0.1m less than the budget with lower members' allowance expenditure than expected. The remaining underspend relates to vacancies within Legal and Governance Services.
- 3.2. Coronial and registrar services spent £0.7m as per the budget, after the use of earmarked reserves of £0.1m and support from corporate budgets of £0.2m, as in previous years.

City Development and Neighbourhoods (Strategic Director – Richard Sword)

The department overspent by £3.3m on a net budget of £92.6m. This is a £3.7m improvement from the forecast overspend of £7m reported at period 9, mainly down to improved performance in managing the cost of temporary accommodation for homeless families.

4. Planning, Development & Transportation (Director – Andrew Smith)

- 4.1. The division spent £15.2m, an underspend of £1.1m. This is an improvement from the underspend of £0.2m reported at Period 9.
- 4.2. Government funding via the BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan) grant has helped to maintain a high level of tendered bus service provision and to support other bus-related measures such as Park and Ride. Expenditure on concessionary fares is significantly higher than the last financial year, due to higher amounts payable to bus operators. This arises from the updated calculation model issued by central government. However, an underspend of £1.2m within concessionary fares has been achieved due to passenger numbers remaining at lower levels than expected.
- 4.3. Highways underspent by £0.8m. This is mainly due to an additional £1m of work done on capital schemes, reducing the amount to be borne by the revenue budget. The £1m was offset by extra cost of £0.2m for extra pothole repairs and other structural maintenance which has been required due to adverse weather conditions.
- 4.4. In a continuation of recent pressures, a reduction in the number of major planning applications being submitted has led to an income shortfall of £0.7m
- 4.5. There is an overspend of £0.2m in relation to the running of bus stations with CCTV, cleaning charges and rates exceeding budget.
- 4.6. This report requests that £1.4m of BSIP government grant income is transferred to reserves to finance expenditure which will be incurred in future years

5. Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment (Director – Mike Dalzell)

- 5.1. The division spent £4.4m, an underspend of £0.2m. This is a small decrease from the £0.3m underspend position reported at period 9.
- 5.2. The saving is mainly attributable to De Montfort Hall achieving a surplus of £0.3m through extra ticketing income due to a wider selection of shows being offered, in addition to increased catering and bar income.
- 5.3. The wider division has generated small underspends of £0.1m due to vacant posts.
- 5.4. This report requests that £163k is transferred to reserves, in respect of grant funding where the expenditure will occur in future years,

6. Neighbourhood & Environmental Services (Director – Sean Atterbury)

- 6.1. The division spent £43.8m, an overspend of £0.2m, in line with the position reported at Period 9
- 6.2. Building control has overspent by £0.3m due to ongoing staffing shortages, reducing the generation of income and therefore prompting the recruitment of an external contractor.
- 6.3. Leisure Centres have improved their income by £0.1m.
- 6.4. This report requests that £728k is transferred to reserves. £600k of this relates to the waste management contract, with the remainder relating to several grant-funded projects, including prison library services and the Imaginative Spaces Project.

7. Estates & Building Services (Director – Matthew Wallace)

- 7.1. The division spent £6.3m, an overspend of £0.2m, being an improvement on the £0.3m overspend forecasted at Period 9.
- 7.2. The Corporate Estate has overspent by £0.7m. There was a £0.4m pressure resulting from extra staffing costs being incurred to support ongoing lease reviews which will, in time, lead to the generation of additional income. There were further overspends of £0.3m relating to repairs across the estate.
- 7.3. There was a £0.1m overspend arising from building repair work in the Operational Estate.
- 7.4. An organisational review within Soft FM has led to a £0.4m underspend on staffing costs, partially offsetting the overspend within the Corporate Estate.
- 7.5. There are other small underspends that total £0.2m.

8. Departmental Overheads

- 8.1. An additional £0.2m has been set aside for potential bad debts.

9. Housing General Fund (Director – Chris Burgin)

- 9.1. The division spent £25.4m, an overspend of £4.0m. This is a significant improvement on the £7m reported at Period 9.
- 9.2. The number of homelessness presentations continues to add to the cost of temporary accommodation with homelessness services overspending by £4.2m; this is inclusive of a £6m extra budget provision to support the area. This is however a considerable improvement from expectations at Period 9 and reflects the success of significant work being undertaken to effectively manage this pressure, as well as reducing accommodation costs as more properties are acquired to house families and singles. There is still a continued demand on homelessness services and work is continuing to find longer-term resolutions to this nationally recognised issue.
- 9.3. The wider division has generated underspends of £0.2m.
- 9.4. This report requests £1,858k of Asylum grant income be transferred to reserves.

10. Housing Revenue Account (Director – Chris Burgin)

- 10.1. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced income and expenditure account relating to the management and maintenance of the Council's housing stock. The HRA has underspent by £3m, where break-even was forecast at period 9. It is proposed that £0.35m of this be used to support the capital overspend (reported in the capital monitoring report on your agenda) and the rest to be held in reserve to support the future provision of affordable housing. Revenue is also used for capital spending, which is reported separately within the capital outturn report.
- 10.2. Core rent and service charge income was £1.1m higher than budgeted. This is due to reduced voids and higher affordable rent levels when compared to budget expectations.
- 10.3. The HRA incurs the cost of interest on its debt and receives income from interest on the cash balances which it holds. Borrowing costs were lower than anticipated, generating a £1.7m surplus, mainly due to interest rate reductions. Additionally, interest income exceeded the budget by £0.6m, reflecting higher cash balances held.
- 10.4. The Repairs and Maintenance service has overspent by £1.4m. There have been increased disrepair claims and associated costs driven by law firms before the introduction of fixed recoverable costs, generating an overspend of £1.1m. Running costs are over budget by £0.6m due to rising premises costs at the metalwork shop, scaffold hire costs to facilitate necessary repairs and the purchase of updated health and safety equipment. These pressures were partially mitigated by other small underspends within the division, totalling £0.2 million, including the receipt of insurance income not originally budgeted for and the capitalisation of some staffing costs.
- 10.5. Management and Landlord Services underspent by £1.5m. A £0.6m underspend has arisen due to vacancies across the service. A further £0.4m saving has been achieved due to the pay award being slightly less than budgeted attributable to the level of vacant posts. There is also a £0.4m saving relating to IT system development, as some modules are now not being implemented until the next financial year. These savings were offset by a £0.4 million shortfall in income from Right to Buy sales, which reduced the available funding for related administrative costs. There was also a £0.2 million overspend due to increased use of temporary accommodation. District Heating underspent by 0.7m, mainly due to grant income being received relating to prior years.
- 10.6. The HRA makes contributions towards general fund activities as well as being charged for a fair proportion of the Council's overheads. The HRA's contribution to general fund activities and overheads was £0.5m over budget, driven by higher than expected repair team costs and slightly increased corporate costs.

Adult Social Care (Strategic Director – Laurence Jones)

11. Adult Social Care (Service Directors – Ruth Lake and Kate Gallopi)

- 11.1. Adult social care spent £152.3m, £5.4m less than the budget (a saving of 3.4%). Members will recall that in the previous period – period 9, this forecast spend was £151m. The underspend of £5.4m can be mainly attributed to vacancies and securing additional income against costs of care but also to measures introduced in the department to constrain costs.
- 11.2. We continued to have difficulty in recruiting to vacancies. These vacancies are predominantly seen across the Social Work Teams. This difficulty has not worsened significantly from period 9 to period 12. The overall staffing underspend attributed to services totals £3.6m.
- 11.3. Gross package costs have increased from Period 9 to Period 12. Specifically, there were 2 reasons for this higher spend:
- a) Net growth in numbers requiring care. The overall number of people receiving a formal package of care stood at 5,509 at the end of March against a target of 5,490. The target for nil net growth in older people numbers was achieved (this actually reduced by 0.6%) but people of a working age receiving a package of long-term care grew by 8.3% against a target of 5.0%)
 - b) Net growth in need. This was set at a challenging target of 2.0% (in 2023/24 the level of growth in need was 3.23%). The actual level of growth for 2024/25 was 4.98%.

Despite the above, average package costs did not increase significantly and were further offset by an increase in income forecast from both individuals and funding contributions from health towards joint-funded packages of care. This has had a net effect of £1.8m

- 11.4. As a result of the factors above, the outturn position of Adult Social Care is a saving of £5.4m.
- 11.5. This report requests £1.9m of partnership income be transferred to reserves to support adult social joint projects such as virtual wards, intermediate care response, hospital discharge and other schemes.

Education and Children's Services (Strategic Director – Laurence Jones)

12. Education and Children's Services (Service Directors – Damian Elcock and Sophie Maltby)

- 12.1. The services spent £110.0m, an underspend of £6.5m a saving of 5.6%. The principal areas of underspend relate to looked after children placement costs, vacancies across several services and SEN home to school transport.
- 12.2. £2.6m of savings are due to staffing vacancies across the department. Some posts like social workers and Educational Psychologists have proven difficult to recruit to due to the competitive market, and admin posts have been left vacant pending the children's centres review. Vacancies have created significant work pressures, but action has been taken where possible to review structures and recruit.
- 12.3. Looked after children and other placement costs were £3.5m below the budget. This is primarily due to a fall in numbers, the current year end number of placements being 643 compared to 662 last year. However, the service also benefited from reduced legal and travel costs.
- 12.4. The SEN home to school transport cost was £0.7m under the budget of £15m. This was due to a slight fall in demand and securing reduced prices from the taxi companies. Average passenger numbers needing transport support was 1606 compared to 1633 last year. Changes to the post-16 SEN transport policy were delayed, pending further consultation, but a decision has now been taken.
- 12.5. Direct payments to parents of disabled children for respite care cost £0.3m more than the budget. The budget was increased for 2024/25, but demand has risen at a faster rate. A review of eligibility criteria will take place in 2025/26 with a view to having a revised policy in place.
- 12.6. The cumulative DSG reserve deficit was £9.6m at the end of March 2024. In the four years to 2023/24, high needs block (HNB) funding increased by more than 10% annually. This helped offset growth in demand and cost inflation, but the underlying deficit continued to grow. Demand for SEN support continues to outstrip the available resources.
- 12.7. The years of significant increases to the HNB funding allocation from the Government ended in 2023/24. The allocation increased by 3.3% to £81.6m in 2024/25, which has all been used towards inflationary increases.
- 12.8. The number of new Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) agreed for statutory assessment in the academic year 2023/24 was 605. Up to March 2025, the number of plans agreed was 317 which is on track to exceed the previous year's total. The current funding levels are inadequate for the total cohort of young people that are now being supported. With effectively zero real terms funding growth, the in-year deficit increases

significantly as the cohort increases. Even with mitigations it remains a significant challenge to meet increasing demand. The current year deficit is £12.6m, which increases the cumulative deficit on 31 March 2025 to £22.2m - it is expected to increase to £45m by March 2026. Due to a special Government “override” we are able to maintain this as a negative balance (normally, we would be expected to write it off against our other reserves). The Government is reviewing the override in March 2026, although it is felt likely that it will be extended.

- 12.9. The service has put in place a range of strategies to mitigate the cost impact of the growth in demand for and complexity of SEN support as part of the HNB Management Recovery Plan and Transformation Project. Leicester is also part of the DfE’s SEND and alternative provision change programme, alongside Leicestershire and Rutland for the East Midlands region.
- 12.10. A saving of £240k was delivered in 2024/25 arising from a review of the Connexions service. The saving was achieved by restructuring it to make it more efficient. Connexions is a careers service for young people who live in Leicester City and are aged 14 to 19, or up to 25 for young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).
- 12.11. This report requests that £2.4m of ringfenced grant income is transferred to reserves to finance expenditure which will be incurred in future years on specific schemes such as family hubs, wraparound childcare and change programme.

Public Health (Director – Rob Howard)

13. Public Health

- 13.1. The Public Health Service spent £23.6m as per budget. Some small variances at service level offset each other.
- 13.2. This breakeven position was possible after drawing down £1.3m of reserves to offset spending on a number of specific projects, specifically children's oral health (£68k), tobacco dependency (£98k), health inequalities (£301k), fuel poverty (£403k) and weight management (£411k).
- 13.3. £106k was transferred to reserves for community vaccines and infection control.
- 13.4. Public Health Services received additional government grants of £3.9m in 2024/25. This targeted funding allows further investment in specific services including substance misuse, smoking cessation and 0-19 children's services. The grants are all ringfenced and monitored through regular returns to the funder.

Corporate Items & Reserves

14. Corporate Items

- 14.1. The corporate budgets cover the Council's capital financing costs, items such as audit fees, bank charges, contingencies and levies. This budget has underspent by £4.2m.
- 14.2. There is a net shortfall on housing benefit subsidy of £1.6m, relating to supported accommodation where rents can be significantly higher than the maximum amount of subsidy paid by the government. The issue has been increasing in recent years, and we understand it is shared by many authorities across the country. This is partially offset by additional amounts reclaimed from tenants and landlords where overpayments have been made.
- 14.3. A capital financing saving of £0.4m arises from cash balances not declining as fast as we expected, and to higher than expected interest rates on these balances. This has been partially offset by losses on the Lothbury property fund winding up, as reported in the treasury management update (also on your agenda).
- 14.4. As previously reported, the underspend includes sums not required to fund the 2024/25 pay award (£0.9m), council tax hardship payments (£0.5m) where Household Support Fund money has been used to fund the scheme in 2024/25, and a receipt from backdated business rates (£0.5m). In addition, expected overspends on coroners' costs and banking charges have been managed within budget. Various additional provisions not required and miscellaneous income have also contributed to the underspend.
- 14.5. In period 3 the demographic pressures contingency was reduced to £2m. This contingency was established to meet unavoidable cost pressures, primarily in social care, and only to be utilised if required. Ongoing work to manage spend has meant that this contingency was not required in year.
- 14.6. A receipt of £7.2m is expected for the Council's share of the surplus from the county-wide business rates pool, plus £0.5m relating to additional rates for the Waterside enterprise zone. It is proposed that these are transferred to the budget reserve in line with the assumptions made as part of the 2025/26 budget report.

Reserves Position

- 1.1 At the start of the 2024/25 financial year, an estimated £80.6m was available to support the budget strategy. The budget adjustments and variances included in this report, and earlier monitoring reports, have updated the position as shown below:

	£m	£m
Resources available 1 April 2024		80.6
Add: additional one-off transfers		10.7
Rates pool funding expected		7.7
Required for 2024/25 budget:		
As set (February 2024)	61.0	
Savings identified	(24.0)	
		(37.0)
Underspend as in this report		15.4
As at 1 April 2025		77.4
Release from earmarked reserves:		
Included in 25/26 budget report	20.1	
Further review at outturn	6.3	
		26.4
Total available		103.8

- 1.2 The 2025/26 budget and capital programme reports approved in February also approved the release of £90m from the capital reserve, which is not included in the table above.
- 1.3 In February, we set a three-year balanced budget to 2027/28, using a combination of one-off monies, savings to be achieved of £23m per year, and cost constraint in demand led services. It was estimated at the time that we would have reserves of £25.2m left to support budgets beyond 2027/28.
- 1.4 This position is affected by the outturn for 2024/25, and the forecasts have been revised as follows (income and expenditure projections have not been revised):

	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
b/fwd	103.8	169.7	123.5
Capital fund	90.0		
Business rates pool	6.0		
Required to meet budget	(30.1)	(46.2)	(68.1)
c/fwd	169.7	123.5	55.4

- 1.5 Thus, reserves at March 2028 are projected to be £30m higher than forecast in February. The position has improved due to the additional savings achieved at outturn, further scrutiny of earmarked reserves (see below) and the use of other funding to reduce the earmarking required.
- 1.6 Members are asked to note that this projection is highly volatile – a forecast of reserves is even more volatile than assumptions about income and expenditure due to the multiplicative effect (e.g. if there are additional pressures in homelessness and social care amounting to £15m per year, then reserves would fall by £45m).
- 1.7 The programme of asset sales to generate £60m over three years is proceeding.
- 1.8 The whole budget position will be reviewed in time for the budget for 2026/27.

2. Earmarked Reserves

2.1 As part of the budget report approved in February, all earmarked reserves were reviewed to release funds where possible, and earmarked reserves were consolidated. A further review has been undertaken at outturn, which has identified an additional £6.3m to support the budget strategy (reflected in the tables at para. 1 above).

2.2 The improvement is in part due to measures taken to reduce the requirement for these reserves (e.g. savings were made on the cost of the King Power Stadium helicopter inquest by holding it at City Hall; the extension of the Household Support Fund has reduced the need for our anti-poverty reserves to be used).

2.3 The remaining General Fund earmarked reserves are:

Description of Reserve(s)	Balance at 1/4/25 £m	Notes
Departmental ring-fenced resources	12.1	Grant funding, with conditions attached.
Partnership funding	10.0	Originating from joint working arrangements (often with the health service). While these may be legally part of our reserve balances, there is a clear expectation that they remain within these projects. Diverting these to other purposes would risk our ongoing relationship with partners.
Insurance Fund	2.2	Meets costs of our self-insured insurance claims. Needs to be

		sufficient for this purpose and is periodically reviewed by actuaries.
Severance Fund	4.7	Meets staff redundancy and other termination costs
Workforce development	4.0	For investment in the workforce, including trainees and apprentices. Despite the budget crisis (or because of it) it is important that we maintain funds for this.
Service transformation fund	6.0	Likely to play a more prominent role in achieving savings through service modernisation.
Building Schools for the Future	6.1	To manage lifecycle maintenance costs of the schools redeveloped under the BSF programme.
Welfare reserve	1.3	Supports welfare reform and provides welfare support more generally.
Cost of technology	8.0	Required for ongoing investment in ICT systems and development work including the implementation of a new finance system detailed in the capital programme report elsewhere on the agenda.
Elections fund	1.4	Funds future local elections
Ward Committees	0.1	
Waste repocurement strategy	8.4	To prepare for a new contract, to take effect from May 2028
TOTAL	64.3	

- 2.4 Members are reminded that we also have a significant negative earmarked reserve. As with most authorities, we spend more than our income on the “high needs” schools’ block (this is further discussed at Appendix B above). There is a special government dispensation for all authorities to maintain a negative balance, and not write it off to the general fund. The balance at the end of 2024/25 is minus £22m. The dispensation is subject to review in March 2026 when the forecast balance would be minus £45m. It is difficult to see how the Government would allow it to end, but it remains a risk. If it happened, the forecast reserve balance at the end of 2027/28 (£56m) would fall substantially.

Savings Identified

- 1.1 As members are aware, when we set the budget for 2025/26 there were savings targets set for Divisions. Since setting the budget Directors have been working on actions they can take to achieve the savings. This report identifies where Directors have been able to take actions to achieve their savings.
- 1.2 The table below provides detail on savings achieved towards the savings targets approved at Council in February 2025.

Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000
Savings Decision Previously Noted in Period 9 Report	1,314	1,314	1,314
<u>Housing General Fund</u>			
Fleet Service Efficiencies	213	213	213
Capitalisation of Staffing Costs	60	60	60
Homelessness Services Efficiencies	253	253	253
HGF Subtotal	526	526	526
<u>Planning, Development & Transportation</u>			
Capitalisation of PDT Staff & Highway Programme Costs	993	1,388	1,398
Concessionary Fares Budget Savings	25	825	825
Highways & Transport Services Efficiency Savings	450	550	555
Parking Services Savings	230	555	555
Planning Service Budget Savings	0	20	40
Parking Fees & Charges (Exec. Decision)	500	550	600
PDT Subtotal	2,198	3,888	3,973
<u>Tourism and Culture Inward Investment</u>			
Growth in income at De Montfort Hall	15	32	32
Reduction in Grants to Arts Organisations	461	461	461
Reduced opening hours at Museums	167	288	318
Efficiency savings within Arts & Museums	304	347	347
Staffing & operational efficiencies within City Centre & Place Marketing teams	72	72	72
New Approach to Festival Procurement	150	150	150
Additional Programme Management Fee Income	50	250	250
Additional Income from Managed Workspaces	0	64	431
TCII Subtotal	1,219	1,664	2,061

Estates & Building Services			
Energy Smart Initiatives (Exec. Decision)	197	197	197
Financial Services			
Virtual Bank Accounts to be introduced within Business Service Centre	150	150	150
Additional income and restructuring within Revenues and Customer Support	250	250	250
FS Subtotal	400	400	400
Children's Services			
Play Association Grants (Exec. Decision)	0	1,000	1,000
Total Savings Reported in this Report	4,540	7,675	8,157
Total Cumulative Savings Reported	5,854	8,989	9,471

- 1.3 In March 2025, the Executive took the decision the purchase the YoHo building to provide temporary accommodation for the homeless. Whilst this does not contribute to the savings targets, it will reduce the net cost of homelessness services by £2.6m per year.
- 1.4 In May, the Executive approved a new SEND travel policy, which will result in savings of £0.9m in 2025/26, rising to £1.9m in 2026/27 and £2.1m in 2027/28.

Executive Decision Capital Budget Monitoring Outturn 2024/25

Overview Select Committee

Decision to be taken by: City Mayor

Decision to be taken on: 9th July 2025

Lead director: Amy Oliver, Director of Finance

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Karen Linnett
- Author contact details: karen.linnett@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to show the final position of the capital programme for 2024/25.
- 1.2 As reported in the previous year's monitoring reports many capital projects have experienced delays in progress and increased costs. This has been attributable to instability in the construction industry, limited contractor capacity and continued inflationary pressures. New pressures in schemes, where possible will be managed within project contingencies and revised scope of works while maintaining the desired project outcomes. When this is not possible it is reported in the monitoring report and decisions are taken as required. These challenges are anticipated to continue for the foreseeable future.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 The Executive is recommended to:
 - Note the following:
 - Total spend of £137.7m for the year.
 - The progress in delivery of major projects, as shown at Appendix A.
 - The progress on spending against work programmes, as shown at Appendix B, and approve the carry-forward of resources into 2025/26 for schemes where spend has slipped (£25.9m).
 - The provisions that remain unspent as shown at Appendix C, and approve the carry forward of the Early Years – Two Year Olds provision of £593k, and the District Heating Metering provisions of £1,404k into 2025/26 (see Appendix C para 1.2).
 - That across a number of schemes, £904k has been saved following completion of schemes below budget. Of this, £639k was funded by

Corporate Resources and will become available for future capital planning.

- Note the prudential indicators presented in Appendix F.
- Approve the following additions to the programme:
 - £411k towards the Leicester Museum and Art Gallery Phase 1 scheme, financed by Heritage Fund grant (see Appendix A, Tourism Culture & Inward Investment para. 2.1).
 - £407k towards the additional provision of Private Sector Disabled Facilities Grants financed by grant funding from MHCLG (see Appendix B, para. 3.19).
 - £798k towards design work for Connecting St Margarets, financed from government grant funding through the Levelling Up Fund.
 - £656k to Local Transport Schemes, funded by the Active Travel Fund Grant (see Appendix A, Planning Development & Transportation para. 2.1).
 - £237k to the High Streets Heritage Action Zones programme, funded by Historic England Grant (see Appendix D, para. 1.2).

The OSC is recommended to consider the overall position presented within this report and make any observations it sees fit.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

N/a

4. Background

- 4.1 The 2024/25 Capital programme was initially approved by Council on 21 February 2024. It has subsequently been amended (including through the 2023/24 outturn and 2025/26 Capital Budget report).

The capital programme is split in the following way:

- (a) Schemes classified as '**immediate starts**', which require no further approval to commence; and
- (b) A number of separate '**policy provisions**' which are not released until specific proposals have been approved by the Executive.

- 4.2 Immediate Starts are further split into:

- (a) **Projects**, which are discrete, individual schemes such as a road scheme or a new building. Monitoring of projects focusses on delivery of projects on time and the achievement of milestones. Consequently, financial slippage is not in itself an issue on these projects;
- (b) **Work Programmes**, which consist of minor works or similar on-going schemes where there is an allocation of money to be spent during a particular year. Monitoring of work programmes focusses on whether the money is spent in a timely fashion;
- (c) **Provisions**, which are sums of money set aside in case they are needed, where low spend is a favourable outcome rather than indicative of a problem;
- (d) **Schemes which are substantially complete**. These schemes are the tail end of previous years' capital programmes, usually consisting of small amounts of money brought forward from earlier years.

4.3 A summary of the total approved 2024/25 capital programme budget and the spend at outturn for the year is shown below:

	Budget £000	Spend £000
Projects	159,934	61,882
Work Programmes	91,318	65,782
Provisions	2,795	798
Schemes Substantially Complete	12,551	9,224
Total Immediate Starts	266,598	137,686
Policy Provisions	16,547	0
Total Capital Programme	283,145	137,686

4.4 The approved budget above does not include the budget approved at Council in February 2025.

4.5 A summary of the total approved 2024/25 capital programme budget and the resources that are funding them:

	£000s					
	Projects	Work Programmes	Provisions	Substantially Complete	Policy Provisions	Total
HRA - Budget	3,786	42,619	1,178	232	750	48,565
GF - Budget	156,148	48,699	1,617	12,319	15,797	234,580
Total	159,934	91,318	2,795	12,551	16,547	283,145
HRA						
Ringfenced	650	5,738	-	232	750	7,370
Unringfenced	3,136	36,881	1,178	-	-	41,195
Total HRA	3,786	42,619	1,178	232	750	48,565
GF						
Ringfenced	39,323	5,130	558	2,550	2,460	50,021
Unringfenced	116,825	43,569	1,059	9,769	13,337	184,559
Total GF	156,148	48,699	1,617	12,319	15,797	234,580

The unringfenced funding, in the above table, includes amounts where budget commitments have been made.

4.6 The following changes have occurred to the capital programme since period 9 2024/25. These movements are included in the table at 4.3 above:

2024/25	Budget £000
Executive Decisions since P9	
Energy Smart Initiatives	2,002
Additional SEND Places - Special schools + DSP	1,750
Gilroes Cemetery	675
Restoring the Soar	579
Slater Primary School - S106	547
Wolsey House Primary School -S106	300
Director's Decisions	
Family Hubs	91
Local Shopping Centres Reopening & Improvement Programme - S106	76
Children's Homes Refurbishments	70
Other Director's Decisions	92
Net Movements	6,182

4.7 The following appendices to this report show progress on each type of scheme:

- Appendix A – Projects
- Appendix B – Work Programmes
- Appendix C – Provisions
- Appendix D – Projects Substantially Complete
- Appendix E – Policy Provisions
- Appendix F – Prudential Indicators

4.8 This report only monitors policy provisions to the extent that spending approval has been given, at which point they will be classified as projects, work programmes or provisions.

4.9 Capital Receipts

4.9.1 At the end of the financial year, the Council has realised £7.2m of General Fund capital receipts. Of this amount, £2.1m relates to receipts on the Waterside development, which pay for spending on the development.

4.9.2 “Right to Buy” receipts from sales of council housing have amounted to £12.1m. Whilst the number of sales in the first half of this year were relatively low, the changes to scheme eligibility in November 2024, have resulted in a large increase in the number of applications; this is likely to increase the number of sales over the next 12 months as the applications are processed. The impact of the changes to scheme eligibility will reduce sales in future years, as indicated by the number of applications received following the change in November 2024. Assumptions relating to the impact of the change in government policy were included in the HRA’s 2025/26 budget report approved at Council in February 2025.

4.10 Prudential Indicators

This report also presents prudential indicators, in accordance with the CIPFA code.

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

5.1 Financial implications

This report deals entirely with financial matters, the implications of which are contained within the report.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy - Head of Finance

Dated: 3rd June 2025

5.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

Signed: Kevin Carter, Head of Law – Commercial, Property & Planning

Dated: 5th June 2025

5.3 Equalities implications

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

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. People from across all protected characteristics should benefit from the improved public good arising from the capital programme. The purpose of this report is to show the final position of the capital programme for 2024/25. At this time, there are no further equality implications as these will have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted.

There may be future projects, arising from the report and its recommendations, which would benefit from further consideration of the equalities implications and possibly a full equality impact assessment in certain circumstances. Whether an Equalities Impact Assessment is required will be dependent upon how work develops and whether the changes are likely to have a disproportionate impact on any protected group; this is usually the case where there are significant changes or a reduction in provision.

Signed: Surinder Singh – Equalities Officer

Dated: 9th June 2025

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

Following the council's declaration of a climate emergency and ambition to reach net zero carbon emissions for the council and the city, the council has a key role to play in addressing carbon emissions relating to the delivery of its services. This includes through its delivery of capital projects, as projects involving buildings and infrastructure often present significant opportunities for achieving carbon savings or climate adaptations and are an area where the council has a high level of control.

Notable projects in the current programme expected to achieve climate benefits / high standards of environmental performance include Pioneer Park, Pilot House, Leicester Urban Natural Flood Management, PV panels at Evington Leisure Centre, Aikman Avenue District Heating project and Connecting Leicester.

It is important that the climate implications and opportunities of all projects and work programmes are considered on a project-by-project basis, both during the development phase and when decisions are made.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer

Dated: 6th June 2025

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

No other implications are noted as this is a budget monitoring report, and therefore no policy changes are proposed.

6. Background information and other papers:

- General Fund Capital Programme 2024/25 and HRA Budget (including Capital Programme) approved by Council on 21 February 2024.
- Capital Outturn 2023/24 presented at OSC on 31 July 2024.
- 2024/25 Capital Monitoring P3 Report presented to OSC on 3 October 2024.
- 2024/25 Capital Monitoring P6 Report presented to OSC on 2 January 2025.
- 2024/25 Capital Monitoring P9 Report presented to OSC on 27 March 2025.
- Capital Programme 2025/26 approved by Council on 19 February 2025.

7. Summary of appendices:

- Appendix A – Projects
- Appendix B – Work Programmes
- Appendix C – Provisions
- Appendix D – Projects Substantially Complete
- Appendix E – Policy Provisions
- Appendix F – Prudential Indicators

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.

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

No

PROJECTS

1. Summary

- 1.1 As stated in the cover report, the focus of monitoring projects is physical delivery, i.e. whether they are being delivered on time, on budget and to the original specification. This appendix summarises progress on projects. Project summaries provided by departments/divisions are shown in the remainder of this Appendix.

Department / Division	Approved Budget £000	2024/25 Spend £000	Forecast (Under) / Overspend £000
Planning, Development & Transportation	35,134	14,462	0
Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment	36,473	17,231	(268)
Neighbourhood & Environmental Services	5,769	969	0
Estates & Building Services	19,363	10,724	0
Housing General Fund	44,995	12,920	0
Children's Services	14,414	5,002	0
Housing Revenue Account	3,786	574	0
Total	159,934	61,882	(268)

- 1.2 A list of the individual projects is shown in the table below. This also summarises the progress of each project. Attention is drawn to expected completion dates and any project issues that have arisen.
- 1.3 A colour-coded rating of progress of each project has been determined, based on whether the project is progressing to the latest approved delivery and cost plan as expected, and whether it is still expected to complete within budget.
- 1.4 The ratings used are:
- (a) **Green** Successful delivery of the project on time, within budget, to specification and in line with original objectives seems very likely. There are no major issues that appear to threaten delivery significantly.
 - (b) **Amber** Successful delivery of the project on time, within budget, to specification and in line with original objectives appears probable. However, some risks exist, and close attention will be required to ensure these risks do not materialise into major issues threatening delivery. Alternatively, a

project is classed as amber if some insubstantial slippage or minor overspend is probable.

- (c) **Red** Successful delivery of the project on time, within budget, to specification and in line with original objectives appears to be unachievable. The project is expected to require redefining, significant additional time or additional budget.
- (d) **Blue** The project is substantially complete.
- (e) **Purple** The project is on hold, for reasons which have nothing to do with management of the capital programme. Examples include reconsideration of whether the project is still needed as originally proposed, or withdrawal of a funder.

2. Summary of Individual Projects

Dept/ Division	Project	Approved Budget (£000)	2024/25 Spend (£000)	Forecast O/(U)spend (£000)	Original Completion Date	Forecast Completion Date	Previous Reported RAG Rating	Project RAG Rating @ Outturn
CDN (PDT)	Connecting Leicester	12,984	10,510	0	Mar-24	Dec-27	Amber	Green
CDN (PDT)	Waterside Strategic Regeneration Area	2,293	(78)	0	Mar-23	Jun-26	Green	Green
CDN (PDT)	St George's Churchyard	229	69	0	Aug-18	Sep-25	Amber	Amber
CDN (PDT)	Leicester Railway Station - Levelling up	17,867	3,637	0	Mar-24	TBC	Red	Red
CDN (PDT)	St Paul's Church	400	0	0	Aug-25	Dec-26	Purple	Purple
CDN (PDT)	Land South of Phoenix	401	120	0	Jun-25	Jun-25	Green	Green
CDN (PDT)	Leicester Urban Natural Flood Management	217	157	0	Mar-27	Mar-27	Green	Green
CDN (PDT)	Heritage Development Trust	164	30	0	Mar-25	Mar-26	Amber	Green
CDN (PDT)	Restoring the Soar	579	17	0	Jul-26	Jul-26	-	Green
CDN (TCI)	Leicester Market Redevelopment	8,676	951	0	Dec-21	Dec-26	Amber	Green
CDN (TCI)	12-20 Cank St Link	2,683	89	0	Jan-25	May-26	Amber	Green
CDN (TCI)	Leicester Museum and Art Gallery Phase 1	6,025	1,399	0	Mar-22	Jun-26	Green	Green
CDN (TCI)	Pilot House - Levelling Up	11,481	9,280	0	Mar-24	Jun-25	Green	Blue
CDN (TCI)	Climate Change Retail Scheme	188	171	0	Mar-25	Mar-25	Green	Blue
CDN (TCI)	Community Digital Grant	135	128	0	Mar-25	Mar-25	Green	Blue
CDN (TCI)	De Montfort Hall	695	377	(268)	Mar-22	Mar-26	Green	Green
CDN (TCI)	Jewry Wall Museum Improvements	6,590	4,836	0	Mar-23	Jun-25	Green	Blue
CDN (NES)	Library Self Access Rollout	542	69	0	Sep-24	Mar-26	Green	Green
CDN (NES)	St Margaret's Pastures Skate Park	397	102	0	Jan-23	Sep-25	Amber	Green
CDN (NES)	Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs)	2,962	447	0	Mar-25	Apr-26	Green	Green
CDN (NES)	Depot Relocation	200	51	0	Mar-25	Mar-26	Amber	Amber
CDN (NES)	Pest & Dogs Depot Relocations	48	0	0	Mar-25	Mar-26	Red	Green
Total		75,756	32,362	(268)				

Dept/ Division	Project	Approved Budget (£000)	2024/25 Spend (£000)	Forecast O/(U)spend (£000)	Original Completion Date	Forecast Completion Date	Previous Reported RAG Rating	Project RAG Rating @ Outturn
CDN (NES)	Leisure Centre Improvements	1,072	0	0	Dec-25	TBC	Amber	Purple
CDN (NES)	Green Libraries Project	150	20	0	Mar-25	Dec-25	Green	Amber
CDN (NES)	PV Panels at Evington Leisure Centre	186	95	0	Mar-25	Mar-25	Green	Blue
CDN (NES)	Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium S106 Improvements	212	185	0	Mar-25	Jul-25	Green	Green
CDN (EBS)	Estate Shops	477	211	0	Mar-22	Dec-25	Amber	Amber
CDN (EBS)	Replacement Cladding Phoenix Square	10,684	8,607	0	Dec-24	Sep-25	Green	Green
CDN (EBS)	St Nicholas Wall	396	34	0	Sep-24	Jun-26	Green	Amber
CDN (EBS)	Aikman Avenue District Heating	195	0	0	Dec-23	TBC	Purple	Purple
CDN (EBS)	Boston Road	1,516	85	0	Jul-25	Mar-26	Amber	Green
CDN (EBS)	SuDS in Schools	50	54	0	Mar-25	Mar-25	Green	Blue
CDN (EBS)	The Curve Remedial Works	2,200	587	0	Oct-25	Oct-25	Green	Green
CDN (EBS)	Tiny Forests in Leicester Schools and Parks	161	157	0	Mar-25	Mar-25	Green	Blue
CDN (EBS)	Haymarket Theatre - Internal Completion Works	1,007	988	0	Mar-21	Jun-25	Green	Blue
CDN (EBS)	Gilroes Cemetery	675	0	0	Sep-25	Sep-25	Green	Green
CDN (EBS)	Energy Smart Initiatives	2,002	0	0	Jun-26	Jun-26	-	Green
CDN (HGF)	Housing Acquisitions – SAP	44,995	12,920	0	Aug-25	Dec-25	Amber	Green
SCE (ECS)	Additional SEND Places (including Pupil Referral Units)	9,461	3,745	0	Jan-24	Sep-27	Red	Green
SCE (ECS)	S106 School Places	847	0	0	Sept-26	Sep-26	-	Green
SCE (ECS)	Pindar Nursery	833	8	0	Mar-23	TBC	Purple	Purple
SCE (ECS)	Expansion of Children's Homes	1,192	654	0	May-23	Sep-25	Green	Green
SCE (ECS)	Education System Re-tender	2,081	595	0	Mar-26	Mar-27	Amber	Green
Total (excluding HRA)		156,148	61,308	(268)				

Dept/ Division	Project	Approved Budget (£000)	2024/25 Spend (£000)	Forecast O/(U)spend (£000)	Original Completion Date	Forecast Completion Date	Previous Reported RAG Rating	Project RAG Rating @ Outturn
CDN (HRA)	Bridlespur Way Refurbishment	370	150	0	Mar-23	Jun-25	Amber	Green
CDN (HRA)	Dawn Centre Reconfiguration	1,461	357	0	May-23	Aug-25	Amber	Amber
CDN (HRA)	St Matthews Concrete Works	1,500	67	0	Mar-24	Oct-25	Green	Green
CDN (HRA)	Council Housing - District Heating	455	0	0	Dec-23	TBC	Purple	Purple
Total HRA		3,786	574	0				
Total (including HRA)		159,934	61,882	(268)				

Commentary on Specific Projects

- 3.1 Explanatory commentary for projects that are not currently progressing as planned, or for which issues have been identified, is provided in the next pages. This has been defined as any scheme that has a RAG Rating other than “green” or “blue”.

Capital Programme Project Monitoring 2024/25 Outturn

Planning, Development & Transportation

1. Projects Summary

Project Name	Approved Budget (£000)	Over / (Under) Spend (£000)	Original Completion Date	Forecast Completion Date	RAG Rating
Connecting Leicester	12,984	0	Mar-24	Dec-27	G
Waterside Strategic Regeneration Area	2,293	0	Mar-23	Jun-26	G
St George's Churchyard	229	0	Aug-18	Sep-25	A
Leicester Railway Station - Levelling up	17,867	0	Mar-24	TBC	R
St Paul's Church	400	0	Aug-25	Dec-26	P
Land South of Phoenix	401	0	Jun-25	Jun-25	G
Leicester Urban Natural Flood Management	217	0	Mar-27	Mar-27	G
Heritage Development Trust	164	0	Mar-25	Mar-26	G
Restoring the Soar	579	0	Jul-26	Jul-26	G
Total	35,134	0			

2. Projects Commentary (for **all** projects rated Amber, Red or Purple)

- 2.1. Connecting Leicester** – This report seeks the addition of £656k to the capital programme funded by the Active Travel Fund grant.
- 2.2. St George's Churchyard** - The project has reached a key milestone with the successful appointment of contractors. All building works are now complete with the remainder of the work to be completed during the summer 2025.

- 2.3. Leicester Station Improvements – Levelling Up** - This is a very large and complex contract. The contracting approach is being carefully reviewed and is subject to detailed discussion with a range of potential contractors. There is confidence that when the contract is retendered, it will be attractive to the market, and we will receive competitive bids.
- 2.4. St Paul’s Church** – As reported in the period 9 report, this project is currently on hold pending further review. The project has been delayed as the owner dissolved the company after the issuance of the initial Urgent Works Notice on the property. The condition of the building continues to deteriorate, and officers are reviewing options to progress the necessary improvement works.

Capital Programme Project Monitoring 2024/25 Outturn

Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment

1. Projects Summary

Project Name	Approved Budget (£000)	Over / (Under) Spend (£000)	Original Completion Date	Forecast Completion Date	RAG Rating
Jewry Wall Museum	6,590	0	Mar-23	Jun-25	B
Leicester Market Redevelopment	8,676	0	Dec-21	Dec-26	G
12-20 Cank St Link	2,683	0	Jan-25	May-26	G
Leicester Museum and Art Gallery Phase 1	6,025	0	Mar-22	Jun-26	G
Pilot House - Levelling Up (Canopy)	11,481	0	Mar-24	Jun-25	B
Climate Change Retail Scheme	188	0	Mar-25	Mar-25	B
Community Digital Grant	135	0	Mar-25	Mar-25	B
De Montfort Hall	695	(268)	Mar-22	Mar-26	G
Total	36,473	(268)			

2 Projects Commentary (for **all** projects rated Amber, Red or Purple)

2.1 Leicester Museum and Art Gallery Phase 1 – This report seeks the addition of £411k to this scheme financed by Heritage Fund grant.

2.2 .De Montfort Hall – Some elements of the programme have come in under budget by achieving outcomes without the up-front capital cost, releasing capital savings of £268k.

Capital Programme Project Monitoring 2024/25 Outturn

Neighbourhood and Environmental Services

1. Projects Summary

Project Name	Approved Budget (£000)	Over / (Under) Spend (£000)	Original Completion Date	Forecast Completion Date	RAG Rating
Library Self Access Rollout	542	0	Sep-24	Mar-26	G
St Margaret's Pastures Skate Park	397	0	Jan-23	Sep-25	G
Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs)	2,962	0	Mar-25	Apr-26	G
Depot Relocation	200	0	Mar-25	Mar-26	A
Pest & Dogs Depot Relocations	48	0	Mar-25	Mar-26	G
Leisure Centre Improvements	1,072	0	Dec-25	TBC	P
Green Libraries Project	150	0	Mar-25	Dec-25	A
PV Panels at Evington Leisure Centre	186	0	Mar-25	Mar-25	B
Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium S106 Improvements	212	0	Mar-25	Jul-25	G
Total	5,769	0			

2. Projects Commentary (for **all** projects rated Amber, Red or Purple).

2.1 Depot Relocation – The initial procurement exercise for a contractor was unsuccessful. Alternative procurement arrangements are now being pursued, but this will extend the anticipated completion date.

2.2 Leisure Centre Improvements – Work is ongoing to develop revised options for the project, as the scope has evolved since its inception. The final scope of the project will depend on the outcome of the feasibility work and the affordability of any proposed works.

2.3 Green Libraries Project – The heating systems have been procured and installed. A slight delay has arisen during the procurement of the final software interface which integrates with wider council systems.

Capital Programme Project Monitoring 2024/25 Outturn
Estates and Building Services

1. Projects Summary

Project Name	Approved Budget (£000)	Over / (Under) Spend (£000)	Original Completion Date	Forecast Completion Date	RAG Rating
Estate Shops	477	0	Mar-22	Jan-26	A
Replacement Cladding Phoenix Square	10,684	0	Dec-24	Sep-25	G
St Nicholas Wall	396	0	Sep-24	Jun-26	A
Aikman Avenue District Heating	195	0	Dec-23	TBC	P
Boston Road	1,516	0	Jul-25	Mar-26	G
SuDS in Schools	50	0	Mar-25	Mar-25	B
The Curve Remedial Works	2,200	0	Sep-25	Oct-25	G
Tiny Forests in Leicester Schools and Parks	161	0	Mar-25	Mar-25	B
Haymarket Theatre - Internal Completion Works	1,007	0	Mar-21	Jun-25	B
Gilroes Cemetery	675	0	Sep-25	Sep-25	G
Energy Smart Initiatives	2,002	0	Jun-26	Jun-26	G
Total	19,363	0			

2. Projects Commentary (for **all** projects rated Amber, Red or Purple).

2.1 Estate Shops – Work has been ongoing during 2024/25 with a new forecast completion date of January 2026. Works to repair concrete spalling at Netherhall shops has been delayed due to the need for coordination with leaseholders.

2.2 St Nicholas Wall – A revised programme is currently being developed, with works now expected to commence in 2025/26. There was a delay in securing diocesan approval for the archaeological investigations, but this issue has now been resolved.

2.3 Aikman Avenue District Heating - The project is currently on hold while viable delivery options are explored. Conversations with the new supplier, Bring Energy, have been hindered by changes in Directors since the company took control.

Capital Programme Project Monitoring 2024/25 Outturn

Housing General Fund

1. Projects Summary

Project Name	Approved Budget (£000)	Over / (Under) Spend (£000)	Original Completion Date	Forecast Completion Date	RAG Rating
Housing Acquisitions - SAP	44,995	0	Aug-25	Dec-25	G
Total	44,995	0			

2 Projects Commentary (for all projects rated Amber, Red or Purple)

Capital Programme Project Monitoring 2024/25 Outturn

Children's Services

1. Projects Summary

Project Name	Approved Budget (£000)	Over / (Under) Spend (£000)	Original Completion Date	Forecast Completion Date	RAG Rating
Additional SEND Places (including Primary Pupil Referral Unit)	9,461	0	Jan-24	Sep-27	G
S106 School Places	847	0	Sep-26	Sep-26	G
Pindar Nursery	833	0	Mar-23	TBC	P
Expansion of Children's Homes	1,192	0	May-23	Sep-25	G
Education System Re-tender	2,081	0	Mar-26	Mar-27	G
Total	14,414	0			

2. Projects Commentary (for all projects rated Amber, Red or Purple).

2.1 Pindar Nursery - Work on this project is currently on hold pending the outcome of the children's centres review. Updates will follow once the review is complete.

Capital Programme Project Monitoring 2024/25 Outturn

Housing (HRA)

1. Projects Summary

Project Name	Approved Budget (£000)	Over / (Under) Spend (£000)	Original Completion Date	Forecast Completion Date	RAG Rating
Bridlespur Way Refurbishment	370	0	Mar-23	Jun-25	G
Dawn Centre Reconfiguration	1,461	0	May-23	Aug-25	A
St Matthews Concrete Works	1,500	0	Mar-24	Oct-25	G
Council Housing - District Heating	455	0	Dec-23	TBC	P
Total	3,786	0			

2. Projects Commentary (for all projects rated Amber, Red or Purple).

2.1. Dawn Centre Reconfiguration - As reported at Period 9, the initial programme of works was completed under budget, allowing for the identification of additional improvements to further enhance the centre. The revised programme has now been confirmed, with completion anticipated by August 2025.

2.2. Council Housing - District Heating – The project is currently on hold while viable delivery options are explored. Conversations with the new supplier, Bring Energy, have been hindered by changes in Directors since the company took control.

WORK PROGRAMMES**1. Summary**

- 1.1 As stated in the cover report, work programmes are minor works or similar on-going schemes where there is an allocation of money to be spent during a particular year. Monitoring of work programmes focusses on whether the money is spent in a timely fashion.

Department / Division	Approved to spend in 24/25 £000	2024/25 Spend £000	Slippage £000	Over/(under) Spend £000
City Development & Neighbourhoods	1,805	560	1,245	0
Planning, Development & Transportation	12,392	8,365	4,128	101
Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment	1,296	482	814	0
Neighbourhood & Environmental Services	609	578	31	0
Estates & Building Services	5,249	2,764	2,393	(92)
Housing General Fund	11,111	4,487	6,624	0
Children's Services	16,237	6,859	9,378	0
Total (excluding HRA)	48,699	24,095	24,613	9
Housing Revenue Account	42,619	41,687	1,267	335
Total (including HRA)	91,318	65,782	25,880	344

2. Summary of Individual Work Programmes

Work Programme	Dept/ Division	Approved £000	2024/25 Spend £000	Slippage £000	Over/ (under) Spend £000
Feasibility Studies	CDN	1,805	560	1,245	0
Transport Improvement Works	CDN (PDT)	4,617	2,429	2,188	0
Bus Engine Retrofitting	CDN (PDT)	376	0	376	0
Air Quality Action Plan	CDN (PDT)	43	42	1	0
Highways Maintenance	CDN (PDT)	5,086	4,350	736	0
Flood Strategy	CDN (PDT)	300	279	21	0
Festival Decorations	CDN (PDT)	50	45	5	0
Local Environmental Works	CDN (PDT)	400	400	0	0
Legible Leicester	CDN (PDT)	42	42	0	0
Potential Strategic Devt. Sites Assessment	CDN (PDT)	568	669	0	101
Architectural & Feature Lighting (Grant)	CDN (PDT)	50	0	50	0
Front Wall Enveloping	CDN (PDT)	394	12	382	0
Transforming Cities Work Programmes	CDN (PDT)	339	1	338	0
Conservation Building Grants	CDN (PDT)	82	66	16	0
Street Nameplates City Branding Programme	CDN (PDT)	45	30	15	0
Heritage Interpretation Panels	CDN (TCI)	221	51	170	0
Local Shopping Centres Reopening & Improvement Programme Grants	CDN (TCI)	823	329	494	0
Community Asset Transfer	CDN (TCI)	252	102	150	0
Parks Plant and Equipment	CDN (NES)	375	375	0	0
Franklyn Fields Public Open Space	CDN (NES)	234	203	31	0
Property & Operational Estate Capital Maintenance Programme	CDN (EBS)	4,965	2,572	2,393	0
Green Homes	CDN (EBS)	142	50	0	(92)
Depots Refurbishment	CDN (EBS)	142	142	0	0
Private Sector Disabled Facilities Grant	CDN (HGF)	2,061	1,554	507	0
Repayable Home Repair Loans	CDN (HGF)	121	0	121	0
Vehicle Fleet Replacement Programme	CDN (HGF)	8,264	2,556	5,708	0
Action Homeless' Supported Living Scheme	CDN (HGF)	665	377	288	0
School Capital Maintenance	SCE (ECS)	14,944	5,811	9,133	0
Brook Mead Academy Capital Contribution	SCE (ECS)	1,000	1,000	0	0
Foster Care Capital Contribution Scheme	SCE (ECS)	293	48	245	0
Total (excluding HRA)		48,699	24,095	24,613	9
Council Housing - New Kitchens and Bathrooms	CDN (HRA)	2,800	2,542	258	0
Council Housing - Boiler Replacements	CDN (HRA)	2,500	2,451	0	(49)
Council Housing - Rewiring	CDN (HRA)	1,610	1,661	0	51
Council Housing - Disabled Adaptations & Improvements	CDN (HRA)	1,200	1,282	0	82
Council Housing - Insulation Works	CDN (HRA)	50	187	0	137
Council Housing - External Property Works	CDN (HRA)	1,008	1,609	(542)	59
Council Housing - Fire and Safety Works	CDN (HRA)	822	877	0	55
Community & Environmental Works	CDN (HRA)	1,234	527	707	0
Affordable Housing - Acquisitions	CDN (HRA)	23,557	23,557	0	0
Public Realm Works	CDN (HRA)	1,338	606	732	0
Feasibility Study for Sheltered Housing	CDN (HRA)	112	0	112	0
New House Build Council Housing	CDN (HRA)	6,388	6,388	0	0
Total HRA		42,619	41,687	1,267	335
Total (including HRA)		91,318	65,782	25,880	344

3. Commentary on Specific Work Programmes

- 3.1 Explanatory commentary for work programmes not currently progressing as planned, or for which issues have been identified is provided below. For monitoring purposes this has been defined as any scheme where budgets have significantly changed, where spend is low or where material slippage is forecast.
- 3.2 **Feasibility Studies** – A number of schemes are progressing well; however, a few have been delayed into the next financial year due to limited available staffing resources.
- 3.3 **Transport Improvement Works** – The Deployment of DfT Transport Improvement Works funds carried over will be considered alongside the recently confirmed Local Transport Grant to deliver a coordinated transport programme for 2025/26.
- 3.4 **Bus Engine Retrofitting** – This ringfenced grant-funded programme has been completed. The government is analysing the outcome of the scheme and, following the national spending review, will determine whether the underspend of £376k can be used locally or must be returned to government.
- 3.5 **Highways Maintenance** – Grant Funding of £586k has been received for Traffic Signals, with plans for this to be spent in 2025/26. In addition, some resurfacing work, including Western Road and University Road, was carried out over Easter, resulting in programmed slippage, which has since been spent.
- 3.6 **Flood Strategy** – Works were committed in 2024/25 but could not be completed within the year due to traffic management constraints and coordination clashes with other street works. The works are now complete.
- 3.7 **Potential Strategic Development Sites Assessment** – Works have been completed ahead of schedule and the overspend will be covered by the capital allocation for the 2025/26 capital programme.
- 3.8 **Architectural & Feature Lighting (Grant)** – Several projects are currently in the pipeline, and we are continuing to collaborate with third parties to progress these forward toward delivery.
- 3.9 **Front Wall Enveloping** – The slippage on this scheme is due to complexities in contacting property owners. The Welford Road scheme is progressing to the tender stage, with works expected to commence in Summer/Autumn 2025.

- 3.10 **Transforming Cities Work Programmes** – A limited number of suppliers has resulted in the need for an extended procurement process. The contract has now been awarded and work is expected to be completed during the summer.
- 3.11 **Conservation Building Grants** – All grants for the scheme have been awarded, with recipients having a year within which to incur expenditure and claim the grant. Full spend will therefore take place by the end of 2025/26.
- 3.12 **Street Nameplates City Branding Programme** - The current phase of Nameplate City Branding programme covers the Old Town district. The coordination of resources aligned to festive decorations meant that work had to be scheduled into April and May of the new financial year.
- 3.13 **Heritage Interpretation Panels** - The work programme is scheduled to continue into 2025/26. It has taken longer than anticipated to secure a supplier for panel installation, resulting in slippage of £170k.
- 3.14 **Local Shopping Centres Reopening & Improvement Programme Grants** - Remaining works are scheduled for completion by March 2026, with two neighbourhood areas already complete and progress underway across three further areas.
- 3.15 **Community Asset Transfer** - The initial phase of the programme was completed by March 2025. Additional funding for 2025/26 has been awarded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and will be allocated to support the next phase of delivery.
- 3.16 **Franklyn Fields Public Open Space** – Works are progressing well on site, with all equipment now installed. The project is substantially complete, with the exception of outstanding drainage basin works.
- 3.17 **Property & Operational Estate Capital Maintenance Programme** – As previously reported, the slippage on this programme reflects the strategic prioritisation of The Curve and Haymarket Shopping Centre projects, with other works re-profiled accordingly. Additional minor delays have occurred due to access constraints at public-facing sites.

- 3.18 **Green Homes** – As previously reported, there has been an underspend against this external grant; the underspend of £92k will be returned to the Department of Energy, Security and Net Zero.
- 3.19 **Private Sector Disabled Facilities Grant** – All funds have been fully committed. While some delays have occurred due to customer cancellations, the programme continues to support high demand and remains responsive to changing individual needs. This report seeks approval for the addition of £407k financed by additional grant funding from MHCLG.
- 3.20 **Repayable Home Repair Loans** – As reported throughout the year, staff are currently prioritising Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG), with the loan scheme slipping into 2025/26. Requests for loans have been received and are being processed, with any urgent repairs being addressed promptly.
- 3.21 **Vehicle Fleet Replacement Programme** - Vehicle replacement is ongoing and will continue into 2025/26. While orders have been placed for the majority of the approved budget, £5.7m will slip into next year primarily due to long lead in times which are being experienced throughout the motor industry.
- 3.22 **Action Homeless' Supported Living Scheme** – The overall spend remains on track, with the project completion and final payment due in summer 2025.
- 3.23 **School Capital Maintenance** – The slippage is primarily due to unforeseen additional works at two schools, including necessary re-piping that could not be completed during the summer holidays due to contractor capacity. To minimise disruption, additional non-intrusive works are being carried out during term time to allow the major works to progress during holiday time. Furthermore, some decarbonisation works have been delayed due to utilities-related complications, and two other projects have faced delays due to unforeseen building issues.
- 3.24 **Foster Care Capital Contribution Scheme** – Two projects were initiated during the year, to a total value of £108k. Billing for these projects is expected in the first half of 2025/26, as the schemes are currently awaiting land registry confirmation of the status of ownership.
- 3.25 **HRA Work Programmes** – A number of schemes detailed below have under or overspent during the year. The net overspend on these schemes is £335k, and this will be financed from in-year revenue underspends.

- 3.26 **Council Housing - New Kitchens and Bathrooms** – Due to the limited capacity of contractors, remedial work to property acquisitions has been prioritised. Resources that were earmarked to complete work on kitchens and bathrooms have been allocated to void properties due to the high demand for housing resulting from temporary accommodation pressures. With this, slippage of £258k will carry forward into 2025/26.
- 3.27 **Council Housing - Boiler Replacements** – The replacement of boilers is an ongoing programme, and works are completed on a reactive basis. Therefore, a small underspend has been generated in the year.
- 3.28 **Council Housing – Rewiring** – Additional contractor capacity became available during the year, which was utilised to carry out more electrical upgrades to assure the safety of our housing stock.
- 3.29 **Council Housing - Disabled Adaptations & Improvements** – Demand for adaptations is increasing year on year, with the current overspend resulting from the council's commitment to limit the wait for adaptations to be completed.
- 3.30 **Council Housing - Insulation Works** – This programme has overspent by £137k due to increased demand for top ups of loft insulation.
- 3.31 **Council Housing - External Property Works** – There has been increased completions of roofing and external works as a result of issuing roof replacement work to contractors. This is bringing work forward from 2025/26 and will be financed from next year's approved budget.
- 3.32 **Council Housing - Fire and Safety Works** – Structural work surveys were commissioned on a tower block, leading to a small overspend.
- 3.33 **Community & Environmental Works** – As reported at Period 9, the technical team has been focussed on delivery of heat meter installations. The slippage of £477k will be used to support the improvements and capital repair work of the heating network. Some of the smaller communal projects have been delayed due to resourcing shortages resulting in slippage of £221k into 2025/26.
- 3.34 **Public Realm Works** – As reported at period 9, works have been re-profiled to start in the spring, leading to £732k of slippage into 2025/26.

- 3.35 **Feasibility Study for Sheltered Housing** – This project hasn't commenced yet due to the lack of technical resource within Housing to progress it, as other works have been prioritised. The £112k budget for this programme will be slipped into 2025/26.

PROVISIONS**1. Summary**

- 1.1 As stated in the cover report, provisions are sums of money set aside in case they are needed, where low spend is a favourable outcome rather than indicative of a problem.
- 1.2 Normally provisions are there if needed. The sums below are for the 2024/25 financial year.

Provision	Dept/ Division	Approved £000	2024/25 Spend £000	Remaining Budget £000
Early Years - Two Year Olds	SCE (ECS)	593	0	593
District Heating Metering	CDN (HGF)	1,024	0	1,024
District Heating Metering	CDN (HRA)	1,178	798	380
Total		2,795	798	1,997

PROJECTS SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETE

1. Summary

1.1 As at the end of the 2024/25 financial year, the following schemes were nearing completion. The budgets are the unspent amounts from previous years' capital programmes, mainly as a result of slippage.

1.2 This report seeks the addition of £237k to the High Streets Heritage Action Zones programme, funded by Historic England Grant.

Project	Dept/ Division	Approved £000	2024/25 Spend £000	Over/(Under) Spend £000
Network Wi-Fi Replacement	CRS	300	285	(15)
Off-site Cloud Backup	CRS	388	184	0
City-wide Parkmap TRO review, signs and lines upgrades	CDN (PDT)	14	2	0
High Streets Heritage Action Zones	CDN (PDT)	133	193	0
Electric Bus Investment	CDN (PDT)	8	0	0
Pioneer Park - Levelling Up	CDN (PDT)	7,432	6,564	0
Pioneer Park Commercial Workspace (formerly Dock 2)	CDN (TCI)	45	45	0
Gresham Business Workspace	CDN (TCI)	9	1	0
Ugandan Asians – 50 Year Anniversary Commemoration	CDN (TCI)	154	(3)	(157)
Abbey Park Precinct Wall	CDN (NES)	12	14	2
Spinney Hills Park - Levelling Up	CDN (NES)	12	8	(4)
Spinney Hills Park	CDN (NES)	150	23	9
African Caribbean Centre Maintenance	CDN (NES)	20	20	0
Study Zones	CDN (NES)	94	38	0
Parks and Open Spaces	CDN (NES)	188	81	(107)
Haymarket House, Car Parks & Lifts	CDN (EBS)	107	106	(1)
Haymarket Bus Station - Toilet Expansion and Refurbishments	CDN (EBS)	48	54	6
Leycroft Road Energy Reduction Works	CDN (EBS)	88	0	0
Aylestone Leisure Centre PV Panels	CDN (EBS)	284	24	(260)
Phoenix Arts Car Park	CDN (EBS)	46	17	(29)
Changing Places - Disabled Facilities Toilets	CDN (EBS)	192	110	(82)
Leisure Centre Air Handling Units	CDN (EBS)	31	17	0
Additional Primary School Places	SCE (ECS)	58	38	0
Expansion of Oaklands Special School	SCE (ECS)	879	169	0
Overdale Infant and Juniors School Expansion	SCE (ECS)	382	163	0
Family Hubs	SCE (ECS)	94	96	2
S106 Additional School Places	SCE (ECS)	413	47	0

Children's Homes Refurbishments	SCE (ECS)	476	475	0
Winstanley Contact Centre	SCE (ECS)	263	245	0
Goscote Site Carpark	CDN (HRA)	232	208	0
Total		12,551	9,224	(636)

POLICY PROVISIONS**1. Summary**

- 1.1. As at the end of the 2024/25 financial year, the following policy provisions were still awaiting formal approval for allocation to specific schemes.

Department/ Division	Policy Provision	Amount £000
CDN (TCII)	Tourism & Culture	10
CDN (NES)	Library Investment	1,000
CDN (EBS)	Growing Spaces	301
CDN (Various)	Match Funding	3,000
CDN (Various)	People & Neighbourhoods	392
SCE (ECS)	New School Places	1,923
SCE (ASC)	Extra Care Schemes	5,936
Other	Black Lives Matter	435
All	Programme Contingency	2,800
Total (excluding HRA)		15,797
CDN (HRA)	Other HRA Schemes	750
Total HRA		750
Total (including HRA)		16,547

- 1.2. There are no additions to policy provisions since the 2024/25 P9 report.

Prudential Indicators

Summary

Under the requirements of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, the full Council sets prudential indicators for the authority at the beginning of each year as part of the Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Strategy. This appendix reports on compliance during the year.

1. Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

The Authority is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the Authorised Limit for external debt) each year and to keep it under review. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

	2024/25 Authorised Limit £m*	2024/25 Operational Boundary £m*	Debt at 31/03/25 £m	Complied?
Borrowing	650	550	154	yes
PFI and Finance Leases	500	450	80	yes
Total debt	1,150	1,000	234	

* Provisional subject to 2024/25 accounts audit

2. Maturity Structure of Borrowing

This indicator is set to control the Authority’s exposure to refinancing risk (i.e. not having to repay too much and then borrow again at the same time). The upper and lower limits on the maturity of all borrowing were:

	Upper Limit £m	Lower Limit £m	31/03/25 Actual £m	Complied?
Under 12 months	50	Nil	20	yes
12 months and within 24 months	100	Nil	nil	yes
24 months and within 5 years	150	Nil	nil	yes
5 years and within 10 years	200	Nil	nil	yes

3. Short-term Treasury Management Investments

The Council has an overall limit for investments. We invest mainly in money markets and with other Local Authorities for short-term investments as we are able to call the money back for any immediate spending needs. Further details on the limits can be found in the mid-year Treasury report to Overview Select Committee.

4. Long-term Treasury Management Investments

The Council has a limit of £50m for long-term investments. The total sum of such investments held by the Council as of 31 March 2025 was £16.186m which includes £6.186 in property funds, the limit was therefore complied with. It should be noted that the Council received 5 repayment of investment instalments up to 31 March 2025 totalling £2.106m following the termination of the fund in April 2024. Further details are available in Treasury report presented to Council on 19 February 2025.

5. Gross Debt and the Capital Finance Requirement (CFR)

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is called the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR).

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital finance requirement, except in the short term. The authority has complied and expects to continue to continue to comply with this requirement.

6. Liability Benchmark

The Liability Benchmark forecasts the underlying need to borrow for capital purposes over the next 50 years, to make sure it remains within the CFR. Our forecasts suggest we will comply with this requirement.

Income Collection Outturn 2024/25

Overview Select Committee

Date of Meeting: 9th July 2025

Lead director: Amy Oliver, Director of Finance

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Mick Weaver, Accountant
- Author contact details: Mick.Weaver@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: V3

1. Summary

This report details progress made in collecting debts raised by the Council during the year 2024-25 together with debts outstanding and brought forward from the previous year. It also sets out details of debts written off under delegated authority that have not been possible to collect at reasonable effort and expense.

This is a routine report made to members twice each year.

Figures included in this report need to be seen in the context of the total amount of income collected by the Council each year: in 2024/25 the total amount raised from the areas covered in this report was £560m. Whilst some debt is difficult to collect, and some people find it difficult to pay, ultimately, we collect nearly all the money due to us.

The key issues in the report are as follows:

- (a) Improvements to processes for collecting local taxation (council tax and business rates) are continuing, and have led to encouraging increases in collection performance;
- (b) Rent arrears remain higher than two years ago, due to economic conditions facing our tenants;
- (c) There has been an increase in older debt in the “other income” category, largely due to an increase in the debt which was raised. The report outlines steps being taken to reduce this.

2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 The OSC is recommended to:

- Consider the overall position presented within this report and make any observations.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

N/A

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

Appendix A provides a summary of all debt.

Appendix B provides more detailed information and narrative for each main category of debt

Appendix C provides a summary of all the write-offs during the period.

Appendix D provides a summary of Write Offs Over £5k for 2024/25

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

5.1 Financial implications

The report details the Council's performance in collecting debts and amounts which have had to be written off.

Signed: Mark Noble, Head of Finance

Dated: 3 May 2025

5.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report, which is for information purposes.

Signed: Kevin Carter– Head of Law - Commercial, Property & Planning

Dated: 13 May 20256 November 2024

5.3 Equalities implications

This report details progress made in collecting debts raised by the Council during the year 2024-25. The Council must make every effort to collect its due debts. The Council aims to collect debt in a fair, proportionate and respectful manner.

Communications with residents are designed to prompt timely payment from residents who can pay, and early engagement from those who may have difficulties in making payments.

Copies of the Council's debt policy is available on the website

<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/how-we-work/debt-enforcement/if-you-are-struggling-to-pay>

Recovery action needs to strike a fair balance between sensitivity to debtors who are struggling to pay and the interests of the public as a whole (the income expected is part of our budget).

Effective communications are central to maximising income collection. Timely and accessible communications will help customers make the required payments. It is important to provide information clearly and transparently to debtors on what/how to pay, what to do if they can't pay and what actions we may take; assist them in understanding the situation, their options and what is required of them as individuals before further recovery progression.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 8 May 2025

5.5 Climate Emergency implications

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

Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

30 June 2025

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

No other implications are noted as this is an income collection report, and therefore no policy changes are proposed.

6. Background information and other papers:

Finance Procedure Rules

Debt Policy

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A provides a summary of all debt.

Appendix B provides more detailed information and narrative for each main category of debt

Appendix C provides a summary of all the write-offs during the period.

Appendix D provides a summary of Write Offs Over £5k for 2024/25

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

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

No

Summary of all Debt

Income Type	Debts brought forward @ 1/4/2024 £m	Debt raised £m	Collected £m	Written off £m	Debts outstanding @ 31/03/2025 £m
Business Rates (including Costs)	14.21	101.64	(98.81)	(2.15)	14.89
Council Tax (including Costs)	37.76	185.13	(181.19)	(3.28)	38.42
Housing Benefit Overpayments	7.64	2.28	(2.90)	(0.34)	6.68
Council House Rents	3.52	95.32	(94.92)	(0.06)	3.86
On and Off-Street Car Parking fines	3.10	6.25	(4.09)	(1.28)	3.98
Moving Traffic Enforcement	1.01	1.60	(1.17)	(0.49)	0.95
Other Income	20.11	167.68	(152.36)	(1.18)	34.25
Totals	87.35	559.90	(535.44)	(8.78)	103.03

1. Business Rates

1.1 Headline Figures for period under review including costs

Uncollected debt b/f £m	Debt raised £m	Debt collected £m	Debt written off £m	Uncollected debt c/f £m
14.21	101.64	(98.81)	(2.15)	14.89

1.2 Background and comparator information

Background Information

Business Rates are a national tax paid by just over 12,600 businesses in Leicester.

Comparator Information

Below shows the in-year collection rate over the last two years:

- Collection to 31st March 2024 – 95.00%
- Collection to 31st March 2025 – 95.36%

It should be noted that unpaid debt at 31st March continues to be collected in the following year. To 31st March 2025 we had collected £5.0m of the £14.21m prior years' debt due. However, adding the uncollected debt for the 2024/25 year increases the overall starting position at 1st April 2025 to £14.89m

As mentioned in the 6 monthly progress report, arrears have been impacted by the unoccupied property debt owed by Highcross Shopping Centre Ltd. This amounts to £2m of arrears and is being actively pursued.

As at 31st March 2025, our collection performance places us 10th out of 13 authorities with comparable populations, up two places from last year.

1.3 Debt write-off

Reason for Write Off ↓	No.	Value £000
Unable to Trace	53	42
Deceased – No Assets	9	1
Insolvent / Bankrupt/ Liquidated	598	1,588
All recovery options exhausted / irrecoverable at reasonable expense, including adjustments for costs and write on	719	518
Totals	1,379	2,149

1.4 Volume/policy/statutory changes that have occurred during the period and their impact

Changes

The retail, hospitality, and leisure business rates relief scheme continued to apply in 2024/25 to provide eligible, occupied properties with 75% relief, up to a cash cap of £110,000 per business.

From 1st April 2025, this relief has been reduced to 25%.

1.5 Summary of measures taken to recover debt

Debt recovery measures

Economic conditions continue to impact collection of business rates.

Our normal recovery process is:

- A reminder will be sent if an instalment is missed.
- If the instalment is paid within 7 days of the reminder, the right to pay by instalments is maintained; if a subsequent instalment is missed a final notice will be issued stating that the right to pay by instalments has been lost and the full charge has become payable.
- If the instalment is not paid within 7 days of the reminder, the full charge becomes payable.

If the full charge becomes payable and is not paid within 7 days, a summons will be issued, and a liability order sought at the Magistrates' Court. Costs become payable at this stage.

Our collection processes are continuously reviewed to improve in-year and arrears collection. As part of this, we are issuing a SMS message to businesses prior to issuing summonses and focusing recovery action on rate payers with high levels of arrears with the help of external solicitors.

At the start of the year we worked with two enforcement agencies, and added a third in September, with a view to improving methods of collection, whilst assisting those businesses facing difficulties by promoting eligibility for reliefs and extended payment arrangements.

Payment arrangement can be made online or over the phone.

We are also ensuring that customers struggling to pay can speak to a business rates officer through a call back service to discuss payment of the outstanding debt and any other support that may be available.

Looking Forward

Looking ahead to 2025/26, we will continue to focus on strengthening our approach to business rates collection in a way that balances firm recovery with support for local businesses. The improvement in our in-year collection rate to 95.36% delivered in the face of ongoing economic headwinds and sector-specific

pressures reflects the positive impact of targeted interventions and proactive engagement with ratepayers.

To further develop this approach, we will introduce a more formal system of debt segmentation, allowing us to group outstanding business rates debt by factors such as value, age, and recovery potential. This will enable more precise targeting of recovery action, ensuring we apply the right level of resource and support to each case. For example, high-value commercial arrears can be escalated appropriately, while businesses facing temporary cashflow issues can be offered tailored payment plans.

We are also taking steps to build on this year's improvement in in-year collection by:

- Expanding the use of pre-summons communications—such as SMS and email to encourage early resolution.
- Enhancing our data-driven targeting of accounts.
- Working closely with external recovery agents and legal partners to pursue complex or higher-risk debts more effectively.
- Promoting digital self-service options for payment plans and relief applications, to reduce frustration for compliant businesses.

These changes will help ensure our recovery strategy remains efficient and fair, supporting collection performance while recognising the wider pressures businesses may be facing.

2. Council Tax

2.1 Headline Figures for period under review including costs

Uncollected debt b/f £m	Debt raised £m	Debt collected £m	Debt written off £m	Uncollected debt c/f £m
37.76	185.13	(181.19)	(3.28)	38.42

2.2 Background and comparator information

Background information

Council tax is a national tax, charged to over 145,400 properties in Leicester. The amount we collect includes sums charged by the fire authority and the police and crime commissioner.

The Council continues to work with households struggling to pay and would encourage anyone in this situation to contact us early.

Comparator information

The following shows the percentage debt collection in the year it is raised over the last two years:

- Collection to 31st March 2024 – 92.60%
- Collection to 31st March 2025 – 93.37%

The debt collected has improved from the previous year, despite the increase in the overall level of council tax and the general cost of living pressures.

As at 31st March 2025, our collection performance places us 9th out of 13 authorities with comparable populations, up two places from last year.

It should be noted that unpaid debt on 31st March continues to be collected in the following year. To 31st March 2025 we had reduced the arrears by £13.0m gross of the £37.76m prior years' debt due. However, adding the uncollected debt for the 2024/25 year increases the overall starting position at 1st April 2025 to £38.28m.

2.3 Debt write-off

Reason for Write Off ↓	No.	Value £000
Unable to Trace	4,459	1,546
Deceased – No Assets	615	174
Insolvent / Bankrupt/ Liquidated	2,592	680
All recovery options exhausted / irrecoverable at reasonable expense, including adjustments for costs and write on	12,471	875
Totals	20,137	3,275

2.4 Volume/policy/statutory changes that have occurred during the period and their impact

Changes

From 1st April 2024, unfurnished properties that have been empty for one year or more are charged a premium of up to 100%. This premium was previously charged after two years.

The 100% discount for one calendar month from when a property first became vacant was reviewed and no longer applies from 1st April 2025.

From 1st April 2025, dwellings that are occupied periodically (often referred to as second homes), are also subject to a 100% premium. However, the Government issued regulations which allows exceptions to these premiums.

Changes have also been introduced for the council tax support scheme from the same date. As the new scheme will be less generous, we will need to monitor the impact closely to help us target the hardship support fund effectively.

2.5 Summary of measures taken to recover debt

Debt recovery measures

As of 31st March 2025, council tax support has been credited to 25,868 accounts, at a cost of £26.1m to the Council.

The council tax discretionary relief scheme also provides support to households experiencing extreme financial hardship. As at 31st March 2025, just over £0.6m was paid to eligible households to make their council tax payments affordable. This is funded by the Council.

The usual recovery process after a reminder instalment has been missed is:

- If the instalment is paid within 7 days of the reminder, the right to pay by instalments is maintained; if a further instalment is missed, another reminder can be issued; if a third instalment is missed, a final notice will be issued stating that the right to pay by instalments is lost and the full balance becomes payable.
- If the instalment is not paid within 7 days of the first /second reminder, the right to pay by instalments is lost and the full balance becomes payable.
- If the full balance becomes payable and is not paid within 7 days, a summons will be issued, and a liability order sought at the Magistrates Court.

As with business rates, collection processes are continuously being reviewed to improve in-year and arrears collection. As part of this, we are issuing SMS message prior to issuing summonses, focusing recovery action on charge payers with high level of arrears and making greater use of charging orders to secure outstanding debts.

We are also engaging with our external enforcement agents to improve methods of collection, whilst protecting the most vulnerable.

At every stage of the recovery process, the council taxpayer is offered a formal payment arrangement. Within the recovery process, safeguards have been put in place to protect the most vulnerable.

Understanding the struggles households and businesses may be experiencing, we continue to encourage residents and ratepayers to contact the Council as soon as possible so that a suitable payment arrangement or any entitlement to discounts, exemptions and discretionary relief can be discussed.

From August 2024, council taxpayers are also able to request a payment arrangement through their online Revenues and Benefits account.

Furthermore, any customer contacting us with regards to their council tax payments, continues to be referred to the Council's cost of living support on our website, where they can receive help with benefits and other advice and support.

We are also ensuring that customers struggling to pay can speak to a council tax officer to discuss payment of the outstanding debt and any other support that may be available.

Looking Forward

Looking ahead to 2025/26, we are committed to building on the progress achieved this year, particularly the improvement in our in-year collection rate, which rose to 93.37% despite continued cost-of-living challenges. This improvement reflects our investment in proactive engagement, use of digital tools, and focus on early intervention, all of which we will continue to expand and refine.

A key development in our approach will be the implementation of debt segregation. By categorising outstanding debts based on characteristics such as age, amount, and collectability, we can apply more targeted and appropriate recovery strategies. This segmentation will allow us to better prioritise resource allocation, improve recovery of older or more complex arrears, and reduce the overall debt burden.

We are also taking steps to further improve our in-year collection performance. These include:

- Expanding the use of predictive analytics to identify customers at risk of falling into arrears.
- Enhancing our digital self-service channels, making it easier for residents to set up or amend payment arrangements.
- Continuing to work closely with enforcement agents to ensure effective collection practices, with a focus on protecting vulnerable residents.
- Increasing our use of SMS and email communications to provide timely reminders and reduce escalation to formal recovery stages.

These actions support our wider ambition to deliver a fair, efficient, and customer-focused service that balances strong financial management with support for those who need it most

3. Overpaid Housing Benefit

3.1 Headline Figures for period under review including costs

Uncollected debt b/f £m	Debt raised £m	Debt collected £m	Debt written off £m	Uncollected debt c/f £m
7.64	2.28	(2.90)	(0.34)	6.68

3.2 Background and comparator information

Background information

Housing benefit overpayments arise from delays in claimants reporting changes in circumstances. This is particularly true with respect to income and household composition and the retrospective impact of DWP and HMRC data matching. Furthermore, there are complexities around UC interactions together with processing delays in both supported and temporary accommodation. To minimise overpayments, we are increasing the use of automation, targeted compliance checks and improved data sharing with DWP.

Overall, housing benefit debt continues to reduce from £7.64m at 31/03/2024 to £6.68m at 31/03/2025.

Comparator information

Debt outstanding at:

- 31/03/2020 £13.74m
- 31/03/2021 £11.02m
- 31/03/2022 £9.45m
- 31/03/2023 £8.66m
- 31/03/2024 £7.64m
- 31/03/2025 £6.68m

3.3 Debt write-off

Reason for Write Off ↓	No.	Value £000
Unable to Trace	24	44
Deceased – No Assets	6	47
Insolvent / Bankrupt/ Liquidated	27	41
All recovery options exhausted / irrecoverable at reasonable expense, including adjustments for costs and write on	436	210
Totals	493	341

3.4 Volume/policy/statutory changes that have occurred during the period and their impact

Changes

There are no changes to report on overpaid housing benefit.

3.5 Summary of measures taken to recover debt

Debt recovery measures

Debt is collected by means of deduction from ongoing benefit payments if there is a current entitlement to housing benefit.

Legislation permits us to deduct overpayments from other state benefits. However, when people transfer to universal credit our ability to collect weakens as we are 19th on the priority of creditors list. (A maximum of 3 deductions are allowed at any one time – if rent, council tax & utility bills are owed – the Council would not receive any monies in relation to the housing benefit debt).

If there is no current housing benefit entitlement, payment is requested from the customer in the first instance before an invoice is raised.

Where no benefits are in payment, but the debtor is in employment we seek to obtain a Direct Earnings Attachment.

The Council continues to work with those struggling to pay on a case-by-case basis, offering payment arrangements. Debt is not waived.

The workload associated with this income category continues to diminish as claimants transfer to universal benefit.

4. Housing Rent

4.1. Headline Figures for period under review

Uncollected debt b/f £m	Debt raised £m	Debt collected £m	Debt written off £m	Uncollected debt c/f £m
3.52	95.32	(94.92)	(0.06)	3.86

4.2 Background and comparator information

Background information

The authority currently collects rent from approximately 18,900 tenancies across the City. Approximately, 4,500 of our tenants (24%) are on full or partial Housing Benefit and 9,300 (49%) on Universal Credit. The debt raised & collected includes the element paid by Housing Benefit

Comparator information

Current tenant rent arrears have stayed consistent with last year, remaining at a level of £2.3m. Like many social landlords nationally, the team faced significant challenges in collecting rent and service charges, including managing changes to welfare benefits and the ongoing migration of Universal Credit. Due to the timing of the HRA period, 6 days following this report, current tenant debtors had fallen to £1.7m which highlights the hard work and resilience of the Income Collection Team. Furthermore, cash collected increased by 7.7% which is positive given the challenges being faced.

Since last year, total arrears have increased by £0.3m, relating to District Heating and Hostel Debt. However, a significant proportion of this debt is less than 90 days old and is also partially due to timing differences in housing benefit claims being processed.

Rent arrears usually from former tenants for previous years are baked into the overall debt and will take time to recover, if at all. We do not write off rent arrears unless the tenant is deceased or no longer a resident in the country, this leads to a “stagnant” pool of debt that remains unpaid, and inflates the debt carried forward year on year.

4.3. Debt write-off

Reason for Write Off ↓	No.	Value £000
Unable to Trace	0	0
Deceased – No Assets	0	0
Insolvent / Bankrupt/ Liquidated	0	0
All recovery options exhausted / irrecoverable at reasonable expense, including adjustments for costs and write on	128	56
Totals	128	56

4.4. Volume/policy/statutory changes that have occurred during the period and their impact

Changes

It is now over 8 years since the implementation of UC, and the roll out of the full UC commenced at the beginning of 2024. Under the latest plans, it is anticipated the managed migration of the final group of legacy benefit claimants will be completed by 2028/29.

Tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit can have it paid directly into their rent account. However, under UC money is paid directly to the claimant rather than the Council. Vulnerable tenants and those with a history of rent arrears or homelessness may be able to have their rent paid directly to the Council, as landlord, by applying for an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA).

The continuing expectation is that tenants should be paying their rent and abiding by all terms of their tenancy agreement to the best of their ability. Various support is available to assist tenants to pay their rent as normal.

4.5 Summary of measures taken to recover debt

Debt recovery measures

The Income Management Team are working with the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) to minimise any impact of UC roll out. Tenants continue to be supported with income maximisation and claims for HB and UC, which can assist with rent payments. The team provide support to claim Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), when available and this year so far, have distributed the £1.1m allocation of the Household Support Fund (HSF) to help secure tenants and those in temporary accommodation, who were in rent arrears and met the criteria.

Rent Management Advisors are supporting vulnerable tenants to claim and maintain UC and other welfare benefit streams, including disability related benefits.

5. Parking Fines (Penalty Charge Notice)

5.1 Headline Figures for period under review

Uncollected debt b/f £m	Debt raised £m	Debt collected £m	Debt written off £m	Uncollected debt c/f £m
3.10	6.25	(4.09)	(1.28)	3.98

5.2 Background and comparator information

Background information

The Council issues penalty notices for both on-street and off-street parking charge evasion, as well as illegal parking. There are two nationally set rates based on the seriousness of the offence, details below.

- £25 or £35 if paid within 14 days.
- £50 or £70 if paid after 14 days.

When the penalty notices are written off, they are done so at the full rate plus any costs incurred.

Comparator information

The percentage of tickets issued during the year, paid at 31st March:

- 2023/2024 – 75%
- 2024/2025 – 76%

5.3. Debt write-off

Reason for Write Off ↓	No.	Value £000
Unable to Trace	4,989	518
Deceased – No Assets	34	4
Insolvent / Bankrupt/ Liquidated	443	48
All recovery options exhausted / irrecoverable at reasonable expense, including adjustments for costs and write on	6,277	712
Totals	11,743	1,282

5.4 Volume/policy/statutory changes that have occurred during the period and their impact

Changes

Although, the number of CEOs (excluding seniors and supervisors) has decreased to 55 in March '25 compared with 60 in March '24, the number of PCN's issued continues to increase compared with 23/24. Last year 109,534 tickets were issued and 120,886 this year, an increase of 10.4%. This has been facilitated by the new system and handheld devices used by CEOs since they were introduced in April 2023.

The increase can also be attributed to staff becoming more proficient and experienced with the systems and equipment used. The Parking Enforcement Team are continuing to recruit new staff to carry out enforcement of existing, as well as new parking restrictions being introduced around the city.

Income generated by parking PCNs has steadily increased but is still limited somewhat by changes in working behaviour and patterns, shopping behaviour and changes and reductions to on-street parking availability in the city.

The number of no-trace cases continues to affect the recovery of debt as vehicles can be registered without proof of identity being provided.

5.5. Summary of measures taken to recover debt

Usual Debt recovery measures

- Reminder letters
- Legal action
- Enforcement action (bailiffs)
- Staff training and general discussions and improvements

6. Moving Traffic Enforcement Fines

6.1 Headline Figures for period under review

Uncollected debt b/f £m	Debt raised £m	Debt collected £m	Debt written off £m	Uncollected debt c/f £m
1.01	1.60	(1.17)	(0.49)	0.95

6.2 Background and comparator information

Background information

The Council issues penalty notices to motorists for driving in Bus Lanes/Gates or Bus Stop Clearways (red routes) and Moving Traffic Offences for stopping in a box junction and school streets.

These are levied at £70, discounted to £35 if paid within 21 days.

When the penalty notices are written off, they are done so at the full rate plus any costs incurred.

In November 2024, we started to enforce yellow box junctions at Vaughan Way/Causeway Lane junction and Gravel St/Abbey Street Junction. In January 2025, we started camera enforcement for School Streets at Overdale School, with cameras on Eastcourt Road and Northfold Road. Access is restricted during school hours, from 8 AM to 9 AM and 2:30 PM to 4 PM. Initially, the council will issue warning notices for first-time offenders. Continued violations will result in a live Penalty Charge Notice (PCN), with fines consistent across all Moving Traffic Contraventions.

Comparator information

The percentage of tickets issued during the year, paid at 31st March:

- 2023/2024 – 76%
- 2024/2025 – 72%

6.3 Debt write-off

Reason for Write Off ↓	No.	Value £000
Unable to Trace	1,857	126
Deceased – No Assets	29	3
Insolvent / Bankrupt/ Liquidated	173	20
All recovery options exhausted / irrecoverable at reasonable expense, including adjustments for costs and write on	3,599	344
Totals	5,658	493

6.4 Volume/policy/statutory changes that have occurred during the period and their impact

Changes

Four new cameras were installed in the second half of 2023/24 and have been operational for the whole of 2024/25: two at Abbey Park Road and one at each of Melton Road and Anstey Lane.

The Abbey Street camera is now active since June 2024 and will enforce the new bus-only street, following the opening of the new St Margaret's bus station and completion of associated junction works.

In November 2024 we implemented camera enforcement for two yellow box junctions for Vaughan Way/ Causeway Lane Junction and on the Junction of Gravel St/Abbey St.

In January 2025 we have introduced Camera enforcement for School Street for Overdale School.

Income raised has increased from £1.4m in 23/24 to £1.6m in 24/25.

6.5 Summary of measures taken to recover debt

Usual Debt recovery measures

- Reminder letters
- Legal action
- Enforcement action (bailiffs)

7. Other Income

7.1 Headline Figures for period under review including costs*

Uncollected debt b/f £m	Debt raised £m	Debt collected £m	Debt written off/back £m	Uncollected debt c/f £m
20.11	167.68	(152.36)	(1.18)	34.25

7.2 Background and comparator information

Background information

“Other Income” includes all income other than the sources described above. It covers a wide variety of income from various individuals and organisations. Examples include commercial property rent, adult social care costs relating to residential and non-residential care, and repairs and maintenance charges relating to Council property.

Unlike other sources of debt, the total debt value can fluctuate based on the type and timing of income being collected. Therefore, when reviewing this type of debt, we continue to focus on aged debt as the main measure of performance rather than value.

Comparator information

Debt over 12 months old (aged debt) has increased in the past year:

- 31/03/2019 £3.59m
- 31/03/2020 £3.48m
- 31/03/2021 £4.33m
- 31/03/2022 £4.48m
- 31/03/2023 £5.25m
- 31/03/2024 £5.05m
- 31/03/2025 £7.43m

The increase is significant and is largely explained by a huge increase in the value of invoices issued (from £125m in 2024/25 to £168m in 2025/26). However, collection of debt can require support from a number of disciplines, and performance has also been affected by resource shortages leading to bottlenecks in the collection process.

In response, the team is undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the aged debt portfolio, to identify key areas of concern, understand the underlying causes of debt accumulation, and assess the effectiveness of current recovery

mechanisms. This will enhance visibility and inform targeted recovery strategies. The analysis is expected to be completed ahead of the next reporting cycle, at which point a plan will be presented to your committee.

In addition, steps are being taken to equip service areas with the necessary tools and information to enhance debt collection efforts. This includes improving data collection processes when debts are first raised, to obtain critical debtor information such as email addresses and mobile phone numbers which we can then use for reminder purposes.

We have also provided dedicated resources in Adult Social Care, which – for obvious reasons - is where much of the “difficult to collect” debt lies. This will focus on:

- Maintaining regular contact with debtors.
- Establishing payment agreements tailored to individual circumstances.
- Monitoring adherence to repayment schedules.

This integrated approach aims to significantly improve recovery rates within ASC and set a framework for best practices across other service areas.

7.3 Debt write-off

Reason for Write Off ↓	No.	Value £000
Unable to Trace	106	54
Deceased – No Assets	789	356
Insolvent / Bankrupt/ Liquidated	371	344
All recovery options exhausted / irrecoverable at reasonable expense, including adjustments for costs and write on	2,170	429
Totals	3,436	1,182

7.4 Volume/policy/statutory changes that have occurred during the period and their impact

Changes

None

7.5 Summary of measures taken to recover debt

Debt recovery measures

The debt recovery measures detailed below are part of our normal process, but the Council continues to offer support where required for those suffering financial hardship.

Normally, a first reminder is issued at 14 days when an invoice remains unpaid. Seven days later a second reminder is issued.

A variety of different recovery actions may then follow depending on the particular debt type as each have different processes and considerations.

A letter before action, known as a letter of claim, follows if the case is suitable for enforcement in the county court. If the Council obtains a judgement or an order for recovery of an award and if payment is still not forthcoming, the next actions can include:

- Referral to an enforcement agent
- Third party debt order
- Attachment to earnings
- Charging Order

Cases not suitable for enforcement through county court procedures are referred to enforcement agents for collection. Debtors are encouraged to engage with our support offers.

Some debt types including Adult Social Care residential care contributions, EBS commercial rents and Leaseholder service charges are referred to legal services for further action.

Summary of all Write Offs

The table below provides detail on the reasons why debt is written off during the year.

Income Type	Unable to trace £000	Deceased - no assets £000	Insolvent/ Bankrupt/ Liquidated £000	Irrecoverable at reasonable effort and expense £000	Total Write offs at 31/03/2025 £000
Business Rates (including Costs)	42	1	1,588	518	2,149
Council Tax (including Costs)	1,546	174	680	875	3,275
Housing Benefit Overpayments	44	47	41	210	341
Council House Rents	0	0	0	56	56
On and Off-Street Car Parking fines	518	4	48	712	1,282
Moving Traffic Enforcement	126	3	20	344	493
Other Income	54	356	344	429	1,182
Totals	2,330	585	2,720	3,143	8,778

Write Offs Over £5k for 2024/25

Income Type	No. of Write Offs	Value £000
Non-Domestic Rates (including Costs)	99	1,889
Council Tax (including Costs)	58	720
Housing Benefit Overpayments	9	149
Council House Rents	0	0
On and Off-Street Car Parking fines	0	0
Bus Lane Enforcement	0	0
Other Income	49	706
Totals	215	3,464

- Financial procedure rules require me to itemise any individual write-offs in excess of £100,000. There have been no such write-offs since the last monitoring report at period 6.

Review of Treasury Management Activities 2024/25

Overview Select Committee

Date of Meeting: 9th July 2025

Lead director: Amy Oliver, Director of Finance

Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected:

■ Report author: Chris Raymakers, Treasury and Investments Manager

■ Author contact details: chris.raymakers@leicester.gov.uk

■ Report version number: 1

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report reviews how the Council conducted its borrowing and investments during 2024/25.
- 1.2 The year started with interest rates at a base rate of 5.25% and an expectation that they would continue to rise slightly to counter high inflation. Rates had fallen to 4.50% on 6 February 2025 and remained at this level for the rest of the financial year. This fall in interest rates will have impacted the Council's return on its investments.
- 1.3 Inflation fluctuated during 2024/25 but overall went up starting at 2.3% in April 2024 and finishing on 2.6% in March 2025. It had briefly fallen below the Bank of England target of 2% in September before climbing again. It is expected to continue to rise in 2025 as the 2024 Autumn Budget takes effect before once again decreasing toward the target rate.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Overview Select Committee are recommended to note the report and make comments to the Director of Finance and the Executive as they wish.

3. Background

- 3.1 Treasury management is the process by which our borrowing is managed, and our cash balances are invested. Whilst there are links to the budget approved annually by Council, the sums in this report do not themselves form part of the budget. Cash balances reported here cannot be used to finance expenditure. Rather, measures approved by Council such as drawing on managed reserves to help support the budget and incurring capital spending funded by prudential borrowing translate to a planned and approved call on cash balances.
- 3.2 The Council has incurred long term loan debt to pay for past capital expenditure.
- 3.3 The Council needs cash balances to meet day-to-day expenditure, such as to pay wages and suppliers when they are due. Substantial cash has however accumulated from funds set aside in the annual budget to repay the long-term loans. Because of Government rules regards repayment of loans from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLb), it has historically been prohibitively expensive to repay such debt early. This cash has therefore been invested, and more recently used as 'internal borrowing' for new capital spending not funded by grants, rather than taking out new loans (such as for new council housing). The ability for the Council to use cash balances is reducing as we use our reserves and undertake increased borrowing for the capital programme. However, the Council did repay the loan with Dexia in January 2025 when the lender asked for an interest rate increase as per the agreement.
- 3.4 The report commences with an overview of treasury management, including loans and investments at key dates. It then reviews the credit worthiness of investments and

implementation of our strategy, provides outcomes on key performance measures, and concludes by reviewing compliance against limits set by the Council.

- 3.5 Reports reviewing treasury management activities are submitted twice a year. The previous report was presented to your committee on 12 December 2024.

4. **Overview of Treasury Management**

Main elements of Treasury Management

- 4.1 There are two main elements to treasury management. The first is managing our borrowings which were used to finance past capital expenditure. Previously capital schemes have for some time been financed by capital grant, and only a limited number of recent schemes have been financed by prudential borrowing. This has changed since the budget strategy for 2025/26 where the capital budget is now financed from grants and borrowing.
- 4.2 Whilst the Council has not borrowed long-term for more than 15 years. However, as cash balances have reduced over this period and the increased need to fund the capital programme through the use of borrowing, the Council recognises the need to change this approach and once again utilise government borrowing facilities.
- 4.3 Historic debt can sometimes be restructured to save money (i.e. repaying one loan and replacing it with another) and this is always given active consideration. However, Government rules had previously made it prohibitively expensive to repay loans borrowed from the PWLB earlier than the maturity date. Therefore, any repayments would likely be as part of an overall longer-term debt refinancing and rescheduling exercise after taking into account the prevailing interest rates and a full cost benefit analysis.
- 4.4 The revenue budget approved by the Council for each financial year includes provision for the interest payable on this borrowing. It also includes a provision for repaying the borrowing over a number of years (broadly speaking over the economic life of the assets acquired). As noted above, the actual loans have generally not been repaid, hence the funding set aside annually for repayment does help to maintain the cash balances.
- 4.5 The second element of treasury management is cash management which involves managing the Council's investments to ensure the optimum amount of money is in the bank account on a day-to-day basis – so that there is enough money in the account to cover the payments made on the day but no more (cash held in the bank account earns lower interest).
- 4.6 During 2024/25 the Council has seen its cash investments reduce, but as noted above this is not of itself "spare cash". There are a number of key reasons for the level of cash:-
- (a) As explained above, whilst the Government no longer supports capital spending with borrowing allocations, we are still required to provide money in the revenue budget each year to repay debt on past capital spending.
 - (b) We have working balances arising from our day-to-day business (e.g. council tax received before we have to pay wages and suppliers, and capital grants received in advance of the associated capital spending);
 - (c) We have reserves as shown in the annual budget report and the annual outturn report, which are essentially held in cash (or to underwrite 'internal borrowing' for new capital spending) until we need to spend them;

- (d) We hold funds previously associated with our role as the accountable body to the former Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP). These are now held by the Council as the lead Upper Tier Local Authority for the post-LLEP arrangements.

- 4.7 There has been a very significant reduction in cash balances during the second half of the financial year as grants received for the capital programme have been spent, acquisitions of council housing have progressed and reserve balances reduce. Balances have fallen by £107m, from £159m at 30 September 2024 to £52m at 31 March 2025 (balances at 31 March 2024 were £237m).

Treasury Management Policy and Monitoring

- 4.8 The activities to which this report relates were governed by the Treasury Strategy for 2024/25 which was approved by the Council on 21 February 2024. This established an outline plan for borrowing and investment. The Treasury Strategy is drawn up in the light of the Council's expected borrowing requirements, its expected cash balances, the outlook for interest rates and the credit worthiness of the banks with whom the Council might invest its cash balances.
- 4.9 A twice-yearly report is submitted to your Committee reviewing the treasury activity undertaken in the year. This report is the second and final report for 2024/25.

Loans and Investments at Key Dates

- 4.10 Table 1 overleaf shows the loans (money borrowed by the Council) and investments (money invested by the Council) as at 30 September 2024 and at 31 March 2025. The rates shown are the averages paid and received during 2023/24.
- 4.11 The level of gross debt (total loans borrowed both long and short-term) remained the same during the second half of the year and no new long-term loans were borrowed during the year.
- 4.12 Our historic borrowing is predominantly from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB), plus two historic bank loans. One of these was repaid in 2023/24 the other, which was a "LOBO" loan (Lender Option, Borrower Option) was repaid in January 2025. The Council took the option to repay this in January, at the triannual review of the interest rate by the lender. The Dexia loan was replaced over year end with temporary borrowing.
- 4.13 Investments in the second half of the year have decreased significantly by £107m, from £159m at 30 September 2024 to £52m at 31 March 2025. This change partially reflects the usual pattern of balances declining towards the end of the financial year as grant income is spent and incoming Council Tax and Business Rates income winds down. However, the continuation of both the General Fund and HRA capital programmes together a many years resisting the need to borrow while more recently not refinancing the two loans mentioned above have seen balances decrease further.
- 4.14 Since 2019/20, we have generally invested in the short to medium term with other local authorities, rather than banks which have less protection for institutional investors. At the end of the 2024/25 financial year, the Council had no exposure to banks except to Barclays who act as the Council's bankers. We may potentially in the future look to increase our deposits with banks if they can be secured by other assets.
- 4.15 The Council has continued to make use of money market funds which comprise a basket of short-dated loans to financial institutions. The funds that we use are very low risk and have very

high credit ratings. We also use them because they are liquid (we can get money back when we need it). We have never lost any money in investing in these funds, but the downside of their safety is that returns are generally lower than some less secure alternatives.

Table 1- Loans & Investments

	Position at 30/09/2024 Principal £M	Position at 31/03/2025 Principal £M	Average Rate at 31 March 2025	Average Rate in 2024/25
Long Term Fixed Rate Loans				
Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)	134	134	4.2%	4.2%
Bank Loans	NIL	NIL		
LOBO Loans				
Bank Loans	20	NIL	0.0%	4.6%
Short Term (less than 6 months) Loans				
Local Authority Loans (repaid in April 2025)	NIL	20	6.3%	4.0%
Gross Debt	154	154	4.5%	4.2%
Treasury Investments				
Banks	0	0		
Other Local Authorities	65	25		
Money Market Funds	87	22		
Property Funds	7	5		
Total Treasury Investments	159	52	4.1%	4.1%
NET INVESTMENTS	5	(102)		

- 4.16 The investments include £5.2m in two property unit trusts. These are unit trusts which invest in property, as opposed to more traditional unit trusts that invest in shares. With this type of investment capital value can go both up or down and in recent years the value of these investments has been somewhat variable with both seeing a decline from the nominal investment value of the asset.
- 4.17 The Threadneedle Property fund, with a valuation of £4.3m which is also £0.7m lower than the original purchase price of £5m.

- 4.18 The Lothbury property fund was terminated on 30 May 2024. This means the fund is being wound up and as assets are sold the investors will receive repayment of their investment in instalments. Repayments have been regularly forthcoming during 2024/25 however as has been previously reported the Council will not recoup its full investment and has allowed for £1m loss on the original principle in the 2024/25 revenue outturn. This has been reflected in the tables 1 and 2.
- 4.19 The dividends received on the units in the year totalled £241k (a return of 2.9% on the original capital investment).
- 4.20 The Treasury Strategy permits additional investments in property funds up to a total value of £30m, but no further such investments have been made during the last year. We do not expect to make any new property investments for the foreseeable future. The table 2 below shows the overall position of the property funds since purchase in 2018.

Table 2 – Position of Property Funds

	Lothbury £m	Threadneedle St £m
Initial Investment 2018	3.30	5.00
Investment Returned	(2.30)	0.00
Realised Loss	(1.00)	0.00
Unrealised Loss	0.00	(0.70)
Value at 31 March 2025	0.00	4.30
Interest received on Investment	0.60	1.40
Overall Gain/(loss)	(0.40)	0.70

- 4.21 The Council's (Non-Treasury) Investment Strategy also allows the spending of capital or making of loans to a third party which are intended to (at least partly) achieve a return. During 2024/25 the Council made one further loan to The Chapter of the Leicester Cathedral. A summary of outstanding loans made under the Investment Strategy is shown in table 3 below.
- 4.22 As previously reported, the cricket club and Leicester Community Sports Arena are currently working with the Council on revised payment schedules.

Table 3 - Loans under the Investment Strategy

Loans	Total loans outstanding At 31/03/2025 £m	Percentage Return 2024/25
<u>Loans</u>		
Ethically Sourced Products Ltd	1.0	4%
Leicestershire County Cricket Club Ltd	2.0	5%
Leicester Hockey Club CIC	0.4	5%
Leicester Community Sports Arena Ltd	1.4	5%
The Chapter of Leicester Cathedral	0.8	5%
Total Loans	5.6	4.8%

5. Credit Worthiness of Investments & Interest Rate Outlook

- 5.1 During 204/25 we started to see the economy stabilise with inflation gradually coming down with the hope of settling around the government target during 2025/26. Growth however has remained hard to find but with inflation coming down it has allowed the bank of England to start to reduce interest rates which in turn is hoped will encourage growth.
- 5.2 Since the financial crisis of 2008 the governments of the largest world economies, including the UK, have implemented measures to make banks less likely to fail but also to reduce the impact on the financial system and on taxpayers if they do fail. The measures for dealing with a failing bank see investors who are not protected by the Financial Services Compensation scheme (which includes the Council) who have lent or deposited money, taking significant losses before there is any taxpayer support ("bail in"). These developments are reflected in the Council's approach to managing credit risk in its treasury strategies and the very low level of lending to banks.
- 5.3 The position is continually under review. One factor is that other regulatory developments are continuing to require or push banks towards greater financial robustness. Banks are now required to "ring fence" bank deposits from other riskier activities.
- 5.4 The Council has an indirect exposure to banks (including non-UK banks) through its investment in money market funds. Money market funds are like "unit trusts" but rather than investing in company shares these funds make interest bearing investments such as bank deposits. When we open such funds, they are vetted to ensure that they have strong investment and risk management processes, and we receive advice from our treasury advisor.
- 5.5 During 2024/25 the Council changed its treasury advisor from Arlingclose to MUFG (formerly known as Link Asset Services)

6. Implementation of Borrowing & Investment Strategy

- 6.1 The strategy approved by Council for 2024/25 continued with its strategy using cash balances to underpin new prudential borrowing and HRA council housing acquisitions and new build, before undertaking borrowing. However, as forecast the Council is now required to undertake external borrowing as it uses its cash balances.
- 6.2 Total investment income during 2024/25 was £6.4m. This was significantly greater than the £4.7m budgeted for, principally due to interest rates not falling as quickly as anticipated and slippage in the capital programme. Most of this increase was reflected within the period 6 and period 9 revenue budget monitoring reports.
- 6.3 In January 2025 the Council repaid both the loans with Dexia, totalling £20m, with a fixed interest rate of 4.6% (£0.92m p.a.) which was due for repayment in the year 2054. This loan was a LOBO style loan (Lender Option Borrowing Option) which includes a review of interest rates by the lender every three years. The most recent option was in January when the lender requested an interest rate going forward of 6.26% giving them a considerable premium on rates available elsewhere and the prevailing trend of interest rate reduction. The Council took this opportunity to repay both loans with the view to re-finance them at around 4.25%.

- 6.4 The Council took out £20m temporary borrowing toward year end which served as both replacement for the Dexia loan and in order to manage cash balances across year end. Due to interest rates being high at the time, around 6.25%, they were held for a minimal period only. These loans were refinanced in April at a lower interest rate of around 4.25%

7. Key Performance Measures

- 7.1 The most important performance measures are the rate of interest on the Council's borrowings, the timing of borrowing decisions, the timing of decisions to prematurely repay debt, the return on investments and the full repayment of the principal amounts invested.
- 7.2 The average rate of interest on all investments for English Unitary Authorities at 31 March 2025 is 4.59% whilst the Council's own rate was lower at 4.1%. This is mainly explained by differences on income from longer term investments, as the Council has had a number of medium-term deposits with other local authorities which were made before the unexpectedly fast rise in interest rates and thus didn't benefit from those high rate rises. These medium-term deposits are coming to an end in July 2025.
- 7.3 The Council has no higher-risk investments in unsecured bank deposits and fewer longer dated strategic funds invested in more variable assets such as property and equities than many other authorities; and has a lower risk portfolio with a far smaller exposure to failed bank bail-in than most. Whilst this quite deliberately lowers our risk of capital losses, it also impacts our relative returns.
- 7.4 Members will be aware that some authorities have found themselves in major difficulties because they invested too much in riskier assets in anticipation of higher returns; and have since seen significant financial losses and in some cases Government intervention.
- 7.5 Higher investment returns are always available if higher risk is accepted. Risk can take the form of credit risk (money due is not paid) or market risk (the value of investments fall). However, the trade-off between risk and reward was considered when investment strategies were set for 2024/25 and in the current economic climate continues to be a most important consideration.
- 7.6 In practice, there is no such thing as a representative "average" authority. The benchmarking data reflects a division between the authorities that use longer term and more risky assets (about half of all authorities) and those adopting a more cautious approach. We fall much nearer to the cautious side of the two as we have only a small proportion of longer-term assets.

8. Use of Treasury Advisors

- 8.1 The Council is advised by MUFG. They advise on all aspects of treasury management, but their main focus is on providing advice on the following matters:
- the creditworthiness of banks
 - the most cost-effective ways of borrowing
 - appropriate responses to Government initiatives
 - technical and accounting matters.

9. **Compliance with the Council's Treasury Strategy**

- 9.1 As required by the statutory borrowing framework, the Council is required to set a number of prudential limits and indicators. These limits are set annually and can be found within the budget and Treasury Strategy.
- 9.2 For the operational implementation of the Council's Treasury Management strategy, the most important limits and indicators that need to be monitored throughout the year are:
- The authorised limit – the maximum amount of borrowing that the Council permits itself to have outstanding at any one time.
 - The operational limit – a lower limit to trigger management action if borrowing is higher than expected.
 - The maximum proportion of debt that is fixed rate.
 - The maximum proportion of debt that is variable rate.
 - Limits on the proportion of debt maturing in a number of specified time bands.
 - Limits on sums to be invested for more than 364 days.
- 9.3 These limits have been complied with.
- 9.4 Further details on the Prudential Indicators can be found in Appendix F to the Capital Budget Monitoring Outturn April-March 2024/25 report found elsewhere on your agenda.

10. **Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications**

10.1 Financial implications

This report is solely concerned with financial issues.

10.2 Legal implications

There are no legal issues from this report – Kevin Carter, Head of Law (Commercial Property & Planning)

10.3 Equalities implications

This report reviews how the Council conducted its borrowing and investments during 2024/25 and monitors compliance with the treasury management strategy. It has no direct equality impacts. - Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer, ext. 37 4148

10.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are limited climate emergency implications directly associated with this report. However, in general, the Council should consider opportunities to ensure that its investments are not contributing to negative climate and environmental impacts, as relevant and appropriate. - Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext: 37 2246

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

None

11. **Background information and other papers:**

The Council's Treasury Management Strategy - "Treasury Strategy 2024/25" - Council 21 February 2024

The Council's Treasury Policy Document – "Framework for Treasury Decisions" – Council 21 February 2024.

Mid-year review of Treasury Management activities - Overview Select Committee 12 December 2024.

12. **Summary of appendices:**

None

13. **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

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

No

Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25

Date of meeting:
Overview Select Committee – 9 July 2025

Lead Director:
Kamal Adatia
City Barrister and Head of Standards

Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected: All

■ Report authors: Ed Brown, Katie Jordan, Kirsty Wooton - Senior Governance Officers

■ Author contact details: edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk, katie.jordan@leicester.gov.uk, kirsty.wooton@leicester.gov.uk

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides a summary of the Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25.
- 1.2. The Chair of the Overview Select Committee has developed a report that details the activity performed by the City Council's scrutiny bodies during 2024/25. The report also references ongoing and proposed scrutiny activity.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 Full Council is asked to note the report and endorse the work of scrutiny during 2024-25.
- 2.2 The Overview Select Committee is asked to review the report and provide any comments/recommendations ahead of consideration by Full Council.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 The report details a summary of work and outcomes from scrutiny across OSC and the six scrutiny commissions during 2024-25.
- 3.2 Although it is a decision of Full Council to approve the scrutiny annual report, given that it covers the work and operation of scrutiny, it is appropriate for it to be subject to consideration by the Overview Select Commission ahead of its submission to Full Council.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

- 4.1 The main report begins with an introduction by Councillor Ted Cassidy, Chair of the Overview and Select Committee for 2024/25.
- 4.2 It then provides general detail of the scrutiny structure, format and operation during the previous year.
- 4.3 The report includes a separate section for each of the seven scrutiny bodies during 2024-25, setting out the key achievements and highlights for each committee/commission and also refers to some of the ongoing and proposed work.
- 4.4 The report is designed to serve as a summary of activity. Full detail of the activity of each scrutiny body can be found via <https://bit.ly/3P7AOEh>

5. Detailed report

The full 'Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-2025' is included on the subsequent pages.

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

6.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Mohammed Irfan, Head of Finance
30 June 2025

6.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications arising.

Kevin Carter, Head of Law
30 June 2025

6.3 Equalities implications

The report provides a summary on the Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25, this includes an overview of work and outcomes from scrutiny across OSC and the six scrutiny commissions, as well as referencing ongoing and proposed scrutiny activity.

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.

We need to ensure that we are meeting our statutory responsibilities under the Equality Act and paying due regard to the PSED when carrying out our functions, this includes ensuring we are embedding equality considerations in our work, and where appropriate carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EIAS) and where negative impacts are identified, putting in place mitigating actions to address these as appropriate. EIAS have been undertaken across a range of areas cited in the SAR report to ensure equality impacts are being identified and addressed appropriately.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer
1 July 2025

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no climate emergency implications arising directly from this report.

Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer
30 June 2024

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

N/A

7. Background information and other papers:

None

8. Summary of appendices:

Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25

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

No

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

No

Leicester City Council

Scrutiny Annual Report

2024-2025

Foreword

It has been my privilege to serve as Chair of the Overview Select Committee for the municipal year 2024/25. This report gives an overview of the wide-reaching and in-depth work carried out by the Overview Select Committee and the Scrutiny Commissions.



The examination of proposed decisions, policy development and performance monitoring has taken place across all commission areas in an informed and considered way. Additionally, the establishment of task groups and the undertaking of informal scrutiny has allowed this to be carried out in greater detail.

The OSC and the Commission have undertaken a large volume of work and have scrutinised this in depth, that has resulted in a number of well-considered recommendations to the Council's executive. I am grateful once again to the city mayor and other members of the Executive team for their involvement in scrutiny which have helped Scrutiny to work with the executive to drive improvement in public services. I am also grateful to officers from across the organisation whose hard work has allowed Scrutiny to understand issues clearly and to make informed recommendations. I am also particularly thankful for the level of engagement from our health sector partners as engaging with decision-makers beyond the local authority helps to Scrutiny to be informed by a range of insights. In the same vein, the continued involvement of young people representatives who have regularly participated in several of our scrutiny bodies has helped Scrutiny to consider the insights of young people in the city.

Leicester City Council encourages scrutiny as it looks at the issues faced by people in the city in great depth and provides that 'critical friend' challenge to the executive that ultimately helps the Council to deliver its services in the most effective and beneficial ways possible. We have continued to scrutinise key strategic priorities of the City Council in greater detail, by setting up informal scrutiny work to allow a broader range of evidence to be gained by commissions. Examples of this include focussed work on Electric Vehicle Charging, Bus Lanes, the High needs Block and Homelessness.

I am hopeful that the 2025/26 municipal year will allow the Scrutiny function to develop further as this will be increasingly important as local authorities are facing new changes as well as growing challenges and pressures. Therefore, it is vital that Scrutiny analyses the implications of these changes, challenges and pressures, in an informed and in-depth manner. I wish the best for the incoming Chair of OSC, Cllr Joel, and I have every confidence that she will uphold the principles of scrutiny to allow continued improvement of public services.

Councillor Ted Cassidy MBE – Chair of the Overview Select Committee

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Glossary

The following abbreviations are used to describe each scrutiny body:

ASC: Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission

CYPE: Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission

CNS: Culture and Neighbourhood Services

EDTCE: Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission

HSC: Housing Scrutiny Commission

HWB: Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission

JHSC: Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

PHHI: Public Health and Health Integration Scrutiny Commission

OSC: Overview Select Committee

Introduction

What is Scrutiny?

The Centre for Public Scrutiny defines scrutiny as “the activity by one elected or appointed organisation or office examining and monitoring all or part of the activity of a public sector body with the aim of improving the quality of public services. A public sector body is one that carries out public functions or spends public money. Scrutiny ensures that executives are held accountable for their decisions, that their decision-making process is clear and accessible to the public and that there are opportunities for the public and their representatives to influence and improve public policy.” As such, it is important that scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring that the Council and its partners remain effective and accountable.

Leicester City Council’s Scrutiny Structure

For the 2024/25 municipal year, there was a change in the scrutiny structure. The Council continued with the model of an Overview Select Committee but was supported by six scrutiny commissions covering all facets of the council’s business rather than the previous seven. Culture and Neighbourhoods Services scrutiny commission combined the former Heritage, Culture, Leisure & Tourism and Neighbourhood Services commissions.

Overview Select Committee

Adult Social Care	Culture & Neighbourhoods	Children, Young People & Education
Economic Development, Transport & Climate Emergency	Housing	Public Health & Health Integration

Report Structure

This annual report covers the period between May 2024 to May 2025 and summarises some of the key activity and areas of influence by scrutiny throughout the year.

The report provides detail of the work of the Overview Select Commission, and each of the six City Council scrutiny commissions. The annual report does not intend to draw out a large quantity of detail or highlight each recommendation, and instead sets out some of the key achievements by the scrutiny bodies, examining areas of influence and work undertaken as part of focussed reviews or task and finish work. Full detail of each scrutiny meeting can be found by accessing relevant agendas, and minutes via leicester.gov.uk.

The report also does not intend to provide full detail of what is covered by each of the scrutiny bodies. Detail of the configuration of scrutiny at Leicester City Council can be accessed via our [scrutiny webpages](#).

By its very nature, scrutiny examines some work over a more considerable period of time, and this report also points to those strands of work that will continue or may emerge throughout 2025/26. This is reflected as part of the commission summary pages throughout the report.

Overview of Scrutiny 2024/25

In total, there were 45 public meetings across the eight scrutiny bodies (including JHSC). This was supplemented by further work performed by members in the form of separate scrutiny task group meetings or additional briefing sessions on topics of significance.

All meetings, with the exception of JHSC, took place in person at the City Council's committee rooms at City Hall, though a hybrid set-up was initiated to allow some non-voting participants to join remotely. Meetings were comprised of eight elected members that were politically balanced, with some commissions being supplemented by co-opted members or standing invitees. The Chairs of the scrutiny bodies throughout 2023/24 were as follows:

Overview Select Committee – Cllr Ted Cassidy
Adult Social Care – Cllr Melissa March
Children, Young People and Education – Cllr Misbah Batool
Culture and Neighbourhood Services – Cllr Mohammed Dawood (May 2024 – January 2025)
Economic Development, Transport & Climate Emergency – Cllr Sue Waddington
Housing – Cllr Molly O'Neill
Public Health and Health Integration – Cllr Karen Pickering



The commissions and committees continued to examine key strategic priorities and emerging issues. As in previous years, a significant proportion of scrutiny related to the consideration of executive decisions prior to them being taken, including scrutiny of the annual budget setting process. This equips scrutiny to challenge, support and influence the City Council's decision-making processes and remains a prime role of the scrutiny function. Scrutiny also strives to examine issues that emerge throughout the year that have significant implications for the people of Leicester.

Many of the scrutiny bodies also performed an extensive level of work in addition to that taking place as part of formal scrutiny meetings. Several focussed task group reviews were initiated throughout 2024/25. It is commonplace for the suggestion behind this work to originate at a formal meeting, often when it is apparent that the level of scrutiny required is extensive and requires a more detailed process of evidence-gathering. Examples of this work include the Overview Select Committee examining the Council Tax Support and Equalities and Workforce Representation; the Economic Development, Transport, & Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission's work on 24hr Bus Lanes, 20mph Streets, Worker Exploitation and Electric Vehicle Charging, Culture and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission's investigation into ward community funding, Children's, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commissions work on the High Needs Block and the Housing Scrutiny Commissions inquiry day on Homelessness and Health Issues. Upon the completion of all task group work, the relevant decision-maker submits a report back to a commission meeting that details a response to the scrutiny recommendations.

Scrutiny continues to gather the majority of its evidence from City Council service departments, though it has always been necessary for this to be supplemented with input from other organisations and stakeholders. During 2024/25, scrutiny sought evidence from a range of partners, particularly across the health sector and via housing tenant representatives. Moreover, the process of empowering the voice of young people across scrutiny was further developed during 2024/25, with representatives regularly participating in OSC, CYPE and PHHI.

During the next municipal year, there are ambitions to expand public and stakeholder engagement as part of the scrutiny process, particularly when performing more in-depth investigations and inquiries. Scrutiny Chairs will also be considering a broader range of methodologies when carrying out such informal scrutiny.

The following pages document some of the key achievements and highlights of each of Leicester's seven scrutiny bodies, drawing on areas of significance during the past year and referring to some of the priorities for taking scrutiny forward during 2024/25.

Overview Select Committee

The Overview Select Committee is the City Council's overarching scrutiny body. The committee primarily scrutinises the work overseen by the City Mayor, the council's strategic priorities and cross-cutting issues including equalities, property and the Council's finances. The Committee also engages with leaders and decision makers from key partner organisations across the city.



The key Overview Select Committee scrutiny developments during 2024/25 included:

Budget Monitoring Scrutiny – OSC examined the revenue and capital finances on a quarterly basis, seeking clarity on numerous issues and requesting further information on a series of matters of significance and recommending further scrutiny of those services areas that had particular impact upon the Council's overall finances.

Budget Setting process – The Committee again examined the full set of budget proposals relating to the Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2025/26. This followed tailored scrutiny at a commission level, and the comments raised previously were also examined and endorsed by OSC.

Corporate Equality Strategy and Workforce Representation - The Committee considered the Corporate Equality Strategy and action plan to support its delivery over the next four years. In particular it was considered as to which groups could be engaged with in order to open wider communication. In addition to this, informal work on workforce representation continued, looking at how the Council adhered to the Public Sector Equality Duty before beginning to examine a significant amount of data to identify trends and areas of concern.

Homelessness Services and Temporary Accommodation – The Committee considered homelessness in the city and progress in relation to the delivery of the Full Council Decision on the 21st March 2024 to invest £45m into additional Homelessness accommodation and services. Further requests for information were made to allow Councillors to better understand and consider the issue. Further to this, the Committee considered a call-in regarding the purchase of the YoHo building for temporary accommodation, which was subsequently withdrawn.

Directly Questioning the City Mayor – Members of the committee and youth representatives continued to raise questions directly to the City Mayor via a dedicated agenda item. Examples of questions raised included questions over the future of the marketplace, cost cutting associated with libraries and adventure playgrounds, issues surrounding flooding and whether Council customer service could be improved. Under this item, the City Mayor also gave a presentation and answered questions on proposals for changes to the Council boundaries.

Council Tax Support Scheme – The Committee considered the proposed simplified “banded” council tax support scheme and the consultation results. The Committee requested further briefings to better understand the issue, which were subsequently offered. The Committee further implemented a task group on the issue in order to monitor the progress of the implementation and understand what the implications of the changes are.

Treasury Management/Investment Activity – The Committee were rigorous in their examination of relevant strategy regarding Treasury Management and investment.

Possible Overview Select Committee plans for 2025/26 include:

Budget and in year budget savings– The Committee is likely to regularly examine the City Council’s overall programme of in-year budget saving proposals on an ongoing basis and will ensure that key proposals are also considered by the relevant commissions.

Domestic and Sexual Violence Needs Assessment – Following on from the Domestic Violence Consultation, Members will be updated on what services LCC provide for individuals who have experienced domestic abuse and sexual violence, what the purpose of the consultation was and how the Council are planning to use the findings.

Customer Services Update – The Committee has requested that a report be brought on customer services in the Council, particularly with regard to the telephone service, to assess the performance of the service and to ascertain if and how it can be improved.

Revenues and Benefits – An overview of work undertaken with revenues and benefits including welfare advice.

Council Tax Support Scheme – Meetings of the task group are scheduled to take place in June, July and August 2025, with an aim to bring a report to the Committee in September 2025.

Strategic Priorities– OSC will closely examine progress made in response to the strategic priorities set out by the City Mayor and Executive.

Workforce Representation– OSC will conclude its findings in relation to the informal scrutiny work around workforce representation.



Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission

This Commission focuses on matters relating to the delivery of statutory adult social care functions, such as care services to allow independence in own homes, care services for those that require care away from home and policies that underpin a broad range of social care issues.

The key Adult Social Care scrutiny developments during 2024/25 included:

Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assessment – The Commission maintained oversight of the Council's preparations for the new Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment throughout the year, recognising it as a significant and evolving process. The Commission received regular updates on Leicester's self-assessment, which highlighted key strengths including strong co-production, timely access to care, effective safeguarding, and a committed workforce. Areas for improvement, such as overdue reviews, limited audit volume and support for carers were openly acknowledged with action plans in place. The Commission welcomed the transparent and proactive approach taken and looked forward to reviewing the outcome once published.

Adult Social Care Reviews – The Commission welcomed the report on Adult Social Care Reviews, which outlined the statutory duty to review care plans under the Care Act 2014 and the Council's strengths based and people centred approach. It was noted that overdue reviews had increased due to capacity pressures, the pandemic and prioritisation of safeguarding and new assessments. In response a dedicated team had been established and supported by additional funding for a steering group to oversee improvements. The Commission welcomed the honest approach and supported ongoing efforts to improve timeliness, transparency, and communication.

Annual Complaints Report - The Commission received the Annual Complaints and Commendations Report for 2023/24. The Commission welcomed the report as a useful tool for identifying areas for improvement, with learning actions including training, practice reviews and cross-departmental work. Complaint volumes remained relatively low, indicating effective early resolution.

Leading Better Lives Project – The Commission welcomed the report on the Leading Better Lives initiative, a collaborative project developed in response to financial pressures and a need to strengthen preventative support in Leicester. Working with Social Care Future and Ernst & Young Consultants and grounded in co-production, the project brought together people with lived experience, council officers, and partner organisations to understand what matters most to residents. The Commission praised the inclusive, strengths-based approach and requested ongoing updates on the development of the early action plan, including further detail on the preventative budget and outcomes from consultancy input.

Autism and Neurodiversity Delivery Plan– The Commission received and endorsed the Leicester City Adult Social Care Autism and Neurodiversity Delivery Plan for 2024–2026. The Commission welcomed the separation of autism, learning disabilities and neurodiversity as distinct areas of focus, and discussed local gaps in ADHD support following the closure of

ADHD Solutions. The Plan reflects a strong commitment to co-production, partnership working and creating a more inclusive and neurodivergent-friendly city.

External Workforce Strategy – The Commission considered the development of Leicester’s Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy 2025–2030, recognising its importance in building a sustainable, skilled, and valued workforce. While Leicester’s vacancy and turnover rates had remained below national averages, Members noted persistent challenges in attracting younger workers, supporting career progression, and addressing skills gaps across the sector. The Commission welcomed initiatives such as Inspired to Care, the Employment Hub, and the Social Care Academy, along with support for ethical international recruitment. Members emphasised the importance of reflecting the city’s diversity within the workforce, strengthening engagement with frontline staff, and ensuring Personal Assistants were fully included in workforce planning. The strategy’s focus on long-term improvement, inclusion, and promoting care as a rewarding career was strongly supported.

Race Equity - The Commission received a report analysing Adult Social Care data through the lens of ethnicity to better understand access and outcomes across communities. Using updated Census data, the deep dive highlighted variations, including higher contact rates for White, Black and Dual Heritage adults and lower rates for Asian adults, prompting reflection on access, referral patterns, and professional bias. The report also identified areas for further exploration, including assessment outcomes, support types, and safeguarding trends. The Commission welcomed the focus on equity and supported continued work with communities and staff to better understand disparities and improve access to services.

Support for Carers –

The Commission recognised the invaluable contribution of unpaid carers and acknowledged the emotional and practical challenges they often faced. Members received a comprehensive update on the support that had been made available, including the recommissioned Carer Support Service and projects funded through the Accelerating Reform Fund. It was noted that while services had supported over 3,000 carers, many more remained unidentified or unsupported, with particular barriers for younger carers and those balancing work and caring responsibilities. The Commission welcomed the co-productive approach taken to develop a new Carers Strategy and practice guidance, and highlighted the need to ensure carers were not only supported practically, but also felt seen, valued, and heard. Findings from engagement work, including the Leading Better Lives project, reflected carers’ feelings of isolation and exhaustion, reinforcing the need for continued focus on access to breaks, contingency planning, and emotional support.

Possible Adult Social Care Scrutiny plans for 2025/26 include:

Adult Social Care Budget – The Commission agreed to monitor the budget and requested an informal scrutiny briefing session to discuss details in further detail in the new financial year.

ASC CQC Assessment – An update on the new assessment framework concerning adult social care services and details of the visit.

Dementia – Information on the work done around supporting those with Dementia and its impact.

Loneliness – Information on the work being done to combat loneliness.

Self-neglect– An update on the challenges and impact that self-neglect can have on people.

Supported Housing – A deeper dive into supported housing.

Young Carers – A deeper dive into young carers.

Culture and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission



The Culture and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission is responsible for examining many of the everyday services that people access within their own communities, including the provision of libraries, community centres, environmental and enforcement services. This Commission also holds responsibility for looking at museums, festivals & events, sports services as well as the voluntary and community sector support and issues relating to community safety and community cohesion.

The key scrutiny developments during 2024/25 included:

Leicester Arts and Museums – The commission considered a number of aspects of the Leicester Arts and Museum Service, in particular, the funding for engagement from Arts Council England, the Heritage Lottery Fund, and also looked in depth at the Museum Strategy, which considered the new Museums Service Vision and Strategic Priorities for 2025- 29, including the plans for changes to the way that the service is delivered. The Commission requested further information on investment in Newarke Houses Museum, and on visitor figures during School Holidays for both Newarke Houses and Abbey Pumping Station Museum.

Community Safety, 'Project Harmony' and Public Space Protection Orders – The Commission looked at what was being done to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the city centre. Project Harmony was developed as Community Safety's response to street lifestyle issues in the city. Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) are a power the Council has 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). If these were then breached and a prosecution was made, a fine can be issued. Members asked questions and made comments, and the Commission requested that the Commission be provided with analysis of the results.

Study Zones and Library IT Provision and Library Community Needs Assessment – The Commission looked into the public engagement work in 2023 and the secondary research undertaken in 2024 as part of the Community Service Services and Library Needs Assessment, and the Study Zones initiative in libraries, in the context of the digital support provided by libraries for people living, working and studying in Leicester. The Commission requested further information on the age profile of users of the Study Zones initiative.

Fly Tipping – The Commission examined fly-tipping issues across the City. The commission requested further information on the number of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) to businesses in comparison to households, and information on which wards

made the most use of the Love Leicester app. Further to this, it was requested that consideration be given as to whether recycling sites needed to be there or if they invited fly tipping.

Culture and Creative Industry Strategy – The Commission were updated on current position on the draft strategy and noted how it links to other major initiatives and emerging government policy. A one-off informal scrutiny session was set up so that members could inform the final report.

Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) – The advancements and future direction of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Engagement Strategy were looked at by the Commission. Members were encouraged to let officers know of any small organisations in their ward that could benefit from the VCSE strategy.

Possible Culture & Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny plans for 2025/26 include:

Business case for the KRIII café – As requested at OSC, this report will consider the business case for the new planned café at the King Richard III visitor centre. This new café would be placed in front of the pay-points, so that people can frequent the café without necessarily purchasing a ticket for the exhibit. It is hoped that this will generate income.

Public Space Protection Orders – Following the report that went to the Commission in February 2025, a further report will come to the Commission to enable them to analyse how well the Public Space Protection Orders have worked.

Burial Strategy – To include information on the search for places, the work plan for Gilroes Cemetery and the findings of the Law Commission.

Proposals for Leicester and Community Centres – The Commission will scrutinise the plans for the future of Libraries and Community Centres in Leicester and will be invited to ask questions and make comments.

National Lottery Heritage Fund – The Commission will consider how National Lottery funding will be used in the Arts and Museum Service and will be updated on future bids.

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission

The Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission is responsible for examining children's social care, education & attainment and support provision for children and young people and families. Diocesan, trade union and school governor representatives work with elected Members on this Commission.



Key scrutiny developments during 2024/25 included:

Post 16 SEND Home-to-School Transport – Following on from proposals made in the previous municipal year, the Commission further scrutinised the approach that the Council aimed to take in the 2025-26 academic year. A number of public questions and statements were considered on the issue. The Commission requested that the impact be tracked and reported on so that it could be assessed as to how the proposals were working and that forecasts and assumptions on costs be looked at again. It was also requested that officers re-examine the suggestion that parents and Young People should choose educational institutions closer to home. It was further requested that reassurance be given that places are available for young people to continue education for as long as possible in the appropriate educational institution and that consideration be given to the need to avoid young people becoming NEET.

Adventure Playgrounds – The Commission considered the plans for the phased withdrawal of Council funding for adventure playgrounds and the subsequent decision to make this the final year of funding. Public questioning was also considered on the issue. The Commission requested more information on parachute payments and licences, and subsequently scrutinised this information. The Commission made suggestions around other potential sources of funding. OSC also raised this issue, and informal scrutiny has been arranged to consider options.

High Needs Block – The High Needs Block was scrutinised in detail, including the management Recovery Plan and the Transformation project and the impact on workstreams. The Commission requested further information, including information on sufficiency in mainstream and special schools and a case study for the commission to consider and information on whether guidance had improved on EHCPs. A task group was subsequently convened which evaluated the efficiency and effectiveness of the High Needs Block (HNB) funding, ensuring it is appropriately allocated to support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Safeguarding Children Annual Report – In reviewing the annual report, which had a focus on multi-agency priorities, learning, impact, evidence, and improvement, the Commission engaged with the independent chair of the partnership and probed into potential further areas for improvement and considered the rising demand for

emergency support leaving less to spend on preventative services.

Youth Summit – The Commission received an update from Youth Council Representatives on the Youth Summit. A number of points and suggestions were made by the Commission, including looking at the cultural dimension and how young people from overseas interact and how they settle in the UK/Leicester, considering the inclusion of Looked After Children and Children Seeking Safety, and to think about how young people want to be spoken to and receive information.

Children from Abroad Seeking Safety – Following on from scrutiny work in the previous municipal year, the Commission looked again at Children from Abroad Seeking safety and requested further information on the proportion of 18+ and U18s and further information on the support the Education Psychology service provides in relation to trauma experienced by CSS, other than the 'Journeys' project.

Ofsted ILACS Report (Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services) and Improvement plan – The Commission considered the most recent Leicester City Council Ofsted inspection. This took place under the "inspecting local authority children's services" (ILACS) framework in September 2024. Having considered the findings, the Commission requested that the staff recruitment rate and targets to be monitored and that regular updates to be brought to scrutiny, to include target monitoring and performance as well as training (especially of middle-management).

Family Therapies Service – The Commission considered the progress of delivering Family Therapies; Multisystemic Therapy (MST), MST: Building Stronger Families (MST BSF), Functional Family Therapy for Child Welfare (FFT-CW), and Family Group Decision Making, for the period of Quarter 3. The Commission requested that the Edge of Care report to come to scrutiny with a report to establish metrics and delivery outcomes.

Possible Children, Young People & Education Scrutiny plans for 2024/25 include:

Edge of Care – An update on the Edge of Care report to come to scrutiny to establish metrics and delivery outcomes.

Sufficiency for Children Looked After and Care Leavers – To include impact monitoring on the Fostering Service microsite launched on the Council website which includes the fostering offer.

Improvement Plan Updates - Regular updates to be brought to scrutiny, to include target monitoring and performance as well as training (especially of middle-management).

Fostering Annual Report - Including an update on costs relating to Customer Relationship management tool, the Ofsted thematic report, information on family finding events and more detail on advertising techniques for recruitment.

Complaints and Performance Report – An update to include children's social care and any relevant information from corporate complaints relating to education.

Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission



This commission reviews a range of matters which include regeneration, public transport and cycling provision, adult learning and job provision and climate emergency policy.

The key scrutiny developments during 2024/25 included:

Market Place – The Commission considered the proposed option for the redevelopment of Leicester Market and the rationale behind the proposal and put questions to the City Mayor. The Commission also hear public questions and statements on the issue. The commission requested further information on the revenue costs to operate the market under the proposed plan as well as making some key suggestions regarding the design.

Worker Exploitation – Following on from work done previously on exploitation in the garment industry, a task group was set up with guidance provided by the University of Leicester (funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund) to look at worker exploitation in other sectors in the city. A number of witnesses were engaged with, including: Margaret Beels - Director of Labour Market Enforcement, Leicester City Council (Adult Social Care), Leicester City Council (Procurement), Leicester City Council (Economic Development), HMRC, Police, Highfields Centre, GMB, Unseen, Leicester & Districts Trades Union Council, Health and Safety Executive, Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, Crimestoppers UK, and Wesley Hall Community Centre. A number of comprehensive recommendations were made on how the Council can better address the issue of worker exploitation in Leicester, including recommendations on how local authorities could work in partnership with other local organisations more effectively to help develop and share intelligence on the issues so that the national organisations who can act more directly, can do so more effectively.

24 Hour Bus Lanes – Following guidance issued by the Department for Transport, the Commission convened a task group to review the deployment of bus lanes, specifically 24/7 bus lanes, across the city. The Task Group heard from bus companies who provide services to Leicester (First, Arriva and Kinchbus) as well as Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire. Recommendations were made on optimal ways to implement and enforce bus lane use and to review and monitor the operation of bus lanes in certain locations.

Leicester and Leicestershire Business Skills Partnership – Following on from the transition from the LLEP into the Leicester and Leicestershire Business Skills Partnership, the Commission heard about the work of the Business and Skills Partnership for Leicester and Leicestershire. The Commission requested further clarity on timelines from the government, that consideration to be given to the rural and urban makeup of the board and that more information be provided on Skills Devolution once more was known on local government re-organisation and timeline for devolution.

ESOL and Skills Bootcamps – Adult learning opportunities in the city were looked at in the form of ESOL offers and Skills Bootcamps. In particular, regarding Skills Bootcamps, the Commission considered the impact of the pilot year (2023-24) and the 2024-25 programme. The Commission also looked at the development of the UKSPF funded ESOL projects in 2024-25.

Heart of Leicester Plan – The Commission considered 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 Commission encouraged officers to consider the night-time economy, and the need for bike-stands in the city.

Air Quality Action Plan Consultation – The Commission scrutinised details on the proposed new Air Quality Action Plan for Leicester and associated consultation and provided comments and suggestions surrounding issues such as the management of traffic flow. Additionally, members were encouraged to engage with schools and families on the issue.

Possible Economic Development, Transport & Climate Emergency plans for 2025/26 include:

Market Place Update – Further updates on the market development, including information on the revenue costs to operate the market.

Update on Leicester and Leicestershire Business Skills Partnership – An update on the Leicester and Leicestershire Business Skills Partnership, focussing on timelines from the government, information on the rural and urban makeup of the board, and money in reserves at the end of the financial year.

Local Walking and Cycling infrastructure plan – Informal work looking at community engagement and consultation on potential routes.

Car Park Usage – Information on Council car park usage to ascertain if car park usage has increased or decreased since charges were increased.



Housing Scrutiny Commission

The Housing Scrutiny Commission examines a wide range of issues relating to Housing and Homelessness. This covers council services as well as issues affecting private sector housing and housing associations.

Key housing scrutiny developments during 2024/25 included:

Adaptations & Disabled Facilities Grant - The Commission noted the continued work of the service to meet adaptation needs of tenants and the robust procedures around this. The Commission requested that an update be brought back on the impact of adaptations, as well as the strategy when developed.

Budget – The Commission considered the housing revenue account budget and the capital programme 2025/26. More information was provided by the service on the impacts of the change to Right to Buy and how Government housing targets would be met.

District Services – The Commission commended the service for positive work despite increasing and changing pressures. The goal of the service was to support tenants to hold successful tenancies, but many were faced with multiple additional needs that required support. The Commission requested that an update be brought back on the 'pop- up' housing offices pilot and various other next steps the service outlined

Homelessness Services Update – The Commission praised the service for their ongoing work under increasing pressures. There was a continued emphasis on collaboration and partnership working with other organisations in the city. The Commission requested that further communication be made to ministers around Asylum cases.

Homelessness and Complex needs Inquiry Day – Working with the Public Health and Health Integration Scrutiny Commission, the commissions considered homelessness and substance misuse through evidence gathering in numerous meetings in one day. Some miscommunications on pathways were identified but the service was pushing towards greater collaborative working. The commitment and passion of those working in this area was applauded. A further work stream was identified around families and homelessness and prison leavers.

House Builds & Acquisitions – The Commission noted the Council is on track to deliver 1500 affordable homes. The Commission visited the Saffron Lane development and requested that an update on alternative construction methods come at an appropriate time.

Housing Crisis Delivery Update – The Commission noted that the service had made good progress on delivering the housing crisis actions for both the Leicester plan and the Government's. There had been positive updates on strengthening the private rental sector quality which the Commission requested to be updated on, along with Selective Licensing and the Renter's Reform Bill.

Housing Regulator – The Commission was updated on the new housing regulator standards and the inspection which has recently taken place. It was noted that service improvement plans are in place as specified by the standards. The Commission recommended that all enquiries from the tenants, the public and members be responded to within 10 working days.

Repairs and Maintenance Performance Work in recent years has successfully focused on improving voids performance. The service had been affected by national struggles in trade services and the backlog since the pandemic which had impacted the ability to meet some Repairs targets. The Commission requested further updates moving forward.

Selective Licensing – The self-funding scheme ensured safer housing for private sector tenants. Joint work with the police and voluntary applications from landlords had identified hazards in properties or their unsuitability for rental. Hazards were usually rectified by landlords with no further action taken but improvement notices and prohibition notices had been served where necessary.

Supported Housing Proposals – The Commission had visited the ZIP building and commended the work the service was doing. The need for supported housing is high due to levels of complex needs and deprivation in the city but acquisitions for this type of accommodation is separate to general acquisitions. Feedback on the experiences from the tenants in the ZIP building, management plans and plans for the YOHO building was requested.

Tenancy Involvement Proposals – The Commission noted the service was working to meet the needs of the communities using the service. An engagement strategy had now been launched and a Tenant's Scrutiny Panel was in place which the Commission hoped to engage with. An update was requested on the 'pop-up' housing offices and the improved use of communications. The Commission expressed concern at the lack of communications for those on the waiting list and requested a report on the engagement strategy for this cohort.

Who Gets Social Housing - The Commission received updates regarding the housing register and requested consideration be given to improving communication to applicants on the waiting list.

Possible Housing plans for 2025/26 include:

Engagement Strategy – An update on the engagement strategy for those who are on the waiting list for social housing due to length of waits.

Housing Regulator Update – An update on the outcome of the inspection.

Maintenance Charges – An understanding of the Maintenance Charges

Temporary Accommodation update – An update on the progress of increasing availability of temporary accommodation. The business case and management plans for the Yo-Ho build and tenants feedback from the ZIP building.

Pop-up Housing Offices Pilot – An update following the completion of the pilot to see whether engagement had been successful.

Repairs and Maintenance Report – A bi-annual update report and proactive property MOT's.

Public Health and Health Integration Scrutiny Commission



This commission is responsible for examining the health services received by all Leicester residents, which includes the services provided by the local authority's public health team along with those delivered by the NHS and health sector partners. Co-Producers are standing invitees and have contributed to discussions throughout the year.

The key Public Health and Health Integration scrutiny developments during 2024/25 included:

Access to GP Practices – The Commission discussed barriers to accessing GP Practices and raised concerns around inconsistencies but were assured by plans in place and agreed to receive further updates.

Critical Incident – The Commission received a verbal update from University Hospitals Leicester (UHL) on the critical incident declared on 9 October 2024 due to extreme pressure on emergency care services. The Commission noted the early timing of the incident in the year, concerns around patient flow, and the wider pressures on emergency pathways. Initiatives trialled during the incident have informed revisions to the winter plan, though financial constraints remain a challenge.

CYP Mental Health Referrals – The Commission was given an update. The triage system which was introduced was welcomed by Members as it helped ensure children and young people were being seen by appropriate services. However, concerns were raised by the number of referrals being returned and the waiting times. Further updates have been requested.

Health Protection – The Commission monitored rates of illnesses and vaccinations in the city. This included measles, whooping cough, covid and TB. Updates will continue to come to each meeting to monitor rates and any emerging concerns within the city.

Joint ASC & Health Scrutiny – The two commissions joined to address Winter Planning provision. The Commission analysed the plans and considered performance, fuel poverty and the link between hospital admissions, discharges and care in the community. Concerns were raised about the lack of information which was made available and the variation of information issued by Health Providers. Concerns were raised on uptake of vaccinations but the development of clearer communications on pathway processes was applauded.

Joint LLR Health Scrutiny Committee – Members discussed items including UHL Future Hospitals, the LLR Health and Care Plan, LLR Women's Health Programme, East Midlands Fertility Policy, Water Fluoridation in LLR, GP Service Improvements, Dental Services and Learning Disability and Autism Collaborative.

LLR Suicide Prevention Strategy – The Commission received a draft of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024–2029. The Commission welcomed the collaborative approach taken with partners including the Police, NHS, VCSE sector and people with lived experience and commended the work. Key priorities included support for at-risk groups such as middle-aged men, those with autism, and people

experiencing isolation. The strategy emphasised the importance of community-based support, early intervention, and reducing stigma around suicide. Members supported the focus on local data, called for training opportunities, and endorsed the commitment to a more compassionate and preventative approach to mental health and suicide.

Mental Health Cafes – The Commission received a report on the Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafés that launched in 2021/22. The cafés offer weekly, open-access support across the city for people in mental health distress, providing one-to-one help, safety planning and coping strategies. Over 3,600 individuals accessed the cafés in 2024/25, with anxiety, depression and isolation being the most common concerns. While attendance broadly reflected city demographics, work was ongoing to improve access for younger adults, men, Black communities and those with disabilities. Members praised the positive impact of the scheme, its value for money, and the strong role of VCSE organisations in supporting recovery and social connection.

Possible PHHI plans for 2024/25 include:

Annual Review of Prevention and Health Inequalities Programme – An update on the progress made in the programme.

Community Wellbeing Champions Programme -

ICB Funding Changes – Updates were requested on the funding changes occurring in the ICB and any restructuring which could impact on the city.

Healthy Weight – A report was requested on the whole systems approach addressing healthy weight.

NHS App – An update on developments for the NHS App.

Mental Health – Further updates on improving the process for mental health referrals by GPs for Children and Young People and progression of the Suicide Strategy.

Oral Health – An update was requested on progression to improve oral health, particularly in children.

Contacting Scrutiny

For more information, please contact the Governance Services Team via **governance@leicester.gov.uk**.

Leicester City Council
City Hall

**Overview Select Committee
Work Programme 2025 – 2026**

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
9 July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Customer Services Update 2. Revenues and Benefits 3. Revenue Outturn 2024/25 4. Capital Revenue Outturn 2024/25 5. Income Collection 2024/25 6. Treasury Management Annual Report 2024/25 7. Scrutiny Annual Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To include info on children's placements. 	
24 September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update on Asset Sales 2. Environmental Impact of Construction Projects 3. Corporate Estate - Annual Report 4. Period 3 Revenue Monitoring 5. Period 3 Capital Monitoring 6. Council Tax Support Scheme – Task Group Recommendations. 		

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
3 December 2025	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Period 6 Revenue Monitoring Report 2. Period 6 Monitoring Report 3. Treasury Management mid-year report 4. Income Collection mid-year report 5. Vacancies and Recruitment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To include information on where vacancies are, the levels of vacancies, and recruitment particularly in social work. 	
28 January 2026	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revenue Budget 2. Capital Budget 3. HRA Budget 4. Treasury and Investment Strategy 		

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
18 March 2026	1. Period 9 Revenue Monitoring 2. Period 9 Capital Monitoring		
29 April 2026			

Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Domestic and Sexual Violence Needs Assessment.	Postponed from 9 th July 2025.	
Community Asset Transfers Policy		
Children's Homes and Planning Issues	Requested at meeting of 1 st May 2025 – PDCC Members to be invited.	
Local Government Reform		TBC
Update on Workforce Representation Informal Scrutiny Work		TBC
City Mayor's Strategic Priorities		TBC

