



Leicester City Council

Scrutiny Annual Report

2024-2025

Foreword

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



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

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

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

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

Councillor Ted Cassidy MBE – Chair of the Overview Select Committee

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Glossary

The following abbreviations are used to describe each scrutiny body:

ASC: Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission

CYPE: Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission

CNS: Culture and Neighbourhood Services

EDTCE: Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission

HSC: Housing Scrutiny Commission

HWB: Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission

JHSC: Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

PHHI: Public Health and Health Integration Scrutiny Commission

OSC: Overview Select Committee

Introduction

What is Scrutiny?

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

Leicester City Council’s Scrutiny Structure

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

Overview Select Committee



Report Structure

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

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

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

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

Overview of Scrutiny 2024/25

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Overview Select Committee

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Possible Overview Select Committee plans for 2025/26 include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Support for Carers –

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Supported Housing – A deeper dive into supported housing.

Young Carers – A deeper dive into young carers.

Culture and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission



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

The key scrutiny developments during 2024/25 included:

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

Community Safety, 'Project Harmony' and Public Space Protection Orders – The Commission looked at what was being done to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the city centre. Project Harmony was developed as Community Safety's response to street lifestyle issues in the city. Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) are a power the Council has under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, aimed at protecting people from ASB in public spaces. It aimed to restrict activities associated with ASB by issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN. If these were then breached and a prosecution was made, a fine can be issued. Members asked questions and made comments, and the Commission requested that the Commission be provided with analysis of the results.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission

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



Key scrutiny developments during 2024/25 included:

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

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

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

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

emergency support leaving less to spend on preventative services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission



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

The key scrutiny developments during 2024/25 included:

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

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

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

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

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

Heart of Leicester Plan – The Commission considered issues and opportunities facing the city centre area, both now and over the coming years and contribute their thoughts and ideas to inform the development of a 'Heart of Leicester' Plan. The Commission encouraged officers to consider the night-time economy, and the need for bike-stands in the city.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Housing Scrutiny Commission

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

Key housing scrutiny developments during 2024/25 included:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Possible Housing plans for 2025/26 include:

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

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

Maintenance Charges – An understanding of the Maintenance Charges


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

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

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

Selective Licensing Update – An update on how the Selective Licensing programme will be progressing and it's continued impact

Public Health and Health Integration Scrutiny Commission



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Possible PHHI plans for 2024/25 include:

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

Community Wellbeing Champions Programme -

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

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

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

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

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

Contacting Scrutiny

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

Leicester City Council
City Hall