

Leicester
City Council

Meeting of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Date: Monday, 2 November 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 Aldred (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Dr Barton, Cassidy, Dave, Haq, Joshi and Pickering

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

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

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Leicester City Council, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

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If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact: **Ed Brown or Ollie Harrison, Governance Services** on edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk or oliver.harrison@leicester.gov.uk. Alternatively, email governance@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

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PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

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 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 3 September and the special meeting held on 8 October 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. A review of Community Asset Transfer Policy Implementation - Task Group Report

Appendix B

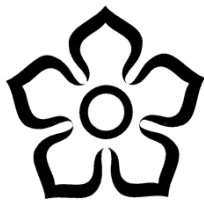
The Chair of the task group submits a report examining Community Asset Transfer policy implementation.

8. Pride in Place Programme and Pride in Place Impact Fund

Appendix C

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services and the Director of Corporate Services submit reports providing an update on the City Council's Pride in Place Impact Fund programme and an outline of the Pride in Place Programme.

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|------------|---|-------------------|
| 9. | Annual Ward Funding Report 2025-26 | Appendix D |
| | <p>The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submits a report providing an outline of how Ward Funding was spent across the city between April 2025 and March 2026. This report seeks to provide an insight into the variety of projects and initiatives that took place in the wards, and some of those that were important to residents locally.</p> | |
| 10. | Future Provision of Libraries and Community Centres implementation update | Appendix E |
| | <p>The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submits a report and presentation outlining progress with the implementation of the decision taken in March 2026 for the Future Provision of Libraries and Community Centres.</p> | |
| 11. | Work Programme | Appendix F |
| | <p>Members of the Commission will be asked to consider the work programme and make suggestions for additional items as it considers necessary.</p> | |
| 12. | Any Other Urgent Business | |



Leicester
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Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2026 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Zaman - Chair

Councillor Dr Barton
Councillor Surti

Councillor Cassidy

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220. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Bajaj and Cllr Haq.

Apologies were also received from Deputy City Mayor Cllr Cutkelvin.

Cllr Surti substituted for Cllr Bajaj.

221. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

With relation to the report on Festivals and Events Grants Programme 2026/27, Cllr Dr Barton declared that he was the Chair of the Board of Governors for one of the organisations that held an event on Summer in the Square. It was not a paid position.

222. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission held on 18 June 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

223. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Chair reminded Councillors to be respectful.

- The Chair noted that members had received the papers in advance of the meeting.
- The Chair reminded Councillors that there would be a special meeting to discuss the Sports Needs Assessment.
- The Chair noted that recommendations from the Community Asset Transfer Task Group would be agreed by email.

224. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

225. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

226. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER ZONE 1 AND ZONE 2

The Director of Neighbourhood & Environmental Services submitted a report to the Commission which provided an overview on the work of the Public Space Protection Order Zone 1. The report also provided an overview of the proposed Public Spaces Protection Order for Zone 2 and plans to implement.

The Head of Safer Communities attended the meeting to help present and assist with discussions.

Key points to note included:

- The Head of Safer Communities detailed the work carried out in quarter 1 of the PSPO. During the first quarter, 180 incidents had been managed, there had been 51 breaches, with the majority being committed by the street lifestyle community and with no means to issue penalty notices and 129 needed no further action.
- Additionally, 24 vulnerable people were supported, and 7 people were given immediate medical assistance in the street which included the lifesaving administration of Naloxone to prevent a drug overdose.
- The zonal work of the PSPO was highlighted in the presentation. The zones selected were high footfall areas, the main routes into the city such as London Road and transport hubs. Regular communication was had with the Police to reduce the overlap of resources so that more areas could be covered.
- Two key projects undertaken as part of PSPO 1 were highlighted, those being Cank Street and New Walk/Upper Nelson Street. On Cank Street, PSPO Officers consulted with local businesses to understand the issues

and have since installed CCTV, gated off doorways and engaged in regular patrols. All of which has helped to reduce open drug use and rough sleeping on the street. On Upper New Walk/Nelson Street, the encampment on the Oval was moved on and work was carried out with businesses to make them more secure. It was noted that the work on both Cank Street and Upper New Walk/Nelson Street had received positive feedback from local businesses.

- While the work of PSPO 1 had focused on the city centre, PSPO 2 would target areas further afield. To better understand the areas of focus for PSPO 2 a 6 week consultation period with the public was started on 1st May 2026. Various forms of media were utilised to advertise the consultation period, this included Facebook posts, an appearance on Radio Leicester by the Head of Safer Communities and posters in LCC buildings.
- Following the consultation 1217 responses were received, including 12 from strategic partners. It was commented that many residents in the new PSPO 2 area welcomed the work to tackle anti-social behaviour however, there were strong concerns raised about the effectiveness of enforcement.
- The key issues highlighted were widespread concern about open drug use and dealing, street drinking and related behaviour, littering and fly tipping, noise nuisance and feeling unsafe walking home, particularly in the evenings.
- It was explained that the next step was to present the proposal for an executive decision.

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

- Members praised the good objectives of the work and asked if they could see a higher resolution version of the map shown in the presentation. The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services advised that this would be provided after the meeting.
- Members asked about the relationship between PSPO Officers and the Police and what powers PSPO Officers had. It was noted that local authorities must instate and lead on the implementation of PSPO's and that they can then delegate these powers to the Police, which the Council has done. It was noted that PSPO Officers could use the PSPO powers but did not have the powers of Police Officers. Members further queried whether PSPO Officers would be patrolling alone and it was

advised that Officers never patrolled alone.

- Members asked if there was direct number that they could provide to their residents if they witnessed anti-social behaviour in progress. It was noted that a number and website will be available for the public to report issues in their local area. However, the Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services stressed that PSPO Officers were not a blue light service. The PSPO Officers were focused on operational projects and constructive work rather than responding to active incidents, which was the domain of the Police.
- The selection and funding of the PSPO areas was discussed, and members were keen to learn more about the processes. The fair funding settlement in the previous year allowed the Council to put more funding into the PSPO scheme and was used to increase the number of Officers in the team from 6 to 10. Additionally, it was explained that the areas were selected based upon reported data of incidents and that PSPO Officers shared a system with the Police to help better coordinate efforts.
- Members were interested to learn about the incidents which PSPO Officers had encountered during quarter 1 and what the escalation process was for cases that were progressed. The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services explained that in more involved cases a Joint Action Group (JAG) would be implemented with partner services such as the homelessness team, Police and homelessness charities. These groups helped to better coordinate effort on cases and address some of the route causes in individual cases.
- Members asked for greater clarity on how the PSPO 1 method would be implemented in zone 2. The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services outlined to the Commission that PSPO 2 would operate in a different manner to PSPO 1. As PSPO 1 covered a much smaller area, the Officers were able to patrol the area on foot but due to the size of PSPO 2 and the capacity restrictions of the team, PSPO 2 was planned as a targeted and data led project. Data collected regarding hotspots and areas of seasonal trouble, such as areas of Castle Ward during university fresher's week were detailed as target areas.

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) Officers to provide a high resolution map of the PSPO areas to members

227. BUSK LEICESTER – OVERVIEW

The Director of Tourism; Culture & Economy submitted a report which provided an overview on the new BUSK Leicester pilot initiative, covering March – May 2026 and proposed next steps.

The Head of Festivals and Events and Cultural Policy attended the meeting to help present and assist with discussions.

Key points included:

- The Busk Leicester scheme was introduced as a pilot scheme between March and May 2026 as part of the Heart of Leicester strategy. The aim was to create a simple, accessible and managed way for buskers to use appropriate city centre spaces while also balancing the needs of businesses, residents and visitors to the city.
- An online booking system was implemented for local artists to book a space at various, defined performance locations. On the system, there were clear terms and conditions outlining the responsibilities of performers, covering issues such as noise and consideration for local businesses. The City Wardens and PSPO Officers were also given access to the booking calendar, so they were able to support the scheme.
- During the pilot scheme, 117 bookings were made on the website and individual performers accounted for 80% of this. Gallowtree Gate proved to be the most popular site followed by High Street. A survey undertaken with artists and creatives showed that 92.3% of respondents believed Busk Leicester provided creatives with a space to perform in. A further 79% of respondents said they would use the scheme again, 76.9% of respondents agreed that Busk Leicester helped to animate the city streets, and 73% of the respondents said they were from Leicestershire.
- It was noted that Busk Leicester was still a pilot scheme and that lessons were learned throughout. A notable example was the movement of the busking positions on High Street following concerns raised by neighbouring businesses. The data from businesses was still being collated at the time of the meeting therefore conclusions could not yet be drawn regarding individual business experiences. It was commented that there were no concerns raised by the Police to date and they

indicated that more supported location could improve the look and feel of the city centre and possibly discourage unregulated activity.

- The next phase was focused on refinement and evidence based development of the scheme. The revised 2 hour performance slots for artists were maintained and the work with Leicester music board was continued to permanently embed the Busk scheme into Leicester's music scene. Potential new locations were assessed against audience potential, business impact and potential safety concerns. Highways were supportive and were involved in the planning as well as safety and road access issues.
- In summary, the scheme demonstrated demand, provided support to artists and creatives and provided practical evidence on how a managed busking scheme can work. The scheme also provided useful learning opportunities, feedback and a base to further develop the scheme in the future.

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

- Members raised questions regarding the nature of the booking system and if there were any costs for performers. It was advised that there were no booking fees for performers.
- The Chair asked how the service balanced the needs of the artists and the business owners. The Head of Festivals, Events and Cultural Policy explained that in the initial stages the service engaged with businesses to understand their disposition and then progressed from there. It was commented that the service was responsive to business's needs, but the business would have to make a reasonable argument, and a degree of trial and error was implemented.
- Members were interested to learn about the future of the project and whether they planned to expand outside of the city centre and incorporate other arts such as graffiti. The Head of Festivals, Events and Cultural Policy clarified that there were plans to expand outside of the centre and that they were using feedback from artists in the decision making. Regarding graffiti it was highlighted that the Council already had projects in place with Graff Werk which supported local graffiti artists.
- The topic of the booking schedule was raised by members and whether the service controlled the schedule. It was detailed that the system is left open to the artists, but the artists were unable to do block bookings.
- Members further asked how the service was managing artists who performed outside of the scheme. It was noted that they could not stop

artists performing in other areas with acoustic instruments, but they would prefer artists to use the Busk scheme. One of the main aims of the scheme was to address artists who were using amplifiers for their music as if artists used amplifiers in unapproved areas, then they would be in breach of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO).

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.

228. FESTIVAL & EVENTS GRANTS PROGRAMME 2026/27 – OVERVIEW

The Director of Tourism; Culture & Inward Investment submits a report to the Commission on the 2026/27 Festivals and Events Grants Programme including background, new commissioning process and criteria, successful applications and awards. The report also outlines how the grants programme has evolved and its strategic relevance to the city.

The Assistant City Mayor for health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres introduced the report and noted that where there was competition for resources, it was necessary to have a transparent process that was fair and could be understood. She acknowledged that moving to another system always had challenges, but this change had happened relatively smoothly.

She further reported that people had engaged well and the process had been open and transparent. She suggested that this was a good foundation for the Council to continue to develop. She highlighted the value of festivals to the city and individuals, and noted that some smaller events had a disproportionate impact in delivering for the city.

The Head of Festivals and Events and Cultural Policy attended the meeting to help present and assist with discussions.

Key points to note were as follows:

- The report provided an overview of the Festivals and Events Grants Programme for 2026/27, including the introduction of a new commissioning process, the assessment framework used, and the recommended funding awards for this financial year.
- Leicester City Council already delivered a number of major events directly, including Light Up Leicester, Riverside Festival, Diwali Day and the Abbey Park Bonfire. Alongside this, the Council supports external organisations to deliver a broader programme of festivals and events that contribute to the city's cultural, social and economic wellbeing.
- Following a review of the previous grants programme, a new

commissioning approach was introduced for 2026/27. The intention was to create a more transparent, robust and strategically aligned process, ensuring funding supports high-quality, inclusive and environmentally responsible festivals and events that deliver clear benefits for Leicester residents and visitors.

- The funding opportunity was publicly advertised in March 2026, with applications promoted through council communications, social media, local press and directly to previous recipients and local cultural organisations. This resulted in 68 applications requesting a total of approximately £927,000, significantly exceeding the available budget.
- Applications were assessed against published eligibility requirements and a detailed scoring framework. Criteria included cultural quality, community cohesion, participation and accessibility, environmental sustainability, economic impact, organisational capacity and value for money. Following eligibility checks, 33 applications were excluded for not meeting the published criteria, with the remaining applications scored and reviewed by officers.
- Originally, a budget of £165,000 had been identified for the programme. However, due to the strength of applications received and the strategic importance of festivals and events, a further £65,000 was approved, increasing the total programme budget to £230,000. This additional investment formed part of a wider increase in the Arts and Museums budget and reflects the Council's commitment to accessible cultural activity across the city.
- As a result, 20 festivals and events were recommended for support in 2026/27, with awards ranging from £5,000 to £45,000. The programme included established events such as Leicester Caribbean Carnival, Leicester Mela, Leicester Pride, Black History Month, Leicester Comedy Festival and Bring the Paint, alongside events celebrating dance, poetry, film, music, heritage and emerging communities. Together they represented a broad and balanced programme that reflected Leicester's diversity and supported participation across different communities and age groups.
- The programme was designed not only to support cultural expression but also to strengthen community cohesion, encourage civic pride, increase footfall for local businesses and ensure that free and low-cost cultural experiences remained available to residents during a period of continued financial pressure.
- All successful applicants would be subject to formal funding agreements, monitoring requirements and post-event evaluation. This included attendance data, financial reporting, evidence of outcomes achieved and, where necessary, audit and compliance checks to ensure public funding delivered measurable value.

In response to member discussion, the following was noted:

- In response to a query about whether there was any conflict with residents in the city centre, it was noted that no complaints had been received from residents about festivals and events negatively affecting the environment.
- In response to a query about whether events increased footfall for local businesses, it was noted that businesses welcomed the programme as it brought people into the city. Attendance data was asked for as part of the evaluation. A methodology was then applied to this data to get an estimate of the economic impact.
- Footfall trackers were in place, and software could measure hotspots to identify the number of people in that area of the city at a particular time. These trackers worked off mobile phone data and could look at the profile of the phone-user, this could be applied to particular events.
- Organisations needed to match-fund.
- In response to a request for clarification about the Monsters event, it was clarified that this was an event that had previously occurred in the city and would occur again. It featured large inflatable monsters on buildings. This would be during restaurant week and half-term and would tie in with restaurant promotions.
- In response to a query regarding reasons for refusal, it was noted that 33 applications had been ineligible. Some refusals had been due to match-funding requirements where organisations had asked for over the 50%. Other requirements had been attendance and participation of over 3000 as wide-ranging events were aimed for. Applicants who came through the eligibility tests were scored against the criteria based on how well they answered 17 questions, the scores were amalgamated and the best selected for funding. Some applications had been just below the threshold, and others further below. Feedback had been given where requested on how they could improve applications in future. It was hoped to re-open the application process in October.
- In terms of promoting grants, this was done through the usual Council channels and through local media. Community partners were also asked to help with communications.
- In terms of awareness of the events, there was a package put together, mentioned in social media and local media outlets. Additionally, interviews were conducted on local radio. Further to this, there were on advertisements on council buildings such as libraries and also on buses. The Council organised communications for the whole city, whereas the individual organisations targeted communications at particular communities.
- In terms of application support, officers were available if people/organisations had questions. Not many questions had been received, but there were a broad range of applicants. Even though some

applicants were ineligible, the applications were representative of communities in Leicester.

- The work was multi-layered and multi-faceted. For example, with events such as the Diwali celebrations, the majority of funds were spent on closing the road rather than the cultural content. In contrast, where events were on parks, the infrastructure costs were lower. Events were not always like-for-like. The return on investment was good.
- It was noted that some smaller festivals could go under the radar. Although some may have ward-funding.
- The What's On guide was no longer produced as there was a challenge around the cycle of applying for funding meaning that organisations could not always commit to do what they said they would do in six months' time as they did not know whether they would have the funding to deliver. In its place, Visit Leicester acted as a portal. When information came late, it was easier to turn it around on a digital platform. Additionally, it was not known what the take-up of the guide was, so it was necessary to think about value for money. Some events, such as Diwali and Light Up Leicester had printed material, but this was done on a case-by-case basis.
- Groups that had just missed out on funding were signposted to other options, including through the website. Groups who had missed out would get feedback, but would still need to re-apply and demonstrate that they could meet the criteria.
- Sustainability and inclusion forms were part of the feedback.
- Officers from the Festivals and Events team could not attend every event due to limited numbers, however, arts organisations that received grants would be surveyed and the data analysed. The survey had particularly high uptake at the Riverside Festival.
- The Festivals and Events team supported a rich and diverse mix of festivals, including working with smaller organisations across parks and in the city.
- In response to a question on whether commercial festivals brought in money that could subsidise the other festivals the Council gave grants to, it was clarified that this money helped, but did not make up all of the money involved. It was a mixed economy underpinned by the Council who put in more than 50% of the budget.
- The Festivals and Events Team were thanked. Work was being moved forward and there was an emerging vision regarding festivals. It was important to have ownership and dialogue as festivals were so important to the city. It was suggested that a further report come back to the Commission on the vision for festivals, exploring both larger and smaller festivals.
- The importance of festivals for the performers was highlighted.

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.
- 3) That a further report be brought back to the Commission on the vision for festivals.

229. WORK PROGRAMME

It was requested that a further report on festivals come back to the commission.

The work programme was noted.

230. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 19:23.



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: Thursday, 8 October 2026 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Zaman (Chair)

Councillor Cassidy
Councillor Halford

Councillor Haq
Councillor Dr Moore

Councillor Pickering
Councillor Rae Bhatia

In Attendance

Assistant City Mayor Councillor Dempster

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231 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed those present.

Apologies were received from Cllr Barton – Cllr Halford substituted.

Apologies were received from Cllr Aldred – Cllr Dr Moore substituted.

Apologies were received from Cllr Dave. Cllr Rae Bhatia substituted.

Apologies were received from Cllr Joshi.

232 Declarations of Interest

The Chair noted that on the advice of the Monitoring Officer, if Councillors were members of leisure centres that were impacted by the proposal, they should declare it, but would not need to leave the meeting.

The Chair, Cllr Zaman, declared that he was a member of Braunstone Leisure Centre that was not affected by the proposals.

Cllr Haq declared that he was a member of Evington Leisure Centre.

233 Leisure Centre Needs Assessment (LCNA), Phase 3 Proposals and Public Consultation.

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submits a report on the Leisure Centre Needs Assessment (LCNA), Phase 3 Proposals and Public consultation. The Assistant City Mayor for Health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres introduced the report.

Key Points included:

- Primary and secondary research had been carried out, and a set of proposals had been produced.
- One of these had been investment in Leisure Leys Centre. The building was in need of improvement, the gym needed improving, as did the front of the building, as people were sometimes queuing in the rain.
- The proximity of Beaumont Leys library to the leisure centre suggested that it could be more economically viable to have the library as part of the leisure centre, which would leave the library as a building that could be used for other things.
- Leicester Leys remained a popular leisure facility. The proposed investment in Leicester Leys would improve the facility and increase its appeal as a leisure destination.
- Regarding the future of New Parks Leisure Centre, data had shown that it was an under-used pool, and for every visit, the subsidy from the city taxpayer was around £6, whereas for the other leisure centres it was around £1 or less.
- Over 65% of Active Leicester users from the western ward use of Braunstone Leisure Centre and Leicester Leys as their primary leisure centre.
- If £4m was invested in New Parks Leisure Centre, around £3m would need to go into addressing maintenance and infrastructure issues such as the roof, electrics and the pool pump/plant, and therefore the customer would not see the benefit. The investment would address the maintenance of the building but not address the problems with usage and performance of the centre.
- It was noted that swimming was only a part of what the leisure centre offered. It was hoped to increase the 'dry' activities such as group exercise and Livewell by utilising and programme these activities in other community locations within New Parks.
- The squash club would need to use Leicester Leys should New Parks leisure centre close. However, data showed that residents of New Parks did not generally use the squash club. The situation would be similar with regards to canoeing, which could also be moved to Beaumont Leys.
- With regard to school swimming, five schools currently used the New Parks pool. Of these two were nearer to Beaumont Leys, so would have a better experience using Beaumont Leys pool should New Parks pool close. The remaining three had been engaged with, they currently walked to New Parks, but if they had transport, it would take the same amount of time to use a different pool, so their

timetable would not be disturbed in the event of New Parks pool closing. It was acknowledged that schools had difficult budgets, but financial assistance would be provided to support schools to cover the cost of transport.

- Meetings had been conducted with the public, and the consultation was live online. Capacity would be looked at in terms of meeting the needs of clubs and groups.
- Pool capacity had been looked at in relations to the number of residents in the city, and had been compared to other cities. Leicester was not over or under capacity. Should New Parks Pool close, it would not have a majorly detrimental effect on this statistic but would improve the budget by approximately £700k.
- The Council had a duty to make decisions on emotive issues; however, it was necessary to think about what was in the interests of the residents at the present time. It was considered that young people wanted different experiences, and whilst they needed the opportunity to learn to swim, which they would continue to be given, they also wanted fun and confidence in the water, which could be achieved through Leicester Leys.

In discussion with members, it was noted that:

- Members praised the comprehensive report but wished to hear more about the arguments in support of New Parks Leisure Centre. In response it was stated that the aim of the consultation period was to provide this. The report brought to the commission had provided the data and the consultation would provide public feedback, which would provide a comprehensive approach. The emotional nature of the issue was acknowledged.
- Members noted the findings regarding the changing trends towards traditional lane swimming and how this impacted the Council's thought process. Members were keen to find out more about the potential improvements that would be made to Leicester Leys. In particular, the currently decommissioned flumes, which members argued were a major attraction and added to the destination appeal of Leisure Leys. It was explained that the closure of New Parks would mean £8 Million could be spent on renovating Leicester Leys and recommissioning facilities such as the flumes.
- It was raised that Leicester's KS2 swimming attainment (the ability to swim 25m when leaving primary school) is lower than other Local Authorities in the region, which has an average of 72% compared to Leicester at 42%. A discussion took place about the non-correlation between location of a primary school and the swimming ability of pupils, with example given in the east of the city of schools that are within walking distance of council pools being as low as 21%, compared to those in the west that are further away being higher as around 65%.
- Concerns were raised about the potential health impacts that the New Parks Leisure Centre closure could have on the New Parks area, which was already struggling with low health outcomes. Concerns around the levels of swimming proficiency in Leicester were highlighted. Officers highlighted that proximity to a

swimming pool was not the underlying issue behind this statistic as notably, Rushey Mead Primary School had a swimming proficiency amongst its students of 20%, even though Cossington Street Sports Centre was nearby. It was stated that schools in the New Parks area were actively choosing Braunstone Leisure Centre over New Parks and those schools had much better averages for swimming proficiency, with Stokes Wood Primary School having 67% and Forest Lodge Academy 61%. More information could be provided on which schools used which pools.

- The topic of travel to other leisure centres was raised by members and the potential barriers this might cause. Officers stated that there were plans to re-site the dry gym equipment at New Parks Youth Centre, which was located opposite New Parks Leisure Centre meaning there was little disruption to local gym users. Regarding swimming pools, Braunstone Leisure Centre was located just over a mile from New Parks and Leisure Leys was two miles away and located at a popular shopping centre.
- The topic of LGR, which was currently on pause at the time of the meeting was raised by members and how a potential enlargement of the city boundaries would affect the leisure centres. The main concern was how the population increase could impact the leisure centres and if the Council had factored capacity into the report's findings. It was advised that the topic would be investigated and members communicated with regarding this.
- It was acknowledged that there would be trade-offs either way depending on which strategy the Council chose. It was detailed that New Parks Leisure Centre was running at a £430K a year deficit and was currently costing each resident a subsidy of £6.35 to support the facility. If New Parks was to remain open and receive a £4 Million investment, then a large majority of the funding would go on maintenance costs rather than improving the overall aesthetic and functionality of the pool. This investment funding would have to be taken away from the funding pot for Leisure Leys which would impact the level of improvements undertaken at the site.
- The Chair was interested to find out if any green schemes were planned as part of the refurbishment and upgrading of the leisure centres. Officers advised that the installation of Photovoltaic Panels had been conducted or were currently ongoing at several leisure centres with the aim of offsetting some of the utility costs at the sites. There were also plans to replace the facilities at several sites, such as boilers, which in some cases were over 50 years old. This again would help to offset utility costs and make the centres more energy efficient.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That points raised by members be taken into account.

The meeting ended at 7:05pm

Leicester City Council

Scrutiny Review

**A review of the Community Asset
Transfer Policy Implementation**

**A Review Report of the Culture and
Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission**

March – September 2026

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Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Commission Members:

Councillor Zaman (Chair)
Councillor Halford (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Dr Barton
Councillor Cassidy
Councillor Chauhan
Councillor Dave
Councillor Haq
Councillor Waddington

Chair's Foreword

Community Asset Transfer (CAT) enables local people to take control of the important spaces and buildings which matter to them locally, to meet the priorities and needs of the local area.

The Council recognises that community ownership of relevant land and buildings can transform neighbourhoods, support thriving communities, and unlock the power of community.

On 18 September 2025, the Council approved an updated Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy, amended in light of changes to legislation, Council objectives, policy and practice since adoption of a CAT Policy in 2008 as last updated in 2022.

Prior to this, at the meeting of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission on 11 September 2025, the Commission considered a report on the updated CAT Policy. At this meeting a task group was requested by members to consider the implications of the policy updates and proposals.

The task group aims to address questions around the processes of CAT and its effect on the community and community groups.

The overarching aim is to look at potential implications of the new policy and to assess whether any improvements could be made to practical application of the policy.

We hope that the recommendations from the task group will help future community groups applying for CAT to have a smooth and straightforward experience and reliable support.

Councillor Zaman

Chair, Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Methodology

- 1.1.1. Following the initial meeting to set the scope, a further meeting was held where members were given an outline of the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policy and were given the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions.
- 1.1.2. It was suggested that groups who had undertaken the process could be engaged with to learn from their experience.
- 1.1.3. Following invitations to three groups being sent out, the group Team Hub who had undertaken CAT on New Parks Centre attended a meeting with the group and presented feedback on their experience of the CAT process.
- 1.1.4. Members were invited to suggest questions that could be sent out to other groups via email. The questions were sent out and responses collated.

1.2 Recommendations

The Assistant Mayor for Health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres and the Executive are asked to consider the following recommendations:

- 1.2.1 Recommend that within guidelines we will aim to promote access to the Council's BESS capitals service for new community groups who may be interested in buying building support from the Council.
- 1.2.2 Recommend that we look to hold an annual knowledge-sharing event for all CAT community organisations
- 1.2.3 Accurate forecasting for building costings – recommend the Council publish full building-condition surveys as part of the pack for CAT buildings to ensure organisations are fully aware of building condition and likely costs.
- 1.2.4 Ensure there is third-party support to help with writing the business case.

2 Report

1.3 Background

- 1.1.5. Following the presentation of the updated Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policy at the meeting of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission on 11 September 2025, a task group was requested by members to consider the implications of the policy updates and proposals.
- 1.1.6. An initial scoping meeting was held on 30 October 2025 after which a scoping document was produced (Appendix 1).

- 1.1.7. The Task Group aimed to address questions around the processes of CAT and its effect on the community and community groups.

1.4 Current Arrangements

- 1.1.8. Slides were presented to the group showing the current arrangements for CAT (Appendix 2). Further points raised are noted below.
- 1.1.9. The previous application process has been difficult to find in the constitution. The new guidelines aim to be more user friendly, and the guide easier to take groups through.
- 1.1.10. There are exclusions regarding what is considered for CAT and what is not. The fourth change concerns updates on new exclusions in law that would allow the disposal of assets.
- 1.1.11. Independent support is given to community groups as many are not experienced in writing business cases and may benefit from the appropriate support to assess their readiness to take on the running of a building. This support also allows the groups to weigh up the opportunity to see if it is right for them. It is important the support is independent as the Council is offering the opportunity and assessing the application.
- 1.1.12. Previously a period of 12 weeks has been provided to enable community organisations to develop and submit their business case. Following this the business cases would be assessed by an officer panel.

- 1.1.13. Views of Ward Councillors are taken before recommendations are made to the executive. A formal decision needs to be taken by the executive.
- 1.1.14. Following a decision to award a lease under the council's community asset transfer policy, the handover period commences. This typically takes between 6 – 9 months to complete legal and practical considerations before buildings could be transferred.
- 1.1.15. There is ongoing monitoring and support within the lease signed when the buildings were exchanged. The community group is monitored on both building compliance delivery of community benefits against their business case which is built into the lease.
- 1.1.16. The CAT policy had been introduced in 2014 as part of the Localism Act. It was then updated in 2022 and again in 2025.
- 1.1.17. There had been amendments in light of changes around MEES (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards). A building could not be leased if it did not have a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of E or above, this would change to EPC rating C or above from 2027 and EPC B or above from 2030. There were some exceptions to this such as listed buildings which could not be developed further, or industrial units which often had their roller shutter doors open most of the time and no heating.
- 1.1.18. If a property asset within the community is surplus to requirements it may be handed back to Estates and Buildings Services (EBS), EBS would then conduct an asset development review to see if it was suitable for repurposing back into the Local Authority for their own use. If a property asset was handed back it would be considered for the Council's priority need first.

- 1.1.19. The law since the Local Government Act 1974, has always allowed Local Authorities to dispose of properties (sell or lease over 7 years) at something called 'less than best consideration' i.e. less than the market value, however, there must be concrete reasons to allow the less than best consideration (or less than market value). In law, that 'undervalue' can only be considered if the Council assesses the 'undervalue' in monetary benefit to the Council. The undervalue can be measured through social, economic and sustainability wellbeing benefit in order to meet the law.
- 1.1.20. The starting point for disposals is always 'best consideration', a business case would be prepared by the tenant/purchaser to justify any social, economic or sustainability wellbeing provided to the citizens of Leicester. The financial stability of organisations taking on CATs is also looked at.
- 1.1.21. Any disposal of over £2m in total value (i.e. this could be a lease proposal at £100k pa for 20 years) needs Secretary of State approval.
- 1.1.22. It is necessary to understand that the Council has a fiduciary duty to its taxpayers and Council needs to consider before disposing of a property asset to external organisations if i) they need it themselves for their own service use; ii) they wish to dispose of it to raise a capital receipt to maintain their own budgetary objectives before considering disposing of it externally. However, in special circumstances, the Council may wish to prioritise these for disposal to the community for them to run. These buildings still have a capital value, and the council would always have to in law consider 'best consideration'. The CAT Policy is a local Policy and the law has precedent.
- 1.1.23. It is not mandatory to have a CAT policy, and approximately 50% of Councils nationally have not chosen to adopt a CAT policy. Full Council agreed in 2014 to adopt a CAT policy. A new Council could choose not to adopt a CAT policy. CAT is entirely a voluntary process entered into by the Local Authority and can be withdrawn from at any time.
- 1.1.24. The Localism Act 2011 sought to empower communities to self-manage and required Councils to consider different ways to deliver community services.
- 1.1.25. Many charity and community organisations are not used to maintaining buildings and do not necessarily understand the legal and compliance requirements at the outset. They are good at delivering their community aims – but not always as aware of how to maintain a property asset. Therefore, the Council inspect CAT assets annually, to ensure that Health & Safety law and compliance are met and that our property asset is being kept in good condition.

- 1.1.26. The Council's Building and Engineering Services Support (BESS) service can be offered to CAT owners. BESS is a commissioned service where property assets continue to be maintained by EBS at a maintenance cost to the organisation. Groups could buy into this if they wished. The advantage of buying into the BESS service is it provides professional services to CAT delivery partners to ensure the building is compliant and well maintained and should the leaseholder need professional advice on installation, there is a team that are there to support them.

1.5 Findings

- 1.1.27. The CAT process can arise organically from community interest or from Council-led considerations. Most recent opportunities have emerged through formal public engagement and consultation.
- 1.1.28. A recent government White Paper was referred to (published two days prior to the meeting), 'Protecting What Matters', included reference to community asset transfers and it was suggested the document would be useful for the Task Group to consider and understand any implications for the Council's approach, including how the Council's strategy aligned with any national policy direction.
- 1.1.29. The importance of ward councillor involvement was emphasised before any report is submitted to the Executive on a proposed transfer, and that councillor views should be incorporated into the report, so members views are properly reflected in the decision-making process.
- 1.1.30. It was suggested that it would be useful to have a diagram or map showing how the CAT policy works in practice, it was highlighted that a visual process map would help both members and community organisations understand the stages involved, the current point reached in a case and the likely timescales. This would be particularly useful as the group was looking at the implementation of policy. It would also be useful to support launch events with organisations. The process map in the new policy was considered a useful tool.
- 1.1.31. Land transaction rules within the constitution govern this process Officer led panels work together going through assessments line-by-line following the assessment criteria published.
- 1.1.32. The length of the lease has lately been offered initially at 5 years to provide a safety net for new CVAT leases. Subsequent leases depend on the strength of the organisation's business case and its ability to demonstrate that it could sustainably operate the building and deliver community benefits.

- 1.1.33. The original CAT process had required organisations to submit business plans through a competitive process and that organisations approaching the end of an initial lease period would normally be required to submit a further business case for any extension. The community benefit outcomes needed to be evidenced as part of the process.
- 1.1.34. The incumbent group has rights so obtaining the lease at the end of the first period was not competitive. at the end of the first lease, the Council would consider building compliance and how the original business plan had been delivered on. If they were satisfied, a new lease could be offered subject to a suitable business plan.
- 1.1.35. All organisations are expected to comply with the community benefits outlined within their business plans, if there are grave concerns, these can be addressed with the organisation.
- 1.1.36. Liabilities cannot be handed over, it is necessary to ensure that buildings are fit for the period in question. It is important that organisations understanding maintenance liabilities before taking on buildings and ensuring that sufficient provision for repairs and maintenance was built into business plans. The council undertook a condition survey, and organisations often commissioned their own from an independent company.
- 1.1.37. The responsibility for ongoing maintenance transferred to the organisation with CAT. The Council could not transfer buildings with liabilities it considered unmanageable or unrealistic. Buildings would normally be assessed as fit for transfer prior to any CAT arrangement progression. While support services and guidance may be available, responsibility for the building ultimately remains with the organisation taking on the lease. There is a level of risk with CAT, but this can be mitigated through a condition survey so that groups could understand what might need doing. Reference was made to BESS which could be bought in to assist organisations in managing buildings. Many groups preferred to take on maintenance themselves as their knowledge and expertise built up and they may be able to source compliant maintenance services cheaper than the Council can.
- 1.1.38. Independent support and guidance can be commissioned to assist organisations in assessing viability and preparing business plans and full building information packs and draft lease terms are provided to assist applicants.

1.6 Evidence Gathering – Team Hub

Jo Randall, Director and Founder of Team Hub attended to provide evidence and share experiences of operating a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) and highlighted the following:

- 1.1.39. The organisation's ambition is to deliver a broad range of community services from the building and creating a sustainable community-led hub.
- 1.1.40. The group had entered into the CAT process for New Parks Centre as a place to operate from. This was achieved as a Community Interest Company (CIC).
- 1.1.41. The group took up the offer of independent support which was commissioned by the Council. This assisted with preparation of the business case and becoming a CIC.
- 1.1.42. As soon as the building opened under the CIC, it was realised as to what the community needed. When applying for funding, it was realised that whilst the group had initially been a dance academy, it had now branched out to support local people, so it was necessary to rebrand.
- 1.1.43. People from the community approached the group with more issues. The group listened to people's needs and projects were put on accordingly.
- 1.1.44. The community had supported the group and helped to get things moving.
- 1.1.45. In terms of current activities and community delivery - Jo advised that the centre currently delivers projects Monday to Saturday between 8am and 8pm and operates a nursery within the building.
- 1.1.46. The organisation delivers a range of free and supported community sessions including: Holiday programmes for children and young people, football, arts and dance sessions, Games room activities, family support provision, youth mentoring and support programmes, support for young people, empowerment groups, mental health cafes, community flower groups, court and football pitch activities delivered in partnership with the community.
- 1.1.47. The organisation currently operates 12 projects and employs 32 local people.
- 1.1.48. The organisation also works closely with schools and parents within the local area and had established partnerships with a number of local organisations through initiatives such as 'New Parks Together'. Particular work had been done with parents and schools regarding suspended pupils.
- 1.1.49. The organisation initially operated under a five-year lease which had since progressed to a ten-year lease. She explained that the organisation was now focused on strengthening governance arrangements, expanding the leadership team and developing a longer-term strategic plan.
- 1.1.50. The intention was for the centre to remain a community asset beyond the involvement of current directors, with local employment and community ownership helping to ensure sustainability and continuity.

- 1.1.51. The group had moved from a five-year lease to a ten-year lease, as part of this they had looked to make the team bigger and an additional director had been brought in. There was additional support in the strategic plan going forward in the next 10 years. The Centre served the community, and it was important that this continued going forward given the buildup of employment for local people), it was hoped that they could take on more ownership and build the skills for the centre to continue.
- 1.1.52. The organisation aimed not to become overly reliant on grant funding and had developed income-generating activities to support sustainability. These included the nursery, room hire income, partnerships with community organisations and delivery contracts and funded programmes.
- 1.1.53. In terms of external money, the centre applied for funding from a range of funders including the OPCC zone, and Lottery funding had also been received for the next three years.
- 1.1.54. Room hires help to pay for the running of the building and provide an important meeting space for local community groups helping to build community cohesion. All projects are ongoing, except for the community café which was not cost effective. Projects would have staff allocated, but also volunteers.
- 1.1.55. The original five-year plan had been met and exceeded within nine months.
- 1.1.56. The organisation operated with a strong focus on community impact and that staff were passionate and went above and beyond as the main objective is community impact.
- 1.1.57. The organisation had inherited a number of property-related issues including roof repairs, drainage concerns and asbestos-related matters. It was noted that obtaining approvals for building alterations and navigating landlord application processes could be lengthy and complicated, as had finding money to address the issues, also, aspects of the process and terminology could be difficult for community organisations to understand initially. It had also been necessary to know which companies could help with which issues.

Representations from other community groups based on a questionnaire are appended at Appendix 4.

1.7 Benchmarking

Members were made aware of the CAT policies of the following Councils for consideration:

- Nottinghamshire County Council - <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/policy-library/39472/community-asset-transfer-policy>

- Nottingham City Council *Note: This is a draft-* <https://committee.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/documents/s140912/Draft%20community%20asset%20policy.pdf>
- Harborough District Council - Corporate Property Strategy and Asset Register (Includes Community Transfer Policy) - [Corporate Property Strategy and Asset register | Harborough District Council](#)
- North Northamptonshire Council - <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/community-safety-and-emergencies/buying-community-asset/community-asset-transfer-policy>

1.8 Conclusions

From the discussions with Community Groups and between members and officers, the following was raised:

- 1.1.58. Consideration of use of the centralised contracts that the Council has could help with statutory aspects of running the buildings.
- 1.1.59. Consideration a best-practice sharing group for all CAT leaseholders could be of benefit.
- 1.1.60. There was a focus on the need for groups to have third-party support to help with writing the business case.
- 1.1.61. The need for accurate forecasting for building costings was noted.

3 Financial, Legal and Other Implications

1.9 Financial Implications

There are no significant financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Stuart McAvoy - Head of Finance
16th October 2026

1.10 Legal Implications

These recommendations do not approve any building transfer or change any existing lease. Before putting them into practice, the Council will need to check the legal requirements and obtain any necessary approvals, including for charging groups for building support. Community groups should have clear information about the building's condition, likely costs and who is responsible for repairs and safety.

Kamal Adatia – City Barrister
20 October 2026

1.11 Equality Implications

In carrying out its functions, the Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under the public sector equality duty are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The recommendations are intended to improve the practical operation of the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process.

The transfer of community assets can have positive equality implications where it enables local organisations to deliver services that respond to the needs of their communities. The evidence from Team Hub illustrates how a transferred asset can support a broad range of community activity, including provision for children and young people, families, mental-health support, employment and community cohesion. Continued monitoring of community-benefit commitments within CAT leases will help the Council understand whether these benefits are being delivered and whether any groups experience barriers to accessing the transferred facilities.

The recommendations are therefore considered likely to have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by improving transparency, support and access to information within the CAT process. The equality implications of any subsequent changes to the CAT policy, guidance or individual asset-transfer proposals should be considered as those proposals are developed.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148
Dated 20 October 2026

1.12 Climate Emergency Implications

There are no significant direct climate emergency implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Improved access to building management support, building condition information and knowledge sharing may help community organisations identify and deliver future energy efficiency improvements and maintain compliance with evolving energy performance requirements, but any resulting carbon reduction impacts would be indirect and dependent on subsequent decisions by individual organisations.

Phil Ball – Sustainability Officer
20th October 2026

4 Summary of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Scoping Document

Appendix 2 – Slides Presented

Appendix 3 – Responses from Community Groups

Appendix 4 – A Guide to Community Asset Transfer

5 Officers to Contact

Ed Brown – Senior Governance Officer

Edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk

Leicester City Council Scrutiny Review

Community Asset Transfer

A review of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny
Commission

2026

Background to scrutiny reviews

Determining the right topics for scrutiny reviews is the first step in making sure scrutiny provides benefits to the Council and the community.

This scoping template will assist in planning the review by defining the purpose, methodology and resources needed. It should be completed by the Member proposing the review, in liaison with the lead Director and the Governance Services Manager. Governance Support Officers can provide support and assistance with this.

In order to be effective, every scrutiny review must be properly project managed to ensure it achieves its aims and delivers measurable outcomes. To achieve this, it is essential that the scope of the review is well defined at the outset. This way the review is less likely to get side-tracked or become overambitious in what it hopes to tackle. The Commission's objectives should, therefore, be as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic & Time-bound) as possible.

The scoping document is also a good tool for communicating what the review is about, who is involved and how it will be undertaken to all partners and interested stakeholders.

The form also includes a section on public and media interest in the review which should be completed in conjunction with the Council's Communications Team. This will allow the Commission to be properly prepared for any media interest and to plan the release of any press statements.

Scrutiny reviews will be supported by a Governance Support Officer.

Evaluation

Reviewing changes that have been made as a result of a scrutiny review is the most common way of assessing the effectiveness. Any scrutiny review should consider whether an on-going monitoring role for the Commission is appropriate in relation to the topic under review.

To be completed by the Member proposing the review. (Filled out by Senior Governance Officer on behalf of the Chair).		
1.	Title of the proposed scrutiny review	Community Asset Transfer
2.	Proposed by	Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission
3.	Rationale Why do you want to undertake this review?	On 18 September, the Council approved an updated Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy, amended in light of changes to legislation, Council objectives, the Community Services & Library Needs Assessment, policy and practice since adoption of a CAT Policy in 2008 as last updated in 2022. Prior to this, at the meeting of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission on 11 September 2025, the Commission considered a report on the updated CAT Policy. At this meeting a task group was requested by members to consider the implications of the policy updates and proposals.
4.	Purpose and aims of the review What question(s) do you want to answer and what do you want to achieve? (Outcomes?)	The task group aims to address questions around the processes of CAT and its effect on the community and community groups. The overarching aim is to look at potential implications of the new policy and to assess whether any improvements could be made. It aims to analyse the processes and the process map that the Council uses and how the Heads of Terms have been used in past CATs and look at the reasonings behind how and why certain approaches, models and processes were taken in certain CATs. Ultimately, the group aims to produce recommendations on how the updated CAT policy and the processes within it can be best implemented.
5.	Links with corporate aims / priorities How does the review link to corporate aims and priorities?	With certain Council assets potentially being made available for CAT, it is fitting that the policy be reviewed to ensure it is suitable and of value to the community.

6.	Scope Set out what is included in the scope of the review and what is not. For example which services it does and does not cover.	The scope will cover the work of both Neighbourhood Services and Estates. It will consider the model Heads of Terms on property lease and the processes that are undertaken in a CAT. It will look at how groups are chosen for a CAT, including their business plans and whether existing occupants of a building are given higher scores. It will also consider both the previous policy and assessment criteria as well as the updated guidelines as an evolution on how the new guidelines improve on the previous ones, particularly in terms of providing more guidance for those interested in applying for a CAT through the new guidebook. It will also look at the engagement that Councillors have in the CAT process and to what extent Ward Councillors and Scrutiny members can be involved. The group can look at how groups are monitored post-transfer to ensure they fulfil the conditions of the transfer. It will also look at the disposal processes that the Council follows, including whether a CAT can be applied for if an asset is being disposed through the market.
7.	Methodology Describe the methods you will use to undertake the review. How will you undertake the review, what evidence will need to be gathered from members, officers and key stakeholders, including partners and external organisations and experts?	The group will consider the previous policy and the updated policy. Members will share their experiences of engagement with CATs and the community groups that have undertaken them. The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environment, The Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Service Manager - Asset Strategy will provide data and information regarding the previous and updated policies and guidance, and examples of previous CATs. Governance Services can aim to provide benchmarking information on the CAT policies from other local authorities. Stakeholders (as below) will be approached to provide evidence potentially through joining meetings, providing written representations, or through submitting questionnaires.
	Witnesses Set out who you want to gather evidence from and how you will plan to do this.	Stakeholders that could be approached include community groups that have undertaken successful CATs to assess their experience.
8.	Timescales How long is the review expected to take to complete?	The task group will take place over the first half of 2026.

9.	Resources / staffing requirements	- Governance Support Officers will facilitate the review. - The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environment, The Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Service Manager - Asset Strategy will provide data and information.
10.	Review recommendations and findings To whom will the recommendations be addressed? E.g. Executive / External Partner?	Recommendations will be directed to the Executive for consideration and implementation.
11.	Likely publicity arising from the review - Is this topic likely to be of high interest to the media? Please explain.	The future of Libraries and Community centres and Adventure Playgrounds have been discussed in local media. If they are considered with regard to CAT, it may generate media interest.
12.	Publicising the review and its findings and recommendations How will these be published / advertised?	The final report will be published on the local authority's website as part of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission papers and shared with the Council's Executive.
13.	How will this review add value to policy development or service improvement?	The review is aimed at scrutinising the updated CAT policy in comparison with the previous policy, and noting potential improvements in the policy with any recommendations hoping to add value to that process.
Comments from the relevant Director		
14.	Observations and comments on the proposed review	The purpose of this review is to test the processes of the Community Asset Transfer policy that was introduced in 2025 by using existing case examples. It aims to provide insight into the ease of use by community groups to bid to run a council facility. The scope must be carefully contained to ensure that clear recommendations are made as an outcome.
	Name	Sean Atterbury
	Role	Director of Neighbourhoods and Environment
	Date	12/3/26
To be completed by the Governance Services Manager		

15.	Will the proposed scrutiny review / timescales negatively impact on other work within the Scrutiny Team?	I am comfortable that Governance Services can support this review and that we have enough resource to facilitate it. The timeframe is tight so consideration should be given to allow for the completion of the final report.
	Name	Kalvaran Sandhu, Governance Services Manager
	Date	7 th January 2026

Culture & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee

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Community Asset Transfer Task Group

12th March 2026

Currently published policy

- Council Constitution
 - Schedule 2: The Framework for the Disposal of Property
 - APPENDIX 2 – Policy for Transfer of Assets for Community Governance

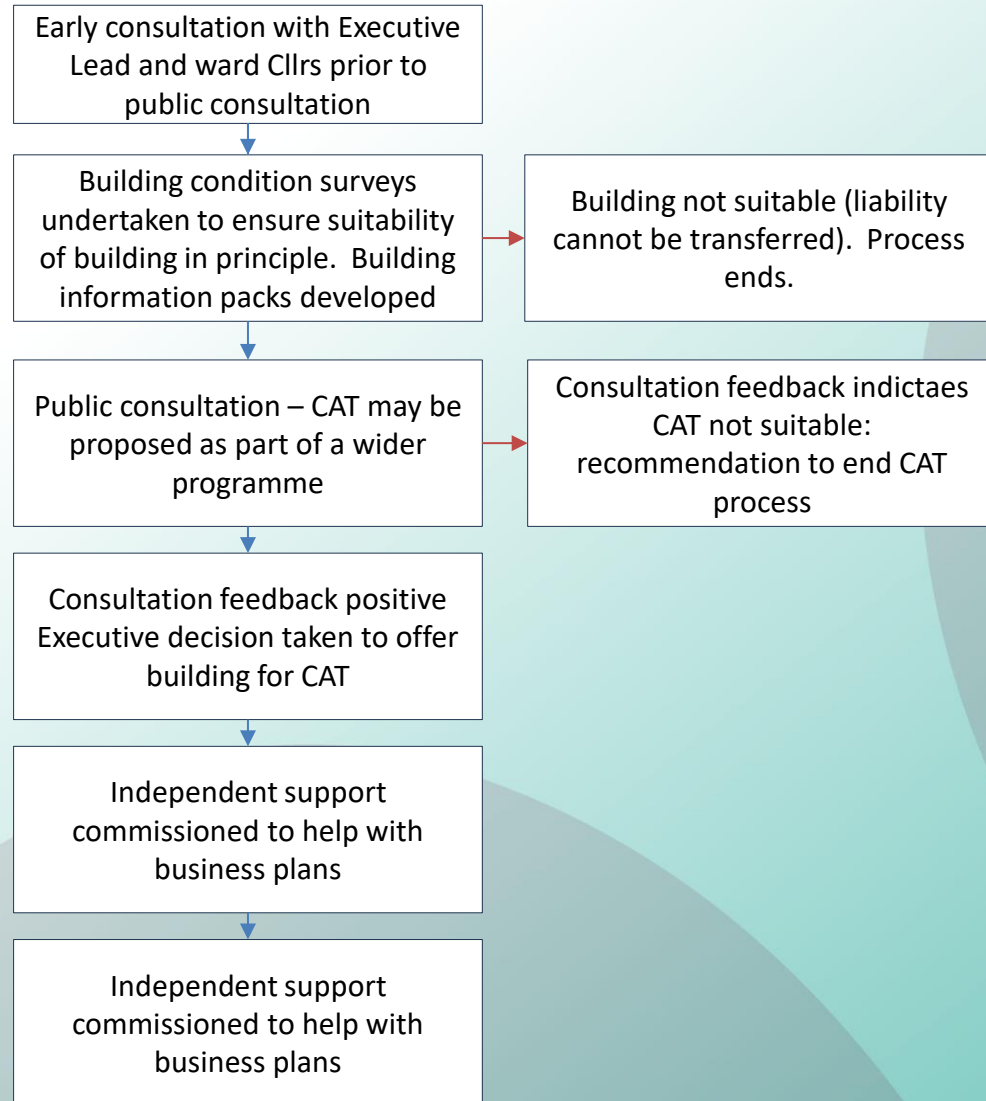
New Policy (Council 18 Sept 2025)

- **Minor amendments to the Land Transaction Rules** to integrate the CAT Policy and the flow of the Policy in the context of those rules.
- Process of application has been removed from the Policy and put into a new **Guide for Community Asset Transfers** which will be added to the website. This shortens the Policy and makes it simpler and provides guidance and the process of application in one place.
- We have **introduced an Exclusions to the Policy section** at Clause 3 too aid organisations in determining whether the CAT Policy applies to them.
- Updates on new exclusions in law that disallow assets to be disposed of for any specific reason. (Appendix 2 – CAT Policy, Section 3). MEES

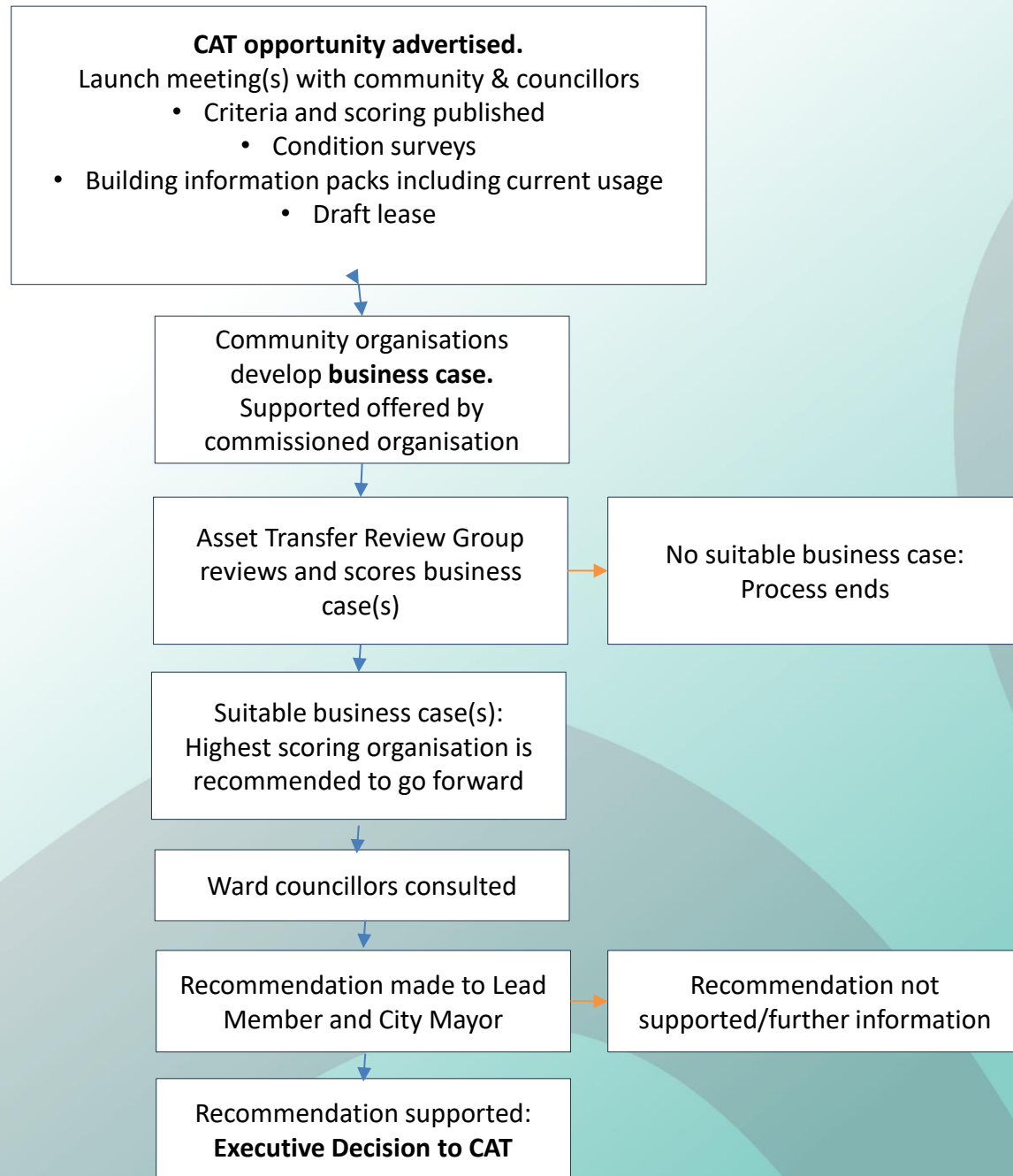
CAT Process developed for Neighbourhood Services Buildings

- 44
- Early consultation with ward councillors
 - Public consultation on proposals (May be as part of wider programme)
 - Executive decision taken - building(s) to go forward for CAT
 - Independent support for community groups procured
 - Advertise and promote opportunities for lease under CAT policy
 - Initial workshops held by LCC and Support Organisation to generate interest (ward councillors invited to attend)
 - Community groups to submit business plans by closing date
 - Asset Transfer Review Group reviews business plans and undertakes due diligence
 - Consult ward councillors
 - Executive decision – successful organisation informed
 - Legal Services instructed - terms of transfer drafted in accordance with terms and conditions agreed
 - Community Asset Transfer Complete - keys handed over and the organisation takes responsibility
 - Ongoing monitoring and support

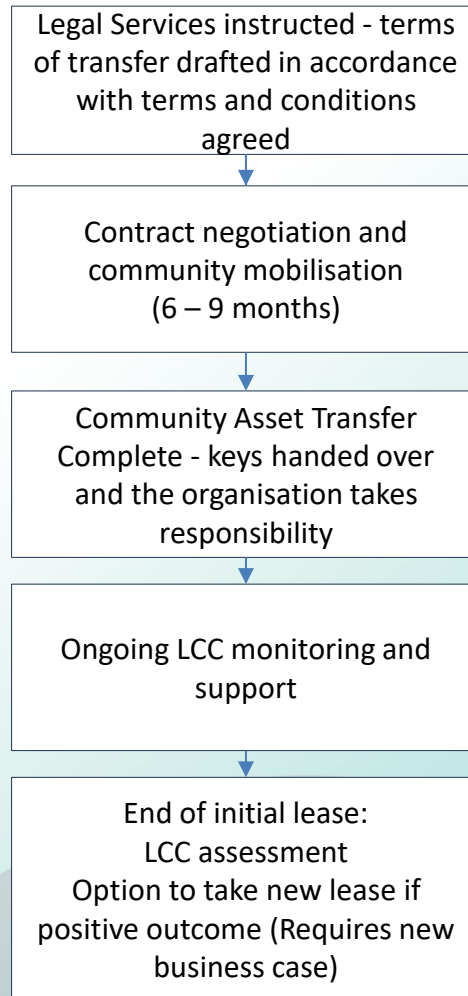
Neighbourhood Services Community Asset Transfers – Flow Chart



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Community Asset Transfer Neighbourhood Services Programme

Building	Transfer Date	Community organisation
Newfoundpool Community Centre	2016-11-01	Leicester Events Group
Cort Crescent (former Community Centre)	2016-11-01	Forward In Faith Ministry U.K
Braunstone Oak Community Centre	2016-11-01	One Church Leicester
Manor House (former Community Centre)	2017-01-04	Mosaic Church
Home Farm Neighbourhood Centre	2017-06-23	Beaumont Leys Muslims
New Parks (former Community Centre)	2017-09-21	Team Hub CIC
Mayfield (Former Children Young People and Family Centres)	2018-08-11	An Nasihah Educational Trust
Northfields Neighbourhood Centre	2018-12-20	Islah Trust
Braunstone Grove Youth Centre	2019-06-28	B-Inspired
Coleman Lodge Community Centre	2021-12-13	Coleman Community Association
African Caribbean Centre	2024-08-01	African Heritage Alliance

CAT – Responses form Community Groups

Nikki Strickland – Newfoundpool Community Centre:

-What led you to consider taking on Community Asset Transfer and what did you hope to achieve?

A need for a home for Leicester theatre group and a suggestion from the mayor that an asset transfer may be suitable for us to consider.

-What does your group deliver?

A home for Leicester theatre group

A multi use building with 5 rooms and 2 kitchens which are available to hire

The current hirers are - a day time nursery, dance schools, fitness classes and a theatre group. All groups are available to local people to benefit from.

Historically we have also been able to support as a polling station and a place for church groups.

-What have been the main the benefits of the CAT for local people since the building was transferred?

A nursery is now available, along with the other groups listed above

-How did you find the Community Asset Transfer application process?

Straight forward and supported by the council where there were questions

-What advice would you have for other organisations considering Community Asset Transfer?

Come along and see what we do at Newfoundpool to see what's been achieved

Read the fine detail of the paperwork and know the condition of your building before you take it on. Some costs can be high and may not be supported in your contract.

-What were the biggest challenges you faced during the CAT process and what could make it easier?

Consider use of the centralised contracts the council has to help with statutory aspects of running the buildings

Help with sourcing funding

Consider a best practice sharing group for all CAT lease holders

-Has the cost of maintaining and running the building aligned with your original business plan, or have there been any financial surprises?

Storm damage and aging infrastructure have increased our costs over what we expected

-Do you have any comments on your current lease?

No

-How have you found the Council's annual monitoring and support?

Useful to keep us in check with our legal requirements. Supportive where help has been asked for.

-What does success look like for your centre five years from now?

Continue to grow the centre, and potentially add in more facilities for children - eg improved outdoor space for them to use.

-What specific skills (e.g., bid writing, facilities management, accounting) do you think are most essential for a committee to have before they sign a lease?

All of the the above!

Marketing - understanding what is needed in the area and what will sell / make money

-On a scale of 1 to 10, how clear and straightforward did you find the CAT application paperwork and requirements?

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Susan Hind – Oak Centre

-What led you to consider taking on Community Asset Transfer and what did you hope to achieve?

We had been running a children's group in Braunstone at the Bright Centre and had used rented space there to start a location of our church as well. We wanted to have a space to meet as a church, but primarily we wanted to make an impact onto the local community. The centre was not very active when we arrived and we saw the potential for it to be thriving and to make a positive difference in North Braunstone.

-What does your group deliver?

We run the centre as a community centre and always aim to hire out space only to groups that will benefit local people. We also operate as a local hub for our compassion charity Open Hands, giving out food hampers and referring people as needed

www.openhandsleicester.org.uk

We opened a preschool on the premises Hand in Hand Preschool , which enjoys an excellent reputation, serves local families and has just expanded into more space within the centre.

As a church we run a weekly children's group The Hub for primary aged children, and Impact for young people- both of these groups involve a family atmosphere and a meal, as they cater for children who may not experience this each day.

We also run a weekly parent and toddler group 'Little Ones' - a stay and play with interactive stories and songs. This is very popular.

We see many people visit the centre each week to participate in dance, first aid, games, health appointments, clinics, consultations, meetings, creative classes and much more. We also rent space for some parties and events, with strict agreements in place. The centre is thriving and a happy place to come to.

-What have been the main the benefits of the CAT for local people since the building was transferred?

When we first arrived, not many people came to the centre. Now it is thriving and people love the events that are put on, like family fun events, free half term holiday club etc as well as classes and activities.

-How did you find the Community Asset Transfer application process?

I managed the lady who did the application back then, as far as I remember it was quite straightforward.

-What advice would you have for other organisations considering Community Asset Transfer?

Go for it, but be clear about what you will be responsible for and have a clear plan of action and clear management in place.

-What were the biggest challenges you faced during the CAT process and what could make it easier?

I am sorry but I don't remember this too well. Having a great centre manager from the off was a game changer to us. They set up great systems and processes and went above and beyond to make the process work.

-Has the cost of maintaining and running the building aligned with your original business plan, or have there been any financial surprises?

Mostly it has aligned.

-Do you have any comments on your current lease?

No

-How have you found the Council's annual monitoring and support?

We get monitoring visits occasionally and those who come are always very impressed with the organisation and our policies and records etc. I wouldn't say we get a lot of support as such.

-What does success look like for your centre five years from now?

Even more visits to the centre, even more real impact in the community, improvements to the building (eg floor and roof).

-What specific skills (e.g., bid writing, facilities management, accounting) do you think are most essential for a committee to have before they sign a lease?

Facilities management, strategic thinking, having effective and competent oversight (in our case, One Church trustees and Open Hands trustees).

-On a scale of 1 to 10, how clear and straightforward did you find the CAT application paperwork and requirements?

I can't easily answer this question-

I would be making it up as I can't remember but I think it was quite clear.

David Hind – Manor House

-What led you to consider taking on Community Asset Transfer and what did you hope to achieve?

We are a church based in the local community, we were using the centre already for a number of community events and projects, including running a mum and toddler group, a foodbank, and a winter wonderland event, as well as renting a room for our church office,

As a church we want to be a presence in the local community and serve it the best we can. Seeking to serve the community in creating a local community hub where people receive support,

-What does your group deliver?

We continue to deliver a local foodbank which serve roughly 200 families over a two week period. From this we offer debt advise via CAP and benefits and energy advise,

We hold two big local community event a year, a summer bbq which is free to the local community and a winter wonderland event which is arts and craft for children

We also run our church youth group here every Friday night.

Then we have a number of local groups using our centre which include care for old age people a nursery for young children, then a mix of education group. Other community group like art groups, boxing and tai chi.

-What have been the main the benefits of the CAT for local people since the building was transferred?

We can hold a number of community event here at the centre, engage with the community more, also having more space to run the foodbank and store the food that is required.

Local people know if they need help can come up to the Centre.

-How did you find the Community Asset Transfer application process?

My former collage was more involved in the application process, but no longer works here, I was say from my little involvement, that it was lengthy and required us at time to be front footed in finding out information

-What advice would you have for other organisations considering Community Asset Transfer?

Make sure all survey are carried out and up to date before taking over a CAT building, work with the current user of any building, we have a number of users still here that where here when we took over.

-What were the biggest challenges you faced during the CAT process and what could make it easier?

Not sure I can comment as was not hugely involved, but I think a clear time frame for the process would have been helpful, from applying to the takeover date

-Has the cost of maintaining and running the building aligned with your original business plan, or have there been any financial surprises?

The maintaining cost has aligned with our plan, however i am quite practical and we rely on a number of volunteers to help maintain the centre, this has kept the cost down

We have recently had to change someone the pipe work which was lead that as an unexpected cost

-Do you have any comments on your current lease?

There is a cottage on site which only the site manager is allowed to live in, this is a clause in the lease, the site manger no-longer lives on site, so we have a cottage we can only use for storage currently, and we are paying council tax on this,

Ideally, we have the lease change to allow the cottage to be use for more than just site manager accommodation, either another employee or someone in the community that need help with housing short term,

We likely having to look at changing the use of the cottage, as don't want to pay council tax on a property we cannot use.

-How have you found the Council's annual monitoring and support?

We had very little contact from the council since taking over the building, we had a couple of site visit over the course of our 10 years here.

-What does success look like for your centre five years from now?

More community groups using the centre, more opportunities for foodbank client to receive different advice and help, hopefully run some course based on English or parenting or handling money well.

To be know as a place where people can receive life, hope and healing.

-What specific skills (e.g., bid writing, facilities management, accounting) do you think are most essential for a committee to have before they sign a lease?

Bid writing, a good understanding of what the future running cost of the building might be and any future works that may be needed to be carried out.

-On a scale of 1 to 10, how clear and straightforward did you find the CAT application paperwork and requirements?

3

A Guide to Community Asset Transfer



Version FINAL DRAFT

29 August 2025



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1. About this guide

Since the introduction of the Local Government Act 1974, Local Authorities (LAs) may dispose of properties (sell or lease) at what is known as 'less than best consideration' i.e. less than the market value, however, there must be a provision for that undervalue to be measured, assessed, approved and agreed through social, economic and sustainability wellbeing in order to meet these requirements in law.

In 2011 the Government introduced the Localism Act 2011 which sought to empower communities to self-manage. Simultaneously, reduced Government grant funding required Councils to consider different ways of delivering community services. With this in mind, a policy was developed to specifically manage this process.

Leicester City Council's Constitution contains the Land Transaction Rules which guide the disposal process. The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy sits within the Council's Land Transaction Rules.

The CAT Policy is a voluntary process entered into proactively by Local Authorities and in 2014 Leicester City Council developed a defined Policy. The Policy was updated in 2022 and 2025 through the Council's continued commitment to localism and community initiatives.

The Council recognises that community ownership of relevant land and buildings can transform neighbourhoods, support thriving communities, and unlock the power of community.

Community ownership also enables local people to take control of the important spaces and buildings which matter to them locally, to meet the priorities and needs of the local area.

Community Asset Transfer is the transfer of a publicly owned asset (usually land or buildings) to a community organisation. Community Asset Transfers come in many forms whether it be via a short-term licence, a lease of under seven years (short-term lease), a disposal via a lease of seven years or more, or on rare occasions through the freehold disposal of an asset. Licensing, leasing or disposal can be completed at market value (our starting point) or at a reduced market value/rent through a thorough assessment of social, environmental and economic wellbeing benefit being provided on behalf of the Authority. These benefits are assessed on an individual case by case basis.

The circumstances for each property will be unique to the asset and the organisation benefiting from it and each is evaluated on its own merits.

This guide provides information and guidance about the Community Asset Transfer process at Leicester City Council and guides you on your community ownership journey.

2. Introduction

As a community organisation, you might be thinking about securing premises to develop your community activities, services or community business. Or it might be that a local building is threatened with closure, and as a group of residents you want to save it.

Whatever your starting point, a Community Asset Transfer is a formal process. While the end results are worth it, it requires a long-term community commitment, passion and ambition.

2.1 How to use this guide?

This guide takes you through your community ownership journey in five phases:

- Imagination
- Discovery
- Building relationships
- Negotiation
- Taking ownership

These phases are not intended to be followed sequentially. Many of these phases will be happening at the same time, rather than sequentially, and we highlight how these overlap throughout this guide.

This guide can be used as a companion throughout your journey. It brings together key information, advice and support which already exists, and signposts you to further resources, where relevant.

2.2 What is the difference between Community Asset Transfer (CAT), a disposal at less than best consideration and the Community Right to Bid?

- **CAT** and disposal at less than best consideration only applies to publicly owned assets. The Right to Bid applies to both public and some private assets.
- **CAT** is the transfer of management or occasionally the ownership of a community asset to a community group to run community services on behalf of the Authority. Disposal at less than best consideration (i.e. under market value) applies to any asset the Council wishes to dispose of. The Right to Bid provides a six-month pause on the sale of an asset so that the community can raise money to purchase on the open market.
- **CAT** is a voluntary process entered into proactively by public bodies. Disposal of a Council asset at less than best consideration is a Council decision. The

Right to Bid is a legal right and applies to all assets listed as Assets of Community Value.

2.3 Key terms

Freehold: Outright ownership of land or buildings.

Leasehold: Where one party acquires the right to occupy land or a building for a given length of time. Rent level is assessed on the merits of the business case and starts at market value and will be assessed on the merits of each case.

Long lease: A leasehold of at least 25 years or more.

Business model: The way the organisation generates income or value from its activities – e.g. selling goods and services, rental income, delivering contracts, charging fees.

Business plan: This will include the business objectives, the evidence and reasons why the objectives are achievable, and the plan for meeting these objectives. It should be based upon local market conditions and research.

Exclusions: You will note, that there are several exclusions within the CAT Policy. We will review all aspects of your application at the Business Case point to ensure the group applying meets the CAT Policy. Below are some examples of excluded groups. This is not an exhaustive list, however the Council reserves the right to decline an application or end a lease for any reason if the Council's reputation is at risk.

- Unregistered groups i.e. organisations which are unincorporated bodies with no trustees (legal advice is sought on each occasion).
- Tenants that have occupied Council assets and who are in material breach of their existing lease.
- An organisation that is no longer a registered charity under the charity commission or has been struck off for any reason.

Feasibility: The ability of the project to meet its objectives, given its context and the resources available.

Viability: The ability of an asset to cover all its costs with income over a specified period. This period is usually 3-5 years, although for larger projects, or where bigger loans have been taken out, this period will be longer.

3. Imagination and Vision: Starting your ownership journey

Your community group's ownership journey should begin by thinking about the end goal: imagine owning the land or building and being responsible for its ongoing maintenance and management.

It is crucial to consider: what will community ownership look like in practice? What are your community groups overall objectives and vision for the asset? What are you trying to achieve through community ownership?

While much of your community group's early focus and attention will be on acquiring the asset itself, the group should also be thinking in detail about the range of activities that will eventually take place within it. The asset itself is not 'the business' and the community group will need to consider how to generate sufficient funds to maintain the bricks and mortar and provide the services within. Even if the community group's key goal and motivation is to save a building from demolition or closure, its long term sustainable future needs to be at the forefront of your community group vision.

Involving the community in imagining and co-creating this vision is essential to generate ideas and support. Community groups should also bear in mind that this vision may need to change throughout the process. Community views or advice from the Council might cause your organisation to change track, or detailed feasibility work might prove the organisation's original idea unworkable. Therefore, flexibility is key. Don't become so fixed on your original idea that it scuppers the whole project. It is, therefore, important that community groups keep their vision under review and make sure that their board, members and wider community are with you as you shape and reshape your organisation's vision.

4. Discovery:

Considering your options

Developing plans for an asset is a process of discovery, considering all the options and practical steps required to turn your vision into reality.

4.1 Get to know the asset:

It is essential that you find out as much information as possible about the potential asset:

- **Are there planning restrictions or covenants in place?**
Leicester City Council could supply this information however an independent legal review should be sought. What are the building conditions? Your organisation should undertake an initial site visit, preferably with an appointed professional surveyor/professional team who will provide an assessment report of the asset.
- **What are the current management and running costs?**
It is important to think about management and maintenance costs early on.

4.2 How will you make the asset financially sustainable?

To demonstrate that the asset will be financially and environmentally sustainable, your organisation will need to develop a sustainable business model. There are a range of options to consider, including:

- **Community business and trading:** The asset might provide premises for a new or expanded community business.
- Venue hire:** The asset could be hired out for functions and events.

4.3 Funding and investment options:

Asset transfer and ownership will require funding, and your organisation will need to consider how they will access funds for the stages in their journey.

- **Discovery and Planning:** The cost of finding out about the building and then paying for any refurbishment designs and costing the organisation's plans.
- **Refurbishment:** There may be a need to refurbish a building to allow better or new services to be delivered.

4.4 Forming your organisation:

Knowing your organisations' options for a legal structure and governance model is an important part of the discovery phase. Your organisation's legal structure should be considered alongside its business planning.

Therefore, organisations need to think carefully about their governance options and legal structure early on, but they should only decide which model to adopt once they have settled on their business plan. If you are a new at pulling a group or organisation together, start with a simple constitution to enable the group to raise funds for any early-stage development work, and decide on a final structure once your group has agreed its business plan.

5. Relationships:

Growing your supporter base

Developing and maintaining relationships will be a key theme of your community ownership journey.

5.1 Community engagement:

Community engagement is an essential part of building support for your project locally. Therefore, you will need to mobilise support from local residents.

If open conversations and engagement with the community do not occur, then there is a risk that your project could generate mistrust or opposition locally. Hence, it is vital to have a communications and marketing plan in place to drive forward your engagement with the community.

Community engagement can range from providing information and collecting views and opinions, to active participation and collaboration.

5.2 Funding and investment options

Making sure that your trustees are actively involved in creating the vision for your project will be very important. Supporting them to engage with the process, rather than simply informing them, will significantly increase the likelihood of achieving your long-term aims for the project.

6. Negotiation:

Securing the asset transfer

Negotiating the asset transfer can be a long process with several rounds. As the negotiation progresses, you will need to refine and strengthen the plans you developed during your initial discovery phase.

As part of this process, it is crucial to have all the key information about the asset, including potential liabilities. Leicester City Council will provide you with information about the asset, including the current tenancy arrangements and running costs. The Council will not give any warranties as to the state of the asset and therefore all liabilities will pass to the community group. A full condition survey will need to be commissioned to flag important issues, such as structural defects, land contamination, asbestos or listed building status.

6.1 Develop maintenance and management plans:

This is an important step to understand how much your asset might end up costing you to operate and maintain in the long term.

Some items of expenditure occur on a cyclical basis – such as electrical equipment testing and gas checks – whereas others are unplanned (reactive). Therefore, it is good practice to set aside a budget for emergency repairs, say 5-10% of annual income. Using volunteers will keep your costs lower, but do not take short cuts where professionally qualified people are required. You should also assign responsibility for overall maintenance and management and health and safety considerations.

6.2 Refine your business plan and secure your funding options:

A detailed business plan will be an essential part of securing the agreement with the Council. It will also form the key document for your funding applications.

In addition to key information about your organisation and mission, your business plan should include:

- Product/services pricing and projected sales/outputs
- The current market and operating environment
- Risk analysis
- Resource needs and business operations
- Income and cost projections
- Funding and finance needs
- Cashflow forecasts

6.3 Forecasting and cash flow:

You must forecast your income, capital costs (such as structural and building works) and revenue costs (such as ongoing facilities and maintenance costs). Cashflow is key as project failure is often due to poor cashflow, rather than overall lack of profitability.

Once you have forecasted your income against your costs, you should make sure that surplus is forecasted as cashflow. Your forecasting will also show you where your gaps in cashflow are likely to be, and therefore how much working capital you will require for your day-to-day operations to get you up and running.

6.4 Whole life costing:

You will also need a 'whole life costing' for your asset to help you plan. This requires considering all the long-term relevant costs and revenues associated with an asset (over the period of the lease). You will need surveyor estimates for the operational, repair, upkeep, building and landscape elements of the asset.

6.5 Negotiating your leasehold agreement:

Getting to the point of negotiating the terms of transfer is a key achievement. This is an important stage, and the terms of your agreement will have a huge impact on the viability of your plans for the asset in the long term.

As part of this process, the Council will issue a 'heads of terms' document which will provide clarity on what is to be transferred, to whom, and on what terms.

7. Taking ownership: Handover

Once you have been handed the asset, there are number of key risks that you need to consider:

- **Regular board meetings:** During the first few months, it will be important for trustees to meet more regularly so that key risks can be discussed and mitigated against.
- **Tight cost controls and stable cash flow:** Micromanaging your finances during this period is key to having working capital and to eventual success. This will help to make sure you can keep cash-flow positive and ensures you can take action to improve situations as soon as possible, if necessary.
- **Keep talking to the Council:** Ideally, regular communication will be a key part of the Council's post-transfer support. Make sure you secure a named contact for follow-up, keep them updated on your progress, and keep in touch with any Councillors who were champions through your asset transfer journey.

8. Aims of the Community Asset Transfer Policy

1. The Council's assets where no longer required for Council purposes, can be used for a variety of different social, community and public purposes. For surplus to requirement assets, community management or ownership is expected to deliver improved:
 - Benefits to the local community
 - Benefits to the Council and other public sector service providers
 - Benefits for the organisation taking ownership
 - And, when an asset transfer will be assessed at less than best consideration, that it contributes to the promotion or improvement of the social, economic or environmental wellbeing of the area, that this has been established through the Business Case, and that the provisions of the Land Transaction rules are satisfied.
2. To be a tool in the flexible management of the Council's assets to maximise their contribution towards achieving the Council's strategic objectives.
3. It is recognised that changing ownership or management of an asset can offer opportunities to extend the use of a building or piece of land and increase its value in relation to the numbers of citizens that benefit. Community-led ownership also offers additional opportunities to secure resources and/or funding that would otherwise not be available, empowering local citizens and communities to provide enhanced community-led facilities.
4. The Council will seek the transfer of appropriate assets to community groups in order to promote the widest public value that can be achieved in relation to, for example:
 - The Council's Strategic Objectives
 - Facilitate inward investment
 - Community empowerment and greater control over community-led facilities
 - Area-wide benefits
 - Building the capacity of the community and encouraging sustainable community organisations by building partnerships
 - Economic development and social enterprise
 - Improvements to local services
 - Value for money

9. Key Principles for Asset Transfer

1. Engagement and empowerment of community groups and social enterprise support.

Under this strategy the core principle must be for the Council to support the engagement and empowerment of community groups to develop their capacity to deliver local solutions to meet identified needs. These are likely to vary from training opportunities to support services and must support the aims and priorities of the Council.

2. Only potential assets and not liabilities should be transferred.

The transfer of assets that will contribute towards maximising the prospects of developing sustainable community groups and enterprises will be a key consideration. For the Council, assets in their present circumstances may be liabilities but a careful transfer can potentially provide community groups with financially viable assets. This may be the case where for instance community bodies can access grants to improve facilities and provide services that the Council cannot access.

3. A community wide perspective should be adopted involving close working with other public and voluntary sector partners. The policy on community asset disposal is part of a long-term programme of support to, and partnership with, community organisations.

The Council will involve all relevant partners in developing asset transfer proposals to ensure there is no conflict with other initiatives involving public and voluntary sector partners. The opportunity to identify potential benefits of wider partnership working will also be taken into account particularly where this assists with the sustainability of a transfer. This can bring additional resources by way of staff support and funding opportunities.

4. Community groups/enterprises should have robust and sustainable business plans for asset transfer seen as part of their wider development plans.

For a successful asset transfer a robust and sustainable business plan will be required. It should form the basis for clear development plans which set out what the community group or enterprise intends to deliver through management of the asset over the short, medium and long term.

Financial considerations should be included within the business plan in order to demonstrate a sound approach to managing and running the facility. The need for any on-going financial support will be carefully considered by the Council to establish a sustainable operation.

5. The tenure offered will be dependent upon the governance capabilities of the community organisation.

The disposal may be based upon a management agreement, meanwhile use agreement, licence, lease or freehold sale and this will be dependent upon the circumstances of the property and the governance capability of the organisation. It is anticipated that the security of tenure to the applicant would be subject to improvement over time in accordance with the success of the project and the growing strength of the applicant in terms of community governance capability. The general principle will be against freehold sale unless the particular circumstances of a case require.

Where there is a transfer of service provision, a community asset transfer may be accompanied by a Service Level Agreement identifying the benefits and how these will be monitored and measured, together with the remedies available to both parties if the Service Level Agreement is not met. This SLA will be in effect a contract for provision of services and will need to be compliant with procurement and state aid requirements.

6. Support for the community group or enterprise from the Council should be on-going at an appropriate level which is required to support the group's development plan over a realistic time period.

Whilst the Council will aim to provide support during (and for a reasonable period beyond any transfer) the Council has limited resources. Discussions need to take place to agree how, and over what period the support will be provided by the Council. It is likely that on-going support may in some cases be better provided via other organisations and the Council can help to suggest such support.

7. The Council will include terms and conditions in disposal documents to safeguard the position should the community asset transfer fail to deliver the anticipated benefits.

The Council will reserve the right to include conditions on any transfer to protect the future community use of the property. It is recognised that the imposition of such conditions could impact on asset value or the ability of groups to raise funds and each case will therefore be considered on its merits and conditions will be considered during the assessment process.

To safeguard the Council's long-term position long lease will generally be preferred to freehold sale as it better protects the Council's position in the case of failure.

10. Benefits of Community Asset Transfer

Benefits can be measured in terms of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the community. Not all benefits have to be financial – they can be about better community outcomes. The business case will need to articulate these benefits and how they will be measured. The potential benefits of asset transfer can include:

For Community Organisations:

- Physical assets can provide sustainable wealth;
- Can strengthen the Organisation's community ties;
- Can strengthen the Organisation's ability to raise money. There may be access to funding to refurbish the building or to support staff training and development;
- Greater financial sustainability can help the organisation to escape short term grant-dependency;
- Community organisations can alter or modify a building to better suit their needs with landlord's consent.

For the Council:

- Transfer can help to solve building management issues;
- The Community Organisation has "reach" into the community a transferred building can therefore provide a more accessible and responsive base from which to deliver services;
- Can strengthen 'community anchors';
- Can restore 'iconic' buildings;
- Can deliver social, economic, and environmental benefits;
- Can provide a catalyst for inward investment and local multipliers through local purchasing and employment;
- Provide a source of rental income;
- Can lower ongoing costs;
- Can help to progress neighbourhood regeneration plans;
- Can provide opportunities for long-term working between sectors.

11. Risks of Community Asset Transfer

The transfer of assets does have risks attached and each assessment will need to consider risks such as the following:

- Potential to disadvantage particular individuals or impact negatively on the local community;
- Potential for a negative impact on community cohesion;
- Potential loss of existing community services;
- Uncertainty around capacity of recipient to manage asset;
- Potential for the asset to become a financial liability for recipient;
- Capacity of recipient to deliver promised services/outcomes;
- Capture of asset by unrepresentative minority;
- Transfer contravenes State Aid and procurement rules;
- Conflict with other legal, regulatory constraints;
- Potential for ongoing Council liability;
- Lack of value for money;
- Conflict with other funders;
- Potential unfair advantage for one group over another;
- The risks associated with property ownership will pass in whole or in part from the Council to the Community Organisation;
- Perception of a loss of the use of a Community facility by certain sectors of the Community.

Before any transfer takes place, a risk assessment and management plan will be undertaken so that all parties are aware of the potential issues a transfer may create.

12. Expectations

Because every transfer project will be unique in its own way, it is vital to outline clear expectations and responsibilities of stakeholders involved. This is to ensure that a common platform is established that satisfies the overall outcome:

Leicester City Council's expectations of the interested Community Organisation are:

- A project team is set up to overlook the entire project with a distinct point of contact.
- To provide relevant documentation requested within the CAT Application Form in order to comply with requirements of the transfer.
- A Business Plan demonstrating the viability of acquiring and improving the asset and also focusing on its viability and sustainability. A Risk Assessment within the Business Plan identifying potential risks and impact and how these will be dealt with.

The Community Organisation can expect the following from the Leicester City Council:

- Be assured LCC has adopted a CAT policy, to support communities in Leicester.
- The LCC has in place robust processes and procedures to ensure that all cases for CAT are considered in an equal, transparent and unbiased manner.
- Clear guidance and information on the process for CAT.
- Support and clarification on CAT process and procedures.
- Support and guidance on assessment criteria and application form.
- Communication in a timely manner throughout the process with an agreed timetable to be followed suitable for the specific characteristics of the particular disposal. Referral to Executive Lead should the group consider the application is not being progressed as agreed.
- Continued communication and dialogue to maintain and further develop the relationship between the Community organisation and LCC.
- Support and guidance on asset related matters.
- Support and guidance to ensure asset transfer remains stable and sustainable.

13. Application Procedure

Any Community Organisation interested in applying for an asset transfer will be provided with the following documentation:

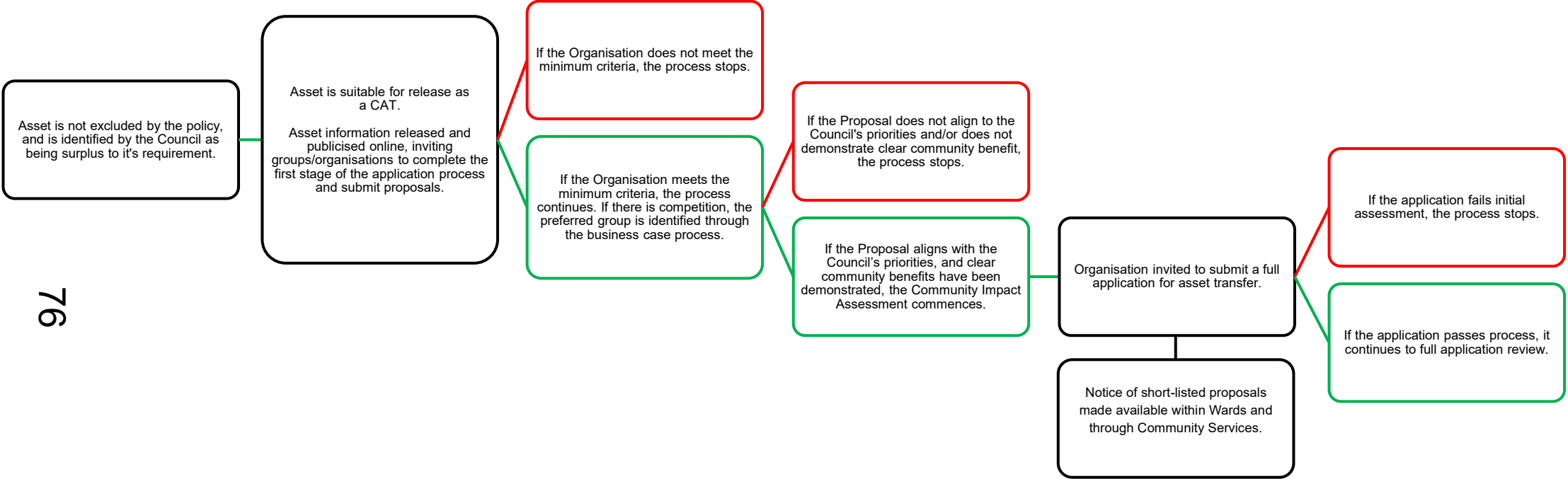
- A copy of Guide to Community Asset Transfer.
- A copy of CAT Application Form and CAT Guidance Notes-Application Form.
- Any relevant information on the property that the Council hold.

It is essential that every applicant has completed the Application Form and provided all the relevant documentation particularly a viable Business Plan demonstrating the capability of sustaining the asset.

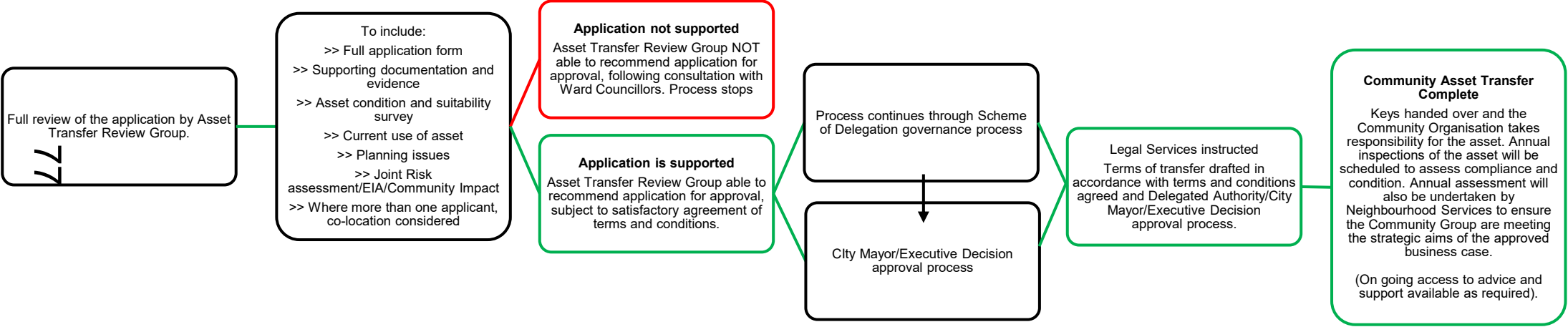
Once the above documentation has been submitted, the steps outlined below will then be followed:

- Every application will be dealt with fairly and equally and guidance will be provided as outlined above.
- Applicants are likely to benefit from carrying out research on asset transfers and demonstrating this. Some useful sources include:
www.communitymatters.org.uk

Process for determining if Community Organisations are suitable for the Community Asset Transfer Process:



Process for full application review by Asset Transfer Review Group:





Pride in Place Impact Fund Update

Culture & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 02/11/2026

Lead Director/Officer: Sean Atterbury, Director of
Neighbourhood & Environmental Services

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Brian Stafford, Head of Standards & Development
- Author contact details: brian.stafford@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1.0

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the City Council's Pride in Place Impact Fund programme and summarises the slide presentation appended.
- 1.2 The report highlights the current progress of the overall programme across the city.

2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny:

2.1 Culture & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission is invited to:

- Note the contents of the report and presentation
- Review and comment on the update.

3. Overview

- 2.1 In January 2026, the City Council was awarded £1.5 million in funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) through the Pride in Place Impact Fund (PIPIF) programme.
- 2.2 The programme is being delivered by local authorities across the country and is intended to provide immediate support for visible environmental improvements, enhancing places and spaces that are of value to local communities. Eligible projects include improvements to community facilities and public open spaces, such as parks, playgrounds, and other community assets.
- 2.3 The programme has 3 objectives:
 - a. Community spaces: creating, extending, improving or refurbishing existing community facilities and enabling community organisations to take control or ownership of underused but valued local assets.
 - b. Public spaces: enhancing the physical environment in public spaces - examples of initiatives include new or improved green spaces or public squares, improved outdoor play, sports and leisure spaces, installing street furniture, public art or wayfinding.
 - c. High street and town centre revitalisation: making these areas more attractive and welcoming places where people congregate and which encourage economic activity. Examples of initiatives that could be funded are shop frontage improvements,

adaptations that bring premises back into use, streetscape improvements, public art, trails and wayfinding, and creating or improving the infrastructure for regular markets.

(MHCLG Summary, 2026: [Pride in Place Impact Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK](#))

- 2.4 The Pride in Place Impact Fund allocation comprises 100% capital funding and may be invested anywhere within the local authority area. There is no requirement for local authorities to deliver all of the programme objectives or to allocate a specific proportion of funding to any individual objective. Consequently, funding may be directed towards a single objective or distributed across a range of projects.
- 2.5 An initial list of proposed projects was developed in January 2026 for consideration under the programme. The focus of the funding was on enhancing community facilities, including play areas and facilities identified through the Libraries and Community Needs Assessment (LCNA).
- 2.6 Sites were selected using a range of assessment criteria, including:
 - Geographical distribution across the city;
 - Levels of deprivation, measured using deprivation quintiles;
 - Alignment with other City Council investment programmes, including MUGA refurbishment, Pride in Place, and the Place Expansion Programme delivered in partnership with Sport England; and
 - Quality assessments and the condition of existing facilities and equipment.
- 2.7 Following the assessment process, a programme of projects was developed to ensure that investment would deliver the greatest benefit to local communities while complementing other planned improvement works across the city.
- 2.8 The programme includes the refurbishment of eleven play areas, the creation of two new community food growing spaces, improvements to the BMX facility at Western Park, and seed funding to support community groups in taking over the management and operation of five community centres across the city.
- 2.9 A programme of engagement was undertaken with Leicester's three Members of Parliament in February 2026 to provide information on the proposed projects and their intended outcomes along with ward councillor information sessions.
- 2.10 The design of the play area improvements has been undertaken in-house, with construction and installation works being delivered by the City Council's Landscape Services team.
- 2.11 Good progress is being made across the programme. Two sites have been completed and are now open to the public, whilst works are currently underway at a further five sites. Minor delays have been experienced in relation to the supply of certain items of play equipment; however, preliminary site works have commenced at affected locations to minimise programme impacts. All projects are anticipated to be completed by the end of March 2027, in line with the requirements of the funding programme.
- 2.12 The principal play area at Abbey Park is proposed to undergo refurbishment, including the replacement of existing play equipment and the removal of the obsolete i-play interactive equipment installed in 2007 through a partnership with Walkers PepsiCo.

The project will require both planning permission and Scheduled Monument Consent. Subject to the necessary approvals, the works will be procured through a competitive tender process for the supply and installation of play equipment by suitably qualified manufacturers and contractors.

- 2.13 Spend to date on the programme is £238k, which will increase markedly once the other play area and landscape works are completed, which is anticipated around the end of Qtr 3 / early Qtr 4 in 2026/27. Where individual project budgets are being supplemented by S106 contributions, these will be claimed in Qtr 3 also.

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

4.1 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications beyond those outlined in the body of the report.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy - Head of Finance

Dated: 19th October 2026

4.2 Legal Implications

This report is provided for information and scrutiny purposes only and does not seek approval of any new decisions.

The Council must continue to ensure that the Pride in Place Impact Fund is delivered in accordance with the terms of the funding award and all applicable legal requirements.

Any necessary consents, approvals and procurement exercises required for individual projects should be obtained and undertaken in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements and the Council's Constitution

Signed: Kevin Carter

Dated: 22nd October 2026

4.3 Equalities Implications

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to 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 protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This report provides an update on the City Council's Pride in Place Impact Fund programme. The programme is expected to have a positive impact by improving access to safe, welcoming and well-maintained play areas, community spaces and public open spaces across the city. This is likely to benefit children and young people, disabled people, older people, families and communities living in areas of higher deprivation.

Site selection has taken account of geographical spread, deprivation levels, the condition of existing facilities and alignment with other Council investment programmes. This is intended to direct investment to where it is likely to deliver the greatest community benefit, while ensuring a citywide distribution.

Temporary disruption may occur during construction works, including temporary closure of play areas or parts of parks. This may affect families with young children, disabled people and older people. The impact is expected to be temporary and will be managed through appropriate advance communication and site notices. An overarching Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out for the Pride in Place Impact Fund programme.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 15 October 2026

4.4 Climate Emergency Implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications arising from this report. Implications arising from specific initiatives should be given consideration as and when the relevant reports are submitted for decision.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

Dated: 14 October 2026

4.5 Other Implications

None

Signed:

Dated:

5. Background information and other papers:

n/a

6. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A – Pride in Place Impact Fund update slide presentation

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

Pride In Place Impact Fund

Culture & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Summary
presentation

November 2026

Introduction

- To provide the committee with an update on the progress of the Pride in Place Impact Fund programme, funded through MHCLG.
- To provide an update on progress and overall programme cost.
- To provide updated timescales for completion of works on site.

Pride in Place Impact Fund

- The Council has received £1.5m in capital funding from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to be delivered by March 2027.
- The programme focuses on community spaces and public spaces and achieving “quick wins”.
- Targets areas of deprivation / high need or ensure that the scheme has citywide benefit and is available to all residents such as a destination park / place
- Ensures a fair geographical spread across the city
- S106 monies to be used as match funding where appropriate - £229k available for use

Project Activities

Objective	Key	Indicative Activities
Community spaces The focus of this objective is buildings and indoor spaces.	1a 1b 1c 1d 1e 1f	- providing funding to a community group to take ownership of a disused asset - providing funding to refurbish or improve an asset already in community ownership - funding to refurbish or improve assets owned by public bodies for community activity - funding to create, improve or refurbish maker spaces - funding to create or improve art galleries, theatres, museums, libraries, cultural or heritage sites, sports facilities - creating or expanding on existing community assets to promote community cohesion
Public spaces The focus of this objective is outdoor recreation spaces.	2a 2b 2c 2d 2e 2f 2g 2h	- creating or improving parks or community gardens, particularly in areas with poor quality parks and gardens - improvements to a canal towpath, riverside walk or other leisure space - creating or refurbishing play areas and sports pitches/courts, installing outdoor gym equipment - providing new or replacing street furniture, repainting of public spaces, creating new shaded areas such as new shelters for bus stops, improved lighting and adaptations to reduce crime and the fear of crime - public art that reflects local culture and history, creating trails and installing new signs to help with wayfinding - creating and refurbishing footpaths, cycle ways and shared use paths - creating or refurbishing a pavilion or bandstand to support cultural, heritage, sporting and creative events - provision of public toilets or improvements to existing facilities, including providing Changing Places toilets
High street and town centre revitalisation The focus of this objective is regenerating high streets and local shopping areas.	3a 3b 3c 3d 3e	- improving street surfaces, street furniture, repainting of public spaces, creating new shaded areas such as new shelters for bus stops, improved lighting, measures to reduce the fear of crime, cycleways and shared paths - shop front improvement grants - grants to bring disused premises back into commercial use - provision of public toilets or improvements to existing facilities, including providing Changing Places toilets - providing infrastructure that supports street markets

Shortlisting steps

68

Projects that
are 'well
known' in
local areas



Unlikely to be
funded
through other
sources, i.e
S106 / PIP



Capital only
and
deliverable by
March 2027



Target areas
of **high need**
OR
**destination
spaces** used
by
communities



Ensure a fair
geographical
spread

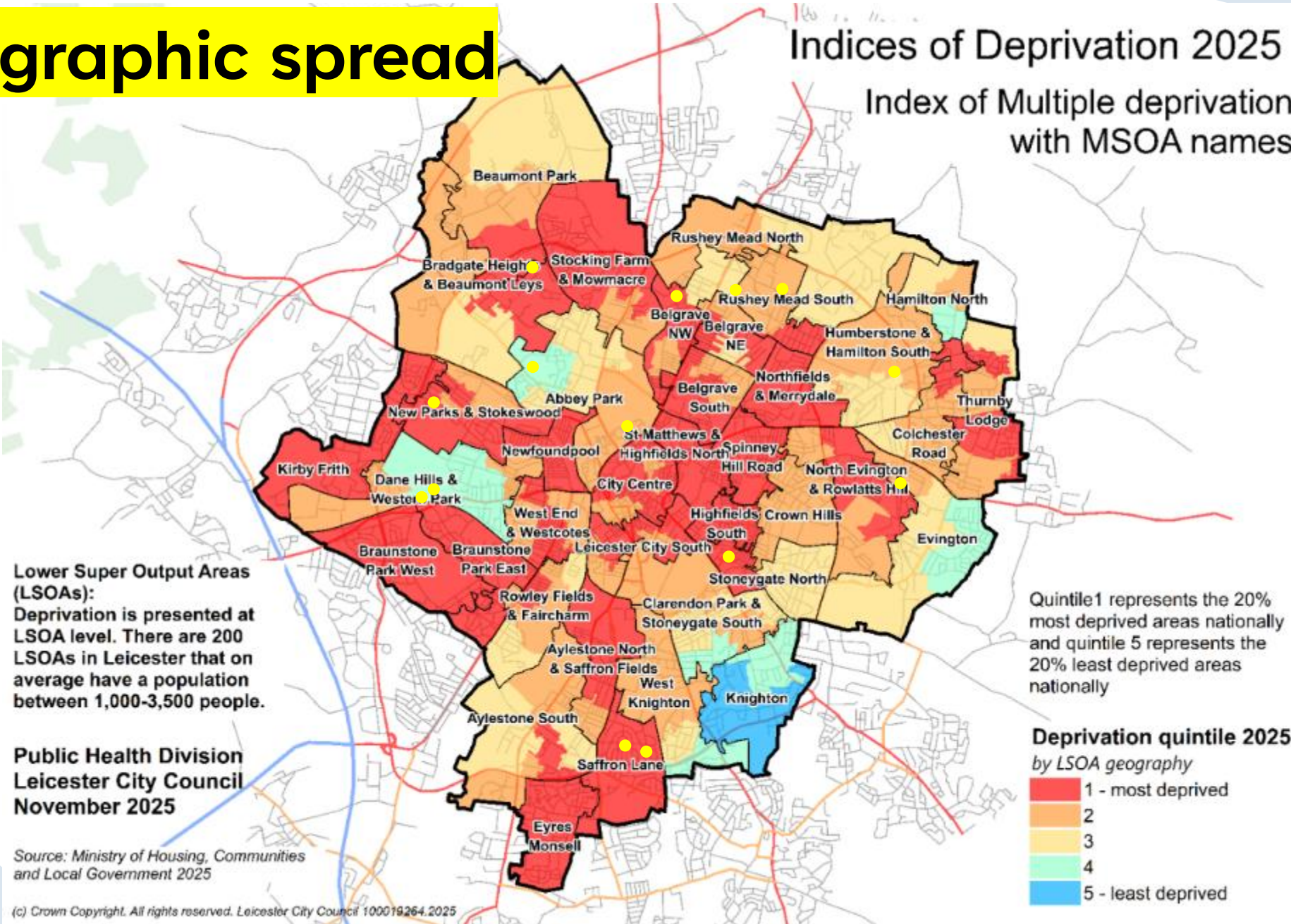
Geographic spread

Indices of Deprivation 2025

Index of Multiple deprivation
with MSOA names

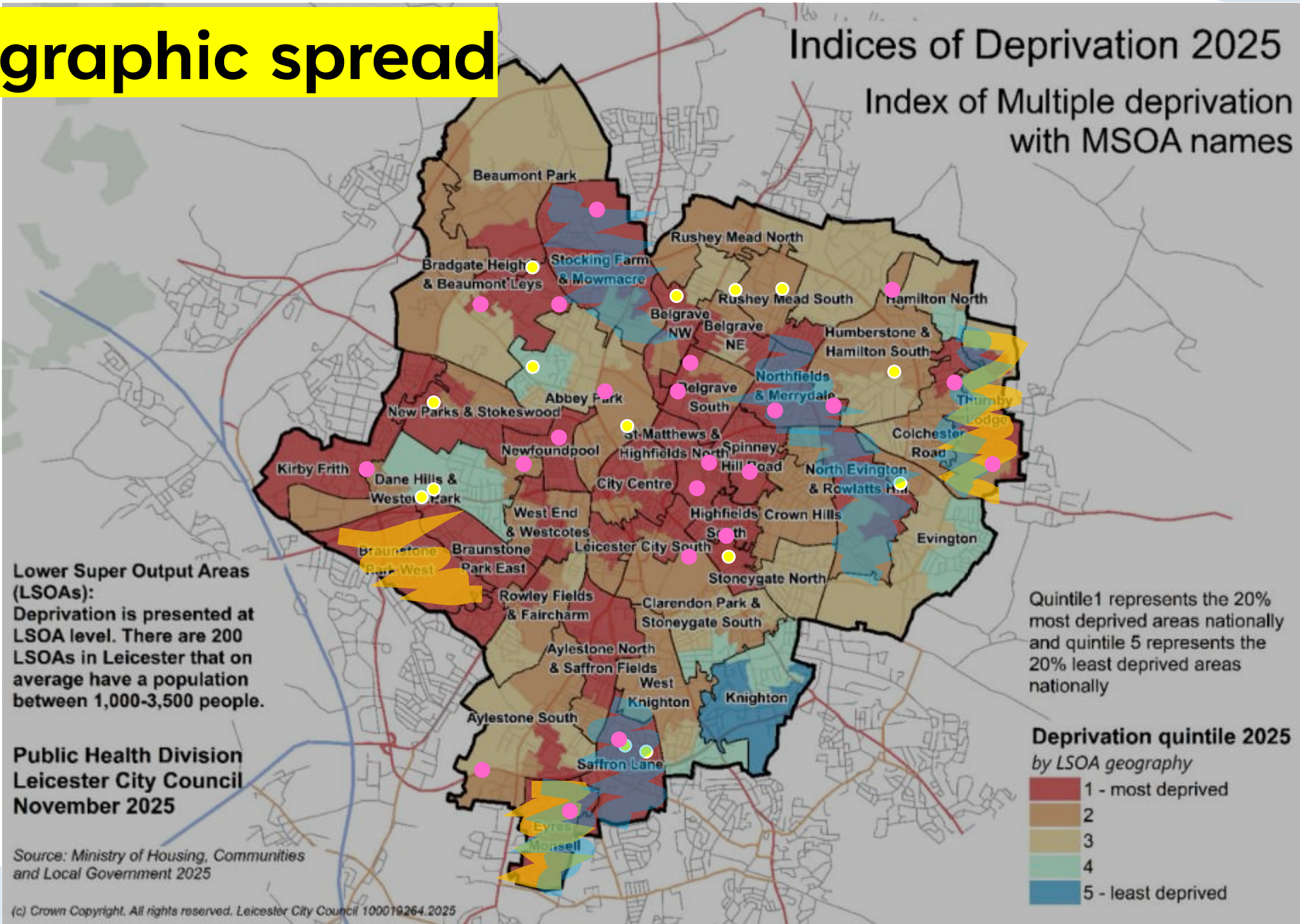
Key

Public Space



Geographic spread

91



Programme update and costs

Project name	Design	Equipment Procured	On site (or planned date)	Complete	Budget (£000's)
Kingfisher Youth Centre					£70
Abbey Park play area					£450
Stoughton Street South					£70
Growing place - New Parks			Expected November 26		£50
Growing places – Saffron			Expected November 26		£50
Bushey Fields play area					£100
St Helen's Close Play Area				Expected December 26	£80
Keyham Lane / Windmill Park					£120
Glovers Walk Play Area				Expected December 26	£80
Thomasson Road Play Area					£80
Appleton Park Play Area				Expected December 26	£120
Loughborough Road Play Area					£52
Western Park - Toddlers Area				Expected December 26	£75
Western Park BMX track					£20
Total					£1,417

Other Matters

- **3 other schemes requested for consideration**
 - Knighton – Church Lane Gardens (Decile 3) - £70k for full play area refurbishment. Recommended from play area provision underspend.
 - Cedar Rd play area – estimated cost £70k – PIPF (Decile 1) – is a good fit for refurbishment works.
 - Gwendolen Gardens (Decile 2) – Proposal to tidy and clear site. Additional seating and bins – estimated cost of £20k for works.
- **Programme underspend**
 - Any further underspend will be assigned to low level schemes across the city.
 - Works to include the provision of additional furniture, signs etc, small scale equipment replacement across various sites.

Abbey Park Play Area

- Complex site due to historical and ecological designations. Planning permission required for multiplay unit. Scheduled Monument Consent needed for all works (through Historic England).
- Ambition to create a destination play area for visitors to the city to visit as well as regular park users.
- Programme will split into 3 phases
 - replacement of existing play equipment
 - Installation of large-scale multi-play unit through separate procurement as supply and install contract
 - Completion of remainder of landscaping funded through S106 balance

Abbey park play area: mood board

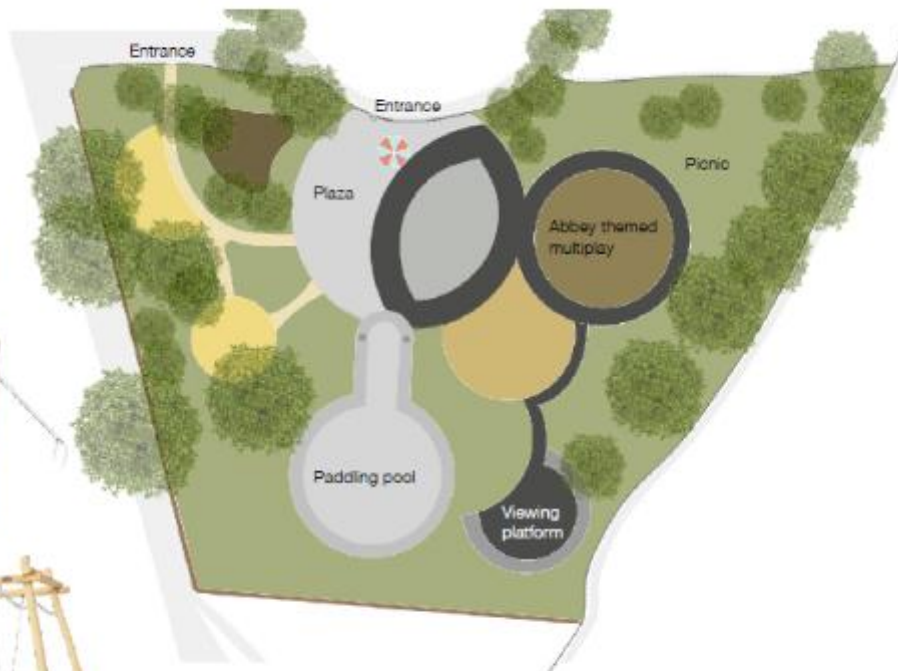
Equipment palette

The equipment represents a shortlist compiled to satisfy initial consultation with historic England. It has been selected based on criteria around neutral and natural materials that are robust and durable. They will blend into the surroundings and compliment the history of the scheduled ancient monument by not dominating.



Layout

The layout has been sensitively designed around the existing site. The entrance will be shifted to create a better spatial experience and highlight the historic paddling pool. Paths in black highlight accessible and inclusive space. Design of the new play equipment will create a sense of Abbey park inspiration in terms of traditional appearance and modern use. Some arboricultural work will be undertaken to reduce the density of the canopy to the West of the site for enhanced transparency and natural surveillance. Some of the trees will be removed for clear lines of sight to the paddling pool as a multi-functional event celebration point from the entrance. An interpretation panel will be installed highlighting the history including the prior use as fish ponds. There will be more seating installed and picnic areas to provide gathering space for general public use. A viewing platform in the south of the site next to the river highlights the waters proximity and provides legibility.



Materials palette

Materials have been selected based on durability, site context and sustainable credentials. The equipment will be manufactured using materials with longevity and that will continue to look good over a long period of time including for example robinia and galvanised steel, the safety surfaces will also be durable and have good end of life credentials. A cork based impact absorbing surface is proposed as well as a coconut husk based carpet called cocoturf. Both have excellent end of life characteristics because they are natural products unlike wet poor rubber and plastic carpet.



Rock



Cocoturf



Bark



Galvenised steel



Corkeen



Robinia



Sand

Progress Photographs



10/9/2021

Loughborough Road
Play Area - complete

Thomasson Road Play Area – complete

66



Appleton Park Play Area – completion December

100

St Helens Play Area –
completion December



**Glovers Walk Play Area –
completion November**



102

**Stoughton Street –
completion January / February**

Western Park BMX works— complete



Questions

Pride in Place Programme Update

Culture & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 02/11/2026

Lead director/officer: Andrew Shilliam, Director of
Corporate Services

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields, Eyres Monsell, Humberstone & Hamilton, and Thurncourt Wards
- Report author: Andrew Shilliam, Director of Corporate Services
- Author contact details: andrew.shilliam@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1.0

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an outline of the Pride in Place Programme to the Commission, including setting out the role of the Council and updating on programme progress.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 That the update report be noted.

3. Detailed report

Overview of the Pride in Place Programme (PiPP)

- 3.1. PiPP is a 10-year government programme delivering long-term funding to disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It is explicitly community-led, with local communities empowered to set priorities and shape regeneration. Three Leicester MSOA areas have been selected by Government, being:
- Eyres Monsell, with the Eyres Monsell Ward
 - Braunstone Park West, within the Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields Ward
 - Thurnby Lodge, with the Humberstone & Hamilton and Thurncourt Wards
- 3.2. Each area will receive up to £20 million over 10 years. The Council is required to act as the Accountable Body for all three areas.

Programme Principles

- 3.3. The programme is built around the four core principles of (1) long term effort, activity and funding, (2) flexibility, (3) community leadership, and (4) support, and has the following overarching aims embedded with it:
- Stronger Communities
 - Thriving Places
 - Local Empowerment
- 3.4. Decision-making is through a Neighbourhood Board required for each area, with a clear requirement for a majority resident position.

Funding Arrangements

- 3.5. Each Pride in Place area receives £20 million over 10 years, made up of a 63% capital and 37% revenue. Funding is released annually (April) and tied to performance and compliance. For 2026/27 – the first 50% was received in April, with the second 50% paid only when the Pride in Place Plan is approved (late 2026). Capital for 2026/27 is paid in full at the start of the financial year.
- 3.6. Over the ten years, funding will be delivered in three investment cycles, being (1) FY 2026/27–2029/30, (2) FY 2030/31–2032/33, and (3) FY 2033/34–2035/36. Communities are expected to decide on spending priorities and types of projects, but they have to meet the programme objectives.

- 3.7. Boards must also meet minimum spend thresholds, being at least 25% of total allocation forecast for each 3-to-4-year cycle. By Year 7 (2032/33), at least 50% of the total £20m must be spent or contractually committed. Government reserves the right to delay payments, claw back funding, and intervene if governance or spend requirements are not met. As Accountable Body, the Council has a duty to oversee this.

Accountable Body

- 3.8. Although Neighbourhood Boards determine local priorities, the Council is the accountable body. It must therefore ensure:
- Proper governance and transparent decision-making;
 - Lawful and appropriate use of public money;
 - Effective financial controls and audit trails;
 - Procurement and subsidy-control compliance;
 - Equality Act (2010) compliance and Public Sector Equality Duty due regard;
 - Monitoring and reporting to Government; and
 - Appropriate action where proposals are not deliverable or compliant.

Governance Requirements

- 3.9. As Accountable Body the Council is legally responsible for all funds and for ensuring compliance. Our key responsibilities are to hold, administer and monitor all funding, ensure robust financial controls, support recruitment and operation of Neighbourhood Boards, appoint Independent Chairs (with MPs), and support community engagement at scale.
- 3.10. We're expected to publish the required governance information, including Board membership, minutes, decisions, declarations of interest, expenses, submit Annual Statements of grant usage signed by the S151 Officer, and to ensure lawful and effective delivery.

Neighbourhood Boards – Requirements and Structure

- 3.11. Each Board is mandated to include an Independent Chair (appointed jointly by LA + MP), the local MP (who must also sit on the Board), at least one councillor, other local stakeholders, and it must be made up from a majority of residents from the area.
- 3.12. It is expected that representatives of local businesses, faith and community groups, voluntary sector, youth/community leaders, and anchor organisations are included in the composition of the Board. The minimum recommended total membership of which is expected to be 8–15 members.
- 3.13. Boards must meet at least quarterly, operate transparent decision-making processes, publish a membership list, meeting dates, draft minutes within 10 working days, final minutes shortly thereafter, decisions and any voting outcomes, and hold a published/accessible conflict of interest register.

Boundaries

- 3.14. Default boundaries are determined using Government-defined MSOAs, though it is possible for changes to be proposed. Any changes would require a clear rationale, including evidence of community identity or asset alignment. Currently, boundary submissions have been made in line with the default boundaries.

Appointment of Independent Chairs

- 3.15. The Chairs must be independent, not be an elected representative (MP or Cllr), have standing, credibility or leadership within the local community, be appointed jointly by the Council and the MP, be approved by Government as part of governance assurance, and lead the Board and act as public face of the programme.
- 3.16. We also required to to conduct the necessary due diligence, determine/record any possible conflicts of interest, ensure political impartiality, and ensure community credibility.
- 3.17. The Chair of each area is responsible for proposing the initial Board membership to the Council and MP for approval. Where agreement isn't possible, Government will be expected to intervene.

Overall Programme Position

- 3.18. The Leicester Pride in Place Programme remains broadly on track across all three neighbourhood areas:
- Chair and Vice-Chair due diligence processes are nearing completion.
 - Community member recruitment has generated significant interest, with over 100 Expressions of Interest received.
 - First Neighbourhood Board meetings are provisionally scheduled for October and November for Braunstone Park West and Eyres Monsell.
 - Initial community engagement activity has been completed in two of the three areas.
 - Work on the required 10-Year Plans and 4-Year Investment Plans is underway.

Thurnby Lodge & Netherhall

Governance

- 3.19. Due diligence requirements for one Co-Chair appointment is substantially complete.
- 3.20. A separate process is underway to agree a replacement Co-Chair appointment following the resignation of one of the Co-Chairs.

Board Recruitment

- 3.21. The area generated the strongest level of public interest, receiving 62 Expressions of Interest for Neighbourhood Board membership. Recruitment will commence when the second Co-Chair is appointed.
- 3.22. The main issue requiring resolution is the future Co-Chair arrangement following the departure of one Co-Chair.

- 3.23. Recruitment levels provide a strong foundation for establishing an effective Neighbourhood Board.

Eyres Monsell

Governance

- 3.24. Due diligence requirements for Chair and Vice-Chair appointments are being finalised.

Board Recruitment

- 3.25. 30 Expressions of Interest were received
- 3.26. Shortlisting has been completed and is progressing through the Chair-led engagement and then the due diligence process.

Community Engagement

- 3.27. Initial engagement and consultation activity has been completed.
- 3.28. Work is progressing towards drafting the community engagement report and undertaking prioritisation discussions.

Braunstone Park West

Governance

- 3.29. Due diligence requirements for Chair and Vice-Chair appointments are being finalised.

Board Recruitment

- 3.30. 25 Expressions of Interest were received.
- 3.31. Candidate shortlisting has been completed and progressing through the Chair-led engagement and then the due diligence process.

Community Engagement

- 3.32. Initial community engagement and consultation activity has been completed.
- 3.33. Work is moving towards preparation of the engagement report and prioritisation activity.

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

5.1 Financial implications

The Council will act as the accountable body for the Pride in Place Programme which will enable it to receive the 3 area's grant allocations to manage, including assessing and approving any onward grant disbursement, processing payments, day-to-day monitoring and

reporting. Funding will be managed within the existing financial governance framework adopted by LCC and its accountability and assurance regime, under the oversight of its chief financial officer, Section 151.

Signed: Joel Martin, Principal Accountant

Dated: 21st October 2026

5.2 Legal implications

Aligned to its duties as Accountable Body, the Council must ensure lawful governance of the Boards and formally approve decisions to the extent necessary to discharge relevant statutory duties. The Council must also ensure that governance structures including Board membership, transparency arrangements, conflict of interest registers and publication requirements meet statutory and constitutional standards.

Full Council delegated to the Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Director of Corporate Services authority to administer the Programme, allocate funding, and manage delivery and compliance in accordance with MHCLG requirements and the Council's approved budget framework.

All decisions taken under delegated arrangements must be demonstrably reasonable, evidence based and aligned with Government programme conditions.

Signed: Kevin Carter

Dated: 21st October 2026

5.3 Equalities implications

The report provides an update on programme progress. The Pride in Place Programme (PiPP) is expected to have a positive impact on equality by directing long-term investment towards three Leicester neighbourhoods experiencing significant socio-economic deprivation. This is likely to benefit residents who experience compounded disadvantage, including disabled people, children and young people, older people, women, carers, people from minority ethnic and faith communities, LGBTQ+ residents and people whose first language is not English.

The programme's community-led approach provides an opportunity to advance equality of opportunity by enabling residents to shape local priorities and investment decisions. The strong response to Neighbourhood Board recruitment provides a good foundation for inclusive and representative governance. The Council will continue to seek to ensure that Board recruitment, engagement, communications and decision-making are accessible and enable effective participation by people who share protected characteristics, including through accessible venues, formats and, where required, interpretation and translation.

The targeted nature of the programme means that funding is concentrated in three areas rather than being distributed city-wide. This is intended to address longstanding socio-economic inequality and is considered a proportionate means of meeting the needs of communities experiencing high levels of deprivation. Clear and transparent communication will remain important to foster good relations and avoid perceptions of unfair treatment between neighbourhoods.

Initial community engagement has been completed in Eyres Monsell and Braunstone Park West, this engagement should continue to seek the views of under-represented residents and groups. In Thurnby Lodge and Netherhall, the replacement Co-Chair process and subsequent Board recruitment will provide a further opportunity to ensure inclusive and representative governance. It is important to ensure that Board recruitment, meetings, engagement, communications and decision-making arrangements are accessible and enable effective participation by people who share protected characteristics, including through accessible venues, formats and, where required, interpretation and translation.

Each Pride in Place Plan must include an equality impact analysis, supporting the Council in having due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty. Individual projects, procurement decisions and delivery arrangements will be subject to further equality consideration and, where appropriate, project-specific Equality Impact Assessments. Equality impacts will be monitored as the programme develops.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148
Dated: 21st October 2026

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications arising from this report. Implications arising from specific initiatives should be given consideration as and when the relevant reports are submitted for decision.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer
Dated: June 2026

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

6. Background information and other papers:

[Pride in Place Programme prospectus - GOV.UK](#)

[Pride in Place Programme: Phase 2 place selection methodology note - GOV.UK](#)

[Pride in Place Programme: funding profiles and timelines - GOV.UK](#)

[Pride in Place Programme: list of indicative interventions - GOV.UK](#)

7. Summary of appendices:

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)?

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

Annual ward funding report 2025-26

Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 2nd November 2026

Lead director: Sean Atterbury

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Lee Warner
- Author contact details: lee.warner@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: Final

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an outline of how Ward Funding was spent across the city between April 2025 and March 2026. This report seeks to provide an insight into the variety of projects and initiatives that took place in the wards, and some of those that were important to residents locally.
- 1.2 An annual budget of £18,000 per ward is allocated which can be used to support projects that bring benefits to that ward. The total annual budget for ward funding is £378,000
- 1.3 In non-election years each ward is permitted to carry over up to 10% of the annual ward budget. An underspend of £14,529 was carried over from the previous financial year 2024/2025 to give a total budget of £392,529 for ward funding in 2025/2026.
- 1.4 In 2025/2026 a total of 559 applications for Ward Funding were received. Of these 52 were withdrawn, leaving 507 for consideration. A total of 426 applications were successful in receiving Ward Funding.
- 1.5 The total amount of ward funding approved for grants for the financial year 2025/2026 was £378,609.
- 1.6 A global underspend of £13,025 was carried over to the current financial year, 2026/2027.
- 1.7 No carry over of ward funding will be permitted for the current financial year, as local elections are due to take place in May 2027.
- 1.8 The report provides further detail on the category and type of grant funded activities delivered, the overall number of volunteers engaged, and the amount of matched funding leveraged.
- 1.9 The report also summarises updates to the ward funding policy which are made to improve processes and timescales.

2. Recommended actions

- 2.1 Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the report on ward engagement and community funding for the year 2025/2026.

3. Background and options with supporting evidence

3.1 The annual ward funding is provided as appendix A.

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

5.1 Financial implications

This report presents a summary of how ward funding has been spent across the city for 2025/26. As such there are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

Dated: 14th October 2026

5.2 Legal implications

The report is for noting and therefore does not give rise to any direct legal implications.

Signed: Mannah Begum, Principal Solicitor, Commercial Legal Team

Dated: 14th October 2026

5.3 Equalities implications

There are no direct equality implications arising from this report as it is for noting, however ward community funding supports a wide range of local projects and activities that contribute to the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty by helping to foster good relations between different communities, encouraging participation in community life and improving access to opportunities and services for residents from a range of protected characteristics. Ongoing monitoring of applications and outcomes should continue to ensure that the funding remains accessible, equitable and able to respond to the needs of Leicester's diverse communities. The report includes examples of support provided to community groups serving women, families, older people and culturally diverse communities.

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

Signed: Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer

Dated: 14 October 2026

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications arising directly from the recommendation to note this report. The report highlights that ward funding has supported some environmental improvement and community-based projects which may contribute to Climate Ready Leicester objectives.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

Dated: 20 October 2026

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

N/A

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A: Annual ward funding report 2025 – 26

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an outline of how Ward Funding was spent across the city between April 2025 and March 2026. This report seeks to provide an insight into the variety of projects and initiatives that took place in the wards, and some of those that were important to residents locally.

What is Ward Community Funding?

Each of Leicester's 21 electoral wards is allocated a yearly budget of £18,000 which can be used to support projects that bring benefits to that ward. Councillors support a wide a range of activities, events and projects. Councillors also have the flexibility to make local arrangements for their ward to set limits on how much funding can be allocated to each application.

Constituencies

East	South	West
Belgrave	Aylestone	Abbey
Evington	Castle	Beaumont Leys
Humberstone and Hamilton	Eyres Monsell	Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields
North Evington	Knighton	Fosse
Rushey Mead	Saffron	Westcotes
Thurncourt	Spinney Hill	Western
Troon	Stoneygate	
	Wycliffe	

In 2025/2026 a total of 559 applications for Ward Funding were received. Of these 52 were withdrawn, leaving 507 for consideration. The table below provides an outline of the number of applications received and of those, the number withdrawn:

Wards	Number of applications received	Number of applications withdrawn	Number of applications for consideration
East	200	22	178
South	213	15	198
West	146	15	131
Total	559	52	507

The application process

Councillors are supportive of projects that bring benefits to their ward and those that address local priorities. Councillors tend to want to support as wide a range of activities as possible and for this reason do not support many proposals which would take up a large proportion of their funds. To assist with this, Councillors have the flexibility to make local arrangements for their ward to set limits on how much funding can be allocated to each application.

Each application is reviewed against key priorities defined locally by ward Councillors and against predefined criteria ensuring applications do not breach any of the funding conditions as set out within the Ward Funding Policy, as outlined below

What cannot be funded?

1. Ward Community funding cannot be used for the following:
2. Staffing, except temporary staff or specialist staff brought in to do a specific and short-term piece of work (for up to a maximum of 12 months)
3. Full costs of infrastructure, running costs or capital investment
4. Recoverable VAT – Ward Funding cannot be awarded for monies that will be reclaimed back as recoverable VAT by the applicant / organisation
5. Any liability arising out of illegality or negligence
6. Any form of gambling (except small fundraising activities e.g., raffle, tombola)
7. Exclusively religious activity
8. Political activity
9. Applications where previously awarded funds have not been accounted for with an evaluation and evidence of expenditure
10. An event or activity which has already taken place e.g. an application that is submitted on the day of or after the activity, event, or project has taken place (Retrospective Application).

Following the review of each application, Councillors are presented with an assessment, summarising the key points of the application and any additional information received on request. It will include a recommendation to Support or Reject, highlighting the merits and/or limitations of the application, based on officer opinion. Ward Councillors are asked to consider these findings to determine their decisions.

Case study

Ward: Eyres Monsell

Amount awarded: £499

Project name: Femina (Polish) Women's Community.

Summary of activity/event:

Femina began as an exercise, and yoga group for Mum and Tots, for [mainly, but not exclusively] Polish women in the community. The aim was to create a safe space, to enable local mums to integrate, share experiences, and culture. Ward funding was awarded toward the costs of the room hire, and exercise mats.

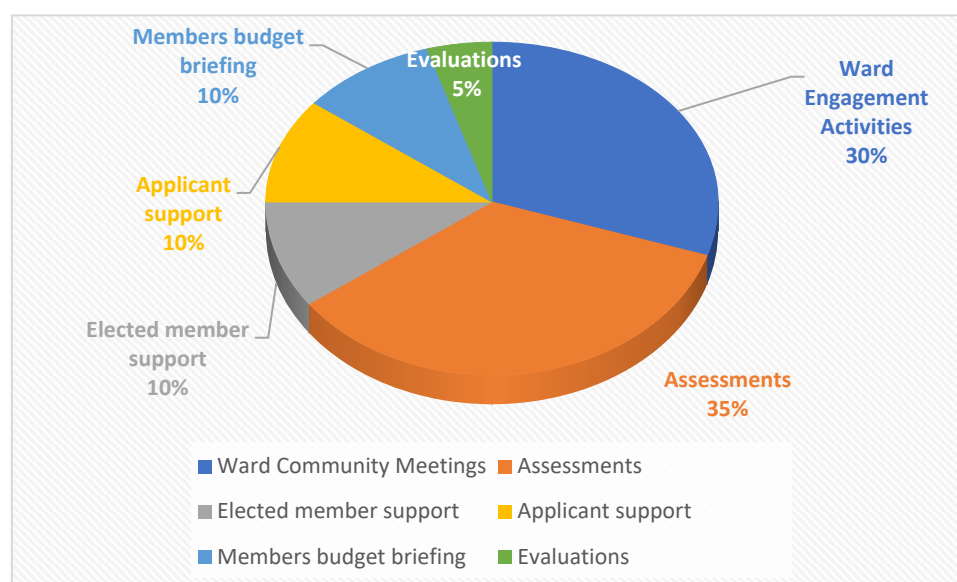
Outcome:

Femina registered as a CIC (Community Interest Company) in 2025 and secured National Lottery funding to develop their business plan. In addition to the original 'Mother and Tots Yoga Groups, Femina now provides; Self Defence Classes for Women, Women's Health Sessions; Art and Crafts Groups; Meet and Chat Groups; 'Tot's on the Mats'; Body Conditioning Sessions, and Zumba Classes. Femina hosts Family Sports Days, Festive Celebrations, and is currently Developing its work with older people.

From Femina's original begins as a small community activity, Femina has developed an interactive website, and a charitable arm to the organisation, as a result of the funding awarded.

Ward Engagement Duties

The ward engagement team manage all aspects of Ward Funding Applications, from submission by applicant right up until the evaluation has been received. Officers also organise and facilitate Ward Community meetings across the city. Although every day can be different for each Ward Community Engagement Officer, below is an approximate breakdown of time spent on various duties, followed by a brief description.



Applicant support

Ward Community Engagement Officers provide one to one support to applicants wanting to apply for Ward Funding. Officers meet with applicants in person, at either Community Centres or Libraries, where they provide advice and support with submitting their application. Officers will discuss the process with applicants along with explaining the requirements needed to meet the criteria and guidelines, including the evaluation stage. Officers also provide support to applicants over the phone and via e-mail.

Assessments

Once an application has been submitted, it will be assigned to the relevant Officer who is responsible for bids relating to the ward that has been applied to. Officers read through each application and contact the applicant to gather any additional information. Once all necessary information has been received, an assessment is then completed with an overview of the project, and a detailed check that the application meets Ward Funding Guidelines. Every assessment is peer moderated by another Ward Community Engagement Officer and then group moderated for a final time by all officers.

Budget meetings

Ward Community Engagement Officers arrange to meet with Ward Councillors to discuss all of the applications which have been received, ensuring assessments and applications are supplied prior to the meeting. During the budget meeting, Officers and

Councillors discuss each application and assessment and confirm their decision. Councillors may ask for additional information to support their decision which may require officers to make further contact with applicants before Councillors can make a final decision.

Applications will also be e-mailed to Ward Councillors. Officers will then monitor the outcome and responses. Once a decision is reached on an application, the Ward Funding database is updated accordingly. All supported applications are listed on a report generated ahead of Executive sign off. Once supported applications have been signed off by the appointed Executive Lead, payments are processed, and Officers send confirmation e-mails to all applicants informing them of the outcome of their application.

Elected Member support

Ward Engagement officers provide support to Elected Members in relation to Ward Funding Applications and their Ward budget, Ward Community Meetings, community patch walks and general enquiries about work within their wards.

Evaluations

For every application that has been supported, an evaluation along with evidence of expenditure is required by the stated deadline. If these are not received by the given deadline, Officers follow up with applicants. Applications are only closed once evaluations have been received and receipts and invoices checked to reconcile expenditure for audit purposes.

Ward Engagement Activities

Each ward receives support for up to three ward engagement activities. This could be in the form of a ward meeting, patch walk, coffee morning or information fair. The support provided by the team includes liaising with Councillors to arrange suitable dates and venues and set the agenda. Requests for written updates from the relevant service areas are also made. After the activity, an action log is produced and published.

Successful applications

Between April 2025 and March 2026, out of 507, a total of **426** applications were successful in receiving Ward Funding. The following table provides details of the number of successful applications per constituency:

Wards	Number of applications received for consideration	Number supported up to £500	Number supported over £500	Total Number supported	Total Number not supported
East	178	76	68	144	34
South	198	84	80	164	34
West	131	61	57	118	13
Total	507	221	205	426	81

Types of ward funded activity

Ward Funding was provided for a number of local priorities and events determined by Ward Councillors. As part of analysing the successful applications, each project/activity was identified under the most appropriate category relative to the purpose of funding. The categories are identified as follows:

Category	Description
Arts and Culture e.g. Celebratory Events	Projects that are specified as arts related or include key cultural aspects. These can sometimes be inclusive around religion for example Holi, Eid, Christmas and Halloween events, that are open to all.
Developing and Supporting Communities	Projects designed to meet the current needs of the community, making neighbourhoods stronger and empowering for sustainable development such as mental health advice workshops, school projects, community information events and foodbanks.
Education and Improving Skills	Projects that support the community in gaining further skills such as ICT, numeracy and literacy, employability and self-confidence.

Environmental	Projects that help improve the environment throughout neighbourhoods and communities such as City Warden clean ups, clearance of fly tips, litter picking campaigns, and work in Parks with volunteers.
Social and Community	Projects that promote community cohesion, to integrate and network such as family fun days, day trips and lunch clubs.
Sports and Leisure	Projects that improve health and well-being through sports and leisure such as football tournaments, various sporting activities, indoor bowls, dance troupes, and knit and natter groups.
Other work e.g. Traffic and Highways	Work/initiatives around highway improvements, speeding, and traffic safety including installation of bollards.

The table below provides an outline of the number of applications supported across the different types of activity.

	Type of activity							
Wards	Arts & Culture	Developing & Supporting Communities /Volunteering	Education and Improving Skills	Environmental	Social and Community	Sports/ Leisure	Other	Total
East	9	71	6	7	12	23	16	144
South	21	81	5	13	9	23	12	164
West	18	49	9	8	7	12	15	118
Total	48	201	20	28	28	58	43	426

The following table provides details of the amount of funding awarded in support of activities across the different categories. The total awarded was £378,609.

	Type of activity							
Wards	Arts & Culture	Developing & Supporting Communities /Volunteering	Education and Improving Skills	Environment al Events/ Projects	Community / Social events	Sports/ Leisure	Other	Total
East	£3975	£59,620	£5450	£10,345	£10,640	£15,250	£23,453	£128,733
South	£13,596	£69,946	£3811	£5855	£26,972	£12,982	£10,582	£143,744
West	£14,950	£38,552	£7000	£7720	£8636	£21,044	£8230	£106,132
Total	£32,521	£168,118	£16,261	£23,920	£46,248	£49,276	£42,265	£378,609

Case study

Ward: Aylestone.

Amount awarded: £1000.

Project name: Old Aylestone Choir.

Summary of activity/event:

The Old Aylestone Choir are a 'not for profit' community 'vocal group' for all ages. That met weekly to sing, and rehearse for community concerts, and festivals. The Old Aylestone Community met for over eighteen years. As a result of the national Covid -19 Pandemic restrictions prevented the choir from meeting to sing, and plan for their community events. Consequently, through the inability to meet, and loss of regular subscription payments, the choir disbanded. Residents realising the benefits of a local choir applied for ward funding to assist in re-establishing the choir. The Old Aylestone Choir successfully secured ward funding, towards the cost of room hire, and music scores, enabling the Choir to re-form.

Outcome:

The Old Aylestone Community Choir, are once again up and running, meeting weekly to sing and rehearse for their seasonal concerts, and services. Funds raised from the events are donated towards a chosen Charity. The Choir states as a result of the ward funding support the benefits of being a member of the Choir are, an improvement to health and well-being, improved circulation, breathing and cerebral activity, and improved posture, and an overall sense of well-being, social interaction and community.

Volunteer engagement

The table below provides information about the estimated number of volunteers engaged in organising, coordinating, and delivering ward funded activities.

Wards	Volunteers per session	Total Number of sessions / Activities	Total volunteer hours
East	1478	4803	1721
South	1691	3007	3070
West	1137	6378	1885
Total	4306	14,188	6676

Council schemes

Through discussions with residents and Council services, ward specific priorities or issues are often identified. A total of 36 applications for Council led projects/schemes were awarded Ward Funding to a total value of **£45,477** (12.8% of the total amount of funding awarded) to help address local issues and priorities that could not be funded by core service budgets. The table below provides details of the service areas that received funding in 2024/25.

Wards	Number of schemes	Amount of funding
City Wardens	6	£6,825
Festivals/Events	1	£3,000
Highways/Transport	6	£9,750
Housing	1	£10,082
Libraries	14	£7,300
Environmental	5	£8,000
Parks & Green Spaces	2	£1,500
Cleansing Services	1	£1,720
Total	36	£45,477

Declared 'Other Sources' of Funding

As part of the application process, applicants show how the projects/activities are supported through other sources of funding. In total £335,257.10 of matched funding was leveraged through the Ward Funding scheme. The table below shows the matched funding by constituency area:

Wards	Amount
East	£116,947
South	£155,262.80
West	£63,047.30
Total	£335,257.10

Summary 2025-2026

Ward Community Funding has continued to demonstrate significant value locally and support for residents and communities. Over that past year (2025/2026), Ward Councillors supported a wide range of projects, activities and initiatives that strengthened neighbourhoods, promoted inclusion, supported health and wellbeing, encouraged volunteering, and enabled residents and community organisations to respond directly to local priorities.

The Ward Community Fund has continued to provide an important mechanism for supporting grassroots organisations, smaller community groups and locally led activity that may otherwise struggle to access funding opportunities. The breadth of projects delivered throughout the year demonstrates the flexibility and responsiveness of the scheme in meeting the differing needs of communities across the city.

In addition to supporting community activity directly, the scheme has also continued to leverage substantial additional investment into local neighbourhoods, with over £335,000 of matched funding secured alongside Ward Funding allocations. Volunteer engagement also remains a significant strength of the programme, with thousands of volunteer hours contributing toward the successful delivery of funded activities and events.

Ward Funding Policy

A number of updates to the ward funding guidelines are to be introduced for 2026/27 following learning and feedback received during the year from applicants, Ward Councillors and officers. The aim is to strengthen governance, improve consistency and support more timely decision making.

The key changes are:

- The introduction of clearer application response windows for both applicants and Ward Councillors to reduce application drift and improve certainty for applicants.
- A strengthened process for monitoring and reporting applications where decisions remain outstanding.

These changes are intended to support Ward Councillors and improve ward funding response times whilst retaining the flexibility to respond to the unique priorities and needs of their local communities.

Future Provision of Libraries and Community Centres implementation update

Neighbourhoods and Culture Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 2nd November 2026

Lead director: Sean Atterbury

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Lee Warner
- Author contact details: lee.warner@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: Final

1. Summary

- 1.1 A presentation is appended outlining progress with the implementation of the decision taken in March 2026 for the Future Provision of Libraries and Community Centres.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission is recommended to note the summary of the implementation to date of the decision for the Future Provision of Libraries and Community Centres.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 A presentation is appended outlining progress with the implementation of the decision taken in March 2026 for the Future Provision of Libraries and Community Centres.

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

5.1 Financial implications

The Executive decision taken in March 2026 declared savings in 2026/27 of £500k, with permanent savings of £1,570k from 2027/28 onwards. The achievement of those savings will be heavily dependent upon the actual transfer of assets to community organisations, and savings delivery will therefore be at risk until those actions are completed.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy - Head of Finance
Dated: 16th October 2026

5.2 Legal implications

The matters set out in this report relate to the implementation of the decision taken in March 2026 concerning the future provision of libraries and community centres. Implementation should continue in accordance with the terms of that decision and the Council's relevant statutory duties and policies.

The proposed Community Asset Transfers will require appropriate assessment of the business cases received and suitable legal arrangements to protect the Council's interests and secure the intended community benefits. Any individual property, contractual, procurement or subsidy control issues arising through implementation should be addressed as part of the relevant transfer or implementation process.

Signed: Kamal Adatia

Dated: 14th October 2026

5.3 Equalities implications

This report provides an update on implementation of the decision taken in March 2026. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out in relation to the Future Provision of Libraries and Community Centres. The EIA will be kept under review and updated as required as implementation progresses.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148
Dated: 19 October 2026

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

This report provides an update on implementation of the decision taken in March 2026 and the detailed climate emergency implications provided for the decision report remain relevant.

As implementation progresses, on balance, there is likely to be a reduction in the council's own emissions associated with reducing the number of buildings within the operational estate, however the city as a whole may see little change in its annual emissions with a minor risk of these increasing over time if opportunities to carry out energy efficiency, renewable energy and decarbonisation improvements are not realised for buildings that have been transferred out of the operational estate.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246
Dated: 20 October 2026

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

N/A

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A: Future Provision of Libraries & Community Centres Implementation update

Future Provision of Libraries & Community Centres Implementation update

2 November 2026

Lee Warner

Head of Neighbourhood Services

Background

- The Future Provision of Libraries & Community Centres is a transformational programme for Neighbourhood Services scoping in the whole service at all settings.

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- A Community Services & Library Needs Assessment was carried out in 2023 – 25.
 - Public engagement (Primary research) July – September 2023
 - Secondary research report – October 2024
 - Transformation proposals developed Summer 2024
 - Publication of Engagement reports October 2024
 - Consultation on transformation proposals Spring 2025
 - Revised proposals post-consultation published November 2025

Decision March 2026

Key points:

- 18 facilities retained
- Multi-service centre model, focus on health and wellbeing
- Revised opening hours in line with “near neighbours”
- Extend self-access scheme to 8 libraries
- Community Asset Transfer opportunities for 6 community centres
- Relocation of St Matthews Library and services
- Capital investment in retained centres
- Withdrawal from Fosse Neighbourhood Centre & Library

Decision March 2026

Changes made after consultation:

- Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre & Rushey Mead Recreation retained with increased income targets
- 3 libraries proposed for community running to be retained under Council management
- Proposed opening hours patterns revised
- Savings reduced from £2.1m to £1.57m

Progress update November 2026

1. New Opening Hours

- Timetables for all libraries updated following consultation
- Local groups consulted to ensure access
- 138 • Toddler Time and Study Support sessions accommodated with minor changes
- DWP Job shops, Housing pop-up offices, Class visits and activity groups retained
- Self-access for community groups set up

Centre	Staffed Hours Per Week	Self-Access Hours
Central Library	45	
Aylestone Library (Leisure Centre MSC)	30	Yes
Beaumont Leys Library MSC	40	
Belgrave Library MSC	40	Yes
BRITE Centre MSC	40	Yes
Hamilton Library MSC	30	Yes
Highfields Library MSC	40	
New Parks Centre MSC	30	Yes
Pork Pie Library MSC	30	Yes
St Barnabas Library MSC	40	Yes
St Matthews Library (relocated to CYPF MSC)	30	
Thurnby Lodge Centre MSC (with small library)	30	Yes
Westcotes Library MSC	30	
Evington Library	25	Yes
Knighton Library	25	Yes
Rushey Mead Library	20	
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	As required	
Rushey Mead Recreation Centre	Self-access	Yes

1. New Opening Hours

Communications campaign

- Ward Councillors briefed 2nd September
- Face to face - groups and library users
- Notices displayed at all facilities
- Libraries & My Leicester newsletter
- Library bookmarks and flyers
- Face to face

Implemented 5th October

Our library opening hours are changing

From 5 October 2026 Leicester Libraries will have new opening hours.

We look forward to welcoming you during our new hours.



Scan to see
the new hours
or ask staff
for details

libraries.leicester.gov.uk



2. Library Plus (Self-Access)

- Library Plus (Self Access) trialled in Evington and Knighton Libraries from 2021
- In addition to core staffed hours
- Access from 8am to 8pm Mon – Fri for 16yrs+
- Access via library card and PIN (bank model)
- Live CCTV monitoring and emergency 'phone
- Book loans, computer access, study and meet

2. Library Plus implementation

Library	Planned Date
Evington Library	Installed
Knighton Library	Installed
Hamilton Library	Installed – Oct 26
Belgrave Library	Installed – Oct 26
BRITE Centre Library	November 26
New Parks Centre Library	November 26
Pork Pie Library	January 2027
St Barnabas Library	January 2027

2. Library Plus - benefits

Library	Staffed hours	Self Access	Total hours
Evington Library	25	38	63
Knighton Library	25	39	64
Hamilton Library	30	34	64
Belgrave Library	40	23	63
BRITE Centre Library	40	23	63
New Parks Centre Library	30	33	63
Pork Pie Library	30	33	63
St Barnabas Library	40	26	66

3. Community Asset Transfer

- CAT Opportunities published 5th Oct:
 - Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre
 - Coleman Neighbourhood Centre
 - Eyres Monsell Community Centre
 - Gilmorton Community Rooms
 - Tudor Centre
- Armadale Centre to be offered later

3. Community Asset Transfer

- Facilities offered for 5-year lease under Council's CAT policy
- Using the same model as 11 current successful CAT transfers
- Significant community benefit must be demonstrated through Business Plans
- Voluntary Action Leicester commissioned to support groups
- Significant early interest in all buildings during consultation phase
- Council will continue to run facilities up to transfer

3. Community Asset Transfer

Programme overview

Date	Action	Status
5 Oct 2026	CAT opportunities published	✓
12 Oct 2026	Launch meetings held	✓
Oct - Dec	Community organisations develop business plans with support from VAL	
10 Jan 2027	Deadline for business case submissions	
Jan 2027	Officers assess business cases	
Feb 2027	Ward councillors consulted Recommendations made to executive Award decisions	
Mar - Oct	Legal and handover arrangements	

3. Community Asset Transfer

Benefits

- Sustainable futures for community buildings
- 147 • Community management empowers local people
- Local groups highly engaged with community networks
- Access to grant funding not available to LCC
- Financial saving for LCC

4. Withdrawal from Fosse Neighbourhood Centre & Library

- All community room hire groups relocated
- Library customers transferred to their preferred near library
- Children's BookBus: Fosse route commenced
- Housebound customers/families offered Home Library Service
- Alice Hawkins Community Projects to continue in annex until December 2026

Next steps

- Complete rollout of Library Self-Access (Autumn 2026)
- Appointment of Volunteer Coordinator to support local engagement (Autumn 2026)
- Community Asset Transfer programme (Autumn 2026 / Spring 2027)
- Refurbishment of St Matthews Family Hub and transfer of library (first half 2027)
- Capital investment programme (2027)

Any Questions?

**Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission
Work Programme 2026 – 2027**

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
18 June 2026	Introduction to Culture and Neighbourhoods Pride in Place Programme Update		
3 September 2026	PSPO Update BUSK Leicester pilot – Report F&E Grants Programme		
8 October 2026 – Special Meeting	Leisure Centre Needs Assessment, Phase 3 Proposals and Public Consultation	Special Meeting	
2 November 2026	Community Asset Transfer – Task Group Report Pride in Place Programme and Pride in Place Impact Fund Ward Funding Annual Report Community and Libraries Needs Assessment Implementation		

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
28 January 2027	Heritage Places Funding - National Lottery Heritage Fund – Update on next stage. Growing spaces strategy Waste Services Update	To include findings of Audience Agency. If Stage 1 is successful.	
4 March 2027	Regulatory Services Update LMAG Capital Project		

Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
A Strategic Review of the Value of Festivals and Events to the City of Leicester		
Jewry Wall		
Fly Tipping		

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.	
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.	
KRIII Café/Visitor Centre	Updating on Capital Project	
Heritage panels, inviting members suggestions for new panels		

