



Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: THURSDAY, 16 APRIL 2026

TIME: 5:30 pm

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

Members of the Committee

Councillor Zaman (Chair)

Councillor Halford (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Dr Barton, Cassidy, Chauhan, Dave, Haq and Waddington

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

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

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

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Further information

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

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PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

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1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Appendix A

The minutes of the meeting of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission held on Thursday 5th March have been circulated, and Members will be asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

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

6. PETITIONS

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

7. PSPO 2 - VERBAL UPDATE

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services provides a verbal

update on PSPO 2.

8. PLACE EXPANSION PROJECT UPDATE

Appendix B

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submits a report providing an update on Leicester's involvement in Sport England's Place Expansion programme and sets out details of a Full Award bid that has been submitted to Sport England on 27 March 2026.

9. LEICESTER RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

Appendix C

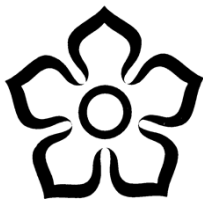
The Director of Tourism Culture and Economy submits a report providing Members with an overview of Leicester Riverside Festival, including its history, location, activities, partnerships, and recent development. The report also outlines how the festival has evolved and its current strategic relevance to the city.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

Appendix D

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

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 5 MARCH 2026 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Zaman – Chair
Councillor Halford – Vice Chair

Councillor Dr Barton
Councillor Dave

Councillor Chauhan
Councillor Haq

Deputy City Mayor - Councillor Cutkelvin
Assistant City Mayor – Councillor Dempster
* * * * *

184. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Waddington.

185. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

There were no declarations of interest.

186. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission held on 22 January 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

187. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair suggested that reports be taken as read where possible.

The Chair also made members aware of the first meeting of the Task Group on

Community Asset Transfer would be on 12th March.

188. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

189. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

190. MUSEUMS SERVICE OPERATIONAL CHANGES UPDATE

The Director of Tourism Culture and Economy submitted a report to provide an update on the delivery of the Museums and Galleries Strategy, focusing upon operational changes at Abbey Pumping Station and Newarke Houses Museum.

The Assistant City Mayor for Health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres introduced the item noting that continued investment into the museums was key. Maintenance and upkeep continued throughout the venues.

The Head of Arts and Museums provided an overview of the report, key points to note were as follows:

- The strategy was implemented nearly a year ago, the vision had been to develop a cost effective, accessible service.
- Significant investment had taken place over the previous decade which included an investment of £1.9m at Newarke Houses Museum. A recent Stage 1 grant had been secured from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for Leicester Museum and Art Gallery. In total £29m would have been invested in the service, upon completion of the development.
- Further Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation funding had recently been secured. Since 2018 National Portfolio Organisation funding of just over £400K a year has enabled a range of activities, in addition to those provided by the core budget. Further funding of £400k was confirmed for this year and a further application had been submitted for the following year.
- Offsite activities were highlighted and engagement had increased by 12% during the year, it was expected that by the end of the 2025/26 year 110,000 people would have been reached.
- Operational Changes at Abbey Pumping Station and Newarke Houses Museums were made from 1st May 2025. The relocation of the Food and Craft Fair from Belgrave Hall to the Abbey Pumping Station had resulted in an 70% increase in visitor numbers.
- Initiatives to increase engagement for children and young people included the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme at Abbey Pumping Station over the summer, with 416 participations. Children received a nutritious meal as part of the visit.

- In total there had been nearly 16,000 visitors from 1st May, with additional offsite activity with volunteers.
- Newarke Houses Museum had been open for special events such as the Siege of Leicester event programme and for Heritage Open Days. School visits had also continued.
- The museum service was on track to deliver on the vision and strategic objectives.

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

- The Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation funding is would be used at multiple sites, including Newarke Houses Museum and Abbey Pumping Station.
- The steam train continued to be in operation at Abbey Pumping Station, including on event days and railway days. Families had the option to visit the free museums. A proposal to open Newarke Houses Museum at Easter would be considered.
- The team had designed a portable cabinet of curiosities to engage with the wider community. A calendar of events would be distributed to the commission.
- Regular surveys were conducted to capture the amount of new engagement from taking the service out into the community.
- Newarke Houses Museum was free, and was therefore not a ticketed site.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) For consideration of Easter Holiday weekend opening at Newark Houses Museum.
- 4) The calendar of events would be shared.

191. SELECTIVE LICENSING UPDATE

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services submitted a report on progress with selective licensing schemes in the city.

The Deputy City Mayor for Housing, Economy and Neighbourhoods introduced the item, noting that the process had been very thorough and was delivering on targets. The first five-year cycle was coming to an end. Implementation of the Renter's Rights Act 2025 was imminent and would impact on the responsibilities for the private sector teams.

The Head of Regulatory Services gave a presentation as attached to the agenda, key points to note were as follows:

- It was estimated that there were around 8000 licensable properties in

the 3 areas. At the end of 2025 around 77% of the applications expected across the 5 years had been received, with the majority having been dealt with.

- For the number of applications within each designated area, Westcotes and the Fosse area had the highest numbers received.
- Most hazards were category 2 and were required to be addressed for licensing. In many cases formal action did not need to be taken after issues being highlighted to the landlord.
- Where necessary work to rectify was not organised by the landlord, the council may undertake these works in default and the costs recharged to the landlord.
- Formal actions included hazard awareness notices, improvement notices and prohibition orders - an incremental approach was usually taken.
- There were a number of investigations in process.
- Landlords were invited to regular forums.
- Team changes had included new management.
- A planned piece of work included reviewing designations, all three of which were due to end next year. Consideration would be given as to whether they needed to continue.

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

- The Council was not permitted to generate a profit on the scheme, and any income was reinvested back into delivery. A realistic fee was set to cover programme delivery costs and support the empowerment, education and signposting of landlords. Unlike some authorities, the scheme used a combined fee of £1,290 and included inspections to confirm properties meet minimum standards before a licence is granted. The cash flow forecast was under review.
- A different framework of standards was in place for council properties. A dip sample had taken place to support the Housing service which found consistency with the Housing team. The Decent Homes Standard would be implemented as part of the Renters Rights Act in the future, bringing changes to the private letting sector.
- The timescale to resolve hazards was dependent on the severity of the hazard. Landlords were responsible for arranging any alternative accommodation during rectification periods.
- The private rented sector team could investigate housing standards issues such as damp and mould, overcrowding and fire safety across all rented properties in the city regardless of licensing.
- There was not a ruling on how often properties would be inspected but robust checks were completed.
- For the numbers awaiting licensing, work was in place which included door knocking and leaflets being left. Tenants were also supported by being signposted to Justice For Tenants. There was a potential for tenants to recover up to 12 months of the rent paid if the landlord had not acquired a licence, this would be going up to two years under the Renter's Rights Act. There was also the possibility of a civil penalty. Since the service review, there was an increased drive

to identify unlicensed landlords

AGREED:

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

192. DRAFT PSPO ZONE: 2 IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

The Director of Neighbourhood & Environmental Services and the Head of Safer Communities gave a presentation providing an update on the development of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for the outer city areas.

The Deputy City Mayor for Housing, Economy and Neighbourhoods introduced the report and noted that it needed to be a data-driven exercise and that expectations would need to be managed.

Slides were presented as attached to the agenda pack. Additional key points to note were as follows:

- This was a work in progress, but the presentation gave an early insight into the formation of the proposed second PSPO (PSPO2).
- There had been a limited amount of responses from Ward Councillors, and there was a need to encourage the public to take part of the consultation process.
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) had been recorded in different locations by different teams, so a variety of data had been collected.
- Types of ASB were sometimes interconnected.
- E-bikes had been an issue with regard to vehicle-based ASB.
- The timeline had changed since the slides had been published and it was currently aimed to push back the timeline to give a realistic timeframe, the timeline was now running 2-4 weeks behind. It was important to ensure that this was done correctly and not rushed through.

In response to member discussion, the following was noted:

- In response to a query on the clarity of boundaries, it was noted that geolocations were mapped by postcode and the boundaries were exact. It was further noted that it was useful for ward residents to encourage them to take part in the consultation.
- It was also important for residents to report ASB. The Love Clean Streets app could be used for this, there were also QR codes that could be scanned. Additionally, a new tool and web portal was being launched. People could also report via computers in libraries, where staff could help. If people did not report, data was not available.
- With regard to fly-tipping this was dealt with by City Wardens. This used

a similar data set and dashboards. This work could increase as more data was received.

- This work would have a team of 11 officers to look after PSPO1 and to do targeted work in PSPO2.
- Data could be analysed to see where problems were likely to occur and when. Some issues, such as fireworks, were seasonal.
- This scheme was about project-based intervention work. The team could support and intervene where necessary and work could be done and measured to see if it had a positive impact.
- As the project was data-led, if there was a specific issue then hotspots and trends could be identified, and the team could look to be deployed, highlighting the importance of reports.
- The scheme would go live in the Autumn, and staff would be appointed from April. These staff could be deployed in Wards for targeted intervention work.
- Councillors were encouraged to bear in mind the key facts (as set out on the slide) when talking to constituents.
- It was noted that in some areas, people could drink in public if they weren't doing so in an anti-social way.
- As the approach needed to be evidence-based, spitting was hard to catch, however, signage could be installed to discourage it. Work would be undertaken on engagement and education where there were groups of problematic behaviour.
- Members were reminded that PSPOs were not implemented to generate fines but to encourage behaviour change.
- It was necessary to educate ourselves and the public on that PSPOs could achieve, and manage expectations. If a PSPO were introduced in certain areas, it would be necessary to think about the priorities of that area. It was necessary to think about what was aimed to be achieved with Ward Councillors and residents.
- Bikes were an issue, but not enough to build into PSPO2. This was different to PSPO1. PSPO2 would not adopt whole Wards, but would look at hotspots where there was evidence. Illegal E-bikes would be looked at and the Police would be worked with on Operation Pedalfast. The PSPO team did not have the power to stop moving vehicles, whereas the Police did.
- PSPO2 was very different to PSPO1 as it was more project-based intervention. Therefore, it was necessary to show when time and effort had been put in and positive impacts on the community. Outcomes could be shared with the Commission in the new municipal year.
- If certain behaviours arose in other pockets, another PSPO would be written. If Councillors felt an area needed a PSPO, they needed to encourage people to report behaviours as PSPOs needed to be data-driven. Ways to report could be discussed at Ward Meetings.
- It was noted that this was a citywide initiative.

AGREED

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

193. PRIDE IN PLACE PROGRAMME

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report setting out the details of the Government's Pride in Place Programme (PiPP), including information on compliance, mobilisation, governance, and early groundwork actions required for this long-term initiative.

Key points to note were as follows:

- The Pride in Place Programme (PiPP) was distinct from the Pride in Place Impact Fund.
- A government initiative had been launched at the end of 2025, and an understanding of what was required had been developed.
- The programme looked to focus on creating thriving places, stronger communities and community democracy (giving residents a say over what was needed in the area).
- Up to £20m over 10 years had been identified by the government. This would be split into 63% Capital (i.e. buildings) and 37% Revenue (i.e. services).
- Deprivation data was used to identify areas that needed investment. The government also used a Community Needs Index, although the Council did not have access to this.
- Three areas were considered in the report, these were Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOA).
- The money would not be received in one go, it would be received over three periods. The first would be received between now and the 2029/2030 financial year, the second between 2030 and 2031/32, and the last between 2033/34 and 2035/36.
- The Council had a responsibility to an outside body to ensure spending was consistent with financial spend rules. Procurement was taken into account. Transparency on spending was needed. It was necessary to ensure that each area was spending within government guidelines.
- It was necessary to support programme delivery. Part of this was recruiting an independent Chair with the local MP. A job profile had been identified for this and it was now out to expressions of interest. There were specific rules on who qualified around local connections and the skills and capabilities to fulfil the role.
- It was necessary to create a plan for each area on how to spend the money over a ten year period.
- Neighbourhood Boards would be resident-led with between eight and fifteen people on each board. The boards would contain at least one Ward Councillor, and MP, as police officer and representatives from anchor institutions, but the majority would be residents.
- It was necessary to collect information as the accountable body and

then it would be necessary to go through the process of engagement and to go through designs for areas and spending plans. Each plan needed to be submitted by the end of November.

In response to member discussion, the following was noted:

- It was clarified that areas were based on MSOAs rather than Wards.
- It was acknowledged that there could be logistical problems for MPs and it was being asked as to whether MPs could send representatives. The programme needed to be community-led, but the MP would have a role in the recruitment of the Chair.
- With regard to questions about how this differed from historical schemes, it was noted that there had been lots of investment in buildings and spaces previously, but the focus was different here as it was on the areas given to work towards. Local organisations would be engaged with to learn from them.
- There would be clear Terms of Reference for board which would outline who needed to be there and whether substitutions would be allowed.
- It was important to recognise that other areas were in need. It was necessary to be careful on the perspective created. The Council did not have control over the areas.
- It was important to understand that whilst the Council could encourage things to be looked at, the Council did not want to tell communities what they wanted.
- Conversations could be had with boards about extending boundaries, for example if there was a facility on the edge of a boundary, but this would need to be evidenced and put to the government.
- The independent Chair and the board would set the needs for the area, therefore it was necessary to ensure that meetings were as accessible as possible, including to younger and working-age people.
- With regard to queries raised about disparity in food retail offerings, it was noted that community pantries were an example of what could be done, but it was up to areas to decide what to do.
- Issues were raised about how Councillors were selected. The method of selection was not the Council's decision.

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environment gave an update on the Pride in Place Impact Fund (PiPIF).

The following points were raised:

- This was a complementary fund of £1.5m of capital for investment in the City and was not limited to MSOAs.
- It was focussed on quick investment opportunities which were low-cost and high-impact.
- There was a need to set out the investment process. This gave the option to focus on investment in the community and in public spaces and highstreets.

- The process of shortlisting was being undertaken to try and pick out projects that were known to communities and neighbourhoods and Ward Councillors. Members would be guided through the intentions on this shortlist of schemes, with an emphasis on high-need areas or the areas alongside them.
- The money needed to be spent in equal proportions over two years and it was necessary to show how the money was being spent.
- The government had talked about engagement with local representatives such as Ward Councillors and constituents.
- People could be guided on what were thought to be suitable schemes.
- There was a focus on high-need deciles and on parks and open spaces, also looking at where it might be complementary to the LCNA
- A briefing would be given to members before Full Council.

AGREED:

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

194. WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

195. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 8:12pm

Appendix B

CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Place Expansion Project Update

16 April 2026

FROM Sports Services & Public Health

Lead director: Sean Atterbury Neighbourhood &
Environmental Services

Rob Howard, Public Health

Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected: Saffron, Eyres Monsell, Abbey, North Evington, Thurncourt, Humberstone & Hamilton

■ Report author: Andrew Beddow, Crispin Clark, Sophie Noon, Claire Mellon

■ Author contact details: Sophie.noon@leicester.gov.uk

■ Report version number: 1

1.0	Summary This report provides an update on Leicester’s involvement in Sport England’s Place Expansion programme and sets out details of a Full Award bid that has been submitted to Sport England on 27 March 2026. The briefing summarises the evidence and engagement activity undertaken to date, outlines the proposed focus of the bid, and highlights the anticipated outcomes, governance arrangements, and next steps.
2.0	Background
2.1	Previous updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On the 24 June 2024, the City Mayor received a report that outlined the focus of Leicester’s Place Expansion Development Bid to Sport England, led by Active Together, the Active Partnership for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland.• On the 30 September 2024 Sport England notified Active Together that the Leicester Place Expansion Development Funding bid was successful, with an award of £273,953.• On the 16 October 2024, the City Mayor received an update on the successful funding bid. It was agreed that the funding would be used to investigate the barriers to physical activity in six MSOA areas of greatest need, in line with Sport England funding requirements, and that Active Together were to lead the development of a Full Award application to Sport England.• On 26 February 2026, the City Mayor received a briefing on this paper and the Full Award submission being made to Sport England by Active Together on this project.
2.2	What is Place Expansion? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sport England’s Place Expansion programme is a national initiative designed to address inequalities in physical activity through long-term, place-based, and system-change approaches. Sport England allocated £250m of National Lottery and Exchequer Funding into place-based systemic work over a five-year period until March 2028. A considerable proportion of the investment is granted to 80-100 places across England, including Leicester City. These places have been identified via a Place Need Classification (combination of data sources).).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme focuses on areas with elevated levels of inactivity and deprivation, supporting local partners to collaborate with communities to remove structural barriers to being active. • Leicester has been identified by Sport England as a Place Expansion area. The Development Award, granted to Active Together, has enabled preparatory work, including community engagement, research, and partnership development, ahead of a Full Award application. • Sport England has advised that the average bid is anticipated to be £1.6m per submission over this period. Given £273k has already been received, a Full Award bid of £1.3m would meet the average scale of investment received by Sport England. <p>This is a solicited bid by Sport England with a submission date of 27th March 2026. Active Together are the lead applicant. The next phase of work, if approved, will be 18months from September 2026 to March 2028. However, the golden thread for this work is ‘long term system change’ and further rounds of funding are anticipated.</p>
2.3	<p>Leicester Context and Rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leicester continues to experience significant inequalities in physical activity participation, closely linked to wider health inequalities, deprivation and structural barriers faced by communities. These issues are prevalent citywide, and exemplified in certain MSOA areas, six of which have therefore been the focus of this phase of Place Expansion activity. • The Place Expansion approach aligns strongly with inactivity levels as outlined in the Active Leicester Turning the Tide on Inactivity Strategy and the corporate priorities around reducing health inequalities, supporting neighbourhoods, and adopting preventative, community-led approaches.
2.4	<p>How were the areas selected?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport England required Active Together and Leicester City Council (Sports Services, Public Health, & Neighbourhoods) to undertake a significant data and insight exercise to determine which neighbourhoods to work in. The general criteria for selection were 1) top ranked MSOA areas according to Sport England that were also 2) highest areas of inactivity in the 2018 Health and Wellbeing Survey. • Sport England subsequently have made it clear that any further work must benefit households within at least one of these areas. Strategic work to benefit the whole of the city is permitted and included in the Full Award bid: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Saffron Lane ▪ Stocking Farm and Mowmacre ▪ Eyres Monsell ▪ Thurnby Lodge ▪ North Evington and Rowlatts Hill ▪ Northfields and Merrydale
3.0	<p>Our Approach</p>

- Based on the evidence and engagement undertaken (see Moving Conversations Summary Report at Appendix 2), Active Together has submitted a Full Award bid to Sport England on 27 March 2026. Active Together will function as the applicant and accountable body on behalf of the Leicester partnership and continue our collaborative way of working.
- We will focus resources on city-wide strategic roles and continue to develop work with community partners, building collaborative relationships with in the MSOA areas. We will work in partnership to try new ways of working, with open cycles of learning and action, with the shared objective to support communities to be more active.
- The project Steering Group has agreed to the following principles, informed by Sport England’s ‘Uniting the Movement’ and national Local Delivery Pilot learning, community engagement and network discussions. The Place Expansion team understand that there may be less visible change in the short term, but by taking our time to embed new processes within communities we will bring about greater long-term change in terms of tackling inactivity:

1. Connect & Listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAKE TIME TO LISTEN & understand what’s really getting in the way of people being active before offering solutions. • Work WITH PEOPLE of all ages and backgrounds so that they can move and feel more connected to others IN THE PLACE they live
2. Shape Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create pathways to securing more EQUITABLE outcomes for people, place and the planet. • Be BRAVE and be prepared to try new and different approaches.
3. Invest & activate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAKE ACTION in ways that others can see, trust, and join, to improve on what feels safe, what feels possible and who feels entitled to be present. • Striving to create a sense of BELONGING and TRUST between all community members • DESIGN for change that can becomes normal
4. Evaluate, & Sustain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed cycles of learning and action – everyone is an evaluator.

- A strategic approach is emerging from discussions and can be viewed in Appendix 3 - ‘A Plan on a Page’.

4.0 Stakeholder engagement

4.1 The project operates across two interconnected layers; System and Place (or neighbourhood level) and to date the following has been achieved:

<p>4.2</p>	<p>System:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations team well established, meeting weekly and equivalent to 2.5 full time members of staff. • In July 2025, 45 senior and emerging leaders took part in a 2-day training course on systems change. Subsequently the group has met four times and a 'Community of Change Practitioners' (facilitated learning, building alliances & peer support) is emerging. • Steering Group including Public Health, Highways, Education, Active Together & University partners. • Ripple-effect mapping workshop – insights are starting to influence decisions. • Facilitated sessions cross-department team leaders. • Theory of Change Workshop 28 Jan 2026 with representation from Active Together, Leicester City Council, Education and Sport England. • Meetings ongoing with Adult Social Care & Communities teams to align workstreams. • Neighbourhood & Environmental Services Conference workshop staff engagement
<p>4.3</p>	<p>Place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the Development Award funding, Active Together supported a programme of engagement and evidence gathering across the six MSOA areas (Appendix 1). • 'Moving Conversations' has been a mix of participatory methods including asset mapping, photovoice and face-to-face conversations. • Interviews with VCSE stakeholders • 15 people trained in Appreciative Inquiry • Over 700+ conversations with people about what they value and what would support them to be more active (See Appendix 1 for Summary Report) • 12 community partners driving the work in neighbourhoods.
<p>4.4</p>	<p>Seven main themes, or 'conditions for movement,' have emerged from the Moving Conversations work and are outlined below. This insight has been central to shaping the proposed Full Award bid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling safe • Transport & Mobility • Social connection • People-centred urban environment • High quality parks and play spaces. • Physical & mental health • Community ownership
<p>4.5</p>	<p>Related events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 4th February 2026, councillors for wards that crossover the six MSOA areas were invited to a briefing on the project and progress to date 4th February 2026.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors were supportive of the project, with Cllr Elaine Pantling expressing her support to attend a Community of Change Practitioners workshop. • A group of seventeen young people (aged 13 to 25) participating in a 'Moving Conversations' Photo Voice project and invited MP Shockat, the Lord Mayor & Councillors were invited to attend an exhibition on 7 February 2026. • A further Photo Voice project was delivered with the Eastern European community, with an exhibition held at the Guildhall on 28th March. 		
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>The Steering Group has explored the change that needs to happen in Leicester and where the priorities for this work will be between now and March 2028:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a single vision for walking, cycling, wheeling & play • Amplify the voices of the least active & highlight the need for action • Power shift to communities • Create a Community of Change Practitioners • Extend the reach beyond Public Health • Create a Participation Playbook for Leicester <p>In the long term, success looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New collaborative ways of working to create active environments in neighbourhoods. ▪ Reducing inequalities in physical activity in Leicester and improving health outcomes. ▪ Stronger, more connected communities. ▪ Services and systems that support physical activity in an equitable way in Leicester. <p>Overarching vision:</p> <p><i>When our least active residents look at their local parks, streets, community centres and leisure facilities, and they can confidently say, "This is for us", we will know the system is working well for us all.</i></p>		
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Governance and Management Arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Together have led the delivery of the £273,953 phase one of this work and will lead delivery and be the accountable body for the Place Expansion programme, working in close partnership with Leicester City Council, local organisations, and community stakeholders. Clear governance arrangements will be in place to provide oversight, manage risk, and ensure alignment with city priorities. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning will be integral to the programme, with regular reporting to partners and Sport England. <table border="1" data-bbox="240 1962 1334 2042"> <tr> <td data-bbox="240 1962 788 2042">Submission of the bid to Sport England</td> <td data-bbox="788 1962 1334 2042">27/03/2026</td> </tr> </table>	Submission of the bid to Sport England	27/03/2026
Submission of the bid to Sport England	27/03/2026		

Sport England decision-making following submission	June 2026
Delivery phase 1	September 2026 – March 2028
Future rounds of funding	Awaiting confirmation

7.0	Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications
7.1	<p><u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p>This report outlines the work undertaken to secure additional income through Sport England. If successful, the bid will lead to grant income of £695k in addition to £273k has already been received to Leicester City Council.</p> <p>Stuart McAvoy - Head of Finance 7th April 2026</p>
7.2	<p><u>Legal Implications</u></p> <p>There are no immediate apparent adverse legal implications from this report.</p> <p>In the longer term the content does suggest thinking about whether any form of consultation is required to ensure the full participation of the prospective beneficiaries of the proposed scheme. Consideration should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) whether necessary. (ii) if required or desirable if this should be on an informal basis; and (iii) if a formal consultation is necessary the timescales and format of this. <p>Legal support would be appropriate if the latter option is chosen.</p> <p>Where any third parties are engaged in the facilitation of the scheme (such as Active Together) or achieving the outcomes more generally, procurement should be advised in the first instance and a legal officer allocated to address matters such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) grant terms. (ii) support on any necessary procurement activities. (iii) potential governance issues; and (iv) any constitutional responsibilities/protocols. <p>Signed: Emma Young, Qualified Solicitor</p> <p>Dated: 31 March 2026</p>
7.3	<p><u>Equality Implications</u></p> <p>Our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires us to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, age) and those who do not. The Council also has an obligation to treat people in accordance with their Convention rights under The Human Rights Act, 1998.</p>

	<p>The report provides an update on Leicester’s place expansion programme, which continues to support the expansion of sport and physical activity opportunities in the six identified MSOA areas across the city and the outcomes of the engagement process. The programme aligns with the Council’s wider objectives to improve health outcomes, increase participation in physical activity, and reduce inequalities and pays due regard to the PSED.</p> <p>The programme aims to improve access to sport and physical activity for residents with protected characteristics and to reduce inequalities in participation across the city. The engagement outcomes outlined in the report should lead to stronger more connected communities whilst taking community insights into account will help to foster relationships with local organisations and communities and target barriers that exist in their communities.</p> <p>Equality considerations have been embedded throughout the project development and delivery, including the selection of locations in areas of greatest need and engagement with local communities. Projects are designed to improve accessibility and inclusivity, with a focus on supporting underrepresented groups such as disabled people, women and girls, older residents and communities experiencing health inequalities.</p> <p>An EIA approach is recommended where appropriate and will help ensure the programme delivers fair and positive outcomes for Leicester’s diverse communities. The Active Together full award needs to ensure that the above equality considerations are included in the submission covering the 6 MSOA areas and their demographics are taken into account.</p> <p>Signed: Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer Dated: 26 March 2026</p>
7.4	<p><u>Climate Emergency implications</u></p> <p>As service delivery generally contributes to the council’s carbon emissions, any impacts of carrying out new projects can be managed through measures such as requesting partners use sustainable travel options or provide remote services where appropriate, using buildings and materials efficiently and following the council's sustainable procurement guidance, as applicable to the programme.</p> <p>In addition, work which encourages and enables sustainable behaviours such as increased levels of physical activity may have further co-benefits for tackling the climate emergency. Where relevant, information about the climate benefits of such actions could also be included in communications and considered as part of the programme.</p> <p>Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246</p> <p>Dated: 30th March 2026</p>
7.5	<p><u>Other implications</u></p> <p>Sports England Place expansion programme has clear synergy with Leading Better Lives (LBL), our programme of early action and prevention for the city. Several of</p>

the themes gained through the moving conversations insights mirror themes identified through working together for change in the LBL programme, which provide the basis for the actions under this programme. The four pillars of our early action offer are partnership working; the community offer; ways of working and digital. Sports England programme expansion programme fits well within the pillars of the community offer and ways of working. Going forward the connections between the 2 programmes could benefit from key representation across governance arrangements to support complimentary, efficient ways of working.

Kate Galoppi, Director Adult Social Care & Commissioning

Dated: 02 April 2026

8. Background information and other papers:

9. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Map of MSOAs selected by Sport England Report

Appendix 2 – Moving Conversations Summary

Appendix 3 – Plan on a Page

Appendix 4 – Activity for all Foundational Principles

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

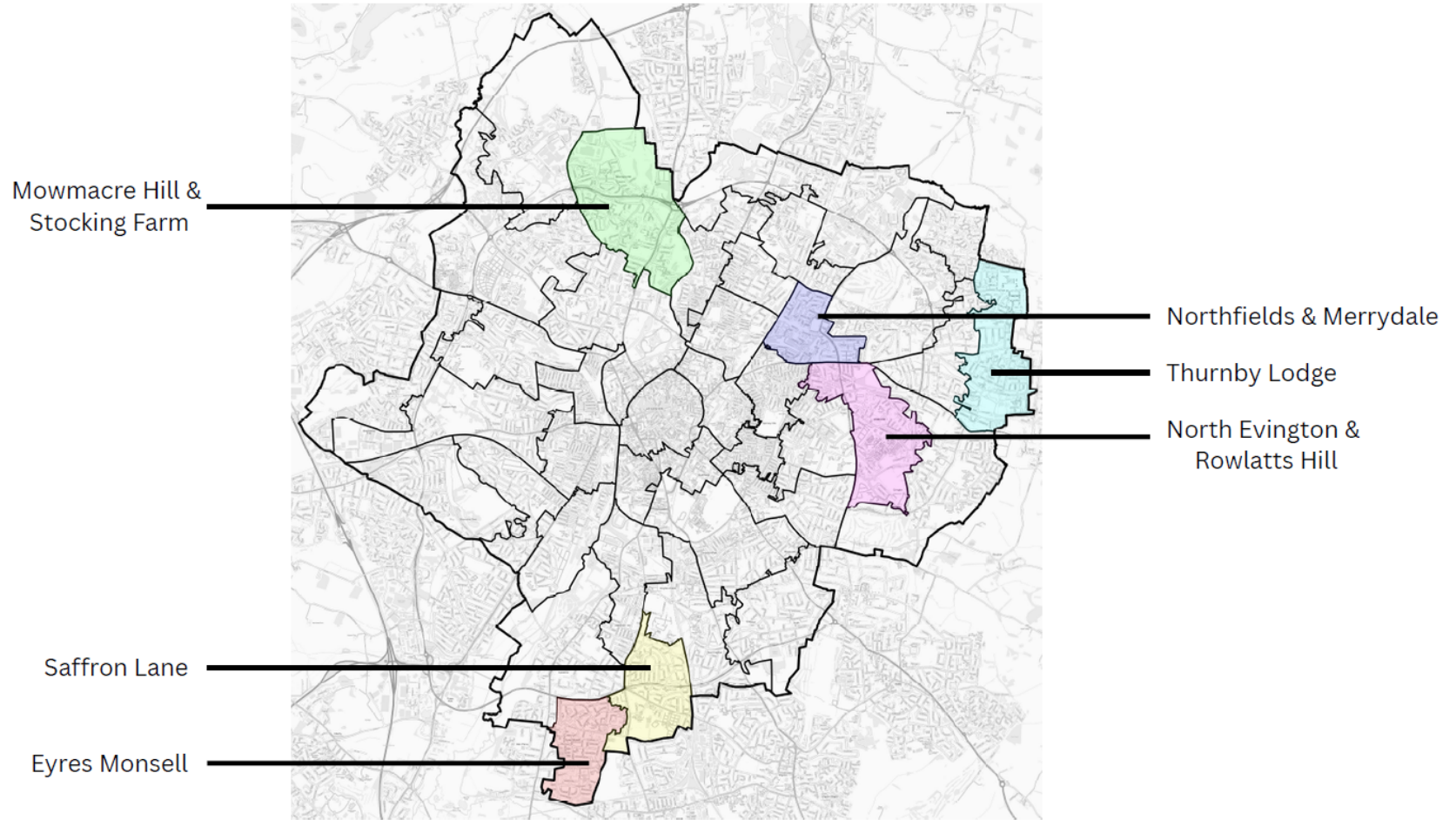
No

11. Is this a “key decision”?

No

Appendix 1 Map of MSOAs Selected by Sport England

20



Appendix 2 Moving Communities Summary Report



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Summary Report – Local voices at the heart of our work

Active Together and Leicester City Council are working with Sport England and a range of community partners to tackle the root causes of physical activity inequality.

“We know that where a person lives and the environment around them has a huge impact on how likely they are to be physically active, and that too often people in low-income communities don’t have access to the same opportunities or facilities as wealthier areas.”
Sport England

We have had over seven hundred face-to-face conversations with people in neighbourhoods where we know inequality in physical activity is highest. Conversations took place in a variety of venues including schools, community hubs, parks, libraries, and leisure centres.

The insights have been analysed by our academic partners, the University of Cambridge, who are supporting us to guide the next stage of our work.

How we worked

The work is led by our team of Moving Conversationalists (MCs), local people who attended a short training course in ‘Appreciative inquiry.’ We used a mix of participatory methods including asset mapping, photovoice and face-to-face conversations. We interviewed partners such as VSCE organisations, Education, Public Health, and Highways.

The Questions

1. What do you do that gets you out, about and moving?
2. Imagine you are moving more in five years’ time. What would have changed to make this possible?





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Where did we go?

Sport England selected the following areas based on factors including high deprivation, lack of community resources, and inactivity data.

What did people say?

We have identified seven main themes, outlined below, which we intend to explore further as levers to reducing inequality in physical activity.



1. Experiences of feeling unsafe

A range of concerns relating to poor urban environment, anti-social behaviour and crime were mentioned.

People told us they wanted environmental improvements such as cleaner streets. Improved policing and CCTV were also highlighted.

As a mother of a 9-month-old daughter, my main activity is going for walks. I try to go out every day, but unfortunately, in the area where I live, I don't feel safe enough because of vandalism, litter, and dog waste. I try to walk in a nearby neighbourhood where there's a nice park and a playground suitable for little children. Unfortunately, I don't have that option in my immediate

Safe and clean streets will make more active as I will be more inclined to walk around. More traffic control measures as the roads are so busy and there's not enough crossing to cross safely.



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I would really love to spend active time with my daughter, but I can't do that in the local area because it's unsafe — there are many homeless people walking around with alcohol. There's a nice place near the Eyres Monsell Community Centre, but I can't use it because I'm afraid someone might attack me. There are lots of teenagers, vandalism, the playground is always full of rubbish, and the outdoor gym is always occupied by people drinking alcohol. I'm afraid to say anything or tell them off.

If the place is safe I could go out more. We hear incidents of people just walking and getting stabbed. You just don't feel safe around community even mums with a baby are getting attacked on the news. I would like more Police on the road. Arrange a community group and social gathering for young adults and to get all people together. Young adults need things to do instead roaming on streets and getting influenced.

Feeling safe is important to me. Sometimes when I go out worry about people being abusive, racist, or violent. My health and work get in the way of physical activity, trying to fit in a walk every day can be quite a challenge.

I go for walk, I try to walk at least an hour or half an hour a day. I get out to spend time with grandchildren. I support my kids, son in-laws, friends, grandchildren, I visit, talk, care and cook for them. I try to go in the park but the park is not safe. We need the Police there especially in the holidays. For people like me who is Muslim and wears hijab they abuse us, sometimes they have thrown water, juice on me. Right in front of my house is a park.





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2. Experiences of transport and accessibility (mobility)

Concerns were raised relating lack of public transport infrastructure (transport accessibility, bus pricing, car parking). Suggested improvements included cycle paths and bike schemes, improved public transport, subsidised travel, and free child bus tickets. Reduced cost of public transport was seen as an enabler to increasing physical activity.

Would love to go further afield but transport and getting to places is difficult it would be great if more organised events via the local clubs could be organised with transport think we would all feel safer. Locally where I live it's messy.

It's good to plan to cycle round shaded streets that are quiet, but not many others of my friends have bikes , and actually I found out that two people I would have asked can't even ride a bike and they're adults

3. Experiences of poor of social connection

People expressed a strong interest in playful and creative ways to be active, including sport, dance, singing and arts-based activities. This highlighted need for more local, inclusive, and family-friendly opportunities, with improved access to creative groups, school-based activities, and funding for activities. Longer opening hours for community cafes and affordable childcare were seen as helpful to support participation.

We also need something for early years and support for young parents which seemed to disappear during Covid, we need early years to have a voice, we also would like a place to offer respite for carers to leave loved ones especially those with a disability. This would help both carers and those with additional support needs.

More socialising, joining in group, would like to do Pilates and dancing, it's fun and get to meet people. Kids would be older so would have more time.





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4. Experiences of the urban environment

A range of concerns related to the urban environment were raised including limited access to facilities, pavements, and street lighting. People spoke about a need for more funding for facilities; local provider options in place; one-to-one training; and outdoor gyms.

Stoughton Rd houses there no proper pavements or lighting across the housing there which won't make walk outside. Also there are no cycle paths or lanes in this area to use a bike which means the kids can't learn to bike or I can't use a bike safely even when the pavements are not properly there or smooth.

Some young people were using the community centre just to stay warm. Young lads were not causing any trouble but as they were laughing and loud, they were asked not to use the space. Going to the community centre was keeping them warm and off the streets, but then they were told that they couldn't use it. There was nowhere else for them to go to keep them out of the cold.

5. Experiences of parks and playgrounds

Litter and poor maintenance were key issues raised around parks and playgrounds. Environmental improvement suggestions included all-weather parks, safer parks, and more accessible gym equipment. A cleaner environment and improved parks and green spaces were considered enabling factors to being more active.

I would love to see the parks becoming more kids friendly and safe. May be mom-daughter exercise group or walk would be nice.

One thing that would help me be more active in the future is if parks were made more accessible and comfortable for all users. For example, when I go for walks with my friend, we often notice a lot of dog walkers [...] It would be really helpful if parks had designated dog walking areas safe, enclosed spaces where dogs can exercise freely without affecting other park users. This would allow everyone to enjoy the park in their own way, whether they're walking, jogging, or just relaxing. Along with better walking paths and more outdoor fitness areas, having clear zones in parks would make it easier and more enjoyable to stay active.





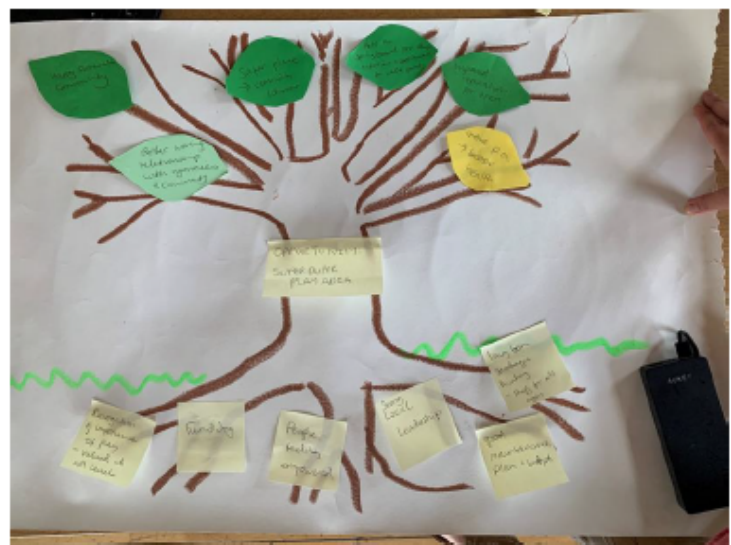
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6. Experiences of poor physical and mental health

We heard that volunteering is viewed by many a way for people to stay active, support their physical and mental health, and develop skills. Respondents highlighted a need for more volunteering and training opportunities, with professionals identifying additional need for volunteer leadership development.

Neuropathy from diabetes, medication takes the pain but not the wobble, so I drop things and not strong. go never gave support to get to the gym or physio, I got put off from going anywhere about health as people were not friendly and this puts people off I've had to build confidence in going somewhere, going somewhere on your own is scary [...] motivation is a massive factor, friends help me so having buddies help and we encourage each other

Two things that would change what I do is becoming ill, are closure of community activities due to not enough volunteers or finances are stretched.



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7. Experiences of working well together in community partnership

Our community partners (MC's) have driven this work. Regularly checking in and allowing space for flexibility and idea sharing, has enhanced our cycle of learning. Not only has this way of working helped to inform how we move forwards in the city, it has also shown direct benefits for our MCs and wider community.

This approach has supported MCs' personal development and physical literacy, including building confidence, overcoming personal barriers and anxiety, developing skills such as leadership and communication. It has also helped to develop understanding of their own communities and build new connections.



MCs also reported that residents who took part in conversations felt recognised and valued, which increased trust, encouraged participation in other local activities, and motivated even initially hesitant individuals to contribute to improving their area.

“Team members grew in confidence from being too nervous, shadowing others, and now he leads on the activities & even makes tea and coffees. LG feels this is real community empowerment. Another team member lacks confidence with the public, social anxiety, and LG has seen her build confidence at events & benefits from team working. LG feels the flexibility of the project is a huge strength - they've been able to adapt to the teams needs. They are thinking more about their community as a whole - not just saffron acres but the estate and city and how the connect.”





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What happens next?

This is just the start of our journey.

We are using what we have learned to change the way in which we collaborate with residents in the future – by involving them from the start in making decisions that affect them. The findings this research will help us form plans with Leicester City Council and other organisations to make Leicester the best place to live, work and be active.

To find out more please contact movingconversations@leicester.gov.uk



Appendix 3 Plan on a Page

“This is for Us”

When our least active residents look at their local parks, streets, community centres and leisure facilities, and they can confidently say, “This is for us”, we will know the system is working well for us all.

What’s keeping us in poor health?

We spend 1/3 of our lives in poor health. Our current system creates a cycle of exclusion:

- Streets belong to cars, not for walkers, wheelers or play.
- Parks feel unsafe and people avoid them, and use of leisure centres is declining.
- Leicester is the 12th most deprived local authority in England.
- With higher rates of preventable deaths, childhood obesity & adult inactivity than the national average, deprived people are at the highest risk of poor health.

We will create a city where the active choice is the easy choice for everyone.

What would help us to get out, about and moving?

700+ people in the least active areas told us:



Initiatives for our ‘Active Neighbourhoods’:

- Embed Core Team & Active Neighbourhood Champions (ANCs) as the bridge between the council and communities.
- ANCs to support communities to select priorities and codesign plans for parks, playgrounds, routes & spaces.
- Leadership Development: Community of Change for Senior Leaders; training for VCSEs.
- Small-scale capital works to ‘unlock’ third spaces and create ‘Play on the Way’ trails.
- Co-design a programme of regular activity in one of the priority spaces.
- Focus on families, CYP & low-income households in selected neighbourhoods.
- Evaluation & Learning Plan working to embed reflective learning and an ‘everyone is an evaluator’ approach.
- Key metrics: Felt experience; number of unlocked third spaces, growth in Physical Literacy scores.



Community Power
 People shape their own surroundings, leading to better services, stronger social bonds, safer neighbourhoods and more active lives within ‘active environments’.

By shifting power to communities through ‘connect, listen & invest’; codesigning a playbook of opportunities; employing 4x Active Neighbourhood Champions. With focus on least active residents, families, CYP, VCSEs.



Active Wellbeing
 Build capacity & coalition of local people to be active leaders, integrate physical activity across sectors, and create feedback loops to use lived experience to guide decision making.

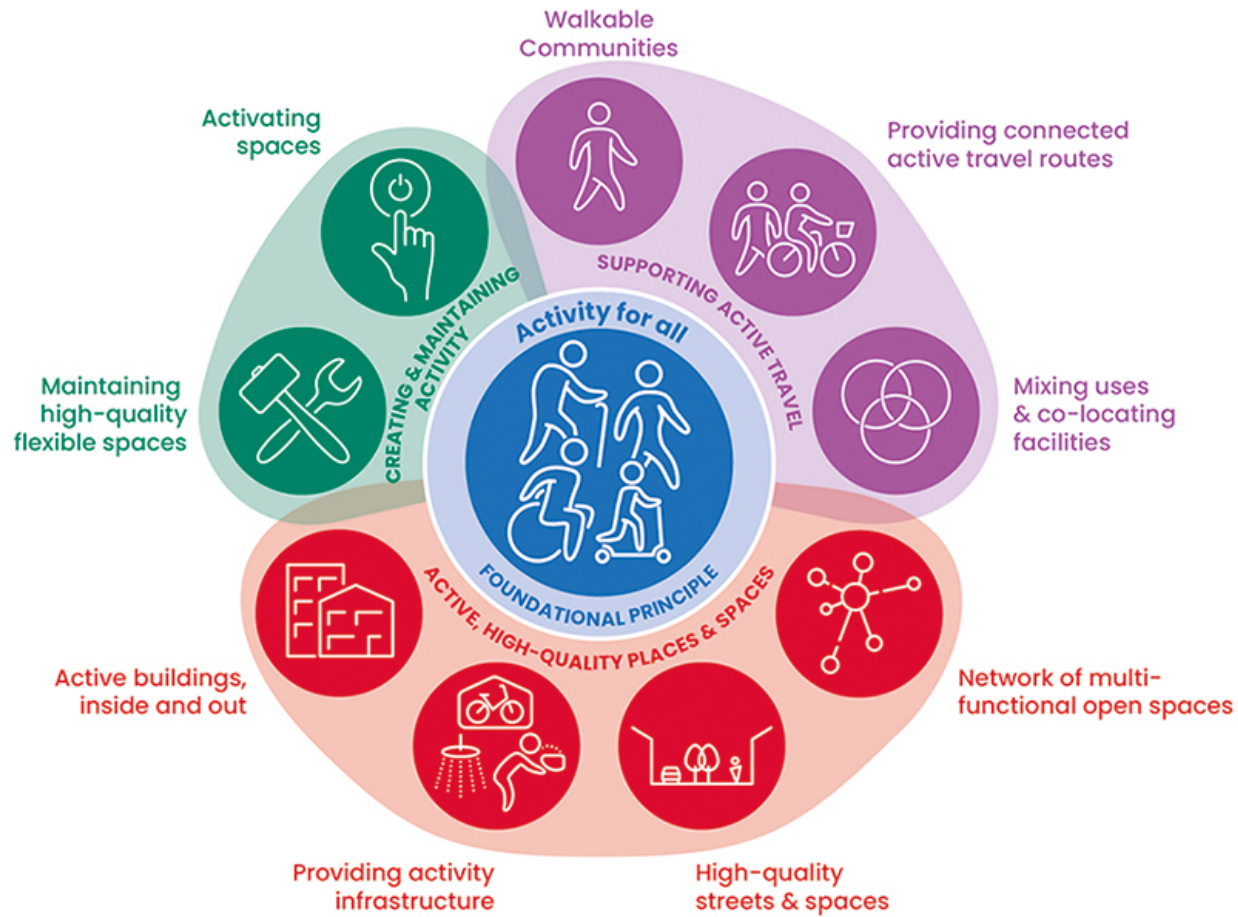
By amplifying voices of the least active and utilising Community of Change Practitioners to develop braver, collaborative leadership, connecting sectors and recognising opportunities. Engaging Senior Leaders, Councillors, Emerging Leaders, VCSE CEOs.



Tackling Structural Inequalities
 Address the social determinants of health through long-term policy change and integrated strategies to break ‘vicious cycles’ of inactivity; framing interventions as essential when there is moral obligation to do them.

By creating a shared vision for everyday active behaviours; embedding social determinants across the Council and partners; delivering system-wide outputs (Marmot City, School Streets, Play Strategy, etc.). Focus on least active residents, families, CYP.

Appendix 4 Foundational Principles for Active Design, Sport England





Leicester Riverside Festival Overview & Update

Culture & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 16th April 2026

Lead director/officer: Graham Callister

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Westcotes, Castle
- Report author: Graham Callister, Head of Festivals, Events & Cultural Policy
- Author contact details: graham.callister@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

To provide Members with an overview of Leicester Riverside Festival, including its history, location, activities, partnerships, and recent development. The report also outlines how the festival has evolved and its current strategic relevance to the city.

2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny:

Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission members are invited to note:

- The strategic role of Riverside Festival within the city's cultural offer.
- The sustainability of the current free-to-attend delivery model.
- Opportunities to further develop Riverside as Leicester's proposed "Signature Festival".

3. Detailed report

A. Background

Leicester's eclectic and popular Riverside Festival is an annual, free, family-focused outdoor event that takes place on the first weekend of June and is held along the River Soar in Leicester.

Established in 1997 the festival achieved its 25th anniversary in 2024 (the event was not held in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions), and 2027 will see 30 years since its original inception.

Originally conceived as a modest Sunday afternoon celebration linked to the regeneration of the riverside (particularly the Bede Island area), the festival has grown significantly post-COVID into one of Leicester's largest free outdoor events and biggest arts festival in the sub-region, attracting weekend audiences between 60,000 – 70,000 in recent years.

Key Data

- **Established: 1997**
- **Annual attendance: 60,000+**
- **Festival sites: 5**
- **Artists / Performers: 80+**
- **Businesses, Traders & stalls: 100+**
- **Partner organisations: 9**
- **Council investment: £35,000**

- **Total budget: c.£146,500**
- **Estimated economic impact: £3.1m**

B. Location, Footprint & Activities

The festival takes place across multiple interconnected city-centre sites adjacent to the River Soar:

- **Bede Park** – Main festival hub featuring the principal music stage, walkabout performers, family entertainment, funfair, street food and bar, and the central information point.
- **Western Boulevard** – Artisan craft market, community stalls, student visual arts exhibition and food/drink traders.
- **Castle Gardens** – Family arts activities, live music, community stalls, food vendors and the festival Access Hub.
- **River Soar (Mile Straight)** – Water-based activities including accessible boat trips, kayaking, dragon boat racing and demonstrations.
- **De Montfort University Campus** – Expanded cultural programme including student-led Cultural eXchanges activities, outdoor performance and film screenings, workshops, council cultural services (Libraries and Museums), and public access to key heritage venues and exhibitions including **Newarke Houses Museum** and **Jewry Wall**.

The festival programme is designed to be inclusive and reflective of the city's communities, creativity and cultural heritage, offering a mix of free and low-cost multi-generational activities.

C. Governance, Delivery and Partnerships

Leicester City Council

Leicester City Council Festivals and Events (F&E) team is the strategic lead and organiser of Riverside Festival. The F&E team receives support from colleagues across the City Council services including Licensing, Parks, Highways, Waste Management and Community Safety. The festival is delivered under a comprehensive Event Management Plan covering safety, crowd management, emergency planning and traffic control, developed in partnership with 'blue light' services.

De Montfort University

From 2024 the F&E Team expanded the festival into the DMU Campus securing DMU as a major event partner and supporter in the form of:

- Significant in-kind event / logistical support.
- Marketing and Communications support.
- Programme content.

- Funding.

The benefits to DMU are several and include:

- Presenting Riverside as an 'end-of-year' / 'kick off the summer' festival and celebration to DMU students.
- An opportunity to showcase the work of DMU students e.g. Cultural eXchanges (see below).
- Greater public / community engagement showcasing DMU Campus facilities and cultural / heritage buildings to local residents and visitors to the city.

Previously Cultural eXchanges was a standalone DMU festival that took place in February. Due to low audience engagement the decision was taken to relocate the festival within Riverside to secure higher exposure and better student experience.

The LCC F&E team has been supporting the DMU Arts & Festival Management faculty and students for 3 years providing practical lectures / presentations on festival programming and a host of operational considerations and hosting under and post-graduate student internships within the team providing 'live work' experiences for participating students.

New initiatives for 2026 include Main Stage industry 'shadowing' opportunities for DMU Music Technology students and Riverside branding / marketing pilots with MSc Cultural Event Management post-grads and Graphic Design students. There is significant scope for further expansion of DMU student projects / showcasing opportunities within Riverside over future years.

Leicester Music Board

New for 2026 will see the newly formed Leicester Music Board (LMB) co-programming the Main Stage with the LCC F&E team. The LMB currently comprises the following partner organisations:

- PPLPRS
- DMU
- Leicestershire Music Service
- Leicester City Council
- HQ Familia
- 2FunkyArts
- Technology in Music Education (TiME)
- UMC Management

The Main Stage music programme will be sponsored by PPLPRS and feature young emerging talent funded via a successful LMB bid to the Youth Music Trailblazer Fund.

All-In Leicester

The F&E team has been liaising with All-IN Leicester in relation to improved accessibility at the festival. All-In Leicester brings together people with a wide range of lived

experiences and access needs, from different backgrounds and communities, to assist cultural venues and festivals with their Access Plans.

Brightsparks Arts

BrightSparks is a community of people who use mental health services, alongside their families and volunteers. By taking a creative health approach to support and showcase people's talent their events and projects promote positive images and narratives of mental health and wellbeing. This year Brightsparks Arts will be delivering 'Bloom' – a mix of free arts / crafts activities and performances in Castle Gardens, and location for the Riverside Access Hub, a dedicated space for families with children with extra access and communication needs.

LCC Public Health

New partnership with the Public Health team encouraging a Healthy & Sustainable Food Commitment, gathering insights to inform future food and drink provision. LCC Public Health wishes to promote healthier food and drink choices for festival visitors without restricting personal choice. F&E will be encouraging traders to consider for example:

- Providing at least one healthy option in their menu.
- Offering smaller portion sizes for children.
- Including a reduced-sugar choice.

Healthy Food traders will be mapped across the festival with feedback gathered to help shape a future Healthy Trader Award. This approach ensures Riverside can build on healthier food options in future events while promoting balanced choices to families and visitors this year.

This successful festival model combines council coordination with community and institutional partnership, enabling cost-sharing, programme diversification and expanded reach.

D. 2026 Programme Highlights

Since 2023 the F&E Team has focused on developing the festival as an inclusive platform to showcase the best of the city's creativity across its stages through a growing number of Leicester-based arts organisations and artists, combined with a diverse food and local heritage offer that is family-friendly and appealing to the cities many communities, which in turn helps to attract a festival audience that genuinely represents the cities demographic make-up.

New activity for 2026 includes:

- **Main Stage relocation to Bede Park**, creating a stronger central music hub. The stage will be co-programmed by the Festivals & Events team and the Leicester Music Board, showcasing emerging and established Leicester/Leicestershire artists.
- **'Bloom' in Castle Gardens** – a sensory arts programme focused on wellbeing and mental health, delivered by Brightsparks Arts with partners Enter Edem, Pedestrian Arts

and Leicester Print Workshop Trust. Highlights include the interactive ‘**Plants and Play**’ floral wall installation and workshops by artist Mandeep Dhadialla.

- **The Newarke** – vintage vehicle display by the Leicester Transport Heritage Trust featuring classic Midland Red and Leicester City Transport buses.

- **Castle Mound and Castle Pub** – live folk music programme featuring The Grandest Union.

- **Additional activity** including BUSK Leicester acoustic performances, a DMU/Phoenix outdoor film screening, and an official Riverside after-party at 2Funky Music Café.

Further activity to be supported via a successful Arts Council England funding application will include:

- Storytelling performances in local libraries and at the festival as part of the **National Year of Reading**, delivered by LCC Libraries.

- Spoken word performances from Literati Arts artists and poets.

- Indian dance and African music collaboration by Nupur Arts and Kaine Management.

- Graffiti and street art workshops delivered by Graffwerk.

- Virtual reality experiences from MBD Limited.

- Development opportunities for young producers and enhanced accessibility, including BSL provision.

E. Strategic Contribution

Riverside Festival contributes to the Council’s objectives in the following areas:

Leicester Leading: Cultural and Creative Industries Strategy – A Signature Festival

Leicester Leading, the city’s cultural and creative industries strategy produced in partnership with De Montfort University, University of Leicester and Arts Council England, identifies the opportunity for a major large-scale Signature Festival as one of the key routes to enabling greater arts engagement from the widest range of its citizens combined with the ability to attract regional attendances, delivering both economic and social benefits for the city.

The proposition is for:

‘A new signature festival that celebrates the city’s growing creative and cultural offer, showcasing its global artists, creativity, Universities, heritage, fashion, public realm, food a drink. The ambition is a multi-artform festival to offer audiences a mix of live performance, installations, exhibitions, film, talks, workshops, free and ticketed events. The programme would be reflective of and responsive to the city’s communities and super diverse status.

A key element will entail promotion of aligned activity by partners. In other words, performances, exhibitions, talks etc that showcase Leicester but that are already planned and budgeted. This should include planned youth / community-based activity as well as work by professional artists. Also, training opportunities for aspiring young artists, producers and event production staff should be built in alongside volunteering options.'

While not wholly delivering upon the *Leicester Leading* Signature Festival proposition outlined above, Riverside Festival has been continually evolving to deliver against this strategic vision by playing a unique role within Leicester's festivals portfolio by combining arts, music, community activity and river-based programming in a large-scale outdoor setting. Unlike Diwali Day or Light Up Leicester, which focus on specific cultural or seasonal themes, Riverside provides a broad multi-artform platform that can showcase the city's local artists / organisations, heritage assets and capitalise on the potential for FE/HE engagement.

Given the scale and scope of the festival there could be multiple volunteering opportunities designed for students and residents, supporting skills development in event production, hospitality and cultural programming. Presently however this would require additional resource to manage a dedicated volunteer programme as the capacity to undertake this does not exist within the F&E team.

If successful Arts Council England funding will help to raise the artistic quality and excellence of the festival and include some limited opportunities for young producers. The ambition for Riverside however is to fully deliver on the Leicester Leading proposition over the next 3-5 years.

City centre vitality and Visitor Economy

Riverside Festival regularly attracts attendances of over 60,000 to the south-west fringe of the city centre with attenders benefitting local businesses in the immediate vicinity, on Narborough Road and city centre as attenders return to local bars, restaurants, car parks and major transport hubs.

Community cohesion and inclusion

Riverside Festival is actively designed to present an inclusive and accessible cultural offer that is appealing to all ages and abilities across the cities many communities. The F&E team ensure that the artistic programme presents artists across its stages from Global Majority communities, equally that the food offer also reflects local tastes and interests, and that the activities available are fully accessible with provision for families and individuals with additional / complex access needs.

Support for local businesses, charities and council services

With regular annual attendances of 60,000+ Riverside offers a great business opportunity for local independent traders and local vendors and provides smaller charitable / community organisations the opportunity to partner on the event and raise greater awareness of their cause / activity e.g. PROSTaid - organisers of the dragon boat racing.

Further the event presents other important council services to engage with residents in an informal, fun and engaging capacity e.g. Family Hub, Library and Museum Services among others.

Promotion of Leicester’s waterways, parks, heritage assets and public realm

Riverside Festival promotes the local waterway and natural environment through a range of activities on the River Soar that include kayaking, accessible boat trips and dragon boat racing, and utilisation of Castle Gardens and Bede Park. The recent expansion into DMU Campus has brought high quality public realm within the festival footprint combined with several of the cities most significant heritage assets that include Newarke Houses, Castle View, The Great Hall and former Courtrooms, St Mary de Castro and The Magazine.

Sustainability

A Carbon Baseline Measurement & Methodology Development for events was developed by DMU and trialled at Leicester Riverside Festival 2025 with an indicative carbon footprint analysis of the event produced covering Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. A key development this year will be an on-site, a short visitor survey (target over 600 responses) that will collect data on travel modes. The festival will also support a targeted Travel Campaign, promoting more sustainable routes via buses, walking, and cycling, building on existing Choose How You Move initiatives.

In addition, Riverside Festival 2026 will gather clearer information to support future sustainable event practices. Traders will provide details on travel distance, vehicle type, cooking methods, and use of local, seasonal, and biodegradable products. Finally, while a Green Trader Award will not be introduced this year, the information collected will help develop this in future events. Riverside Festival also coincides with Great Big Green Week, supporting wider environmental awareness.

F. Budget (Provisional)

INCOME (Forecast)	£
Leicester City Council F&E budget contribution	(35,000)
Arts Council England grant	(29,500)
DMU & PPLPRS (sponsorship)	(25,000)
Traders (F+B; Market stalls; Funfair etc)	(47,000)
Small grants	(5,000)
Advertising	(5,000)
Sub-Total	(146,500)
EXPENDITURE (Forecast)	£
LCC casual staff & Young Producers	8,000
Electrical / utilities	11,000
Traffic Management	5,500
Equipment – Staging; Toilets; Fencing; Benches; PA; Hammocks; Van hire etc	26,500
Cleansing services	8,000
Security & 1 st Aid	34,500
Performance & access costs	37,500
Marketing / Advertising / Evaluation	7,000
Licences	1,500
Contingency	7,000

Sub-Total	146,500
BALANCE +/-	0

The Council contribution of £35,000 towards Riverside Festival represents approximately **24% of the total festival budget**, with the remaining funding secured through commercial income, sponsorship and partnership support. F&E team achieves a minimum return on investment of £3.18 per £1 invested by LCC, at a cost to LCC of 0.58p per attendee.

Based on an annual attendance of 60,000 and an average day visitor spend of £51.96¹ however the estimated impact is far greater delivering a total direct and indirect economic benefit of £3.1m.

N.B. The budget presented does not include Arts Council England funding. If successful with a recent application the programme budget will be bolstered by an additional £30,000 investment.

In addition to direct financial support, partners including DMU provide significant in-kind contributions through public realm and venue access, staffing and marketing support.

G. Development Opportunities

Members are invited to comment on the following:

- Further development of and investment in Riverside Festival as a signature high quality multi-artform festival and visitor destination for the city and wider East Midlands as identified in the Leicester Leading Creative and Cultural Industries Strategy.
- Expansion of a festival 'city-side' fringe benefitting the local night-time economy.
- Long-term financial sustainability of the free delivery model. Maintaining a free model ensures accessibility and maximises community participation across Leicester's diverse communities. Comparable free city festivals such as Nottingham Riverside Festival (c.£60k NCC investment), Birmingham Weekender (c.£250k+ total festival cost) and Bristol Harbour Festival (c.£500k pa cost) attract similar scale audiences and play a key role in city branding and visitor attraction, although note that this is delivered with significantly higher investment.
- Developing further volunteering opportunities. The festival currently utilises a small number of volunteers annually through partner organisations, though there is scope to develop a larger structured volunteer programme.
- Growing partnerships and attracting further funding and sponsorship.
- Implementing further environmental and sustainability measures.
- Developing a Riverside brand identity.

¹ Based upon 2024 STEAM Tourism Economic Impact data which identified an annual day visitor value of £458m to the city generated through 8.8m day tourism visits, equating to an average spend per day visitor of £51.96pp.

- Crowd management, security and site logistics as attendance grows.
- Future strategic positioning within Leicester’s wider festivals portfolio which includes Diwali Day, Light Up Leicester and several council funded events.

H. SUMMARY

Since its inception in 1997, Leicester Riverside Festival has grown from a small community celebration linked to riverside regeneration into one of the city’s largest free outdoor events and a significant cultural platform for Leicester and the wider sub-region.

Attracting audiences of more than 60,000 annually, the festival delivers cultural, social and economic benefits for the city. It showcases Leicester’s creativity, diversity, heritage assets and riverside public spaces, while providing a major platform for local artists, community organisations and creative businesses.

As a free and family-friendly event, Riverside Festival ensures that high-quality cultural activity remains accessible to residents regardless of income, enabling people from across Leicester’s communities to come together and participate in shared cultural experiences within the city’s public realm.

The festival is delivered through a collaborative model led by Leicester City Council in partnership with organisations including De Montfort University, Leicester Music Board and a growing network of cultural and community partners. This approach enables the festival to attract external investment, diversify programme content and create opportunities for students, artists and local organisations.

Through this partnership and mixed-income model, the Council’s direct financial contribution represents approximately 24% of the overall delivery budget. This investment helps leverage additional income through sponsorship, trading and partner support. Based on current attendance and visitor spending estimates, the festival generates an estimated economic impact of around £3.1m for the local economy, representing a strong return on the Council’s investment.

Looking ahead, Riverside Festival also supports Leicester’s ambitions to strengthen its cultural profile and creative economy. As it continues to evolve, it provides a strong foundation for developing a distinctive multi-artform “signature festival” aligned with the Leicester Leading Cultural and Creative Industries Strategy, with opportunities to further enhance artistic ambition, partnership support, sustainability measures and the wider city-centre festival footprint.

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

4.1 Financial Implications

As detailed within this report, Leicester City Council provides a £35k contribution towards the funding of the festival, in addition to staff time in the planning of the event. Any development, changes or expansion of the event would need to be fully costed with clear funding sources to support those changes.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

Dated: 17th March 2026

4.2 Legal Implications

The Riverside Festival is delivered through a partnership arrangement involving a number of organisations. It is therefore essential that robust contractual arrangements are in place with all third parties, setting out roles, responsibilities and liability. Any in-kind contributions should also be subject to appropriate written terms to ensure legal protection.

The Council must ensure compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 in relation to the appointment of suppliers for services. Legal and Procurement services should be engaged at an early stage to ensure appropriate processes are followed.

In respect of external funding and sponsorship, the Council must ensure that all funding conditions are complied with, to mitigate the risk of clawback or breach.

Signed: Seema Patel, Principal Lawyer

Dated: 19th March 2026

4.3 Equalities Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The paper provides an update on the history, current operational model, strategic value, and budget of the Leicester Riverside Festival. There are no direct negative equality impacts arising from the report. The festival provides a significant positive impact by ensuring accessible, inclusive cultural provision. The festival is a free, citywide event and brings together people from all backgrounds. While not a strictly protected characteristic under the Equality Act, maintaining a free-to-attend model removes financial barriers, ensuring that cultural experiences remain accessible to residents regardless of household income.

The diverse programming and food offer, featuring representation from Leicester's communities and local voluntary sectors celebrate the city's diversity and promotes community cohesion. Ongoing engagement with community networks will help ensure that the festival continues to reflect the city's diversity and to remove barriers to participation related to income, language, or accessibility.

Signed: Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer

Dated: 19th March 2026

4.4 Climate Emergency Implications

Events can generate carbon emissions where they lead to additional travel by staff, members of the public or staff of partner organisations using private cars, taxis/private hire vehicles or buses. There are also building emissions (heat and power) associated with the use of venues for events along with secondary impacts such as waste and recycling.

Embedding sustainability initiatives through gathering information on travel and sustainable catering from traders, conducting a visitor travel survey alongside promoting sustainable

and active travel methods in tandem with Choose How You Move demonstrates a best practice approach to managing event associated emissions. It will be important to ensure that this information is used after the event to support a positive impact on future events and to report on successes and potential future initiatives such as the Green Trader Award.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer

Dated: 23rd March 2026

4.5 Other Implications

N/A

Signed:

Dated:

5. Background information and other papers:

N/A

6. Summary of appendices:

N/A

**Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission
Work Programme 2025 – 2026**

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
19 June 2025	<p>Overview of Culture and Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Business case for the KRIII café.</p> <p>Public Space protection Orders</p> <p>Waste Engagement Findings</p>	<p>Site visit to Biffa to be arranged</p> <p>To avoid a backlog of casework arising, officers to respond to members queries within 5 days.</p> <p>Report to come back to the Commission in 12 Months following the opening of the new café to see if expectations have been met in terms of customer numbers and cost/benefit.</p> <p>Report to come back to the Commission on the plan going forward.</p> <p>Informal session to be convened around early August for Commission to discuss options with the Commission so they can inform the way forward.</p>	<p>To be arranged later in the year.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Added to workplan TBA</p> <p>Added to workplan TBA</p> <p>Arranged for 7th August.</p>
11 September 2025	<p>Heritage Places Funding, National Lottery Heritage Fund – Verbal Update</p> <p>Re-drafted Community Asset Transfer Policy</p>	<p>To note stories that need to be heard more, including about the historical diversity of Leicester in terms of the people living here and how Leicester became so diverse, as well as understanding Commonwealth contributions to the World Wars.</p> <p>Task Group to be set up</p>	<p>Funding for this is limited and the type of themes which are progressed will depend upon the type of grant applications which we receive.</p> <p>Scoping document for task group to come to Commission in January.</p>

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
22 January 2026	<p>Budget</p> <p>Bereavement Services Update (6-monthly update)</p> <p>Leisure Centre Needs Assessment</p> <p>De Montfort Hall/ Haymarket Theatre</p> <p>Community Asset Transfer Task Group - Scoping Document</p>	<p>To include information on the search for places, the work plan for Gilroes Cemetery. Also to include Cremation facilities.</p> <p>To also include information on fees and how to encourage people to use the council cremation facilities.</p> <p>Will consist of primary and secondary research in relation to active Leicester Leisure Centre Offer. Scope includes public opinion, membership and usage numbers and engagement in activity.</p>	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
5 March 2026	Museum Update Selective Licensing PSPO – Plan going forward Pride in Place/Impact Fund	To include visitor figures over the school holiday period.	
16 April 2026	Place Expansion Programme Riverside Festival evolution Update on HASBO and CRASBU		

Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
BUSK Leicester pilot – Report	To go to first meeting of 2026/27 municipal year.	
F&E Grants Programme – Awards	To go to first meeting of 2026/27 municipal year.	

YPC Survey Findings	To go to first meeting of 2026/27 municipal year.	
Sports Consultation Findings		
Museum Engagement	To proposals for an open day	
NLHF Museum and Art Gallery Project		
Festivals and Events Review update		
Trees and Woodlands – Involvement with Schools and Education and Grassland Strategy	To include seed and produce exchange and to include areas for recreation and sports.	
Engagement of Community Organisations	Report on how community organisations could be engaged to help the Council run services as requested at the meeting of 29 January. – To go to first meeting of new municipal year.	
Growing spaces strategy		
Heritage Places Funding - National Lottery Heritage Fund – Update on next stage.	To include findings of Audience Agency. If Stage 1 is successful.	
KR111 Visitor Centre – Performance since new Café.	Analysing the cost/benefit of moving the Café. To include changes in visitor numbers since café moved and comparisons between old and new café. To come in February 2027.	
Heritage panels, inviting members suggestions for new panels		
CCTV Overview	Moved from November	

