



CABINET – TUESDAY 18 MARCH 2025

ORDER PAPER

ITEM DETAILS

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr. N. J. Rushton CC, Mrs. L. Richardson CC

1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 22)

Proposed motion

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2025 be taken as read, confirmed, and signed.

2. URGENT ITEMS

None.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Cabinet are asked to declare any interests in the business to be discussed.

4. ENGLISH DEVOLUTION WHITE PAPER: LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION (Pages 23 - 66)

- *The Scrutiny Commission considered a report regarding the proposed content of the interim plan at its meeting on 10 March 2025 and its comments are attached to this Order Paper, marked "4".*

Proposed motion

- a) That the outcome of the early engagement undertaken on the proposals for local government reorganisation including the comments of the Scrutiny Commission be noted;
- b) That the outline of the interim plan be approved for submission to the Government by the deadline of 21 March 2025;
- c) That the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Acting Leader, the Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance, be authorised to finalise the interim plan for submission to the Government provided that these do not change the underlying principles as presented in the report.

5. ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT 2025/26 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND WORKS PROGRAMME
(Pages 67 - 110)

- *The Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report at its meeting on 6 March 2025 and its comments are attached to this Order Paper, marked "5".*

Proposed motion

- a) That the comments of the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- b) That the acute financial context in which the 2025/26 Highways and Transportation Capital and Works Programmes (the Programmes) have been developed and will be delivered, as set out in Part B of the report be noted;
- c) That the Programmes be approved;
- d) That the Director of Environment and Transport be authorised,
 - i. following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources and the Cabinet Lead Members for Highways and Transportation and Corporate Resources, to prepare and submit bids, as appropriate, to secure external funding for delivery of schemes identified in the Programmes;
 - ii. following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources, the Director of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Lead Member for Corporate Resources, to enter such contracts as is necessary to progress schemes in the approved Programmes to allow early contractor involvement to take place in advance of all external funding required to deliver the scheme being secured, noting the challenges set out in paragraph 22 of the report;
 - iii. following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources, the Director of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Lead Member for Corporate Resources, to undertake preparatory work as considered appropriate to develop savings as set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and to ensure that further savings are implemented in a timely manner.

6. THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN UPDATED RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (ROWIP) 2025-2035 (Pages 111 - 120)

Proposed motion

- a) That the intended approach to the development of an updated Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) to cover the period from 2025 to 2035 be approved;
- b) That a 12-week public consultation exercise on a draft RoWIP 2025-2035, as set out in paragraphs 43 to 46 of the report be approved.

7. LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY 2024-2029 - OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION (Pages 121 - 210)

Proposed motion

- a) That the outcome of the consultation on the draft Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029, including the comments of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be noted;
- b) That the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Prevention Strategy 2024-2029 be approved.

8. PROPOSED SUBMISSION DRAFT (REGULATION 19) HARBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2020-2041 (Pages 211 - 248)

- *With the agreement of the Chairman, Mr. P. King CC, Local Member for Market Harborough West and Foxton, will speak on this item.*
- *Comments have been received from Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC, Local Member for Gartree. These are attached to this Order Paper, marked "8".*

Proposed motion

- a) That the County Council's response to Harborough District Council's Draft Local Plan consultation, set out in paragraphs 34 to 75 inclusive and the appendix to the report, be approved;
- b) That the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, be authorised to make any minor amendments to the consultation response prior to its submission to Harborough District Council by 6 May 2025.

9. SECTION 106 POLICY AND CHARGING SCHEDULE FOR OFF-SITE AND SIGNIFICANT ON-SITE BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (Pages 249 - 264)

Proposed motion

That the Section 106 Charging Policy and Schedule for off-site and significant on-site Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring be approved for use by the County Council and its partners within the Biodiversity Net Gain partnership.

10. LIGHTBULB SERVICE BUSINESS CASE (Pages 265 - 306)

Proposed motion

- a) That the comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- b) That the latest position regarding the Lightbulb Business Case be noted;
- c) That the response from the district councils regarding the proposed transfer of the Minor Adaptations Service delivered by the Adults and Communities Department into the Lightbulb Service be noted;

- d) That a further extension of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Blaby District Council for the continued delegation of statutory functions from the County Council to the Lightbulb Service be agreed.

11. LEICESTERSHIRE ADULT LEARNING SERVICE OFSTED INSPECTION FINDINGS (Pages 307 - 326)

Proposed motion

- a) That the comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- b) That the findings from the Leicestershire's Adult Learning Service Ofsted inspection which took place from 14 to 17 January 2025 be noted;
- c) That the actions set out in the Quality Improvement Plan to address and monitor specific areas identified for improvement be supported;
- d) That it be noted that a further report will be presented to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee outlining progress with the actions in the Quality Improvement Plan in due course.

12. MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RURAL ESTATE (Pages 327 - 336)

Proposed motion

- a) That it be drawn to the attention of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council that
 - i. the management and disposal of the County Council's land holdings is in line with approved policies; and
 - ii. the County Council's Rural estate has grown in the last 10 years and that any land sold or acquired is for good reason;
- b) That it is regrettable that Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council did not seek to understand the position before tabling an uninformed notice of motion;
- c) That the County Council hopes that the enclosed report to the Cabinet will enable the Borough Council to have a proper understanding of the proactive management of the County Council's rural estate and its benefits for the residents of Leicestershire.

13. PROPOSED EXPANSION OF AGE RANGE DESIGNATION FOR OAKFIELD SHORT STAY SCHOOL (Pages 337 - 342)

Proposed motion

- a) That consultation on an age range change for Oakfield School, from solely primary age provision to a school for children aged 4 to 16 years be approved;

- b) That the Director of Children and Family Services be authorised to approve the age range change for Oakfield School following the consultation subject to no significant issues/concerns having arisen.

14. DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS (Pages 343 - 344)

Proposed motion

That the County Council be recommended to hold meetings on the following dates during the next two municipal years:-

Wednesday 14 May 2025 (Annual meeting)
 Wednesday 2 July 2025
 Wednesday 24 September 2025
 Wednesday 3 December 2025
 Wednesday 18 February 2026 (to consider the budget)
 Wednesday 13 May 2026 (Annual meeting)
 Wednesday 1 July 2026
 Wednesday 23 September 2026
 Wednesday 2 December 2026
 Wednesday 17 February 2027 (to consider the budget)
 Wednesday 12 May 2027 (Annual meeting).

15. ITEMS REFERRED FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

None.

16. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN HAS DECIDED TO TAKE AS URGENT

None.

17. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed motion

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 10 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and that, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information:

Exception to the Contract Procedure Rules to Provide Temporary Staff for 'Hard to Fill Roles' within the Environment and Transport Department.

Officer to contact

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SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 10 MARCH 2025

**ENGLISH DEVOLUTION WHITE PAPER: LOCAL GOVERNMENT
REORGANISATION**

MINUTE EXTRACT

English Devolution White Paper: Local Government Reorganisation

The Commission considered a joint report and presentation of the Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Resources, and the Director of Law and Governance which sought views on the proposed content of the interim plan for local government reorganisation. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', and of the presentation, are filed with these minutes.

In introducing the report and presentation, the Chief Executive reported that Mrs. Deborah Taylor, Acting Leader of the County Council, had hosted a meeting of the City Mayor, the Leader of Rutland and the District Council Leaders, on 6 March. The expectation from this meeting was that three separate proposals would be submitted to the Government: one by the County Council; one by the City Council; and one by the District Councils. It was known that Rutland Council would meet on 11 March to discuss its position. To date, the Leader of Rutland Council had indicated her support for the proposal made by the District Councils.

The Director of Corporate Resources provided an overview of the funding position in relation to local government reorganisation. He stated that the financial position of the County Council reflected that of other local authorities nationally, including district councils. It was not clear whether the Government's expected funding reforms would have an impact on the Council's overall budget and the last local government settlement had not provided an increase in core spending power for district councils. Local government reorganisation was not expected to solve all of the financial challenges being faced by authorities, but it could lead to a significantly improved position for the County Council. Discussions on the right solutions for Leicestershire would focus on finance, services and democracy. The Director emphasised that the three could not be considered in isolation. The investment in reorganisation would be significant and it would therefore be vital for reorganisation to focus on improving services and generating savings. Despite the fact that a number of financial challenges were outside of local government's control, a single unitary option for Leicestershire would put a new unitary authority in the best possible position to deal with these challenges.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- (i) In response to a question asked regarding the interim plan, the Acting Leader stated that the Government's decision not to fast-track local government reorganisation in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland through postponing the County Council elections, as jointly requested in a letter from the Acting Leader of the County Council, the City Mayor and the Leader of Rutland Council, meant that devolution to the area had been further delayed with any estimated date for devolution uncertain. In light of this, the County Council had focussed on revising and updating the 2019 business case, a 'Vision for Local Government in Leicestershire'. This business case would inform the interim plan.
- (ii) Concern was raised regarding the sustainability of discretionary services currently provided by district councils within the proposed unitary model. The Acting Leader assured members that the proposal for a single unitary authority for Leicestershire would be focussed on delivering high quality and sustainable statutory and non-statutory public services and that there would be benefits in bringing services together. She said that the County Council itself provided discretionary services. Further work would need to be undertaken in order to consider the future funding model and understand the impact of a reallocation of resources. This would not be possible until the Government had provided feedback on the interim plan.
- (iii) In response to a question relating to population size, the Chief Executive stated that the interim plan for a proposed single unitary council for Leicestershire was being developed according to the Government's stated aim that the population size for new councils should exceed 500,000 residents. It was expected that any proposal for a unitary authority which did not meet that benchmark would need to include a justification against all the criteria in the ministerial invitation letter.
- (iv) Concern was raised relating to extension of Leicester City Council's boundaries in terms of the impact this would have on residents in those localities, as well as the impact on the remaining area of Leicestershire. The Acting Leader acknowledged these concerns and confirmed her view that, if the Government were to seek to progress any proposal for an extension of the City's boundaries, it would not be in the interests of Leicestershire's residents.
- (v) With regards to the role of town and parish councils under a single unitary council for Leicestershire, the Chief Executive stated that town and parish councils would be invited to deliver some local services within their communities. Concern was raised that some parish councils would not have the necessary resource in place in order to undertake this role. The Chief Executive assured members that a framework would be developed whereby parish and town councils would be offered the opportunity to deliver certain services, and that funding arrangements would be considered. The proposed unitary authority

would be the responsible body for ensuring that services were delivered, in line with statutory responsibilities and its priorities. Governance and monitoring arrangements would be developed for working with town and parish councils, and Community Governance Reviews could be undertaken in unparished areas such as Loughborough, Market Harborough, and other such areas across the County.

- (vi) The Interim Plan would outline the proposal for a Cabinet and Strong Leader model, with Area Committees and Area Planning Committees for local decision making. It was expected that the number of Area Committees would either be 10, based on a population of roughly 70k, in order to address issues around sense of community and common sense of place, or seven, based on parliamentary constituency areas. Concern was raised that additional committees could lead to increased costs. Members were assured that Area Committees would aim to support the necessary governance and decision-making arrangements of the proposed unitary authority. Details relating to the proposed governance and decision-making model would be developed following feedback from the Government on the interim plan.
- (vii) Concern was raised relating to the performance of local authorities which had been through a process of reorganisation. The Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Resources stated that it would not be beneficial to make comparison due to differences in financial circumstances, local issues, and geography. The interim plan would focus on outlining the benefits of a single unitary council for Leicestershire and point to the high performance of the County Council as its proposer.
- (viii) In response to a question regarding the next steps, the Chief Executive outlined that the interim plan would be submitted to the Government before 21 March 2025. A new business case would then be developed based on latest information, as well as the views of local residents. These views would be obtained through focus groups, extensive internal and external communications, online consultation, and through engagement with targeted stakeholders and groups. This business case would fully reflect the Government's criteria and would also take on board any feedback on the interim plan provided by the Government. The deadline for the submission of a final plan to the Government would be 28 November 2025. It was acknowledged that following feedback from Government, it would be important for local authorities across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to work together to deliver reorganisation for their residents.

RESOLVED:

That the Commission's views now made on the option for a single unitary Council for Leicestershire, excluding Leicester City, be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 18 March 2025.

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HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE - 6 MARCH 2025

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

2025/26 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND WORKS PROGRAMME

MINUTE EXTRACT

Environment and Transport Department 2025/26 Highways and Transportation
Capital Programme and Works Programme

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport regarding the development of the Environment and Transport Department 2025/26 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

A member raised concerns that the Programmes were not supported by sufficient funding from central government and as a result the quality of Leicestershire's Highways would decrease. In response the Director acknowledged this concern and explained that she regularly raised the point with the Department for Transport (DFT) when she attended meetings with them. The DFT in turn recognised the severity of the situation and submitted evidence to the Treasury to help make the case for more funding for highways and transport. The Director also attended meetings with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government regarding local government funding more generally.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the development of the Environment and Transport Department 2025/26 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme be noted;
- (b) That the comments now made be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 18 March 2025.

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Agenda item 8 – Response to Proposed Submission Draft (Regulation 19) Harborough Local Plan (2020-2041)

Comments by Dr Kevin Feltham to LCC Cabinet 18 March 2025

Residents, including myself as county councillor for the Gartree Division, were not given access to the proposed submission draft, and the dozens of accompanying documents, until agenda documents were released for the 20th February HDC Cabinet meeting. The 8-week public consultation started on 10th March.

I have read the agenda 8 report for the Cabinet meeting and fully agree with all comments and criticisms of the HDC draft Local Plan. I wish to comment on just two key Highways aspects of the Plan at this stage:

Firstly, the scale of housing feeding into the A6 corridor is not accompanied by a detailed increase in highways infrastructure to mitigate the effect of over 6,000 houses to 2041. A Strategic Transport Impact Assessment has been published alongside the draft Plan together with estimates of the Highways Mitigation Costs totalling £65,675,000.

Long running issues in the urban Kibworths section on the A6 have been (1) speeding in the 30mph section and (2) difficulty accessing the A6 from side roads. Traffic volumes on the single carriageway A6 through the Kibworths exceed 20,000 vehicles a day. Developer contributions from new housing estates in villages feeding the A6 have been identified for several years to improve the A6, although LCC Highways are yet to divulge solution options. My requests for average speed cameras have joined a long list for similar requests from across the county.

Clearly the proposals in the HDC draft Plan will greatly increase the problems along the A6 and yet the cost for a bypass for the Kibworths, to mitigate many of these issues, has not even been mentioned. What has been included are two traffic light proposals for two main access junctions onto the A6 – New Road (£3,000,000) and A6 – Church Road/Marsh Drive (£2,900,000). The last thing the Kibworths A6 junctions need is traffic lights! The road is very busy already so any delay to through traffic results in extremely long queues of several km coming in from the north along the Great Glen bypass, or to the south, past the Kibworth tip towards Market Harborough. A little bit of consultation with either Kibworth parish council or me, or even some direct observation, would have shown how disastrous these traffic light mitigation proposals are.

Secondly, one development of 475 houses is proposed for the Kibworths. The site is on a field to the south of the East Midlands Railway line with a single carriageway, traffic-light controlled bridge to link to the A6 at Wistow Road. This lane, called Warwick Road, takes traffic from the west end of Kibworth Beauchamp and also traffic from Fleckney. It currently allows some 6 or 7 vehicles through on each traffic light sequence. Absolutely nothing is included in the draft Plan to mitigate the enormous highways problems that this bridge, without mitigation such as widening costing many £millions, would create.

I use these two points to underline the lack of sufficient practical Highways mitigation proposals in the HDC draft Plan for the Kibworths. Clearly, the halo-effect further north along the A6 is also hugely relevant to traffic movements and been well covered by the Highways LTA report. The HDC draft Local Plan (2020-2041) cannot therefore be considered sound as it is currently proposed.

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