



DATE: 10 May 2022
MY REF: MIS/CCouncil
PLEASE ASK FOR: Mr. M. I. Seedat
DIRECT DIALLING: (0116) 305 2583
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Dear Sir/Madam

I summon you to the ANNUAL MEETING of the LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL to be held at COUNTY HALL, GLENFIELD on WEDNESDAY, 18 MAY 2022 at 2.00 p.m. for the transaction of the business set out in the agenda below.

Yours faithfully



Chief Executive

A G E N D A

1. To elect a Chairman.
2. To elect a Vice Chairman
3. Chairman's Announcements.
4. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23 February 2022. (Pages 5 - 20)
5. To receive declarations by members of interests in respect of items on this agenda.
6. To answer questions asked under Standing Order 7(1)(2) and (5).
7. To receive position statements under Standing Order 8.



To consider reports of the Cabinet, Scrutiny Commission, Scrutiny Committees and other bodies:

8. Reports of the Cabinet
 - (a) Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 (Pages 21 - 80)
 - (b) Leicestershire County Council's Communities Strategy - Our Communities Approach 2022 - 2026 (Pages 81 - 104)
 - (c) Dates of Council Meetings 2022/23 and 2023/24. (Pages 105 - 106)
9. To make the following appointments in accordance with items 11 and 12 of Standing Order 4:
 - (a) To appoint the Leader (and to note the members which the Leader proposes to appoint to the Cabinet);
 - (b) To appoint such Cabinet Support Members as the Council considers appropriate;
 - (c) To appoint members of the Scrutiny Commission, Boards and Committees;
10. To consider the following notices of motion:
 - (a) Cost of Living in Leicestershire - Mr Max Hunt CC
 1. That this Council notes:
 - (a) That many residents of the County:
 - are now finding it very hard to meet their domestic fuel bills;
 - are finding a rise in the price of ordinary commodities from food to household products;
 - are facing escalating fuel costs at the petrol stations with no alternative options;
 - will be receiving lower wages in real terms for the foreseeable future, including many working in the public sector;
 - are struggling with the latest Council Tax and National Insurance tax rises.
 - (b) That the Bank of England officially forecasts an inflation rate of 10.2% in the fourth quarter of this year; this being based on a rise in fuel cap from £1,971 to £2,800 in October.
 - (c) That price rises are more likely to adversely affect those on low incomes living in deprived communities who will also be prey to the seductive loans which are often at exorbitant rates of interest.
 - (d) And welcomes the establishment of a Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) wide group to be

chaired by a representative from the Leicester Cathedral and comprising the County Council, City Council, District Councils, Rutland, voluntary sector, NHS and the DWP to address the impact of the cost of living crisis.

2. That this County Council requests:

(a) That the LLR wide group referred to in (d) above develop an action plan to:

- Improve debt advice and access to that advice through Contact Plus and other avenues.
- Prioritise action to identify and contain illegal money lenders.
- Widen interventions on child poverty.
- Develop new initiatives to support struggling families.

(b) That the County Council work with District Councils and others to explore ways to:

- Optimise the distribution of the Household Support Fund.
- Increase take-up of Council Tax Support.
- Identify any mitigation of financial risks to small businesses.

(b) Ukrainian Refugees - Mr M. T. Mullaney CC

(a) That this Council offers its solidarity with the people of Ukraine who are suffering the ongoing trauma of the unprovoked aggression of the Russian invasion.

(b) That this Council welcomes the incredibly warm hearted and generous response from many Leicestershire residents who have taken Ukrainian refugees into their homes.

(c) That this Council notes that a number of local authorities have already provided free bus passes to Ukrainian refugees living in their areas and calls on the Cabinet to consider a scheme to provide free bus passes to those Ukrainian refugees coming to live in Leicestershire.

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD AT COUNTY HALL, GLENFIELD ON WEDNESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY
2022**

PRESENT

Mr. D. Harrison CC (in the Chair)

Mr. R. G. Allen CC, Mr. R. Ashman CC, Mr. N. D. Bannister CC, Mr. T. Barkley CC, Mr. P. Bedford CC, Mr. D. C. Bill MBE CC, Mr. G. A. Boulter CC, Mr. S. L. Bray CC, Mr. L. Breckon JP CC, Ms. L. Broadley CC, Mr. B. Champion CC, Mr. N. Chapman CC, Mr. J. G. Coxon CC, Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC, Mr. S. J. Galton CC, Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC, Mr. T. Gillard CC, Mr. D. J. Grimley CC, Mrs. A. J. Hack CC, Mr. L. Hadji-Nikolaou CC, Mr. B. Harrison-Rushton CC, Mr. R. Hills CC, Mr. Max Hunt CC, Mr. P. King CC, Mr. B. Lovegrove CC, Mr. K. Merrie MBE CC, Mr. J. Miah CC, Mr. J. Morgan CC, Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC, Ms. Betty Newton CC, Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC, Mr. J. T. Orson JP CC, Mrs. R. Page CC, Mr. B. L. Pain CC, Mr. T. Parton CC, Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC, Mr. L. Phillimore CC, Mr. J. Poland CC, Mrs. P. Posnett MBE CC, Mrs. C. M. Radford CC, Mr. T. J. Richardson CC, Mrs. H. L. Richardson CC, Mr. N. J. Rushton CC, Mrs. B. Seaton CC, Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC, Mr. C. A. Smith CC, Mrs. D. Taylor CC, Mr. G. Welsh CC, Mrs. A. Wright CC and Mrs. M. Wright CC

41. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Mr Orson Duncan Lucas

It was with great sadness that the Chairman reported the passing of a former Chairman of the County Council, Mr Orson Duncan Lucas.

Mr Lucas had served on the County Council from 1985 to 2005 representing the Bushloe Electoral Division in Oadby and Wigston. He had been Chairman of the County Council during the 1993 – 1994 municipal year.

He served on the Arts, Libraries and Museums Committee, the Agriculture Committee, the Environment Committee and the Resources Committee.

The Chairman reported that Mr Lucas' funeral service would be held at Wigston Magna United Reformed Church on Long Street on Tuesday, 1st March at 1pm.

Members of the Council joined the Chairman in standing in silent tribute to the memory of Mr Lucas.

Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

The Chairman welcomed Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant, Mr Mike Kapur OBE, to the meeting and thanked him for being his guest at lunchtime.

As Members were aware, her Majesty the Queen had now become the first British Monarch to celebrate seventy years on the throne and therefore

celebrating her Platinum Jubilee. The Chairman commented that this year was going to be very special. To mark the occasion an extended bank holiday, Thursday 2nd June to Sunday 5th June, would provide an opportunity for communities and people to come together to celebrate this historic milestone. There would also be a number of celebrations such as Street Parties, the Big Lunch, Beacon Lighting and national celebrations.

In addition to the national initiatives the Chairman reported that the Lord Lieutenant would be leading the celebrations in Leicestershire and Leicester City and that he had his own three initiatives which were launched earlier this month. They were: -

- An arts competition for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children;
- A 70 at 70 garden party at Beaumanor Hall for seventy people who were born in 1952;
- An award for 70 organisations whether that be a business, community or voluntary group, or a school that has done something exceptional and positive to develop community spirit.

The Chairman on behalf of the Lord Lieutenant encouraged all Members to promote these initiatives within their electoral divisions and communities and advised that further information could be found on the Lord Lieutenant's Platinum Jubilee website.

The Chairman was also pleased to inform Members that the County Council would be supporting the Jubilee. The Chairman, along with the Lord Lieutenant, would be planting a tree at County Hall on Friday, 11th March as part of the Queen's Green Canopy. In addition, a beacon would be lit at Beacon Hill on Thursday 2nd June, as well the lighting up of County Hall.

This Chairman commented that this would be a very special year and one which all Members should try and promote in their communities.

Paula Murray BEM

The Chairman asked Members to join him in congratulating Paula Murray, Group Support Manager in the Environment and Transport Department, who had been awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Year's Honours List.

In addition, he congratulated everyone in Leicestershire who had also received a personal honour.

Mike Sandys

The Chairman was pleased to inform Members that the Lord Lieutenant had commissioned seven new Deputy Lieutenants in honour of their service to the local community. One of the seven was Mike Sandys, Director of Public Health, and he called on Members to congratulate Mike on his appointment.

Chief Constable of Leicestershire Constabulary Simon Cole QPM

The Chairman reported that Simon Cole, the Chief Constable for Leicestershire, would be retiring shortly. Simon had taken up his position in June 2010 and had been responsible for not only leading the Force, but also developing and managing relationships with key partners and the community. He had also chaired the multi-agency Local Resilience Forum and led it admirably throughout the Covid pandemic.

The Chairman commented that Simon's contribution to both policing and community life in Leicestershire had been immense and his close support and leadership had provided assurance for our communities. The Chairman placed on record his appreciation and that of the Council and said that Mr Cole would be a hard act to follow, wishing him the best for the future.

Upcoming Events

The Chairman reported that over the next few months he would be hosting a number of events including his Charity Dinner in aid of Dementia UK, a volunteers reception and the County Service.

42. MINUTES

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Dr Feltham, the Vice-Chairman, and carried:-

"That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 1st December 2021, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed."

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to make declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

All members who were members of District Councils declared a registrable interest in relation to the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2025/26 (minute 47(a) refers).

Mr B. L. Pain CC declared a non-registerable interest in relation to passenger transport issues referred to in the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2025/26 (minute 47(a) refers), as his family operated a taxi business.

Mr L. Phillimore CC also declared a non-registerable interest in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) issues referred to in the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2025/26 (minute 47(a) refers), due to his wife's employment.

44. QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 7(1)(2) AND (5).

(A) Question by MR HUNT

- “1. “Many people, particularly those of a certain age or vulnerability, will have been struck by the interview on East Midlands BBC (13/2/22) with a gentleman from the County who could not obtain timely treatment due to rising waiting lists, worse than elsewhere in the East Midlands. Could the Chair of Scrutiny Commission provide some reassurance that we are positively scrutinising these key rising waiting lists, not tinkering at the edges but identifying ways in which Leicestershire can improve against other areas, and publishing our findings, which can all too easily be buried in minutes?”

Reply by MR MULLANEY

- “1. Can I begin by thanking Max for his question. The pandemic has had a significant impact on an already stretched health and social care service and this has been acknowledged by all. It now appears that we may be over the worst of the large surge in cases that occurred as a result of Omicron and Christmas gatherings with Covid pressures easing on acute and community services.

Members of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been aware of the concerns and worry of people who have had delays in treatment which have been exacerbated as a result of the pandemic and it has raised these concerns with NHS colleagues.

On 10th November the Committee received very informative reports and presentations on (link to meeting below):

- (i) Current data access to primary care services, the challenges being faced by GP practices and initiatives being introduced to improve access;
- (ii) The Restoration and Recovery Plans of health care providers, particularly on dealing with the significant backlog that has built up in terms of diagnosis and elective care.

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1045&MId=6431&Ver=4>

NHS managers who attended the meeting acknowledged the significant backlog that had built up and had prepared the plans so that there was transparency in the way in which they would seek to prioritise and deal with this. They, along with the members of the Committee, were aware that the task ahead was monumental and would require significant investment of resources and staff, and even then it was unlikely that significant reductions in the backlog and waiting times could be achieved in the short term.

The Government has made promises of significant new resources as a result of raising National Insurance contributions. Most of these resources are to be directed to the NHS with very little to support the

social care sector. This I believe is a mistake as the ability of the NHS to deliver will be dependent upon hospitals being able to discharge patients to a social care setting for after care and rehabilitation.

Without significant national investment in social care the social care market cannot develop and function on a sustainable level and this will impede the NHS in its delivery. The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 1st November was advised of significant demand pressures. The financial impact of the increased need and demand is such that the Department is forecasting a significant overspend against budget in this financial year and this is likely to grow in subsequent years. As a consequence the Council is allocating £25m growth for social care within the MTFS for 2022/23 rising to £35m over the four year period.

Over the coming year the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be monitoring the position and members will be raising issues and concerns. I am sure that the County Council as the social care authority will be working closely with NHS colleagues on this.

Finally, I think you make a valid point regarding publishing our findings. The next edition of our residents' newsletter, Leicestershire Matters, will include an update on the work of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and I am sure that the Chair and Spokespersons of that Committee working with the Lead Member and our comms team will want to look at anything further for the future."

45. REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE.

(a) Review of Standing Orders (Meeting Procedure Rules).

It was moved by Mr Rushton, seconded by Mrs Taylor and carried:-

"That the changes to Standing Orders (the Meeting Procedure Rules), as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Constitution Committee, be approved."

46. TO RECEIVE POSITION STATEMENTS UNDER STANDING ORDER 8.

The Leader gave a position statement on the following matters:

- County Deal
- Net Zero and the Green Agenda
- MTFS
- Queens Platinum Jubilee
- Storm Impacts and thanks to staff

The Lead Member for Highways and Transport gave a position statement on the following matters:-

- Recent storm damage;

- The Member Highway Fund;
- The SEN School Transport Digital Application process;
- Highways and Transportation recruitment event.

Copies of the position statements are filed with these minutes.

47. REPORT OF THE CABINET.

(a) Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26.

It was moved by Mr Breckon and seconded by Mr Shepherd:-

- “(a) That the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Scrutiny Commission as set out in Appendix Q to the report be noted;
- (b) That subject to the items below, approval be given to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which incorporates the recommended revenue budget for 2022/23 totalling £471.7m as set out in Appendices A, B and E of this report and includes the growth and savings for that year as set out in Appendix C;
- (c) That approval be given to the projected provisional revenue budgets for 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26, set out in Appendix B to the report, including the growth and savings for those years as set out in Appendix C, allowing the undertaking of preliminary work, including business case development, consultation, and equality and human rights impact assessments, as may be necessary towards achieving the savings specified for those years including savings under development set out in Appendix D;
- (d) That approval be given to the early achievement of savings that are included in the MTFS, as may be necessary, along with associated investment costs, subject to the Director of Corporate Resources agreeing to funding being available;
- (e) That the level of the general fund and earmarked funds as set out in Appendix K be noted and the use of those earmarked funds as indicated in that appendix be approved;
- (f) That the amounts of the County Council's Council Tax for each band of dwelling and the precept payable by each billing authority for 2022/23 be as set out in Appendix M (including 1% for the adult social care precept);
- (g) That the Chief Executive be authorised to issue the necessary precepts to billing authorities in accordance with the budget requirement above and the tax base notified by the District Councils, and to take any other action which may be necessary to give effect to the precepts;
- (h) That the 2022/23 to 2025/26 capital programme as set out in Appendix F be approved;

- (i) That the Director of Corporate Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Resources, be authorised to approve new capital schemes, including revenue costs associated with their delivery, shown as future developments in the capital programme, to be funded from funding available;
- (j) That the financial indicators required under the Prudential Code included in Appendix N, Annex 2 be noted and that the following limits be approved:

	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Operational boundary for external debt				
i) Borrowing	263	263	311	340
ii) Other long term liabilities	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	264	264	312	341
Authorised limit for external debt				
i) Borrowing	273	273	321	350
ii) Other long term liabilities	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	274	274	322	351

- (k) That the Director of Corporate Resources be authorised to effect movement within the authorised limit for external debt between borrowing and other long-term liabilities;
- (l) That the following borrowing limits be approved for the period 2022/23 to 2025/26:
- (i) Upper limit on fixed interest exposures 100%;
 - (ii) Upper limit on variable rate exposures 50%;
 - (iii) Maturity of borrowing: -

	<u>Upper Limit</u>	<u>Lower Limit</u>
	%	%
Under 12 months	30	0
12 months and within 24 months	30	0
24 months and within 5 years	50	0
5 years and within 10 years	70	0
10 years and above	100	25

- (iv) An upper limit for principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days is 10% of the portfolio.
- (m) That the Director of Corporate Resources be authorised to enter into such loans or undertake such arrangements as necessary to finance capital payments in 2022/23, subject to the prudential limits in Appendix N;
- (n) That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix N, be approved including:
 - (i) The Treasury Management Policy Statement, Appendix N; Annex 4;
 - (ii) The Annual Statement of the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision as set out in Appendix N, Annex 1;
- (o) That the Capital Strategy (Appendix G), Corporate Asset Investment Fund Strategy (Appendix H), Risk Management Policy and Strategy (Appendix I), Earmarked Funds Policy (Appendix J) and Insurance Policy (Appendix L) be approved;
- (p) That it be noted that the Leicester and Leicestershire Business Rate Pool will continue for 2022/23;
- (q) That the Leicestershire School Funding Formula remains unchanged, reflecting the National Funding Formula for 2022/23.”

The Chairman indicated that a named vote would be recorded, as required by Government Regulations.

The vote was recorded as follows:-

For the Motion

Mr Allen, Mr Ashman, Mr Bannister, Mr Barkley, Mr Bedford, Mr Breckon, Mr Champion, Mr Chapman, Mr Coxon, Dr Feltham, Mr Ghattoraya, Mr Gillard, Mr Grimley, Mr Hadji-Nikolaou, Mr Harrison, Mr Harrison-Rushton, Mr Hills, Mr King, Mr Lovegrove, Mr Merrie, Mr Morgan, Mr O'Shea, Mr Orson, Mrs Page, Mr Pain, Mr Parton, Mr Pendleton, Mr Phillimore, Mr Poland, Mrs Posnett, Mrs Radford, Mr Richardson, Mrs Richardson, Mr Rushton, Mrs Seaton, Mr Shepherd, Mr Smith, Mrs Taylor, Mrs A. Wright and Mrs M. Wright.

Against the Motion

Mr Bill, Mr Boulter, Mr Bray, Mrs Broadley, Mr Galton, Mrs Hack, Mr Hunt, Mr Miah, Mr Mullaney, Ms Newton, Mr Welsh

The motion was put and carried, 40 members voting for the motion and 11 members against.

48. JOINT REPORT OF THE CABINET AND THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE.

(a) Becoming an Anti-Racist Organisation.

It was moved by Mrs Posnett, seconded by Mr Breckon and carried:-

“That Leicestershire County Council makes a clear commitment to becoming an anti-racist organisation.”

2.00 pm – 4.10 pm
23 February 2022

CHAIRMAN

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COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 23 FEBRUARY 2022

POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

County Deal

I welcomed the publication of the Levelling Up White paper three weeks ago and the news that our bid for a County Deal was announced as one of the first 9 areas to be invited to enter talks with Government.

The Conservative Group agreed that our bid would propose an Elected Mayor for Leicestershire and this would give us the best opportunity of maximising new powers and new funding available from a County Deal. We were grateful for the support of the Opposition Group Leaders, the County's MPs and the seven District Council Leaders.

Discussions with representatives from Government have confirmed what I took from the White Paper, that the Deal for which we bid is only available over what Government calls a 'Functional Economic Area' or FEA. In our case the FEA could not be Leicestershire only – it could be Leicester and Leicestershire, or Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

The fact is that there is an Elected Mayor for Leicester already and he will not accept having another Elected Mayor over him.

I have discussed the situation with the City Mayor, and with the Leader of Rutland County Council. They are both really interested in seeing what can be negotiated with Government which, as leaders of neighbouring unitaries, the White Paper encourages.

At their invitation, we have started to discuss with Government what the White Paper calls 'a new form of combined authority model to be made up of upper tier local authorities only'. This is from the stand-point that we want to try everything possible to get additional funding and a greater say over capital funding for highway schemes.

We want to get a Deal which in White Paper terms is as close as possible to Level 3, unlocking the powers, funding and opportunities that Levelling Up envisages. I am doing everything I can with the Deputy Leader to get MP support for this.

If we do not succeed, we will be negotiating a combined authority model for Level 2, which would be second best in terms of powers and funding, but could give the opportunity to negotiate further powers in future. As

an Administration, we will not be turning down an offer from Government of a County Deal.

Net Zero and the Green agenda

As I have reported previously the County Council has made significant progress in reducing its own carbon footprint. We will build on this and the Council's leadership role by working in partnership to tackle climate change and create a greener and more resilient County.

Late last year we commissioned independent research consultants to help us develop a 'Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan' aimed at being a net zero County by 2045. The key findings of the consultant's report were that: -

- The net zero carbon 2045 target for Leicestershire cannot be delivered by the Council working alone;
- The pathway to net zero is challenging but feasible if all available policy levers are employed at pace and scale;
- Investment will be required from all sectors.

A draft 'Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan' will be the subject of extensive consultation with the public and stakeholders during the spring. This is extremely important as we need to get as wide an agreement as possible on the way forward.

In terms of what we are doing ourselves, I'd like to take this opportunity to inform the Council that we have launched a new project to support households at risk of fuel poverty to keep warm and cut their bills by installing cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, solar panels, air source heat pumps and other energy efficiency measures. We are now working alongside district councils to secure up to £4million of additional funding to extend the scheme for another year and reduce the impact of the cost of living crisis for our most vulnerable residents.

We are also developing a new Council run tree nursery to secure tree stock for the Council's tree planting commitments and address issues of biosecurity and local provenance.

MTFS

Later on we will be debating the proposed MTFS for the next four years. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all the staff of the County Council, our statutory partners and voluntary and private sector providers with whom we contract for their hard work and dedication in providing services for the people of Leicestershire. Their continued efforts to find new ways of working and delivering high quality services at a time of significant resource constraints have enabled us to deliver a balanced budget for next year, when almost all other principal authorities are struggling to do so.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Further to the Chairman's announcement I would also like to congratulate Her Majesty the Queen on her historic achievement of being our monarch for seventy years.

As the Chairman has announced there will be a number of celebrations over the bank holiday weekend in June and I am sure local communities will wish to hold street parties. To help facilitate this, the County Council will waive its fees in relation to the processing of road closure applications and associated restrictions, as well as offering the loan of signs and cones. However, I need to advise Members that the deadline for applications is Friday, 15th April so it is important that they communicate this within their electoral divisions.

In addition, I am also pleased to inform the Council that if any organiser needs support or guidance in completing their application, officers in the Environment and Transport Department will be on hand to help.

This is truly a momentous occasion for our country and Leicestershire.

Storm Impact and thanks to staff

Finally, I would like to thank staff for all their hard work and efforts in keeping the County running and cleaning up after the unprecedented triple storms of Dudley, Eunice and Franklin.

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COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING - 23rd FEBRUARY 2022
POSITION STATEMENT OF THE CABINET LEAD MEMBER FOR
HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Recent Storm Damage

As the Leader mentioned over the past few days, the County has experienced three major storms Dudley, Eunice and Franklin. Over this period, we have had additional highways crews out to help deal with the situation. Our teams responded to 176 trees down as well as a number of flood related issues. Over 350 enquiries have been dealt with over this period.

The staff involved who worked tirelessly over this period (including 24/7 over the weekend) and in very difficult circumstances. They have shown a real commitment to get the job done and I would like to acknowledge their hard work.

Member Highway Fund

498 requests have now been received from all 55 Members for works under the Member Highway Fund.

182 requests are currently in the processing stage, 33 are with Members for sign off and to date 108 jobs have been assigned for delivery. This work is continuing apace with officers supporting Members in finalising their projects for delivery and programming works. No new requests are being accepted for the current financial year, however, to reassure Members new requests can be submitted for the next round of funding. Any agreed works that cannot be carried out by the end of March will be delivered in the new financial year.

A more streamlined process is being developed for us for the next round. This will start with an online application process followed up with individual meetings with officers to discuss potential requests. As you know, the MHF has been a new initiative for us all and the department is working hard to get this years' schemes on the ground for our communities as soon as possible and to ensure we are all on the front foot for the coming financial year.

SEN School Transport Digital Application Process

I am pleased to advise that parents now have the ability to apply for SEN transport online. This new system went live on 10 February, and I can report we had our first compliment from a member of the public on how easy to use and effective the new system is the following week. We have also had positive comments on Facebook. Along with our ICT colleagues we will continue to progress and deliver similar initiatives to improve our customer service. Many thanks to all involved.

Recruitment Event

Across Highways and Transport we are experiencing significant problems recruiting to vacancies. As part of our work to address this we are holding a recruitment event here at County Hall on 3 March. This is being run in partnership with Reed and is specifically looking to generate interest in roles across Highways and Transport as well as our Waste operation. The communications supporting this event includes targeting more hard to reach communities such as people with disabilities and Black, Asian and Multi Ethnic audiences with the objective of not only getting good candidates into the department but helping us increase diversity across the workforce.

Mr. O. O'Shea CC

Cabinet Lead Member

REPORT OF THE CABINET

A. LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2026

Introduction

1. This report concerns the County Council's Strategic Plan for the period 2022-26. A copy of the Plan is attached as Appendix A to this report.

Background

2. The Strategic Plan is part of the Authority's Policy Framework (as defined in the Constitution) and as such needs approval by the County Council. The Strategic Plan sets out the Council's long-term vision for Leicestershire and its priorities over a four-year period. It is a key strategy which shapes how the Council plans and delivers services.
3. The Strategic Plan is complemented by the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which sets out a financial plan supporting the priorities in the Strategic Plan, as well as by the Strategic Change Portfolio which outlines how the Council will transform local services in response to national and local drivers for change whilst seeking to maintain or improve outcomes. The Plan is also underpinned by departmental business plans and strategies which provide further detail on how the Council will deliver the aims and actions in the Plan. This includes, for example, the Council's Communities Strategy 'Our Communities Approach' (which is also on the agenda for today's meeting) which sets out in detail the Council's approach to collaborating and working in partnership with communities.
4. The Plan summarises the Council's vision for Leicestershire through five strategic outcomes and a single line vision statement. The outcomes represent long-term aspirations for Leicestershire which may not be achieved in full during the four-year course of the Strategic Plan. Therefore, the Plan also includes specific aims for the Council to achieve by 2026 in order to progress towards each outcome. It also sets out some of the key actions which the Council will deliver to achieve these aims.
5. The five outcomes are:
 - **Clean, green future:** The environment is protected and enhanced, and we tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and unsustainable resource usage
 - **Great communities:** Leicestershire has thriving, inclusive communities in which people support each other and participate in service design and delivery
 - **Improving opportunities:** Every child gets the best start for life with access to a good quality education and everyone has the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential.
 - **Strong economy, transport and infrastructure:** Leicestershire has a productive, inclusive and sustainable economy and infrastructure which meets the demands of a growing population and economy.

- **Keeping people safe and well:** The people of Leicestershire are safe and protected from harm and have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing.

Public Consultation

6. The Cabinet, at its meeting on 26 October 2021, approved a 12-week public consultation on the draft Strategic Plan to run from 1 November 2021 to 21 January 2022. The consultation period was subsequently extended to 18 February 2022 to enable further direct engagement with County Council officers and members.
7. The consultation sought the views of a wide variety of stakeholders including residents, community groups and partners. It consisted of a public survey which received 259 responses, in addition to direct engagement of the Council's Scrutiny Committees, the Scrutiny Commission and key partnership boards including the Health and Wellbeing Board, Children and Families Partnership Board and Educational Excellence Partnership Strategic Board. There was also engagement with community groups and partners including Leicestershire Equality Challenge Group, the Council's Youth CYCLe groups and town and parish councils (via two briefing sessions facilitated by Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils). Additionally, there was engagement of Council staff groups such as the BAME Network and LGBT Network in addition to three staff briefings which used an interactive presentation to obtain the views of a further 200 officers.
8. A detailed report on the consultation responses and changes made to the Plan as a result is attached as Appendix B and a summary is provided below.

Format and Structure

9. During consultation, there was a view that the Plan was too long and that detail about the Council's actions could be set out separately. Some also commented that whilst the Plan identified what success would look like, it did not adequately quantify this or set a benchmark against which performance could be measured.
10. In addition, some stated that the Plan included aspirations which were outside the Council's control. Recognising that the Council often has a broader role as a partner, enabler and facilitator, it was suggested that the Plan should more clearly differentiate between those aspirations for which the Council would have lead responsibility, and those where it would have a contributing/partnership role; specifying which partners it would work with to deliver the actions in the Plan. Some also challenged the lack of reference to district councils.

Vision

11. There was a high level of support for the Council's vision (79% of public survey respondents agreed with the outcomes and only 10% disagreed). The outcome with the least, albeit still substantial, support was the 'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure' outcome (68% survey respondents agreed and 17% disagreed). The reasons for this are set out in paragraph 22 of this report.

Clean, Green Future

12. The 'Clean, Green Future' outcome aims for the environment to be protected and to address climate change, biodiversity loss and unsustainable resource usage. There was a high level of support for this outcome, as well as for the specific aims which the Council intended to achieve by 2026 to progress towards it. Over 90% of survey respondents rated each of the aims as either 'fairly important' or 'very important'.
13. There were, however, concerns that the outcome may not be compatible with the Council's aims to support housing and infrastructure development. Some also requested that the Plan include further detail on how the Council would enable and promote sustainable transport and attract environmentally friendly businesses.

Great Communities

14. The 'Great Communities' outcome aims for inclusive communities in which people support each other and participate in service design and delivery. Whilst most agreed with the outcome, there was varied support for the Council's aims by 2026.
15. The following aims were considered to be very important:
 - Ensure Council services are accessible and inclusive
 - Support the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector
 - Increase community cohesion and tackling hate crime
 - Increase the percentage of residents who feel they can influence Council decisions
16. However, the following aims were considered to be less important:
 - Increase engagement in cultural and heritage activities
 - Sustain the increase in volunteering seen during the pandemic
 - Increase the number of Neighbourhood Plans adopted
 - Increase the number of active Community Response Plans
17. The aim to sustain a high rate of volunteering was perceived by some to indicate the Council attempting to shift its responsibilities onto volunteers. There was also a view that the action under sub-outcome 5.2 (public participation) to support town and parish councils indicated insufficient acknowledgement of 'non-parished' areas.

Improving Opportunities

18. The 'Improving Opportunities' outcome aims for every child to get the best start for life with access to a good quality education and for everyone to have the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential. It was the most popular outcome, with each of the Council's aims to deliver it rated as either fairly or very important by over 90% of survey respondents, and over 60% rating each aim as 'very important'.
19. However, some suggested that the outcome may not be achievable due to reductions in youth and education services. There was also a view that to deliver the outcome mainstream schools would need more resources to support children with special educational needs who have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

20. Although the emphasis on children and families was welcomed, there was a view that the outcome should also focus on supporting young people and adults to access education and employment opportunities. Some also suggested that the aims under sub-outcome 6.4 (post-16 outcomes) were insufficiently ambitious. Finally, there was a view that the outcome title should be revised to 'Improved Opportunities' so it is consistent with the other outcomes and represents an 'end state' rather than a journey.

Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure

21. The 'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure' outcome aspires for Leicestershire to have a productive, inclusive and sustainable economy and infrastructure which meets the demands of a growing population and economy.
22. As outlined previously, it was the least popular of the five outcomes. During both the public survey and the three County Council staff briefings on the Plan, the aim around housing was considered to be the least important of all aims in the Plan. This seemed to be due to concerns that housing development in greenfield areas would undermine delivery of a 'Clean and Green' future in Leicestershire. Some requested clarification on which is a greater priority to the Council between 'green' and 'growth'. There were also concerns that new houses may not be supported by necessary infrastructure (for example, schools, health facilities and public transport).
23. There was also relatively low support for the aims to support Research and Development (R&D), increase the number of businesses in Leicestershire and ensure there are sufficient employment sites for growth. However, there was a high level of support for increasing labour market opportunities for young people, addressing skills shortages, supporting inclusive economic growth, and ensuring infrastructure supports growth and net zero emissions.
24. There was also a frequent theme around the need to better enable and promote sustainable transport, such as cycling and walking as well as affordable and frequent buses and trains. It was suggested that achieving the aims for this outcome would require investment in this area to avoid excessive congestion.

Keeping People Safe and Well

25. The 'Keeping People Safe and Well' outcome aims for the people of Leicestershire to be safe and protected from harm and to have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing.
26. There was a high level of support for this outcome and for all the Council's aims to progress towards it by 2026, with over 90% public survey respondents agreeing with each aim and the majority 'strongly agreeing'. There was significant support for each aim, particularly those focused on community safety, vulnerable people, mental wellbeing, unpaid carers and care experiences. The aim with the least support was for more residents to be a healthy weight.
27. Some questioned the level of influence which the County Council has over areas such as crime levels, preventing young people from engaging in criminal activity and increasing the proportion of residents with a healthy weight. It was highlighted

that achieving these aims would require partnership-working with other public agencies such as the NHS, Police and district councils and that the aim around healthy weight would rely on individuals taking responsibility for their own wellbeing.

28. There was also a view that the Plan should outline how the Council is intending to support road safety, such as through education and highway design. Further, some requested clarification on how the Council would address substance misuse. Additionally, there was a request to highlight how the Council would promote access to green space in order to support its aims around wellbeing. Finally, there was a view that the outcome title should be revised to 'Safe and Well' so that it too represents an 'end state' and is consistent with the other outcomes.

Strategic Change Portfolio

29. The Strategic Plan includes a section on the Council's internal transformation programme, the Strategic Change Portfolio, which outlines the purpose, aims and actions of the 'four pillars' of this programme: Sustainable Finances, Carbon Reduction, Customer and Digital and Ways of Working.
30. During the consultation, there was a concern that increased adoption of digital services through the Customer and Digital Programme may lead to 'digital exclusion' whereby some people are unable to access services due to lack of digital technology and/or digital skills. It was suggested that this could exacerbate social and economic inequalities. There was a request to reflect how the Council will support digital participation for all and to include actions to ensure everyone can access reliable broadband and learn how to use digital technology.

Comments of the Scrutiny Commission

31. The level of support for the vision/outcomes was welcomed. Members were pleased to see its previously made comments and those of the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees had been considered and largely addressed in the revised draft. Members supported the shortening of the Plan, which was now more focused and reader friendly and agreed that this was a much improved document.
32. The Commission noted that the response rate, whilst higher than usual, was not vast. Members acknowledged that consultations on strategic documents often generated less feedback as residents could find it difficult to relate their purpose to their own circumstances and day to day lives. A Member challenged whether the number and style of questions asked in such consultations struck the right balance to encourage residents to respond. The Commission was reassured that the questions and those targeted were carefully considered by the Council's specialist consultations team to ensure these were appropriate and followed best practice. However, it was acknowledged that lessons could always be learnt and the potential for further improvements would be considered.
33. The reference to Neighbourhood Plans was queried. It was noted that the language in the Plan now made clear that the County Council had a supporting role in this area, and that district councils were ultimately responsible for their development. A Member commented, however, that a Neighbourhood Plan might not be suitable for all areas and questioned therefore the Council's action to support communities to

develop these Plans. It was suggested that support should be targeted to those areas where such a Plan was considered locally to be appropriate and beneficial.

The Revised Strategic Plan (2022-26)

34. Following the consultation process, a number of changes have been made to the Plan which are summarised below and detailed in full at Appendix B.
35. Changes have been made to the outcome titles in order to ensure they are consistent with each other and represent an 'end state':
 - 'Improving Opportunities' revised to 'Improved Opportunities'
 - 'Keeping People Safe and Well' revised to 'Safe and Well'
 - 'Clean, Green Future' revised to 'Clean and Green'
36. The length of the Plan has been reduced by removing unnecessary text (wordcount reduced by 25%) and images have been added to enhance the visual appeal of the document.
37. Specific, quantitative targets tend to be set through annual departmental business plans and strategies as this allows for the targets to reflect current service capacity and pressures. However, where quantitative targets exist, these have now been added to the Plan, such as for the aims around CO2 emissions and the Supporting Families Programme. Further, to help clarify what the Council is aiming to achieve by 2026, each sub-outcome now includes, under 'how we will measure success', the performance indicators which will be monitored to identify if each aim is being achieved. Each sub-outcome also includes a summary of current performance which provides a benchmark against which to measure future progress.
38. The Plan reflects that in order to deliver its vision for Leicestershire, the Council will need to use both its own direct service delivery and its significant capacity to influence and support others. It differentiates between areas over which the Council has lead responsibility and those where it has a contributing/partnership role by highlighting where the Council will need to 'work with partners' to deliver specific aims and actions. The Glossary also now includes a definition of 'partners'.
39. The Plan also now refers to specific partners which the Council will need to work with to deliver certain actions – for example work with bus operators and Midlands Connect to improve passenger transport and work with district councils through the Environment Group to coordinate environmental programmes. Additionally, the Plan highlights examples of effective collaboration which the Council intends to build on, such as work with district councils during the Covid-19 pandemic to establish community hubs to support the most vulnerable people.
40. The sub-outcome around housing has been removed, with the Council's actions to support housing development shown instead to support the sub-outcome around infrastructure (7.2). This reflects the low popularity of the aim around housing development, as well as that the planning of housing is a responsibility of district councils rather than the County Council. Further, listing the Council's actions to support housing delivery in sub-outcome 7.2 highlights that the Council considers the wider infrastructure requirements of housing developments.

41. The Introduction / Foreword now acknowledges the challenges involved in supporting economic growth whilst achieving a 'Clean and Green' future for Leicestershire and highlights how the Council intends to achieve this. Additionally, further actions have been added to the Plan to show how the Council intends to work with partners to enable and promote sustainable transport and encourage and support environmentally friendly businesses and the development and adoption of low-carbon technologies.
42. Sub-section 9.2 of the Plan (the Customer and Digital Programme) includes an action to understand and mitigate the impact of digitalisation and channel development on groups with protected characteristics. A new action has been added to ensure services are accessible through multiple channels (for example mediated digital access, telephone support and face-to-face channels) so that no groups are excluded. A further action has been added to develop a community-based programme to support residents to learn how to use digital technology.

Delivery of the Strategic Plan (2022-26)

43. Council departments will be responsible for implementing the actions set out in the Strategic Plan. Additionally, through their annual service plans, departments will identify further actions for each forthcoming year to help achieve the aims set out in the Plan. To embed the Plan in Council decision-making processes, officers will be required to set out, in reports to Council bodies, the potential impact of their proposals on delivery of the Strategic Plan. Further, Council strategies will be required to contribute to delivery of the outcomes in the Plan, where possible.
44. The Council's progress and performance in delivering the Plan will be monitored by officer Outcome Boards, which will provide six-monthly highlight reports to senior management outlining key achievements and challenges in the delivery of the Plan as well as priorities for the following six months. Overview and Scrutiny Committees will receive quarterly updates on performance for the areas they cover. The Scrutiny Commission will receive the Annual Performance Report which will summarise overall progress each year in delivering the Strategic Plan. Outcome Boards will also ensure that all Council strategies align with and support their outcomes.

Consideration by the Cabinet

45. The Cabinet at its meeting on 29th March 2022 noted the outcome of the consultation including the comments and views of the Scrutiny Commission and approved the Strategic Plan.

(Motion to be moved: -

That the Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2026 as set out in the Appendix A to this report be approved.)

**Mr N. J. Rushton
Leader of the Council**

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet – Draft Strategic Plan (2022-26) – 26 October 2021

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s164242/Strategic%20Plan%202022-26.pdf>

Report to the Scrutiny Commission – Engagement on the Draft Strategic Plan (2022-26) – 17 November 2021

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s164629/Engagement%20on%20the%20Councils%20Strategic%20Plan%20-%20Final.pdf>

Report to the Scrutiny Commission – Outcome of Consultation on the Draft Strategic Plan (2022-26) – 9 March 2022

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s167002/Outcome%20of%20Consultation%20on%20the%20Strategic%20Plan%20final.pdf>

Appendices

Appendix A - Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan (2022-26)

Appendix B – Consultation Responses and Revisions to the draft Strategic Plan (2022-26)

Strategic Plan

2022-26



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1. Glossary

Term	Definition
LLEP	Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership
Partners	Tends to refer to other public bodies such as NHS, Police, Fire and Rescue Service, district councils, parish and town councils, but can also include private and third sector organisations
VCSE sector	Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EHE	Elective Home Education
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
GVA	Gross Value Added
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
R&D	Research and Development
SMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
GDHI	Gross Disposable Household Income
PM2.5	Fine Particulate Matter
CO2e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent

2. Foreword



Cllr Nick Rushton

Leader of Leicestershire County Council

This Strategic Plan sets out our long-term vision and priorities for the next four years (2022-26).

Our vision is based on five strategic outcomes which are aspirational; they outline the end results that we want to see for Leicestershire. For each outcome, we have identified specific aims which we will focus on achieving over the next four years, with corresponding actions. The actions in this Plan are not exhaustive; further detail on how we will deliver our priorities is set out in supporting Council and partnership strategies.

Whilst the outcomes are in separate sections, there are significant interdependencies between them. For example, reducing our carbon footprint supports both our aims to tackle climate change and to improve health outcomes. Additionally, improving children's development supports both our aims to ensure everyone can achieve their full potential and to increase skills supply and economic productivity. Links such as these are highlighted throughout the Plan and some actions are shown to support multiple outcomes.

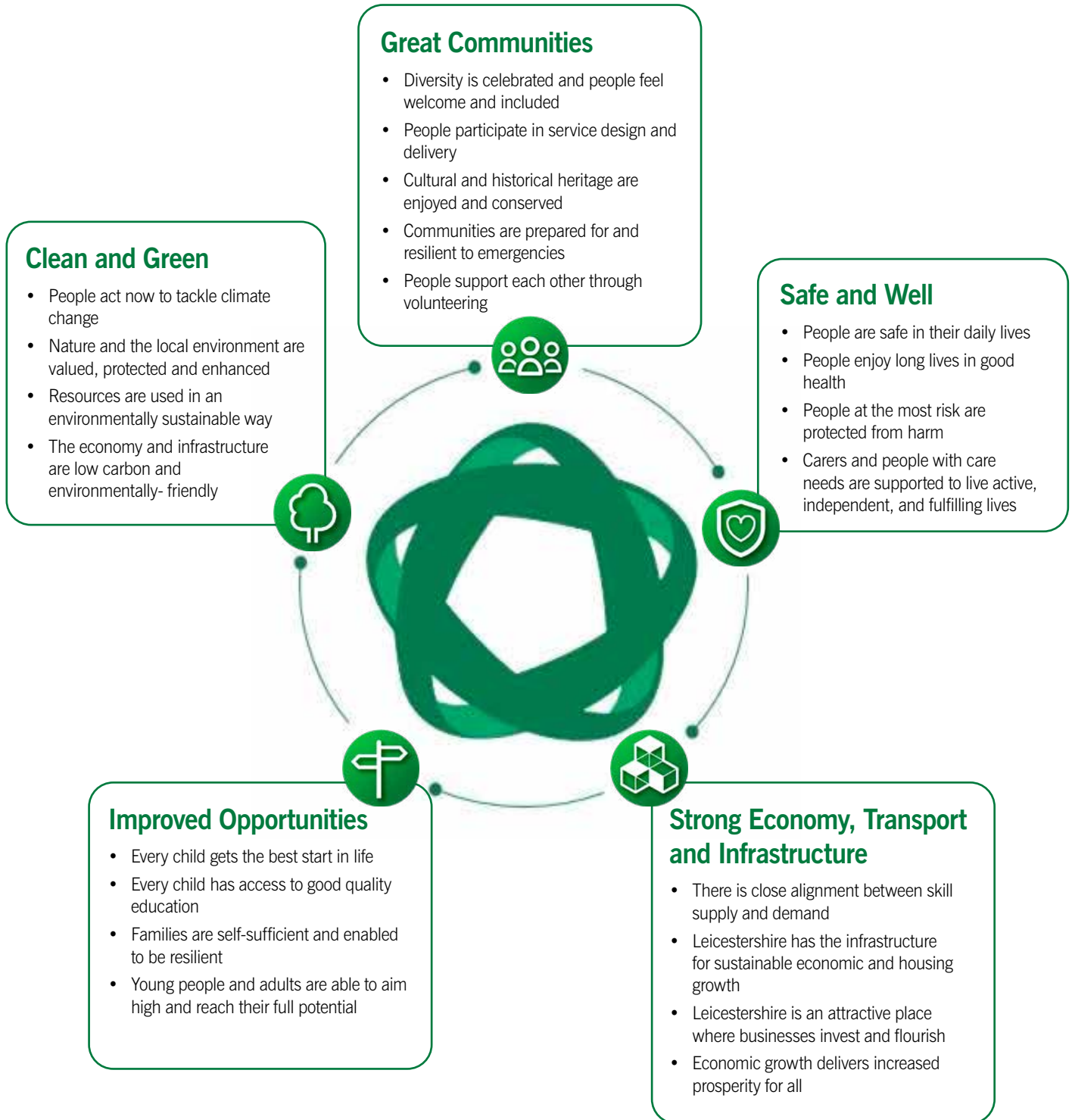
We recognise that our aspiration for a 'Clean and Green' future may seem at odds with our desire for 'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure'. However, we are confident that through actions such as enabling sustainable transport, promoting business action on climate change and ensuring infrastructure developments are low or zero carbon, we can strike the right balance between 'green and growth'.

We will deliver this Plan by building upon our previous achievements, such as being recognised by Impower as the most productive Council in England and Wales, whilst being the lowest funded County Council in the UK. However, the Council alone cannot deliver all the change that will be needed. Through continued collaboration with our partners to coordinate and integrate our plans we hope to make the maximum impact on the most pressing issues that we face and celebrate and build on the success of this great county.

Nicholas Rushton



3. Strategic Outcomes (Our Vision for Leicestershire)



4. Clean and Green

This outcome reflects the need to protect and enhance the environment and tackle climate change. Global warming is increasing the frequency and intensity of flooding and heatwaves. It will affect social and environmental determinants of health including clean air, safe drinking water, food supply and secure shelter.

There is increasing recognition of the need to protect and enhance the environment. The 2015 Paris Agreement requires countries to limit temperature rise to below 1.5 to 2°C. Government has committed to reducing the UK's net emissions of greenhouse gases to zero by 2050. The County Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions from its own operations by 2030 and to work with partners to achieve net zero carbon emissions in Leicestershire by 2045.

The County Council has various levels of control and influence in protecting the environment and addressing climate change. It is responsible for managing the environmental impacts of its own activities (e.g. heating and powering offices, using vehicles and generating waste) and is able to help minimise the impacts of residents and businesses (e.g. by enabling and promoting sustainable transport, managing household waste in an environmentally-sustainable way and enforcing environmental legislation on businesses). It also has capacity to influence wider action by working with partners and lobbying Government.

We will help to tackle climate change by embedding environmental sustainability into everything we do. We will minimise the environmental impact of our activities and use our influence in areas such as transport, planning, economic development and community engagement to protect the environment.

4.1 People act now to tackle climate change and protect the environment

To achieve net zero carbon emissions in Leicestershire we need communities to take action to reduce their environmental impacts, such as by being more resource-efficient and travelling by sustainable modes.

99% of residents think that protecting the environment is important and from 2005-2019, there was a 36% reduction in domestic CO2 emissions. Leicestershire performs well in the energy efficiency of new build homes, but poorly in the efficiency of existing homes. It also has below average rates of electrical vehicle ownership and cycling and walking.



Our aim by 2026

- More residents actively involved in tackling climate change

Our actions

- Raise environmental awareness amongst local communities, schools and businesses to promote positive action
- Support people to be more resource efficient in their energy and water use
- Work with bus operators to deliver our Bus Service Improvement Plan which will promote affordable, frequent, and high-quality passenger transport services
- Work with the region's transport body, Midlands Connect, to improve passenger rail services
- Work with partners to enable and encourage electrical vehicle usage, such as by expanding charging points
- Enhance the infrastructure that supports cycling and walking, such as segregated infrastructure, cycle parking, pedestrian crossings and traffic reduction measures to create healthy streets and spaces
- Provide cycle training and work with schools and workplaces to provide people with the required skills and information to cycle and walk

How we will measure success

- Percentage of domestic properties (new build / existing) with Energy Performance Rating C+
- Percentage of residents who report having made lifestyle changes to help tackle climate change
- Rate of electrical vehicle ownership
- Percentage of adults walking for travel, 3 days a week
- Percentage of adults cycling for travel, 3 days a week
- Number of volunteers helping to tackle climate change

4.2 Nature and the local environment are valued, protected and enhanced

Biodiversity describes the enormous variety of life on Earth. Biodiversity and the eco-system clean our water, purify our air, regulate the climate and provide us with food and resources for medicines. Loss or damage of natural environments is among the biggest threats to wildlife.



Intensively managed farmland, with applications of chemical fertiliser, pesticides and herbicides, is poor for wildlife. In Leicestershire, where more than 80% of the land is farmed, our wildlife continues to decline due to a lack of good habitats. Leicestershire has relatively few sites of recognised nature conservation value compared to other counties, with the best sites representing only about 1% of the land in Leicestershire.

Our aim by 2026

- Increase the percentage of county land which promotes diversity of habitat and species

Our actions

- Create, protect and enhance sustainable green space and waterways on Council managed land and assets
- Promote and support environmentally sustainable farming practices which maintain and enhance biodiversity
- Work with the LLEP to develop a Natural Capital Investment Plan to minimise the loss of habitats

How we will measure success

- Hectares of Council land in better management for nature
- Percentage of suitable Council land in better management for nature
- Number of trees planted by the Council

4.3 Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way

We are using the planet's resources at a faster rate than they are being replenished and in a way which does not allow them to be reused. In order to address this crisis, we need to move to a circular economy model. This is a more efficient alternative to a traditional linear economy (make, use, dispose) where resources are used for as long as possible, then recovered, regenerated, or recycled.

Compared to other county areas, Leicestershire has a lower rate of household waste which is recycled and a significantly higher percentage of waste which is landfilled.

Our aim by 2026

- Increase in the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting and reduction in the percentage landfilled

Our actions

- Work with partners to reduce the volume of waste produced in Leicestershire, such as by supporting the national Love Food Hate Waste campaign, delivering education around food waste prevention and enabling communities to conduct their own waste prevention activities
- Manage waste in the priority order of prevention, reuse, recycling, other recovery and disposal
- Encourage appropriate use of our Recycling & Household Waste Sites service
- Provide an efficient and sustainable trade waste recycling, treatment and disposal service

How we will measure success

- Percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill
- Percentage of household waste sent by local authorities for reuse, recycling, composting

4.4 The economy and infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly

Decarbonising the economy and infrastructure is one of the key solutions to addressing the climate emergency, as nearly 70% of Leicestershire's emissions come from commercial, industrial and transport sources. This will require action from the Council, partners and businesses.

From 2005-2019, there was a 54% reduction in commercial CO₂ emissions in Leicestershire and a 40% reduction in industrial CO₂ emissions. However, transport emissions fell by only 8%.

A survey of local businesses from March-June 2021 (LLEP Business Tracker) found that 35% had taken action to reduce their carbon impact in the past 2 months and 50% planned to do so over the next 6 months.

Our aims by 2026

- Net-zero carbon emissions from the Council's own operations by 2030, with an interim 64% reduction by 2025
- Work with partners to ensure Leicestershire is on track to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2045

Our actions

- Develop and implement a Net Zero Carbon 2030 Plan for the Council
- Reduce our demand for energy and increase our generation and use of renewable energy
- Through the Environment Group, collaborate with district councils and the LLEP to coordinate development and implementation of environmental programmes and promote a green recovery
- Own and manage efficient and sustainable properties through our Corporate Asset Investment Fund
- Work with partners to develop the training and skills routes required for zero carbon development
- Encourage businesses to reduce their carbon impact and promote business opportunities arising from net-zero transition
- Work with partners to support the capacity of SMEs to supply low-carbon products and services, expand links between businesses and universities to enhance low-carbon research and development and develop a central integrated hub for demonstration of low-carbon technology
- Reduce pollution and contamination through our Trading Standards service
- Investigate and pursue opportunities to increase carbon sequestration through natural solutions such as tree planting
- Work with bus operators to deliver our Bus Service Improvement Plan which will promote affordable, frequent, and high-quality passenger transport services
- Work with the region's transport body, Midlands Connect, to improve passenger rail services
- Work with partners to enable and encourage electrical vehicle ownership and walking and cycling, including through provision of infrastructure

How we will measure success

- Total CO2e emissions from the Council (buildings, sites, street lighting and traffic signs, fleet)
- Amount of renewable energy generated as a percentage of consumption by the Council
- CO2 emissions in the local area within the scope of local authority influence
- Percentage of businesses taking action to reduce their carbon impact



5. Great Communities

This outcome aims for Leicestershire to have active and inclusive communities in which people support each other and participate in service design and delivery. It reflects our aspiration to have frequent dialogue with communities about local priorities, how well services are working and how they could be improved. Communities also need to be resilient; able to avoid, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

The communities we live in and the relationships we have are the primary source of our physical and mental health – which in turn influence the kind of life we are able to live and the part we play in society. Our communities are key assets and by investing in them we can cultivate the conditions for people to flourish.

We will support communities to take advantage of and build on the assets within their local area (e.g. buildings, people, skills and networks) to solve local challenges. We will strengthen community capacity by supporting the VCSE sector and building upon successful partnerships which have been shown to deliver better outcomes for residents, such as our work with district councils during the Covid-19 pandemic to establish community hubs to support the most vulnerable people in our County.

We will use a wider range of engagement methods to ensure residents can have their say in decisions affecting their local areas. Building on the exceptional collaborative work undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic with partners such as district councils, Police and the NHS, we will support communities to minimise the impact of any emergencies and ensure a seamless return to normal life.

5.1 Diversity is celebrated and people feel welcome and included

We are committed to equality and diversity because we believe that everyone deserves to be treated fairly and that people are happier when they can be themselves without fear of discrimination or inequality.

There has been a decrease in the percentage of residents who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (from 96% in 2019/20 to 91% in 2021/22). The rate of hate crime has also increased since the EU referendum and during the pandemic.

Our aims by 2026

- Work with partners to increase community cohesion and tackle hate crime
- Council services are more accessible and inclusive

Our actions

- Deliver our Equalities Strategy to improve service accessibility and equity in employment opportunities
- Fulfil the Race at Work Charter, Disability Confident Scheme and the Stonewall Workforce Equalities Index
- Organise and promote civic events throughout the county to celebrate our diverse communities
- Support the Inter Faith Forum to promote greater understanding and awareness of faith and religion
- Support the Equality Challenge Group to scrutinise our service accessibility and inclusivity
- Work with partners through the Safer Communities Strategy Board to help prevent and tackle hate crime

How we will measure success

- Percentage of residents who feel that in their local area, people from different backgrounds get on well
- Rate of hate crime incidents
- Percentage of residents who agree the Council treats all types of people fairly
- Percentage of the Council workforce who feel that the Council is committed to equality & diversity

5.2 People participate in service design and delivery

Residents should feel that they can get involved in decisions about public services and policies which affect their lives. County Councillors have a key role in representing the needs and interests of residents, however the Council aims to improve how it engages residents in service design and delivery so that more residents feel they can influence Council decisions. Currently, 50% of residents feel well informed about the Council and 69% state that they trust the Council. However, only 32% feel that they can influence Council decisions.

Neighbourhood Plans enable residents to develop a shared vision which shapes development in their local areas. There are now 125 active Neighbourhood Planning group and 35 communities managing their local library, with many of these being community hubs which support the needs of local people.

Our aim by 2026

- Increase in the proportion of residents who feel that they can influence Council decisions

Our actions

- Improve how we engage residents in service design by using a wider range of engagement methods and applying the best practice principles from the Consultation Institute Charter
- Support the development of Neighbourhood Plans by communities which seek to establish them
- Support the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector and town and parish councils in their roles as providers of community-managed services and as community leaders
- Support communities to plan and deliver services, such as libraries and heritage sites



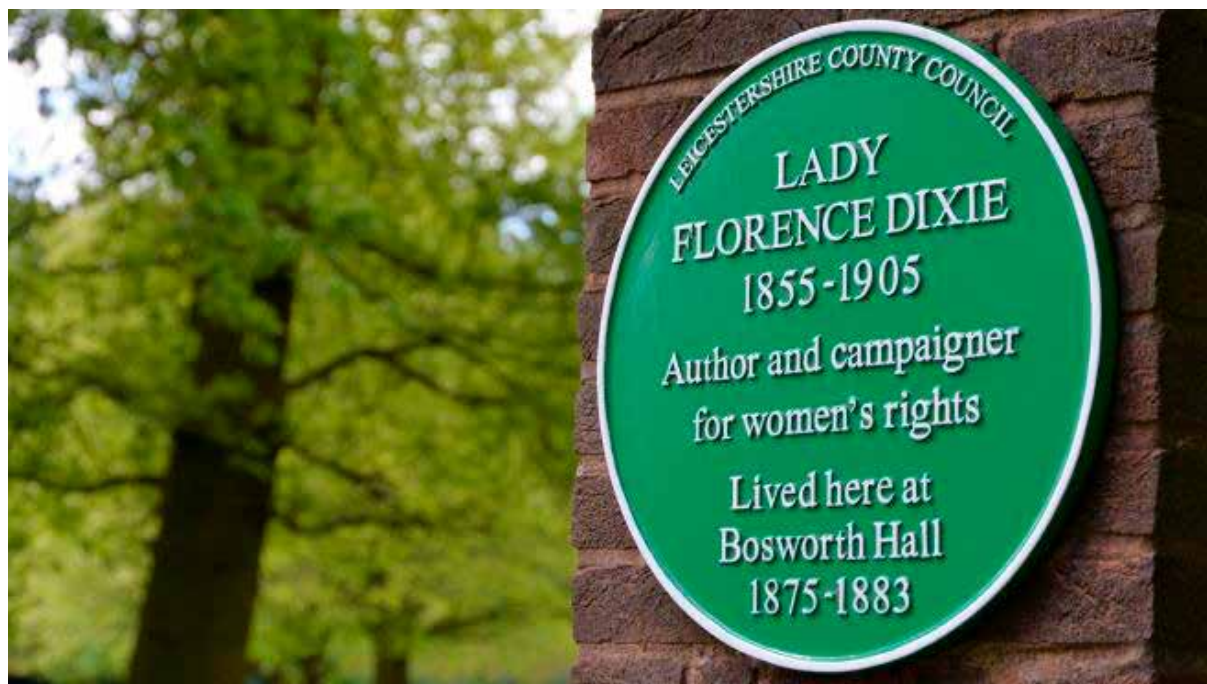
How we will measure success

- Percentage of residents who feel well-informed about the Council
- Percentage of residents who feel that they can influence Council decisions
- Number of Neighbourhood Plans adopted
- Number of communities running their own library

5.3 Cultural and historical heritage are enjoyed and conserved

Culture is our past, present and future. It's what we have inherited, what we are experiencing now and what we would like to see remembered. We want to preserve and make accessible our local cultural and historic heritage to enhance the wellbeing of local residents.

From 2018/19-2019/20, there was an 8% reduction in visits to heritage sites between 2018/19 and 2019/20. Covid-19 has had a significant impact, with the county's heritage sites and libraries having closed during the restrictions. However, services have adapted through digital delivery including virtual museum tours, whilst libraries have seen an 89% increase in the number of e-loans from 2019/20-2020/21.



Our aim by 2026

- Increase in the number of Leicestershire residents and visitors engaging in cultural and heritage activities

Our actions

- Our libraries, heritage, country parks and adult learning programmes will provide accessible community facilities, exhibitions and parks and outdoor activities with a wide range of learning opportunities
- Support communities to engage in cultural and heritage activities and develop their own bespoke programmes of cultural events and activities
- Support schools with a wide range of resources, pupil sessions and professional help to stimulate reading for pleasure and creative learning across the curriculum
- Preserve and provide access to resources which can be used to research Leicestershire's history
- Maintain the County's natural history, artefacts, specimens, information and objects as well as the stories of the people who have made Leicestershire their home for thousands of years
- Offer a wide range of online adult learning courses in venues across Leicestershire

How we will measure success

- Library site and website visits and loans
- Museum and heritage site and website visits

5.4 Communities are prepared for and resilient to emergencies

Covid-19 has highlighted the importance of communities being able to respond to, withstand and recover from adverse situations. Developing a Community Response Plan enables a community to identify the skills, knowledge and resources in their local area which can be mobilised during a crisis. There are currently 53 Community Response Plans across Leicestershire.

Our aim by 2026

- Increase in the number of active Community Response Plans

Our actions

- Work with the local Resilience Partnership to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies
- Support communities to prepare for emergencies by developing Community Response Plans
- Provide business continuity information and advice to businesses and VCSE sector organisations
- Support resilience to changes in climate, such as by fulfilling our duties as Lead Local Flood Authority
- Maintain our Resilient Highways Network to ensure traffic keeps moving despite disruptive events
- Work with partners to provide emergency short-term food and fuel support to those in need

How we will measure success

- Number of active Community Response Plans

5.5 People support each other through volunteering

Volunteers perform a key role in supporting local communities and delivering our vision for Leicestershire. We want to support volunteering opportunities and activity because we recognise the significant contribution which volunteers make in delivering wider community benefit beyond the Council's direct service provision.



Leicestershire has a dynamic and diverse Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, ranging from small grassroots groups to national charities. During the Covid-19 pandemic, VCSE organisations supported vulnerable people whilst experiencing significant financial pressures and increases in demand. There was also a surge in volunteering with over 1,000 volunteers supporting vulnerable people and a further 1,250 assisting with vaccinations. However, pre-pandemic there was a long- term downward trend in volunteer numbers.

Our aims by 2026

- There is a wide variety of volunteering opportunities and activity across Council services
- VCSE organisations remain financially viable and maintain their service delivery

Our actions

- Develop and maintain volunteering opportunities across Council services
- Provide communities with up-to-date information and advice to support and promote volunteering
- Encourage Council staff to volunteer to build links with communities and support local initiatives
- Support volunteers to maintain their health and wellbeing
- Support the growth and development of VCSE organisations by providing targeted grants and funding
- Support VCSE organisations in areas such as governance, income generation and commissioning

How we will measure success

- Percentage of residents who have given unpaid help in the past 12 months
- Number of volunteering enquiries received by Voluntary Action Leicestershire
- Number of volunteering opportunities across Council services
- Number of hours of volunteering by Council-managed volunteers
- Amount of SHIRE Community Grants awarded to VCSE organisations
- Feedback from VCSE organisations regarding current and future challenges



6. Improved Opportunities

This outcome aims to ensure that all children and young people get the best start for life and have the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential, regardless of their circumstances. We believe children are best supported to grow within their own families and as such the outcome reflects our aspiration for families to be self-sufficient. It also aims to ensure that disadvantaged adults, such as those with learning disabilities, autism and/or mental health conditions, are able to aim high and achieve their aspirations.

The impact of disadvantage is felt before a child enters school and can have a significant impact on their future prospects. Whilst the term 'disadvantage' is usually linked to a family's income, it can also be linked to vulnerability in the context of the child's family. For example, children living in a home where there is domestic abuse, poor mental health and/or problematic usage of drugs or alcohol, are at greater risk of experiencing mental illness and engaging in harmful behaviours. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities may also be disadvantaged, and some children face multiple disadvantages.

Education has the potential to drive social mobility and improve outcomes for the next generation. It is estimated that people with five or more good GCSEs have average lifetime productivity gains of £100,000, compared to those with qualifications below this level. It is therefore essential that children arrive at school ready to learn. High quality care in the early years of a child's life supports better readiness for school, stronger cognitive skills and speech and language development. Investing in children's development in the early years therefore benefits children, communities and the wider economy.

Our services will be flexible and responsive to the needs of children and families, providing the right level of support at the right time. Wherever possible children's and families' needs will be met by universal services, however we will also invest in effective, targeted services that identify and support vulnerable families at an early stage. We will work closely with partners, including through Leicestershire's Children and Families Partnership, to help ensure children and young people can reach their full potential.

6.1 Every child gets the best start in life

The first 1,001 critical days from pregnancy to the age of two set the foundations for an individual's cognitive, emotional and physical development. We want to improve how we support families during these 1,001 days.



Leicestershire generally performs well in child and maternal health. However, it is similar to the national average in the percentage of children achieving a good level of development at foundation stage and it ranks in the worst 25% of counties for the percentage of children achieving the expected level of development at age 2-2.5yrs. It also performs poorly in terms of the percentage of eligible 2 year olds taking up free early education (an initiative for low-income households) and the percentage of children eligible for free school meals who achieve a good level of development at age 5.

There are 2 tiers of support for children with special educational needs (SEND): 'SEN Support' and 'Education, Health and Care Plan' (EHCP). EHCPs are the higher level of support. In Leicestershire, the percentage of children with SEND who have an EHCP and achieve a good level of development by age 5 is significantly higher than national average. However, for children on SEN Support, performance is below the national average.

For the past 10 years there have been year-on-year increases in the rate of children looked after in our care. These children are consistently working at below age related expectations when they start school.

Our aims by 2026

- Increase in the percentage of children achieving the expected level of development at age 2-2.5yrs
- Increase in the percentage of children achieving a good level of development at foundation stage

Our actions

- Develop an integrated communication strategy to promote the 1001 Critical Days Children's Manifesto
- Strengthen collaboration with partners to improve education and health outcomes for pre-school children
- Work with partners across education, health and care to promote breastfeeding initiation and continuity
- Inform staff in education, health and care about the needs of children with SEND and available support
- Develop an integrated Early Years Pathway to ensure vulnerable children are identified and supported
- Encourage and support eligible families to access free early education (FEEE)
- Support childcare providers to offer sufficient high-quality early education places
- Protect and strengthen the services provided by our Children and Family Wellbeing Centres
- Support children's development through learning opportunities in libraries (e.g. reading sessions)

How we will measure success

- Percentage of eligible families taking up free early education (FEEE) for their child
- Percentage of children achieving a good level of development at ages 2-2 ½ years
- Percentage of children achieving a good level of development at foundation stage
- Percentage of looked after children achieving age-related expectations when they start school

6.2 Every child has access to good quality education

As of August 2021, Leicestershire had a similar proportion of primary and secondary schools rated either good or outstanding to the national average. The vast majority of children and families are offered their first preference of school placement. However, there is a growing need for school places.



Demand for the higher level of support (EHCPs) for children with SEND has also increased significantly, leading to rising demand for specialist SEND provision. We believe however that most children with SEND should have their needs met in a mainstream school setting at the lower level of support (SEN Support).

Leicestershire has better educational attainment rates than the national average at primary level, however, at secondary level attainment is similar to the national average. Whilst children in our care have significantly poorer educational outcomes than their peers, Leicestershire performs well in this area compared to other counties. Additionally, educational attainment for children with SEND on the higher level of support (EHCP) is better locally than the national average.

However, Leicestershire consistently performs below comparator levels in the educational attainment of children with SEND on the lower level of support (SEN Support). Further, at key stages 2 and 4, educational attainment of children in receipt of free school meals is consistently lower locally than the national average.

Our aims by 2026

- Sufficient, high quality mainstream school places and specialist SEND provision to meet demand
- Improved educational attainment amongst pupils who are more disadvantaged (i.e. those who are in receipt of free school meals, are in our care and/or have special educational needs)

Our actions

Sufficient, high quality mainstream school places and specialist SEND provision to meet growing demand

- Work with partners to ensure that admissions arrangements promote diversity and choice
- Monitor school capacity and extend or build new schools where required
- Implement an ambitious programme to develop SEND provision across the local area, including resources in mainstream schools to promote inclusion and expansion of existing special schools
- Maintain our school buildings and strengthen our relationships with academies to ensure that all school buildings (irrespective of their designation and funding arrangements) are fit for purpose

Improved educational attainment amongst pupils who are more disadvantaged

- Ensure that all children in our care and care leavers access appropriate, stable education placements and positive educational experiences, such as through our Virtual School
- Work with partners through the SEND and Inclusion Board to ensure that all mainstream schools and providers are inclusive, with staff able and supported to meet the learning needs of those with SEND
- Work with further education colleges to develop individualised learning for young people with SEND
- Improve the quality of EHCPs, the EHCP process and Annual Reviews both within the local authority and between the local authority, clinical commissioning group and provider services
- Ensure that when a child or young person needs move to a different educational provision or service, this is done in a timely manner with the appropriate information available

How we will measure success

- Percentage of pupils offered first choice of school (primary / secondary)
- Percentage of schools rated good or outstanding (primary / secondary / special)
- Percentage of pupils achieving the expected level of attainment from Key Stages 1-4

6.3 Families are self-sufficient and enabled to be resilient

Many families have complex needs which require support to enable their children to achieve good outcomes in life. We need to identify issues early and work directly with families in collaboration with other services.

Leicestershire County Council has a strong track record of supporting families experiencing multiple disadvantages to achieve significant and sustained progress through the Supporting Families programme.

Disruption in family lives can lead to children missing education, with the impacts felt by children, families and wider society. Leicestershire has low rates of children missing education. However, the number of children electively home-educated (EHE) has increased significantly in recent years. We need to ensure that families opting for EHE are aware of what is expected of them and able to provide a good quality education.

Our aim by 2026

- Families are able to deal with issues as they arise, and the Council achieves its targets for the number of families achieving progress through the Supporting Families Programme (set at 464 families in 2022/23)

Our actions

- Develop the Leicestershire Information and Support Directory and Local Offer to help families access information, guidance and support
- Support the delivery of Citizens Advice services and crisis and hardship support for people in need
- Work positively with families opting for EHE, offering support to ensure statutory duties are met
- Work across the early help partnership to ensure all agencies are able to identify families who may require additional support at the earliest possible opportunity and provide the best response
- Help avoid children becoming looked after by prioritising investment in early help / preventative services and ensuring children at risk of family breakdown receive timely, and if necessary intensive, support
- Develop our support for young people experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties

How we will measure success

- Percentage of families achieving positive progress through the Supporting Families Programme (Education and learning / Progress to work / Home and money)
- Number / percentage of families achieving significant and sustained progress through the Supporting Families Programme

6.4 Young people and adults are able to aim high and reach their full potential

To fulfil their potential, young people need access to relevant, good quality post-16 education, training and employment opportunities. It is also critical that adults who may be disadvantaged due to learning disabilities and/or mental health issues are able to live as independently as possible and access suitable employment.

Leicestershire performs better than the national average for the percentage of children aged 16-17 who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), at 2.4% in Leicestershire compared to 2.8% nationally, and ranks in the best performing 50% of county areas. Those most likely to be NEET include care leavers, young carers, young offenders and those with learning and/or other disabilities. Leicestershire is in the best performing 25% of county areas for the percentage of care leavers who are in education, employment, or training as well as for the percentage of care leavers who are living in suitable accommodation.



The percentage of young people aged 19 with at least a level 2 qualification is consistently higher locally (better) than the national average, however for those from low-income households who claimed free school meals during school, performance is consistently lower locally than the national average.

Leicestershire is in the best performing 25% of counties for the proportion of people aged 18-64 with a learning disability who are in paid employment and the proportion who are living independently. However, it is in the worst 25% of counties for the proportion of those in contact with secondary mental health services who are in paid employment, and for the proportion living independently.

Our aims by 2026

- Leicestershire performs in the best 25% of counties for the rate of young people aged 16-17 who are NEET

- Leicestershire remains in the best 25% of counties for the percentage of adults with a learning disability who are in paid employment, and the percentage who are living independently
- The percentage of adults in contact with secondary mental health services who are in paid employment, and the percentage who are living independently, increase to be above the national average

Our actions

Preventing young people from becoming NEET

- Support schools to develop statutory individualised careers guidance for vulnerable groups'
- Monitor the progress of learners beyond age 16 to ensure good progress and identify those at risk of becoming NEET in order to target them for additional support to participate in education or training
- Deliver our 'promise' to care leavers (launched in collaboration with district councils, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Combined Fire Authority) to support care leavers to access employment or training through measures such as qualifications and ring-fenced apprenticeships
- Through our Teenagers with Babies Group, deliver actions to reduce NEET amongst teenage parents, such as by ensuring seamless support pathways and improving access to educational opportunities
- Provide children in contact with our Youth and Justice Service with dedicated Education Workers and Careers Advisors to ensure they are actively engaged in education, training or employment
- Support the range of alternative providers for children and young people for whom formal educational placements are not suitable
- Be an active partner with the Enterprise Adviser Network which inspires and prepares young people for the world of work, by linking business/ employer volunteers (Enterprise Advisers) with local schools and colleges
- Be a delivery partner with the European Social Fund Employment Hub (until 2023) which promotes apprenticeship opportunities to businesses. The project brings together businesses and young people.
- Maintain a person-centred process to support transition from childhood to adulthood

Supporting disadvantaged adults to access paid employment and live independently

- Offer engaging 'first steps' learning opportunities through our Adult Learning Service as to increase participation by disadvantaged learners and prepare them for more formal learning
- Work with partners to promote and extend opportunities for supported employment for disadvantaged people
- Support people to live in the least restrictive environments possible by developing more supported accommodation, including 'step down' temporary accommodation, and exploring the benefits of single accommodation units with on-site shared support for adults with mental ill-health

How we will measure success

- Percentage of young people aged 16-17 who are not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) or whose activity is not known
- Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (EET)
- Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation
- Percentage of young people with special educational needs who are in education or training
- Percentages of adults who live independently (learning disabilities / mental health)
- Percentages of adults who are in paid employment (learning disabilities / mental health)

7. Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure

This outcome aims to use local innovation and skills to build a productive, inclusive and sustainable economy at the cutting edge of science, technology and engineering. It reflects the need for our transport, housing and digital infrastructure to meet the demands of a growing population and economy.

Our economy is primed for success. We have unrivalled assets such as a world-class university with one of the UK's largest science parks, a central location with the largest distribution park in Europe and the UK's largest freight airport. Recently, the East Midlands Airport Gateway Industrial Cluster site in North West Leicestershire was selected for Freeport Status. This will provide a significant boost to our strong and growing manufacturing and logistics industries and create up to 60,000 additional jobs.

However, our economy faces significant challenges including lower productivity than the UK. The Covid-19 pandemic has also challenged businesses in terms of their resilience and financial health. Before Covid-19, the Leicester and Leicestershire economy generated £24.5bn in Gross Value Added (GVA). Testament to its resilience and growth potential, we still expect this to increase to £30.2bn by 2030.

We will support people to develop the skills they need to access employment, particularly in our growth sectors. We will help to ensure that our infrastructure provides excellent connectivity – enabling access to opportunities and opening up sites for development – whilst supporting net zero carbon emissions by 2045.

7.1 There is close alignment between skill supply and demand

It is important to ensure that education and skills are well-aligned to the needs of employers as this will drive economic growth and ensure people are able to get good jobs and make progress in their careers.



Local skills needs are driven by the needs of our key sectors (manufacturing and logistics) and other growth sectors such as life sciences, low carbon technologies, creative industries and aerospace. In 2021, a LLEP survey of local businesses found 21% were experiencing recruitment difficulties due to skills issues, 60% needed more basic work-based skills and 33% needed digital skills. The shortfall in overseas workers caused by Covid-19 and EU-Exit may further increase demand for skills, particularly in sectors such as social care.

Leicestershire performs well in the percentage of working-age adults qualified to Levels 2+ and 3+ . It also has a strong further education sector and good supply of graduates to the labour market. However, our growth sectors need for more young people to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) and there are challenges in retaining young people and graduates in Leicestershire.

Our aims by 2026

- Reduction in the proportion of employers reporting skills shortages or gaps
- Increased opportunities in the labour market for young people

Our actions

Reduction in the proportion of employers reporting skills shortages

- Work with partners to:
 - Capture and analyse labour market information to identify growth sectors and skills shortages
 - Support the Further Education sector to expand and improve their facilities and links to growth sectors
 - Develop Skills Plans for growth sectors to help businesses meet their recruitment and skills needs
 - Be an active member of the Digital Skills Partnership to address digital skills deficiencies
 - Provide flexible leadership and management development programmes
 - Promote enterprise skills programmes to support self-employment, start-ups and existing businesses
 - Provide opportunities for learning and skills development through libraries and Adult Learning

Increased opportunities in the labour market for young people

- Work with partners to provide information, advice and guidance on the labour market to parents, teachers and young people
- Work with partners to identify and promote youth pathways into employment in emerging sectors
- Work with partners to provide youth career services such as Careers Hub
- Work with partners to support the graduate retention initiatives of local universities and businesses
- Work with partners to produce an Apprenticeship Strategy and Delivery Plan
- Be a delivery partner with the European Social Fund Employment Hub (until 2023) which promotes apprenticeship opportunities to businesses. The project brings together businesses and young people.
- Through the Kickstart scheme, provide employment for young people at risk of unemployment
- Through our Work and Skills Leicestershire scheme, provide free one-to-one support, advice and information to help people access secure paid employment or training
- Be an active partner with the Enterprise Adviser Network which inspires and prepares young people for the world of work, by linking business/ employer volunteers (Enterprise Advisers) with local schools and colleges

How we will measure success

- Working age population qualification rates
- Unemployment and employment rates
- Percentages of businesses experiencing recruitment issues or skills shortages
- Apprenticeship start and achievement rates

7.2 Leicestershire has the infrastructure for sustainable economic and housing growth

We need our housing, transport and digital infrastructure to support economic and population growth, whilst helping to deliver net zero carbon emissions.



Leicestershire's population is projected to rise by 19% from 2021-2043. There is therefore a need for 96,580 new houses by 2031, which will need to be low carbon and include affordable housing. The number of older people living in Leicestershire is forecast to increase significantly, which will necessitate development of specialist housing suitable for those who are frail and/or disabled. These houses need to be supported by new roads, schools, transport and other infrastructure.

Road networks in Leicestershire are in fair condition with a low percentage of roads requiring structural maintenance. However, there are unreliable journey times caused by congestion on roads in local towns and on parts of the strategic road network. Further, rurality presents challenges for medium and long-distance public transport, meaning it can be difficult to enable opportunities to travel by sustainable modes.

To drive economic growth, we also need an additional 367-423 hectares of land for employment use by 2031. Since 2010, there has been a transformation in the provision of world class business locations in Leicestershire with new office, technology and manufacturing premises accommodating 5,000 jobs. We need to continue to support existing employment areas and identify where further growth should be directed.

Expanding digital connectivity will accelerate economic growth. The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated digital transformation, with employers expecting digital skills to become increasingly important. Whilst this has enhanced business efficiency, productivity and resilience, it has also exposed the 'digital divide' in society with some lacking access to digital technology and connectivity.

Our aim by 2026

- Infrastructure capacity and capability supports growth and net zero carbon emissions

Our actions

- Support district councils in their roles as local housing authorities to improve existing housing stock and maximise opportunities for development of low carbon and affordable houses
- Deliver the Social Care Investment Plan to secure specialist accommodation choices for social care service users, including those who are frail and/or disabled
- Secure financial contributions from developers to support infrastructure (e.g. schools, highways)
- Work with partners to renew existing employment sites and premises where there is demand
- Work with partners to maintain momentum in the development of strategic sites and the Freeport
- Through our Corporate Asset Investment Fund, own and manage a diverse portfolio of property and other investment assets which support economic growth and environmental sustainability
- Provide safe and well-maintained highways which support housing development and economic growth
- Maximise opportunities from technological innovations; utilising evidence gathered on the Major Road Network and key radial routes to support end to end journey planning and better traffic management
- Work with bus operators to deliver our Bus Service Improvement Plan which will promote affordable, frequent, and high-quality passenger transport services
- Engage the logistics sector to better understand its transport infrastructure needs and support the efficient movement of freight into, within and out of Leicestershire
- Work with the sub-national transport body, Midlands Connect, to improve passenger rail services
- Engage HS2 Ltd to ensure that Leicestershire's interests are addressed throughout construction
- Work with partners to enable and encourage electrical vehicle usage, including through infrastructure
- Enhance the infrastructure that supports cycling and walking, such as segregated infrastructure, cycle parking, pedestrian crossings and traffic reduction measures to create healthy streets and spaces
- Work with partners through the LLEP to improve broadband, Wi-Fi and 5G connectivity across Leicestershire and define and implement the Council's first digital connectivity strategy

How we will measure success

- Number of new houses completed
- Number of affordable houses delivered
- Percentage of principal and non-principal roads where structural maintenance should be considered
- Levels of public and business satisfaction with traffic levels
- Rates of travelling by, and public satisfaction with, public transport
- Rates of electrical vehicle ownership and cycling and walking
- Percentage of premises with gigabit-capable broadband

7.3 Leicestershire is an attractive place where businesses invest and flourish

89% of businesses in Leicestershire are micro-sized (employing 9 or fewer people). The number of businesses has increased significantly (+18% between 2014 and 2019), with improvements in start-up and survival rates.

However, productivity rates are lower locally than the national average. This may be partially driven by low investment in research and development (R&D) – a key driver of innovation and productivity. In 2016 R&D expenditure was equivalent to 1.5% GVA in Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire – below the UK average (1.7%) and government target of 3%. This highlights the need to increase investment and activity in R&D and innovation and to lever existing R&D capabilities from our leading corporations.



Leicester and Leicestershire are in a prime location for international businesses; 18% of local businesses exported in 2020, with 83% selling to EU markets. However, businesses need to adapt to the challenges posed by Covid-19 and EU-Exit; the value of goods exported from the UK declined by 16% in 2020.

Our aims by 2026

- Increased investment in Research and Development
- Increase in the number of businesses and business survival rates

Our actions

Growth and expansion of existing innovation and R&D strengths

- Work with partners through the LLEP Innovation Board to drive forward innovation priorities
- Work with partners to ensure the R&D sector has the skills and support to attract new programmes
- Support R&D funding bids and knowledge transfer initiatives to promote investment in R&D
- Support collaboration between businesses and universities to help translate research into innovations
- Work with businesses to develop a culture of innovation and awareness of the performance benefits
- Support our traditional strengths in manufacturing and logistics in addition to growth sectors such as advanced manufacturing and engineering, life sciences, low carbon technologies and aerospace
- Work with partners to encourage foreign and domestic inward investment and expansion into the County, including in the Freeport site
- Develop and implement the Freeport strategy and support for international business
- Advise businesses to assist recovery from Covid-19 and adaptation to new EU trading relationships

How we will measure success

- Rates of businesses and new enterprises per 1,000 population
- Research and Development (R&D) expenditure as a share of Gross Value Added (GVA)
- Gross Value Added (GVA) per job
- Business confidence levels

7.4 Economic growth delivers increased prosperity for all

Inclusive economic growth does not just contribute to Gross Value Added (GVA) in the local economy; it improves living standards by reducing levels of deprivation and creating opportunities for everyone.

Leicestershire is ranked 137th out of 152 upper tier authorities in deprivation (where 1st is the most deprived). It also has a low rate of households at risk of homelessness. However, pockets of deprivation exist, with four neighbourhoods in the county falling within the most deprived 10% in England.

The percentage of school pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average but has risen significantly in recent years. Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) – the amount of money which households have available for spending or saving – is lower than the average amongst county authorities.

Our aim by 2026

- Growth in Gross Value Added (GVA) in the local economy corresponds with a reduction in deprivation

Our actions

- Through the Kickstart scheme, provide employment for young people at risk of unemployment
- Through Work and Skills Leicestershire, provide free information and advice to help people access employment or training
- Deliver gigabit broadband in rural areas to help ensure equality of digital opportunity

How we will measure success

- Gross Value Added (GVA) per head
- Index of Multiple Deprivation
- Percentage of households in fuel poverty
- Percentage of school pupils in receipt of free school meals
- Gross Disposal Household Income (GDHI) per head
- Rates of homelessness and rough sleeping



8. Safe and Well

This outcome aims to ensure that people are safe and protected from harm, live in a healthy environment and have the opportunities and support they need to live active, independent and fulfilling lives.

Good health is a basic precondition for people to take an active role in family, community and work life. Leicestershire performs well across a range of health indicators and has higher average life expectancies than England. However, there are persistent health inequalities; life expectancy is 6.3 years lower for men and 5.0 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Leicestershire compared to the least deprived areas.

Health and wellbeing outcomes are influenced by a range of social, economic and environmental factors, known as the 'wider determinants of health'. These include factors such as early childhood experiences, social support and community inclusivity, crime rates, income levels, educational opportunities, availability of transport, access to nutritious food and safe drinking water and the quality of housing and infrastructure.

The Council can influence these factors in various ways such as by working with partners to build community capacity, support community safety, protect vulnerable people, facilitate skills development and job creation, enhance the quality of housing and infrastructure and promote healthy lifestyles.

We will embed a 'Health in all Policies' approach to systematically consider the health implications of all decisions. We will provide information and advice to support people to take control of their wellbeing and plan for their future. We will identify people who may be at risk of needing social care support and help them to gain or regain the skills they need to live independently. We will also support carers and those with care needs to live active, independent, and fulfilling lives through easy access to person-centred care and support.

We will also help keep people safe by working with partners such as district councils, NHS, Police and Fire and Rescue services to raise awareness of and prevent crime and to identify and protect vulnerable people. This will include work to review and improve our safeguarding practices.

8.1 People are safe in their daily lives

Crime levels are relatively low in Leicestershire compared to other areas. The number of people killed or seriously injured on the County's roads is also low and public satisfaction with road safety is high.

However, crime levels have shown an upward trend and there has been a reduction in the percentage of residents who feel safe when outside in their local area after dark, from 88% in 2019/20 to 79% in 2020/21.

From 2018/19 to 2020/21, there has been a year-on-year reduction in referrals to child safeguarding for child sexual exploitation. However, the rate of referrals for child criminal exploitation is increasing.

Our aims by 2026

- Increase in the percentage of residents who feel safe in their local area
- Fewer children and young people involved in and impacted by criminal behaviour

Our actions

Increase in the percentage of residents who feel safe in their local area

- Work with partners including the Police to raise awareness of and tackle all forms of hate crime
- Help to tackle modern slavery and trafficking by ensuring our suppliers adhere to ethical standards and working with the Modern Slavery Action Group to raise awareness, disrupt crimes and safeguard victims
- Work with partners through the Violence Reduction Unit to help prevent serious violence
- Raise awareness of and tackle scammers and rogue traders who exploit vulnerable consumers

- Work with the Road Safety Partnership to support the Safety Camera Scheme and delivery of Driver Education Workshops as well as speed reduction initiatives including Community Speed Enforcement
- Ensure road safety audits are undertaken during our own projects and those undertaken by others
- Develop a Road Safety Strategy

Fewer children and young people involved in and impacted by criminal behaviour

- Deliver a whole-family approach to prevent children and young people from engaging in crime
- Deliver preventative street-based work in areas with high levels of anti-social behaviour
- Identify and address the exploitation of children and young people and support victims

How we will measure success

- Percentage of residents who feel safe in their local area
- Resident perceptions of the level of anti-social behaviour in the community
- Detriment to consumers prevented by Trading Standards
- Number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads
- Road safety satisfaction levels
- Rate of referrals to child safeguarding for child sexual or criminal exploitation
- Rate of first time entrants to the criminal justice system aged 10-17
- Hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object amongst under-25s

8.2 People at the most risk are protected from harm

There is a long-term upward trend in demand for child safeguarding, with an increase in the rate of safeguarding investigations and children on child protection plans. The rate of children looked after by the Council has also increased year-on-year for the past 10 years.



Whilst the rate of reported domestic abuse-related incidents remains below the national average, it has increased in Leicestershire from 21.1 per 1,000 population in 2017/18 to 23.1 in 2019/20. The Leicestershire Needs Assessment undertaken by Safelives in 2021 shows a year-on-year increase in under-18s becoming victims of domestic abuse. In 2020/21 this equated to almost a doubling on the previous year.

Our aim by 2026

- Vulnerable children and adults are identified and protected from harm and abuse

Our actions

Vulnerable children and adults are identified and protected from harm and abuse

- Risk assess and quality assure care providers to ensure services are safe and protect vulnerable children and adults
- Work with partners to review the lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic regarding safeguarding
- Improve how we safeguard babies by establishing robust procedures and raising awareness of risk factors
- Develop a communications strategy to deliver universal safety messages to children and young people
- Combat sexual violence and domestic abuse by delivering our Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy (2022-5) – protecting survivors and their families in safe and appropriate accommodation and improving our understanding of perpetrators and how to respond to them
- Develop trauma-informed practices across the Leicestershire Children and Families Partnership to support children to recover from Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Raise awareness amongst communities to prevent people becoming victims and ensure they know how to seek help and have the confidence to do so
- Improve our understanding of the impact of equality and diversity issues on access to safeguarding

How we will measure success

- Percentage of safeguarding enquiries where the desired outcome was fully or partially achieved
- Percentage of service users who say that services make them feel safe
- Domestic crime and incident rate
- Number of safe accommodation spaces for domestic abuse victims
- Children's placement stability rates
- Rates of re-referrals to Children's Social Care within 12 months

8.3 People enjoy long lives in good health

As highlighted previously, the health of people in Leicestershire is generally better than the England average. However, healthy life expectancy (an estimate of how many years people might live in a 'healthy' state) is only marginally higher than the national average and there are significant health inequalities in the county.

Health outcomes are influenced by a wide range of social, economic and environmental factors, known as the 'wider determinants of health'. For example, air pollution, particularly fine particulate matter (PM2.5), is a significant health hazard. PM2.5 is the 3rd leading cause of preventable deaths in Leicestershire.

We are living in an obesogenic environment, with an abundance of energy dense food, motorised transport and sedentary lifestyles. Two thirds of adults, and one third of children in year 6, are either overweight or obese. There has been an increase in physically inactive adults, from 19.5% in 2018/19 to 21.9% in 2019/20. Some areas of the county have higher rates of overweight/obesity and physical inactivity than England. There is a need to improve the healthy weight environment such as by promoting sustainable/active travel, reducing the number of fast food outlets and providing people with skills and resources to cook and eat healthily.



Leicestershire has high rates of people reporting low happiness and high anxiety. Although there is a low rate of suicides in Leicestershire compared to other counties, the county has a high rate of excess deaths amongst those aged under 75 with a severe mental illness. These excess deaths are explained not only by suicides and accidents but also physical illnesses; studies show that that all-cause mortality in people with severe mental illness is 2 to 3.5 times higher than in the general population.

Our aims by 2026

- Improved healthy life expectancy and reduced health inequalities
- Increased proportion of residents with a healthy weight
- Improved mental wellbeing and reduced prevalence of mental ill health

Our actions

Improved healthy life expectancy and reduced health inequalities

- Deliver a wider determinants programme of work to address the social, economic and environmental factors which influence health outcomes, thereby improving health and reducing health inequalities
- Embed a Health Equity in All Policies approach to help ensure our decisions improve health outcomes
- Through Healthy Together 0-19, provide Health Visiting and School Nursing to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people
- Provide information and advice to enable people to access health and wellbeing services and resources
- Identify those at risk of needing social care support and intervene early to maintain wellbeing
- Deliver our Substance Misuse Strategy (2020-23) to support people to make informed healthy lifestyle choices to reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drug misuse and improve their wellbeing

Increased proportion of residents with a healthy weight

- Work with partners to create an environment which facilitates healthy choices
- Support people to achieve and maintain a healthy weight through prevention, self-management and weight management support
- Prioritise healthy weight through systems leadership, creating a workforce that are confident to promote healthy weight

Improved mental wellbeing and reduced proportion of residents experiencing mental ill health

- Promote positive mental health and awareness of risk factors for poor mental health
- Sustain excellent customer satisfaction with our cultural, wellbeing and adult learning services; promoting and facilitating access to libraries, museums and learning centres to promote wellbeing
- Support communities to engage in cultural and heritage activities and develop their own bespoke programmes of cultural events and activities
- Ensure that our residential planning applications for our own land enable public access to green space, and support district councils to develop plans to improve public access to green space
- Implement 'Making Every Contact Count Plus' to deliver brief interventions which enhance wellbeing
- Work with partners such as the NHS to ensure the early detection and treatment of mental health and wellbeing needs and improve access to mental health services for all ages

How we will measure success

- Average healthy life expectancy
- Percentages of adults walking / cycling for travel at least 3 days per week
- Levels of air pollution – fine particulate matter
- Percentage of residents with access to green space within a 10 minute walk
- Percentages of children / adults who are physically active
- Percentages of children / adults classified as overweight or obese
- Rate of school pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs
- Rates of hospital admissions for mental health conditions (under 18s)
- Self-reported wellbeing measures
- Rate of excess under 75 mortality rate in adults with serious mental illness

8.4 Carers and people with care needs are supported to live active, independent, and fulfilling lives

Leicestershire ranks in the best 25% of county areas for the performance of its reablement services, which support those with physical or mental health needs to maintain or regain their independence and avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital or residential care. Leicestershire also has low rates of adults being admitted into residential or nursing care which is important as research suggests that people tend to prefer alternative accommodation options.

Further, in Leicestershire, a high proportion of people with social care needs receive personalised care and support through direct payments or personal budgets which enable them to choose the services they receive.

However, there is a need for improvement in the proportion of people who find it easy to access information about adult social care services and in the quality of life and overall satisfaction of those who receive care and support. As highlighted previously, the number of older people, and those living with dementia and/or mobility problems, is forecast to increase significantly. Some will require housing adaptations and others will need specialist housing and support.

Our aims by 2026

- Increase in the proportion of people who find it easy to access information and advice about adult social care services
- Improvements in the experiences of those who receive adult social care and support
- Carers feel more recognised, valued and supported to undertake their caring role

Our actions

Increase in the proportion of people who find it easy to access information and advice about adult social care services

- Improve access to information and advice through digital channels including the Directory of Services
- Work with partners to proactively provide advice and information about housing, including development of social prescribing and encouraging people to plan for their future housing needs
- Provide quality information, advice and guidance for those living with dementia and their carers

Improvements in the experiences of those who receive adult social care and support

- Respond to customer feedback to improve satisfaction with our adult social care services
- Recruit and train a skilled and resilient social care workforce, whilst inspiring more people to work in the sector and improving job satisfaction through rewarding careers and opportunities
- Work with the NHS to deliver integrated services at the point of delivery with seamless transitions between health and social care
- Enable people to be self-reliant and independent through crisis support and reablement services
- Work with partners to provide carers and/or those with care needs with the right equipment and technology to enable them to live independently for longer
- Review progress on the Living Well with Dementia Strategy (2019-22) and co-produce a new strategy
- Explore solutions to transport issues to enable older people to remain active and independent
- Support people receiving direct payments to choose the provision suitable to meeting their outcomes
- Deliver the Social Care Investment Plan to secure specialist accommodation choices for social care service users, including those who are frail and/or disabled

Carers feel recognised, valued, and supported to undertake their caring role

- Work with partners to identify carers and ensure they are signposted to information and services
- Provide opportunities for carers to inform and shape service development
- Develop carer-friendly communities by raising awareness about the needs of carers
- Promote health checks for carers to help them to maintain their own physical and mental health
- Work with housing providers and others to ensure carers can access equipment and adaptations
- Ensure carers can access assessments which determine if they require further social care support



How we will measure success

- Percentages of service users / carers who find it easy to find information about support
- Percentages of service users / carers receiving self-directed support
- Percentage of service users who have control over their daily life
- Percentages of service users / carers who have as much social contact as they would like
- Percentage of people who had no need for ongoing services following reablement
- Percentages of service users / carers who are satisfied with their care and support



9. Strategic Change Portfolio

The Council's Strategic Change Portfolio (SCP) outlines how it will transform operational service delivery to maintain or improve outcomes. It consists of four key programmes:

- Sustainable Finances
- Customer & Digital
- Carbon Reduction
- Ways of Working

Overseen by the Council's Transformation Delivery Board, and managed through Departmental Change and Programme Boards, the SCP contains targets and deliverables for each programme as described below.



9.1 Sustainable Finances Programme

The savings requirements contained within the Council's annually refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) remain a central driver for the Council's change portfolio. However, the scale of the financial and transformation challenge is increasing, with the simple changes having been made and the straightforward savings long-since delivered. What remains is complex change, often involving multiple partners and many risks. The body of work contained within the portfolio, refreshed annually, currently represents future savings targets in excess of £48m, including £21m for services supporting those with special educational needs (SEND).

9.2 Customer & Digital Programme

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed customer expectations of how our services should be delivered and the need for more immediate access to information and support via a broader range of channels is greater than ever before. In response to the changing needs of our citizens we will focus on developing and delivering against an improved, council-wide customer and channel strategy which supports the delivery of modern and effective services in the most efficient and sustainable way. By promoting innovative, digital ways of working, we will seek to shape the Council's interaction with its customers as part of our digital revolution and to enable improved customer journeys leading to an enhanced customer experience and faster, first time resolution of customer needs.

Our aims by 2026

- Customers directed to the right channel, at the right time, in the most efficient way
- Council service access channels maximise citizen value whilst reducing costs
- A whole system approach is taken to designing our customer journey and back-office processes

Our actions

Customers directed to the right channel, at the right time, in the most efficient way

- Develop and implement Customer and Digital strategies to support high-quality, consistent customer experience through improved digital services
- Increase our understanding of customers and actively involve them in our channel development
- Ensure services are accessible through multiple channels (e.g. digital access, telephone and face-to-face channels) so no groups are excluded and engage with Leicestershire Equality Challenge Group to further identify and mitigate the impact of digitalisation on those with protected characteristics
- Develop a community-based programme to support residents to learn how to use digital technology
- Improve front-end communications interfaces to ensure enquiries are directed to the right channel
- Deliver a new target operating model for our Customer Service Centre

Our customer channels maximise citizen value whilst reducing the cost of service

- Increase the amount of automation for repetitive, low value activities and integrations
- Increase service user adoption of digital solutions by driving a cultural shift to “digital by choice”
- Improve our ability to resolve queries on first contact using the optimal channel

A whole system approach is taken to designing our customer journey and back-office processes

- Work with Council Departments to develop and deliver improved customer journeys
- We will improve our contact and system data to inform continuous improvement activity
- We will seek to exploit emerging technologies and system integration where possible to enable more streamlined end-to-end working



How we will measure success

- Customer satisfaction levels
- Cost reduction and avoidance
- Response handling rates
- Application of digital tools and processes
- Rates of channel shift to automated and self-serve processes

9.3 Carbon Reduction Programme

The Carbon Reduction Programme aims to achieve net zero carbon from the Council's own operations by 2030, with an interim target of 64% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2025 (compared to 2016/17).

Leicestershire County Council is ahead of target in the delivery of net-zero emissions by 2030. From 2008/09-2020/21, the Council reduced the greenhouse gas emissions from its own operations by 74%. This may have been further supported by impact of Covid-19 in reducing business mileage and emission from our estate.

There are also increasing opportunities to secure external funding and investment to reduce our carbon emissions. The most recent success has been in our bid for decarbonisation funding, securing £3.6m towards works on our key buildings, including expansion of the biomass heating system across County Hall.

However, meeting the ambitious net-zero 2030 target remains a significant challenge, particularly due to the challenging financial position of the council and demands on resources. Our aims and actions to deliver this programme are set out in the section on the 'Clean and Green' outcome ([see here](#)).

9.4 Ways of Working Programme

The Covid-19 pandemic saw a huge shift in organisational culture – with many working from home for the first time. This led to a change in how we work with each other and provide services. There is now a need for greater flexibility and remote working which will be delivered through our Ways of Working Programme.

Our aims by 2026

- All staff have the technology and training needed to do their job effectively
- The way we work embodies continuous improvement, innovation, and ambition
- Council-operated workplaces are a shared resource based on need, where people can collaborate

Our actions

All staff are provided with the technology and training needed to do their job effectively

- Provide all staff with an assigned 'worker style' and the IT kit they need
- Ensure all IT equipment is replaced in good time to ensure technology is effective and productive
- Ensure all staff can work remotely through specialist technology, software and remote access
- Staff meetings to be 'digital by default' - hybrid and face-to-face meetings will be supported

The way we work embodies continuous improvement, innovation, and ambition

- Focus on objectives and outputs not on presenteeism for office-based staff
- Empower staff to choose where they work, whilst prioritising service and customer needs
- Senior leaders and managers to lead by example – champion > role model > challenge

Council-operated workplaces are a shared resource based on need, where staff and customers can collaborate

- Set up workplaces to support collaboration, productivity, wellbeing and customer service
- Prioritise space for activities - flexibility to be the norm with fixed desks kept to minimum
- Encourage staff to work as flexibly as possible, using a mix of workplaces (offices, working from home, remote working) to best meet service and customer needs and support staff wellbeing.



How we will measure success

- Productivity levels
- Business mileage costs
- Property costs and income generation
- Staff wellbeing indicators and sickness absence rates
- Recruitment and retention indicators
- Environmental impact



10. Medium Term Financial Strategy

Delivery of this Strategic Plan is enabled by the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which sets out a credible financial plan supporting the aims and actions in the Plan.

The Council is operating in an extremely challenging financial environment following a decade of austerity and spending pressures, particularly from social care. This has been further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and there is significant uncertainty around future funding levels. Despite this, we will deliver this Strategic Plan by focusing our available resources on the key priorities set out in previous sections.

Our aims by 2026

- Delivered a revenue budget and capital programme which reflected the Council's key priorities
- Maintained a sustainable financial position that ensures the Council is resilient to financial shocks
- An improved financial position for Leicestershire arising from progress on Fair Funding

Our actions

- Raise awareness of our financial position and maintain transparency around our savings proposals
- Target efficiency savings and new income generation before service reductions
- Regularly update assumptions to support the efficient flow of resources to Council priorities
- Promote a culture of forward planning to ensure there is time for corrective action
- Embed financial discipline in decision-making to increase value for money for taxpayers
- Through our Corporate Asset Investment Fund, invest in commercial schemes to generate income



How we will measure success

- Level of risk in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)'s Financial Resilience Index
- Avoidance of unplanned in-year budget cuts or short-term, reactive actions to resolve unforeseen financial issues

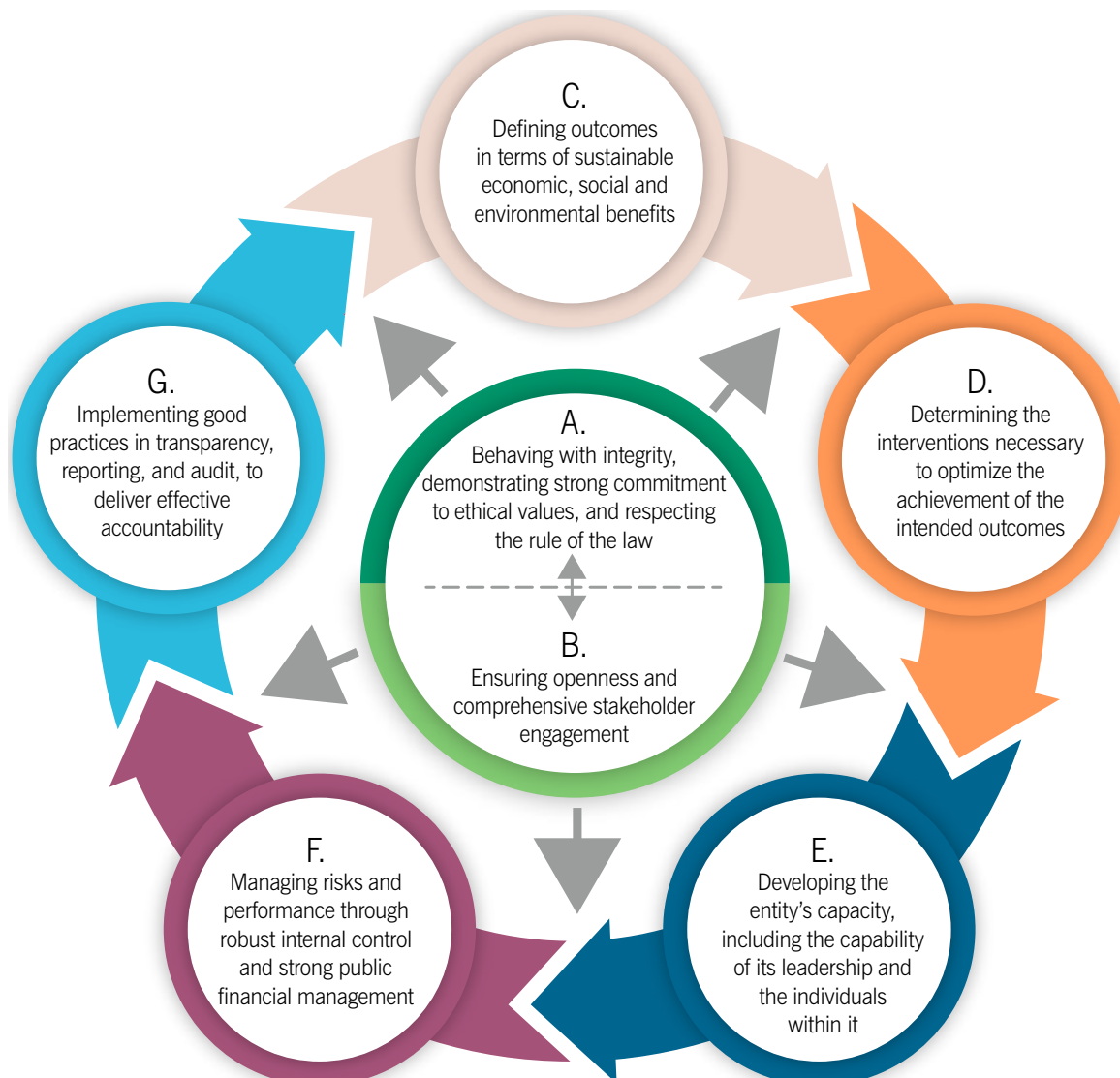
11. Enabling Services

Delivery of this Plan is dependent on a wide range of 'back-office' services such as Finance, IT, HR, Legal, Communications, Property Services, Strategy and Business Intelligence, Democratic Services and Business Support. These organisation-wide functions support frontline services by providing business support based on specialised knowledge, best practice and technology. They also support good governance, ensuring that:

- Resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities
- There is sound and inclusive decision making
- There is clear accountability for the use of those resources

Good governance is about ensuring the Council is doing the right things, in the right way and for the benefit of the communities it serves. It leads to high standards of management, strong performance, effective use of resources and positive outcomes. The diagram to the right illustrates the core principles of good governance which the Council is committed to and how they relate to each other: Principles A and B permeate implementation of principles C to G.

Back-office services have a key role in ensuring that the Council adheres to these principles and achieves positive outcomes for service users. For example, Strategy and Business Intelligence support principle C by assisting decision-makers in defining the Council's overall vision and outcomes. Additionally, Finance support Principle F by enforcing financial discipline, strategic resource allocation and efficient service delivery.



11.1 Leicestershire County Council Values and Behaviours

Good governance flows from shared values and culture. Our values, set out below, underpin everything we do and describe how we will deliver this Plan.



12. Performance Management

The Council's progress and performance in delivering this Plan will be monitored by Outcome Boards.

Council Departments will be required, through their annual service planning processes, to identify actions for each forthcoming year which will help to achieve the aims set out in this Plan. The Outcome Boards will monitor progress in the delivery of these actions, as well as other actions already set out in this Plan. They will also ensure that all Council plans and strategies align with and supports the aims in this Plan.

Outcome Boards will provide 6-monthly highlight reports to our Corporate Management Team in order to inform strategic decision-making and resource allocation. The Council's Scrutiny Committees will receive quarterly updates and our Annual Performance Reports will provide a summary of progress each year.



Consultation Responses and Revisions to the Strategic Plan (2022-26)

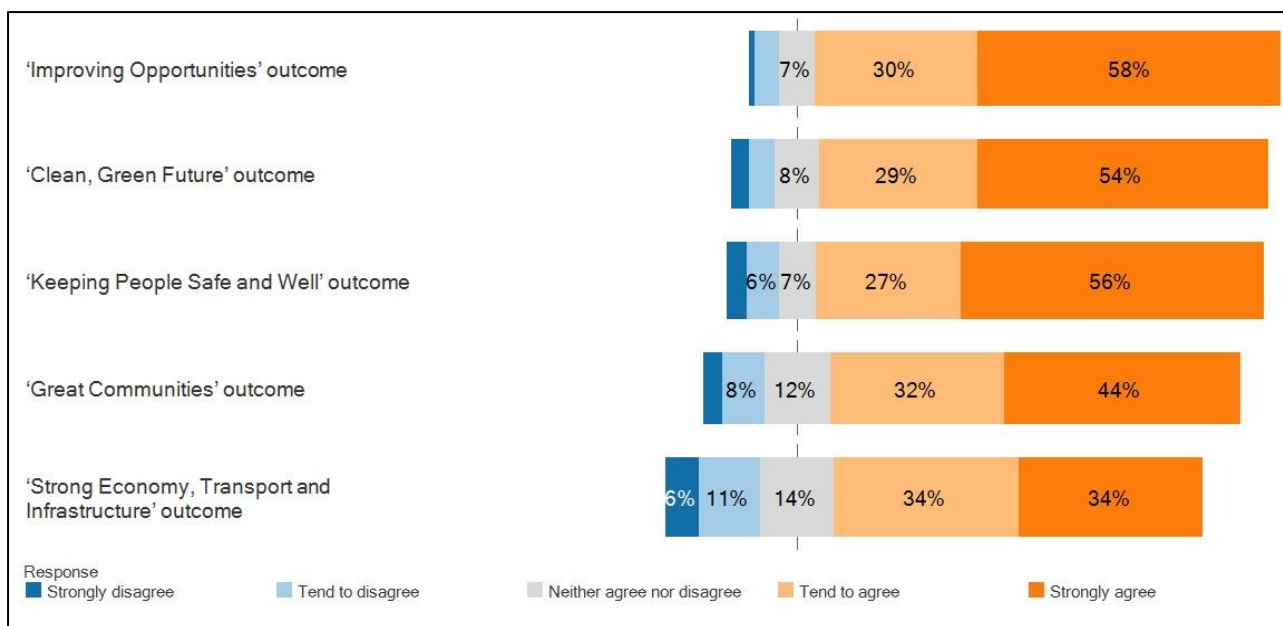
Format and Structure

1. During consultation, there was a view that the Plan was too long and that detail about the Council's actions could be set out separately. Some also commented that whilst the Plan identified what success would look like, it did not adequately quantify this or set a benchmark against which performance could be measured.
2. In addition, some stated that the Plan included aspirations which were outside the Council's control. Recognising that the Council often has a broader role as a partner, enabler and facilitator, it was suggested that the Plan should more clearly differentiate between those aspirations for which the Council would have lead responsibility, and those where it would have a contributing/partnership role; specifying which partners it would work with to deliver the actions in the Plan. Some also challenged the lack of reference to district and borough councils.
3. Response to this feedback:
 - The length of the Plan has been reduced by cutting down on unnecessary text and merging or removing aims and actions where appropriate. Further, images have been added to improve the visual appeal of the document.
 - Quantitative targets tend to be established through annual service planning processes and supporting strategies, as this allows for the targets to reflect current service capacity and pressures. However, quantitative targets have now been added for some aims in the Plan such as those around CO2 emissions and the supporting families programme. Additionally, to provide greater clarity on what the Council is aiming to achieve by 2026, the Plan also now includes, under 'how we will measure success', the key performance indicators which will be monitored to identify if each aim is being achieved. Finally, it should be noted that each sub-outcome in the Plan includes a summary of current performance, which can be used as a benchmark against which to measure future progress.
 - The Plan refers to the need for the Council to 'work with partners' to deliver certain actions and now includes a definition (in the glossary) of 'partners'. It also now refers to collaboration with specific partners, such as district councils, to deliver specific actions. Further, the Plan highlights effective collaboration with district councils. For example, the introduction to the '*Great Communities*' outcome sets out the Council's desire to build upon successful partnerships, such as work with district councils during the Covid-19 pandemic, to establish community hubs to support vulnerable people.

Vision

4. There was a high level of support for the Council's vision. Of the 259 public survey respondents, 79% agreed with the outcomes, with 42% strongly agreeing. Similarly, 79% agreed with the vision statement, with 39% strongly agreeing. Only 10% disagreed. There was particularly strong support for the following outcomes:
 - *'Improving Opportunities'*: 88% agreed, of which 58% strongly agreed
 - *'Clean, Green Future'*: 83% agreed, of which 54% strongly agreed
 - *'Keeping People Safe and Well'*: 83% agreed, of which 56% strongly agreed
5. However, there was less, albeit still substantial, support for the following outcomes:
 - *'Great Communities'*: 76% agreed, of which 44% strongly agreed
 - *'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure'*: 68% agreed, of which 34% strongly agreed (notably 17% disagreed)
6. As will be shown in the relevant sub-section below, it appears that the primary reasons for the lower level of support for the *'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure'* outcome were concerns that housing development would have a negative impact on the environment and may not be accompanied by necessary infrastructure (e.g. schools and public transport networks).
7. Whilst there was significant support for the vision statement (particularly the references to inclusivity, greener living and healthy communities), some stated that it did not add value, as the vision was already summarised by the five outcomes.

Chart 1: The extent to which public survey respondents agreed or disagreed with each outcome



8. Response to this feedback:

- See relevant sub-sections below for response on specific outcomes.
- Removed the single-line vision statement

Clean, Green Future

- The '*Clean, Green Future*' outcome aims for the environment to be protected and to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and unsustainable resource usage. There was a high level of support for this outcome, as well as for the specific aims which the Council intended to achieve by 2026 to progress towards it. Over 90% of survey respondents rated each of the aims as either 'fairly important' or 'very important'.
- There were, however, concerns that the outcome may not be compatible with the Council's aims to support housing and infrastructure development.

Other requests included:

- Enable and promote sustainable transport
- Attract 'green' / environmentally-friendly businesses
- Educate residents on climate change
- Reduce the volume of waste produced locally
- Work with farmers to tackle climate change
- Remove reference to installation of new gas boilers

11. Response to this feedback:

- Outcome name revised to '*Clean and Green*' to ensure consistency following changes to the names of other outcomes (set out in sub-sections below).
- The Introduction / Foreword now acknowledges the challenges involved in supporting economic growth whilst achieving a '*Clean and Green*' future for Leicestershire and highlights how the Council intends to achieve this.
- Further actions have been added to sub-outcomes 4.1 (community action to tackle climate change), 4.4 (low carbon economy) and 7.2 (sustainable infrastructure) to show how the Council will enable and promote cycling and walking through enhanced infrastructure, cycle information and training, as well as and work with partners to improve bus and rail services.
- An action has been added to sub-outcome 4.4 (low carbon economy) to work with partners to enhance the capacity of SMEs to supply low-carbon products and services, expand links between businesses and universities to enhance low-carbon research and development and develop a central integrated hub for demonstration of low-carbon technology.
- The Plan includes an action (sub-outcome 4.1) to raise environmental awareness amongst communities and businesses to promote positive action.
- The Plan now includes under sub-outcome 4.3 (sustainable resource usage) actions to reduce the volume of waste produced in Leicestershire, including supporting the national Love Food Hate Waste campaign, delivering food waste prevention classes and providing a SHIRE Environment Grant scheme to enable communities to conduct their own waste prevention activities.
- The Plan includes an action under sub-outcome 4.2 (nature) to support sustainable farming practices which maintain and enhance biodiversity.
- Removed the reference under sub-outcome 4.1 (community action to tackle climate change) to installing new gas boilers through Warm Homes. The action is now to support people to be more efficient in energy and water use.
- Further detail on how the Council will deliver the actions above will be set out in relevant supporting strategies such as the Council's Environment Strategy.

Great Communities

12. The '*Great Communities*' outcome aims for inclusive communities in which people support each other and participate in service design and delivery. Whilst most agreed with the outcome, there was varied support for the Council's aims by 2026.
13. There was significant support for the aims to:
 - Ensure Council services are accessible and inclusive

- Support the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector
- Increase community cohesion and tackling hate crime
- Increase the % of residents who feel they can influence Council decisions

14. However, there was less support for the aims to:

- Increase engagement in cultural and heritage activities
- Sustain the increase in volunteering seen during the pandemic
- Increase the number of Neighbourhood Plans adopted
- Increase the number of active Community Response Plans

15. Similarly, during the 3 staff briefings on the draft revised Strategic Plan, the aim around cultural and heritage activities was consistently seen as the least important.

16. Feedback suggested that the aim to sustain a high rate of volunteering was perceived by some to indicate the Council attempting to shift its responsibilities onto unpaid volunteers. Some requested that the Plan highlight the role of Councillors in enabling residents to influence Council decisions. There was also a view that the action under sub-outcome 5.2 (public participation) to support town and parish councils indicated insufficient acknowledgement of 'non-parished' areas.

17. Response to this feedback:

- A sentence has been added under sub-outcome 5.4 (volunteering) to clarify that the Council aims to support volunteering opportunities and activity as it recognises the significant contribution which volunteers make in delivering wider community benefit beyond the Council's direct service provision.
- Revised wording of the aim for a 'sustained increase in volunteering post-pandemic' to read 'There is a wide variety of volunteering opportunities and activity across Council services'. This reflects feedback that the aims should be more focused on areas over which the Council has direct control.
- The aim under sub-outcome 5.2 (public participation) to 'increase the number of Neighbourhood Plans adopted' has been removed, as feedback suggests that this was not seen as important, and it was challenged on the basis that it is not a County Council function. The Plan still, however, includes an action for the Council to support development of Neighbourhood Plans as this helps to achieve the aim of 'increasing the proportion of residents who feel they can influence Council decisions'.
- The Plan now refers in sub-outcome 5.2 (public participation) to the role of County Councillors in representing the needs and interests of residents. However, it sets out the Council's desire to improve how it

engages with residents in service design and delivery so that more residents feel they can influence Council decisions.

- The actions in sub-outcome 5.2 (public participation) show how the Council intends to engage all residents in service design and delivery – not just those from areas with a Town or Parish Council. To further emphasise this, the action to support town and parish councils in their roles as providers of community-managed services and community leaders has been expanded to include supporting the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, which covers both ‘parished’ and ‘non-parished’ areas.

Improving Opportunities

18. The *‘Improving Opportunities’* outcome aims for every child to get the best start for life with access to a good quality education and for everyone to have the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential. It was the most popular outcome, with each of the Council’s aims to deliver it rated as either fairly or very important by over 90% of survey respondents, and over 60% rating each aim as ‘very important’.
19. However, some suggested that the outcome may not be achievable due to reductions in youth and education services. There was also a view that to deliver the outcome mainstream schools would need more resources to support children with special educational needs who have an Education, Health and Care Plan.
20. Although the emphasis on children and families was welcomed, there was a view that the outcome should also focus on supporting young people and adults to access education and employment opportunities.
21. Other requests included:
 - Promote alternative career paths to university (e.g. vocational routes)
 - Highlight the role of libraries (e.g. reading sessions for children)
 - Add more detail on how families will be supported to be self-sufficient
 - Revise targets around post-16 outcomes to be more ambitious
 - Revise outcome name to ‘Improved Opportunities’ to support consistency
22. Response to this feedback:
 - The name of the outcome has been revised to *‘Improved Opportunities’*.
 - The Council’s aims to progress towards this outcome by 2026 are considered realistic and attainable, despite funding pressures.
 - The Plan highlights the Council’s intention for most children with special educational needs (SEND) to have their needs met in a mainstream school setting at the lower level of support (SEN Support). It also includes an action to help ensure mainstream schools have the resources to promote inclusion.

- Sub-outcome 6.4, 'everyone is able to aim high and reach their full potential', has been revised to read 'young people and adults are able to aim high and reach their full potential' to reflect that it is focused on ensuring people can access education and employment from age 16 onwards.
- The Council is keen to promote youth pathways into employment including academic and vocational routes. The Plan includes under sub-outcome 6.4 actions to ensure young people receive individualised careers guidance and can access alternative education providers if formal education is not suitable. There are also actions under sub-outcome 7.1 (skills) to help improve further education facilities and promote apprenticeships. An action has been added to this sub-outcome to 'be a delivery partner with the European Social Fund Employment Hub (until 2023) which promotes apprenticeship opportunities to businesses'. Additionally, an action has been added to sub-outcome 6.4 (post-16 outcomes) to work with partners through the Local Enterprise Partnership to support the Enterprise Adviser Network which inspires and prepares young people for the world of work, by linking business/employer volunteers (Enterprise Advisers) with schools and colleges.
- The aims to progress towards sub-outcome 6.4 (post-16 outcomes) by 2026 have been revised to be more ambitious. They now aim for Leicestershire to be in the best performing 25% of counties for the rate of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), to remain in the best performing 25% of counties for the percentage of people with learning disabilities who in paid employment and the percentage who are living independently. The sub-outcome also includes an aim for the percentages of people in contact with secondary mental health services who are in paid employment / living independently to be above the national average – this is because Leicestershire performs below the national average in this area currently, so it is considered realistic and achievable (i.e. not too ambitious) to aim for above the national average in this specific area by 2026
- The Plan now includes under sub-outcomes 6.1 (early years) and 7.1 (skills) actions to provide learning opportunities through libraries and adult learning.
- The Plan sets out under sub-outcome 6.3 (family resilience) how the Council will support families to be resilient and self-sufficient. This includes providing information and advice, supporting families in a crisis, early identification and prevention and assisting families who decide to educate their child at home.

Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure

23. The '*Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure*' outcome aspires for Leicestershire to have a productive, inclusive and sustainable economy and infrastructure which meets the demands of a growing population and economy.

24. As outlined previously, it was consistently the least popular of the 5 outcomes. Public survey feedback considered the aim around housing development to be the least important, with 42% respondents describing it as either not at all important (23%) or not very important (19%). During both the public survey and the 3 County Council staff briefings on the Plan, this aim was consistently rated as the least important of all aims in the Plan.
25. There was also relatively low support for the aims to support Research and Development (R&D), increase the number of businesses in Leicestershire and ensure there are sufficient employment sites for growth. However, there was a high level of support for increasing labour market opportunities for young people, addressing skills shortages, supporting inclusive economic growth, and ensuring infrastructure supports growth and net zero emissions.
26. It seems that the aim to support housing development was least popular due to concerns that it would undermine delivery of a 'Clean and Green' future in Leicestershire due to the building of new houses in greenfield areas. This led some to request clarification on which is a greater priority to the Council between 'green' and 'growth'. There were also concerns that new houses may not be supported by necessary infrastructure (e.g. schools, health facilities and public transport).
27. There was also a frequent theme around the need to better enable and promote sustainable transport, such as cycling and walking as well as affordable and frequent buses and trains. It was suggested that achieving the aims for this outcome would require investment in this area to avoid excessive congestion.
28. Other requests included:
 - Highlight the role of libraries in supporting skills and employment
 - Clarify how the Council will support green technologies
 - Build networks between schools and employers to address skills gaps
 - Encourage businesses to commit to more apprenticeships
 - Focus less on supporting logistics sector and more on growth sectors
29. Response to this feedback:
 - Removed the sub-outcome around housing, with the key actions to support housing development shown instead to support the infrastructure sub-outcome (7.2). This reflects the low popularity of the aims around housing, as well as the fact that the planning of housing is a district council responsibility rather than the County Council. Further, listing the actions to support housing provision in the sub-outcome around infrastructure highlights that the Council considers the wider infrastructure requirements of housing developments.
 - Removed the aim 'sufficient employment sites and premises for growth'
 - The Introduction / Foreword now acknowledges the challenges involved in supporting economic growth whilst achieving a 'Clean and

Green' future for Leicestershire and highlights how the Council intends to achieve this.

- Actions have been added to sub-outcome 7.2 (infrastructure) for the Council to enable and promote cycling and walking through enhanced infrastructure and to deliver a Bus Service Improvement Plan as well as work with Midlands Connect to improve passenger rail services.
- Sub-outcome 7.1 (skills) highlights the role of libraries in supporting skills.
- Sub-outcome 4.4 (low carbon economy) includes an action to work with partners to develop the training and skills routes required for zero carbon development. It also includes a new action to work with partners to enhance the capacity of SMEs to supply low-carbon products and services, expand links between businesses and universities to enhance low-carbon research and development and develop a hub to demonstrate low-carbon technology
- Sub-outcome 7.1 (skills) includes an action to provide information, advice and guidance on the labour market to parents, teachers and young people – this may help to build networks between schools and businesses. This sub-outcome also includes an action to help develop an Apprenticeship Action Plan which will help increase apprenticeship opportunities in the county. A further action has been added to sub-outcome 6.4 (post-16 outcomes) for the Council to work with partners through the Local Enterprise Partnership to support the Enterprise Adviser Network which inspires and prepares young people for the world of work, by linking business/ employer volunteers (Enterprise Advisers) with local schools and colleges.
- Logistics and manufacturing are key economic sectors in Leicestershire. The Council aims to support these sectors and other growth sectors such as life sciences, low carbon technologies, creative industries and aerospace.

Keeping People Safe and Well

30. The '*Keeping People Safe and Well*' outcome aims for the people of Leicestershire to be safe and protected from harm and to have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing.
31. There was a high level of support for this outcome and for all the Council's aims to progress towards it by 2026, with over 90% public survey respondents agreeing with each aim and the majority 'strongly agreeing'. There was significant support for each aim, particularly those focused on community safety, vulnerable people, mental wellbeing, unpaid carers and care experiences. The aim with the least support was for more residents to be a healthy weight.
32. Some questioned the level of influence which the County Council has over areas such as crime levels, preventing young people from engaging in criminal activity and increasing the proportion of residents with a healthy weight. It was highlighted that achieving these aims would require

partnership-working with other public agencies such as the NHS, Police and district councils and that the aim around healthy weight would rely on individuals taking responsibility for their own wellbeing.

33. There was also a view that the Plan should outline how the Council is intending to support road safety, such as through education and highway design. Further, some requested clarification on how the Council would address substance misuse. Additionally, there was a request to highlight how the Council would promote access to green space in order to support its aims around wellbeing.
34. Other requests included:
 - Revise outcome name to '*Safe and Well*' for consistency
 - Involve unpaid carers in service design and support them to make their views known by advocating for them
 - Highlight how sustainable transport supports wellbeing
 - Invest in the training of the social care workforce
 - Refer to tackling scammers and fraud
 - Strengthen reference to meeting accommodation needs of frail and/or disabled people; and making properties accessible during development
 - Increase reference to usage of assistive digital technology
35. Response to this feedback:
 - Outcome name revised to '*Safe and Well*' – note this change also led to the '*Clean, Green Future*' outcome being re-named to '*Clean and Green*'
 - Highlighted the specific partner agencies which the Council will need to work with to deliver the aims for this outcome and removed the aim for 'less crime and fear of crime', recognising that this is a Police responsibility. This aim is now instead focused on ensuring more residents feel safe in their local area.
 - Actions added to sub-outcome 8.1 (community safety) to support road safety such as delivering the Safety Camera Scheme, Driver Education Workshops, Community Speed Enforcement and develop a Road Safety Strategy
 - An action has been added to sub-outcome 8.3 (public health / wellbeing) to 'Deliver our Substance Misuse Strategy (2020-23) to support people to make informed healthy lifestyle choices to reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drug misuse and improve their wellbeing'.
 - An action has been added to sub-outcome 8.3 (public health / wellbeing) to 'Ensure that residential planning applications by the County Council for its land enable public access to green space, and support district and borough councils to develop plans to improve public access to green space'. Also added under 'how we will measure success' is a new performance indicator showing levels of public access to green space.

- An action under sub-outcome 8.4 (care experiences) has been revised to 'Provide opportunities for carers to inform and shape service development'.
- Highlighted in sub-outcome 8.3 (public health / wellbeing) that we are living in an obesogenic environment, with an abundance of energy dense food, motorised transport and sedentary lifestyles. Added that there is a need to work with partners to improve the healthy weight environment such as by promoting sustainable/active travel, reducing the number of fast food outlets and providing people with skills and resources to cook and eat healthily
- A further action has been added to sub-outcome 8.4 (care experiences) for the Council to 'Recruit and train an appropriately skilled and resilient social care workforce, whilst inspiring more people to work in the sector and improving job satisfaction through rewarding careers and opportunities'
- Sub-outcome 8.1 (community safety) includes actions to work with partners to raise awareness of and tackle scammers and rogue traders who exploit vulnerable consumers and to enforce food and product safety standards
- Sub-outcome 7.2 (infrastructure) now highlights that the number of older people living in Leicestershire is forecast to increase significantly and that this will necessitate the development of housing which is accessible for those who are frail and/or disabled. It also includes a revised action to deliver our Social Care Investment Plan to secure suitable accommodation choices for social care service users, including those who are frail and/or disabled.
- Sub-outcome 8.4 (care experiences) includes an action to 'provide effective crisis response, reablement services, equipment, and technology to enable people to be self-reliant' and a new action has been added to 'work with partners to develop an outcomes-led technology service which provides carers and/or those with care needs with the right technology and guides people to technology which can enable them to live independently for longer'

Strategic Change Portfolio

36. The Strategic Plan also includes a section on the Council's internal transformation programme, the Strategic Change Portfolio. This outlines the purpose, aims and actions of the 'four pillars' of this programme: Sustainable Finances, Carbon Reduction, Customer and Digital and Ways of Working.
37. During the consultation, there was a concern raised by the Leicestershire Equality Challenge Group (LECG) and others that increased adoption of digital services through the Customer and Digital Programme may lead to 'digital exclusion' whereby some people are unable to access services due to lack of digital technology and/or digital skills. It was suggested that this could exacerbate social and economic inequalities. There was a request to reflect how the Council will support digital participation for all and to include actions to ensure everyone can access reliable broadband and learn how to use digital technology.

38. Response to this feedback:

- Increased adoption of digital services through the Customer and Digital Programme is about making the online customer journeys easy to use so that services are easier to access. Sub-section 9.2 of the Plan (the Customer and Digital Programme) includes an action to understand and mitigate the impact of digitalisation and channel development on groups with protected characteristics. A new action has been added to ensure services are accessible through multiple channels (e.g. mediated digital access, telephone support and face-to-face channels) so that no groups are excluded. A further action has been added to develop a community-based programme to support residents to learn how to use digital technology.
- The Strategic Plan also highlights under sub-outcome 7.2 (infrastructure) the 'digital divide' caused by differential access to reliable broadband. There is an action to work with partners through the Local Enterprise Partnership to improve broadband, Wi-Fi and 5G connectivity across Leicestershire and define and implement the Council's first digital connectivity strategy.

REPORT OF THE CABINET

B. LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S COMMUNITIES STRATEGY - OUR COMMUNITIES APPROACH 2022-26

Introduction

1. This report concerns the outcome of engagement on the draft Leicestershire County Council Communities Strategy - Our Communities Approach 2022-26. A copy of the Approach is appended to this report.

Background

Development of the revised Communities Approach 2022-26

3. The existing Communities Strategy 2017-21 sets out the Council's continuing commitment to work in partnership to support, strengthen and empower communities. It adopted 'a glass-half full' approach to build on and develop new relationships, values and culture within the County Council and with communities that could support and enable 'how' the Council operates.
4. Since the adoption of the existing Strategy there has been a notable shift amongst commentators, think-tanks, policy developers and the Government to change how the public sector operates, with a greater emphasis on how it collaborates with communities and where and how decisions are made. The shift towards greater community involvement and collaboration is reflected in the revised Communities Approach which should be viewed as the model for 'how' solutions can be achieved.
5. The work to develop the draft Communities Approach has been guided by the following key influences:
 - Recognising and learning from the difference made from the various approaches embedded within the County Council.
 - The role and significance of civil society (communities and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector) prior to and during Covid-19 (including social action and community responses).
 - A focus on recovery and how the County Council can support and enable the Government's levelling up/build back better agenda with communities.

Engagement feedback

6. The Cabinet, at its meeting on 26 October 2021, approved engagement with stakeholders on the draft Communities Approach between 1 November 2021 and 21 January 2022. This engagement period was subsequently extended to 18 February 2022 to coordinate with the extended timescale for consultation on the draft revised Strategic Plan

and to allow time for additional input to development of the revised Approach. Engagement was used to gather insight and understanding about Leicestershire Communities and the approach that the Council proposes.

7. The engagement process invited contributions the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group, parish and town councils, other public sector partners and the voluntary and community sector including Voluntary Action Leicestershire and the RCC (previously known as the Rural Community Council) and colleagues. The methods of engagement included a survey and dissemination of information through newsletters and briefings, with opportunities to feedback via group discussions, email responses and an on-line questionnaire. The engagement process was promoted via web articles and newsfeeds, social media and briefing meetings with stakeholder groups and organisations.
8. The questionnaire survey on the Leicestershire Communities website was the focus for community feedback and 97 responses were received. In addition to the survey, feedback was also received through meetings, letters, and stakeholder briefings.
9. Feedback from the engagement process showed support for the principles identified in the Communities Approach (73% agreeing, 24 % undecided and 3% disagreeing) including community empowerment, the role and potential of communities and the individuals, groups, and buildings within them. Other feedback received included calls for prioritisation of principles and actions, more clarification and information on how principles translate to action, recognition of the continuing value of the public as well as voluntary service delivery and broad and early co-production engagement starting with issues definition.
10. The engagement identified support for the objective to help communities to design and deliver solutions (60% agreeing, 19% undecided and 21% disagreeing) with suggestions for increased support in areas such as community buildings and mental health and wellbeing. A number of comments also promoted enhanced engagement with communities, including the most disadvantaged, and openness to community ideas and initiatives. Others called for the principles to be embedded across the Authority and highlighted the value of providing advice and support for communities and community groups.
11. There was a broad spread of opinion on the strength of local assets with 40% rating local resources as strong, 36% rating them as neither weak or strong and 24% rating them as weak. Views on how the Council could collaborate with communities to further strengthen community assets centred on support for enhancement of physical assets such as community centres and village halls and an identified need for improved and sustained communication and deepening trusting relationships with stakeholders. There were also suggestions

for increased recognition/funding of, and collaboration with, communities and increased devolution of power to communities and parish councils. Feedback highlighted the value of joint working with parish and town councils, district councils and communities in non-parished areas. Many positive examples of community collaboration were put forward as part of the engagement, with many people highlighting valuable community services delivered by/from community venues including community managed libraries, church halls, community cafes, community centres/village halls and heritage centres.

Comments of the Scrutiny Commission

12. The engagement draft of the Communities Approach was considered by the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 17 November 2021 and points made by Members at that meeting have been taken into account in the revised Communities Approach as follows:
 - The Council should continue to support communities to come together and address local issues – the revised Approach has an increased focus on supporting empowerment, participation and enabling social action.
 - Prevention will continue to be of critical importance – there is a continuing focus on prevention in the revised Approach.
 - Unparished areas and the issues affecting them are not adequately represented in the draft Approach – the revised Approach highlights that the Council will continue to work with a wide range of voluntary and other groups that operate in non-parished areas.
 - There should be increased clarity around infrastructure support available via the RCC and the Leicestershire and Rutland County Association for Town and Parish Councils – delivery of the revised Approach will include a focus on enhanced communication including on how support services complement each other.
 - The vital role of volunteers should be further supported – support for volunteering is a focus of the revised Approach.

13. The outcome of engagement and the revised Communities Approach were considered by the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 9th March 2022 and arising from discussion, the following points were made:
 - Members welcomed the broad level of engagement undertaken and the conversations held with communities to seek their views on the Council's proposed Approach. It was acknowledged that the process had focused on ensuring good quality feedback and that this had provided some useful insights and helped to shape and inform the planned way forward.
 - The Commission was pleased that there was overall support for the Approach but acknowledged requests for further embedding existing practices and building on partnership working and what people were already doing within their communities.
 - The Members were satisfied that its comments and concerns previously made had been addressed and complimented the

revised Strategy, which was clear and focused, easy to follow and engaging. Members also welcomed the inclusion of hyperlinks which easily signposted communities to useful information and support available.

- A Member commented that the Strategy would be a valued document and support elected members in their role as community leaders.

14. The Scrutiny Commission resolved:

- (a) That the revised draft Communities Strategy: Leicestershire County Council– Our Communities Approach 2022-26 be welcomed and supported;
- (b) That the comments now made by the Commission be reported to the Cabinet at its meeting on 29th March 2022.

The revised Communities Approach

15. The engagement draft of the Communities Approach was designed specifically to promote co-production of the Council's approach to working with communities and to encourage consideration, debate and feedback on the background, context and emerging direction of a future Approach. The revised Communities Approach retains the format of the engagement draft but has been restructured. The narrative and emphasis on previous work, policy development and context has been revised while the principles, themes and implementation objectives have been enhanced.
16. Engagement feedback has been taken into account and the revised draft includes increased explanation of the meaning of key concepts, and the mechanisms for embedding the principles within the Authority and for promoting them to partners.
17. The principles of the revised Communities Approach build on the priorities of the existing Strategy and cut across all Outcomes of the revised Strategic Plan. The principles, revised in light of engagement feedback, are outlined below;
 - **Prevention:** Supporting and enabling citizens to help themselves and others. This is about how the Council works towards this and how the Authority communicates this with communities. Focus must be on how the information and advice produced underpins prevention and reduces demand, ensuring that it is accessible, relevant, and timely.
 - **Participation:** The Council will work across services, departments and with partners and will be led by its work with citizens and communities. Through listening and conversations and by building trusting relationships solutions will be collaboratively defined and designed locally.
 - **Catalysts:** Voluntary and community sector organisations, social enterprises and parish and town councils are supported and

empowered to collaborate and provide a range of effective services and activities for individuals and communities.

18. The principles of the Approach will be supported by the Strategic Plan and associated Council plans and the delivery model will be underpinned by the themes of an asset-based approach centred on the strengths of local communities, and social action.
19. This change has also led to the replacement of the Principle of Engagement with one centred on Participation that better reflects the ambition to work with and alongside partners and communities in collaboration and reflects the partnership sub-objective of the Strategic Plan.
20. To augment the Communities Approach whilst retaining a shorter document, a dedicated resource has been developed on the Leicestershire Communities Website (www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk). This focuses on asset-based thinking and doing and features local and national examples, academic research and case studies that identify and demonstrate how activities can support the principles of the Communities Approach and the Outcomes of the revised Strategic plan.

Consideration by the Cabinet

21. The Cabinet at its meeting on 29th March noted the outcome of the consultation and approved the revised Communities Strategy: Leicestershire County Council – Our Communities Approach 2022-26.

(Motion to be moved: -

That the Communities Strategy: Leicestershire County Council - Our Communities Approach 2022-26, appended to the report, be approved.)

**Mr N. J. Rushton
Leader of the Council**

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet – Working Together to Build Great Communities in Leicestershire: The Leicestershire Communities Strategy 2017-21 - 12 December 2017

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s134009/FINAL%20Communities%20Strategy%20report.pdf>

Report to the Cabinet – Draft Communities Strategy: Leicestershire County Council Collaborating with our Communities- Our Communities Approach 2022-26 – 26th October 2021

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/g6447/Public%20reports%20pack%20Tuesday%2026-Oct-2021%2014.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

Report to Scrutiny Commission - Draft Communities Strategy: Leicestershire County Council Collaborating with our Communities- Our Communities Approach 2022-26 – 17th November 2021

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=6747&Ver=4>

Report to the Scrutiny Commission – 9 March 2022 – Draft Communities Strategy – Leicestershire County Council Collaborating with our Communities, our Communities Approach 2022-26

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=6868&Ver=4>

Appendix

Draft Communities Strategy: Leicestershire County Council, our Communities Approach 2022-26



Leicestershire Communities

Leicestershire County Council

Communities Strategy

Our Communities Approach 2022 - 26 Final Draft



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Foreword



Mrs Pam Posnett, CC,
Cabinet Lead Member Community and Staff Relations

It is heartening to see that collaboration and working alongside Leicestershire Communities is at the forefront of the way in which the county council makes its plans and delivers its services. This approach has guided our work for many years, and there are many inspiring examples of what has been jointly achieved, but there are also opportunities to go further and I am delighted that this strategy makes a strong commitment to fully embed a way of working centred on an asset-based approach and the value of social action.

Every community has a tremendous supply of assets including people, skills, land and buildings and networks that can be used to build the community and solve the challenges that require a shared commitment and a willingness to come together.

The approach of communities and the council to the Covid 19 pandemic is testament to this and has also informed our Communities Approach.

This document, sets out a way of working for the council over the coming years. I would like to thank everyone for their contributions in the development of this revised strategy and I look forward to working with you all as we take our next steps and make plans to embed the Approach.

“I am delighted that this draft strategy makes a strong commitment to fully embed a way of working centred on an asset-based approach and the value of social action.”



Introduction

Our Communities Approach sets out our aspirations to strengthen and further embed Leicestershire County Council's approach to decision making and to designing and delivering public services in Leicestershire. Formerly known as the Leicestershire Communities Strategy, this refreshed and updated Our Communities Approach has been informed by:

Recognising and learning from the difference made by approaches to working with communities that have become embedded within the county council and growing these,

The role and significance of civil society (communities and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector [VCSE]) prior to and during covid-19 (including social action and community responses)

A focus on recovery from the pandemic and the plans for levelling up.

Our first Communities Strategy 2014-17 was delivered against the backdrop of austerity measures and at a time when making efficiencies, within a market-led, transaction-based public service framework was required. The impact of these measures meant that adopting new models of delivery and relationships with citizens was needed to mitigate the impacts of reduced resources on Leicestershire communities.

New models were beginning to be adopted and during this period we saw the establishment of Community Managed Libraries, the creation of Local Area Coordinators within Leicestershire and, with more savings needed, a continued commitment to support our communities and voluntary sector through grants and commissioned activities, albeit within a reduced resource envelope.

The aim of the Communities Strategy 2017-21 'Working Together to Build Great Communities' was to move away from the dire warnings of the previous few years and to look at 'what can be done.' This aim was underpinned by 4 Key Priorities:

1. Communities support themselves, individuals and families
2. Communities in collaboration with public services, are supported to design and deliver better outcomes for the people of Leicestershire
3. Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, Social Enterprises and Parish & Town Councils are supported and empowered to provide a range of effective services and activities for individuals and communities
4. The Council continues to be outward focussed, and open to new ways of working

The Strategy introduced asset-based approaches to support and enable 'how' we do things. It has helped change our thinking and provided the impetus to collaborative solutions that have developed new relationships, values and culture within the county council and with our communities.



Our Communities Approach 2022-26

Principles of the Strategy

The principals outlined in this refreshed Strategy build on and incorporate the Priorities of the Communities Strategy 2017-21.

Prevention - (Priority 1 - Helping people to help themselves and others)

Supporting and enabling citizens to help themselves and others. This is about how the whole council works towards providing preventative and self-help support and how we communicate this with our communities.

Participation - (Priority 2 - Work in collaboration & Priority 4-Be outward focused)

The Council will work across services, departments and with partners including districts, health, blue light services and businesses but will be led by our work with our citizens and communities.

Catalysts - (Priority 3 - Supporting Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, Social Enterprises (VCSE) & Town & Parish Council service provision)

Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, Social Enterprises and Parish & Town Councils are supported and empowered to collaborate and provide a range of effective services and activities for individuals and communities.

Model

The Principles of our Communities Approach are underpinned by asset-based thinking and doing and social action. These concepts were introduced in our Strategy 2017-21 and we want to reiterate and emphasise them as the model for delivery for the county council over the next 4 years.

(Please see Pages 13-16 for further information on the Principles and Model)



Key Achievements 2017-21

Supporting Voluntary, Community Social Enterprise (VCSE) infrastructure and community organisations

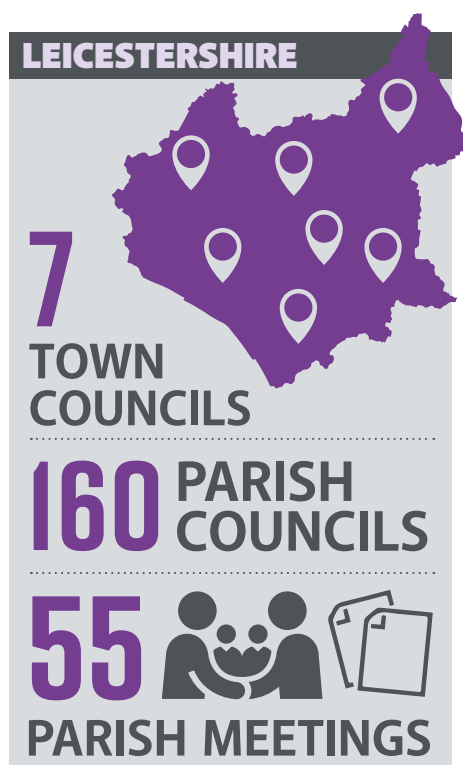
*Leicestershire has a dynamic and diverse VCSE, with **over 3,000** different organisations operating across the county, ranging from **small grassroots groups**, to **social enterprises** and **national charities**.*

These organisations have a strong track record of innovation and responsiveness to communities and are an essential part of improving the lives of people across the county.

Support for the VCSE in Leicestershire is provided by an infrastructure services contract that is delivered by Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL) <https://valonline.org.uk/> The service is jointly commissioned with West Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning Group and East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group. It is aligned to the shared objectives of the county council and CCGs around managing demand through early/ community level intervention and prevention, increasing community resilience and more effective delivery of services by community groups. The Service brings together commissioners and sector groups in information, advice and learning events, provides advice and support around topics such as governance, group development and funding and promotes, develops and supports volunteering.

In addition to the infrastructure contract, support for the VCSE in Leicestershire is also enabled by a contract with CASE (Cooperative and Social Enterprise Development Agency) <https://case.coop/> to provide support for social enterprise development and a grant to the RCC to provide assistance for Community Buildings; an invaluable resource where community activities take place, where people meet and from where services are delivered.





Supporting Town & Parish Councils

Leicestershire has a total of 7 Town Councils, 160 Parish Councils and 55 Parish Meetings. The council works closely with the Leicestershire & Rutland Association of Local Councils (LRALC) to support Town and Parish Councils and Meetings and has a Grant Agreement with the Association to help enable this support.

The key elements of the agreement are around engagement with the Sector and enhancing the role of the local councils.

A new website – A-Roads to Zebras’ – has been developed to support Parish & Town Councils with Highways related queries and applications. Meetings, briefings, and training sessions have taken place on the ‘Climate Emergency’. These will help shape the support we offer to Parish & Town Councils in responding to our Net Zero goal.

Embedding Asset Based Approaches

An asset-based approach is one that harnesses the skills, knowledge, connections and potential which already exist within communities. Through a combination of influencing and direct delivery a range of asset-based projects and programmes have been supported and delivered working with peers and colleagues, local, regional and national partners and Leicestershire communities and citizens.

With partners from health and the VCSE we have designed and delivered a long-term asset-based development programme running over 6 months that has resulted in a number of collaborative, practical new initiatives. We have also facilitated sessions with partners such as Town and Parish Councils and, by invitation, delivered workshops to partner conferences.

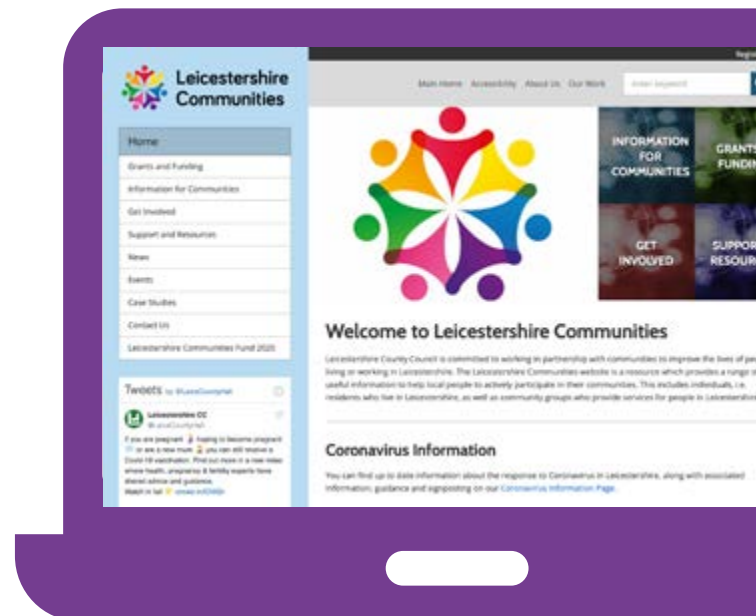
Within communities themselves we have hosted events such as Community Roadshows to put asset-based approaches into practice and enable whole geographical communities to come together. We have also worked with communities of interest such as Community Managed Libraries, collecting and developing tools and resources to be made available to all.



Website

The Leicestershire Communities website is a resource which provides a range of useful information to help local people to actively participate in their communities. It continues to be a place where our communities can find information and support. The website has dedicated pages for the Neighbourhood Planning Network and Community Managed Libraries where volunteers can manage and update their own pages.

www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/



SHIRE Community Grants Fund

Leicestershire County Council's SHIRE Community Grants programme provides grant funding to charities and other voluntary/community organisations and social enterprises, to support the delivery of services, projects and activities which improve the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged people and groups.

www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/grants/

The Communities Board

The Communities Board was established in August 2016 to co-ordinate delivery of the Communities Strategy across the Council by developing active, resilient and inclusive communities. Progress and proposals are overseen and driven forward by the internal Board which meets bi-monthly and includes senior representatives from across the Council.

The Communities Strategy acts as a key enabler across the work of all Council departments and all five Outcomes of the **Strategic Plan**, although it is acknowledged that it has a strongest connection to the Great Communities Outcome. The Communities Strategy aims to facilitate and drive culture change within the Council and identifies opportunities to do things differently by:

Encouraging, enabling and supporting volunteers and volunteering

Creating the conditions and commissioning for social action and asset-based thinking and doing

Working with communities, town & parish councils, the VCSE and businesses.



Covid-19 – Since March 2020

Since March 2020...

Leicestershire County Council had a leading role in the response for our communities to the Covid-19 pandemic. As the host for the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) there was a clear line of responsibility within the Council for the initial set-up and support for the crisis response. Structures were quickly established across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (LLR) to identify issues and co-ordinate support. This included the establishment and leadership of partnership response 'cells' that were tasked with dealing with all aspects of the response.

Whilst specialists for health, care and blue light services were drawn into the planning for their responsibilities, LCC established and led the

Voluntary, Faith and Community Engagement Cell and the sub-cells that were tasked with supporting our communities.

Within the LRF a Community and Volunteering group was established and has been responsible for supporting and driving forward work linked to:

The multiple community responses that were happening across LLR in support of neighbours and communities within local areas.

The role and impact on voluntary and community sector organisations in supporting communities and those that were shielding, how these organisations were operating and could continue.

The establishment and co-ordination of volunteering and volunteers in support of delivering the response to requests for help from both individuals and public services as consequence of the pandemic.

.....

*At this time, our ongoing work, informed by the **Communities Strategy 2017-21**, and our role in supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector, Town and Parish Councils, communities and working with partners, was invaluable.*

.....





Communities Fund

In March 2020 the Council announced a £1 million fund to support voluntary and community sector organisations in the county to manage the financial impacts of the pandemic. This hardship fund was established to enable local groups, impacted by reduced income from sales/trading, room rental or donations, to keep on providing essential support to vulnerable people, including those isolating and with reduced social contact.

The grant fund was subsequently increased in value and extended through further rounds of funding to help voluntary groups to manage the impacts of the pandemic and to continue to deliver services for vulnerable and disadvantaged people and communities. In total, over 3 rounds of funding, 379 grants were awarded, totalling nearly £2.6m of funding from the county council.

Recovery

Optimistically, the LRF and county council took its first steps towards thinking about recovery in the early summer period of 2020. Whilst there had been a need to retain a focus on responding to the impacts of the Covid-19 this has been accompanied by looking at what could be learnt from the pandemic to help us shape how we recover.

This learning concentrated on the vital role that civil society (communities, voluntary sector, local groups) had, and continues to have, in providing services and support to individuals and communities and how

this can be built upon. The Communities Approach is part of the councils wider work and plans for recovery.



Policy Developments

Financial pressures and the implications of ongoing reductions in funding for the public sector accompanied by rising demand for public services has meant that there has been, and continues to be, a need to focus on how the county council can best achieve its outcomes.

Locally the Council's Strategic Plan and Outcomes have been reviewed and updated.

One of the five strategic outcomes that the Plan seeks to achieve is Great Communities; thriving, inclusive communities in which people support each other and take responsibility for their local area.

Our Communities Approach is reflected in the Great Communities Outcome through the enabling commitments that;

- People participate in service design and delivery,
- People support each other through volunteering.

The Communities Approach does however support all aspects of every Outcome and all elements of the Strategic Plan and should be viewed as 'how' the county council can deliver 'what' (all the Outcomes) we want to achieve.

Since the adoption of the 2017-21 Communities Strategy there has been a notable shift amongst commentators, think-tanks, policy developers and politicians that has promoted a change in how the public sector operates; with a greater emphasis on how it collaborates with communities and where and how decisions are made.

The greater emphasis on collaboration and involvement for our citizens and communities, supporting and empowering them to have autonomy and agency over their lives and in their interactions with public services, is not without its challenges.

However, this shift towards greater community involvement and collaboration should be viewed as model of 'how' we can achieve solutions.

New Local* advocate that the public sector needs to recognise and acknowledge 'that the solutions to an area's biggest challenges are to be found outside in the community not inside the institution...' and that this can be achieved though:

Community decision-making:

Using deliberative and participatory tools to involve citizens more meaningfully in local decision-making.

Collaboration with communities:

Public services shifting from hierarchical and siloed ways of working, to more collaborative approaches which deeply involve communities as equal partners with essential insights.

Building community capacity and assets:

Equipping communities with the resources and skills they need.

*New Local (formerly the New Local Government Network) is an independent think tank and network with a mission to transform public services and unlock community power.
COMMUNITY POWER: THE EVIDENCE Grace Pollard, Jessica Studdert and Luca Tiratelli Published by New Local February 2021 www.newlocal.org.uk/research/publications/



This way of working is related to, and can be viewed alongside, associated calls and lobbying for regional and local devolution and changes to local governance and our aspiration to learn from the pandemic and 'Build Back Better' by 'Levelling Up our Communities.'

Levelling up our communities: proposals for a new social covenant - A report for government by Danny Kruger MP, September 2020

www.dannykruger.org.uk/sites/www.dannykruger.org.uk/files/2020-09/Kruger%202.0%20Levelling%20Up%20Our%20Communities.pdf,

set out a series of recommendations 'to give civil society a greater role in levelling up the country.' He advocated that 'What is missing in our current model [of public service] is community power: the role of local people, acting together spontaneously or through enduring institutions, to design and deliver the kind of neighbourhood they want to be part of.'

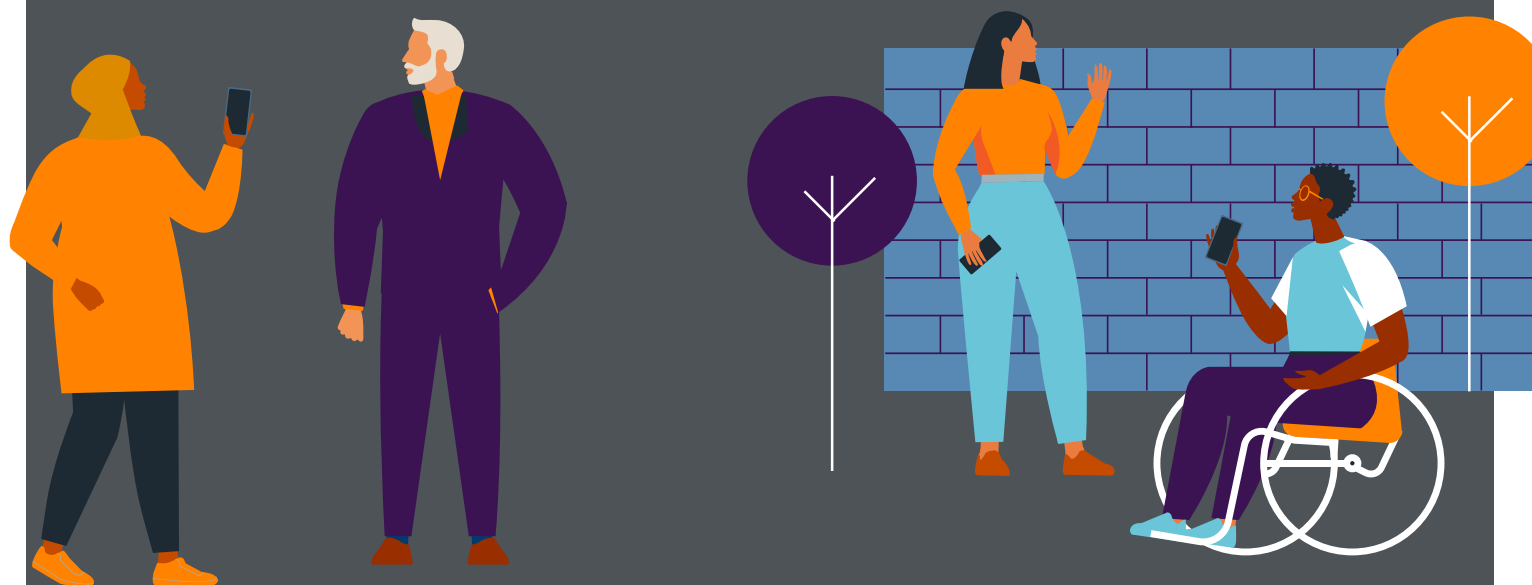
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*The report has informed the Levelling Up White Paper (Levelling Up the United Kingdom www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom) sets out how the Government proposes to spread opportunity more equally across the UK.**

As New Local note, 'This principle [Community Power] is not just a theory. It already exists in neighbourhoods, in local networks, and in voluntary and community organisations where people come together to overcome challenges and support each other. This comes to the fore in times of crisis, such as with the sudden flourishing of mutual aid during the Covid-19 pandemic but has endured for decades in many forms. It is also rapidly influencing practice in the public sector and local government. Public services are seeing the benefits of moving towards practices which involve actively collaborating with communities. New methods of enabling community insights to shape action are increasingly being developed: from councils trialling participatory and deliberative democracy; to frontline professionals using asset-based practice and co-production.'

www.newlocal.org.uk/publications/the-community-paradigm/

This refreshed Communities Approach aims to act as a catalyst to further develop and strengthen the achievements of collaboration and community involvement and move this approach 'From the Margins to the Mainstream'. This will be achieved by enhancing and embedding the mindset, values, behaviours, relationships and infrastructure creating '...the conditions for new operating models to thrive.' From the Margins to the Mainstream-Nesta -Collaborate Published September 2020.

https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/Margins_to_Mainstream.pdf



*Specific Government responses to the principal recommendations of the Kruger report have been published in a policy paper at www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-danny-kruger-mps-report-levelling-up-our-communities-proposals-for-a-new-social-covenant/government-response-to-danny-kruger-mps-report-levelling-up-our-communities-proposals-for-a-new-social-covenant

Our Communities Approach 2022-26

An ongoing focus over many years, and in the lead up to and learning from the pandemic, was not to focus solely on what communities have done or can do. Rather, it is to look at the role the county council has and how it operates in supporting and enabling individuals and communities to help themselves.

Our refreshed and updated Communities Approach 2022-26 reflects this not only in its title but in its ethos, principles, and model of delivery.

Principles of the Strategy

Prevention

Supporting and enabling citizens to help themselves and others. This is about how the whole council works towards providing preventative and self-help support and how we communicate this with our communities.

Prevention has often been used in health and social care settings, however for the Approach we use it to cover a full range of self-help, care, wider wellbeing and community impacts. This could be anything from planning for life changes, thinking about the waste you produce through to climate change and preparing for emergencies.

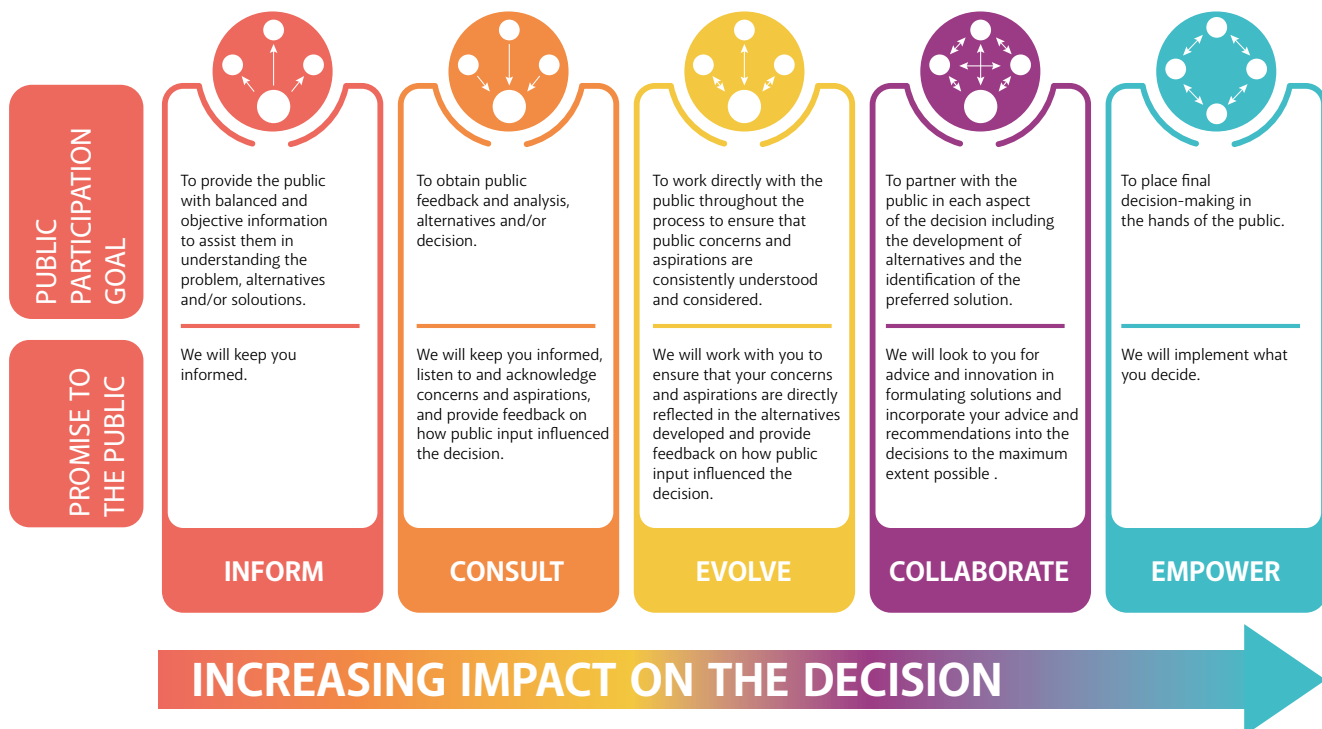
We must focus on how the information and advice we produce underpins prevention and reduces demand, ensuring that it is accessible, relevant, and timely.

Participation

The Council will work across services, departments and with partners including districts, health, blue light services and businesses but will be led by our work with our citizens and communities. Through listening and conversations and by building trusting relationships and encouraging participation we will inform our decisions and define and design our solutions locally.



An example of a Participation Spectrum Model adapted from <https://iap2canada.ca/foundations>



The Participation Spectrum Model demonstrates that through a range of engagement methods different outcomes can be achieved. One, many or all methods can be understood as participation, and we will continue to provide information and consultations, however a move towards greater collaboration and coproduction in decision making is advocated here.

Catalysts

Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, Social Enterprises and Parish & Town Councils are supported and empowered to collaborate and provide a range of effective services and activities for individuals and communities.

This will require a focus on not only how we work with our communities but also how our 'catalysts' as providers of activities that are either commissioned by, or support our plans are enabled to support our communities too. This will include a focus on disadvantage, rurality, communities of interest and protected characteristics.

The Principles of the Strategy will be supported by the Strategic Plan and associated plans; the Council's Engagement Strategy; VCSE Partnership Statement; Strategic Volunteering Vision; Social Value Policy and others.



Model

The Principles of our Communities Approach are underpinned by asset-based thinking and doing and social action. These concepts were introduced in our Strategy 2017-21 and we want to reiterate and emphasise them as the model for delivery for the county council over the next 4 years.

Asset Based Thinking and Doing

Asset Based Approach – working with the skills, knowledge, connections and potential that exists within a community.

The asset-based approach starts by making visible and explicitly valuing the strengths that exist in people and places rather than starting from the perspective of the problems in a community, or what a community needs (a 'deficit-based' model).



These strengths include:

Personal assets – the knowledge, skills, talents and aspirations of individuals

Social assets – the relationships people have with family, friends and the wider community

Community assets – voluntary and community sector organisations; faith groups; public sector services that operate in the area

Neighbourhood assets – the physical assets that contribute to health and wellbeing where people can meet and take part in activities, for example community centres and parks.

An asset-based approach develops connections, builds relationships, and mobilises social action at the local level, helping to prevent the need for more formal services and helping communities to develop and flourish. This approach also highlights that the design, development and delivery of solutions is not only the responsibility of public services, but is much more effective when accompanied by local community involvement which helps people to take ownership of, and responsibility for, local solutions. As evidenced clearly through the responses from local communities within the pandemic.

Investment in identifying, understanding and developing community assets can help to prevent and address problems early on, rather than when they have had a greater impact on people and have become more difficult and costly to tackle.

We want to continue to focus on this approach by:

- Embedding the 'asset-based' approach amongst our staff, service departments and partners, understanding that is 'how' we think and do things such commissioning and service planning that will help achieve change.
- Supporting communities to recognise their own and local assets, ensuring that all can take full advantage of what is available.
- Providing a dedicated resource on the Leicestershire Communities Website, which will include guides, practical examples and information to help embed the Approach.
www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/sr/assetbased.html

Social Action

A focus on social action acknowledges that when people come together and act, they can improve their lives and solve the problems their communities face. Social Action can be best understood as:

People coming together to help improve their lives and solve the problems that are important in their communities. It can broadly be defined as practical action in the service of others, which is (i) carried out by individuals or groups of people working together, (ii) not mandated and not for profit, (iii) done for the good of others – individuals, communities and/or society, and (iv) bringing about social change and or value.'

(adapted and updated from Leicestershire Communities Strategy 2017-21)



Next Steps...

The aim of this Communities Approach is not to present a complete 'plan', mapping out the specifics of what can be achieved; rather it is intended as guide to shape 'how' we should work to fulfil the ambitions of the council and of communities. It should be understood as a live document wherein we further develop and enhance the approach over the next 4 years as we implement and learn.

Through the principles and model, we believe that we are creating the conditions to provide services and support that will benefit all of Leicestershire. This will be underpinned by continued oversight by the Leicestershire County Council Communities Board, working with our communities to help shape how we do things locally.

We will provide briefings, training, and resources to support this Approach.

We will work with all partners to help to embed the Approach.

We will work to establish effective participation methods developing our engagement activities.

We will commission activities that support the Approach.

We will seek to provide timely, relevant and accessible information that will help people to help themselves and their communities.

If you would like us to have a conversation with your community or would like to find out how else you can get involved please see: www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/getinvolved/communitiesapproach.html

or email us at leicestershirecommunities@leics.gov.uk

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REPORT OF THE CABINET

C. DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS 2022/23 and 2023/24

Introduction

1. This report concerns the proposed dates for Council meetings in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Background

2. Standing Order 1(2) requires that in addition to the Annual Meeting of the Council and any meetings convened by the Chairman or members of the Council, meetings of the Council for the transaction of general business shall be held on such days as may be determined by the Council at its Annual Meeting on the recommendation of the Cabinet. A date so determined may be varied by the Cabinet. Dates for the 2023/24 municipal year have been included in order to provide members with advance notice of future meetings.
3. The recommendation of the Cabinet on this matter is set out in the motion which appears below: -

(Motion to be moved:

That Council meetings in 2022/23 and 2023/24 be held on the following dates: -

- **Wednesday 6 July 2022**
- **Wednesday 28 September 2022**
- **Wednesday 7 December 2022**
- **Wednesday 22 February 2023 (to consider the budget)**
- **Wednesday 17 May 2023 (Annual meeting)**
- **Wednesday 5 July 2023**
- **Wednesday 27 September 2023**
- **Wednesday 6 December 2023**
- **Wednesday 21 February 2024 (to consider the budget)**
- **Wednesday 15 May 2024 (Annual meeting)**

**Mr N. J. Rushton
Leader of the Council**

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet, 26 April 2022 – Dates of Council meetings.

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s168679/Council%20dates.pdf>

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