Leicester City Council

Scrutiny Annual Report

2025-2026

Foreword

It has been my privilege to serve as Chair of the Overview Select Committee for the municipal year 2025/26. This report provides an overview of the extensive work undertaken by the Overview Select Committee and the Scrutiny Commissions.

Throughout the year, scrutiny has examined a wide range of issues affecting the city and its residents. This has included the consideration of proposed decisions, the development of policy, performance monitoring, and the review of emerging challenges and opportunities. This year particularly, alongside the formal meetings, scrutiny undertook a number of task groups, briefings, site visits and other informal scrutiny activities to enable members to explore issues in greater detail and gather evidence from a variety of sources. Having this deeper understanding was important to us to efficiently scrutinise the information we were receiving.

The Overview Select Committee and Scrutiny Commissions have undertaken a substantial programme of work during the year, resulting in a range of recommendations designed to improve outcomes for residents and strengthen the delivery of public services. I am grateful to the City Mayor and members of the Executive for their constructive engagement with the scrutiny process and for the positive manner in which recommendations have been considered. I would also like to thank officers across the Council whose expertise, commitment and support have enabled members to examine issues thoroughly and make informed contributions.

Scrutiny has continued to benefit from strong engagement with a range of partners, particularly across the health sector, where collaboration and openness have supported meaningful examination of issues affecting local communities. The continued participation of young people within several scrutiny bodies has also been particularly valuable, helping to ensure that the perspectives and experiences of younger residents are reflected in discussions and decision-making.

One of the strengths of scrutiny is its ability to undertake detailed investigations into complex issues. During 2025/26, this included focused work on Community Asset Transfer, Adventure Playgrounds, Council Tax Support and the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, among other areas. This work has enabled members to consider evidence in greater depth and provide constructive challenge where appropriate.

As local government continues to face increasing financial pressures, changing demands and a rapidly evolving policy landscape, the role of scrutiny remains as important as ever. Looking ahead to 2026/27, I am confident that scrutiny will continue to develop and adapt, providing robust challenge, supporting improvement, and helping to ensure that the voices of Leicester's residents remain at the centre of decision-making. I look forward to continuing a strong a scrutiny year ahead.

Councillor Ashiedu Joel – Chair of the Overview Select Committee

Introduction

What is Scrutiny?

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

Leicester City Council's Scrutiny Structure

For the 2025/26 municipal year, the Council continued with the model of an Overview Select Committee and was supported by six scrutiny commissions covering all facets of the council's business.

Report Structure

This annual report covers the period between May 2025 to May 2026 and summarises some of the key activity and areas of influence by scrutiny throughout the year.

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

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

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

Overview of Scrutiny 2025/26

In total, there were 50 public meetings across the eight scrutiny bodies (including JHSC). This was supplemented by further work performed by members in the form of separate scrutiny task group meetings or additional briefing sessions on topics of significance.

All meetings took place in person at the City Council's committee rooms at City Hall, though a hybrid set-up was initiated to allow some non-voting participants to join remotely. Meetings were comprised of eight elected members that were politically balanced, with some commissions being supplemented by co-opted members or standing invitees. The Chairs of the scrutiny bodies throughout 2025/26 were as follows:

Overview Select Committee – Cllr Ashiedu Joel
Adult Social Care – Cllr Melissa March
Children, Young People and Education – Cllr Misbah Batool
Culture and Neighbourhood Services – Cllr Syed Zaman
Economic Development, Transport & Climate Emergency – Cllr Sue Waddington
Housing – Cllr Molly O'Neill
Public Health & Health Integration & LLR Joint Health – Cllr Karen Pickering

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

Many of the scrutiny bodies also undertook an extensive programme of work in addition to that carried out through formal scrutiny meetings. Several focused task group reviews were initiated throughout 2025/26, alongside informal scrutiny activities such as site visits and briefings. It is commonplace for proposals for this work to originate at formal meetings, often where it is apparent that the level of scrutiny required is extensive and necessitates a more detailed process of evidence gathering.

Examples of this work include the Overview Select Committee's examination of Council Tax Support and Adventure Playgrounds, the Culture and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission's work on Community Asset Transfer, and the Housing Scrutiny Commission's work on the Tenant Scrutiny Panel. Upon completion of informal reviews and task group work, the relevant decision-maker submits a report to the appropriate commission detailing their response to the scrutiny recommendations.

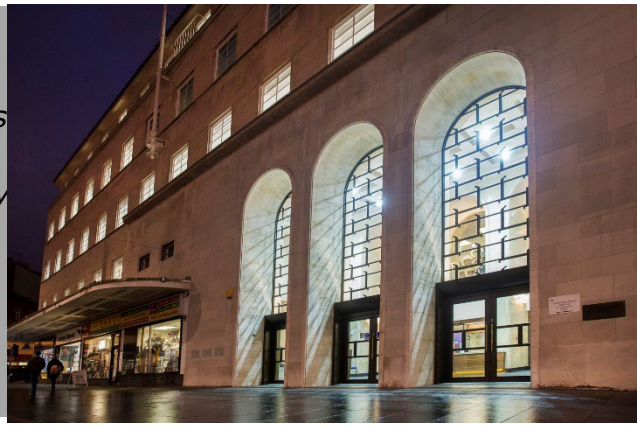
Scrutiny continues to gather the majority of its evidence from City Council service departments, although this has always been supplemented by input from external organisations and stakeholders. During 2025/26, scrutiny sought evidence from a wide range of partners, particularly across the health sector and through engagement with housing tenant representatives. In addition, the process of strengthening the voice of young people within scrutiny continued to develop during 2025/26, with youth representatives regularly participating in the work of the Overview Select Committee, Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission, and Public Health and Health Integration Scrutiny Commission.

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

The following pages document some of the key achievements and highlights of each of Leicester's seven scrutiny bodies, drawing upon areas of significance during the past year and highlighting some of the priorities for taking scrutiny forward during 2026/27.

Overview Select Committee

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



The key Overview Select Committee scrutiny developments during 2025/26 included:

Directly Questioning the City Mayor – Members of the committee and Young People's Council (YPC) Representatives continued to raise questions directly to the City Mayor via a dedicated agenda item. Examples of questions raised included issues raised by the YPC representatives on transport access and affordability and engagement with the YPC, and questions raised by members surrounding proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), issues surrounding the local plan and the future of adventure playgrounds.

Budget Monitoring Scrutiny – OSC examined the revenue and capital finances on a quarterly basis, seeking clarity on numerous issues and requesting further information on a series of matters of significance.

Budget Setting Process– The Committee examined the full set of budget proposals relating to the Draft Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and HRA Budget for 2026/27 before it was formally approved by Full Council. The Committee also considered comments via minute extracts which were discussed across all scrutiny commissions.

Treasury Management/Investment Activity – The Committee scrutinised the Treasury Management and Investment strategies, including the monitoring throughout the year.

Corporate Estate Annual Report – The Committee considered the Corporate Estate Annual Report for the 2024/25 Financial Year. Further information was requested, including more detail on Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards, Business Support Case Studies and a Customer Satisfaction.

Local Government Reorganisation – A special meeting was held for the Committee to consider the progress of the Council's Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) submission, for consideration of the OSC Commission. Noting this was an evolving process, a presentation was given by the City Mayor.

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Leicester – A report came to the Committee updating them on local domestic abuse need, the types of service currently available locally, the approach in Leicester and plans to continue to better meet local need.

Adventure Playgrounds – A Task Group was undertaken during which Play Associations met with Councillors and considered potential support that could be available to them. The recommendations from the task group on adventure playgrounds were brought to the Commission and an Executive Response was subsequently presented.

Council Tax Support Scheme – A Task Group was undertaken to better allow Councillors to understand the effects of the new scheme and to consider alternatives and potential changes to the proposed scheme. The recommendations from the task group on the Council Tax Support Scheme were brought to the Commission and an Executive Response was subsequently presented.

Workforce and Resourcing – The Committee were presented with broad outline of the workforce challenges that Local Authorities, including Leicester Face. The item had come to OSC following previous discussion at scrutiny. The report provided context, offered a deeper dive into the challenges of recruiting to social care, and explained changes to People Services.

Asset Sales – The Committee were updated on Asset Sales as an important element to the Councils financial strategy.

Possible Overview Select Committee plans for 2026/27 include:

Findings of Healthy Workplace Survey – Following the consideration of the item on Workforce and Resourcing, it was requested that the findings of Healthy Workplace Survey be considered by the Committee once the timeframe was known.

Budget and in year budget updates – OSC will continue to receive budget updates during the year.

Crisis and Resilience Fund – following the announcement of the Crisis and Resilience Fund, OSC asked for a report setting out the Councils plans to use this funding to support households in Leicester.

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Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission

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

The key Adult Social Care scrutiny developments during 2025/26 included:

Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection – At the November Scrutiny meeting, members were updated on the CQC inspection and received the action plan that had been developed. It was noted that the Local Authority rating had been 'Requires improvement', but Leicester's scoring was approaching the 'Good' rating and in line with most regional outcomes.

The ASC Scrutiny Commission members made a number of recommendations at the meeting which included extending Scrutiny work with Partners in Care and Health and for an additional metric to be added under governance.

Reablement Provider Service Inspection – The Commission received a verbal update on the five domains inspected. It was noted that four of these had received a rating of 'Outstanding' and one had been rated 'Good'.

The Commission recognised this as being a good report and requested that the item return to Scrutiny once the report was published.

Care Arrangement Fee – The Commission reviewed the rationale for the proposed Care Arrangement Fee and the feedback gathered during the public consultation. Members highlighted the impact of daily living expenses and the need to understand the real impact on people's lives and financial stability. A recommendation emerged to broaden considerations to include Self-Funders.

Annual Report 24/25 ASC Complaints and Commendations – The Commission considered a report of the Annual Report for 2024/25 produced in relation to Adult Social Care's (ASC) statutory, corporate, Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman complaints and commendations.

It was noted that around half of the complaints related to care received whilst experiences with staff and communication made up the remainder.

Following member discussion, it was agreed that further scrutiny would come to look into AI analysis of complaints data

Integrated Crisis Response Service – The Commission scrutinised a report on the Care Quality Commission's inspection outcome for the Leicester City Council Integrated Crisis Response Service (ICRS). Each of the five domains assessed had received a rating of 'Outstanding'.

The commission commended the team for their work and recognised the service for flexibility in responding to care needs, and for the culture of promoting staff welfare.

Support for Carers – The Commission reviewed a report providing an update on Carer's work in the city and to setting out key priorities over the next 9 months.

In discussion, members had noted problematical definitions of being a 'Carer'. It was agreed that the Carer's Strategy would come back to Scrutiny, including a reflection on the diversity of carers.

Care home rating – During the November Scrutiny meeting, a brief update was provided to members featuring a 'Good News Story.' The Five Rivers Living Care Home had a previous Care Quality Commission (CQC) rating of 'Inadequate' but had now received the second highest rating from inspectors with all service areas being rated 'Good'.

Autism and Neurodiversity Delivery Plan Update April 2026 – The Commission scrutinised the progress of the delivery plan for Neurodiversity and Autism. During discussion it was recognised that partnership work between officers and councillors could potentially broaden the scope of support. The benefits of engaging with wider community groups was recognised.
Employment Rights Bill – The Commission considered a report providing an update on new legislation which represented one of the most significant changes to employment protections in recent years. Major employment law changes would include eligibility for statutory sick pay, amendments to bereavement entitlement and increased liability for redundancy consultation.

It was noted that changes could have a noticeable impact on the Adult Social Care Sector with a likely increase in workforce pressures.

The Commission were advised that the new Fair Works agency would strengthen enforcement activity and they requested that a follow-up return to Scrutiny on the Fair Pay Agreement.

Possible Adult Social Care Scrutiny plans for 2026/27 include:

Diverse by Design – This was added to the Forward Plan as part Scrutiny recommendations and will include caseloads for Social Workers.

Dementia - To come back with lived experience Case Studies as per Scrutiny meeting actions.

Young Carers/Carers – to include the Carer's Strategy.

Modern day Slavery - Following up from April Scrutiny meeting on Employment Rights.

Leading better lives - Information to be provided on early intervention for working age adults requiring care packages in order to reduce demand and ensure that ASC remained financially sustainable.

Culture and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission

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

The key scrutiny developments during 2025/26 included:

Public Space Protection Orders – At various points in the year, the Commission were updated on Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO). Both the first PSPO, in the city centre, and the development PSPO2 encompassing outer-city areas. The aim of these PSPOs was to curtail Anti-Social Behaviour within those areas. The Commission scrutinised those plans and requested further information surrounding funding, and powers to tackle pavement-cycling.

Waste Engagement Findings – The Commission considered the Household Waste Collections Engagement Survey including the approach to the engagement survey, the key lines of enquiry in the form of its objectives and scope. Following the consideration at the meeting of the Commission, a further informal session was held looking at the options available to the Council.

Community Asset Transfer – In considering the amended Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy, the Commission requested that a task group be set up to look at the matter in more detail. The task group has commenced and has met with a group who have undergone CAT to gain a better idea of how the process works.

Fly Tipping – The Commission were updated on fly-tipping in Leicester. The Commission made suggestions, including putting stickers/posters up where fly tips have taken place, indicating what the consequence was to the fly tipper, and sharing details of Love Clean Streets with members so they can disseminate to constituents.

Assessment and Recommendations for Libraries and Community Centres – A special meeting considered a report providing an update on the findings of the recent public consultation (April 2025 – June 2025) and to provide commission members with an update on the future recommended delivery model for Libraries and Community Centres. A number of questions were taken form members of the public on the issue and responses were given by the Assistant City Mayor - Health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres and the Head of Neighbourhood Services. The Chair proposed an amendment to the Assessment & Recommendations Report for Libraries and Community Centres which can be found in the meeting minutes.

Leisure Centre Needs Assessment – The Commission looked at primary and secondary research in relation to active Leicester Leisure Centre Offer. The scope included public

opinion, membership and usage numbers and engagement in activity. This research would inform the next five-year plan and outlined how Active Leicester would continue to respond effectively to both commercial pressures and wider social challenges.

De Montfort Hall and Haymarket Theatre – The Commission were updated on operational and financial progress at De Montfort Hall and the Haymarket Theatre, which were being managed as an integrated service.

Arts, Museums and Heritage – The Commission were updated on issues relating to Arts, Museums and Heritage, including the Business case for the new café at the King Richard III Visitor Centre and Heritage Places Funding and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Bereavement Services Update – The Commission considered an update on matters related to the council's Bereavement Services. It was noted that there was a duty to maintain municipal cemetery and buildings for perpetuity. Even when they were full.

Place Expansion Scheme – An update was brought on Leicester's involvement in Sport England's Place Expansion programme and set out details of a Full Award bid that had been submitted to Sport England on 27 March 2026. It was noted that in 2017 Sport England had selected 10 areas across the country for a pilot scheme, looking at how to address physical inactivity. A second phase was introduced in 80 areas, including Leicester. It was requested that information on disadvantaged neighbourhoods to be circulated with officer guidance, and for a letter to be sent to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding allocation of MSOA funding.

Possible Culture & Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny plans for 2026/27 include:

Community safety – This will include outcomes of PSPO 2 and an overview of CCTV

Pride in Place – The Commission will be updated on both the Pride in Place Programme and Pride in Place Impact Fund

Waste Services Update – The Commission will be informed about developments surrounding waste services for the City.

Community and Libraries Needs Assessment – The Commission will look at the implementation of the Community and Libraries Needs Assessment following the consideration of the public consultation recommendations in November 2026.

LMAG Capital Project – The Commission will be informed on works to Leicester museum and Art gallery, as well as museum engagement.

Engagement of Community Organisations - Report was requested on how community organisations could be engaged to help the Council run services.

Festivals and Events – including BUSK Leicester pilot – Report and F&E Grants Programme – Awards – The Commission will be updated on progress of funding awards for Festivals and events and on Festivals and Events that have taken place.

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission

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

Key scrutiny developments during 2025/26 included:

High Needs Block Task Group - The final report of the High Needs Block Task Group was presented to the Commission. Feedback was provided and amendments were made accordingly. Following this, the Chair presented the report to the City Mayor and his Executive, with the Executive response scheduled for consideration at the first meeting of the municipal year.

Post 16 SEND Home-to-School Transport – The Commission undertook extensive scrutiny of proposed changes to the Post-16 SEND Transport policy following a five-member call-in. Members raised concerns regarding financial hardship, access to education, travel training, appeals processes and the potential impact on vulnerable young people and families. Following constructive discussions and assurances from officers regarding a holistic and person centred approach, the call-in was withdrawn with recommendations made to strengthen guidance and monitoring arrangements. Further scrutiny continued throughout the year as Members monitored the implementation of the policy, individual transport decisions, appeals and support for families. Subsequent updates highlighted improved engagement with families, continued individualised assessments and no increase in NEET figures.

Schools White Paper and SEND Reform – The Commission reviewed the implications of the Government's Schools White Paper and proposed SEND reforms for Leicester. Members examined plans to strengthen inclusion within mainstream schools, expand local SEND provision and improve early intervention and partnership working across education, health and social care. Discussion focused on workforce development, consistency of inclusive practice across schools, sufficiency of SEND places and the co-production of Leicester's local SEND reform plan. The Commission requested further updates on the implementation of the reforms, local delivery plans and the impact on children and young people across the city.

Families First Partnership Programme – The Commission reviewed progress on the Families First Partnership Programme and the South Leicester pilot aimed at strengthening early help, prevention and multi-agency working for families. Members examined plans to integrate services, improve partnership working and develop a more joined up approach across social care, schools, health and community services. Discussion focused on accessibility of Family Hubs, workforce development, co-production with young people and families, and the importance of reducing bureaucracy to enable more direct support for families. The Commission requested further updates on the outcomes of the pilot and the Young People's Survey as the programme expanded across the city.

Equality and Diversity Development– The Commission reviewed the department's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion improvement ambitions for 2026/27, including plans to strengthen inclusive decision making, workforce development and representation across the service. Members discussed the importance of cultural change, psychological safety, open dialogue and challenging unconscious bias within the workforce. The Commission welcomed the development of an action plan and maturity matrix to measure progress and requested quarterly updates to monitor the department's progress and outcomes.

Fostering Service Annual Report– The Commission reviewed the annual performance and activity of the Fostering Service, including recruitment, placement stability, support for foster carers and safeguarding arrangements. Members examined the impact of the national shortage of foster carers, increasing complexity of need amongst looked after children and the importance of maintaining placements close to Leicester to support family and school continuity. The Commission welcomed positive feedback from Ofsted, strong placement stability figures and the development of enhanced support for carers and children with complex needs. Members also highlighted the importance of recognising and supporting foster carers through initiatives such as the Celebrating Success events.

Early Years Extended Entitlement– The Commission reviewed the expansion of early years provision, and the implementation of the Government's extended childcare entitlement offer across Leicester. Members examined the challenges facing the sector, including workforce shortages, funding pressures, sufficiency of places and support for children with SEND. Discussion focused on ensuring families were aware of the support available, maintaining high quality provision across the city and supporting disadvantaged children to access early education. The Commission also highlighted the importance of effective communication and local promotion to improve awareness and uptake of the offer.

Edge of Care Strategy - The Commission reviewed the Edge of Care Strategy and examined the support available for children and families at risk of children entering care. Members welcomed the strong outcomes achieved through preventative and therapeutic interventions, including support helping children remain safely within their family networks and reducing reliance on high-cost placements. Discussion focused on long term sustainability, safeguarding, workforce capacity, cultural inclusion and how outcomes were monitored over time. The Commission also examined the importance of early intervention, family engagement and maintaining support networks to improve long term outcomes for children and young people.

Youth Justice Plan– The Commission reviewed the five-year Youth Justice Plan for 2025-2030, including strategic priorities, governance arrangements and performance measures for the Youth Justice Service. Members examined work to reduce first time entrants, reoffending and custody rates, alongside support for vulnerable children and young people at risk of exploitation. The Commission discussed the findings of the recent HMIP inspection, progress against the resulting improvement plan and the importance of partnership working, disproportionality monitoring and youth participation in shaping services. Members also highlighted the need for continued scrutiny of youth crime trends and preventative support across the city.

The Commission did a great amount of work this year and other key items were LSCP Annual Report, Social Care and Education Performance Dashboard, Children and Young People from Abroad Seeking Safety and SCE Priorities and Performance Reports.

Possible Children, Young People & Education Scrutiny plans for 2025/26 include:

White Paper and local SEND reform plan update– The commission will continue to monitor the updates as they are received.

Care Leavers Focussed Visit

Leicester Children's Services – Self Evaluation

Children from Abroad Seeking Safety – Annual report

Youth Strategy - Including the Youth Survey.

Fostering Annual Report – To include Community Champions and Marketing Strategy

Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission

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

The key scrutiny developments during 2025/26 included:

Workspaces – The Commission were given updates on progress surrounding workspaces, particularly Dock and Canopy and the organisations that made use of them.

Bus Services and Transport Affordability – The Commission looked at bus services in the City, both through the Bus Service Improvement Plan, and through a report on Transport Affordability, which had a particular focus on affordability for young people. Young People's Council representatives were invited to the meeting where Transport Affordability was considered, and asked questions around fares for 16–18-year-olds and how to make the Hop! Service better meet the needs of young people.

Connecting Leicester – Local Transport Grant – The Commission scrutinised details of the government grants made available for transport improvements in the 25/26 financial year and to advise members of the commission of the projects and programmes these grants will allow us to deliver or support. The Commission made recommendations including requesting more information on Rally Park costings and the proposals for resurfacing Aylestone Road.

Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan and Cycle Lane Demarcation – An informal session considered the Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan. Members were informed that the approach would also involve direct sessions with ward councillors, direct sessions with key stakeholders and a wider public consultation using a map-based platform. Issues surrounding Cycle Lane Demarcation were also considered by the Commission.

Get LLR Working Plan – The Commission were updated on the Get Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Working plan. The Commission requested that a future report be brought to the Committee summarising the relationship between initiatives aimed at reducing economic inactivity and trends in unemployment data, to enable the Committee to assess impact.

Leicester and Leicestershire Business Skills Partnership – Members considered a report to update the Commission on the development and delivery of the Business and Skills Partnership for Leicester and Leicestershire. Suggestions would be fed in to inform future recruitment of additional board members.

Market Place – The Commission were updated on progress on the Market Place development. They would be kept informed of further progress as it developed.

Worker Exploitation – The Executive Response to the recommendations of the Task Group on worker exploitation came to the Commission. The Commission was informed of ongoing national developments including the proposed Employment Rights Bill and the establishment of the Fair Work Agency expected to launch in 2026. The Task Force's emphasis on partnership working was acknowledged and identified the 'Get LLR Working' programme as a key partnership framework through which labour market exploitation issues could be addressed to raise awareness and support individuals into work. It was requested that the Commission be kept updated on progress on devolved funding and on Local Government Association initiatives on exploitation/modern slavery as they emerge.

ZEV Strategy – Members were updated through a report and a presentation on the council's Zero Emission Vehicle Strategy. It was suggested that research be conducted into the most efficient ways to generate electricity. This would be included in the strategy as an appendix.

Car Park Usage – The Commission considered parking fees and usage, including looking at the impact of increase to on street and off-street parking charges, and a verbal addendum on the closure of NCP car parks. Members requested to be kept informed regarding the NCP car parks.

Possible Economic Development, Transport & Climate Emergency plans for 2026/27 include:

Labour Market – Worker Exploitation – Information to be provided on devolved funding and on Local Government Association initiatives on exploitation/modern slavery as they emerge.

Get LLR Working – Further information to be brought summarising the relationship between initiatives aimed at reducing economic inactivity and trends in unemployment data, to enable the Commission to assess impact.

Local Transport Funding Progress – The Commission will be updated on progress on local transport funding.

Market place update – The Commission will be updated on progress surrounding the development of the market place.

Road Safety and Pedestrian Crossings – The Commission will consider issues surrounding road safety and pedestrian crossings.

Economic Strategy Overview – Update on work to develop an economic strategy

Housing Scrutiny Commission

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

Key housing scrutiny developments during 2025/26 included:

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2026/27 Proposals (including Capital Programme) – The Commission looked at pressures facing the HRA budget, particularly around new responsibilities around damp and mould, and also the continued loss of housing stock. Issues were raised by members of the Commission, including the affordability of increased rents, and issues around service charges.

Tenants' Scrutiny Panel – The Commission heard updates from members of the Tenants' Scrutiny Panel. This allowed a useful exchange in feedback between residents and the Council, which in turn allowed the Council to gain an insight into issues faced by tenants, and tenants to gain an insight into issues faced by the Council.

Fire Safety - The fire safety conditions within the Council's residential buildings were considered by the Commission. The Commission requested more information on the average wait time for the 452 low-level fire risk blocks.

PRS Strategy / Renters Reform Bill - Recent and upcoming developments aimed at the improvement of private rented sector stock within the city. The presentation covered the Renters' Rights Bill (RRB), the Supported Housing Act 2023 (regulations) (SHA) and the introduction of a refreshed Private Rented Sector (PRS) strategy.

District Service Performance 2025 – The Commission were given an overview of the Tenancy Management Service, the support it provides and its performance as a social housing landlord to Leicester City Council tenants. The Commission asked for details of the Community Safety ASB team and information on feedback regarding engagement with Community Engagement Officers and use of QR codes to be brought in a future report.

Homelessness Strategy – The Commission looked into homeless in the City for 2024/25 and progress in relation to Leicester's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. This also included looking at temporary accommodation and considering the £45 Million put aside by the Council to help resolve the issue of Bed and Breakfast accommodation by helping to provide more suitable self-contained accommodation.

Who Gets Social Housing – The Commission scrutinised Housing Register and Lettings data, relating to Leicester City Council's Housing Register. The Commission looked particularly at the reasons people joined the register, and how the Banding system works. The Commission gave particular attention to the Easymove House Exchange Scheme and requested more information on the scheme.

House Building and Acquisition – The delivery of new council house building was scrutinised, along with the acquisition programme, and the Commission received updates on all sites in our current pipeline. Site visits were carried out on the schemes on Hospital Close and Saffron Velodrome.

Pop-up Housing Office – The Housing Pop-up office pilot across multiple sites was considered by the Commission. It was noted that positive feedback had been received from the Tenants' Scrutiny Panel. The Commission asked questions about costs and resources and about the location of the hubs.

Repairs and Maintenance, including Damp and Mould – The Commission were provided with an update on the current position of the Repairs and Maintenance performance, including responsive repairs, voids, and damp and mould, the team's performance throughout 2024-25 and projections for 2025-26. Issues surrounding Damp and Mould were looked at further with regards to the implementation of Awaab's law. Information would be shared with Members to support wider communication on damp and mould issues.

Possible Housing plans for 2026/27 include:

District Heating – An item will be brought on district heating, including information about investment.

Temporary Accommodation – The Commission will be updated on issues surrounding temporary accommodation.

Maintenance Charges – Information will be brought on maintenance charges, focussing on charges other than Cleaning Charges.

District Performance Report – Information brought on District Performance will include feedback regarding engagement with Community Engagement Officers and use of QR codes.

Mutual Exchange Swap Scheme – A report will be brought on the Mutual Exchange Swap Scheme, including the incentives and barriers.

Public Health and Health Integration Scrutiny Commission

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

The key Public Health and Health Integration scrutiny developments during 2025/26 included:

Special Meeting on Winter Pressures – The Commission held a special meeting to scrutinise winter pressures across Leicester. Members questioned health partners on ambulance delays, escalation spaces, urgent treatment centre access, GP access and patient experiences across the system. Issues were also raised regarding the lack of up to date winter performance data provided to the Commission. Additional information and further updates were requested on emergency department performance, escalation processes and the wider impact of winter pressures on community services.

Deep Dive into Rheumatology – The Commission undertook a detailed review of Rheumatology Services at University Hospitals Leicester, focusing on rising demand, workforce pressures and patient access to treatment. Members challenged the Trust on referral to treatment performance, workforce capacity, delays in diagnosis and the long-term sustainability of the service in light of continued increases in referrals. While improvements in early inflammatory arthritis treatment and national recognition for service performance were welcomed, concerns remained around unmet demand, recruitment challenges and the wider impact on patient care. Members requested a further update in the new municipal year to continue monitoring progress and workforce planning.

LOROS – Members welcomed the reopening of additional inpatient beds at LOROS Hospice following additional NHS funding and recognised the positive impact this would have on end of life and palliative care across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The Commission raised concerns regarding hospice funding inequalities between Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and Northamptonshire, alongside the wider long-term sustainability of hospice provision. Members also continued to advocate for further investment and increased bed capacity at LOROS to meet growing demand across the system.

Health Protection – The Commission monitored rates of illnesses and vaccinations in the city. This included measles, whooping cough, covid, meningitis and TB. Further updates were requested to continue monitoring rates and emerging concerns within the city

Leicester Neighbourhood Approach - The Commission reviewed the development of Leicester's Neighbourhood Approach and examined how partners across Health, Social Care and the Voluntary Sector planned to deliver more preventative and community-based services. Members raised points regarding the configuration of neighbourhoods, the potential for health inequalities to be masked within larger and more diverse areas, and how equity and population need had informed the model. The Commission sought assurance that community level data, targeted engagement and neighbourhood steering groups would be used to identify local priorities and ensure resources reflected the needs of individual communities. Ongoing scrutiny of the

neighbourhood model, localised planning and community engagement arrangements was requested as part of the future work programme.

Cost of Living, Food Poverty and Fuel Poverty – The Commission reviewed the impact of poverty on health inequalities across Leicester, including fuel poverty, food insecurity and period poverty. Members welcomed work undertaken through the fuel poverty programme, the rollout of free menstrual products across community settings and progress towards auto enrolment for free school meals. The Commission also highlighted the importance of dignified and accessible support for residents experiencing hardship and encouraged further partnership working with local organisations and businesses to strengthen support available across the city.

For 2025-26 Leicester City Council were responsible for servicing the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint Health scrutiny Committee, which included:

Joint LLR Health Scrutiny Committee – Members discussed items including NHS Transformation, Pilot Digital Project, Shared Care Record, Winter Pressures Across the LLR, System Health Equity, LLR Send and Inclusion Alliance and Speech and Language Therapy Services.

St Marys Birth Centre - The LLR Joint Health Committee undertook detailed scrutiny of the future of St Mary's Birth Centre, including workforce pressures, patient safety, accessibility, birth choice and the long-term sustainability of maternity provision across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Members raised significant concerns regarding travel times, equality of access, communication with families and the impact of the closure on local communities. The Committee also challenged the timeline for decision making the role of the 2021 consultation and the availability of alternative maternity provision at Leicester General Hospital. Following extensive discussion, the Committee formally recommended that the Integrated Care Board defer its decision to allow further consideration of maternity options, future provision and women's choice of care across the system. Following the subsequent decision by the ICB Board, the Committee requested ongoing scrutiny of maternity services, postnatal provision and birth choices to monitor the impact on women and families across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Possible PHHI plans for 2026/27 include:

Prevention and Health Inequalities Programme – An update on the progress made in the programme and a focus on work being done to combat Bowel Cancer.

Vaccination uptake across Leicester – A report was requested to come to the commission in the new municipal year.

Leicester Neighbourhood Approach – The commission will continue to monitor the progress of localised plans.

Maternity Provision – The Commission requested further updates on the maternity provision across the LLR.

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

Speech and Language Therapy Service – It was requested the item returns to scrutiny with relevant stakeholders invited.

Contacting Scrutiny

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

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