



Meeting: **Cabinet**

Date/Time: **Friday, 24 May 2024 at 11.00 am**

Location: **Sparkenhoe Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield**

Contact: **Ms. J. Bailey (Tel. 0116 305 2583)**

Email: **jenny.bailey@leics.gov.uk**

Membership

Mr. N. J. Rushton CC (Chairman)

Mr. B. L. Pain CC	Mr. L. Breckon JP CC
Mrs D. Taylor CC	Mrs H. L. Richardson CC
Mrs. C. M. Radford CC	Mrs. P. Posnett MBE CC
Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC	Mr. P. Bedford CC

Please note: this meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's web site at [Cabinet meeting webcasts](#) - notices will be on display at the meeting explaining the arrangements.

AGENDA

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>	
1. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2024.		(Pages 3 - 12)
2. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.		
3. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.		
4. Provisional Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24.	Director of Corporate Resources	(Pages 13 - 58)
5. Recycling and Household Waste Sites - Outcome of Public Consultation and Proposed Service Changes	Director of Environment and Transport	(Pages 59 - 158)



<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>	
6. Development of the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) 2026-2040.	Director of Environment and Transport	(Pages 159 - 222)
7. Ibstock Community Managed Library.	Director of Adults and Communities	(Pages 223 - 252)
8. Exception to Contract Procedure Rules: Urgent Action taken by the Chief Executive in relation to the Educational Psychology Service.	Director of Children and Family Services	(Pages 253 - 258)
9. Items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.		
10. Any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent.		



Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 26 March 2024.

PRESENT

Mr. N. J. Rushton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. B. L. Pain CC
Mrs D. Taylor CC
Mrs. C. M. Radford CC
Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC
Mr. L. Breckon JP CC

Mrs H. L. Richardson CC
Mrs. P. Posnett MBE CC
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC
Mr. P. Bedford CC

In attendance (including via Teams)

Mr. R. Ashman CC, Mrs. A. Hack CC, Mrs. R. Page CC, Mrs. M. Wright CC.

327. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2024 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

328. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

329. Declarations of interest.

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

Mrs. D. Taylor CC declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 8 – Review of the Lightbulb Partnership – as a member of Charnwood Borough Council.

330. Refresh of the Leicestershire County Council Planning Obligations Policy.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive regarding the proposal to undertake a refresh of the County Council's Planning Obligations Policy, including consultation on the proposed changes. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 4', is filed with these minutes.

Mr O'Shea CC and Mr Bedford CC emphasised the importance of ensuring the correct infrastructure was in place to support development and said that it was also essential to receive the necessary contributions from developers.

Mr Pain CC welcomed the inclusion of Bio-diversity net gain in the Policy and asked for consideration to be given to implementing a more coherent system around the removal of trees.

Mrs Radford CC made a comment around sustainable travel and the possibility of developers providing an alternative public transport service if an existing one ceased to operate in a particular area where development was taking place.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the proposed changes to the County Council's Planning Obligations Policy as summarised in the report be supported;
- b) That consultation is undertaken on the proposed changes to the Planning Obligations Policy;
- c) That the Chief Executive be authorised to make minor amendments to the proposed changes to the Policy before it is issued for consultation;
- d) That a further report be submitted to the Cabinet in September 2024.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION

To accord with national legislation which sets out the mechanism for securing developer contributions from new development. This includes the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (as amended) which set out additional legislation on the use of planning obligations.

To ensure that the County Council's approach in securing developer contributions for new developments is based on up-to-date evidence and costings.

Consultation on the proposed changes will help inform the revised Policy.

331. Transition of Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) Responsibilities to Upper Tier Local Authority Control.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive which provided an update on progress in transferring the responsibilities of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP), a strategic body which had existed since 2011 to drive forward the growth of the Leicester and Leicestershire economy, to the two upper tier local authorities – the County Council and Leicester City Council. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 5', is filed with these minutes.

Mr Bedford CC wished to put on record his thanks to officers and members of the LLEP for assisting in securing investment into the area since 2011.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the progress made in the transition of responsibilities from the LLEP to the Council and Leicester City Council be noted;
- b) That the retention of LLEP Ltd. for a short period beyond 31 March 2024, to enable the existing contractual arrangements regarding Enterprise Zones to be preserved pending new arrangements being finalised, be noted;

- c) That the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, be authorised to:
 - i) nominate a senior officer to represent the Council on the Board of LLEP Ltd. for the short period beyond 31 March 2024 when it will be retained;
 - ii) take any operational, governance and regulatory steps that may be required to finalise the transition to the upper tier local authorities.

REASONS FOR DECISION

To ensure that the Cabinet is fully aware of the transition process and the need to retain LLEP Ltd. beyond the transition date of 1 April 2024.

The LLEP Ltd., a company limited by guarantee, was established in April 2019. For most activities there can be a seamless transition on 1 April 2024 with the former LLEP Team continuing to deliver activities whilst the new governance, business representation and staffing is put in place. It is considered appropriate, however, for the LLEP Ltd. to be retained as a legal entity in the short term (ideally only to June/July 2024) with an 'administrative' Board comprising City and County senior officers, and the City Council to formally remain as the Accountable Body. This will enable the existing contractual and financial arrangements regarding the Enterprise Zones to be preserved pending the finalisation of new arrangements.

Delegation to the Chief Executive to nominate an officer to represent the Council on the LLEP Ltd. during the transition period and to finalise the transition to the upper tier authorities will expedite the process.

332. Environment and Transport 2024/25 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which presented the Environment and Transport Department's 2024/25 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme. These had been developed in accordance with the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28, as approved by the County Council on 21 February 2024. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 6', is filed with these minutes.

Mr O'Shea CC welcomed the additional funding to assist with, amongst other things, improving the situation with the condition of roads throughout the county.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the acute financial context in which the 2024/25 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Work Programme have been developed and will be delivered, as set out in Part B of the report, be noted;
- b) That the Environment and Transport 2024/25 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme be approved;
- c) That the Director of Environment and Transport be authorised

- i) following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources and the Cabinet Lead Members for Highways and Transportation and Corporate Resources, to prepare and submit bids, as appropriate, to secure external funding for delivery of schemes identified in the Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme;
- ii) following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources, the Director of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Lead Member for Corporate Resources, to enter into such contracts as is necessary to progress schemes in the approved Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme to allow early contractor involvement to take place in advance of all external funding required to deliver the scheme being secured, subject to the key principles set out in Paragraph 16 of the report;
- iii) following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources, the Director of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Lead Member for Corporate Resources, to undertake preparatory work as considered appropriate to develop savings as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and to consider that further savings are implemented in a timely manner.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION

To highlight the challenging financial context in which the two Programmes are being developed and will be delivered.

To enable the delivery of the Environment and Transport Department's Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme for the 2024/25 financial year.

To enable the delivery of large capital schemes using a collaborative approach, to work with contractors to reduce risk and increase cost certainty. Working in this way will also provide necessary assurance to partners and third-party funders contributing to the cost of delivering the Highways and Transportation Capital Programme.

To enable early work to be undertaken on the development of new savings to address the worsening financial position.

333. Network North Funding and the Local Transport Fund.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which provided an update on the most recent Network North funding announcements. Approval was sought to use the funding allocated to Advanced Design/Match Funding in the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy to develop a multi-year Local Transport Fund programme, which was required to be submitted to the Department for transport by the end of this calendar year. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 7', is filed with these minutes.

A letter, dated 26 March 2024, had been received from the six Conservative MPs for Leicestershire regarding the use of the funding. It was stated that the funding did not apply until the 2025/26 financial year and further engagement with the MPs would take place once the allocation was known. Where any requests related to using the funding on national highway routes, they should be referred to National Highways.

Mr O'Shea CC welcomed the funding announcement and said that, if it came to fruition, this would help to deliver a number of schemes across the county.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the latest substantial additional funding announced as the Local Transport Fund under the Network North plan be welcomed and noted;
- b) That the Director of Environment and Transport, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, be authorised to carry out relevant consultation and engagement required to support the development of the Local Transport Fund programme;
- c) That the Director of Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources, be authorised to accelerate £1.2m funding currently allocated for 2025/26 to Advanced Design/Match Funding in the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy to fund the development of the Local Transport Fund programme, in line with the principles set out in paragraphs 37-39 of the report;
- d) That a further report be submitted to the Cabinet for approval in November 2024, presenting the proposed Local Transport Fund programme covering the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years, prior to submission to the Department for Transport;
- e) That the letter, dated 26 March 2024, from the six Conservative MPs for Leicestershire regarding the use of the funding be noted.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION

Developing the Local Transport Fund programme will require considerable additional staff resource to develop a programme of works to be submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) and to undertake the development and technical design ready for delivery, starting in 2025.

Delegation to the Director will allow the programme to be developed in line with the yet to be published DfT guidance.

The DfT requires local authorities to demonstrate local political support for the schemes and interventions included in the Local Transport Fund programme alongside section 151 officer sign-off. Authorities in receipt of funding are also required to publish plans for the additional work that is delivered, and to report regularly on delivery progress.

334. Review of the Lightbulb Partnership.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities advising of the review of the Lightbulb Partnership and consultation which had taken place with key partners of the Lightbulb Service, and seeking approval for a further extension of the Partnership arrangement which was due to end on 31 March 2024. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

Members of the Cabinet expressed their disappointment that Charnwood Borough Council had still not committed to the Lightbulb Partnership, particularly as residents were waiting longer than necessary for adaptations to be undertaken, despite funding being available. Concern was raised around the performance of Charnwood Borough Council compared to other district councils and it was stated that the Partnership should not continue to subsidise Charnwood.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the review of the Lightbulb Service and revised draft Business Case for Lightbulb Partnership arrangements for 2024-26 be noted;
- b) That a further extension of the Partnership arrangement for 12 months from 1 April 2024 be approved;
- c) That the Council does not believe that the Partnership should continue to subsidise Charnwood Borough Council.

REASONS FOR DECISION

The County Council has a Service Level Agreement with Blaby District Council which expires on 31 March 2024. This agreement allows a level of delegation of statutory functions of the Local Authority for assessment and provision of services to Blaby District Council as part of the Lightbulb Service and an integration of housing and social care interventions to increase people's independence and optimise their living environments. For this to continue, a variation of contract to extend for a further 12 months needs to be in place from April 2024.

A review of the current arrangements has been undertaken and identified several service and partnership improvements that could be taken forward in the new agreement. The draft options proposed seek to address the current inconsistency of delivery across the county and make the most of opportunities to include more joint service provision in the way of minor adaptations.

Alongside the Partnership review an independent review was commissioned by Charnwood Borough Council and recommendations made regarding the future delivery model.

The Partnership has agreed to request an extension of the current agreement to allow further consideration and test of feasibility for service improvements recommended in the Charnwood review. Scoping of actions needed to transfer the Adaptations Service from the County Council to the Lightbulb Service has begun with the expectation that this will take place in 2024/25.

Charnwood Borough Council has agreed to contribute towards the total costs over the next twelve months.

335. County Council Performance and Expenditure Benchmarking - Update.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive which presented the Council's overall performance and expenditure benchmarking position and progress, following receipt of more recent, end of year comparative performance data for 2022/23 and in

year 2023/24 data. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

Mr Breckon CC emphasised the point that the County Council continued to be one of the best performing authorities in the country, despite being the lowest funded.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the outcome of the Performance and Expenditure Benchmarking for 2022/23 and that the Council continues to be one of the highest performing Counties, despite remaining the lowest funded, be noted;
- b) To note that recent Office for Local Government (Oflog) identified metrics have been added to the benchmarking model and that these will continue to be incorporated where possible;
- c) That the data and update on some of the recent in year improvements and ongoing areas of performance improvement work be noted.

REASONS FOR DECISION

It is best practice in performance management, implicit in the current Sector-Led approach to local authority performance and part of the Council's Internal Governance Framework, to maintain an overview of overall progress, performance and cost effectiveness and to benchmark performance against comparable authorities.

The Council continues to maintain a close focus on performance and performance data in terms of outcomes, expenditure, cost effectiveness and service delivery. This draws heavily on and is informed by key metrics set out in government statutory returns, regulatory frameworks such as those of Oflog, the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted and Office for National Statistics.

The benchmarking model will continue to be developed to incorporate metrics as they are identified, particularly in relation to the range of new Oflog metrics which are expected to be available over the next few months.

Areas of lower comparative performance continue to be a key focus for service improvement in departmental service and commissioning plans and associated transformation projects.

The County Council is poorly funded in comparison with other local authorities, with marked differences from some similar authorities and this, until addressed, will continue to affect delivery, performance, risks and Council Tax levels.

336. Dates of Council Meetings 2024/25 and 2025/26.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive which set out the dates for Council meetings up to May 2026, which it was proposed be submitted to the next Council meeting for approval. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

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

Wednesday 3 July 2024

Wednesday 25 September 2024

Wednesday 4 December 2024

Wednesday 19 February 2025 (to consider the budget)

Wednesday 14 May 2025 (Annual meeting)

Wednesday 2 July 2025

Wednesday 24 September 2025

Wednesday 3 December 2025

Wednesday 18 February 2026 (to consider the budget)

Wednesday 13 May 2026 (Annual meeting).

REASON FOR DECISION

To comply with the Local Government Act 1972 and the County Council's Standing Orders.

337. Items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

There were no items referred from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

338. Exclusion of the Press and Public.

RESOLVED:

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

- East Midlands Development Company Limited.

339. East Midlands Development Company Limited.

The Cabinet considered an exempt report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Law and Governance which set out further recommendations in respect of the County Council's concerns about the management and governance of the East Midlands Development Company, both in respect of the Council's membership of the Company and the County Council's role as the accountable body for the East Midlands Freeport. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 14', is filed with these minutes. The report was not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 3 and 10 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the County Council remains in membership of the East Midlands Development Company for the time being but its engagement with the Company remains paused;
- b) That the refusal of the Company to answer straightforward questions from a member authority about its management and governance following the Cabinet

resolution of 23 June 2023 be noted with regret and as wholly unacceptable for an organisation in receipt of public funds;

- c) That the letter from the Chief Executive and the Director of Law and Governance to the UK Freeports Programme Director at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the concerns about the Company and its Chairman expressed therein and action to be taken by the County Council as the accountable body for the East Midlands Freeport be noted;
- d) That the County Council's position, as set out in the report, be communicated to the Company, the other members/local authority owners of the Company and other relevant parties.

REASON FOR DECISION

The recommendations serve to put the County Council's current position on the record, including for communication to other parties.

2.00 - 3.04 pm
26 March 2024

CHAIRMAN

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**CABINET - 24 MAY 2024****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES****PROVISIONAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2023/24****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to set out the provisional revenue and capital outturn for 2023/24.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:
 - (a) The 2023/24 provisional revenue and capital outturn be noted;
 - (b) The prudential indicators for 2023/24 as shown in Appendix E to this report be noted;
 - (c) The transfers to earmarked reserves, as set out in paragraphs 65 and 66, are approved.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. To inform the Cabinet of the provisional revenue and capital outturn for 2023/24 and seek agreement to the transfers to earmarked reserves to fund future commitments.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

4. A report on the provisional revenue and capital outturn will be considered by the Scrutiny Commission on 10 June 2024.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

5. The County Council approved the 2023/24 to 2026/27 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in February 2023. The key aim of the Strategy is to ensure that the Authority has appropriate resources in place to fund key service demands over the next few years. The Strategy includes the establishment of earmarked reserves and the allocation of ongoing revenue budget and capital resources for key priorities.

6. The 2023-27 capital programme was reviewed over the summer of 2023 and an updated programme was approved by the Cabinet on 15 September 2023.

Resource Implications

Revenue Outturn

7. A summary of the revenue outturn for 2023/24, excluding schools grant, is set out below:

	£000
Updated budget	512,152
Provisional outturn	524,405
Net overspend	12,253
Less additional income	-12,253
Net Position	0

8. Overall the revenue budget shows a balanced position. Details of the variances on Departments and central items are included in the report and in Appendix A and Appendix B.
9. The General Fund Reserve stands at £21m as at 31st March 2024, which represents 3.7% of the 2024/25 revenue budget (excluding schools' delegated budgets), in line with the County Council's reserves policy and the MTFs approved in February 2024. It is planned to increase the General Fund to £24m by the end of 2027/28 to reflect increasing uncertainty and risks over the medium term and to avoid a reduction in the percentage of the net budget covered given the overall budget increase.

Capital Outturn

10. A summary of the capital outturn for 2023/24, excluding schools devolved formula capital, is set out below:

	£000
Updated budget	139,305
Less provisional outturn	107,386
Net Variance	-31,919

11. Overall, there has been a net rephasing of expenditure of £31.9m compared with the updated budget. This funding will be carried forward to 2024/25 to fund schemes that were not completed in 2023/24.
12. Details of the variances and key projects delivered in 2023/24 are included in the report, and in Appendix D.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

13. None.

Officers to Contact

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PART B

Overall Position - Revenue

14. Appendix A shows the provisional outturn position for 2023/24. This compares the actual net expenditure incurred with the updated budget. The original budget has been updated for transfers between services and from central contingencies.
15. Appendix B gives details of significant variances by departmental revenue budgets for 2023/24.

Children and Family Services – Schools Budget

16. There is a net overspend of £1.9m on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This comprises an overspend of £5.6m on the High Needs Block, offset by an underspend of £2.2m on the Early Years Block, and an underspend of £1.6m on the Schools block.
17. The High Needs Block shows an overspend of a net £5.6m in 2023/24 compared to the budgeted overspend of £13m. This represents a significantly overall reduced overspend position on the High Needs Block in comparison to previous in-year projections, and this is linked to the Transforming SEND in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme focusing significantly on ensuring that all data within the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system is robust to enable effective management of the SEN system. This has focused upon both data on individual pupils and how that data translates into robust financial data through the introduction of effective financial processes. Resolving data quality and establishing more robust data transfer of pupil data from Special Educational Needs Assessment (SENA) to the finance system has identified an over provision of financial commitments. Some of this improvement is one-off as it relates to past accruals which are no longer required. An action plan is under development to address the identified issues.
18. Nationally, concern over the impact of SEND reform on High Needs expenditure, and the financial difficulties this exposes local authorities to, is growing. Whilst the Government's Green Paper is set to result in systemic changes to the national SEND system, such changes may take a number of years to deliver and none appear to address the funding issues.
19. Leicestershire is actively engaged within the Department of Education's (DfE) Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND programme as a result of the DSG deficit. Leicestershire has received £1m in grant funding from the DfE to support the transformation of the SEND system. The TSIL programme has moved to an implementation and sustainability phase and improvements created during the design stage are being rolled out; this programme and the DBV programme are closely aligned. Discussions have taken place with the DfE regarding the strategic partner and funding. Whilst the cost of the strategic partner cannot be charged to DSG the investment in TSIL is recognised as a key step in reducing the DSG deficit and as such would be taken into consideration if there was a

call on the County Council to contribute to the deficit reduction, as has been the case for authorities with even more serious deficits.

20. Without new interventions the High Needs block deficit is forecast to continue to increase over the MTFS period and is not financially sustainable, despite the improved position in 2023/24. This creates a significant and unresolved financial risk to the Council. Work is underway to reassess the financial impact on the budget over the coming months and target savings from the TSIL programme are £32m by 2028/29. At the end of 2023/24 the accumulated High Needs deficit was £41m.
21. The Early Years budget is showing an underspend of £2.2m. The budget is based on the number of hours used to calculate the original 2023/24 Early Years DSG income in December 2022. The 2023/24 Early Years DSG income was increased in July 2023 by £1.8m to allow for the Spring Term 2023 census. This includes a prior year adjustment of £0.6m relating to 2022/23. The hours paid to providers for 2023/24 are £0.9m more than the budget, reflecting estimated Spring 2024 payments to providers. There is also an underspend of £0.9m as part of the payback of previous years' Early Years deficits, and centrally managed budgets underspent by £0.4m. The updated deficit on this block as at 31 March 2024 was £3.1m. The plan is to clear this deficit over 4 years. The DfE will recalculate the 2023-24 Early Years DSG income in 2024-25, based on the Spring 2024 census data. This is estimated to be an increase in grant of £0.3m.
22. There is an underspend of £1.6m on the Schools Block from schools' growth, which will be retained for meeting the costs of commissioning school places in future years. As at 31 March 2024 the balance on the DSG reserve (excluding High Needs), stands at £9.2m consisting of £12.3m Schools Block from school's growth, for meeting the costs of commissioning school places in future years, less £3.1m accumulated deficit on the Early Years Block.

Children and Family Services – Local Authority Budget (Other)

23. The Local Authority budget is overspent by a net £11.9m (11.1%), mainly relating to overspends on the children's social care placements budget (£6.2m), unaccompanied asylum seeking children's budget (£3.7m), SEN service budget (£0.9m), education psychology service (£0.3m), disabled children services budget (£0.9m) offset by some of the outputs of departmental financial controls currently in place (£0.1m).
24. The outturn shows a reduced (£0.6m) overall overspend in comparison to the last departmental financial position reported. The primary reason for this is linked to outcome of the age assessments for the unaccompanied asylum seeking children's (UASC) cohort resulting in financial responsibility sitting with the Home Office, whereas previously, given the level of uncertainty, this had been assumed to be with the Council. Similarly, within the children's social care budget, the outcome of agreed funding contributions from partners was more positive and higher than previously projected. Combined with the added level of manager oversight and scrutiny of spend across services, supported by recently introduced and mandated corporate financial controls, this has positively contributed to a reduced overspend position versus that previously reported. However,

the pressures in Children's social care remain significant and is a key focus of the Council's transformation programme.

25. The overspend position on the Children's Social Care Placement budget (£6.2m) is largely due to increased unit costs of placements. For example, the average weekly cost per residential placement having increased from £4,800 per week (budgeted average cost included in the MTFS) to the current average of £5,800 per week which equates to a 20% increase in the last 12-18 months. The increase is partly related to the cohort of children (those with the most appropriate fit for residential care) but the main contributing factor is market pressures. A lack of provider capacity and volatility in the market, as well as increasing complexity and/or different cohort of children and young people needing placements, has significantly increased the cost of new placements compared to those placements ending.
26. Market instability and provider choice is resulting in children with a range of complex needs being 'unattractive' to the market. Needs include violence, aggression as a result of experiencing trauma, and results in the use of high cost (£10,000+ per week per child) interim provisions until behaviour stabilises or another placement can be found. Other sufficiency issues impacting on budget pressure include a lack of step-down options from residential provision (circa.10 children who have been waiting long periods for family-based placements), with continued searches and work with providers to try to identify suitable provision. This is not helped with a low recruitment pipeline for mainstream carers, nationally, which particularly impacts on availability of placements for older children and those with more complex needs.
27. As part of the direct actions being taken to mitigate against these financial pressures, the Defining Children and Family Services for the Future programme has several workstreams to enable MTFS benefits to be achieved alongside the Social Care Investment Programme (SCIP) working in partnership with Barnardo's. This will have a positive impact through the creation of additional residential provision capacity for under 16's, over 16's and parent and children places. The Council has been successful in obtaining additional capital grant funding (match funded by the Council) to enable investment in a number of properties, creating provision for 20 plus placements over the lifetime of the current MTFS, of which two units are currently up and running with children placed, and several other units to become operational very soon.
28. The £3.7m overspend position in relation to the UASC budget is largely due to the rapid increase in UASC in care and care leavers, which has required a greater resource requirement to meet their needs. The different entry routes include both the National Transfer Scheme (NTS), as well as spontaneous arrivals. More recently there have been more UASC coming through the hotel dispersal scheme where requests to accommodate people placed in Asylum Dispersal Hotels in Leicestershire are made. Whilst they have been deemed adults by the Home Office, they subsequently claim to be children which creates an additional pressure for the service to manage which is not fully funded. In addition, delays in asylum claim processes mean that the Council is often accommodating young people well past the age of 18. Home Office funding drops

significantly at the age of 18, but the costs do not. The table below shows the increase in numbers of UASC over the last two years.

	UASC - In Care (under 18's)	Annual % Increase	UASC – Care Leaver (Over 18's)	Annual % Increase
March 22	60		69	
March 23	97	62%	112	62%
March 24	115	19%	170	52%

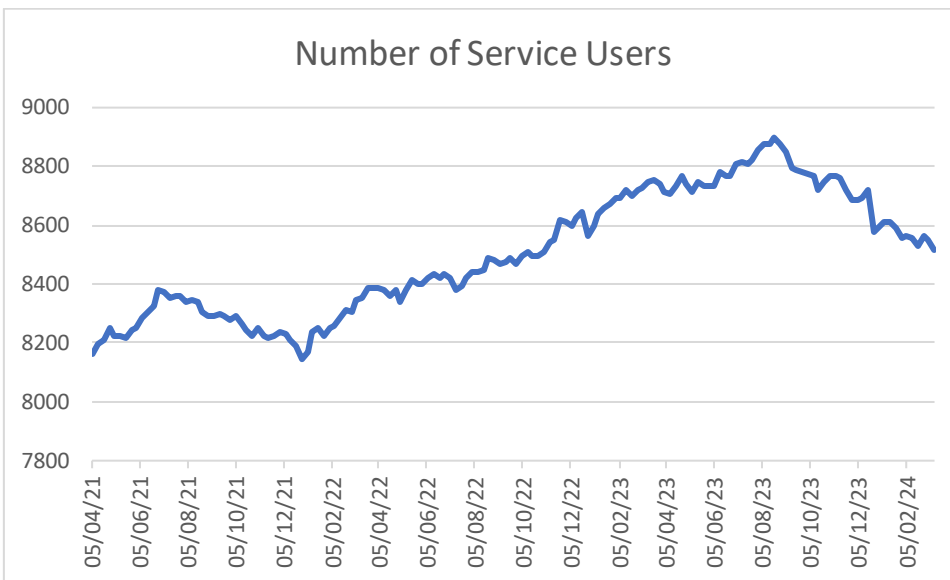
29. The increase in UASC under 18's represents an increase of 92% since March 2022 and continues the upward trend experienced in 2021/22, an increase due to the NTS becoming mandatory and two dispersal hotels opening in Leicestershire. The increase in UASC over 18's represents a 146% increase since March 2022, and this is linked to the increasing number of care leavers, for whom a reduced funding rate is received in comparison to the costs being incurred.
30. The SENA service budget is overspent by £0.9m in 2023/24. During the previous financial year increased service demand and complexity resulted in the need for additional service resources to ensure demand can be managed in the most efficient and effective manner, with this position continuing into 2023/24. A heavy reliance on agency workers to undertake Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) writing and tribunal work has resulted in an overspend in this area. Meanwhile mediation costs remain high adding to the overall in-year budget pressure.
31. The Disabled Children Service is also reporting a overspend position of £0.9m due to increased demand, linked to respite support at home for children with acute challenging behaviour. This continues to present increased financial pressures where support is needed for children who are high needs and on the edge of care, but nonetheless would still be less costly than if the child entered care and subsequent placement provision needing to be sought.
32. As a direct response to the projected in-year overspends as described above the departmental management team has led a review of non-statutory services, supported with the recent introduction of corporate led financial controls. Together with robust management and review of vacancies within the department this work has delivered one-off in-year efficiencies and budget opportunities (£0.1m). Further work is being undertaken to explore the feasibility of this work and its scope to deliver on-going future budget efficiencies.

Adults and Communities

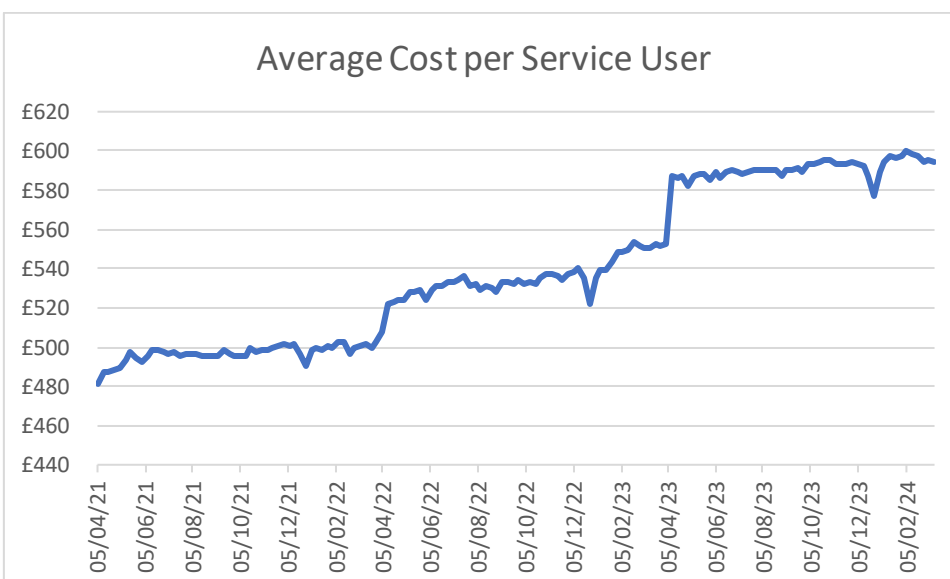
33. There is a net overspend for the departmental revenue budget for 2023/24 of £2.6m (1.2%). This is an improved position from earlier forecasts, which is due to a combination of factors, including extensive actions to reduce demand on the service, corporate spend controls and a reduction in service user numbers in the second half of the year.

Overall Trends

34. The chart below shows overall number of service users being supported across Residential Care, Homecare, Supported Living, Cash Payments, and Community Life Choices from April 2021 through to March 2024. Typical growth would be approximately 1% to 1.5% per annum. However, current numbers of service users supported have now decreased to an annualised rate of 1.6% per annum from higher levels of 2.2% observed earlier in the year. The reduction in numbers that can be seen from October 2023 marks the beginning of corrective action being taken by the department via the Fair Outcomes Panel which started around September 2023.



35. The average cost per service user rose over the same time period. The steep rise from April 2023 relates to the annual fee review uplift.



36. Note the average cost per service user was not static and rose over the course of 2022/23, mainly driven by higher cost packages within Residential care from market pressures to secure a placement and increasing hours being commissioned within Homecare from increasing numbers of discharges from hospital.
37. The overspend has declined over the course of the year due to several factors:
- The Fair Outcomes Panel, which was established in September 2023, reviewed cases brought before it and sought cheaper and more effective ways to meet service user need.
 - Concurrently the Homecare Assessment and Reablement Team service was more efficiently able to take more community homecare referrals from the Fair Outcomes Panel but also directly from the Care Pathway, which meant lower long term homecare packages were being commissioned. This in turn reduced the Homecare overspend.
 - Service user numbers decreased within Direct Payments as more service users opted for a managed service as opposed to receiving a Direct Payment.
 - Residential income increased as backdated financial assessments were being undertaken but also revised third party agreements were being returned following the fee uplift that took place in October 2023 resulting in additional backdated income. Non-Residential income increased due to backdated financial assessments being undertaken.

38. The main areas of variance are:

Homecare - £7.5m overspend

39. There has been an average of 2,660 service users for the year which is 5% higher than the budgeted number of 2,540. Current average package costs (or hours) are 5% higher than budgeted (excluding the fee uplift of 8.4%) at £328 per service user per week compared to the budgeted value of £313. The increase is from delaying admission into residential care and increased provision within the service user's own home, and lower numbers of service users opting to take a direct cash payment. There is Adult Social Care Discharge Grant of £1.0m and £0.1m other health funds offsetting this expenditure.

Supported Living - £5.5m overspend

40. There was an increase of 28 service users over the course of the financial year from 472 to 500. The majority of the increase in service users are from those either transitioning from Children's Social Care, living at home with their parents, or moving from a hospital setting into Supported Living. They represent new growth in numbers rather than a movement of existing service users from Residential Care, which was the primary driver under the Target Operating Model Programme. The Dynamic Purchasing System used by supported living commissioners is increasing the supply of additional Supported Living schemes, facilitating the increase in the number of placements that can be made. Average placement costs have risen since April 2023 and currently stand at £1,570 per week per service user (+8%). There has also been an increase in community income to

offset these additional costs. The department is looking into ways to reduce demand for new and existing one to one support within Supported Living via the review process. Also, initial work has started reviewing how specialist and complex care is procured.

Residential Care - £2.1m overspend

41. The overspend is mainly due to increases in the average weekly cost per residential placement over and above the planned inflationary increases to the banded rates. This is a continuation of the pressure experienced in 2022/23 which led to an overspend. There are an average 2,405 service users with an average weekly rate of £1,039.
42. The main driver of the increases is where the Council has agreed funding above the banded rates to ensure that the service is provided with a suitable care placement, known as Local Authority Agreed Funding (LAAF). The forecast cost of LAAFs in 2023/24 (based on current volumes and values of LAAFs) is £14.6m. This compares to the 2022/23 cost of £12.6m, and 2021/22 of £10.0m. The 2023/24 forecast is a 46% increase on the 2021/22 costs. This is a combination of both an increase in the volume and value of LAAFs. The volume of LAAFs has increased from 742 service users per week in 2021/22 to 946 in 2023/24. The value of LAAFs has increased from an average of £258 per service user per week in 2021/22 to £296 in 2023/24. The increase in LAAFs (both volume and value) is predominantly in the older adults area.
43. The position includes an increase in the residential banded rate and the implementation of a nursing rate in October 2023 of £2.1m funded through the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (part 1) grant.
44. This overspend is offset by additional service user income of £6.2m which is mainly due to backdated arrears from working through a backlog of financial assessments.
45. The department has also allocated the second tranche of the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF 2 - £3.7m) to fund this overspend and other areas, identified on a separate income line below.

Better Care Fund / Other NHS Income - £2.2m net loss of income

46. A total of £6m income was budgeted for from the NHS for additional costs relating to Covid-19 mainly due to hospital discharges. There is a £4.5m shortfall in this income for 2023/24. due to changes in the way hospital discharges are undertaken and funded. However, the overall position is offset by additional Better Care Fund income and new Discharge Grant of £2.4m.

Community Income - £5.4m additional income

47. The majority of the variance is due to health income from Supported Living service user packages which are generating an extra £3.7m. Of this, £2.0m relates to increased Supported Living packages, £0.7m due to increased funding for Direct Payments clients and £0.8m relates to home care packages, mostly due to temporary health condition

funding continuing at late 2022/23 levels. Non-Residential service user income has overachieved the budget of £18.1m by £1.8m, due to increasing chargeable service users, as more service users are receiving a non-residential service such as homecare.

Other additional income £3.7m

48. There are allocations of the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF 2) - £3.7m which has been allocated to offset the current additional costs particularly in residential care, increased residential and nursing fees as part of the Market Sustainability Plan, supporting staffing and reducing waiting times for care.

Direct Payments - £1.0m underspend

49. There is an underspend due to a reduction in service user numbers and additional funding from the MSIF (1) grant allocated to fund higher personal assistant rates, introduced in August 2023.
50. The net overspends above are offset by a net £4.7m underspend, mainly from staffing vacancies and other minor variations.
51. The department has established a wide-ranging demand management programme and the fair outcomes panel to review care packages. The panel has reviewed 4,250 care packages since September 2023 and has been successful in better managing service user's needs and avoiding significant increase in the cost of packages. A robust demand management plan will continue during 2024/25 which will focus on managing demand particularly for homecare. In particular to:
- review all service users' packages that have commenced or changed since April 2023
 - work with NHS partners to help improve the discharge pathway including reviewing funding arrangements
 - ensure financial and funding assessments are undertaken
 - review internal processes.

Public Health

52. The Department is forecasting an underspend of £0.8m, mainly due to staffing vacancies and contract underspends. The underspend will be transferred to the Public Health earmarked reserve.

Environment and Transport

53. A net underspend of £2.3m (2.5%) is reported.
54. Across Highways and Transport Operations a net £1.9m overspend is reported as a result of:

- Mainstream School Transport - £1.3m overspend. Increase in overall number of students entitled to mainstream transport and rise in the number of routes, increase in bus operational costs resulting in higher contract costs and limited bus capacity leading to a larger number of pupils being transported by taxi. To mitigate costs a review is in progress to reduce the number of solo taxi contracts. A retendering process will then be undertaken during summer 2024 which should achieve savings in the new financial year.
 - Social Care Transport / Passenger Fleet - net overspend £1.1m. Increased costs following a rise in the number of commissioned journeys for Social Care Transport, additional vehicle hire and maintenance costs, net of underspends on Passenger Fleet due to inability to recruit drivers and escorts.
 - SEN Transport – £0.7m overspend. Continued growth in pupil numbers. To mitigate costs an SEN network review is in progress to maximise fleet usage and reduce solo taxi contracts.
 - Environmental and reactive maintenance works – £1.4m overspend. Increased highways maintenance costs required to meet policy requirements.
 - Staffing vacancies – net £0.4m underspend. On-going staffing vacancies caused by an inability to recruit to vacant posts across teams.
 - Additional fee income – net £2.2m underspend. Increase in issues of Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders and network licenses/permits.
55. There is a net underspend of £1.9m reported on Environment and Waste Management services. Reasons are additional income from the sale of dry recyclable materials and electrical items (£1.0m); together with underspends arising from delays in delivery of environmental policies and initiatives (£0.1m); and the net impact from the diversion of waste from Energy from Waste and Refused-derived fuel facilities into landfill to accommodate the disposal of Persistent Organic Pollutants by incineration (£0.5m). This diversion is generating less haulage costs as waste is going directly into landfill causing an underspend (£0.2m).
56. As part of the year-end process an additional £0.2m has been released from the bad debt provision.
57. The remaining balance relates to a £2.1m underspend on Development and Growth. Lower than budgeted reimbursement on concessionary travel net of overspends on Local Bus Service contracts following delays to savings implementation due to conditions attached to Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP+) funding allocation has caused a net £0.8m underspend. This is in addition to underspends arising from vacancies across teams (£0.8m), HS2 ending (£0.1m); reduced energy costs (£0.1m) and additional income from section 38 and section 278 (Highways Act 1980) and fees and charges relating to highway infrastructure (£0.5m). These underspends are offset by additional costs associated with consultancy support to improve governance arrangements relating to the capital programme.
58. Additional costs arising from the various flooding incidents across the County during the winter are expected to be incurred during 2024/25 and are anticipated to be in the region

of £1m. A separate earmarked reserve has been established to fund these costs (paragraph 66 below refers).

Chief Executive's

59. The department is reporting a net underspend of £1.1m (7%). There are underspends due to staffing vacancies (£0.5m), increased Registrar's income (£0.3m), reduced running costs (£0.2m), additional income (£0.2m), and a net underspend on external legal costs (£0.1m), offset by additional costs of £0.2m relating to the Coroner's Service.

Corporate Resources

60. The department has an overall net underspend of £1.3m (4.0%).
61. There are underspends of £2.6m due to a combination of vacancies across several parts of the department, and reduced commissioning spend. This is largely because of the introduction of tighter corporate led financial controls, together with existing robust management and review of vacancies, delivering a number of in-year efficiencies, some of which are an early achievement of future MTFS savings.
62. However, there are continuing pressures on commercial services budgets, which has a £0.8m overspend, due to increases in the national living wage and general inflationary pressures. The overspend is after a one-off transfer of £2m from the MTFS Risks Contingency which has been added to the School Meals service budget to mitigate the impact of the inflationary pressures arising from the difficult economic climate. Work is continuing to review pressures and to identify mitigating actions.

Central Contingencies

63. Growth contingency (£1m). The contingency has been released to offset the overspends due to increased spending pressures in departments.
64. Fair Cost of Care / Adult Social Care Reforms (£4.6m). £3.5m of this contingency is required to fund additional spending in Adults and Communities. The balance of £1.1m is shown as being released as an underspend, reflecting the additional expenditure in the department.
65. MTFS Risks Contingency (£10m). £2m of the contingency has been released to provide temporary support to the Commercial Services budget. It is proposed that the remaining balance be used as a contribution to the Capital Financing reserves and this has been reflected in the outturn position at Appendix A. The future Capital Programme has a £93m funding gap. There are early indications that the North and East Melton Mowbray Distributor Road project may exceed current cost estimates, but risk assessments and contractor discussions are still ongoing to determine whether the current contingency will be sufficient. There are a number of other major capital projects still at an early stage and inflationary pressures continue to be a factor for the Council to manage. Weather related risks are also becoming an increasing issue to consider. Given that capital risks are

increasing, using the available risks contingency towards future capital costs is an appropriate and prudent strategy.

66. Inflation Contingency (£41.8m original budget, £3.3m balance). The pay award for Local Government staff for the current year exceeded the amount assumed in the contingency by around £1.6m. However, there is an underspend on the provision made for running costs, leaving a net balance of £3.3m which it is proposed is used as a contribution to an earmarked reserve of £1m for flooding works given issues experienced this winter and a £2.3m contribution to the Transformation reserve, to provide funding to support the delivery of additional savings required to address the future MTFS funding gaps.

Central Items

67. The Financing of Capital budget is underspent by £1.7m due to a reduction in interest payments following the early repayment of £42m of external debt principal to the Public Works Loans Board over the period June to August 2023. Following market expectations of higher and for longer inflation in the UK, there has been an increase in the discounts/reduction in the premiums available for the premature repayment of debt. At the start of the year the Council was £54m overborrowed against the capital financing requirement (the level of historic capital expenditure required to be funded). The premature repayment rates will continue to be monitored for any further opportunities to repay existing debt early.
68. Bank and other interest saw £7.7m increased investment income due to continued increases in the Bank of England base rate earlier in the financial year, and higher than estimated average Council balances. The base rate is 5.25% with markets forecasting that rates have now peaked and that they will start to reduce later in 2024. Average balances remain strong due to reserves, rephasing of expenditure on the capital programme and government grants paid in advance.
69. Central expenditure budgets are overspent by a net £0.5m due mainly to a contribution of £0.6m to the Pension Fund to top up the provision for ill-health retirements.
70. Other Items show a net overspend of £0.8m, due to technical pay adjustments, offset by prior year adjustments mainly relating to the refund of business rates and the cleansing of receipted aged purchase orders that are no longer required.
71. Additional business rates income (£12.3m), as set out below, is shown as being contributed to the Budget Equalisation Reserve, to be used to offset the anticipated gap of £33m in the MTFS projection in 2025/26. A net balance of £0.6m on the overall 2023/24 outturn is also shown as part of the transfer to the reserve. Whilst focused effort is being made by the Council to identify further savings and income generation opportunities, there are currently insufficient savings identified to meet the 2025/26 gap and so maintaining a sufficient level of reserves is crucial.

Business Rates

72. Additional Business Rates income of £5.2m is shown, subject to information from districts. The MTFS adopted a prudent approach and did not allow for potential real terms growth or for the full impact of inflation in charges to businesses and S31 grants.
73. The latest projection of the Leicester and Leicestershire Business Rates Pool shows levies for 2023/24, based on quarter three forecasts, to be a total of £18.4m, of which one third (£6.1m) will be allocated to the County Council as reported to the Cabinet on 23 June 2023. In addition, there are amounts of £0.2m due as a third share of previous years' levies held by the LLEP and £0.4m relating to interest on earlier years' levies, giving an overall forecast of £6.7m.
74. The Government announced a redistribution of £100m from the national Levy and Safety Net fund, of which the County Council has received £0.5m.
75. The Government has also released details of revisions to 2023/24 Top Up and Tariff amounts, reflecting adjustments to provisional figures in the original 2023/24 Settlement. The County Council's Top Up has been reduced by £0.1m.
76. These changes net to £12.3m which will be transferred to the Budget Equalisation earmarked reserve as referred to above. The growth arising from the Pool will be spent on economic priorities in line with the pooling agreement. This is likely to be through investment in capital projects which support economic growth.

Overall Revenue Summary

77. With focused effort and a tight control over cost pressures, the Council has achieved a balanced outturn position for 2023/24. There has been earlier delivery of savings in some areas, and innovative service delivery models developed, such as the partnership with Barnardo's and completion of additional SEND provision. The Council has also taken advantage of repaying debt when the opportunity arose, achieving savings in interest costs through proactive action. There are also encouraging indications that the TSIL programme is having an impact on the High Needs Deficit with a much improved position compared to the original budget. The improved outturn position has enabled £1m to be set aside for flooding improvement works to be carried out over the next 12 months in response to the flooding incidents experienced across the County this winter.
78. Despite achieving a balanced budget for 2023/24, the underlying position remains very challenging, even after actions taken to reduce expenditure. There are significant overspends in the Children and Family Services and Adult and Communities departments and the 2023/24 £6m deficit on the High Needs Block (resulting in a £41m cumulative HNB deficit) is of particular concern.
79. Many of the underspends are due to staff vacancies which by their nature are not on-going, and the significant additional income from bank and other interest is likely to be short-term too. Tight control over spending and reducing running costs where possible

through escalated financial controls has enabled the Council to produce a balanced outturn position, despite continued cost pressures across social care. Spend controls have contributed to savings in salaries, travel, training and stationery and a review is being undertaken to identify if any of these savings can be taken as permanent budget reductions.

80. The financial outlook for the County Council continues to be very difficult. Spending controls will need to remain in place and there will need to be a significant focus on identifying further savings across the Council.

General Fund and Earmarked Reserves

81. The uncommitted General Fund balance as at 31 March 2024 stands at £21m which represents 3.7% of the 2024/25 revenue budget, in line with the County Council's earmarked reserves policy. The MTFs includes further analysis of the County Council's earmarked reserves including the reasons for holding them.
82. The total level of earmarked reserves held as at 31 March 2024 total £223m including schools and partnership funding. They can be summarised as below:

Capital/Repairs	£136m
Risk	£79m
Revenue projects	£17m
Ring fenced grants etc	£21m
Schools DSG	-£32m
Partnerships	£2m
Total	£223m

83. Earmarked reserves are shown in more detail at Appendix C. This shows actual balances as at the end of March 2024 and a forecast balance as at the end of March 2025. The forecast shows that reserves are due to reduce significantly over the next 12 months as capital reserves are used to fund the programme during 2024/25 and ring-fenced grants are spent on the projects that they are intended for.
84. The risk-based reserves shown in the table above includes the Budget Equalisation reserve which is held to support the MTFs and provide some level of cover for future funding gaps in case adequate savings are not identified or delivered. Given that the budget gap in 2025/26 is expected to be in the region of £33m, as well as the future challenges on the High Needs deficit, it is important that this reserve is held at a reasonable level.
85. The main earmarked reserves are set out below.

Renewals of Vehicles and Equipment (£1.3m)

86. Departments hold earmarked reserves for the future replacement of vehicles and equipment such as ICT.

Trading (£2.6m)

87. Sinking fund set aside to fund repairs and maintenance of the Investing in Leicestershire Programme (ILLP).

Insurance (£15.4m)

88. Earmarked reserves of £10.3m are held to meet the estimated cost of future claims to enable the Council to meet excesses not covered by insurance policies and smooth fluctuations in claims between years. The levels are informed by advice from independent advisors.
89. The uninsured loss fund of £5.1m is required mainly to meet potential liabilities arising from Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI) that is subject to a run-off of claims following liquidation in 1992. The fund also covers the period before the Council purchased insurance cover and any other uninsured losses.

Children and Family Services

90. Children and Family Services Developments (£2.1m). This provides funding for a number of projects such as improving management information, information access and retention and responding to changing requirements as a result of OfSTED and legislation. The fund also includes government grants with no conditions for repayment that have not yet been used by the end of March 2024.

Adults and Communities

91. Adults and Communities Developments (£1.4m). This earmarked reserve is held to fund a number of investments in maintaining social care service levels and assisting the Department in achieving its transformation.

Public Health

92. Public Health (£9.0m) – to fund Public Health initiatives within Leicestershire. The reserve includes various Government grants that have been carried forward to 2024/25 or where the grant conditions have already been met, and for the departmental underspend at year end as mentioned earlier in the report. The department has a detailed plan of public health initiatives, including those relating to Covid-19 for at risk groups.

Environment and Transport

93. Commuted Sums (£2.4m). This funding, received from housing developers, is used to cover future revenue costs arising from developer schemes where the specifications are over and above standard developments. For example, block paving, bollards, or trees adjacent to the highway. These liabilities can arise many years after the funding is received and therefore the balance on this earmarked reserve has built up over time.

Corporate

94. Transformation Fund (£8.9m). The fund is used to invest in transformation projects to identify and deliver efficiency savings and also to fund severance costs. To achieve the level of savings within the MTFS the Council will need to change significantly, and this will require major investment, including in some of the core 'building blocks' of transformation such as improvements to data quality, and improvements to digital services enabling more self-service.
95. Broadband (£3.9m). This earmarked reserve was established to allow the development of super-fast broadband within Leicestershire. There is a significant time lag in spending County Council funds as a result of securing grant funding from Government and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) that required those funds to be spent first and within a set period.
96. Budget Equalisation (£61.3m). This manages variations in funding across financial years. This includes the increasing pressures on the High Needs element of the DSG which is in deficit by £41.2m at the end of 2023/24. The Children and Family Services department is investigating a number of actions that could over the course of the MTFS reduce demand and therefore the overall deficit. As things stand, there could be a significant call on this reserve for 2025/26 if further savings are not identified and delivered in the short term.

Capital

97. Capital Financing (£149.3m). This earmarked revenue reserve is used to hold MTFS revenue contributions required to fund the approved capital programme in future years. The increase at year-end is due to the overall level of rephasing of expenditure on the capital programme in 2023/24 and the £8m set aside for capital risks from the MTFS risks contingency mentioned earlier in the report. In addition, when financing actual capital expenditure incurred, capital funding is used first and this revenue reserve is used last (as revenue funding is less restricted than capital funding which can only be used to fund new capital expenditure). This reserve is fully committed to fund the 2024-28 MTFS capital programme and will be used before any of the planned £93m unsupported borrowing included in the 2024-28 programme is used.
98. Pooled Property Fund(s) (-£24.8m). The Cabinet previously approved the investment of £25m of the Council's earmarked reserves into pooled property funds. The investments are held to achieve higher returns than if the funds were invested as cash and return an annual contribution of approximately £1m. The investment is funded from the overall balance of earmarked reserves and can be realised in the future when required.

Other / Partnerships Earmarked Reserves

99. DSG (overall deficit of £32m). DSG is ring-fenced and can only be applied to meet expenditure properly included in the Schools Budget, as defined in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations. This reserve is earmarked to meet the revenue costs of commissioning places in new schools, early years and to support pressures on the High Needs block. A summary is shown below:

	Schools Block	Early Years Block	High Needs Block	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
As at 31 March 2023	10.7	-5.3	-35.5	-30.1
Changes 2023/24	1.6	2.2	-5.7	-1.9
As at 31 March 2024	12.3	-3.1	-41.2	-32.0

100. Within the Schools block funding, future DSG allocations for schools' growth will be retained and added to the earmarked reserve to support the revenue costs of commissioning new schools. The deficit on the High Needs block will increase in the medium term until the savings arising from the High Needs Development Plan are delivered. In the short term the surplus on the Schools block will partially offset the high needs and early years deficits.
101. Health and Social Care Outcomes (£10.0m) used in conjunction with Health partners across Leicestershire. These reserve balances are higher than anticipated due to delays in projects such as extending the new Intake Model for Homecare Assessment and Reablement (£2.5m) which will commission appropriate services following a more focussed assessment period and the health digital project (£0.6m) with some projects still to be confirmed (£2.0m).
102. Active Together (£1.2m). The main purpose of this earmarked reserve is to hold partner contributions until expenditure on the agreed activities has been incurred. A significant part of the services' funding from external agencies is uncertain in nature, so the earmarked reserve also allows management of funding variations and a redundancy provision.

East Midlands Freeport (EMF)

103. The Council acts as the accountable body for EMF. Freeports are designated areas where tax benefits exist to encourage investment and economic growth. The key funding stream for Freeports is retained business rates. In designated areas 100% of growth in business rate revenues is retained to allow these funds to be invested in the local area rather than a share needing to be returned to central government.
104. In advance of growth, and retained business rates being available, the Cabinet approved the provision of a cash flow loan to EMF up to a total of £4m to cover set up and operations. This loan is at commercial rates to avoid any conflict with subsidy control and ensure the County Council gets an appropriate return on investment. As the accountable body for EMF, the role includes providing support to the Freeport in delivering the objectives set by the Government.
105. As at the end of the 2023/24 financial year a total of £2.6m had been drawn down. Current forecasts are that there will be a surplus of retained business rates over costs in the 2024/25 financial year such that the balance on the cash flow loan at the end of 2024/25 will reduce to £1.9m. It is then anticipated that this remaining amount will be repaid in full during 2025/26.

106. The risk of eventual non-payment is considered to be low for the following reasons:

- Over £1bn of retained business rates is expected to be generated over 25 years;
- This is likely to exceed £10m per year from 2027/28 and continue to rise;
- Repayment of County Council funds is the first call on retained business rates after covering operational costs;
- Rates are already being generated on one of the tax sites.

107. In addition, the use of retained business rates will be available to supplement developer funding, thereby mitigating adverse impacts of development.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

108. The updated capital programme for 2023/24 totals £139m. This follows a review of the programme undertaken over the summer and approved by the Cabinet in September 2023. A total of £107m has been invested during 2023/24.

109. A summary of the capital outturn for 2023/24, excluding schools devolved formula capital, is set out below:

Programme Area	Updated Budget £000	Actual Expenditure £000	Net Variance £000	%
Children and Family Services	41,417	33,915	(7,502)	82%
Adults and Communities	5,904	4,836	(1,068)	82%
Environment and Transport	85,002	65,901	(19,101)	77%
Chief Executive's	31	31	(0)	100%
Corporate Resources	4,651	1,838	(2,813)	39%
Corporate Programme	2,300	865	(1,435)	38%
Total	139,305	107,386	(31,919)	77%

110. A summary of the net variance is shown below:

Programme Area	Underspend £000	Overspend £000	Rephasing of expenditure £000	Accelera- tion £000	Total £000
Children and Family Servs.	(131)	131	(10,159)	2,657	(7,502)
Adults and Communities	(10)	0	(1,058)	0	(1,068)
Environment and Transport	(918)	918	(19,282)	181	(19,101)
Chief Executive's	0	0	0	0	0
Corporate Resources	(4)	4	(2,890)	77	(2,813)
Corporate Programme	0	0	(1,435)	0	(1,435)
Total	(1,063)	1,053	(34,824)	2,915	(31,919)
	(10)		(31,909)		

111. The net underspend has been added to the capital financing reserve to reduce the level of internal borrowing required for the new MTFs capital programme. The net rephasing of

expenditure of £31.9m has been carried forward to the capital programme 2024-28 to fund delayed projects.

112. A summary of the key projects delivered and main variations are set out below. Further details of the main variations are provided in Appendix D.
113. Appendix E compares the provisional prudential indicators with those set and agreed by the Council at its budget meeting in February 2023. These are all within the limits set.
114. A review of the new 2024-28 MTFS capital programme will be undertaken during the summer 2024 in light of the outturn and financial pressures on large capital projects. An updated capital programme will be reported to the Cabinet in September 2024.

Children and Family Services

Key Projects Delivered

115. Creation of additional school places completing projects at fourteen different schools. A total of 602 new primary school places across six schools including Holycroft Primary School in Hinckley, the Council's first Carbon Neutral School. For secondary, 250 new school places across two schools were delivered. The SEND programme saw the completion of several schemes to support the growing needs for High Needs places in Leicestershire. This included the expansion of six SEND Schools which created an additional 123 SEND places.

Main Variances

116. The Department is reporting net rephasing of expenditure of £7.5m.
117. The main variances relate to the Provision of School Places Programme (£4.6m):
 - Shepshed Iveshead School, £2.3m rephasing of expenditure. The Shepshed campus has multiple different education provisions that have some degree of interaction which affects the timing dependency of building works. Enabling works are now underway with commencement of the build on site expected in July 2024.
 - Ibstock High School - rephasing of expenditure of £1.4m. This scheme supports housing growth in the area and transition to 11-16. The original estimates for the start of the project were slightly optimistic with the latest update now reporting construction starting in July 2024.
 - Coalville Forest New Primary - rephasing of expenditure of £2.1m. The timing of the Council's contribution to this scheme is dependent on the contractor hitting trigger points and submitting claims. The site was affected by unprecedented weather over the winter and as such the Council's contribution will not be required until 2024/25.
 - Burbage Hastings High School - acceleration of £0.5m. A project in the 2024-28 programme to create a new sports hall and addition classrooms. The budget had been prudently profiled in the MTFS – however, pre-construction works were able to start in 2023/24.

- Market Harborough New Primary School (Wellington Place Primary) - acceleration of £1.7m. The profiling of the budget for this scheme was undertaken prudently. The scheme is well underway, with completion expected by September 2024.

118. Other variations include rephasing of expenditure of £1.9m on the Children's SEND programme and £0.5m rephasing of expenditure on the Children's Social Care Improvement Programme (SCIP). Key variances are:

- £0.9m rephasing of expenditure relates to the new SEND school due to open at Shepshed in September 2024. This scheme encountered rephasing of expenditure due to delays in the DfE appointment of a contractor.
- £0.5m rephasing of expenditure on the Children's SCIP was due to lack of availability on properties on the housing market following rises in the Bank of England base rate during 2023.

Adults and Communities

Key Projects Delivered

119. Disabled Facilities Grant £4.8m passported to Leicestershire district councils to help people with the cost of adapting their homes to meet their essential needs.

Main Variances

120. The Department has reported net rephasing of expenditure of £1.1m. The variance is on the SCIP programme relating to two extra care schemes where the land transactions have been delayed to 2024/25.

Environment and Transport

Key Projects Delivered

121. A total of £38.5m was spent on the preparation and delivery of major projects in 2023/24, including:

- North and East Melton Mowbray Distributor Road, £33.4m – The construction of the new distributor road to ease congestion in the town centre and facilitate growth is underway.
- A511 Major Road Network scheme, £1.7m in designing and preparing the full business case to the Department for Transport. Project to tackle longstanding congestion and traffic related problems on the A511 between Leicester (M1 Junction 22) and the A42 commenced 2019/20 with a completion on site anticipated in 2027.
- Advanced Design/ Match funding for major projects - £1.8m
- Leicester and Leicestershire Integrated Transport Model Refresh - £0.9m
- Zouch Bridge, £0.3m – the existing bridge is at the end of its life. The bridge forms part of the A6006 which is strategically important in terms of transport infrastructure

and the regional economy. The procurement for a replacement commenced in 2023/24.

122. A total of £2.5m was spent on other schemes including:

- Vehicle replacement programme – £1.3m
- Externally funded schemes – £0.7m

123. A total £23.6m was invested in Highways Asset Maintenance:

- £17.6m on carriageways
- £2m on footways and rights of way
- £1.1m on bridge maintenance and strengthening
- £2m on street lighting maintenance
- £0.3m on flood alleviation
- £0.6m on traffic signal renewal

124. A total of £1.3m has been invested in Environment and Waste improvement works, including Recycling and Household Waste Sites (RHWS).

Main Variances

125. The Department has reported net rephasing of expenditure of £19.1m. The main variances are:

- North and East Melton Mowbray Distributor Road, £9.3m rephasing of expenditure due to adverse weather conditions delaying works from progressing on the programme. The overall costs of the project may now exceed the original budget, leading to a call on the risk contingency. However, this is still being reviewed and mitigations being explored.
- Council Vehicle Replacement Programme, £2.2m rephasing of expenditure as orders have been committed however due to supplier issues this has delayed the delivery of the vehicles.
- Advanced Design, £1.3m rephasing of expenditure. Delays in transport modelling.
- A511/A50 Major Road Network, £0.9m rephasing of expenditure. The sealing of the CPO has been delayed due to design amendments.
- Highways Capital Maintenance - £0.7m rephasing of expenditure on design works for capital programmes and delays in securing environment agency permits.
- Zouch Bridge Replacement – Construction and enabling works, £0.7m. Procurement process underway with a start date expected later in 2024/25.
- Waste Transfer Station Development, £0.6m rephasing of expenditure. Due to ongoing discussions with contractor regarding snagging issues.
- Property Flood Risk Alleviation, £0.6m rephasing of expenditure forecast on schemes in Breedon, Swithland, Harborough and Diseworth. Resource impacts from Storm Henk and reprofiling with the Environment Agency are key reasons for this.

- Ashby Canal reed bed - Rephasing of expenditure of £0.5m due to delays in construction works on the programme. Work expected to progress and complete in 2024/25.

Chief Executive's

Key Projects Delivered

126. During 2023/24, the final round of the SHIRE capital grant programme was delivered at a cost of £31,000. Through the SHIRE grants programme this financial year, capital grants were awarded to a total of nine not-for-profit community organisations, charities and social enterprises within Leicestershire. These grants were used towards delivery of projects, activities and services to support the health and wellbeing of vulnerable and disadvantaged people and communities.

Corporate Resources

Key Projects Delivered

127. During 2023/24, £1.8m was invested, including the following programmes:

- ICT End User devices, £0.8m, updating Council-owned computers.
- Ways of Working programme, £0.2m, a programme to drive efficiency and promote productivity by promoting a culture of flexible, smarter working and office optimisation enabling rental income from partners.
- Property services, £0.4m, extending the life of council properties.
- Public sector decarbonisation scheme, £0.3m, a programme to reduce the carbon impact of County Council properties.

Main Variances

128. The Department is forecasting net rephasing of expenditure of £2.8m. The main variances are:

- Workplace Strategy - End user device programme (PC, laptops), £0.6m rephasing of expenditure agreed to reprogramme funds over future years.
- Workplace Strategy – Office Infrastructure, £0.6m rephasing of expenditure due to requirements for departmental engagement and detailed design work pre-implementation.
- Climate Change (Energy Initiatives), £0.5m rephasing of expenditure. Heat decarbonisation plan will not be completed before March 2024 which will identify projects for 2024/25. Electric vehicle charging plans delayed to align with EV feasibility strategy completion.
- Workplace Strategy – Property Costs, £0.3m rephasing of expenditure as other unplanned work has created a delay to the original plan. This work was to be completed before any further lettings take place.

- ICT, £0.2m rephasing of expenditure to accommodate wider growth during 2024-28 MTFS period.
- Property Services - rephasing of expenditure of £0.5m across a number of smaller schemes, including works at County Hall and at various country parks.

Corporate

Key Projects Delivered

129. During 2023/24, £0.9m was invested into the direct property estate, including a £0.2m investment in Airfield Business Park, Market Harborough, £0.3m investment in Quorn Solar Farm as part of the Investing in Leicestershire Programme (IILP) to generate enhanced revenue returns, and £0.4m on improvements to industrial estates and county farms.

Main Variances

130. The programme has reported net rephasing of expenditure of £1.4m on the Investing in Leicestershire Programme (IILP). The main variances are with the general improvement programmes for County Farms Estate, £0.2m and Industrial Properties Estate, £0.3m. There was also rephasing of expenditure of £0.5m as no new investment opportunities were identified in 2023/24.

Capital Receipts

131. The requirement for general capital receipts for 2023/24 is £3.5m. The actual receipts were £6m due to earlier than planned disposals. The balance will be carried forward to 2024/25 to fund the 2024-28 capital programme – a surplus from 2023/24 was anticipated when compiling the 2024-28 capital programme.

Overall Capital Summary

132. The Council has delivered a number of key capital projects during 2023/24, including new school places and early works on a number of transport projects. Managing and delivering major capital projects is complex and the spend on some projects has been rephased into future years to match completion timescales.

133. The Capital Programme in future years is challenging, with a funding gap in the MTFS, although further opportunities to generate capital receipts or secure external funding will be explored to reduce the gap and minimise any borrowing requirement.

Investing in Leicestershire Programme (IILP) – 2023/24 Monitoring

134. The IILP is an integral part of the MTFS. Investments in property and other indirect holdings generate income that supports the Council's MTFS whilst contributing to the wider strategic objectives of the Council and the economic wellbeing of the area. The IILP Strategy is approved annually as part of the MTFS.

135. A summary of the liLP position for 2023/24 is set out below:

Asset Class	Opening Capital Value	Capital Incurred / (Returned) 2023/24	Net Income YTD	Budget Net Income FY	Actual net income return %
	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
Development	46,187	38	(136)	(136)	(0.3%)
Rural	24,212	(3,352)	191	452	0.8%
Direct Core Commercial Holdings	87,659	155	3,377	4,718	3.8%
Total Direct Core and Non-Core Holdings	158,058	(3,159)	3,432	5,034	2.2%
Private Debt	28,708	495	1,720	1,055	5.9%
Pooled Property	22,470	0	924	759	4.1%
Pooled Infrastructure Fund	8,693	0	471	338	5.4%
Pooled Bank Risk Share	15,541	0	1,131	425	7.3%
Total Indirect Holdings (Diversifiers)	75,412	495	4,246	2,577	5.6%
Total (All liLP)	233,470	(2,664)	7,679	7,611	3.3%
Total excl. development and rural	163,071	650	7,624	7,294	4.7%

136. The budgeted net income for 2023/24 is £7.6m, split between direct and indirect (diversifiers) as in the table above. The outturn for the year was higher than the budget and it was decided to add the £1.2m out performance to accelerate the rebuild of the sinking fund which was depleted in 2022/23 in order to remediate a farm.

137. The diversifiers are indirect holdings with the purpose of reducing overall portfolio risk by investing in differing asset classes and geographies. Four separate types of investment are included, UK pooled property funds, a global infrastructure fund, three vintages of a pooled private (debt) credit strategy and a bank risk share strategy. The aim is to provide diversified income from a variety of differing sources. No new diversifiers were committed to in 2023/24 although the private debt fund has called capital totalling £5.6m through 2023/24. This was offset with maturing earlier vintage private debt investments of £5.1m. The diversifiers net income in the year totalled £4.2m which was higher than the budgeted £2.6m. This is due to more favourable terms being achieved from these investments and a higher amount invested in bank risk share compared to the original budget.

138. The valuations for the indirect holdings include four pooled property funds which in 2023/24 fell in aggregate by £1.7m (on top of the £5.5m in 2022/23). The reduction in valuation of the pooled property funds is due to the repricing of property assets versus the risk-free UK bank base rate increases since mid-2022. Income from the underlying holdings is still considerable and marginally exceeded the £0.8m budget by £0.1m. These holdings are considered long term investments and some fluctuation in valuation is expected in shorter periods.

139. Private debt income has been ahead of the £1.1m budget due to timing of interest payments that were delayed in 2022/23.
140. Income from the bank risk share investment of £1.1m is higher than budget. The higher interest rate environment and lack of capital during 2023 allowed the manager to complete better than expected deals which would benefit investors.
141. It should be noted that the above table excludes end of year capital valuations for the direct portfolio which will impact the net income return percentage when that element is finalised. Capital valuations are assessed annually as part of the asset revaluation exercise and are reported in the annual ILLP performance report in September each year.

Equality Implications

142. There are no direct equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Human Rights Implications

143. There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

Appendices

- Appendix A - Comparison of 2023/24 Expenditure and the Updated Revenue Budget
- Appendix B - Revenue Budget 2023/24 – main variances
- Appendix C - Earmarked Reserve balances 31/3/24
- Appendix D - Capital Programme 2023/24 – main variances
- Appendix E - Prudential Indicators 2023/24

Background Papers

- Report to the County Council on 22nd February 2023 - Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-2027 - <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=6913&Ver=4>

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REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 - OUTTURN STATEMENT

	Updated Budget	Actual Expenditure	Difference from Updated Budget	
	£000	£000	£000	%
<u>Schools Budget</u>				
Schools	98,038	96,423	-1,615	-1.6
Early Years	39,283	37,105	-2,178	-5.5
DSG Funding	-137,321	-137,321	0	0.0
	0	-3,793	-3,793	
<i>Earmarked fund - start of year</i>			-5,374	
<i>Earmarked fund - end of year</i>			-9,167	
High Needs	103,482	109,136	5,654	5.5
Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	-103,482	-103,482	0	0.0
	0	5,654	5,654	
<i>Earmarked fund - start of year</i>			35,534	
<i>Earmarked fund - end of year</i>			41,188	
<u>LA Budget</u>				
Children & Family Services (Other)	106,652	118,511	11,859	11.1
Adults & Communities	210,190	212,764	2,574	1.2
Public Health *	-1,806	-1,806	0	0.0
Environment & Transport	101,592	99,272	-2,320	-2.3
Chief Executives	16,203	15,061	-1,142	-7.1
Corporate Resources	41,166	39,828	-1,338	-3.2
DSG (Central Dept. recharges)	-2,285	-2,285	0	0.0
Growth Contingency	1,000	0	-1,000	-100.0
Service Reduction Contingency	95	0	-95	-100.0
Fair Cost of Care / Adult Social Care Reforms	1,076	0	-1,076	-100.0
MTFS risks contingency	8,000	8,000	0	0.0
Contingency for Inflation	3,313	3,313	0	0.0
Total Services	485,196	492,658	7,462	1.5
<u>Central Items</u>				
Financing of Capital	19,500	17,811	-1,689	-8.7
Revenue funding of capital	7,020	7,020	0	0.0
Bank & other interest	-13,600	-21,283	-7,683	56.5
Central Expenditure	2,636	3,122	486	18.4
Other Items (including prior year adjustments)	0	798	798	n/a
Total Central Items	15,556	7,467	-8,088	-52.0
Contribution to budget equalisation earmarked reserve	10,400	23,280	12,880	123.8
Contribution to General Fund	1,000	1,000	0	0.0
Total Spending	512,152	524,405	12,253	2.4
<u>Funding</u>				
Revenue Support Grant (new burdens)	-27	-27	0	0.0
Business Rates - Top Up	-40,527	-40,385	143	-0.4
Business Rates Baseline / retained	-27,997	-29,733	-1,736	6.2
S31 Grants - Business Rates	-12,090	-15,550	-3,460	28.6
Allocation of Business Rates Pool Levies	0	-6,683	-6,683	n/a
Business Rates -allocation from national Levy surplus	0	-519	-519	n/a
Council Tax Precept	-374,208	-374,208	0	0.0
Council Tax Collection Funds - net surplus	-1,687	-1,687	0	0.0
New Homes Bonus Grant	-1,257	-1,257	0	0.0
Improved Better Care Fund Grant etc.	-14,190	-14,190	0	0.0
Social Care Grant	-32,012	-32,012	0	0.0
Market Sustainability & Fair Cost of Care Fund	-5,653	-5,653	0	0.0
Services Grant	-2,504	-2,502	1	0.0
Total Funding	-512,152	-524,405	-12,253	2.4
Net Total	0	0	0	

* Public Health funded by Grant (£27.1m)

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Revenue Budget 2023/24 – main variances**Children and Family Services****Dedicated Schools Grant**

There is a net overspend of £1.9m. The main variances are:

	£000	% of Budget
DSG High Needs Block (HNB) earmarked reserve drawdown	13,333	n/a
The DSG budget in the original MTFS included an estimated HNB drawdown of £13.3m as the forecast in year overspend.		
Secondary Education Inclusion Partnerships	805	34%
Secondary Education Inclusion Partnerships are supporting a growing number of secondary students.		
Specialist Teaching Service (STS)	204	8%
The STS Service is a fully HNB funded service, with a fixed budget envelope, and does not receive inflation in response to pay awards. It also has a built-in annual savings target which is usually achieved through in-year vacancy savings. This year due to the significant, unfunded pay award, this target has not been met.		
Special Educational Needs	-8,479	-8%
<p>Whilst growth in Independent Specialist Provider (ISP) places continues, the rate of this is less than reflected in the original MTFS, in addition to a lower than anticipated need for higher cost Independent Special Schools Places and reduced occupancy of SEN Units than budgeted partially offset by an increased use of special school places.</p> <p>This represents a significantly better overall financial position on the High Needs Block in comparison to previous in-year projections, and this is linked to the TSIL programme focusing significantly on ensuring that all data within the SEND system is robust to enable effective management of the SEN system. This has focused upon both data on individual pupils and how that data translates into robust financial data through the introduction of effective financial processes. Resolving data quality and establishing more robust data transfer of pupil data from SENA to finance systems has identified an over provision of financial commitments and an action plan is under development to address the identified issues. However, as some of the improvement relates to historic adjustment, it may be one-off rather than ongoing savings. Overall there is still a £5m plus overspend position on the HNB block after taking into consideration other major variances, including the nominal HNB reserve drawdown.</p>		
Early Years / Nursery Education Funding	-2,178	-6%
<p>The budget is based on the number of hours used to calculate the original 2023-24 Early Years DSG income in December 2022. The 2023-24 Early Years DSG income was increased in July 2023 by £1.8m to allow for the Spring Term 2023 census. This includes a prior year adjustment of £0.6m relating to 2022/23. The hours paid to Providers for 2023-24 are £0.9m more than the budget, reflecting estimated Spring 2024 payments to providers. There is also a planned underspend of £0.9m as part of the payback of previous years' Early Years deficits, and centrally managed budgets are forecast to underspend by £0.4m. The deficit as at 31 March 2023 was £5.3m, so this £2.2m underspend will reduce this. The plan is to clear this deficit over 4 years. The Department for Education will recalculate the 2023-24 Early Years DSG income in 2024-25, based on the Spring 2024 census data. This is estimated to be an increase in grant of £0.3m.</p>		
Schools Growth / Budget Allocations	-1,399	-51%
This funding has been earmarked to help meet the revenue costs associated with new schools. The underspend will be transferred to the DSG earmarked reserve to fund pupil growth in future years.		
Transforming SEND & Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) Programme	-154	-16%
Staff turnover in the TSIL Programme budget area has resulted in an underspend position.		
Early Years SEN Inclusion	-127	-10%
Staff turnover and vacancy management controls are the main contributing factors driving the underspend.		
Other variances	-144	n/a
TOTAL	1,861	n/a

Local Authority Budget

The Local authority budget has an overspend of £11.9m (11.1%). The main variances are:

	£000	% of Budget
Children's Social Care Placements	6,196	12%

The average unit cost have increased significantly vs budgeted unit cost. For example – currently average social care external residential cost is circa £5.8k per week (20% increase on budgeted unit cost). The combination of complexity of need results in the use of high cost (£10k+/week/child) interim provisions until behaviour stabilises or another placement can be found.

Other sufficiency issues impacting on budget position include:

- Lack of step-down from residential placements (10 children who have been waiting long periods for family-based placements), with continued searches and work with providers to try to identify homes
- Slow recruitment pipeline for mainstream carers, nationally. Particularly impacting on availability of placements for older children and those with more complex needs.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)	3,711	220%
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The rapid increase in UASC in care and care leavers has required a greater resource requirement to meet their needs. The different entry routes include both the National Transfer scheme, as well as spontaneous arrivals, but more recently through the hotel dispersal scheme where requests to accommodate people placed in Asylum Dispersal Hotels in Leicestershire are made, and whilst they have been deemed adults by the Home Office, subsequently claim to be children, and creates an additional pressure for the service to manage which is not fully funded. In addition, delays in asylum claim processes mean that we are often accommodating young people well past 18 and the Home Office funding drops significantly at 18 but the costs do not.

SEN Service Budget	895	47%
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Increased service demand and complexity has resulted in need for additional service resource to ensure demand can be managed in the most efficient and effective manner. A heavy reliance on agency workers to undertake Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) writing and tribunal work has resulted in a significant overspend in this area. A second Service Manager post has been created to help deliver whole-system change within SEN. Meanwhile mediation costs remain high, adding to the overspend.

CFS Disabled Children Service	878	22%
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Increased demand for support at home for children with challenging behaviour which is more costly for some children with high needs and 'on the edge of care'.

Educational Psychology Service	288	22%
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Difficulties recruiting into vacancies in this area has resulted in an increased reliance on locums at a significantly higher cost. Increased demand due to an increase in the number of EHCP needs assessments has further impacted the overspend position

Departmental Financial Controls / Vacancy Control Management	-122	n/a
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As a direct response to the overspends as described above, CFS's departmental management team have led a review of non statutory services, supported with the recent introduction of corporate-led financial controls, and together with a robust management and review of vacancies within the department, with the output of this work delivering some one-off in year efficiencies, and budget opportunities, which included delaying recruitment to non-essential posts where appropriate. Further work is being undertaken to explore the feasibility of this work and its scope to deliver on-going future budget efficiencies.

Other variances	13	n/a
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TOTAL	11,859	n/a
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Adults & Communities

The Department has a net overspend of £2.6m (1.2%). The main variances are:

	£000	% of Budget
Homecare	7,480	19%

There has been an average of 2,660 service users (SU) over the year, 5% than the budgeted position of 2,540. Current average package costs (or hours) are also 5% higher than budgeted (excluding the fee uplift of 8.4%) at £328 per SU per week compared to the budgeted value of £313.

The increase is from:

- a) the delaying of admission into residential care and increased provision within the service users own home. b) that lower numbers of service users are opting to take a Direct Cash Payment.

The department has established a wide ranging demand management project and a Fairer Outcomes Panel to review care packages which has led to a reduction in spend on home care. The current weekly cost has reduced from £920k in early September to £820k by early March.

Other spend £273k relates to legacy COVID grants and subsequent returns submitted by providers relating to expenditure of the grant.

There is offsetting income reported elsewhere (Better Care Fund) of £1.0m from the ASC Discharge Grant and £100k other health income.

Supported Living	5,496	16%
An increase of 28 service users over the course of the financial year from 472 to 500 (6% more than budgeted). Average placement costs have risen since April and currently stand at £1,570 per week per service user (+8% more than budgeted). The majority of the increase in service users are from those service users either transitioning from Children's Social Care, living at home with their parents or moving from a Hospital/Residential setting into Supported Living. They represent new growth in numbers rather than a movement of existing service users from Residential Care, which was the primary driver under the TOM Programme. The Dynamic Purchasing System used by Supported Living commissioners is increasing the supply of additional Supported Living schemes facilitating the increase in the number of placements that can be made. There has been an increase in community income to offset these additional costs reported within the Community Income line. The Department is looking into ways to reduce demand for new and existing one to one support within Supported Living and how complex care is procured.		
Residential Care and Nursing	2,087	2%
<p>The overspend is mainly due to increases in the average weekly cost per residential placement over and above the planned inflationary increases to the banded rates. This is a continuation of the pressure experienced in 2022/23 led to an overspend. There are an average 2,405 service users with an average weekly rate of £1,039.</p> <p>The main driver of the increases are where the authority has agreed funding above the banded rates to ensure that the service is provided with a suitable care placement (known as Local Authority Agreed Funding-LAAF). The cost of LAAFs in 2023/24 (based on current volumes and values of LAAFs) is £14.6m. This compares to the 2022/23 cost of LAAFs of £12.6m, and the 2021/22 cost of LAAFs of £10.0m. The 2023/24 cost is a 46% increase on the 2021/22 costs. This increase in the costs of LAAFs is a combination of both an increase in the volume and value of LAAFs. The volume of LAAFs has increased from 742 service users per week having a LAAF in 2021/22 to 946 in 2023/24. The value of LAAFs has increased from an average of £258 per service user per week in 2021/22 to £296 in 2023/24. The increase in LAAFs (both volume and value) is predominantly in the older adults area.</p> <p>Other spend £365k relates to legacy COVID grants and subsequent returns submitted by providers relating to expenditure of the grant.</p> <p>This overspend is offset by additional service user income of £6.230m which is mainly due to new service users and backdated arrears from working through a backlog of financial assessments. The allocation of the latest tranche of Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF) has also reduced this overspend by £3.0m (not included in above figure).</p>		
Better Care Fund (Balance) / Other NHS Income	2,175	6%
A shortfall in Discharge to Assess (D2A) recharge income of £4.5m. Offset by additional BCF (£1.5m) and Discharge Grant income (£0.9m).		
Community Life Choices (CLC) Commissioned Services	936	13%
Overspend with the transition of service users from inhouse CLC services to the independent sector. This overspend should be viewed alongside the underspend within CLC/Day Services within Direct Services as internal bases are closed and staff action plans are conducted. A virement will take place for 2024/25 to increase this budget.		
Care Pathway - Mental Health and Safeguarding	757	10%
Overspend predominantly caused by the Liberty Protection Safeguards and the contracted out Best Interest Assessor and Paid Person Representative spend. A more sustainable funding position is required for this service, as reserve funding has been used for multiple years and growth is part of the MTFS 2024.		
Other Support	446	n/a
Other social care support includes £110k for kennel costs and £332k for floating support contract for mental health.		
Community Income	-5,387	-18%
<p>Non-Residential Service User Income has overachieved the budget of £18.1m by £1.8m, due to increasing chargeable service users, as more service users are receiving a Non-Residential Service. Also the average chargeable amount per service user has increased as forecast. This was offset by an net increase to the allowance for doubtful debt provision by £100k. Income from health for community packages has increased by £3.7m. Supported Living packages are generating an extra £2.0m, £700k is due to increased funding for Direct Payments clients and £800k for home care packages is mostly due to temporary health condition funding continuing at late 22-23 levels. Offsetting this CLC health income is lower by £200k, this is mostly as a result of clients moving at the end of 2022-23 onto Personal Health Budgets when the LCC day centres closed.</p>		
Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF) - Tranche 2	-3,672	n/a
This is the MSIF second tranche for 23/24 that is being used to fund the overspend in Residential Care and other areas.		
Community Life Choices (CLC) / Day Services Team	-1,618	-88%

Following the Cabinet decision to close CLC bases, there have been vacancies within the services, pending the implementation of staffing action plans. Service users have been transitioned to the independent sector demand led CLC budget. This is linked to an MTFS saving. Next year this underspend will cease.

Home First	-1,334	-14%
Difficulties in recruiting to posts and vacancies are the main causes of the underspend in both the HART and Home first teams £900k. MSIF Monies have been allocated for the 2 Week Review Team that is currently being recruited to increasing the underspend by £366k.		
Direct Cash Payments	-1,036	-2%
Underspend due to new increased PA rates that were introduced in August 2023 starting to increase slowly and offset by (£557K) MSIF Grant not budgeted for and reduction in clawbacks of unspent service user funds are the main causes of the underspend. There is also an underspend of £479k due to 12% reduction in service users (SU) and 11% increase in SU package price. Currently averaging at 1,852 SU with an average cost of £450 and Carers averaging at 1,161 SU with an average cost of £54. The reduction in SU is reflecting that more new SU are choosing to take a managed homecare service over a cash payment. The increase in SU package price most likely reflects the higher cost of homecare and supported living being commissioned that are also being reflected in the cash payments budget for those recipients. In addition, higher support may have been commissioned to compensate those service users that could no longer visit a buildings-based service for a community life choices service.		
Department Senior Management	-639	-42%
Underspend due to MSIF Monies have been allocated towards specific contracts and general costs, plus general underspend on expenditure.		
Care Pathway - Heads of Service (IAP) & Strategic Service Managers	-612	-153%
Staffing budget underspend relating to posts that have been paused in preparation for £500k MTFS Saving relating to restructures in department.		
Supported Living, Residential and Short Breaks Team	-602	-11%
Underspend due to vacancies and also reduction in day services in co-located short break locations causing a reduction in staffing costs. Savings offset overspend in commissioned services and linked to an MTFS saving.		
Business Support & Strategy and Planning	-324	-16%
Underspend from vacancies that are in the process of being recruited to.		
Early Intervention & Prevention -Extra Care	-314	-48%
Underspend due to retendered contract having a lower cost element.		
Care Pathway - Learning Disability and Autism	-264	-6%
Underspend from vacancies that are in the process of being recruited to.		
Care Pathway - Cognitive and Physical Disability	-263	-3%
Underspend from vacancies that are in the process of being recruited to.		
Care Pathway - Social Care Investment	-220	-33%
Underspend due to reduced projects progressing therefore less costs for staffing and other expenditure.		
Strategic Commissioning and Quality Support	-207	-11%
Underspend from vacancies that are in the process of being recruited to.		
Communities and Wellbeing	-199	-3%
Underspend mainly due to vacancies and increased income.		
Direct Services Review	-136	-90%
Underspend from reduced repairs and maintenance costs.		
Other variances (under £100k)	24	n/a
TOTAL	2,574	n/a

Public Health

The Department has a net underspend of £0.8m which will be transferred to earmarked reserves.

	£000	% of Budget
Public Health earmarked reserve	781	n/a
Net underspend on Public Health budgets to be offset by a contribution to the Public Health earmarked reserve. Uncertainties on future grants.		
Programme Delivery	415	52%

£550k of the variance is due to expenditure originally budgeted to be funded from reserves, -£71k underspend due to staff vacancies, -£38k underspend on the Making Every Contact Count (MECC) project, -£19k underspend on development costs, and -£44k net income from the Work Place Health Programme. The remainder of the variance is due to the additional costs of the pay award (+£37k).		
First Contact Plus	121	35%
+£32k of the variance is due to the additional costs of the pay award, +£224k due to Household Support Fund (HSF) expenditure not funded by the HSF grant, offset by underspend due to staff vacancies (-£135k).		
NHS Health Check programme	103	26%
Issues with payments last year and increased activity in each quarter has resulted in +£103k overspend.		
Sexual Health	-942	-23%
-£136k underspend on GP activity, -£392k underspend on device costs, -£40k underspend on Pharmacy activity. Reduced Integrated Care Board income as a result of reduced activity (+£31k). -£81k underspend on Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, -£276k underspend on Out of Area claims, -£51k underspend on core contract, offset by minor overspend on running costs (+£3k).		
Public Health Leadership	-288	2%
-£78k of the variance is due to receipts in advance brought forward. -£398k is due to the net additional grant income, of which +£381k has been used to fund the pay award in the department (+£188k in PH Leadership and +£193k across the rest of the department).		
0-19 Children's Public Health	-165	2%
+£438k of the variance is due to expenditure originally budgeted to be funded from reserves, +£10k due to the additional costs of the pay award, offset by -£35k underspend on 0-10 contract and -£578k underspend on Teen Health.		
Substance Misuse	-60	-1%
-£44k underspend on Integrated Substance Misuse contract, -£14k underspend on Prevention & Recovery budget and -£2k additional income.		
Other variances (under £50k)	35	n/a
TOTAL	0	n/a

Environment and Transport

The Department has a net underspend of £2.3m (2.3%). The main variances are:

	£000	% of Budget
Social Care Transport	1,425	30%
Continued rise in the number of commissioned journeys for Social Care Transport combined with increased operating costs. Closer working relationships developed with Social Workers to improve more efficient transport modelling.		
Mainstream School Transport	1,325	34%
Increase in overall number of students entitled to mainstream transport and rise in the number of routes, increase in bus operational costs resulting in higher contract costs, limited bus capacity leading to a larger number of pupils being transported by taxi. To mitigate costs a mainstream transport review is in progress to reduce the number of solo taxi contracts. A full retendering process will then be undertaken during summer 2024 which should achieve savings in the new financial year.		
Landfill	1,232	34%
Overspend arising from diversion of waste from treatment/EfW to landfill in order to conserve capacity for Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) waste treatment.		
Reactive Maintenance	1,002	43%
Overspend due to general maintenance and defect repairs, out of hours emergencies and non-illuminated sign maintenance which is partially offset by an underspend on road markings due to excessive wet weather affecting programme delivery and road stud programme unable to be undertaken due to road space allocation issues.		
SEN Transport	674	3%
Continued growth in pupil numbers. To mitigate costs, the SEN network continues to be reviewed to maximise fleet usage and reduce solo taxi contracts. The new transport management system (MTC) will assist with this in 2024/25.		
Public Bus Services	572	24%
Overspend due to higher than budgeted spend on local bus services following decision to delay implementation of the Passenger Transport Programme. This is offset by the underspend on concessionary travel.		
Environmental Maintenance	363	7%

Overspend consists of several overspends and underspends. There are overspends on Gully Emptying due to numerous recent flooding events, Camera Van due to higher incidence of drainage related works, Drainage Repairs due to greater number of investigation works following storms and Grass cutting to deliver a full width cut plus using external strimming as unable to recruit strimming operatives. These are partly offset by underspends in Forestry as unable to recruit tree surgeons to deliver the programme and Weeds as the second spray only part complete due to wet weather during the season.		
Recycling and Household Waste	272	6%
Increased haulage cost associated with transport of POP material from landfill to treatment (legislation implications) (£27k) plus increase in repairs and maintenance costs at RHWS sites (£132k) and net reduction in income following anticipated legislative changes with effect from January 2024 restricting charges at RHWS (£29k) offset by additional cost of market premium and retention payments (£153k) previously funded from reserves..		
Civil Parking Enforcement	104	-189%
Overspend includes £27k lower income than budget for Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs), £23k net lower income for Residents Parking Scheme, non draw of reserve funding for the camera car (£28k) and higher Notice Processing Unit costs (£24k).		
Staffing, Admin & Depot Overheads	-2,295	196%
underspend due to additional Temporary Transport Regulation Orders (TTRO) and network licencing income, vacancies within the teams and less reactive events expenditure are partially offset by reduced fee income for structures and street lighting.		
Treatment & Contracts	-1,767	-11%
Underspend due to a reduction in treatment/EfW as waste is diverted into landfill to preserve capacity for POPs incineration.		
Concessionary Travel	-1,326	-32%
Underspend due to reduced concessionary travel reimbursement levels during 2023/24.		
Dry Recycling	-887	-35%
Increased tonnage offset by better than expected market prices on sale of dry recycling materials.		
Highways & Transport Network - Staffing & Admin	-702	-67%
Underspends forecast due to additional s38 & 278 fees and vacancies across various teams.		
Passenger Fleet	-342	-169%
Underspend due to vacant driver and escort posts, which is partly offset by additional agency and overtime costs, plus additional vehicle hire and maintenance costs. Recruitment of drivers is currently very difficult.		
Highways & Transport - Staffing & Admin	-239	-9%
Underspend as a result of vacancies across various teams.		
Departmental Costs	-220	-30%
Release of credit loss allowance due to a reduction in required aged debtor during 2023/24 plus £35k one-off underspend on software license costs.		
Haulage & Waste Transfer	-209	-9%
Reduction in haulage costs as a result of less waste going direct to landfill and a delay in procuring Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel supplier.		
Staffing & Admin Delivery	-156	-3%
Underspend in relation to vacancies.		
Initiatives	-142	-19%
Underspend due to delays in implementation, spend controls and reduced take-up grant schemes and classes on waste initiatives.		
Income	-130	8%
Increase in tonnages resulting in increased income.		
HS2	-123	-42%
Underspend due to HS2 ceasing.		
Traffic Management	-121	-73%
Increase in fees received for TRO's and income from lining and signing from Members Highways Fund schemes and external customers plus reduction in internal LHO expenditure.		
Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Funding	-118	190%
Increased income from the sale of metal.		
Development & Growth	-62	-5%
Underspend as a result of high level vacancies across various teams.		
Other variances (under £100k)	-450	n/a
TOTAL	-2,320	n/a

The Department has a net underspend of £1.1m (7.1%). The main variances are:

	£000	% of Budget
Coroner's Service	197	16%
£179k overspend due to UHL increased costs of post mortems and toxicology and +£17k to set up Coroner's Court at County Hall.		
Departmental Items	50	-60%
Departmental-wide saving for staffing vacancy held in this budget. Overspend here is offset by underspends elsewhere in the department.		
Growth Service	-303	-23%
-£248k underspend due to staffing vacancies, -£13k underspend on running costs and -£42k additional income.		
Registrars	-294	n/a
Wedding fee income was higher than budgeted.		
Democratic Services and Administration	-219	-14%
Underspend mainly due to staffing vacancies (-£106k), underspend on running costs (-£55k) and additional income (-£58k).		
Legal Services	-156	-3%
£284k net overspend on locum support offset by -£42k reduced running costs, -£72k additional income, +£29k transfer from reserve not required and -£354k underspend on demand-led budgets		
Policy & Communities	-81	-4%
-£119k underspend on staffing, -£50k on running costs, offset by +£88k reduced income (of which +£78k are transfers from reserve not required).		
Civic Affairs	-72	-106%
Reduction in the number of Civic Events hosted (-£56k) and reduced transport/lease costs (-£16k).		
Management and Admin	-66	-10%
-£62k underspend due to staffing vacancies and -£4k underspend on running costs.		
Freeport	-54	n/a
The underspend is due to the Accountable body income.		
Other variances (under £50k)	-144	n/a
TOTAL	-1,142	n/a

Corporate Resources

The Department has a net underspend of £1.3m (3.2%). The main variances are:

	£000	% of Budget
Commercial Services (Catering and professional services, Country Parks and LTS Property)	825	59%
Pressure in Commercial Services is on-going; this includes recovery from the pandemic but also additional pressures through the increase in national living wage and general inflationary pressures. The local government workers pay award places significant pressure on commercialism especially services employing staff on lower grades e.g. catering. It is likely that those pressures persist and deepen into 2024/25. The Chancellors announcement of £11.44 for the national living wage for 1 April 24 will add 5-10% onto staff costs.		
Transformation Unit	500	29%
Reduction in draw down from the Transformation reserve as covered from the overall departmental underspend.		
Building Maintenance Costs	63	2%
Overspend related to higher levels of reactive maintenance than expected related to patching, collapsed sewage works and data centre false gas deployment (false fire alarm).		
Strategic Property	51	2%
One-off increase in contribution to Social Care Investment Plan (SCIP) sinking fund to ensure sufficiency when considering items identified in conditions surveys for SCIP buildings.		
ICT	-1,147	-9%

Underspend has been mainly driven by the existence of vacancies throughout the service. Also a reduction in IT equipment and software licences requirement this year as well as contract savings on smartphones. Some IT workstreams being pushed into the new financial year due to the delivery of the service/system taking longer than expected.		
Commissioning Support - Household Support Fund (HSF)	-347	n/a
Budgeted administrative and other overheads income, incurred across the authority, not recharged and instead the income held on the HSF cost centre.		
Building Running Costs	-318	-7%
Valuation Tribunal's decision to reduce Rateable Value of the Industrial Heritage Museum campus to £1 has resulted in a £140k underspend in 23/24 as well as £1.3m rebate reported as a prior year adjustment. These will be realised as an ongoing saving from 24/25 onwards. In addition reduced energy and facilities management costs (£200k) due to under occupation and refunds for some sites, most notably Roman Way and Coalville Community Resource Centre both expected to be disposed of in 24/25 and contribute towards MTFS savings. The saving is partially offset by an unfunded business rates liability of £90k related to the Bardon Transfer Waste Centre.		
Corporate Resources Projects	-300	-69%
Limited additional commissioning of system and reporting developments for Fusion and PBCS.		
Operational Property	-210	-9%
Staffing turnover and vacancies across several teams. Also some additional income from NHS tenants for Postal Services.		
Corporate HR	-163	-7%
Underspend on staffing due to vacancies/movements and delays in recruitment.		
Strategic Finance and Pensions	-137	-3%
Underspend due to vacancies and timing delays in filling vacant posts		
Learning and Development	-123	-8%
All training tightly reviewed in line with financial controls leading to an underspend.		
Commissioning Support	-67	-5%
An underspend on staffing due to 2 vacancies not filled and increased income from Midlands Highways Alliance.		
Management	-58	-8%
Staffing underspend due to gap in filling a vacancy.		
Other variances	93	n/a
TOTAL	-1,338	n/a

EARMARKED RESERVES BALANCES

	Revised Balance 01/04/23 £000	Actual Balance 31/03/2024 £000	Forecast Balance 31/03/25 £000
Renewal of Systems, Equipment and Vehicles	1,970	1,359	1,951
Trading Accounts			
Investing in Leicestershire Programme (IILP)	430	2,600	3,706
Insurance			
General	10,310	10,259	10,870
Schools schemes and risk management	0	34	34
Uninsured loss fund	5,190	5,120	5,120
Committed Balances			
Central Maintenance Fund	0	60	0
Community Grants	20	21	21
Other			
Children & Family Services			
Supporting Leicestershire Families	500	500	0
C&FS Developments	3,070	2,134	104
Youth Offending	750	895	672
Other	380	253	211
Adults & Communities			
A&C Developments	1,360	1,435	1,435
Adult Learning Service	190	139	139
Public Health	8,430	9,032	5,800
Environment & Transport			
E&T Developments	170	13	155
Commuted Sums	2,710	2,425	1,925
LLITM	1,300	539	161
Waste Developments	1,190	665	705
Major Projects - advanced design	600	822	429
Section 38 Income	460	435	27
Other	150	161	119
Chief Executive			
Economic Development-General	280	278	278
Chief Executive Dept Developments	430	431	431
Other	50	103	103
Corporate Resources			
Other	420	481	417
Corporate:			
Transformation Fund	9,450	8,920	4,287
Broadband	1,770	3,853	3,853
Business Rates Retention	570	568	568
Elections	300	501	701
Other	0	75	75
Budget Equalisation	40,510	61,268	61,000
Carbon Neutral Investment Fund	2,000	2,000	2,000
Flooding Restoration Works	0	1,000	0
Capital Financing (phasing of capital expenditure)	136,410	149,330	95,599
Pooled Property Fund investment *	-24,770	-24,766	-18,466
TOTAL	206,600	242,943	184,430
Schools and Partnerships			
Dedicated Schools Grant	-30,160	-32,021	-47,984
Active Together	1,480	1,242	865
Health & Social Care Outcomes	13,100	9,975	11,575
Emergency Management	860	895	895
East Midlands Shared Services - other	10	52	52
Leicestershire Safeguarding Children Board	170	238	200
Leics Social Care Development Group	30	33	33
Total	-14,510	-19,586	-34,364

* Pooled Property Fund investments - funded from the overall balance of earmarked reserves

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Capital Budget 2023/24 – forecast main variances**Children and Family Services**

Net slippage of £7.5m. The main variances were:

	£000
Provision of Additional Places	-4,648
<p>1) Shepshed Iveshead - slippage of -£2.3m. The Shepshed campus has multiple Education provisions that have some degree of interaction and timing dependency for building works. The project planning required additional site visits, to review project brief and competitive procurement options available delaying the start date. Enabling works are underway and are expected to complete by the end of March 2024 with commencement of the build on site in July 2024.</p> <p>2) Ibstock High School - slippage of -£1.4m. This scheme supports housing growth in the area and transition to 11-16. The original estimates for the start of the project were slightly optimistic with the latest update now reporting construction starting in July 2024.</p> <p>3) Coalville Forest New Primary - slippage of -£2m. The timing of LA contribution to this scheme is dependent on the contractor hitting trigger points and submitting claims. The site has been impacted by unprecedented weather over the winter to date and as such it is now expected that the LA's contribution will not be incurred until 24/25</p> <p>4) Burbage Hastings High School - acceleration of £0.6m. This large expansion scheme to create a new sports hall and addition classrooms. The budget had been prudently profiled in the MTFS - however pre-construction works and professional fees will be incurred in 23/24</p> <p>5) Market Harborough S106 New Primary School - acceleration of £1.8m. The profiling of the budget for this scheme was undertaken prudently. The scheme is well underway, with completion expected approx August 24.</p> <p>6) Slippage of -£0.2m each on Rothley Classroom Extension, Normandy way Hinckley Primary and Old Dalby extension as final completion slipped to 24/25</p> <p>Other schemes - slippage of -£0.8m</p>	
Children's SEND Programme	-1,934
<p>SEMH school St Botolph's - slippage of -£0.9m. This budget was increased in anticipation of additional costs relating to drainage/sewage issues and potential upgrades to existing system. Connections into the drain system have now been made, but further testing will need to be undertaken to determine whether any upgrade will need to be undertaken. This will not happen before the end of the financial year.</p> <p>Dorothy Goodman remodel - slippage of -£0.4m. The practical completion date of this scheme has been pushed back from Feb 24 to April 24.</p> <p>SEND Contingency - slippage of -£0.4m from unused SEND grant will be used in 24/25 towards new SEND school</p> <p>Robert Smythe - slippage of -£0.2m from delay in submitting final claim for passported development</p>	
Children's SCIP Programme	-429
<p>Slippage of -£0.6m. Despite extensive searches of the property market, the LA has been unsuccessful to date in sourcing a suitable property for the second EBD provision. A property has now been found, and a provisional offer accepted. However completion of the purchase won't happen until 24/25</p> <p>Workspace 17 (Art Hub & 3 beds) - acceleration of £0.1m.</p>	
Strategic Capital Maintenance	-292
Safeguarding & Schools Access	-199
TOTAL	-7,502

Adults & Communities

Net slippage of £1m. The main variances were:

	£000
1) Supported Living SCIP Schemes - This budget relates to two extra care schemes, but the land transaction is no longer expected to take place in this financial year, so is slipping into next financial year.	-1,009

2) Wigston LALS refurbishment – slippage of -£58k due to a delay in commencing of work. Expected to take place in 2024/25.	-58
TOTAL	-1,067

Environment and Transport

Net slippage of £19m. The main variances were:

	£000
Melton Mowbray Eastern Distributor Rd	-9,317
Due to continued storms the programme has been delayed in the 2023/24 year and therefore some works will now need to be delivered in the 2024/25 financial year. In addition There are delays on the land acquisitions claims which is causing the programme to slip.	
Council Vehicle Replacement Programme	-2,199
Orders committed however due to supplier issues this has delayed the delivery of the vehicles.	
Advance Design / Match Funding	-1,261
Slippage due to delays in transport modelling from ongoing delays in the strategic planning partnership, delay in securing funding for Desford Crossroad project and works programmes on the cycling and walking for Active Travel.	
A511/A50 Major Road Network	-853
The sealing of compulsory purchase order (CPO) has been delayed due to design amendments. This has resulted in the legal fees and CPO public inquiry costs moving to the next financial year.	
Highways Capital Maintenance	-737
Slippage of -£0.4m relates to delays in design works on the A511 and Zouch bridge procurements. Slippage of -£0.3m relating to Bridge maintenance caused by weather conditions not being optimal for works to be completed and delays in securing EA permits.	
There were also underspends on some schemes(-£0.9m) relating to slippage from 2022/23 financial year matched by overspends in Preventative/Restorative maintenance due to carriageway deterioration and additional vehicle usage charges for Roadmenders.	
Zouch Bridge Replacement - Construction and Enabling works	-665
Procurement process underway with programme works expected to start later in 2024/25.	
Waste Transfer Station Development	-580
Ongoing discussions with contractor regarding snagging issues has led to slippage. Discussions not being resolved as quickly as previously expected.	
Property Flood Risk Alleviation	-569
Slippage on schemes in Breedon, Swithland, Harborough and Diseworth. Resource impacts from Storm Henk and reprofiling with the Environment Agency are key reasons for this.	
Ashby Canal Reed bed	-491
Slippage due to work not commencing until March 2024.	
NPIF Schemes	-378
Slippage due to programme closure now expecting to be early 2024/25 with final works and costings to be confirmed at this time. In addition the works relating to Spa Lane in Hinckley are now commencing later than previously anticipated and now predominantly will occur in 2024/25	
Recycling household Waste Sites - S.106 funded schemes	-344
After a review of the programmes several programmes will be delayed until 2024/25	
Safety schemes	-333
Net slippage in relation to delivery timeframes for Vehicle Activated Signs, Parish's making claims for their speed reduction programmes and a delay in completing safety schemes.	
Recycling household Waste Sites - General Improvements	-307
Slippage due to delays in delivery of new mobile plant for RHWS's.	
Area Office Accommodation	-285

Slippage due to reprogramming the depot improvements/maintenance programme. Expecting delays beyond 24/25 due to MMDR NE compound on land outlined for Melton Depot.

Externally funded schemes	-251
Slippage as start date of schemes delayed due to supplier issues.	
LLITM Leicester and Leicestershire Integrated Transport Model - Refresh	-250
Due to continued deterioration of the road increased re surface dressing has been required which will be offset by the announcement of additional funding from Network North.	
Other variances	-291
TOTAL	-19,111

Chief Executives

The outturn is in line with the updated budget.

Corporate Resources

Net slippage of £2.8m. The main variances were:

	£000
Workplace Strategy - End User Device (PC, Laptop)	-620
Slippage agreed at previous WoW Programme Board to ensure refresh funds available beyond existing MTFS period.	
Property Services	-602
slippage of £0.5m across a number of smaller schemes, including works at county hall and at various country parks due to procurement / tendering delays. Works are scheduled to complete in 2024/25.	
Workplace Strategy - Office Infrastructure	-589
The slippage is due to requirements for departmental engagement and detailed design work pre-implementation. Internal resources has also impacted on delivery timescales.	
Climate Change - Energy Initiatives	-476
Slippage due to Heat decarbonisation plan to identify projects now expecting completion in April 24. EV Charging plans delayed to align to EV feasibility strategy completion.	
Workplace Strategy - Property costs	-351
Change in strategy - other unplanned work has created a delay to the original plan. This work was to be completed before any further lettings take place.	
ICT Programme	-174
Slippage to accommodate wider growth during 24-28 MTFS period	
TOTAL	-2,812

Corporate Programme

Net slippage of £1.4m. The main variances were:

	£000
Investing in Leicestershire Programme (IiLP)	-1,435
Slippage of -£0.5m on Corporate Asset Investment fund as no investment opportunities identified in 23/24. Slippage due to procurement delays: -£0.2m on County Farms Improvements and -£0.3m on Industrial properties improvements. Also total of -£0.4m of slippage due to re profiling of M69 J2, Embankment house and Lutterworth East schemes.	

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APPENDIX E**PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2023/24**

	Original Indicator	Forecast as at 03/1/2024	Provisional Actual as at 31/03/2024
Actual Capital Financing Costs as a % of Net Revenue Stream	4%	3.7%	3.7%
Capital Expenditure (£000's) (excluding Schools devolved formula capital)	£171m	£138m	£107m
Operational Limit for External Debt (£000's)	£263m	£263m	£263m
Authorised Limit for External Debt (£000')	£273m	£273m	£273m
Interest Rate Exposure – Fixed	50-100%	50-100%	50-100%
Interest Rate Exposure – Variable	0-50%	0-50%	0-50%
Capital Financing Requirement (£000's)	£202m	£202m	£202m
Actual debt as at 31/3/2024 (£000's)	£262m	£220m	£220m

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**CABINET - 24 MAY 2024****RECYCLING AND HOUSEHOLD WASTE SITES
OUTCOME OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND PROPOSED SERVICE
CHANGES****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet of the outcome of two public consultation exercises on proposals to make savings from the Recycling and Household Waste Site (RHWS) service and to recommend proposals to be implemented.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:
 - a) The Somerby Recycling and Household Waste Site be closed with effect from October 2024;
 - b) The opening arrangements at the Recycling and Household Waste Sites at Bottesford, Market Harborough, Kibworth, and Shepshed be as follows with effect from October 2024:
 - i. Bottesford - three days per week,
 - ii. Market Harborough - three days per week,
 - iii. Kibworth - four days per week,
 - iv. Shepshed - two days per week;
 - c) The summer opening hours at all the Council's Recycling and Household Waste Sites be reduced with effect from April 2025, to be as follows:
 - i. from 9.00am to 5.00pm on Saturdays, Sundays, or Mondays;
 - ii. from 9.00am to 7.00pm on other days;
 - d) All the Council's Recycling and Household Waste Sites be closed on Christmas Eve with effect from December 2024;
 - e) Subject to approval of a) above, the Somerby RHWS be considered for disposal.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. To note the outcome of the public consultation.
4. The recommended proposals will enable the savings target as set out in the 2024-28 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to be achieved.
5. The Cabinet in June 2023 accepted the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Panel including that if sites were closed, initially plans to decommission but not sell them be supported. Only the Somerby RHWS is now proposed for closure and the site is then likely to be surplus to requirement. If so, its future use or disposal would be a matter for the Director of Corporate Resources using his delegated powers.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. Reports were considered by the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 November 2023 and 11 March 2024. The comments of the Committee are included in Part B of this report.
7. It is anticipated that, following the approval of the recommendations, the closure of Somerby RHWS and part-time opening at some sites would be implemented in October 2024, with the Christmas Eve closures from 24 December 2024, and the summer opening hours changes from April 2025. The exact date of the changes is to be confirmed and members will be kept informed.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. The Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy, adopted by the Council on 24 April 2023, sets out how the Leicestershire Waste Partnership (consisting of the Council and the seven district councils) intends to manage municipal waste up to 2050.
9. Since 2013, there have been a number of service reduction and efficiency changes to the operation of the RHWS service to achieve MTFS savings of approximately £2.7m. The current RHWS service offer was approved by the Cabinet in November 2015.
10. The Cabinet agreed to a public consultation on RHWS summer opening hours changes in June 2019, but the changes were not taken forward at the time.
11. On 13 February 2023, the Scrutiny Commission appointed a cross-party Scrutiny Review Panel to test the assessment criteria used to identify sites for potential closure, and to consider how the closures would impact residents in the future. The report and recommendations of the Panel were supported by the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 June 2023 and by the Cabinet on 23 June 2023.

12. On 24 October 2023, the Cabinet agreed to commence a public consultation on:
 - a) The closure of three of the Council's RHWS: Market Harborough, Shepshed, and Somerby;
 - b) The change to part-time opening at Bottesford RHWS;
 - c) The reduction of summer opening hours at all RHWS; and
 - d) The introduction of Christmas Eve closure at all RHWS.
13. On 9 February 2024, the Cabinet considered a report setting out the proposed MTFS for 2024/25 to 2027/28 and recommended amended proposals in relation to the RHWS service, to be funded from the Service Investment Fund and to be subject to further consultation. The Cabinet agreed that, subject to the Council's approval of the MTFS, the Director of Environment and Transport be authorised to consult on the revised proposals for the RHWS service.
14. The MTFS 2024-28 was approved by the County Council on 21 February 2024.

Resource Implications

15. The revised proposals recommended for implementation in this report are estimated to achieve annual savings of £300,000, and it is anticipated that the project will deliver these savings by 2025/26. The revised savings target of £300,000 has been included in the MTFS 2024-28, approved by the Council on 21 February 2024.
16. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.
17. As requested by the Scrutiny Review Panel, work was undertaken to identify Section 106 developer contributions that has been received but not yet spent for Market Harborough RHWS and Shepshed RHWS as well as monies not yet received but where a legal agreement is in place. The revised proposal to keep Market Harborough RHWS and Shepshed RHWS open part-time has now superseded this work. Somerby RHWS is unaffected as it has no Section 106 money allocated.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

18. This report has been circulated to all members.

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PART B

Background

19. The Council has a statutory duty under Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) to provide places at which residents in its area may deposit their household waste free of charge. The EPA requires that each place provided is open at all reasonable times including at least one period on a Saturday or Sunday. The Council has discretion to determine the number of these facilities, the location of such facilities, and the opening hours to be operated.
20. There are currently 14 RHWS located across the County, all of which are directly operated by the Council. There are 70 operational staff working across the sites. A map showing the location of Leicestershire's RHWS is attached as Appendix A.
21. The total operational budget for waste management in 2023/24 was £30.7m. The current net revenue budget for operation of the RHWS is circa £4.7m (excluding waste disposal and treatment).
22. The Cabinet approved in November 2015 opening times for all RHWS as follows:
 - a) 9.00am to 7.00pm, five days a week from April to September (summer hours) (Saturday to Wednesday or Thursday to Monday dependent on site);
 - b) 9.00am to 4.00pm, five days a week from October to March (winter hours); and
 - c) All sites are closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Note: due to staffing pressures following the Covid-19 pandemic, not all sites have reopened in line with the above agreed service offer. Bottesford and Shepshed sites are currently open three days per week and Somerby RHWS is open two days per week.

First Public Consultation

23. The Cabinet agreed on 24 October 2023 that the following proposals be taken forward for public consultation:
 - a) The closure of three of the Council's RHWS: Market Harborough, Shepshed, and Somerby;
 - b) The change to part-time opening at Bottesford RHWS (three days per week);
 - c) The reduction of summer opening hours (April to September) at all RHWS; and
 - d) The introduction of Christmas Eve closure at all RHWS.

24. In relation to paragraph 23 point c) above, the proposed summer opening hours included in the consultation were:
- a) 9.00am to 5.00pm where the RHWS is open Saturday, Sunday or Monday;
 - b) All other days that the RHWS is open to remain as 9.00am to 7.00pm.
25. A twelve-week public consultation was undertaken between 1 November 2023 and 24 January 2024. The consultation consisted of an online questionnaire accessed via the 'Have your say' page on the Council's website and a series of focus groups were undertaken with members of the public.
26. A variety of other stakeholders were consulted, such as district councils, parish councils, neighbouring Waste Disposal Authorities (Leicester City Council and county councils), and the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group (LECG).

Online Questionnaire Headline Findings

27. Full findings from the 'Have your say' online questionnaire can be found in the Consultation Survey Analysis Report (Appendix B).
28. There were 5,638 responses to the online questionnaire. The Table 1 below shows the headline demographic data for questionnaire respondents, compared to the general population of Leicestershire.

Demographic Characteristics	Questionnaire Respondents	Leicestershire Population
Female	53%	51%
Aged 45-74	64%	38%
White ethnicity	96%	88%
Heterosexual	93%	92%
Not Disabled	81%	83%
Population data source: 2021 Census		

Table 1 Demographic data for first online questionnaire respondents

29. The majority of respondents strongly disagreed/tended to disagree with the proposed closure of Market Harborough RHWS (73%), Shepshed RHWS (67%), and Somerby RHWS (40%). The proportion of respondents who strongly disagreed/tended to disagree with the proposed closures increased significantly for those who either lived in the local area or were regular users of the sites. The key response themes were:
- a) Concerns about environmental impacts such as increased fly-tipping and driving further to alternative sites.
 - b) Concerns that the Market Harborough RHWS and Shepshed RHWS are in areas of housing development.

- c) Concerns about the suitability of alternative sites such as traffic safety at the A6 entrance to the Kibworth RHWS and increased usage at other already busy sites.
- 30. The majority of respondents (59%) neither agreed nor disagreed with part-time opening at Bottesford RHWS. The proportion of respondents who agreed with the proposal increased for those who were regular users of the site (70%). The key response themes were:
 - a) Support for the proposal as part-time opening is preferable to closure.
 - b) Concerns about increased fly-tipping.
- 31. The majority of respondents (56%) tended to agree/strongly agree with the proposal to reduce summer opening hours at all RHWS. The key response themes were:
 - a) Support for the proposal as an alternative to closing sites.
 - b) Support for the proposal as it is a sensible way to save money.
 - c) Suggestions of alternative opening hours to those proposed.
- 32. The majority of respondents (92%) tended to agree/strongly agree with the proposal to introduce Christmas Eve closure at all RHWS. The key response themes were:
 - a) Support for RHWS staff having Christmas Eve off.
 - b) Support for the proposal as people are unlikely to prioritise visiting an RHWS on Christmas Eve.
 - c) Support for the proposal as visitor numbers are lower on Christmas Eve.
- 33. The questionnaire asked respondents for alternative suggestions on ways of making savings. The key response themes were:
 - a) To reduce hours and opening days at the sites proposed for closure and the RHWS around the County.
 - b) To reduce staffing levels at RHWS, to utilise volunteers to staff sites, and the greater use of automated systems at sites.
 - c) To generate income via reuse and recycling of items.
 - d) To charge to visit sites and to dispose of specific types of waste.
 - e) To improve the range and quantity of kerbside collections to reduce demand on RHWS.

Focus Groups

- 34. Full findings can be found in the Focus Group Report (Appendix C) and a summary is given below.
- 35. Six online focus groups were held with a mixture of Leicestershire residents and residents from the areas specifically affected by potential RHWS closures. Feedback from the participants is summarised as follows:

a) On the closure of Market Harborough, Shepshed and Somerby sites:

- i. Participants who were regular visitors to the sites were the most affected and unhappy about the plans.
- ii. The closures were considered short-sighted due to the housing development around Market Harborough and Shepshed.
- iii. The savings were considered to be small, especially if fly-tipping was to increase.
- iv. There were concerns regarding closing Market Harborough RHWS as it is seen as a good site with good access; participants would have preferred closing Kibworth RHWS which is seen as having less good access.
- v. It was felt that closures should have been thought through before investing in the Kibworth site (the redevelopment of which took place between November 2021 and March 2023).

b) On the part-time opening at Bottesford RHWS:

- i. Site users were relieved that the proposal was to keep the site open part-time rather than to close it.
- ii. Weekend access to the site was considered to be crucial.

c) On the reduction of summer opening hours:

- i. This was considered to have a low impact on households.
- ii. There was a preference for more evening opening times in the summer, instead of opening early in the morning.
- iii. It was suggested that winter opening hours were reduced, and that sites were kept open for longer in the summer instead.

d) On the Christmas Eve closure:

- i. No participants had visited sites on Christmas Eve, and some assumed that the sites were shut, whilst others stated they had 'better things to do'.
- ii. Participants felt that it was a very reasonable change and would have a low impact on households.

Other Consultation Activity

- 36. Views on the proposals were also sought from parish councils, district councils, neighbouring local authorities, the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the LECG. Detailed feedback is given in the Consultation Survey Report (Appendix B) and summarised below.
- 37. A number of parish councils, district councils and neighbouring local authorities submitted responses as part of the online survey. Of those that responded via letter/email, the following concerns were raised:

- a) Harborough District Council's main concerns were the impact of closing Market Harborough RHWS on traffic safety at Kibworth RHWS, and the potential for increased fly-tipping.
 - b) North Northamptonshire Council's main concerns were that the closure of Market Harborough RHWS could create cross-over demand to their facilities, and the potential cost to them of implementing a residents-only permit system should cross-border use increase.
 - c) Hathern Parish Council's main concerns were the closure of Shepshed RHWS leading to increased fly-tipping, increased congestion in Loughborough due to people using the site there as an alternative, and the environmental impact of people making longer car journeys to alternative sites.
38. The LECG's main concerns were an increase in fly-tipping, closures causing congestion in built-up areas as people travel to alternative sites, closing RHWS while the population increases, queuing at alternative sites, and older people in Somerby having to travel further to an alternative RHWS.

Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee

39. The Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the proposals at its meeting on 2 November 2023 and its main concern was housing growth proposed for Harborough increasing visitor numbers at Kibworth RHWS and, therefore, placing increased pressure on local roads.

Kibworth RHWS Traffic Assessment

40. In December 2023, the Council's Network Data and Intelligence Team undertook work to understand the potential impact of increased traffic accessing Kibworth RHWS should Market Harborough RHWS close. The worst-case scenario was modelled to understand the impact of 100% of Market Harborough RHWS visitors using Kibworth RHWS as an alternative at peak times of day and year.
41. The data suggests that the right turn into the Kibworth RHWS on the A6 could cope with additional visits resulting from the closure of Market Harborough RHWS. However, future housing developments and Government legislation changes have not been factored in and may increase demand on Kibworth RHWS in future.

Consideration of Consultation Feedback

42. Having carefully considered the alternative suggestions for making savings raised in the public consultation, it was concluded that none provided a viable alternative to make the level of savings required. The RHWS already operate with the minimum staffing levels that are required to operate the site safely and efficiently. In addition, the Council is legally required to make the sites

accessible to residents free of charge and there are significant restrictions on which waste items can be charged for.

43. While it would be possible to design an alternative pattern of opening hours or days, there was no consensus from respondents on which alternative opening pattern would be preferable (i.e. it depended on the respondent's individual circumstances). It is not possible for the County Council to progress suggestions concerning changes to kerbside collections as these are the responsibility of the district councils.
44. Although there is potential to increase income from the sale of materials, particularly in relation to reuse, this is already included in the MTFS on another savings line and will be progressed in addition to the savings proposed in this report.
45. There was a high level of dissatisfaction with the proposals to close RHWS, particularly in relation to Market Harborough and Shepshed. As a result of this feedback, an alternative option to keep these two sites open on a part-time basis was proposed as outlined below. This proposal does, however, reduce the level of savings that could be achieved.

Revised Proposals

46. The Cabinet on 9 February 2024 considered a report setting out the MTFS for 2024/25 to 2027/28 MTFS including amended proposals in relation to the RHWS service. It was agreed that, subject to the outcome of a further public consultation, the Service Improvement Fund would cover £100,000 of the planned £400,000 savings in relation to RHWS service. In light of this, and the public and stakeholder feedback from the public consultation on the proposals outlined above, the revised proposal was put forward to keep Market Harborough RHWS and Shepshed RHWS open part-time, and to reduce the number of opening days at Kibworth RHWS. The revised proposals are estimated to achieve the remaining annual savings requirement of £300,000.
47. It was proposed that Market Harborough RHWS would change from opening five days to three days per week and Shepshed RHWS would change from opening three days to two days per week. To make the proposal operationally viable, a reduction in opening days from five days to four days per week at Kibworth RHWS would also be required. As these changes had not been put forward for consideration as part of the initial public consultation, a further consultation exercise was required.
48. The revised proposal to keep Market Harborough RHWS open part-time would mean that a smaller proportion of Market Harborough RHWS visitors would be expected to use Kibworth RHWS as an alternative. This should reduce the potential impacts on the road network which were raised as a concern in the initial public consultation.
49. The original proposal to close Somerby RHWS remained, due to its high operational cost per visit and low visitor numbers, as did the proposal to reduce

summer opening hours for all RHWS, change to part-time opening at Bottesford RHWS, and close all sites on Christmas Eve and, therefore, these did not form part of the second consultation.

Second Public Consultation

50. An additional four-week public consultation on the revised proposals to introduce part-time opening at Market Harborough RHWS and Shepshed RHWS and reduce the opening days at Kibworth RHWS was undertaken between 21 February and 20 March 2024. The consultation consisted of an online questionnaire available via a link from the Council's website. In addition, a variety of other stakeholders were consulted, such as district councils, parish councils, neighbouring Waste Disposal Authorities (Leicester City Council and county councils), and the LECG.

'Have Your Say' Online Survey Headline Findings

51. Full findings from the second 'Have your say' online survey can be found in the Consultation Survey Analysis Report (Appendix D).
52. There were 566 responses to the second online questionnaire. The Table 2 below shows the headline demographic data for questionnaire respondents, compared to the general population of Leicestershire.

Demographic Characteristics	Questionnaire Respondents	Leicestershire Population
Female	54%	51%
Aged 45-74	65%	38%
White ethnicity	97%	88%
Heterosexual	93%	92%
Not Disabled	79%	83%
Population data source: 2021 Census		

Table 2 Demographic data for second online questionnaire respondents

53. In relation to the proposal to keep the Shepshed site open two days per week, 44% of respondents tended to agree or strongly agreed with the proposal, 22% neither agreed or disagreed and 23% tended to disagree or strongly disagreed. The key response themes included:
- a) Concerns that two days was not enough for the site to be open, particularly in light of the amount of housing growth in the area.
 - b) Concerns about increases in traffic and travel, both around the Shepshed site when it is open and at other sites when it is shut.
 - c) Support for the site remaining open rather than being closed and thanking the Council for listening to the views of residents.

54. Regarding the proposal to keep the Market Harborough site open three days per week and reduce the opening days at Kibworth RHWS to four days per week, 47% of respondents tended to agree or strongly agreed with the proposal, 17% neither agreed or disagreed and 25% tended to disagree or strongly disagreed. The key response themes were that:
- a) Many respondents felt that both Market Harborough and Kibworth sites should be open all weekend.
 - b) Some respondents felt that Market Harborough RHWS should be open more than Kibworth RHWS, as Market Harborough has a larger population.
 - c) Some respondents were still concerned about the safety of the A6 and the entrance to the Kibworth RHWS.
 - d) Some respondents felt that while the proposals were not ideal, they were preferable to closing the Market Harborough RHWS.
55. Respondents to the questionnaire were asked for any other options that would significantly reduce the running costs of the RHWS service. Response themes included:
- a) Suggestions of alternative patterns of opening hours / days.
 - b) Reducing staffing levels, using volunteers or having unmanned sites.
 - c) Introducing a charge for site use rather than closing sites.
56. A number of other comments about the proposal were submitted by respondents. The key themes included:
- a) Concerns about the impact of the proposals on levels of fly-tipping.
 - b) Concerns about increases in how busy the RHWS will be, traffic and road safety, and/or carbon emissions.
 - c) General dissatisfaction with the Council.
 - d) Recognition that the Council had listened to the results of the first consultation and had amended the proposals.
57. No additional written comments were submitted via letter/email as part of the second consultation.
58. No new viable alternative options were put forward as part of the second public consultation.

Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee

59. The Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the proposals at its meeting on 11 March 2024. The Committee noted the completion of a traffic impact assessment regarding the impact of the potential displacement of traffic to the Kibworth RHWS that showed that the junction on the A6 to the Kibworth RHWS could tolerate any potential displacement.

60. The Committee felt that the proposals contained within the second consultation were a good compromise and recognised the level of work that had been put in to determine the best approach for the service in light of the Council's challenging financial position.

Conclusions

61. Taking into consideration the results of both of the public consultations and the need to make savings, the Cabinet is recommended to authorise the implementation of the revised proposals, in summary:
- a) Closure of Somerby RHWS;
 - b) Part-time opening at the following RHWS:
 - i. Bottesford (three days per week);
 - ii. Market Harborough (three days per week);
 - iii. Kibworth (four days per week); and
 - iv. Shepshed (two days per week).
 - c) Reduction of summer opening hours at all RHWS:
 - i. 9.00am to 5.00pm where the RHWS is open Saturday, Sunday or Monday;
 - ii. All other days that the RHWS is open 9.00am to 7.00pm.
 - d) Christmas Eve closure at all RHWS.
62. The exact opening days for each site will be determined by the waste service as needed to meet operational and legislative requirements.
63. When considering the initial proposals for making savings to the RHWS service, the Scrutiny Review Panel recommended that if any sites were closed, that initially plans to decommission but not sell sites be supported. The Cabinet (in June 2023) supported the Panel's recommendations.
64. At the time that the Scrutiny Review Panel was considering the proposals, five RHWS were being considered for closure. As outlined above, the proposals have been amended and only one site (Somerby) is now being recommended for closure. In light of this change, and subject to the approval of the recommendations in this report, the Waste Management Service is intending to declare the Somerby RHWS surplus to requirement once the site has been closed to the public and any appropriate decommissioning has been undertaken. The future use or disposal of the site would then be a matter for consideration by the Director of Corporate Resources in line with the Council's usual processes and procedures.

Equality Implications

65. The Equality Impact Assessment has been updated (Appendix D) to take into account the revised proposals to keep Market Harborough RHWS and Shepshed RHWS open part-time and to reduce opening days at Kibworth RHWS.

66. The comments of the LECG are given at paragraph 38 above.

Human Rights Implications

67. No human rights implications were identified.

Environmental Implications

68. It has been noted that there could be environmental implications from residents driving further to an alternative RHWS should their current nearest site close. However, this has been largely mitigated by the revised proposal to keep Market Harborough RHWS and Shepshed RHWS open part-time. Somerby RHWS has low visitor numbers so its closure is unlikely to have significant environmental implications.

Background Papers

24 April 2023 – Report to the Cabinet – ‘Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy 2022-2050’:

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s175771/Leicestershire%20Resources%20and%20Waste%20Strategy%20Cabinet%20240423.pdf>

23 June 2023 - Report to the Cabinet - ‘Final Report of the Scrutiny Review Panel on Recycling and Household Waste Sites’:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-10/RHWS-Scrutiny-Review-Panel-report-2023.pdf>

24 October 2023 - Report to the Cabinet – ‘Recycling and Household Waste Sites Proposed Consultation’:

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s179117/FINAL%20RHWS%20Savings%20Consultation%20Cabinet%20241023.pdf>

9 February 2024 - Report to the Cabinet – ‘Provisional Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25-2027/28’:

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7503>

11 March 2024 – Report to the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee – ‘Recycling and Household Waste Sites Consultation Outcome, Recommendations, and Further Consultation’:

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s181789/RHWS%20Outcome%20of%20Consultation.pdf>

Appendices

Appendix A - Location of Recycling and Household Waste Sites in Leicestershire

Appendix B - Consultation Survey Report

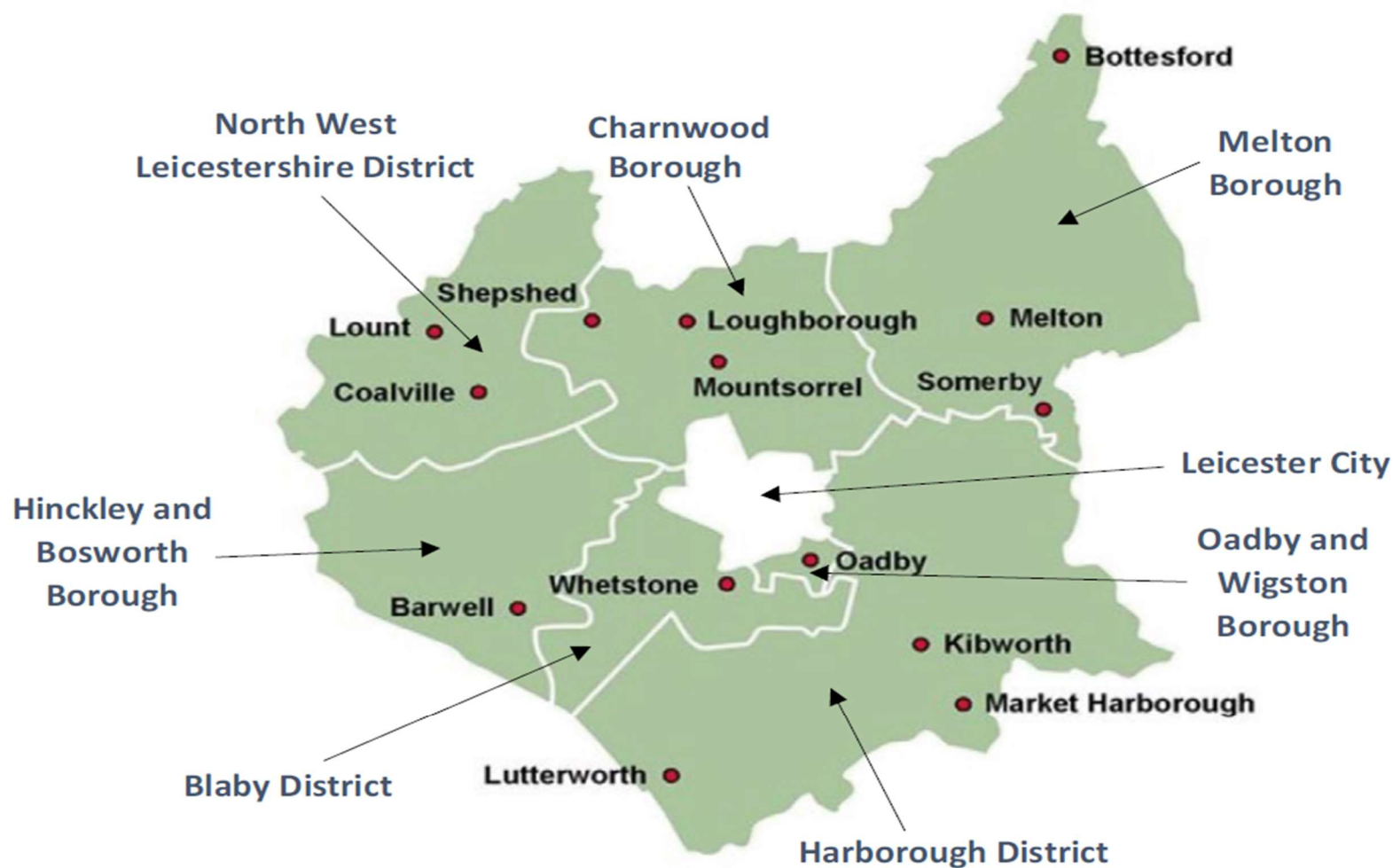
Appendix C - Focus Group Report

Appendix D - Second Consultation Survey Report

Appendix E - Equality Impact Assessment (second iteration)

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Recycling and Household Waste Site (RHWS) Locations Across Leicestershire



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Recycling and Household Waste Sites

Consultation Survey Report

February 2024

Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Purpose of this Report	3
Background	3
Consultation Methods	3
About the Respondents	4
Use of Recycling and Household Waste Sites	4
Views on the Proposals	7
Proposal 1: Recycling and Household Waste Site Closures	7
Proposal 2: Changes to Opening Days.....	11
Proposal 3: Changing Summer Opening Hours at all Recycling and Household Waste Sites	13
Proposal 4: Closing Christmas Eve at all Recycling and Household Waste Sites	15
Impact of Proposals	15
Alternative Options	17
Any Other Comments	19
Additional Consultation Feedback	21
Appendix – Survey Questionnaire.....	24

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our thanks to everyone who has taken the time to provide their views and feedback as part of the consultation process.

Purpose of this report

This document provides a summary of the findings of the 12-week public consultation undertaken between 1 November 2023 and 24 January 2024, on proposed changes to Leicestershire County Council's Recycling and Household Waste Sites (RHWS). This report reflects the findings of the formal consultation questionnaire, and additional responses received during the consultation period.

Background

Leicestershire County Council continues to face financial challenges, with growing demand for county council services and general price rises (inflation) increasing the cost of delivering services. As such financial savings continue to be required, and the council's recently published budget plan included a requirement to make savings from the RHWS. The following proposals were put forward for public consultation and are estimated to save approximately £420,000 per year:

- Closure of three of the Council's RHWS: Market Harborough, Shepshed, and Somerby.
- Change to part time opening at the Bottesford RHWS.
- Reduce summer opening hours at all RHWS.
- Introduce Christmas Eve closure at all RHWS.

Consultation methods

The consultation consisted of an online questionnaire (see appendix) accessed via the 'Have your say' page on the Council's website, with an email address provided to enable residents and stakeholders to ask questions about the consultation or request the questionnaire in alternative formats. A variety of other stakeholders were also consulted, such as district councils, parish councils, neighbouring Waste Disposal Authorities, and the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group (LECG).




Additionally, six online focus groups were held which sought the views of a sample of Leicestershire residents in general and also those from areas specifically impacted by the proposed site closures. The feedback from the focus groups can be found in the separate Focus Group Report.

About the respondents

In total, 5,638 responses were received (5,635 online and 3 paper/postal responses). Results have been reported based on those who provided a valid response, i.e. excluding the 'don't know' responses and no replies from the calculation of the percentages, where applicable. The following provides a summary of the responses. All results, including the open comments, have been passed to the service for reference and further consideration.

In reply to Q1, the majority of responses (95%) were from Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland residents. A smaller percentage (3%) were from interested members of the public and residents from another county (1%). These and other roles selected are summarised in Chart 1 below.

Chart 1: Summary of Q1: In what capacity are you responding to this survey?¹

Response	#	%	
Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland resident	5,316	94.7%	
Interested member of the public	149	2.7%	
Resident of another county	68	1.2%	
Leicestershire recycling and household waste site employee	16	0.3%	
Leicestershire County Council staff member	10	0.2%	
Representative from a parish, district or borough council	14	0.2%	
County, district or parish councillor	12	0.2%	
Representative of a voluntary sector organisation, charity or community group	6	0.1%	
Representative of a business or private sector organisation	4	0.1%	
Representative of another public sector organisation	2	0.0%	
Other (please specify)	17	0.3%	

Those who indicated they were responding as a Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland resident, resident of another county and interested member of the public were asked a series of demographic questions, of which:

- 53% were female and 46% were male, with 1% indicating that they use another term
- The highest proportion were aged 55 to 64 years (23%)
- 19% indicated that they had a long-standing illness, disability, or infirmity
- The majority identified as white (96%) and 4% identified with a Black and Minority Ethnic group
- 43% said they lived in Harborough and just over a third (34%) said they lived in Charnwood
- Over half were employed, either full-time (42%) or part-time (12%), with 10% self-employed and 29% wholly retired from work

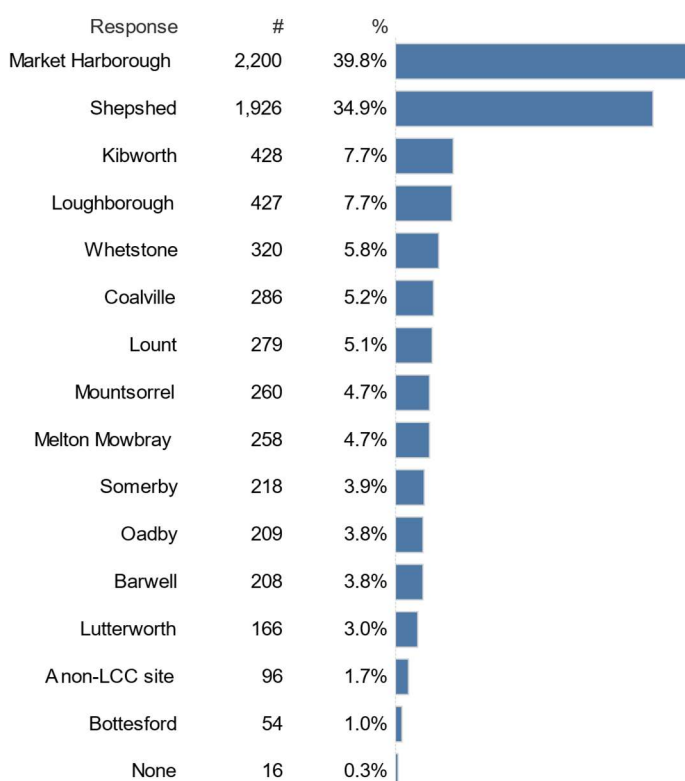
Use of recycling and household waste sites

Residents and interested members of the public were asked which RHWS they used.

¹ Those who selected 'other' in response to Q1 included those indicating that they were family members of Leicestershire residents, or a homeowner, a former resident, site user, Charnwood Housing Residents' Forum member, a resident of Shepshed, and a resident in a neighbouring council area.

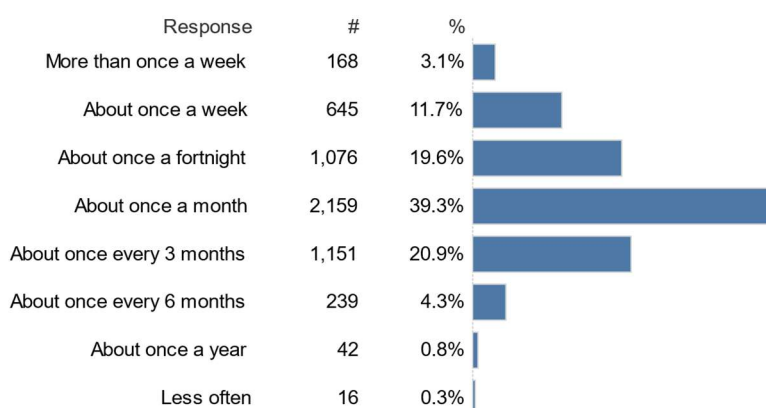
Overall, 40% of respondents indicated that they used Market Harborough and 35% indicated that they used Shepshed. Chart 2 below provides further details of all sites selected in response to this question.

Chart 2: Summary of Q5: Which, if any, of the following sites do you use? (multiple choice)²



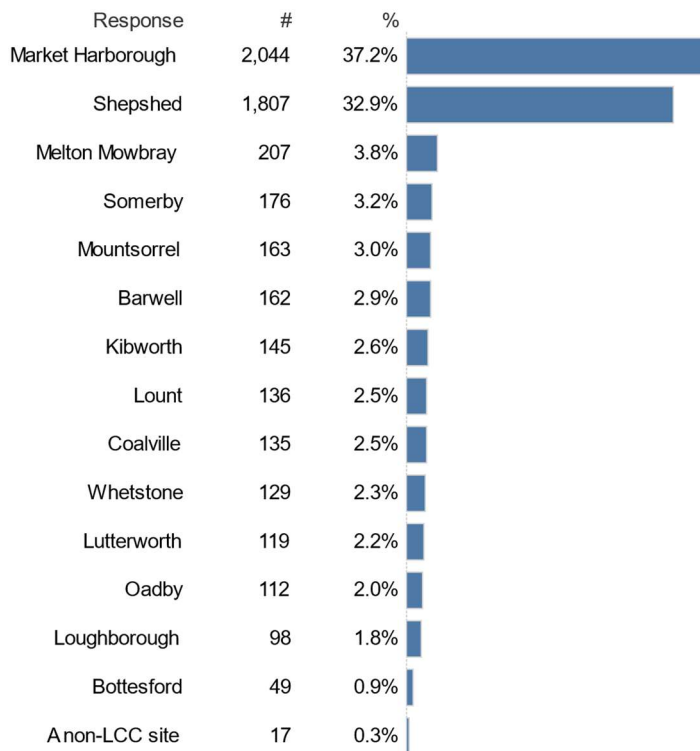
Those who said they used a RHWS were asked how often they use a site. As Chart 3 below shows, the most popular frequency selected was about once a month (39%). This pattern is broadly similar when looking at frequency of usage by specific site(s) used.

Chart 3: Summary of Q6: On average, how often, if at all, do you use a site?

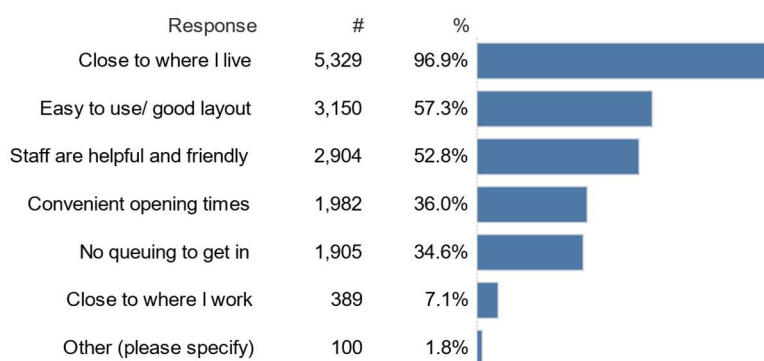


These respondents were also asked which site they used most often. Over a third (37%) said they used Market Harborough most often, with a third (33%) selecting Shepshed as the site they used most often. See chart 4 for further detail.

² Please note this question was multiple choice and respondents could choose more than one answer, so percentages do not add up to 100%.

Chart 4: Summary of Q7: Which site you use most often?

When asked what their main reasons were for using each site, the majority of respondents said it was close to where they live (97%). Over half said they used the site because it was easy to use/had a good layout (57%) or because staff are helpful and friendly (53%). Over a third (36%) said it was because the site had convenient opening times or that there was no queue to get in (35%). A smaller proportion of respondents said it was close to where they worked (7%) or for other reasons (2%).³ See Chart 5 for more detail.

Chart 5: Summary of Q8: What are your main reasons for using this site (multiple choice)?⁴

³ 'Other' reasons provided for use of the site included recycling, environmental concerns and the avoidance of landfill, convenience, safety, disposal of garden waste and opening days/times.

⁴ Please note this question was multiple choice and respondents could choose more than one answer, so percentages do not add up to 100%.

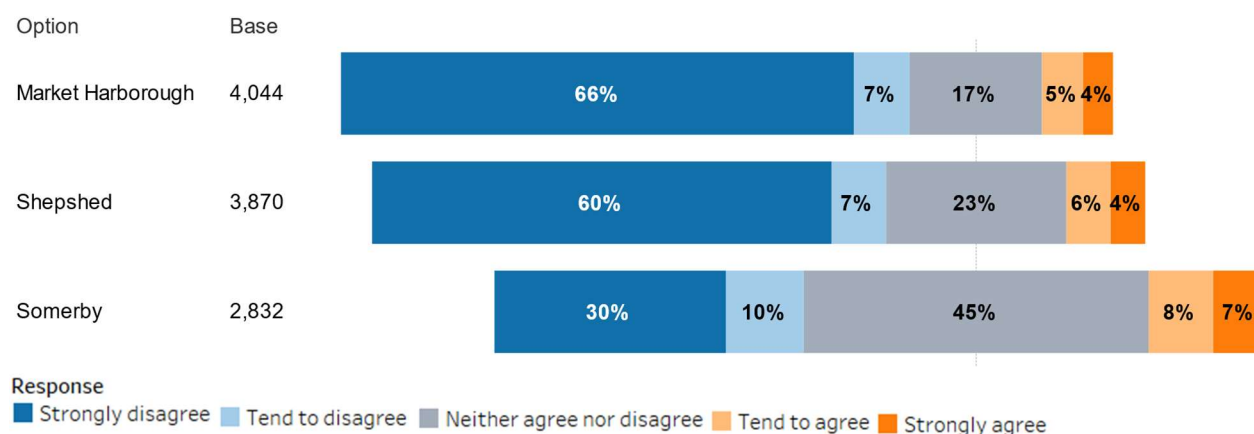
Views on the proposals

Proposal 1: Recycling and household waste site closures

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to close the sites in Market Harborough, Shepshed and Somerby.

As Chart 6 below shows, the majority disagreed (66% strongly disagree, 7% tend to disagree) with the proposal to close the Market Harborough site. The majority of respondents also disagreed with the proposal to close Shepshed (60% strongly disagree, 7% tend to disagree). Regarding the proposal to close Somerby, a notable proportion selected 'neither agree nor disagree' (45%) and 40% of respondents disagreed (30% strongly disagree, 10% tend to disagree).

Chart 6: Summary of responses to Q9: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to close the following sites?



Respondents were asked a follow-up question to Q9, 'Do you have any comments on the above? A total of 3,794 respondents (67%) provided an answer to this question. A number of key themes were identified from these comments, which are summarised below.

- Fly-tipping:** concerns about the potential impact of closures on fly-tipping was the most notable theme amongst comments. This included views of a 'false economy' and that the cost of future fly-tip removal would be greater than proposed savings. There were also concerns over 'hidden' costs and costs for landowners, farmers and local district/borough councils, including their capacity to manage this. Many also highlighted a reliance on local volunteers to clear fly-tipped waste and the impact closures would have for them. Many noted that fly-tipping was already a local issue (particularly in Market Harborough and Shepshed), that it had increased during Covid-19, since restricted opening hours and since charges were introduced. Added consequences of fly-tipping noted included the impact on wildlife, risk of fly-tippers falsely advertising waste removal services, and concern that recent years' work to reduce fly-tipping will be reversed. Related comments also raised concerns regarding policing and enforcement, signage, and education.
- Other environmental impacts:** comments under this theme included references to the impact on air pollution and carbon reduction targets, particularly if residents are required to travel further to an alternative site or cannot combine car journeys with other reasons (e.g. for work). Burning waste was also raised as a specific concern. Many were concerned that residents would use general waste bins rather than recycle or practice good waste disposal, also that residents were already receiving reduced

collections and smaller refuse bins. Concern was also raised regarding the costs to local authorities of separating waste in general waste bins. Comments highlighted the potential impact on kerbside refuse collection, including delays and capacity. Many noted that recycling was becoming more difficult (including insufficient local facilities such as bottle banks, food waste collections) when it should be encouraged and made easier.

- **Wider environmental impacts:** some were concerned about waste building up on or around properties, leading to health and safety issues. References were made to the potential social and/or wellbeing impacts if closures affect the ability to keep areas clean and tidy. Also mentioned was the potential impact on road surfaces due to increased travel and the cost of repairs. Others raised concerns or questions regarding the future of the land of the sites that are proposed to close, and whether there would be opportunity to buy it.
- **Population and housing growth:** one of the most frequently noted concerns amongst comments was that the proposed closures were in areas of housing growth, particularly Market Harborough and Shepshed. Many felt that the population size and scale of local housing developments highlighted the need for a local site. Respondents also suggested that the increase in use and Council Tax income from new housing would reduce the cost per visit to sites and queried the use of these funds. Concern was also raised regarding a reduction in green land for housing, and the recycling and waste needs of new householders, those living in apartments or high-density housing.
- **Suitability of alternatives:** respondents raised concerns about the Kibworth site, namely the location of the site near a busy road (known locally as an accident 'blackspot'). Many expressed strong concerns about accessing and exiting the Kibworth site, both in terms of traffic levels and safety. The need for additional traffic safety/control improvements (e.g. traffic lights, road layout) around the Kibworth site was noted by a number of respondents. Concerns were also raised about traffic levels and queuing at other alternative sites, including Loughborough, Melton, and Kettering.

Comments raised doubts about capacity and increased usage at alternative sites, including the fact that these were already busy (in particular Shepshed and Loughborough). Reduced opening was already seen as an issue and some questioned whether alternative sites would have increased opening hours. A number of comments raised concerns about the impact on staff workloads at alternative sites. Several comments highlighted how existing sites complement each other, for example in opening hours. Other more general concerns about alternative sites included the quality of service, accessibility, inconvenience and travel time, inability to recycle certain items and the potential impact on neighbouring council areas (including whether they had been involved in the consultation that may potentially impact their sites). The potential for future expansion at alternative sites (specifically Loughborough) was also questioned.

- **Positive feedback regarding sites proposed to close** (particularly Market Harborough and Shepshed): these comments included positive feedback about the staff, location, convenience, accessibility, general running of the site and confidence that waste would be recycled.
- **Economic impact:** concerns about additional costs during the current economic climate were raised, including transport/fuel. Other respondents were concerned that the proposals would affect those who struggle the most, including lower income households. Some noted that they were already paying increased charges for garden waste collections, whilst others were not because they felt that it was not cost-effective. Some residents also feared that they may need to pay private companies to remove waste or were worried that local businesses may increase charges to reflect increased waste transport costs. Concerns were raised regarding the economic impact on businesses (including those using or located near the sites), the local economy (e.g. shopping habits and footfall), countryside tourism (due to fly-tipping) and those looking to move to areas impacted by the proposals. Others mentioned costs associated with removing the sites and the impact on local employment and/or existing staff.

- **Disproportionate impact on certain groups:** these concerns included reference to older people, those with mobility or health issues, and families. Some mentioned issues with how accessible and user-friendly alternative sites were (particularly Kibworth) and the relative ease of using other sites (particularly Market Harborough). Impacts on other groups highlighted included carers, those with no transport or those that owned specific vehicles (e.g. vans). Many felt that their area, including rural areas, were being underserved, damaged, and these residents felt overlooked. This was particularly notable amongst comments related to Shepshed and Market Harborough. Concerns raised regarding Somerby include the potential impact on local horse riders and lack of public transport.
- **Council decision-making concerns:** many questioned existing decisions made to refurbish and update existing sites prior to the consultation, including Kibworth, Shepshed and Market Harborough (including the view that the Harborough site should have been upgraded instead of Kibworth). A number of respondents also questioned other local decisions, notably the development of the marketplace in Shepshed and the decision to install a waste incinerator in Shepshed. Other decisions that were criticised include housing (particularly in Market Harborough), flood prevention, and the lack and/or withdrawal of infrastructure and core facilities (which was particularly notable in comments related to Shepshed).

There was general disapproval of council management and decision-making processes, including priorities and the perceived lack of common sense, lack of joined-up thinking, not listening to or being 'out of touch' with residents and questioning whether planning rules had been fairly applied. There was some general criticism of specific councils including Leicestershire County Council, Harborough District Council, Charnwood Borough Council and elected members, including reference to the impact of decisions on future local votes.

Some queried money received from housing developers, how Council Tax monies were being spent, with others questioning whether they were getting value for money for the Council Tax they pay or of the view that recycling was generating income for the council. Many highlighted the amount of Council Tax paid and were against any further cuts. General strong feelings of disagreement with the proposed closures were noted.

- **Concerns about the proposal details:** a number of questions were raised regarding the rationale presented for some site closures. Some reasoned that data presented in the supporting information did not reflect a true picture, for example they presented reasons for the decrease in site usage not being linked to demand (e.g. closures and restrictions during Covid-19, permit requirements introduced, lack of information on opening times). Others questioned the figures including trip count, comparisons made, and that the data presented did not include or mention the impact of brown bins. Some respondents felt that the map and seven-mile radius provided did not sufficiently reflect the travel impact on residents who would need to use an alternative site. Respondents also questioned the distance calculations and actual travel time. Others felt that there was no overlap in site locations.

There were also questions regarding the financial rationale, the costs to run sites, and how much or whether the proposals would save money. Some also felt that the proposed savings were relatively small. As mentioned above, many queried whether the increased cost of managing fly-tipping had been considered and more information (including financial detail) was requested by respondents, some of whom felt there was a lack of detail (including costs and how waste would be disposed of). Whilst many said they understood the council's financial situation and the need for savings, they did not feel that the proposals were the right approach. Respondents questioned the wider rationale presented (such as comparisons with other council areas) and disagreed with the view that fly-tipping would not increase or that there would be negligible impact on residents.

Many felt that the proposals were short-sighted and had not been thought through. A number of respondents also noted that the proposals did not account for other factors, such as an ageing

population, population/housing growth, equality analysis, travel/highways assessment, increased costs at other sites, analysis of how levels of recycling may change and concern that the longer-term costs would outweigh any short-term benefits. There was also the view that the proposals did not tackle the problem from source and focus on reducing packaging.

Several comments questioned what the land would or could be used for, whether the real reasons for the proposals had been outlined (including the balance between political and budgetary reasoning). Others were concerned about the future of other sites, particularly Lutterworth. A number queried whether/what other options had been considered and were concerned that a decision had already been made or doubted the validity of the consultation survey.

- **Positive comments regarding the proposals:** although the majority of comments reflected disagreement and/or concern about the proposals, some did indicate support for the proposed closures. Reasons included proximity/access to alternative sites, the need for savings, low usage, size of the site and limited opening times. A number of comments in support of the proposals did so with conditions (e.g. improved opening hours at other sites) or suggested that it was the least worst option.
- **Suggestions:** many respondents urged the council to reconsider the proposals, particularly site closures. A number of suggestions and/or alternative approaches were put forward and are summarised below.

Suggestions regarding savings and/or alternative approaches to the proposals included:

- Reduce/change opening days/times (e.g. open nearby sites on different days, rotate staff)
- Make efficiencies at sites (e.g. reduce staff, use volunteers, fewer sites with better recycling options or reduce range of accepted items), make energy efficiencies (e.g. solar panels), reduce costs (including the use of private businesses), online appointment booking, CCTV for smaller sites (unmanned)
- Make savings elsewhere, for example council offices, use of contractors, other council projects, discretionary spending, staffing levels, expenses
- Consider closure of another site (e.g. Kibworth, Loughborough) or relocate sites instead
- Consider use of the current incinerator site for Shepshed residents to dispose of/recycle waste
- Review charging approach, with some respondents indicating that they would be willing to pay (either to use a site or in their Council Tax bill) to keep their local site open
- Generate income (e.g. by selling unwanted items). Reference was also made to co-operatives and partnerships (e.g. with Freegle) or to explore sponsorship and/or developer contributions
- Reduce frequency of kerbside collections during winter months
- Consider other areas' examples, including piloting larger or more bins
- Listen to residents that are local to each site and ask for views on other ways to save money, including the creation of an independent panel
- Lobby central government/MPs for more funding
- Delay the decision until after key events, such as the general election and A606 works
- Free permits for residents (to prevent cost of/use by residents from outside the council area)
- Pilot the proposals first (in particular the closure of the Market Harborough site)

Suggestions if the proposals were to be implemented included:

- Review traffic management for the Kibworth site
- Use the land of the proposed closed sites to provide facilities for local residents
- Change kerbside collections (e.g. provide a mobile service or allow kerbside collect of certain items/provide garden waste bins for free or a reduced cost). Include garden waste collection in Council Tax bill or combine reduced opening with a brown bin collection
- Consider whether residents could use the neighbouring council sites if their local Leicestershire site were to close
- Provide more information on alternatives and ensure alternatives accept various types of waste

- Continue to promote benefits of using the sites and provide clear guidance on how and where residents should dispose of household waste
- Consider mothballing site(s) for potential future re-opening
- Increase opening hours of alternative sites nearby those proposed to close
- Do not charge for the disposal of DIY waste
- Greater deterrents for fly-tipping, including education and increased fines
- Provide details to residents on how savings will be used and/or pass savings back to residents (e.g. reduce Council Tax if closing a site, with reference also made to students paying reduced Council Tax if only resident for part of the year), provide fuel vouchers and an air purification service.
- Avoid redundancies and move staff from closed sites to sites with the highest usage
- Review planning permissions/stop further developments (or keep sites open)

Other suggestions included:

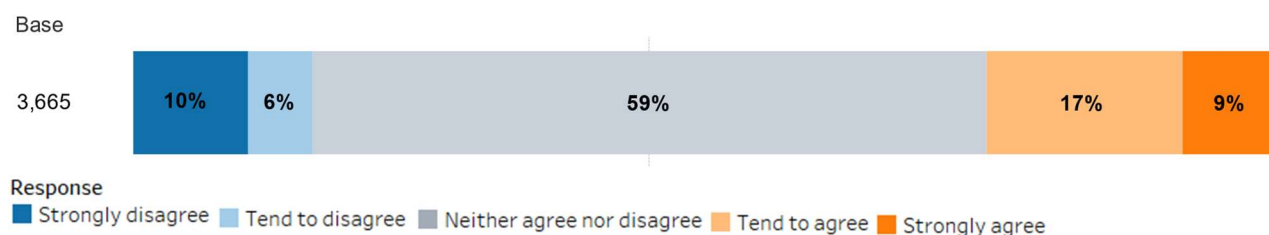
- Focus more on protecting communities
 - Only allow certain waste (e.g. that which can generate income)
 - Focus on recycling and appropriate disposal of non-recyclable waste
 - Allow long-term permits
 - Do not close Oadby or Lutterworth sites
 - Open more sites, or sites should be open more and not less
 - Site staff should help older people and those with disabilities or mobility issues
 - More checks should be made on trades people using the sites (e.g. to check licences)
- **Other comments:** various other comments were provided, including those with no opinion, or those that felt the proposals would not impact them (e.g. not nearby or did not use sites). References were made to other local issues, for example traveller sites, poorly maintained roads, and the inability to use neighbouring councils' sites. Some felt that residents deserve or have a right to such services locally and that they were a necessity. Several comments also suggested some misunderstanding about who was responsible for the proposals, with references to specific district councils. Reference was made to the impact of the rise in online shopping and home deliveries, the role of sites in emergency waste disposal during unforeseen events and their role in raising awareness/educating around environmental awareness and responsibility. Another view noted was that once sites are gone, they are then lost, and the cost of any future sites would mean investment (whereas existing sites only required maintenance).

Proposal 2: Changes to opening days

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to continue the current 3 day opening pattern at the Bottesford site.

Overall, over a quarter (26%) of respondents agreed with the proposal (9% strongly agree and 17% tend to agree) and over a tenth (16%) disagreed with the proposal (10% strongly disagree and 6% tend to disagree). Over half (59%) responded 'neither agree nor disagree' (see Chart 7).

Chart 7: Summary of responses to Q10: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to continue the current 3 day opening pattern at the Bottesford site?



Following Q10, respondents were asked the follow up question 'Why do you say this?' A total of 1,843 respondents (33%) provided an answer to this question. A number of key themes were identified from these comments, many of which are similar to those referenced previously in comments following Q9:

- **Fly-tipping:** concerns were raised about the potential impact of this proposal on fly-tipping. Many felt that greater convenience, such as increased opening and flexibility, would help stop fly-tipping, whereas closing at busy times (such as on Sundays) would encourage fly-tipping. There was concern that confusion over opening times could cause an increase in fly-tipping, and that this was already an issue since the opening days had been reduced. Other related concerns included the financial impact of fly-tipping on district/borough councils and farmers, who are already under significant pressure.
- **Opening times:** some comments reflected the view that the Bottesford site needs to be open for more than 3 days a week or every day. Others also felt that the Bottesford site needs to be open when it is convenient for residents, especially at the weekends (including on a Sunday).
- **Agreement with the proposal:** a number of positive comments did indicate agreement with the proposal to continue the 3 day opening pattern at the Bottesford site, alongside an understanding of council budgets and the need to save money.
- **Suggestions:** respondents made various suggestions regarding the proposal, particularly suggestions regarding opening times. These included:
 - Stagger opening to match highest usage
 - Weekend opening (particularly Sunday)
 - Close/open all sites on the same day
 - Open on Monday instead of Thursday (to enable post-weekend waste disposal)
 - Ensure that opening times are widely publicised
 - Summer opening hours are too long so should open 9am-5.30pm
 - All sites should be open less days and for less time (or open part-time during weekdays)
 - Consider joint working with Nottinghamshire/Lincolnshire, if they have a site nearby, which might enable closure of the Bottesford site
 - Approach the Government for funding
 - Open other sites more frequently (if closing sites)
 - Offer paint recycling at Bottesford
- **Other comments:** these included references to no opinion, or no impact (for example not nearby or do not use the Bottesford site). There was some concern around the impact of this proposal on increased queuing times at the Bottesford site, pressure on other sites and increased travel and emissions, and the impact on staff. Reference was made to the impact of new homes in the area, concerns over reduction in relation to value for money/service and the view that all sites should be easily accessible.

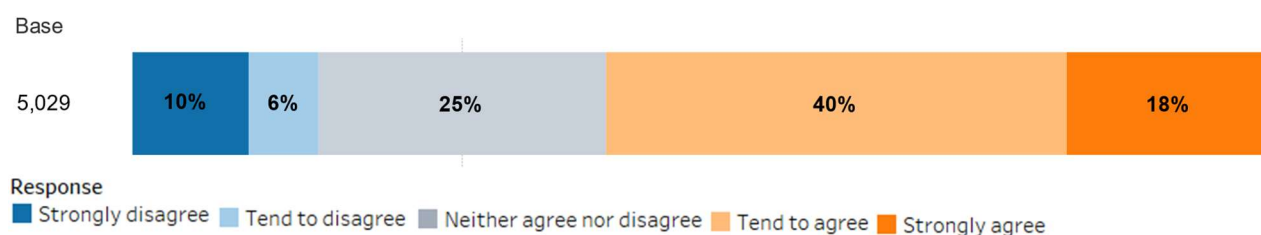
A number of comments referred to other sites. For example, regarding Melton, comments included concern or disagreement with changing opening times and concern regarding capacity if other sites are closed. Regarding Market Harborough, comments included support for retaining the site, the suggestion to reduce the opening times rather than closing, fly-tipping concerns, and reference to the suitability and/or safety of using and accessing the site at Kibworth. Regarding Shepshed, comments included concerns over the impact of closing the local site, including fly-tipping concerns. The justification for retaining another site for a small population was also questioned.

Proposal 3: Changing summer opening hours at all recycling and household waste sites

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to change the summer hours at all sites (except Bottesford).

Chart 8 shows that over half of respondents (58%) agreed with the proposal (18% strongly agree, 40% tend to agree). A quarter (25%) said they neither agree nor disagree with the proposal and over a tenth (16%) disagreed with the proposal (10% strongly disagree and 6% tend to disagree).

Chart 8: Summary of responses to Q11: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to change the summer hours?



Following Q11 the follow-up question 'Why do you say this?' was asked and 1,907 respondents (34%) commented in response to this question. Key themes noted are summarised below.

- Positive comments regarding proposed opening hours:** many respondents supported or felt that the proposed changes to opening hours were acceptable. They felt that the proposed hours would allow most residents to access the sites and that they would be able to plan or work around the proposed hours. There was support for weekend and late-night opening during the week, with the view that two late nights are sufficient. Others noted that a good level of service was currently provided and felt that sites did not need to be open until 7pm every day. Some respondents also appreciated that views from the previous consultation had been considered. Comments included the suggestion that the proposal would improve staff work-life balance and wellbeing.
- Negative comments regarding proposed opening hours:** some respondents raised concerns about the proposed opening hours which included concerns about access for those who work, particularly shift workers and those who work weekends. Others felt that sites were not open enough currently or that the proposals were inconvenient, not sufficiently flexible or impractical. There was also the view that life had changed since the previous consultation in 2019.
- Changes to opening hours preferable to site closures:** a significant number of respondents felt that changes to opening hours were preferable or should be considered as an alternative to site closures, and that changes to opening hours were a pragmatic alternative to closures. Comments under this theme included agreement with the proposal for shorter opening hours to other sites on the condition that the Market Harborough, Shepshed or Somerby sites remain open.
- Council's financial position and decision-making:** some felt that the proposals seemed fair and reasonable. Others felt that although the proposals were less than ideal, they made sense to achieve savings. Respondents also referred to Council Tax in their comments. These included concerns about service levels, expectations and the amount of Council Tax paid. Whilst some comments indicated a preference for a small increase in Council Tax to retain current levels of service, others did not want an increase in Council Tax and/or expected a discount should the proposals be implemented. Other comments under this theme included concern that the service had already been reduced and that if the proposal was implemented, they would not want any further service reductions for a number of years.

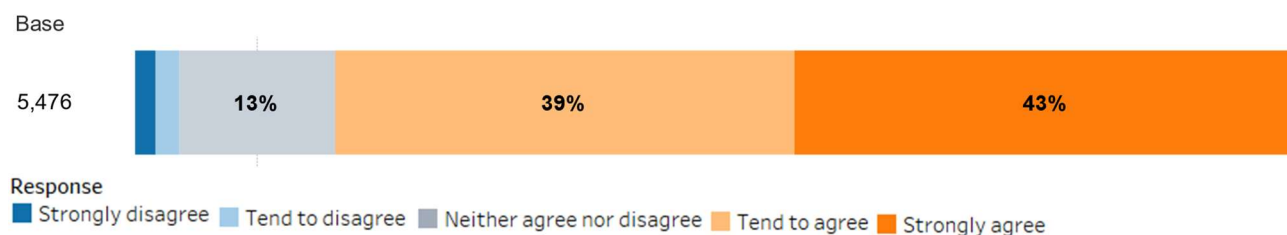
There was also the view that the proposals did not generate significant savings compared to the overall budget, and that the council should manage its budget better, making savings elsewhere (with suggestions including staffing efficiencies and street lighting savings). Some were concerned that the decision regarding site closures had already been made.

- **Suggestions regarding alternative opening hours/days:** respondents suggested a wide variety of alternative opening patterns. These are summarised below.
 - Enable those completing DIY/gardening work to visit at the end of the day (e.g. open later in the evening, including weekends, or increased opening during the summer and on bank holidays). On the other hand, some comments included the view that longer opening hours in the summer were not needed, or that sites were not used much after 5pm
 - Other suggestions included opening later than 9am, opening Bottesford 4 days per week and opening one weekday and/or weekend day until 7pm
 - Whilst some felt that site should be open seven days a week or that current opening hours should be retained, there were some suggestions to reduce opening times. These included the suggestion to close all sites on Sunday, close on Easter Sunday, or shorten winter opening hours to allow for increased opening during the summer
 - A trial and review of the new hours was proposed, along with the view that some sites should be open more to compensate for those proposed for closure
 - There was also the view that changes to opening hours should be implemented immediately rather than waiting until April 2025
- **Negative impacts of proposals:** a number of comments highlighted concerns regarding potential negative impacts of the proposals. These included fly-tipping (and associated costs), staffing concerns, queuing (including air pollution/carbon emissions), site capacity and traffic concerns (including those specifically related to Kibworth). Respondents were also concerned about the impact on recycling rates and the use of residual (black) bins, also noting that not all could afford to pay for garden waste collection bins.
- **Other comments:** some respondents, particularly those that were retired, felt that the proposals had no impact on them. Others felt that the proposals regarding opening hours were confusing and noted that it was already hard to remember which days sites were open. With this in mind, suggestions included the need to communicate well to minimise wasted journeys, and to ensure sites close at the advertised closing time. Some respondents felt frustrated by the lack of data supplied as part of the consultation and noted the importance of using data to support decisions. There was also disagreement with the proposed change to opening times at Melton, or the view that a question on this should have been included in the survey. There was some general criticism and wider concerns amongst comments, for example the view that sites are run inefficiently, the permit system is too complex, and concerns around new housebuilding in areas where sites are proposed to close. Other suggestions include sharing staff between sites, allowing foot traffic at sites for those without a car, and improving technology at sites to increase recycling.

Proposal 4: Closing Christmas Eve at all recycling and household waste sites

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to close all sites on Christmas Eve. The majority (83%) of respondents agreed with the proposal (43% strongly agree and 39% tend to agree). A small proportion (4%) of respondents disagreed with the proposal (2% strongly disagree and 2% tend to disagree). Under a fifth (13%) selected 'neither agree nor disagree' in response to this question (see Chart 9).

Chart 9: Summary of responses to Q12: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to close on Christmas Eve?



Following Q12, respondents were asked 'Why do you say this?' and 1,720 respondents (31%) provided an answer to this question. The key themes are summarised below.

- **Support for the proposal:** many comments showed support for the proposal and outlined several reasons, including support for staff having leave prior to Christmas, low usage, minimal impact and low demand on Christmas Eve, a positive alternative to site closures and financial savings. Some respondents felt that this was the least worst proposal of the consultation as a whole. Others suggested closing on other days to make further savings, for example New Year's Eve and Good Friday.
- **Disagreement with the proposal:** whilst many comments reflected support, there were some comments against the proposal. Reasons included the view that Christmas Eve is a working day for many residents, the need to open as kerbside collections are reduced over Christmas and concern that the proposal to close on Christmas Eve would increase fly-tipping. Comments included the suggestion to close earlier rather than for the entire day.

Impact of proposals

Respondents were asked 'Do you have any comments on the potential impact of these proposals?' In total, 3,098 respondents (55%) answered this question. Overall, the majority of respondents were not supportive of the proposals and many expressed anger and disbelief that the proposals were being considered, particularly site closures. Many comments were in support of keeping the sites at Market Harborough or Shepshed open, with several comments in support of retaining the site at Somerby. Key themes noted amongst comments are summarised below.

- **Fly-tipping concerns:** an increase in fly-tipping was the main concern noted amongst respondents, along with concerns over the associated increase in costs to clear additional fly-tipping and the view that costs would outweigh any savings. Some believed that the council were 'passing on' the cost and responsibility of clearing fly-tipping to district and borough councils. An increased risk of fly-tipping in rural areas was frequently mentioned, with this being considered unfair on private landowners. Other comments included the view that fly-tipping was damaging town areas and that rogue waste traders would be responsible for a large proportion of any fly-tipping increase. Other related concerns were that the proposals would encourage an increase in illegal waste collection and the use of bonfires to dispose of rubbish.

- **Increased use of household waste bins:** people felt that the council should be making it easier for people to recycle, not more difficult. If closures went ahead, respondents felt that this would result in an increase in the amount of waste being disposed of in the residual (black) bin or fly-tipped.
- **Safety and suitability of Kibworth as an alternative site:** respondents felt that access to Kibworth was a serious accident risk. They mentioned that the area was already dangerous and busy, the site was located on a fast road and on a bend, along with the risk of increased queues and traffic congestion, with some questioning whether a risk assessment had been carried out. Concern was also raised over traffic on Leicester Road where the new prison, housing and industrial units are to be built.
- **Housing growth:** the scale of housing growth in both Shepshed and Market Harborough areas was highlighted and many questioned how the council could consider closing sites in areas of rapid growth.
- **Impact of increased traffic:** increased traffic pollution was another key theme and respondents associated this with the additional environmental impact, which they felt contradicted the council's green messaging. Traffic congestion was a key concern and often linked to accident risk, pollution, wear and tear on roads and general environmental impact.
- **Travel time:** extra travel time and additional fuel costs were mentioned, with many saying that people would not be prepared to travel extra distances. Respondents from Shepshed highlighted the additional distance to Loughborough, adding to road congestion, pollution and fuel costs which would be very unfair in a cost of living crisis. Respondents also commented that Mountsorrel and Loughborough sites are both very busy (with Loughborough already difficult to access) and redirecting from Shepshed would cause traffic congestion and queues at alternative sites.
- **Concerns regarding Shepshed:** respondents felt strongly that Shepshed was being overlooked or unfairly affected by another local service reduction, along with the view that the area was solely attracting new housing, which in itself provided a reason to keep the site open.
- **Support for proposals:** although the majority of responses expressed concern or dissatisfaction with the proposals, there were some supportive comments. Some of these respondents suggested that they understood the financial constraints of the council and accepted the proposals if the closures and other changes were necessary to save money. A few respondents that said the proposed changes did not directly impact them, and a few felt that the proposals were well thought out or seemed sensible. Additional comments acknowledged that people do not like change, but that they would soon get used to it, and although it is a cost saving measure with a service reduction, residents would still receive a local recycling and household waste service. Another view accepted the proposed changes based on the provision that sites would be open in the evenings and at weekends.
- **Suggestions:** various suggestions were made, many similar to those mentioned in earlier questions:
 - Reduce hours/days instead of closures, or pilot extending all opening hours at all sites first to see if this reduced fly-tipping
 - If sites close, then other sites should be open every day to compensate
 - Making savings/efficiencies elsewhere, including reclaiming unpaid Council Tax and reducing other council services
 - Lobby Government for more funding, or change of central government
 - Ensure that any changes made are well publicised and clear for the public
 - Generate income (e.g. sell items and use money raised to support running of the site and assist people on low incomes)
 - Introduce a booking system (Birmingham cited as an example) to alleviate queues
- **Other comments:** Other comments included concerns and criticism of council decision-making. Respondents fed back that proposals were short-sighted in the context of growing towns and environmental messaging (e.g. promoting public transport or less car use), and that those living in rural

areas or villages already received less services. There was also the view that closure would be a short-term gain and could be impossible to reverse. Others questioned the money spent on the refurbishment of the site at Kibworth.

Other various impacts of the proposals were highlighted, which included the impact on those without transport, those with mobility problems or older people. Some were worried about the impact the proposals could have on jobs. Concern was raised about the need to store items for longer before being able to dispose of them and the need for traffic management near sites. It was felt that reducing summer opening hours at the weekends would reduce time available for people to complete work and visit sites during weekends. The need for Christmas opening to cater for residents' waste needs was also noted.

There were some references to Council Tax, including the view that a service should be provided based on the amount of Council Tax that residents pay, or that there should be a reduction in Council Tax if the proposals were implemented. Some respondents already experienced reduced collections and additional waste charges, with some confusion noted over which sites people were allowed to use. Comments featured a number of negative comments about the council, including staff, budgets and the wider council agenda.

Alternative options

Respondents were asked 'Are there other options for significantly reducing the running costs of the recycling and household waste sites that you think we could consider?' A total of 2,505 respondents (44%) answered this question and key themes echo a number already mentioned in response to previous questions. These key themes are summarised below.

- **Reducing operating hours and opening days at the sites proposed for closure and at other sites in the county:** many respondents felt that this could make further savings. Some said that restricted opening was preferable to complete closure, and it was suggested that this approach must lead to further savings based on the rationale provided for the proposed closures. Alternative opening hours and days were suggested such as weekends only, one day per week and restricted hours (e.g., two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon). References were made to accommodate people who were working and needed evening or weekend opening times. Lots of support was shown for the sites being open at the weekend, even if restricted during the week. There was some support for alternating the days open between sites which were closer together (e.g. Shepshed and Loughborough). Many respondents felt that further savings could be made by restricting the opening hours and days at sites not proposed to close, which could also help retain the three sites proposed to close.
- **Staffing:** changes to staffing were suggested, as concerns were expressed about the high number of staff and whether this could be reduced as a way to make savings (although some respondents did recognise potential health and safety considerations related to staffing reductions). Lack of engagement by some staff was noted and questions were raised around the necessity of some staff roles. Whilst some felt that staff directing residents to disposal containers seemed unnecessary and costs could be reduced if this were to stop, others raised concerns about whether 'meet and greet' was necessary at sites. Suggestions were made as to whether staff could rotate around all sites, especially if opening times were reduced. Others suggested that if staff were currently employed using external providers or agency, then to consider direct employment instead. The use of volunteers, community and other groups was also suggested. Technological suggestions to reduce staffing included the use of automated systems at sites, such as self-service arrangements and automated number plate recognition.
- **Reuse and recycling of materials:** many respondents suggested it would be good to be able to purchase items from the sites or have more areas for the reuse and refurbishment of items. Some respondents

felt that many of the items being thrown away could have a second lease of life, and this could be an effective way to generate income, with bikes and furniture frequently mentioned. Several said they supported the idea of having a shop or store at the sites, whilst others felt the creation of online shops or using existing platforms (such as eBay) would be a good idea. It was suggested that working in partnership with local registered charities and community groups to allow the removal and resale of good quality items could reduce costs. Many referenced examples of other sites with a shop or store for buying second hand items. Suggestions were also made for volunteers to support these activities. Along with the sale of useable second-hand items, many respondents wanted the sale of compost at sites to be reinstated and saw this as an opportunity to generate income. There was some concern about whether maximum value was being sought for high-value items, such as scrap metal. Respondents also suggested negotiating contracts with businesses to ensure the best costs were being achieved.

- **Charging/fees and income generation:** suggestions were made around charging a standard fee for visiting sites, either in the form of a charge per visit (suggested amounts varied between 0.50p to £3.00 per visit) or an annual fee through a chargeable permit. Allocating an annual allowance and charging for visits that exceed the allowance was offered as a solution. Also, respondents suggested charging based on vehicle type (e.g. paying more for using a van rather than a car) and charging residents that live outside of the county, or in another district to where the site is based. References were made to automating payments where possible and the potential use of QR codes for entry. Respondents suggested charging for specific types of waste to generate income (e.g. TVs, mattresses and paint), whilst others requested that current charges be removed. Some suggested that the council should charge businesses and traders to use sites, whilst others highlighted misconceptions around permits and business use of the sites. Other suggestions under this theme included lobbying Government for fair funding, increasing Council Tax, increasing fines for environmental crimes (e.g., fly-tipping), and seeking contributions from housing developers to support local infrastructure (including recycling facilities).
- **Kerbside collections:** suggestions were provided around improving the frequency, quantity and range of kerbside collections (e.g. electrical products, bulky items), which would mean less demand for disposal of waste at sites. Respondents proposed a reduction in the current charges for chargeable kerbside services, especially garden waste. Some requested the removal of charges for garden waste and bulky waste collection, noting that if residents had to pay for this waste to be collected then this may increase demand at specific sites. Some suggested improving the availability of recycling banks, especially for small electrical items and the placement of large skips for communities to use rather than visiting a site.
- **General efficiency savings:** overall efficiency of councils in Leicestershire was questioned along with financial planning and spend on projects, with some seen as unwanted or unnecessary. Respondents queried council structures and upper-tier management, and asked whether proposed savings could be met by reducing senior officers and councillors as part of a restructuring exercise. Questions were also raised regarding the use of money to support equality and diversity activities. Respondents highlighted a need for general contract efficiency and wanted assurance that contracts were being managed effectively, to ensure that it was the best value, whilst others queried whether there was a competitive tendering process in place.
- **Site-based efficiencies:** suggestions included investment in innovative technologies to improve waste sorting and recycling, whilst reducing costs at sites, such as an online appointment system and energy saving measures (e.g. solar, wind power, LED lighting). Suggestions also included outsourcing the running of the service to private contractors.
- **Other suggestions:** respondents made various other suggestions, including:
 - Move the Shephed site closer to the Newhurst Energy from Waste plant to reduce travel
 - Provide an out-of-hours service with skips outside the site when closed
 - Pressure producers and manufactures to take responsibility, including packaging quality

- Promote waste reduction (e.g. through education, reuse, and repurposing items), raise public awareness of recycling and environmental responsibility, especially in regard to what can be recycled at home. Involve businesses, schools, and local community groups to help raise awareness about the RHWS service.
 - Effective communication with residents about when sites are open
 - **Concerns raised:** further to the suggestions, concerns were also raised on the impact of the proposals. Overall, the main concern noted was fly-tipping and the potential increase of this if the proposals were to go ahead. Many of these respondents felt that the cost of clearing increased fly-tipping would negate any potential savings. Requests were made for the council to continue monitoring fly-tipping. It was also noted by respondents that some measures to increase income, such as introducing a fee, could also potentially increase fly-tipping.
- Other concerns were raised regarding new housing developments and respondents felt that if these developments were prevented there would be less waste. Many respondents felt that they were unable to answer the question due to a lack of supporting information, including the breakdown of the running costs of the affected service. There were several concerns from residents about increased use of the Kibworth site due to the proposed closure of Market Harborough, who felt that the access to the Kibworth site was dangerous.
- **Positive comments:** some comments noted that respondents felt the proposals seemed sensible and did not have further suggestions.

Any other comments

The consultation survey also asked for any other comments about the proposals. In total, 1,668 respondents (30%) answered this question. A large proportion of respondents expressed disagreement with the proposals. Many were of the opinion that the current proposals were short-sighted and would result in more money being spent on managing the adverse impacts the proposals would have (primarily the proposal to close three sites). A small number of respondents agreed with the proposals, stating that although the proposed changes were not ideal, they understood the current financial position the council was in, and that savings have to be made. Whilst many acknowledged the need for the council to make savings, some respondents were opposed to any reductions that would impact recycling and household waste sites. It was felt that these sites are an essential service used by many and that the impact of the proposals for all communities would be serious. Key themes noted amongst the responses align with many concerns mentioned in comments to earlier questions and are summarised below:

- **Environmental impacts:** a repeated theme throughout the comments centred around fly-tipping. There were a large number of concerns about the increase in fly-tipping if the proposed sites were to close and the costs that the council would incur as a result. Another concern was distance, as travelling to alternative sites would increase the carbon footprint, thus impacting the environment. The proposals were deemed contradictory to the council's Net Zero aims and some felt that anything that conflicts with this agenda should not be actioned.

A lot of concerns were noted regarding household refuse bins. Respondents felt that household refuse bins were being filled with waste that should be disposed of at the recycling and household waste sites. Although people who pay for garden waste bins advised that they may not be as impacted by site closures and reduced opening times, they commented that those who cannot afford to pay for a garden waste bin may be negatively impacted by the proposals. Some questioned where people's garden waste would go if they did not have a garden waste bin.

- **Suitability of alternative sites:** a lot of respondents expressed concerns about the safety element of travelling and accessing the Kibworth site due to the entrance of the site being located on the busy A6. Traffic concerns resulting from long queues and the high risk of road traffic accidents were a repeated theme throughout these comments. The need to travel to an alternative site was a common theme, with many feeling that the additional travel was inconvenient, time-consuming and that residents would not be willing to do this. Some felt that centralising services in this instance would not work.
- **Housing developments and local growth:** related to the proposal to close three of the sites, there were a lot of comments surrounding housing developments and growing communities in the areas of Market Harborough and Shepshed. There was a level of distrust from some respondents, who believed that a deal would be broken between the council and local housing developers if the proposals were approved. Questions were raised about what would happen to the unused sites/land, how the money would be used if the land were to be sold and whether the infrastructure levy on developers could be used to offset the costs of running these sites. Some respondents wanted more transparency from the council surrounding the long-term plans. Alongside this was an overall fear of growing towns losing valuable services, such as local waste sites, when there were already limited resources in certain areas.
- **Efficiencies in council buildings and staffing:** some comments focussed on the need for efficiencies in council buildings and staffing structures. These focussed on management-level jobs, the number of councillors and the costs of running County Hall. Those that mentioned County Hall felt that the office space was not being used the same as it was before Covid-19 but was generating the same costs, if not more, with energy bills. A few respondents were concerned about the job losses that would result from the proposals to close three sites. Some shared positive feedback about the staff at some of the sites and were concerned about the impact job losses would have on them/their families in the current financial climate. Some respondents queried why Leicestershire County Council was the lowest-funded council and suggested more effort should be made to lobby the Government for more funding.
- **Other comments:** a range of other comments were noted, including concerns regarding council decisions and Council Tax. A lot of comments focussed on the money spent on remodelling the Kibworth site and felt that this money could have been saved to avoid the proposal to close sites. Council Tax charges were mentioned throughout the responses. Most of these respondents felt that residents were paying increased Council Tax for reduced services. Many expressed that they did not trust the council, felt that the proposals had already been decided and that resident and stakeholder views were not being taken into consideration. A request was also made for a face-to-face meeting to discuss the proposals with officers.

Regarding the consultation specifically, some felt that the consultation had not been well publicised and were unaware of the consultation had it not been for a neighbour/friend who had signposted it to them. A lot of comments were made about the demographic details collected at the end of the survey. Some felt that this was intrusive, unrelated to the actual consultation, added no value and represented another tick-box exercise carried out by the council.

- **Other suggestions:** a number of other suggestions were made, most of which have been highlighted in previous responses but are included below for reference:
 - Use discretionary funding to help with the council's current financial struggles and aim to stop making cuts to core services
 - Tackle accessibility issues, including making information about recycling and household waste sites and how to dispose of waste easy to find on the council's website
 - Generate income, including use of re-use shops, sale of green waste and compost, annual access fees for all sites, skip trailer rental service, and adopt income-generation ideas from other councils (e.g. King's Lynn council and Norfolk who send recyclable items to Holland for processing)
 - Reducing opening times at all sites to avoid any closures.

Additional consultation feedback

In addition to feedback provided via the online consultation survey, views on the proposals were also provided via email/letter/meetings from district councils, parish councils, neighbouring waste disposal authorities, the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group (LECG).

LECG – Feedback from the meeting on 10 November 2023:

- If the Shepshed tip closes then 20,000 households will have to travel to the other side of Loughborough, to Coalville or Mountsorrel, these sites will experience long queues.
- Closure of sites may lead to an increase in fly tipping in both urban and rural areas.
- Costs can be significant to clear up illegal dumping of waste/fly tipping, and may lead to rises in council tax, so is it worth closing three sites which may impact on costs even further?
- Need to back up online consultation with focus groups to get views from groups the council may find hard to reach, particularly older people and the digitally excluded.
- Review which languages require translation for communications, as it may not be essential for some.
- Distance and travel times to alternate waste sites is not straight forward, congestion and built-up areas can be an issue.
- Those with cars will travel further and queue, creating a negative impact on communities and wildlife.
- Those without cars, will be further impacted as they will need to store the waste material until it can be collected by the recycling and waste management system. Another eco nightmare.
- False economy for the Leicestershire County Council to propose the closure of some waste sites as the population is increasing.
- More public communication on the proposals needed such as putting posters in local libraries and leisure centres, providing a full year of information on opening times, and providing clear information on which sites 'do what'.
- Concerns about older people in the Somerby area having to travel further to the next nearest RHWS in Melton Mowbray.
- Suggestions for the county council to consider; provide more 'mini' accessible local waste sites, provide small electrical drop off points in the centre of towns or community neighbourhoods (like bottle banks), continue using Leicestershire Matters to communicate changes, and promote the council's bulk waste collection service.

Harborough District Council email feedback:

- There needs to be a full analysis of the impacts of decisions.
- Within Harborough District the Environmental Services Team have successfully changed the national trend of increased fly tipping for 4 years running. This has taken significant resources and was achieved despite the initial charging for certain DIY items by the county council which saw fly tipping increase within the area and across Leicestershire, especially around locations of RHWS.
- Concerns about the additional vehicle movements at Kibworth if the Market Harborough site were to close. Kibworth sits on the main A6 and at a crash site where only recently someone lost their life. Concerns over queueing on this road posing a significant health and safety hazard. Would like to know how traffic movements have been mapped and the view of the Highways Department at the county council.
- Concerns over fly tipping in laybys and around entrances to sites. If the proposals go ahead, will the collection authority be compensated for additional clear ups of these offences?

- Proposed changes to opening times at all sites will exacerbate the frustration if sites were to close. Therefore, additional opening hours will probably be required to negate the closures and additional vehicle movements.

North Northamptonshire Council email feedback:

- North Northamptonshire Council (NCC) are concerned about the closure of Market Harborough, whereby the closure could lead to some cross over to their facilities.
- While Kibworth, in Leicestershire, is Market Harborough residents' closest site, NNC sites are then the next closest before other Leicestershire sites.
- Kibworth is closed on Tuesday and Wednesday meaning that on those days Corby or Kettering could be the closest open waste site. Furthermore, Kibworth closes at 4pm when it is open while North Northants site open until 6pm which may mean previous users of the Market Harborough facility may look to use these sites instead.
- NNC will be undertaking postcode checks to assess the current scale of any cross-boundary use of the NNC waste site network to allow them to assess the potential scale/cost of the issue. This may lead to NNC having to implement a residents only permit system, at a cost to the authority.
- Somerby and Shepshed proposed closures and proposed permanent changes to opening hours at Bottesford pose no concern to NNC.
- NNC has no comments on proposed changes to summer opening hours and proposed Christmas Eve closures.

Hathern Parish Council email feedback:

- Closing the Shepshed site will further exacerbate fly tipping as a result of people not traveling to sites in Loughborough or Mountsorrel.
- New houses on the Garendon estate will increase the demand for a nearby waste site. Such a large development would benefit from a waste site located nearby in Shepshed. Concerned the increase in houses could increase fly tipping issues.
- Traffic congestion in Loughborough is already a problem. Adding further trips to Loughborough RHWS site will make this worse.
- Should people travel to sites located some distance from Hathern (Loughborough being the closest) this will inevitably increase air pollution due to greater travel. With so many campaigns around reducing air pollution this is a contradictory measure.

Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee - points raised at the meeting on 2 November 2023:

- The Kibworth site had been redesigned to draw traffic away from the main road to reduce congestion. A traffic assessment would be carried out to assess whether the Kibworth site would cope with potential increased usage should the Market Harborough site be closed. This would be made available to Members as part of the consultation. A member expressed concern that the housing growth proposed for Harborough would increase visitor numbers to the RHWS, and would therefore, increase use of the Kibworth site and place increased pressure on local roads. They were advised that future housing growth was one of the criteria in determining the proposals and that there was not a direct correlation between increased housing and a growth in waste as there had been a change in recycling behaviour post Covid 19. County councillor Mr. Boulter asked that his reservations to the proposals related to traffic assessment and management around the RHWS site in Kibworth be noted in the minutes.
- A report would be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2024, setting out the outcome of the consultation and presenting revised proposals should they be changed following the consultation, prior to submission of a report to the Cabinet for a decision on the future of RHWS.

- There were significant funding gaps across the council and all departments were being asked to make significant savings to enable other services, for example Adult Social Care, to be supported. The Scrutiny Review Panel had explored various factors to determine which sites would reduce opening hours, or would be proposed for closure, which included usage numbers and cost of operating, for example. The Director recommended that Members looked at the Scrutiny Review Panel report which was now available on the Council's website.
- The council did not currently have a policy on usage of RHWS by people living outside of the Leicestershire border, although this had been considered by the Scrutiny Review Panel. Data showed that usage of RHWS was reciprocated across boundaries and was usually determined by people's commute to work. Members recognised that policing cross boundary usage would be a challenge. The consultation questionnaire allowed for people to identify their location, so cross boundary usage would be evident.
- For sites proposed for closure, the land occupied would be 'mothballed'. Members were assured decisions about what would happen to vacated sites would be made in the future once final decisions had been made about the RHWS.
- Leicestershire had 14 RHWS, which was more than in other neighbouring counties. The statutory duty placed on councils was to provide the ability for householders to dispose of their rubbish and the offer had to include the weekend period. The location and number of sites was discretionary and based on need and locality.
- The level of fly tipping in an area was linked to the level of enforcement carried out by district councils, and not linked to the availability of RHWS in the locality. Levels of deprivation in the area was also a contributing factor to the levels of fly tipping.
- The Scrutiny Review Panel was keen for the consultation questions to be succinct and direct rather than include wider information for residents to consider. Members said that it would be useful to include information in the consultation on the Council's statutory obligations to enable people to be fully informed when responding to the consultation.

Appendix – Survey questionnaire

Have your say on proposed changes to recycling and household waste sites

Leicestershire County Council remains the lowest funded county in the country and continues to face financial challenges. Growing demand for county council services and general price rises (inflation) are increasing the cost of delivering services. This means we are going to have to find more savings in the future, despite having made £250m of savings since 2010.

The council's recently published budget plan includes a requirement to make savings from the recycling and household waste sites (often referred to as the 'tips'). We estimate the changes proposed below would make savings of £420,000 per year.

The proposals being put forward below are those seen as being able to offer the best balance between how much money can be saved and the impact on our residents and site users. The proposals include:

- Closing Market Harborough, Shepshed and Somerby recycling and household waste sites
- Changing the opening days at Bottesford and Melton Mowbray recycling and household waste sites
- Changing summer opening hours at all recycling and household waste sites
- Closing on Christmas Eve at all recycling and household waste sites

Please read the supporting information provided before completing the questionnaire.

View our informative map on Social Pinpoint for more information about our Recycling and Household Waste Sites

Thank you for your assistance. Your views are important to us.

Please note: Do not use the back button on your browser/device as you may lose your response.

Please note: Your responses to the main part of the survey (including your comments) may be released to the general public in full under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Any responses to the questions in the 'About you' section of the questionnaire will be held securely and will not be subject to release under Freedom of Information legislation, nor passed on to any third party.

Q1 In what capacity are you responding to this survey? Please select one option only.

- ☐ Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland resident
- ☐ Resident of another county
- ☐ Interested member of the public
- ☐ Leicestershire recycling and household waste site employee
- ☐ Leicestershire County Council staff member
- ☐ Representative of a business or private sector organisation
- ☐ Representative of a voluntary sector organisation, charity or community group
- ☐ Representative from a parish, district or borough council
- ☐ Representative of another public sector organisation
- ☐ County, district or parish councillor
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Please specify 'other'

Q2 If you indicated that you represent an organisation, business, community group or council, please provide your details.

Name:

Role:

Organisation:

Q3 Are you providing your organisation's official response to the consultation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q4 Which area do you live in?

- ☐ Blaby
- ☐ Charnwood
- ☐ Harborough
- ☐ Hinckley & Bosworth
- ☐ Melton
- ☐ North West Leicestershire
- ☐ Oadby & Wigston
- ☐ Leicester City
- ☐ Rutland

Use of recycling and household waste sites

Q5 Which, if any, of the following sites do you use? Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ Barwell
- ☐ Bottesford
- ☐ Coalville
- ☐ Kibworth
- ☐ Loughborough
- ☐ Lount
- ☐ Lutterworth
- ☐ Market Harborough
- ☐ Melton Mowbray
- ☐ Mountsorrel
- ☐ Oadby
- ☐ Shepshed
- ☐ Somerby
- ☐ Whetstone
- ☐ A non-Leicestershire County Council site
- ☐ None

Q6 On average, how often, if at all, do you use a site?

- ☐ More than once a week
- ☐ About once a week
- ☐ About once a fortnight
- ☐ About once a month
- ☐ About once every 3 months
- ☐ About once every 6 months
- ☐ About once a year
- ☐ Less often

Q7 Which site do you use most often?

- ☐ Barwell
- ☐ Bottesford
- ☐ Coalville
- ☐ Kibworth
- ☐ Loughborough
- ☐ Lount
- ☐ Lutterworth
- ☐ Market Harborough
- ☐ Melton Mowbray
- ☐ Mountsorrel
- ☐ Oadby
- ☐ Shepshed
- ☐ Somerby
- ☐ Whetstone
- ☐ A non-Leicestershire County Council site

Q8 What are your main reasons for using this site? Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ Close to where I live
- ☐ Close to where I work
- ☐ Convenient opening times
- ☐ Easy to use/ good layout
- ☐ No queuing to get in
- ☐ Staff are helpful and friendly
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Please specify 'other'

Our proposals

Proposal 1: Recycling and household waste site closures

We are proposing to close the Market Harborough, Shepshed and Somerby recycling and household waste sites from October 2024. We estimate that by closing these three sites we will save approximately £270,000 a year.

Market Harborough, Shepshed and Somerby recycling and household waste sites are proposed for closure as they have significant overlap with other sites or are a lot more expensive per visit than other sites.

Please refer to the supporting information for more detail on why these sites have been selected for closure.

Q9 To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to close the following sites?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Market Harborough	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shepshed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Somerby	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you have any comments on the above? Please be specific around the site(s) you are referring to.

Proposal 2: Changes to opening days

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bottesford recycling and household waste site was open 5 days a week Saturday to Wednesday (closed Thursday and Friday). More recently, the site has been open 3 days a week on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. We propose to make this change permanent.

For information, we also intend to amend the Melton Mowbray recycling and household waste site days of opening. The Melton site is currently open Thursday to Monday (closed Tuesday and Wednesday). We are proposing to change the opening days to Saturday to Wednesday (closed Thursday and Friday). The site will continue to be open 5 days a week.

For a table of our proposed site opening days, please refer to the supporting information.

Q10 To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to continue the current 3 day opening pattern at the Bottesford site?

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Why do you say this?

Proposal 3: Changing summer opening hours at all recycling and household waste sites

Throughout the year, with the exception of Bottesford, all sites will continue to be open on Saturday, Sunday and Monday and **either** Tuesday and Wednesday or Thursday and Friday.

We propose to change the summer hours at ALL sites as follows from April 2025:

- Saturday, Sunday and Monday 9am to 5pm
- All other days will remain as 9am to 7pm

The last time we consulted about the waste site opening times (in 2019), residents and site users told us that they wanted to be able to visit the sites after work on weekdays. The proposed changes will therefore leave all sites open until 7pm on two weekdays in the summer months to cater for those working during the day. These proposals would equate to a saving of £150,000 a year.

Q11 To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to change the summer hours?

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Why do you say this?

Proposal 4: Closing Christmas Eve at all recycling and household waste sites

At the moment the recycling and household waste sites are all closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. We are also proposing to close ALL sites on Christmas Eve from 2024 onwards. We experience low numbers of visits on Christmas Eve compared to other days in December so believe the impact would be limited.

Q12 To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to close on Christmas Eve?

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Why do you say this?

Impact of the proposals

Q13 Do you have any comments on the potential impact of these proposals?

Alternative options

Q14 Are there other options for significantly reducing the running costs of the recycling and household waste sites that you think we could consider?

Any other comments

Q15 Do you have any other comments about our proposals?

About you

Leicestershire County Council is committed to ensuring that its services, policies, and practices are free from discrimination and prejudice, address the needs of all sections of the community and promote and advance equality of opportunity.

Many people face discrimination in society because of their personal circumstances and for this reason we have decided to ask these monitoring questions.

We would therefore be grateful if you would answer the following questions. You are under no obligation to provide the information requested, but it would help us greatly if you did.

Q16 What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ I use another term

Q17 Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q18 What was your age on your last birthday? (Please enter your age in numbers not words)

Q19 What is your full postcode?

This will allow us to see how far people live from one of our sites. It will not identify your house.

Q20 Do you have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q21 What is your ethnic group? Please tick one box only.

- ☐ White
- ☐ Mixed
- ☐ Asian or Asian British
- ☐ Black or Black British
- ☐ Other ethnic group

Q22 Which of these activities best describes what you are doing at present?

- ☐ Employee in full-time job (30 hours plus per week)
- ☐ Employee in part-time job (less than 30 hours per week)
- ☐ Self employed full or part-time
- ☐ On a government supported training programme
- ☐ Full-time education at school, college or university.
- ☐ Unemployed and available for work
- ☐ Permanently sick / disabled
- ☐ Wholly retired from work
- ☐ Looking after the home
- ☐ Doing something else

Q23 What is your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Bi
- ☐ Gay or Lesbian
- ☐ Heterosexual / straight
- ☐ I use another term

Please click the 'Submit' button to send us your response.

Thank you for your assistance. Your views are important to us.

When the consultation closes on Wednesday 24th January 2024, we intend to report the results back to Cabinet in April 2024.

Data Protection: Personal data supplied on this form will be held on computer and will be used in accordance with current Data Protection Legislation. The information you provide will be used for statistical analysis, management, planning and the provision of services by the county council and its partners. Leicestershire County Council will not share any personal information collected in this survey with its partners. The information will be held in accordance with the council's records management and retention policy. Information which is not in the 'About you' section of the questionnaire may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

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**Resident Focus Groups on
Proposed Changes to
Recycling and Household
Waste Sites**

Leicestershire County Council

Final Report

February 2024

Project details and acknowledgements.....	2
Introduction	3
Background	3
Context.....	3
Methodology.....	4
Findings.....	6
Understanding the context	6
Proposed change 1	9
Proposed change 2	11
Proposed change 3	12
Proposed change 4	13
Conclusions and recommendations	14
Income generation	15
Education & awareness raising	15
Communication	16
Appendix A: Data shared during focus groups.....	17

Project details and acknowledgements

Title	Resident Focus Groups on Proposed Changes to Recycling and Household Waste Sites
Client	Leicestershire County Council
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Introduction

Background

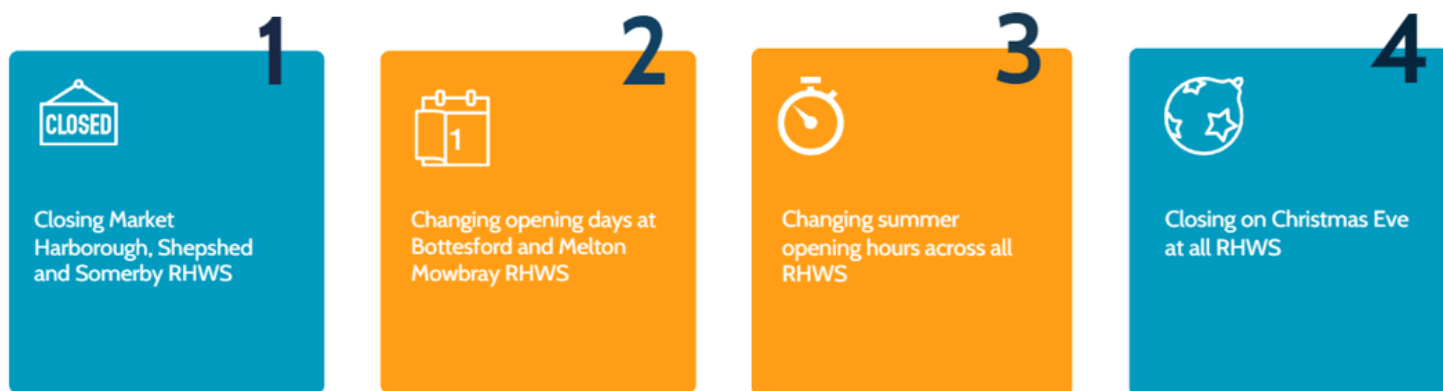
This research is contextualised within wider changes and budgetary constraints faced by Leicestershire County Council (LCC). LCC faces unprecedented financial challenge. The rising cost of service delivery fuelled by high inflation, growing demand for services and being the lowest funded county in England has resulted in significant financial pressures. LCC are not alone as all Local Authorities across the country are struggling. For example, nearby councils such as Nottingham and Birmingham have recently issued a section 114 notice, illustrating that they do not have adequate resources to deliver services. Whilst LCC is not in this immediate situation, significant budget gaps exist between the resources needed for services and income received. It is estimated that LCC will face an £85m budget shortfall by 2028. These circumstances are forcing efficiency savings changes across all LCC departments. This research focuses specifically on proposed changes to Leicestershire's Recycling and Household Waste Sites (RHWS).



Context

LCC's recently published budget proposal (2024-2028) includes a requirement to make savings from RHWS. On 13 February 2023 LCC appointed a Scrutiny Review Panel (SRP) to review proposed changes regarding RHWS closures (a total of five potential site closures were put forward). Whilst not all of the closures were approved, the proposed changes, and data which sits behind the options presented in a recent RHWS public consultation, were informed by the SRP report.

The current proposed changes are estimated to save LCC in the region of £420,000 per year. There are four key changes which LCC have sought residents' views on, and which form the basis for the current research:

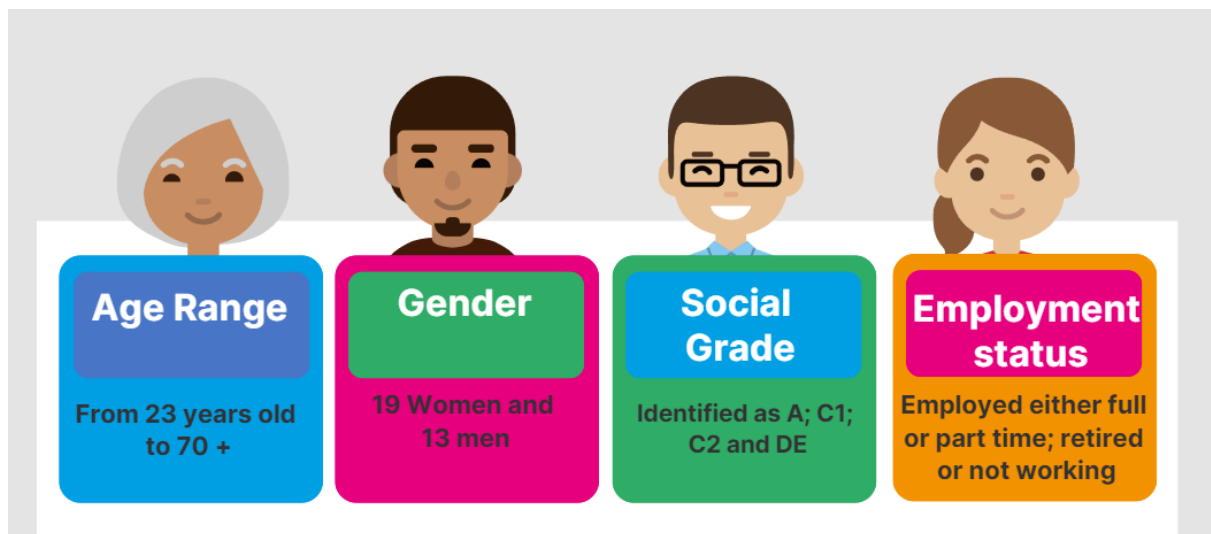


Methodology

We facilitated six remote, online video focus groups with residents across Leicestershire between 18 and 25 January 2024. All participants were recruited by our market research recruitment partner, Discovery Research, had used at least one RHWS in recent months, and the majority described themselves as regular visitors. RHWS visits were mainly used to dispose of items from home renovations, broken toys, excess cardboard, other recyclable products and bulky items (not collected at the kerbside).

The focus groups were designed to explore participants' thoughts and views on the four proposed changes to RHWS. Each proposed change was discussed in turn after key data and statistics were shared with the groups (see **Appendix A**), which helped to contextualise LCC's decision making process and set the foundation for the proposed changes. Focus groups lasted between 75 and 90 minutes and all were recorded and later transcribed. We paid particular attention to personal reflections and any perceived impact (positive or negative) that might result from the proposed changes. In addition, participants were asked to make any further recommendations or suggestions they felt LCC might consider in refining their proposals and changes to RHWS.

Given that there are specific proposed changes which would affect users of Market Harborough and Shepshed RHWS, and that these are well populated areas, two focus groups were designed just for users of these two sites. The remaining four focus groups were made up of participants who use a mixture of the other RHWS across the county. In total we spoke to 32 participants; see below for sample breakdown.



Findings

Understanding the context

Initial discussions focused on what residents knew and understood about the current financial situation faced by LCC. There was little surprise that *'things were tough'* as people were aware of the crises in other Local Authorities (Birmingham and Nottingham) as this was on the mainstream news. There was a general understanding that inflation (cost of living), increased local population and Local Authority funding have and will result in a wave of cuts and council tax rises.



I'm aware of the other councils being in the news that are, you know, in dire financial situations. I hadn't actually looked into Leicestershire, but it's obviously not surprising."

Male, (aged 35-44), Market Harborough



I didn't know that, but I'm surprised either."

Female, (aged 23-35), Twyford

There was, however, little knowledge of the specific predicted budget deficit. In addition, there was minimal knowledge of LCC being the lowest funded county in the country, which surprised and shocked many. Participants were unsure why this is the case and were not aware of the associated fair funding campaign. Despite information being available on LCC's website, participants rarely visited the site and when they did, it was primarily for some specific task (e.g. paying council tax, reporting missed refuse collections etc.) rather than simply browsing for information. In addition, there is little distinguishing between LA departments amongst residents. For example, people would struggle to differentiate responsibilities between Waste Services and RHWS responsibilities. There were a few exceptions to this view from



I didn't realise [LCC] we are the lowest funded in the country. That's quite surprising. We're a big county!

Male, (age 23-34), Lutterworth

participants who worked in the voluntary and public sectors; these individuals had sought professional funding from LCC and had greater knowledge of resource constraints and departmental roles.

Data was then shared with the groups regarding the number of RHWS in Leicestershire in comparison to neighbouring council (see **Appendix A**). On the whole, residents did not know the number of RHWS available and felt fortunate that LCC had been providing this number of facilities. Some questioned whether residents in neighbouring councils felt they had a sufficient RHWS services given the number of sites per household.

“

So really it seems that, at the minute, we have a very healthy provision when you compare it to other counties as far as the number of sites, and the number of households each site is there to serve."

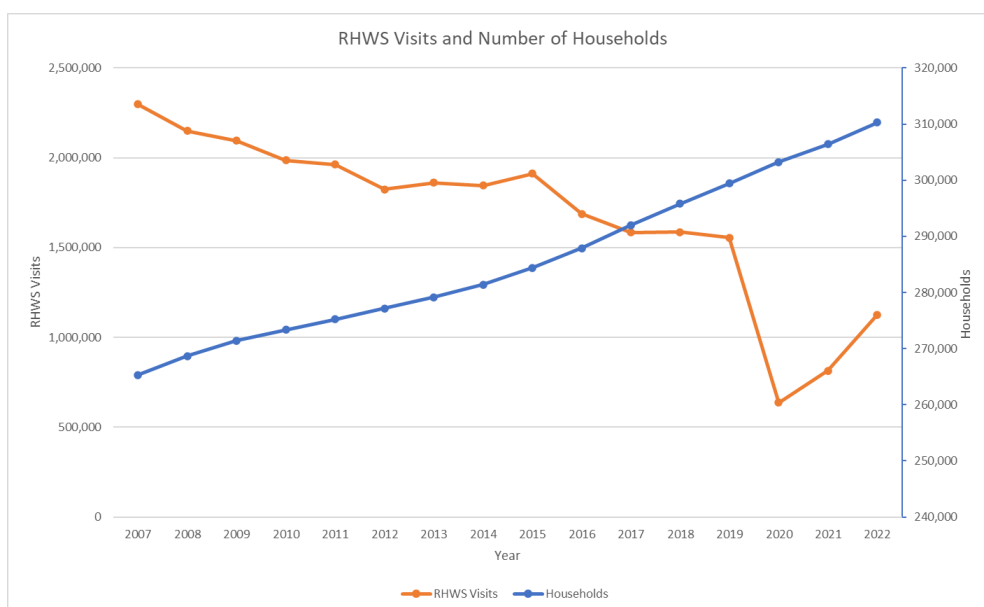
Female, (age 35-44), Bottesford

“

If you look at the data then it's obvious that other councils have got away with providing less tips, but it doesn't tell you the wait time and that kind of thing. Obviously if there's a one-hour or two-hour queue all the way outside then that's not good."

Male, (age 45-54), Market Harborough

A graph (see below) was then shared with the group which illustrates LCC site visits (across all RHWS) plotted against the growing number of households within the LA area. This graph raised questions and prompted several discussions amongst participants.



Participants were unaware that RHWS visits were down in comparison to pre-Covid levels. A few suggestions were put forward as to why this might be. This included people fly-tipping, which was raised as an increasing concern for many residents. In addition, people felt families might be looking for alternatives to disposal and perhaps selling or taking unwanted goods to charities or reusing and upcycling items themselves. Residents also noted that there had been an improvement in kerbside collections, especially around bulky cardboard, potentially explaining a reduction in RHWS visits. Others questioned interpretations and assumptions regarding the data. For example, people cited that in the current cost of living crisis residents are waiting longer and doing 'bigger trips' to reduce fuel cost or delaying household renovations, meaning fewer trips are needed. A small number of participants also expressed that they felt the upward trajectory of visits indicated that residents are becoming more aware of post-Covid opening days and times and that household visits will increase over time.

““

From my perspective, our local tip has restricted opening hours. So, because it's only open three days out of seven in the week, we don't visit as much as we would have before. So, I think having restricted opening hours is probably affecting [the number of site visits] as well. " Male, (age 45-54), Bottesford

““

I suppose people's vehicles are bigger, so they haven't got to come as many times."

Female, (age 35-44), Shepshed

““

There could be a whole range of things going on with the cost of living. People might be a bit more cautious about when they do a trip."

Female, (age 45-54), Melton Mowbray

““

Well, that's what the graph would indicate to me; it's not flattening out, is it? It's on a steady increase and certainly not dropping; it's increasing rather than decreasing."

Male, (age 55-64), Market Harborough

Proposed change 1

Closing Market Harborough, Shepshed and Somerby RHWS

Information was shared regarding the proposed closures of the three RHWS. Residents were not surprised that site closures were an option given the financial constraints presented earlier. Participants who used the three sites were obviously more vocal and personally impacted by these changes than those living further from these locations. Emotions ranged from being angry, aggrieved, disappointed and a feeling of 'reluctant acceptance' given the context presented earlier.

Users of the Market Harborough site raised specific issues and expressed concerns regarding why this site was selected for closure rather than the nearby site of Kibworth, which was considered more difficult to access with congested roads. In addition, the recent funding at the Kibworth site created an overt cynicism regarding the decision-making process. Participants felt that as this site had received funding it could not be closed and therefore the decision to close Market

Harborough was not based on usage and convenience to residents. Compounding this, residents felt the choice of closing Market Harborough was 'short sighted' and whilst it may help the financial situation in the short term, given the population growth in the town, would create more long-term problems.



That route to the tip [Kibworth] is notoriously congested as well."

Female, (age 35-54), Market Harborough



It [closure of RHWS] will mean increased and longer journeys. What's the carbon footprint of people now having to drive from Market Harborough to Kibworth? It doesn't make sense."

Male, (age 55-64), Shepshed



It doesn't make sense to close Market Harborough 'cause we've got a population of about 25,000 people. So why would you close a tip that, that serves that amount of people? The only reason I can think of is because they've just refurbished Kibworth and they can't close that one."

Male, (age 65+), Market Harborough

Similar concerns were raised by Shepshed RHWS users especially regarding expected increases to the population. They also felt aggrieved that additional costs and inconvenience associated with the proposed closure would be placed on households. This issue is particularly heightened given residents' wider views on the cost-of-living crisis and the perception that people are 'paying more and getting less'. One participant expressed confusion about Shepshed being earmarked for closure given the recent installation of a new incinerator in the area. This point also illustrates a general lack of understanding amongst residents about what the council funds and what is installed or funded by private enterprises and LCC contractors. From the group discussions, there was a view that the council are responsible and thus funding 'everything'.

“

You look at the difference. The ten-minute round trip is now a forty-minute round trip. What's the benefit to the Council saving the money when everyone else living in these areas is wasting a lot more on fuel? It seems out of touch.”

Female, (age 35-44), Shepshed

“

I think it's quite shortsighted because, actually, there's a lot of development. There's always planning applications going in for more houses and it's just going to increase the load on those other sites outside of Shepshed. So, closing the site seems a bit ridiculous to myself.”

Male, (age 55-64), Shepshed

Both Shepshed and Market Harborough groups were also concerned the nearby sites which they would need to access would be busier post-closure. The added road congestion and wait times at sites would also add to households' inconvenience. Across all groups there were fears that this would inevitably lead to an increase in fly-tipping across the county. Some residents cited specific areas where this is already problematic and feared the situation would only get worse. For some, this anticipated negative impact and the associated cost of cleaning up fly tipping, countered the cost saving that might be realised by closing sites.

“

The saving will be lost to clear up the fly-tipping, which could be more expensive than keeping the tip open!

Female, (age 45-54), Melton Mowbray

Proposed change 2

Changing opening days at Bottesford and Melton Mowbray

RHWS

These proposed changes were less controversial across all groups, including residents who use the Bottesford and Melton Mowbray RHWS themselves. It should be noted, however, that the proposed changes were presented in the same order to all groups, so there was perhaps relief amongst users of these sites that their local facility was not getting closed altogether. This also sparked discussions in the Market Harborough and Shepshed groups as to why those sites could not have reduced opening hours introduced, rather than being closed entirely. Participants in other groups also questioned whether savings could still be made by reducing opening days/hours across all sites instead of closing sites.

Newer residents to Bottesford and Melton Mowbray were largely unaware of pre-Covid opening times and individuals who had used the RHWS prior to 2020 assumed restricted days would stay. The main points of discussion were largely around how the opening days had been decided and whether it was based on usage and site visit data. For Bottesford RHWS users, weekend access was considered crucial especially for people working Monday to Friday. There were some calls to change the proposed opening days to include Saturday and Sunday (for example to be open Friday, Saturday and Sunday or Saturday, Sunday, and Monday). Overall, the specific impact of these proposed changes to households was considered minimal. Whilst it may require residents to check opening

“

So, are the savings just in terms of manpower? It might be fairer to have alternate closing days so that all sites stay open, but on fewer days, and the personnel can be moved around.”

Male, (age 45-54), Melton Mowbray

“

But I think people will just get used to those hours as they are made aware; we'll just get used to it. And to be honest, I always forget when it's open and always Google it before I go.”

Male, (age 23-34), Barwell

“

I don't think I would have anything that pressing that couldn't wait a couple of days.”

Female, (age 35-44), Whetstone

days prior to visiting and may create some initial confusion, proposed changes to opening days were not regarded as unreasonable.

Proposed change 3

Changing summer opening hours across all RHWS

Conversations regarding changing summer opening hours raised similar points to above. Generally, people understood the rationale behind this and felt the proposed changes were very reasonable. The main impact on residents was seen as being needing to check opening times and days prior to a visit.

Some participants did, however, make suggestions regarding alternative times. For example, discussions took place regarding whether having sites open less in the winter to allow for more summertime openings was possible. People expressed that evening opening times in the summer would be invaluable (especially for people who work '9 to 5') and therefore asked whether sites could remain open an hour later in the evening. Moreover, given that many sites will have reduced opening days, participants felt it would be a good idea to ensure that RHWS were open later the night before any consecutive day closures. Some participants also felt that having late opening hours in the summer on weekends specifically would be helpful for residents.



I don't think they've [LCC] been unreasonable. They're giving people different options".

Female, (age 35-44), Bottesford



I think it should be open later on the weekend days more so than 2 random days in the week."

Male, (age 23-34), Lutterworth

Proposed change 4

Closing on Christmas Eve at all RHWS

All groups were of a unanimous opinion that closing RHWS on Christmas Eve was unproblematic. For many, there was an assumption that the sites were closed on Christmas Eve in any case. Other participants felt it was not unreasonable to ask people to wait a few days over the Christmas period to visit. Participants did not expect any opposition to this. There was very little discussion on this point as there was a consensus this was a good cost saving proposal.

“

I don't think there'll be many people that will be bothered by it being closed on Christmas Eve. Generally, the rubbish is generated at Christmas, so yeah, I don't see any problem with that proposal.”

Female, (age 35-44), Twyford

“

I would have thought most people have other things on their mind rather than going to a tip on Christmas Eve. I don't think the impact of that would be too great.”

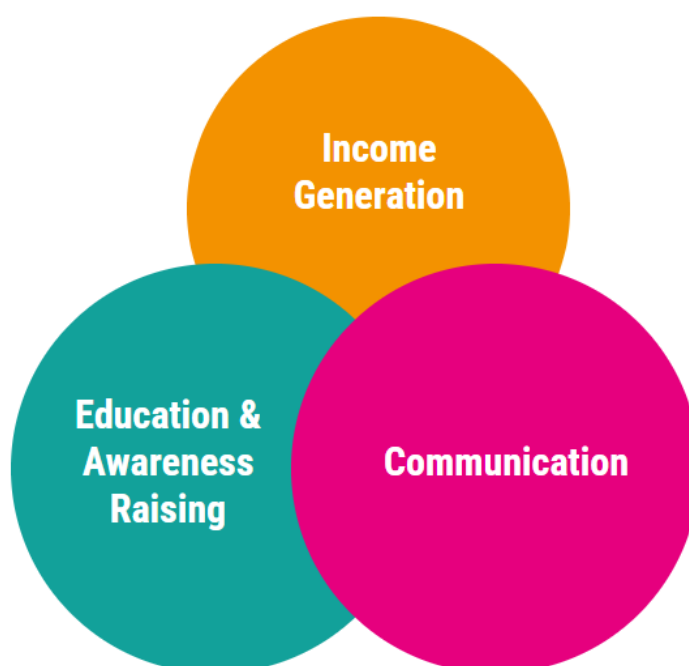
Male, (age 55-64), Melton Mowbray

Conclusions and recommendations

The most controversial of the four proposed changes was the closure of RHWS, especially Market Harborough and Shepshed given the population in these areas. The users of these sites are likely to provide the most vocal opposition. Rationales for these closures will need to be clearly articulated and disseminated to residents. The data provided during these focus group was considered too general and thus, on its own, an insufficient justification for closure. For example, the use of statistics on site visits did not satisfy participants and was seen as a simplistic benchmark. Sharing additional information regarding the decision-making process may help how these proposals land. We would also recommend providing reassurance that fly-tipping is addressed and that these proposed changes will not exacerbate this issue thanks to proactive management on the part of LCC.

In contrast, proposed changes two, three and four were considered very reasonable by most, especially given RHWS provisions by neighbouring councils and LCC's budget deficit. Ultimately, people would rather have reduced opening hours than site closures. There was a sense of reassurance that LCC had carefully considered these three proposed changes.

Based on the findings from this research, there are three key areas in which we would recommend further thought and reflection:



Income generation

A notable gap in the proposals that participants noted was a lack of income generation activities at RHWS. Across numerous groups, people expressed that more could be done to make money rather than solely looking at cutting costs. Residents spoke of initiatives they've seen or heard about at other RHWS in other areas, including:

- Ability to buy goods including unwanted/broken furniture, slate, bricks, wood – for the growing upcycling and recycling market.
- Investing in technology to turn green and garden waste into compost for resale.
- Developing partnerships with local businesses or charities to buy broken furniture to recycle/upcycle goods for profit.



They [LCC] can actually generate some money, rather than just making cuts."

Male, (age 65+), Somerby

Education & awareness raising

In addition, residents talked about the need for more local education, not just on the use of RHWS but also wider issues such as household waste, landfill and recycling. This is partly due to a perceived lack of understanding and awareness about how people use RHWS, what can and can't go in general waste bins and what can be recycled.

Such an initiative would ensure residents are disposing of items correctly. This could also fit into wider environmental and net zero campaigns and ambitions. Targeting younger people, possibly through school visits, could also help encourage better waste management amongst younger generations and in future years.

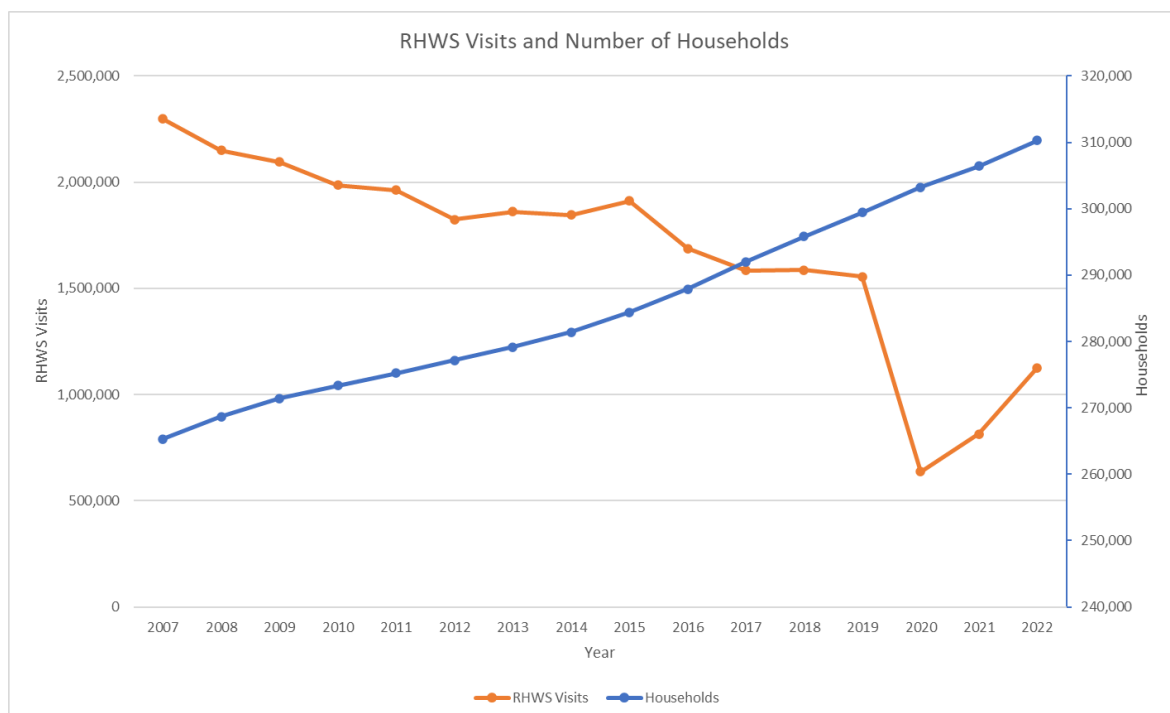
Communication

Moreover, whilst participants were pleased to learn that there was an ongoing public consultation on this issue, few were aware of it prior to the focus groups. This raises several questions regarding how residents are accessing key information which impact upon them and how LCC is communicating changes, or proposed changes, to services. We recommend the development of a wider communications strategy, targeting the platforms that resident's access for news and information, potentially broadening your preferred channels as dictated by a 'digital by default' approach. This will help people feel more informed and included when it comes to changes. It was clear that the residents we spoke to were interested in understanding more about the future of services and LCC's financial situation; they were keen to be involved but had little awareness or understanding of how to do so.

Appendix A: Data shared during focus groups.

The following data tables were shared with the participants during the focus group discussions.

Authority	Number of Waste Sites	Geographical Area Served (km ²)	Households per Site	Hours per Week (averaged across sites)	
				Summer	Winter
Leicestershire County Council	14	154	22,000	50	35
Warwickshire County Council	9	219	29,000	40	37
Staffordshire County Council	14	187	28,000	48	45
Nottinghamshire County Council	12	174	31,000	81	66
Derbyshire County Council	9	283	41,000	66	66
Lincolnshire County Council	11	538	32,000	37	37
Former Northamptonshire County Council	10	236	33,000	40	40







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Recycling and Household Waste Sites

Second Consultation Survey Report

April 2024

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Purpose of this report.....	3
Background	3
Consultation methods.....	3
About the respondents	3
Use of recycling and household waste sites	4
Views on the proposals.....	5
Proposal 1: Shepshed Recycling and Household Waste Site.....	5
Proposal 2: Market Harborough and Kibworth Recycling and Household Waste Sites	8
Impact of revised proposals.....	10
Alternative Options	11
Any Other Comments.....	12
Appendix – Survey questionnaire	14

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our thanks to everyone who has taken the time to provide their views and feedback as part of the consultation process.

Purpose of this report

This document provides a summary of the findings of the 4-week public consultation undertaken between 21 February 2024 and 20 March 2024, on proposed changes following the initial 12-week consultation to Leicestershire County Council's Recycling and Household Waste Sites (RHWS) which ran from the 1 November 2023 to 24 January 2024. This report reflects the findings of the formal consultation questionnaire.

Background

Leicestershire County Council continues to face financial challenges, with growing demand for County Council services and general price rises (inflation) increasing the cost of delivering services. As such financial savings continue to be required, and the council's recently published budget plan included a requirement to make savings from the Recycling and Household Waste Sites. An initial 12-week consultation was held and after listening to feedback from residents along with the announcement of extra funding from government, revised proposals were presented for consultation which include:

- keeping Market Harborough Recycling and Household Waste Site open 3 days a week, whilst reducing opening days at Kibworth Recycling and Household Waste Site from 5 to 4 days per week
- keeping Shepshed Recycling and Household Waste Site open 2 days per week

Consultation methods

The consultation consisted of an online questionnaire (see appendix) accessed via the 'Have your say' page on the Council's website, with an email address provided to enable residents and stakeholders to ask questions about the consultation or request the questionnaire in alternative formats.

About the respondents

In total, 566 responses were received. Results have been reported based on those who provided a valid response, i.e., excluding the 'don't know' responses and no replies from the calculation of the percentages, where applicable. The following provides a summary of the responses. All results, including the open comments, have been passed to the service for reference and further consideration.

In reply to Q1, the majority of responses (96%) were from Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland residents, with all other categories under 1% of which the largest was residents from another county (0.9%). These and other roles selected are summarised in Chart 1 below.

Chart 1: Summary of Q1: In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

Response	#	%
Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland resident	541	96.3%
Resident of another county	5	0.9%
Leicestershire recycling and household waste site employee	4	0.7%
Representative of another public sector organisation	3	0.5%
Representative from a parish, district or borough council	3	0.5%
Leicestershire County Council staff member	3	0.5%
County, district or parish councillor	2	0.4%
Other (please specify)	1	0.2%

Those who indicated they were responding as a Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland resident, resident of another county or interested member of the public were asked a series of demographic questions, of which:

- 54% were female and 45% were male, with 1% indicating that they use another term
- The highest proportion were aged 55 to 64 years (22%)
- 21% indicated that they had a long-standing illness, disability, or infirmity
- The majority identified as white (97%) and 4% identified in equal parts with a description of Asian or British Asian (1%) Mixed (1%) and other ethnic group (1%)
- Over half were employed, either full-time (42%) or part-time (10%), with 10% self-employed and 34% wholly retired from work.

Use of recycling and household waste sites

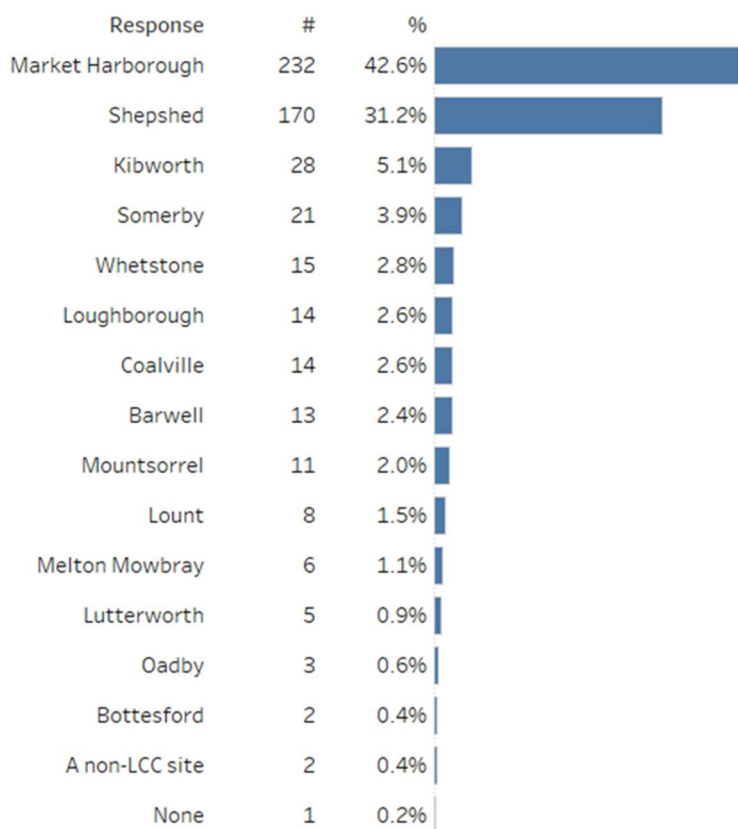
When residents were asked which area they lived in, the majority of respondents indicated that they lived in either Harborough (49%) or Charnwood (33%), both being key areas of focus in the revised proposals.

Chart 2: Summary of responses to Q4: Which area do you live in?

Response	#	%
Harborough	264	48.9%
Charnwood	178	33.0%
North West Leicestershire	31	5.7%
Melton	31	5.7%
Hinckley & Bosworth	19	3.5%
Blaby	12	2.2%
Oadby & Wigston	4	0.7%
Rutland	1	0.2%

Residents (of Leicestershire or another county) were asked which site they used most often. Over forty percent (43%) said they used Market Harborough most often, with nearly a third (31%) selecting Shepshed as the site they used most often.

Chart 3: Summary of Q5: Which site do you use most often?



Views on the proposals

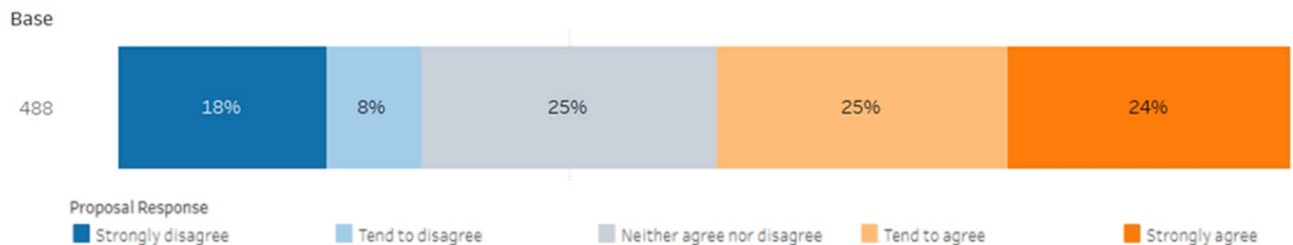
Proposal 1: Shepshed Recycling and Household Waste Site

The Shepshed site is currently open 3 days a week on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. We recently consulted on the proposal to close the Shepshed waste site, however having considered the feedback, we are now proposing to keep Shepshed open for 2 days a week (Friday and Saturday) from October 2024.

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with this revised proposal, to reduce the opening days at Shepshed rather than closing the site.

As Chart 4 below shows just under half (49%) agreed (25% tend to agree and 24% strongly agree). A quarter (25%) responded 'neither agree nor disagree' and just over a quarter (26%) disagreed (18% strongly disagree, 8% tend to disagree).

Chart 4: Summary of responses to Q6: To what extent do you agree or disagree with this revised proposal?



A follow up question 'Why do you say this?' provided respondents with the opportunity to provide an explanation for their response to the above question. A total of 339 respondents (60%) provided an answer to this question. A number of key themes were identified from these comments, which are summarised below:

Housing development:

- Many comments were received with concerns over the increase in housing in the area, and its impact on the Shepshed site due to the increase in population. It was felt that this would increase pressure on the site and there were comments that this could potentially lead to increased traffic at the site as well as fly-tipping.

Environmental impacts:

- Fly-tipping: concerns about the potential impact of reducing opening times to 2 days per week on fly-tipping:
 - Opening for just 2 days per week could increase fly-tipping and therefore create a greater burden on council resources to deal with it
 - Friday and Saturday opening might not be convenient to residents who work these days, which could increase fly-tipping
 - Fly-tipping is already a problem in the area
- Concern that increased travel to other sites would impact on fuel usage and pollution

Opening times:

- A number of comments noted that Shepshed should be open 3 days per week / as much as possible
- Comments that Shepshed should also be open on a Sunday (all weekend)
- Comments that the Shepshed site needs to open when convenient for residents
- Concern that waste resulting from works carried out on Sundays or early in the week will have to be retained until the site opens on Friday
- If reduced to 2 days there will be the same amount of waste to move, just collected over a smaller time. This will have a negative impact on staff morale, as it funnels more throughput throughout each day. It also means the greater the throughput, the smaller the window of reaction should something fail (e.g. compaction)

Comments related to traffic:

- Concern that a reduction in opening times could increase traffic at Shepshed, an already busy site, and lead to queuing
- Road safety concerns related to increased traffic on the road leading to the Shepshed site
- Concern regarding increased traffic at the Loughborough site when the Shepshed site is closed

Positive comments regarding the proposals:

- Many positive comments were received agreeing with the proposal, some of which expressed thanks to the council that residents have been listened to and recognised the need to make savings
- Other more general positive comments included positive feedback regarding the Shepshed site and the sentiment that the sites were much-needed facilities to help residents recycle responsibly.

Other comments:

Various other comments were provided, as noted below:

- No opinion, or no impact (for example not nearby, do not use the site)
- Agreement that the proposal was better than closing but might not be ideal
- Concern that reduced opening times could put pressure on other facilities and encourage greater use of the black bin
- Accessibility concerns e.g. residents required to travel to other sites
- A few comments suggested that Shepshed had more alternative sites nearby and therefore would be a better candidate for closure than Somerby.

Suggestions:

- Open Shepshed and Loughborough 3 days each, to provide more options
- Keep Shepshed open on Sunday as well, to enable residents to dispose of waste from weekend DIY projects
- One of the two opening days should be a Sunday when most people are not working
- Make the road to the Shepshed site 2-way if there is an increase in demand
- Have more sites open, and restrict opening times at each, than have fewer sites available
- Consider running one site if economically sensible and use savings for other areas e.g. health, education or social care
- Open Market Harborough 4 days, Shepshed 3 days and Kibworth 2 days based on population and growth
- Trial reducing the site opening to 2 days and ensure that there isn't a significant increase in fly-tipping. If not, then continue with the 2 days a week
- Consider 4 days open at Loughborough and 2 days open at Shepshed (week 1) and 2 days open at Loughborough and 4 days open at Shepshed (week 2)
- Stagger opening days, for example Saturday and Wednesday
- Close Shepshed to allow both Lount and Coalville to open for an extra day each week as Shepshed is close to these sites

Comments - other sites:

Several comments related to other sites including:

- Market Harborough - concern that those who work Monday to Friday can only use their local site on 1 day a week
- Somerby - comments expressing support for retaining the site at Somerby. There was also a suggestion to keep the sites at Somerby and Shepshed open 1 day per week so that residents in Somerby do not lose access to the local site.

Proposal 2: Market Harborough and Kibworth Recycling and Household Waste Sites

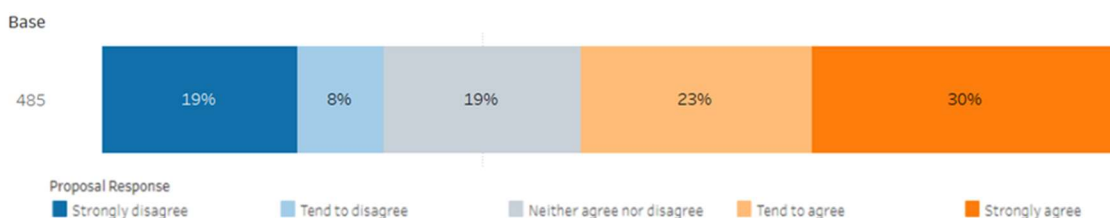
The Market Harborough site is currently open 5 days a week - Saturday to Wednesday (closed Thursday and Friday). The Kibworth site is currently open 5 days a week - Thursday to Monday (closed Tuesday and Wednesday).

Having considered the feedback from our recent consultation, we propose to keep Market Harborough open for 3 days a week (Thursday to Saturday) from October 2024. However, in order to keep the Market Harborough site open, opening days at Kibworth will need to reduce to 4 days a week (Sunday to Wednesday). This revised proposal gives residents 7 day access to a site in this part of the county.

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with this revised proposal.

Chart 5 below shows that over half (53%) agreed with the revised proposal (30% strongly agree and 23% tend to agree). Just under a fifth (19%) neither agreed nor disagreed with 27% of respondents disagreeing with the new proposals (19% strongly disagree, 8% tend to disagree).

Chart 5: Summary of responses to Q7: To what extent do you agree or disagree with this revised proposal?



Following Q7 respondents were asked the follow up question 'why do you say this?' A total of 319 respondents (56%) provided an answer to this question. Key themes noted from the responses are summarised below.

Opening times:

- Comments that sites should be open both Saturday and Sunday as this is when people want to use the sites (including both Market Harborough and Kibworth). Concern that sites will be too busy on open days at the weekend
- The view that Market Harborough should be open more due to size and housing growth.
- Disagreement with part-time opening and support for full-time opening hours for all sites
- Kibworth should be open all weekend (and Harborough closed) due to capacity and ability to cope with increased demand
- Concern that the proposed opening days are not convenient
- References to Kibworth, including the view that it should stay open 5 days per week, and comments on the amount of money spent on its refurbishment

Travel and accessibility:

- Traffic concerns, particularly related to Kibworth and the A6, with references to the area being known as an accident 'blackspot' along with references to congestion, the site entrance and safety
- Reference to increased car use along with related costs and carbon emissions from driving to Kibworth
- Kibworth not considered to be easily accessible for Market Harborough residents
- Concern that accessibility issues will affect some residents ability to visit an alternative site (e.g. older people, disabled)
- Reference to the proximity of Kibworth and Market Harborough sites and driving times are reasonable relative to other Leicestershire residents
- Concern that traffic calming measures discourage use of Kibworth

Suggestions:

- Make savings elsewhere, for example close underused offices or other sites / buildings, make energy savings (e.g. lighting) and make staffing efficiencies (including management of staff)
- Provide a leaflet with opening days / times for residents
- Ensure permits are valid for Market Harborough and Kibworth sites
- Allow residents to use sites outside of county (e.g. Oakham)
- No need for both Market Harborough and Kibworth, with the suggestion to close Market Harborough and open Kibworth 7 days instead (as Kibworth has recently been refurbished) or close Kibworth and open Market Harborough 7 days
- Both sites could open 3 days per week, with 7-day access unnecessary

Comments - other sites:

- The view that Shepshed should be open an extra day in line with other sites
- Concerns about the consultation (no mention of other changes in this consultation e.g. changes affecting Melton Mowbray)
- Disagreement with the closure of the Somerby site
- Suggestion to reduce proposed days at Market Harborough and Kibworth to keep Somerby open?

Positive Comments:

- Feedback that Market Harborough site is a credit to the council and the workers that run it
- Comments that the proposals are reasonable / logical
- Reference to the fact that keeping the sites open means there is an opportunity to increase days in future if needed and/or finances allow
- Comments that the proposals are not ideal but better than closing Market Harborough

Other Comments:

- Concerns regarding value received from council tax
- Concern about the impact of the proposals on staff and work life balance
- Comments noting that fly-tipping is already an issue in the Harborough District, which could increase if the site opening times are reduced
- Concerns about the capacity of Market Harborough and its ability to cope with demand over proposed 3 days open (especially weekend)

Impact of revised proposals

In Q8 respondents were asked a free text question 'Do you have any comments on the potential impact of these revised proposals?'

A total of 348 respondents (61%) provided an answer to this question. Key themes related to the question were identified and are summarised below.

Fly-tipping:

- Fly-tipping was the most recurring theme amongst concerns. Whilst many felt the reduction in days and hours would increase fly-tipping, several felt the change to keep open the Market Harborough and Shepshed sites some days would decrease or keep down the fly-tipping compared with full closures.

Travel and Accessibility:

- Some felt that the proposals would reduce traffic, whilst others felt that they would increase traffic
- Many comments highlighted planned housing developments and the potential impact of this on service levels, fly-tipping, traffic and site capacity
- There were a number of concerns regarding the A6 and entrance to the Kibworth site. Some felt this would result in an increase in collisions, while others simply thought it would cause increased congestion

Environmental / Carbon:

- Views that proposals would have a negative environmental or carbon impact

Personal cost / Inconvenience / quality of life:

- The increased distance that would be required to travel leading to greater inconvenience and personal cost was also mentioned

Awareness of site opening days and times:

- Concern that people would not remember what site was open on which day, potentially resulting in fly-tipping at site entrances on closed days

Other Comments

Staff impact:

- Concern that the change in opening days and hours would negatively impact staff, including work-life balance and salaries

Financial comments:

- Finances were mentioned by a number of respondents, particularly how the increase in fly-tipping would cost more than what was saved, and that fines for fly-tipping should increase

Will impact recycling levels:

- Concern around maintaining recycling levels – if the tip is more inconvenient, people will just throw things away, or fly-tip rather than attempting to recycle
- Concern about the lack of weekend hours at all sites. This was mentioned several times and relates to comments about traffic and capacity as well as service levels and fly-tipping levels
- Several respondents felt that opening hours at all sites should be increased not decreased

Positive comments:

- Many responses reiterated that the revised proposal was a good compromise, and a better outcome than closing the sites entirely

A few respondents suggested a trial be carried out to enable the impact on fly-tipping to be monitored and the closures to be re-evaluated.

Alternative Options

Respondents were asked in Question 9 'Are there other options for significantly reducing the running costs of the recycling and household sites that you think we could consider?' A total of 282 respondents (50%) provided an answer for this question. Some comments reiterated concerns previously raised e.g. the impact of the proposals on fly-tipping and related costs. A number of key themes were identified which are summarised below.

Operating hours and opening days at the sites:

- Keep all the sites open even on reduced opening hours such as Friday to Sunday each week as this is preferable to site closures
- Consider seasonal variations and amend opening hours accordingly
- If reducing the number of days the sites are open, consider extending the opening hours
- Open later in the mornings and open longer on a Saturday when likely to be busy
- Reduce Kibworth to 2 days and keep Market Harborough open for more days

Staffing:

- Concerns were raised about high staffing levels and whether this could be reduced to make savings
- Consider the use of volunteers to reduce staffing costs
- Automation and self-service arrangements were also suggested as mechanisms to reduce staffing costs

Charging and income generation:

- Charge residents that live outside of the county
- Introduce a small charge for use of Somerby site rather than closing completely
- Introduce a small charge to use any of the sites; suggested amounts of £2.00 per visit and/or a charge to deposit certain materials such as paint
- Use of sites by traders should be stopped and more checks made for their legitimacy, introducing a charge for commercial use
- Consider selling reclaimed materials on site directly to the public and sell compost from the green waste

Kerbside collections:

- Improve the frequency, quantity and range of kerbside collections (e.g. electrical products, bulky items), which would mean less demand for disposal of waste at sites
- Reduce the current charges for chargeable kerbside services, especially garden waste

Other suggestions:

- Pool resources with district councils and neighbouring authorities to maximise opportunities for residents to recycle more
- Close the Kibworth site
- Increase council tax contributions
- Place more bottle banks in convenient locations and install local facilities
- Lobby Government for fairer funding
- Turn lights off at Kibworth when the site is closed
- Improve waste signage at the sites

Any Other Comments

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments or suggestions about the revised proposals. A total of 191 respondents (34%) provided a response to this question.

Although the second consultation asked different questions, responses showed evidence of feedback in respect to questions asked in the first consultation. Key themes from the responses to this question are summarised below.

No further comments:

- The majority of respondents said they did not have any other comments or suggestions about the revised proposals

Reconsideration of proposals:

- Many respondents requested that the council reconsider the proposals with alternative suggestions, including opening days, staffing and income generation

Comments about the Council:

- As with the first consultation, discontent with the council was observed in the responses which on occasion were linked to the council being conservative led. Some comments also indicated that respondents would vote differently in future elections as a result of the proposals.

Compromise:

- On the other hand, some comments acknowledged that even though the proposals may not be ideal, they are probably the best compromise given the situation and financial circumstances of the council.

Positive comments regarding the proposals:

- Some respondents gave thanks to the council for listening to residents after the first consultation and for proposing a compromise.

Fly-tipping:

- As in the first consultation, fly-tipping concerns were expressed as an anticipated result of the proposals.

Other comments:

- The feeling that waste services are not a 'nice to have' service and should be provided as standard, featured periodically and was regularly linked to the idea that if people pay their council tax, they should be entitled to a waste service
- Some comments reflected some misunderstanding about the different responsibilities of district and county councils
- Several comments reflected the feeling that proposed changes were directly related to the costs incurred to upgrade the Kibworth site
- There were some financial concerns such as the impact of a reduced / imbalanced budget and whether savings could be found in other departments
- Comments were received around improving service levels, also querying the recruitment of mid and high-level council staff
- Comments were received regarding the frequency of household waste collections and increased disposal in the residual waste bin
- Some comments suggested alternative opening hours at Shepshed. There was also concern around the quality of the facilities at the Shepshed site
- Consideration regarding monitoring the impacts of changes was also suggested along with conducting a traffic analysis
- Comments regarding Kibworth included disappointment with reduced opening hours and concern over road safety
- Other comments received included support for retaining the site at Somerby, concerns about the environmental impact, population increase, and the impact of the proposals on rural areas
- There was also negative feedback expressed around why the equality questions within the questionnaire had been asked

Appendix – Survey questionnaire



Have your say on proposed changes to recycling and household waste sites

The council consulted the public and stakeholders between 1 November 2023 and 24 January 2024 on proposals to make savings of £420,000 from the recycling and household waste site service.

These proposals included closing 3 waste sites from October 2024, which made up £270,000 of the total savings. These sites were Market Harborough, Shepshed and Somerby.

The previous consultation received over 5,600 responses. Key findings included:

- 74% of respondents disagreed with the proposal to close the Market Harborough waste site
- 66% of respondents disagreed with the proposal to close the Shepshed waste site
- 40% of respondents disagreed with the proposal to close the Somerby waste site

Based on the response to this consultation, we have considered options to keep the Market Harborough and Shepshed waste sites open and would like to understand your views on our revised proposals:

- We are now proposing to open the Market Harborough waste site 3 days a week. However, to do this, opening days at the Kibworth waste site would need to reduce to 4 days per week (currently 5 days per week).
- We are also proposing to open the Shepshed waste site 2 days per week.

Somerby is a small waste site that is difficult to operate. As reflected in the first consultation, we still propose to close the Somerby waste site from October 2024 due to the high operational costs relative to the low number of users.

The proposals above would save £170,000 per year, £100,000 less than our original proposal to close all 3 waste sites.

More information on our proposals can be found on our website: <http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/waste-site-changes>

Thank you for your assistance. Your views are important to us.

Please note: Your responses to the main part of the survey (including your comments) may be released to the general public in full under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Any responses to the questions in the 'About you' section of the questionnaire will be held securely and will not be subject to release under Freedom of Information legislation, nor passed on to any third party.

Q1 In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

Please select one option only.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland resident | Go to Q4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resident of another county | Go to Q5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leicestershire recycling and household waste site employee | Go to Q6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leicestershire County Council staff member | Go to Q6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Representative of a business or private sector organisation | Continue to Q2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Representative of a voluntary sector organisation, charity or community group | Continue to Q2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Representative from a parish, district or borough council | Continue to Q2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Representative of another public sector organisation | Continue to Q2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County, district or parish councillor | Continue to Q2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | Continue to Q2 |

If 'Other', please specify

Q2 If you indicated that you represent an organisation, business, community group or council, please provide your details.

Name:

Role:

Organisation:

Q3 Are you providing your organisation's official response to the consultation?

Please select one option only.

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | Go to Q6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | Go to Q6 |

Q4 Which area do you live in?
Please select one option only.

- ☐ Blaby
- ☐ Charnwood
- ☐ Harborough
- ☐ Hinckley & Bosworth
- ☐ Melton
- ☐ North West Leicestershire
- ☐ Oadby & Wigston
- ☐ Leicester City
- ☐ Rutland

Q5 Which waste site do you use most often?
Please select one option only.

- ☐ Barwell
- ☐ Bottesford
- ☐ Coalville
- ☐ Kibworth
- ☐ Loughborough
- ☐ Lount
- ☐ Lutterworth
- ☐ Market Harborough
- ☐ Melton Mowbray
- ☐ Mountsorrel
- ☐ Oadby
- ☐ Shepshed
- ☐ Somerby
- ☐ Whetstone
- ☐ A non-Leicestershire County Council site
- ☐ None

Our revised proposals

Proposal 1: Shepshed

The Shepshed waste site is currently open 3 days a week on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

You may know that we recently consulted on the proposal to close the Shepshed waste site, however having considered the feedback, we are now proposing to **keep Shepshed open for 2 days a week** (Friday and Saturday) from October 2024.

Q6 To what extent do you agree or disagree with this revised proposal?

Please select one option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why do you say this?

Proposal 2: Market Harborough and Kibworth

The Market Harborough waste site is currently open 5 days a week - Saturday to Wednesday (closed Thursday and Friday).

The Kibworth waste site is currently open 5 days a week - Thursday to Monday (closed Tuesday and Wednesday).

Having considered the feedback from our recent consultation, we propose to keep **Market Harborough open for 3 days a week** (Thursday to Saturday) from October 2024. However, in order to keep the Market Harborough waste site open, **opening days at Kibworth will need to reduce to 4 days a week** (Sunday to Wednesday). This revised proposal gives residents 7 day access to a site in this part of the county.

Q7 To what extent do you agree or disagree with this revised proposal?

Please select one option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why do you say this?

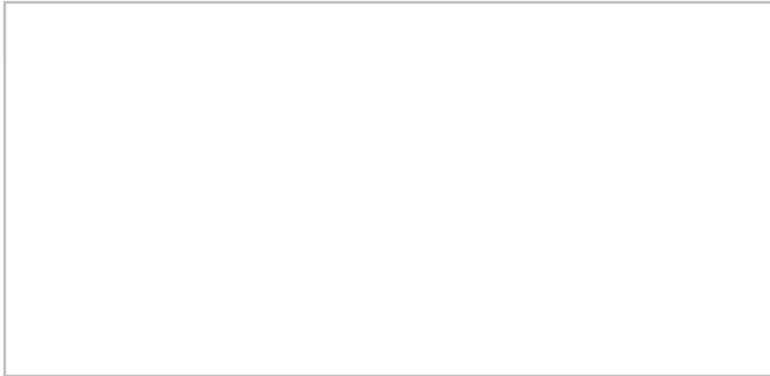
Impact of the revised proposals

Q8 Do you have any comments on the potential impact of these revised proposals?



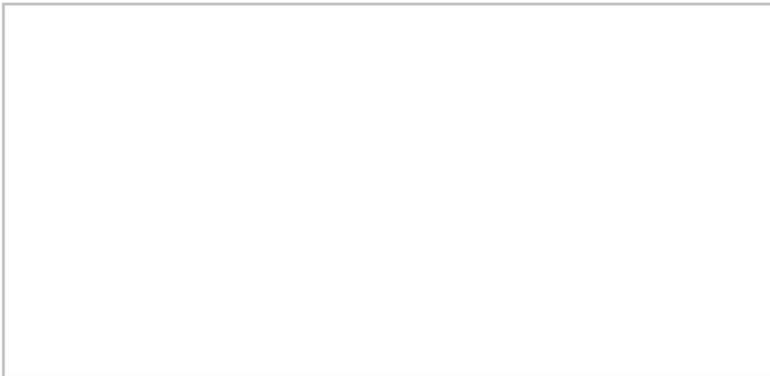
Alternative options

Q9 Are there other options for significantly reducing the running costs of the recycling and household waste sites that you think we could consider?



Any other comments

Q10 Do you have any other comments or suggestions about these revised proposals?



Please continue if you said in Q1 that you are responding as either of the following:

- Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland resident
- Resident of another county

Otherwise, please skip to the instructions at the end of the survey.

About you

Leicestershire County Council is committed to ensuring that its services, policies, and practices are free from discrimination and prejudice, address the needs of all sections of the community and promote and advance equality of opportunity.

Many people face discrimination in society because of their personal circumstances and for this reason we have decided to ask these monitoring questions.

We would therefore be grateful if you would answer the following questions. You are under no obligation to provide the information requested, but it would help us greatly if you did.

Q11 What is your gender? Please select one option only.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ I use another term

Q12 Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? Please select one option only.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q13 What was your age on your last birthday? (Please enter your age in numbers not words)

Q14 What is your full postcode?

This will allow us to see how far people live from one of our sites. It will not identify your house.

Q15 Do you have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity? Please select one option only.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q16 What is your ethnic group? Please select one option only.

- ☐ White
- ☐ Mixed
- ☐ Asian or Asian British
- ☐ Black or Black British
- ☐ Other ethnic group

Q17 Which of these activities best describes what you are doing at present? Please select one option only.

- ☐ Employee in full-time job (30 hours plus per week)
- ☐ Employee in part-time job (less than 30 hours per week)
- ☐ Self employed full or part-time
- ☐ On a government supported training programme
- ☐ Full-time education at school, college or university.
- ☐ Unemployed and available for work
- ☐ Permanently sick / disabled
- ☐ Wholly retired from work
- ☐ Looking after the home
- ☐ Doing something else

Q18 What is your sexual orientation? Please select one option only.

- ☐ Bi
- ☐ Gay or Lesbian
- ☐ Heterosexual / straight
- ☐ I use another term

Thank you for your assistance. Your views are important to us. When the consultation closes at midnight on Wednesday 20 March 2024, we intend to report the results back to Cabinet in May 2024.

Please return your completed survey to:

Recycling and Household Waste Site Consultation 2024
 Environment and Waste Management
 Room 700
 Leicestershire County Council
 Have Your Say
 FREEPOST NAT18685
 Leicester
 LE3 8XR

Data Protection: Personal data supplied on this form will be held on computer and will be used in accordance with current Data Protection Legislation. The information you provide will be used for statistical analysis, management, planning and the provision of services by the county council and its partners. Leicestershire County Council will not share any personal information collected in this survey with its partners. The information will be held in accordance with the council's records management and retention policy. Information which is not in the 'About you' section of the questionnaire may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Before completing this form, please refer to [the supporting guidance document](#)

The purpose of this form is to aid the Council in meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in the Equality Act 2010. This requires the Council to have “due regard” of the impact of its actions on the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The assessment is used to identify and record any concerns and potential risks. The following actions can then be taken to address these issues.

- Remove risks: abandon the proposed policy or practice
- Mitigate risks – amend the proposed policy or practice so that risks are reduced
- Justify policy or practice in terms of other objectives

1- Policy details	
Name of policy	Recycling and Household Waste Service Reduction Project
Department and service	Dept: Environment and Transport Service: Environment and Waste
Who has been involved in completing the Equality Impact Assessment?	Vicky Cormie – Head of Service; Environment and Waste Commissioning
Contact numbers	N/A
Date of Completion	Version 2: February 2024

2- Objectives and background of policy or practice change

Use this section to describe the policy or practice change
 What is the purpose, expected outcomes and rationale?
 Include the background information and context

<p>What is the proposal?</p> <p>What change and impact is intended by the proposal?</p>	<p>Proposed changes to the Recycling and Household Waste service taken forward for public consultation, which ran from 1 November 2023 to 25 January 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Reduce the number of Recycling and Household Waste Sites (RHWS) from 14 to 11. The three sites selected for potential closure are Somerby, Shepshed, and Market Harborough. • Part-time opening to be adopted at the Bottesford RHWS, reducing from five to three opening days per week. • Reduce summer opening hours at the 11 remaining RHWS sites. Sites are currently open five days per week, 9am-7pm from April to September. The proposal is to reduce this to 9am-5pm on three of the five opening days (one of three opening days at Bottesford, due to part-time opening). • Christmas Eve closure to be adopted at all RHWS. <p>*Five RHWS closures were originally proposed (Somerby, Shepshed, Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Bottesford). In March 2023 a cross-party Scrutiny Review Panel reviewed the rationale for the proposed closures, which resulted in the proposals being changed to three RHWS closures and part-time opening at Bottesford. This was due to concerns about rural isolation at Bottesford and planned housing development at Lutterworth.</p> <p>After consideration of the consultation feedback, it was decided to run a secondary four-week consultation on the alternative option of keeping Market Harborough RHWS and Shepshed RHWS open part-time, and for operational viability reasons reducing the number of opening days at Kibworth RHWS from five days to four days per week. This consultation is taking place between 21 February 2024 and 20 March 2024.</p>
<p>What is the rationale for this proposal?</p>	<p>The key driver for the change is to deliver the savings target for the service agreed in the 2023-2027 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Sites were assessed for potential closure against a number of criteria, including; finance, ongoing operational deliverability, site catchment areas, site usage patterns, housing growth, site infrastructure / suitability etc.</p>

3- Evidence gathered on equality implications - Data and engagement

What evidence about potential equality impacts is already available?

This could come from research, service analysis, questionnaires, and engagement with protected characteristics groups

What equalities information or data has been gathered so far?

What does it show?

Population Demographic Data

Data has been collated (at ward/parish level) for each of the areas affected by potential closures. Headline findings as follows (source: 2021 Census - ONS Website):

- **Age Profile:**

The table below shows that Market Harborough and Shepshed have a relatively even spread across the age ranges up to 80, comparable with Leicestershire as a whole. Somerby has a significantly higher percentage of its population in the 50 to 80 age range than Leicestershire as a whole.

Age Range	M'Harborough (%)	Shepshed (%)	Somerby (%)	Leicestershire (%)
0 to 9	9.9	10.8	7.9	10.7
10 to 19	11.7	9.8	10.8	11.6
20 to 29	9.5	12.2	6.4	11.5
30 to 39	12.0	13.2	8.7	12.4
40 to 49	13.4	12.1	10.7	12.4
50 to 59	14.8	14.1	20.4	14.4
60 to 69	11.2	12.2	16.3	11.6
70 to 79	10.6	10.4	13.3	9.9
80+	6.9	5.4	5.6	5.4

- **Gender:** Each area has roughly a 51% female, 49% male population split.
- **Legal Partnership Status:** the majority of the adult population in each area is classified as married/in a registered civil partnership or never married and never registered a civil partnership.
- **Ethnicity:** approximately 94-98% of the population in each area is White British.

- **Religion:** approximately 91-93% of the population in each area is Christian or no religion.
- **Disability:** approximately 81-85% of population in each area is classified as not disabled.
- **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity:** data on sexual orientation and gender identity was only available at district level. In each of the districts with sites earmarked for closure/reduced opening hours (Charnwood, Harborough, and Melton) approximately 90% of the population are straight or heterosexual, and approximately 94% have the gender identity the same as that registered at birth.
- **Deprivation:** approximately 50-55% of households in each area are classed as not deprived in any dimension. Approximately 31-34% of households in each area are classed as deprived in one dimension. Note: there are four dimensions of deprivation - employment, education, health and disability, and household overcrowding.

Service User Data

Equalities data collected from respondents to the 2017 RHWS customer survey give a sample of the demographic characteristics of service users across Leicestershire. It indicates that the majority of services users are aged 35-75, male, white British, not classified as disabled, and either in employment or retired.

Rural Isolation Data

The table below contains drive time data (source: Google Maps) showing the distance and travel time by car to the nearest alternative RHWS for each of the areas affected by potential closures.

Start point	Nearest Alternative RHWS	*Distance (miles)	*Drive Time (minutes)
Shepshed (Centre)	Coalville RHWS	5.7	15
Market Harborough (Centre)	Kibworth RHWS	5	13
Somerby (RHWS)	Melton RHWS	7.9	16

	*Distance and drive times were taken from google maps at approximately 11:45am on Friday 5 th May 2023
<p>What engagement has been undertaken so far?</p> <p>What does it show?</p>	<p>A 12-week public consultation on the proposals was undertaken from 1 November 2023 to 24 January 2024, which included an online questionnaire (made available in alternative formats) and focus groups.</p> <p>The main equalities related issues raised in the online questionnaire and focus groups was the disproportionate impact on older people and those with mobility issues, with particular reference to the proposed closure of the Market Harborough and Shepshed sites. There were some concerns raised regarding rural areas being underserved and that residents felt overlooked.</p> <p>The proposals were presented to the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group (LECG) on 10 November 2023 as part of the consultation. The main equalities related issue raised by the LECG was concern about the older population in Somerby having to travel 8 miles to the nearest alternative RHWS at Melton Mowbray. A summary of the outcome of the consultation, including LECG feedback, can be found in the Consultation Survey Report.</p> <p>After consideration of the consultation feedback, it was decided to run a secondary four-week consultation on revised proposals to keep Market Harborough RHWS and Shepshed RHWS open part-time, and for operational viability reasons, reduce the number of opening days at Kibworth RHWS from five days to four days per week. This consultation is taking place between 21 February 2024 and 20 March 2024. The other proposals in the original consultation to close Somerby RHWS, reduce summer opening hours at all RHWS, retain part-time opening at Bottesford RHWS, and introduce Christmas Eve closures at the RHWS, remain unchanged.</p> <p>There are no additional equalities issues arising from the revised proposals.</p>

4- Benefits, concerns and mitigating action

Please specify if any individuals or community groups who identify with any of the '[protected characteristics](#)' may **potentially** be affected by the policy and describe any benefits and concerns including any barriers.

Use this section to demonstrate how risks would be mitigated for each affected group			
Group	What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	What are the concerns identified and how will these affect those from the following groups?	How will the known concerns be mitigated?
Age	None	It has been identified that Somerby has a higher percentage of residents in the 50-80 age range than Leicestershire as a whole. However, this is not considered to be a significant factor in relation to the proposals.	None
Disability	None	If consultation and service changes are not communicated in a way that caters for the needs of those with disabilities such as visual impairment, then this group could be considered to have been discriminated against.	Consultation and service change communication to the public will be offered in different formats (e.g. Braille, easy read etc) on request.
Race	None	If consultation and service changes are not communicated in appropriate languages, then some communities/races could be considered to have been discriminated against.	Consultation and service change communication to the public will be offered in different languages on request.
Sex	None	It has been identified through customer satisfaction surveys that the majority of site users are male. Therefore, men are more likely to be impacted by site closures than women. However, no specific concerns	None

		have been identified in relation to the proposals.	
Gender Reassignment	None	None	None
Marriage and Civil Partnership	None	None	None
Sexual Orientation	None	None	None
Pregnancy and Maternity	None	None	None
Religion or Belief	None	None	None
Other groups: e.g., rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived, armed forced, or disadvantaged communities	None	Rural isolation: The original proposal to close five sites included the closure of Bottesford RHWS. It was identified that rural isolation is an issue here, with the nearest alternative RHWS at Melton which being 16 miles away (30 Minute drive). The issue is further exacerbated for low-income households as they would have to spend more to travel the extra distance.	As a result of concerns raised by the Scrutiny Review Panel in March 2023, the decision was taken to look at options for keeping Bottesford RHWS open part-time.

5- Action Plan and Recommendations

Use this section to describe concerns further

Produce a framework to outline how identified risks/concerns will be mitigated.

What concerns were identified?	What action is planned?	Who is responsible for the action?	Timescale
Consultation documents and communications about service changes need to cater for different languages and those with disabilities such as visual impairment.	<p>Ensure public consultation documents are offered in different languages and formats, on request.</p> <p>Ensure communications about service changes are offered in different languages and formats, on request.</p>	Vicky Cormie: consultation and public comms.	<p>Consultation: November 2023 - January 2024</p> <p>Secondary consultation: February 2024 - March 2024.</p> <p>Implementation of service changes (subject to further consultation and final decision by the Cabinet): October 2024 - April 2025.</p>

6- Way forward	
How will the action plan and recommendations of this assessment be built into decision making and implementation of this proposal?	Requirements will be built into the project/communications plan.
How would you monitor the impact of your proposal and keep the EIA refreshed?	The EIA will be reviewed and updated periodically throughout the project.
Sign off by DEG Chair/Director or Head of Services	

**CABINET – 24 MAY 2024****DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP4) 2026-2040****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to advise the Cabinet on the progress of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) 2026-2040, to seek approval for the approach to its development, and to undertake public consultation.
2. The LTP4 Core Document sets out the vision, key themes and core policies which will underpin the LTP4, the strategic case and narrative for funding, and the Council's expectations relating to transport infrastructure which is maintained/managed by others. The draft Core Document is attached as Appendix A to this report and may be subject to further amendment prior to consultation.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that:
 - a) The work to date on the development of the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) be noted;
 - b) The continued development phases one to three of the LTP4 as set out in paragraph 33 of this report be agreed;
 - c) The commencement of a six-week public consultation exercise on the LTP4 development phasing and the draft LTP4 Core Document be approved.

Reasons for Recommendation

4. The current LTP3 requires updating to ensure the Council meets its legal responsibilities to publish an LTP according with national policy, to provide the strategic case to secure funding opportunities and to set the narrative for the delivery programmes including the Local Transport Fund (LTF).

5. The LTP4 Core Document must be in place by September 2024, so that it provides the basis for the LTF delivery programme which needs to be submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in December 2024.
6. The six-week public consultation will seek the views and perspective of local communities, partners and stakeholders to inform the Council's approach to and development of the LTP4.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

7. It is proposed that the six-week public consultation takes place from 28 May to 9 July 2024. The outcome of the consultation and the finalised LTP4 Core Document would then be presented to the Cabinet on 13 September 2024.
8. It is intended that the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a report as part of the consultation exercise at its meeting on 6 June 2024.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

9. In 2011, the County Council approved its third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) that set out the vision for transport in the County with a framework for the management and development of the transport system across the County up to 2026.
10. The LTP3 set out six strategic transport goals:
 - Goal 1 - A transport system that supports a prosperous economy and provides successfully for population growth.
 - Goal 2 - An efficient, resilient and sustainable transport system that is well managed and maintained.
 - Goal 3 - A transport system that helps to reduce the carbon footprint of Leicestershire.
 - Goal 4 - An accessible and integrated transport system that helps promote equality of opportunity for all our residents.
 - Goal 5 - A transport system that improves the safety, health and security of our residents.
 - Goal 6 - A transport system that helps to improve the quality of life for our residents and makes Leicestershire a more attractive place to live, work and visit.
11. In May 2022, the County Council approved its Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026). This has been used to inform the development of the LTP4 Core Document and it has been ensured that the vision and main themes align with all the Strategic Plan's five strategic priorities. It is acknowledged that the current Strategic Plan is being refreshed and it will be ensured that the LTP4 accords with the latest version.

12. In addition, the development of the LTP4 Core Document has considered the following Council strategies:
- a) Our Communities Approach 2022 - 2026;
 - b) Leicestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2032;
 - c) Environment Strategy 2018 – 2030;
 - d) Net Zero Leicestershire Strategy 2023 – 2045;
 - e) Leicester and Leicestershire 2050: Our Vision for Growth;
 - f) Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Growth Strategy 2021 – 2030.

Resource Implications

13. A total of £125,000 has been allocated for the development of the LTP4 in the Department's Advanced Design Budget for 2024/25 to 2026/27.
14. The LTP4 will be a key document in the development of Council transport programmes including for the allocation of the LTF funding. The LTP will set the strategic case and narrative on which funding submissions and the implementation of transport solutions will be made and implemented.
15. To aid the development of the LTP4, and given the cross-cutting nature of transport, there has been ongoing work on its contribution to wider objectives including health, environment, and economic growth. Key Council officers and specialist stakeholders have been involved in several internal and external workstreams to support the development of the LTP. Whilst there are no direct resource implications, it should be acknowledged that the development of the LTP involves staff from across the Council to aid its development and should shape future investment decisions for the transport network.
16. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

17. This report will be circulated to all members.

Officers to Contact

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PART B

Background

18. The Leicestershire transport network has a key role in enabling movement across the County, regionally and also nationally, to enable local communities to achieve their ambitions through access to key services and employment opportunities. The transport network is also important to support and deliver economic growth and prosperity by providing access to key markets locally, regionally, nationally and globally.
19. However, the demands placed upon transport infrastructure are changing rapidly and investment is needed to enable the transport network to adapt to climate change, promote active and healthy living and aid the delivery of new jobs and housing across the County. In addition, significant changes to travel behaviour have been noticed alongside observing the impact of new technology and innovation which is changing the way transport networks across the County are utilised.
20. The Covid-19 pandemic, lockdowns and post-pandemic recovery have also led to significant changes in travel behaviour and demands on the transport network. Greater levels of home working have produced changes to travel behaviour and patterns. However, this has resulted in communities needing access to reliable high-speed digital infrastructure not only within their homes but also in the wider community as organisations and businesses adopt hybrid working practices.
21. Transport networks are experiencing greater movement in freight and logistics, due to the increased use of online shopping, which has resulted in a higher demand for the movement of goods and increasing Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) and Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) movements across the transport networks. Leicestershire is located in the heart of the freight and logistics triangle, with East Midlands Airport acting as a core international gateway for the movement of goods and services globally.
22. In addition, there is greater awareness about the impact transport choice has upon the environment which has led to higher demand for alternative low-carbon forms of travel including cycling, and demand for electric vehicle charging provision. The travel choices people make not only affect their own health but also the wider well-being of communities (vehicle emissions, for example, can have a significant impact on respiratory illnesses).
23. An aging population is an additional challenge due to the differing needs of older people and their greater reliance on public transport. The challenges to providing such services, particularly in a rural county, can lead to isolation and restrict access to key facilities and services that people rely on. Public transport also sees a greater demand from younger people for access to education and employment as they are less likely to be able to drive or afford to maintain and run a motorised vehicle. In addition, younger people tend to have a greater awareness of and concern around impact on the environment.

24. With such challenges, it is the right time to prepare a new LTP that will enable the Council to tackle these challenges in a proactive and flexible manner and reset the direction for transport policy and strategy across the County.

What is the Local Transport Plan?

25. The LTP is a statutory requirement of the Local Transport Act 2008, to be produced by Local Transport Authorities, and the key mechanism for delivering integrated transport at a local level. It helps to promote transport as an enabler to deliver on economic, environment and social objectives by planning for infrastructure and initiatives to help people and goods travel around.
26. The LTP3 is coming to an end in 2026. Approved in 2011, it no longer accords with much of national planning, transport, and environmental policy. It also has a limited focus on health and well-being and the potential benefits that active travel can provide for communities.
27. An updated LTP4 will enable the Council to deliver transport solutions to benefit local communities, visitors, and businesses through the County. These will aim to:
- a) Meet the current and future needs of all users in a coordinated manner and enable travel choices.
 - b) Benefit all transport users including car drivers, freight traffic, those who use public transport, and those walking, wheeling and cycling.
 - c) Provide wider public health, economic, and environmental benefits for local communities.
 - d) Provide the best value for money to the taxpayers.
28. The LTP4 will also provide the strategic case and narrative to support the development and implementation of the investment programme for various funding streams announced by the DfT including LTF, Roads Resurfacing Fund and Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Development of LTP4

29. Development of the new LTP began in late 2021 when the DfT advised that it would be issuing guidance on the preparation of the next generation of LTPs. However, this long-awaited guidance has not been forthcoming.
30. Whilst there is no specific guidance for the development of the new LTP, the following national policies have been identified which have supported the direction for the development of the LTP:
- a) Build Back Better: our plan for growth, HM Treasury (2021);
 - b) Transport Decarbonisation Plan, Department for Transport (2021);
 - c) Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking, Department for Transport (2020);
 - d) Future mobility: Urban Strategy, Department for Transport (2019);

- e) Bus Back Better: National Bus Strategy for England, Department for Transport (2021);
 - f) Great British Railways: The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, Department for Transport (2021);
 - g) Plan for Drivers, Department for Transport (2024);
 - h) Government Environment Plan, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2018);
 - i) Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener, Department for Energy Security and NetZero and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2021); and
 - j) National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2023).
31. To commence development of the LTP4, a conference was held in November 2023. Stakeholders attending included representatives from local authorities, National Highways, and Network Rail. Main themes which emerged from the conference were to make future LTP engaging and to focus on 'communities'. Key areas of focus for the LTP4 were identified as:
- a) Health,
 - b) Carbon reduction,
 - c) Enabling growth,
 - d) Minimising future levels of damage to the Council's highway assets, and
 - e) Influencing behaviour change.
32. Since the conference, several internal and external workstreams (involving Council officers and specialist stakeholders such as Public Health, environment and external stakeholders including Midlands Connect, neighbouring transport authorities and National Highways) have been supporting the development of the LTP4. These workstreams are:
- a) Health and Carbon reduction,
 - b) Communities, Communication and Engagement,
 - c) Spatial Planning and Growth,
 - d) Data and Evidence,
 - e) Environment, Transport and Infrastructure,
 - f) Innovation, and
 - g) Regional Transport Policy.
33. A key outcome of the workstreams has been the agreement to develop the LTP4 in three phases, to be undertaken concurrently:
- a) **Phase One (up to 2030); in development between December 2023 – September 2024** – comprises the LTP4 Core Document which will identify the key challenges faced across the County in terms of transport, the strategic vision, the core themes and policies and how these will be implemented. The LTP4 Core Document will provide the strategic case and narrative to aid the development and implementation of the programme for the LTF and other funding streams, delivering transport solutions across the County.

- b) **Phase Two (up to 2040); in development between summer 2024 – spring 2026** – will be the development of the full LTP4 which will be in the form of a series of focused strategies, including freight, logistics and aviation, a County Strategic Transport Investment Plan, locally focused Multi-Modal Area Investment Plans, and supporting documents which will set out the transport solutions that are proposed and the programme for delivery and implementation. The Multi-Modal Area Investment Plans will be developed together with communities and partners to identify the local transport solutions which meet their requirements and geographical needs as well as supporting the development of Local Plans to enable the delivery of new homes and employment opportunities across the County.
 - c) **Phase Three (up to 2050); in development between summer 2024 – winter 2026** – will set out the monitoring and review processes and progress based on the LTP to identify success or where greater focus is required. It will also set the Council's approach to a post-2050 vision for the future and 'horizon scanning' to ensure that the Council is proactive and can adapt the LTP and transport solutions to accommodate travel behaviour change, innovation, and changes to national policy and guidance.
34. The LTP4 will focus on Leicestershire. However, in both development and delivery, work will be undertaken with key partners, including Leicester City Council, Lincolnshire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Derbyshire County Council, Rutland County Council, and Warwickshire County Council, and stakeholders including National Highways and Network Rail.

LTP4 Core Document

35. As stated above, Phase One (2030) comprises development of the Core Document. This sets out the vision, key themes, and core policies which will underpin the LTP4 and its supporting strategies.
36. The Core Document will also set the strategic case and narrative for funding streams, including the LTF, and the associated delivery programmes. The document also sets the direction and agenda for Council expectations relating to transport infrastructure which is maintained and managed by other authorities and stakeholders and how collaboration should be undertaken.
37. The proposed strategic vision for transport across the County is:
- ‘Delivering a safe and connected transport network which is resilient and well-maintained to support the ambitions and health of our communities, deliver economic prosperity whilst safeguarding our environment’.
38. Alongside the vision, five core themes and six core policies have been identified:
- a) The five core themes:

- i. Enabling health and wellbeing,
- ii. Protecting our environment,
- iii. Delivering economic growth,
- iv. Enhancing our transport network's resilience,
- v. Embracing innovation.

b) The six core policies:

- i. **Core Policy 1: Delivering the Vision** - Ensure that all our transport solutions align with the themes to deliver our vision for transport with regard to Government policy for the benefit of our communities.
- ii. **Core Policy 2: Managing Demand** - Deliver a safe, accessible, connected and resilient transport network that is well managed and enables communities to access jobs, education and services. The network will also enable efficient movement and delivery of goods to support the local, regional and international markets.
- iii. **Core Policy 3: Enabling Travel Choice** - Enable travel choice in all of our communities that reflects their unique needs which ensures their safety whilst promoting health and wellbeing and protecting the environment.
- iv. **Core Policy 4: Delivering Solutions** - Work collaboratively to identify and develop transport related solutions which provide good value for money and enable travel choice, improve our transport network users' experiences, and benefit the environment and the health and wellbeing of our communities.
- v. **Core Policy 5: Embracing Innovation** - Embrace innovation and collaboration, which enables us to decarbonise transport and adapt to climate change to ensure a resilient transport network, whilst benefiting the environment and promoting the health and wellbeing of our communities.
- vi. **Core Policy 6: Evaluating Progress** - Utilise data, monitoring and evaluation of our transport solutions to enable evidence-based programmes, provide a flexible approach to policy development, technology, and innovation to address changes and challenges which impact our communities.

39. The LTP4 Core Document (Appendix A) will set out how these will be implemented and monitored.

Consultation

40. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, a six-week public consultation exercise is to be undertaken between 28 May and 9 July 2024. The consultation would involve the proposed programme for the development of the LTP4 in three phases and the draft LTP4 Core Document. It will take the form of an online survey available via the Council's website (with alternative formats available on request).
41. The consultation will be open to all residents, businesses, organisations, and key stakeholders. To aid this, a process of stakeholder mapping has already been undertaken and there will also be engagement with these groups through existing meetings and communication channels.
42. Part of the consultation activity is a programme focussed on engaging with local and regional partners, including National Highways, Network Rail, Midlands Connect and neighbouring local authorities, and local communities seeking their views on the proposed plan for developing the LTP4.
43. During the consultation period, the proposals will also be presented to the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its views on 6 June 2024.
44. The outcome from the consultation will inform the further update of the draft LTP4 Core Document and will be presented alongside the finalised LTP4 Core Document to the Cabinet in September 2024.

Equality Implications

45. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment screening was undertaken in 2021 at the inception stage of the project, which identified a neutral impact. The assessment has been used to help to:
 - a) Steer the Council's approach.
 - b) Identify the range of engagement required at different stages of the LTP4 development.
 - c) Continue to review and update the equalities assessment as further evidence becomes available, including new consultations and engagement.
46. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the LTP4 Phase Two development.

Human Rights Implications

47. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment was undertaken in 2021 at the inception stage of the project which identified a neutral impact.
48. Where appropriate, human rights implications will be assessed during the LTP4 Phase Two development.

Health Implications

49. In agreement with the Public Health, a high-level health impact assessment has been undertaken in April 2024 on the LTP4 development and the Core Document.
50. The outcome of the high-level health impact assessment is positive. The assessment notes that the vision, core policies and objectives, set out in the LTP4 Core Document will support and enable healthy and wellbeing in local communities. It also recognises the role that the transport network has in achieving this goal.
51. There are some comments and recommendations which the assessment has highlighted within the assessment. These will be considered through the consultation period.
52. A full health impact assessment will be undertaken during Phase Two of the LTP4 development, where the policies, strategies, and implementation proposals will have a greater impact on the health and well-being of Leicestershire residents and communities.

Environmental Implications

53. A high-level Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been undertaken during April 2024 on the LTP4 development and the Core Document.
54. The outcome of the SEA is positive, noting that the LTP4 Core Documents will provide benefits to the environment through the delivery of its vision, core policies and objectives. There are also recommendations provided in the report which will be considered during the consultation period.
55. A SEA will be undertaken during Phase Two of the LTP4 development, where the policies, strategies, and implementation proposals will have greater impact on the environment, Leicestershire residents and communities.
56. A copy of the high-level SEA is attached as Appendix B.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

57. Partnership working is a key element for the development of the LTP4 as the transport network across the County includes infrastructure that is managed and maintained by others including the Strategic Road Network by National Highways and the rail infrastructure by Network Rail.
58. The Council is also actively seeking engagement from the DfT, Active Travel England, Midlands Connect, neighbouring transport authorities and district councils.
59. More detail regarding partnership working can be found at paragraphs 31-32 of this report.

Risk Assessment

60. As part of the project programme, a regular risk register is maintained and presented to programme board. Key risks at present are focused on timescales to ensure the LTP4 Core Document is finalised and adopted in September 2024 to provide the strategic case and support the LTF programme required ahead of submission to the DfT in December 2024.
61. The development of LTP4 could also be delayed if a general election was to be called; at present, it is anticipated that a general election might take place in October/November 2024.

Background Papers

Local Transport Plan (LTP3) Strategy 2011 – 2026:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-maintenance/local-transport-plan>

Our Communities Approach 2022 – 2026:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2021/12/9/easy-read-communities-approach-2022-26.pdf>

Leicestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2032:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/leicestershire-health-and-wellbeing-board/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy>

Environment Strategy 2018 – 2030:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2020/7/13/Environment-Strategy-2018-2030-delivering-a-better-future.pdf>

Net Zero Leicestershire Strategy 2023 – 2045:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/net-zero/net-zero-leicestershire-strategy-action-plan-and-reports>

Leicester and Leicestershire 2050: Our Vision for Growth:

<https://www.llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Final-LL-SGP-December-2018-1.pdf>

Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Growth Strategy 2021 – 2030:

<https://llep.org.uk/app/uploads/2021/12/LLEP-Economic-Growth-Strategy.pdf>

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft LTP4 Core Document

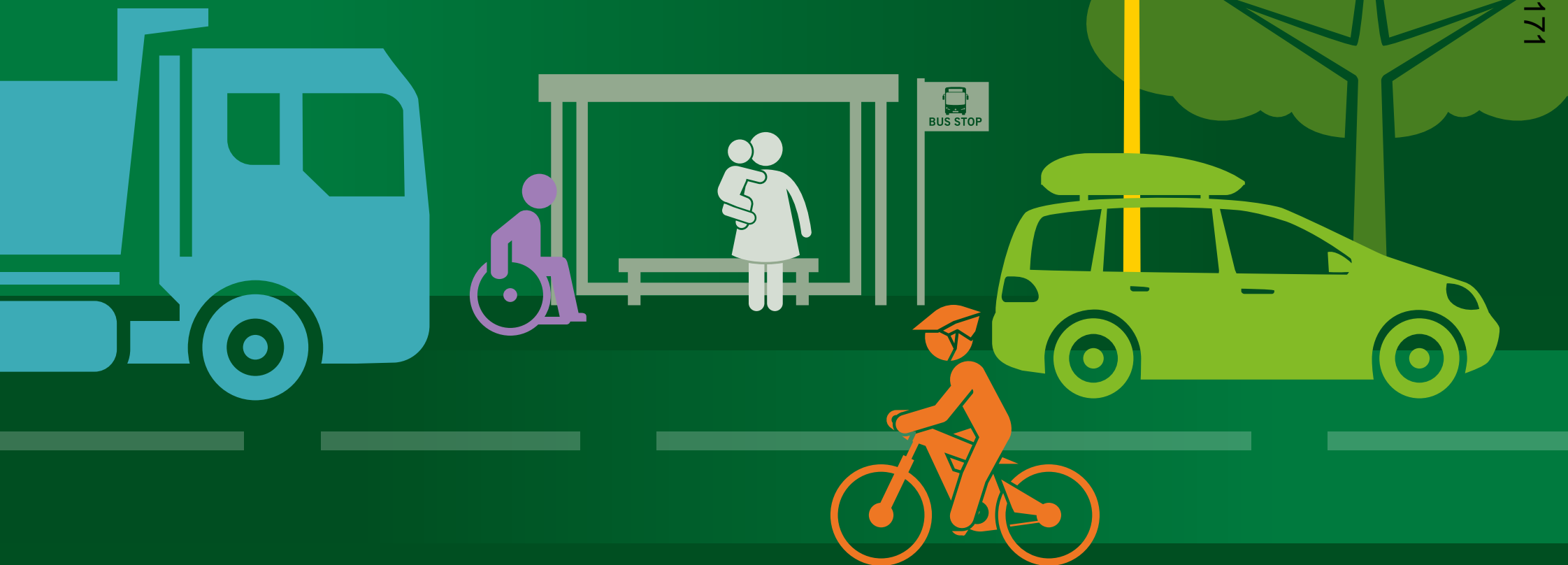
Appendix B – High Level Strategic Environmental Assessment

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A Local Transport Plan for Leicestershire

Core Document 2026 - 2040



Introduction

Our transport network has a key role in enabling movement across the county, regionally, nationally and internationally, enabling our communities to achieve their ambitions through access to key services and employment opportunities. This access supports key markets and delivers economic growth and prosperity not only at a local level but also globally.

However, our transport infrastructure and the demands placed upon it are now changing at a rate not seen since the Victorian age. Not only have we seen significant changes to travel behaviour, new technology and innovation are transforming the way transport networks across the county are utilised, operated and maintained.

In response to such change, a new Local Transport Plan will provide a vision for the county's transport network into the future, outlining how we work with our communities, businesses, organisations, stakeholders and transport infrastructure providers to take this opportunity to tackle inequalities and challenges across the county which include:

- **Access to employment**
- **Disparity in access to education**
- **Health inequality**
- **Addressing poor connectivity**
- **Preventing isolation and social exclusion**
- **A resilient and reliable transport network**
- **Supporting enhancement and recovery of the environment**



What is the Local Transport Plan (LTP)?

The LTP is a requirement of the Local Transport Act 2008, and the key mechanism for delivering integrated transport at a local level. It helps to promote transport as an enabler of existing and future challenges, explains how transport impacts local communities and puts in place plans for infrastructure, initiatives and solutions to help people and goods travel around.

LTP3 is coming to an end in 2026, and no longer accords with national planning, transport, and environmental policies. It also has a limited focus on health and well-being and the potential benefits that active travel provides Leicestershire for local communities.

An updated LTP4 will enable Leicestershire County Council to deliver transport solutions to benefit local communities, visitors, and users throughout the county. These will aim to:

- **Meet the current and future needs of all users in a coordinated manner and enable travel choices**
- **Benefit all transport users including car drivers, freight, public transport, walking, wheeling, and cycling**
- **Provide wider public health, economic, and environmental benefits for local communities**
- **Provide the best value for money to taxpayers**



The Development of the Local Transport Plan

The LTP will be developed in three phrases and will cover the period between 2025 and 2040.

Phase 1: Up to 2030

Phase 1 comprises the LTP4 Core Document which will identify the key challenges faced across the county in terms of transport.

It will set out the strategic vision for transport, the core themes and policies and how these will be implemented. The LTP4 Core Document will provide the strategic case and narrative to aid the development and implementation of the programme for the LTF, and other funding streams, delivering transport solutions across the county.

Phase 2: Up to 2040

Phase 2 will be the development and implementation of a series of focused strategies, including freight and logistics and aviation and the development and implementation of a County Wide Strategic Transport Investment Plan and locally focused Multi-Modal Area Investment Plans (MMAIPS).

These plans will be developed with communities and partners setting out the transport solutions and the programme for delivery and implementation over a five-year period, which meet their needs and requirements. As well as supporting the delivery of new homes and employment opportunities across the county.

Phase 3: Up to 2050

Phase 3 will set out the monitoring and review processes and progress based on the LTP to identify success or where greater focus is required.

It will also set the Council's approach to a post-2050 vision for the future and 'horizon scanning' to ensure that the Council is proactive and can adapt the LTP and transport solutions to accommodate travel behaviour change, innovation, and changes to national policy and guidance.

The LTP4 Structure

LTP4 will be comprised of a series of documents which are identified below:

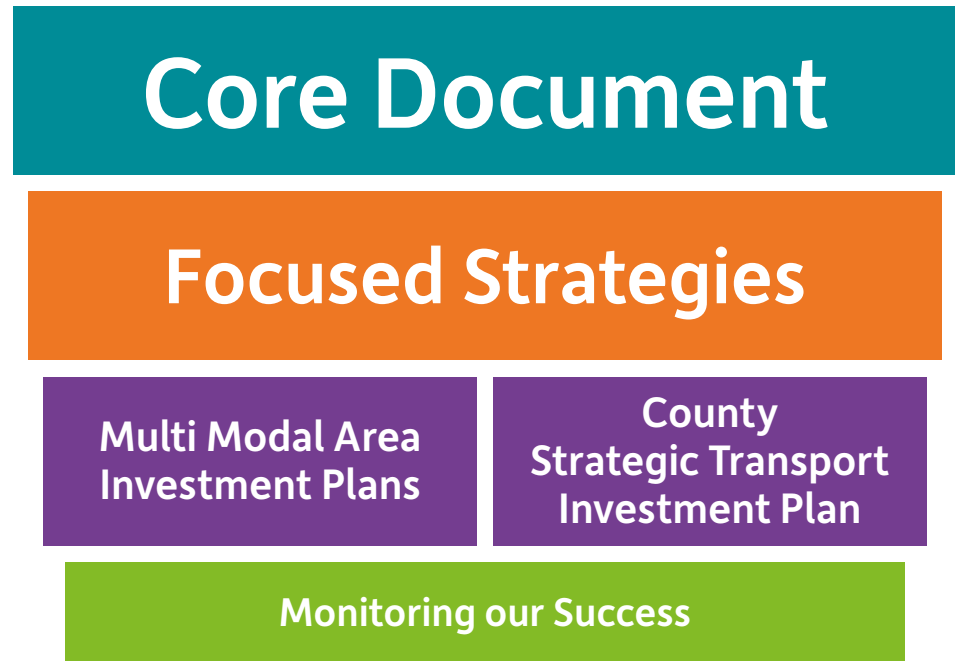
LTP4 Core Document: The core document will set out the strategic vision for transport across the council. It will also identify the core themes, core policies and how these will be implemented. It will provide an action plan for the development, implementation and review of focused strategies, Multi Modal Area Investment Plans, County Strategic Transport Investment Plan and provide detail on how the Local Transport Plan will be monitored.

Focused Strategies: A series of focused strategies will be developed to identify and tackle specific challenges and matters related to the transport network. These will include existing strategies such as the Cycling and Walking Strategy and the Road Safety Strategy. In addition, new focused strategies will be developed for topics including freight and logistics, transport network safety and decarbonising the transport network.

County Strategic Transport Investment Plan: This document will set out the strategic transport investment needs across the county to support the delivery of strategic development sites,. As well as identifying needs for investment and capacity enhancement on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and the rail network building on the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Priorities published in November 2020.

Multi Modal Area Investment Plans: These will be focused on the local level and set out strategies and investment plans for integrated transport solutions to meet the needs and requirements of our communities.

Monitoring our Success: This will set out the core Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Performance Indicators (PIs) which will be used to assess the success of LTP4 and how these will be reported upon.



The LTP4 Core Document

The LTP4 Core Document sets out the strategic vision for transport, core themes and the core policies until 2040. The Core Document will also act as the foundation from which the supporting strategies, County Strategic Transport Investment Plan and Multi-Modal Area Investment Plans will be developed.

Context

Setting out the policy and geographical context to LTP4.

Challenges

Providing a summary of the challenges which LTP4 will seek to address.

Vision

Setting out the ambition and the core themes that shape the vision.

Core Policies

Identifying the core policies which will be adopted to deliver the vision.

Implementation

Setting out the policy justifications and identifying the core objectives to deliver the policies.

Monitoring Success

Setting out how we will monitor the success and progress of the LTP.



Policy Context

National Level

The Local Transport Act 2000, established the requirement of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) as a statutory document. In addition to this there are a range of national policies and guidance which the LTP will contribute to the delivery of, and include:

- **Build Back Better: our plan for growth (2021)**
- **Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021)**
- **Gear Change (2020)**
- **Future mobility: Urban Strategy (2019)**
- **National Bus Strategy (2021)**
- **Great British railways and the Integrated Rail Plan (2021)**
- **Plan for Drivers (2024)**
- **Government Environment Plan (2018)**
- **UK Carbon Budget (2021)**

Local Level

The LTP will set out how the transport network will support delivering the Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan and its five strategic priorities.

The LTP has also considered the following strategies published by Leicestershire County Council:

- **Our Communities Approach 2022 - 2026**
- **Leicestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 - 2032**
- **Environment Strategy 2018 - 2030**
- **Net Zero Leicestershire Strategy 2023 - 2045**
- **Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our Vision for Growth**
- **Leicester & Leicestershire Economic Growth Strategy 2021 - 2030**



Strategic Priorities for the Council



Clean and Green

- People act now to tackle climate change
- Nature and the local environment are valued, protected and enhanced
- Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way
- The economy and infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly



Great Communities

- Diversity is celebrated and people feel welcome and included
- People participate in service design and delivery
- Cultural and historical heritage are enjoyed and conserved
- Communities are prepared for and resilient to emergencies
- People support each other through volunteering



Safe and Well

- People are safe in their daily lives
- People enjoy long lives in good health
- People at the most risk are protected from harm
- Carers and people with care needs are supported to live active, independent and fulfilling lives



Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure

- There is close alignment between skill supply and demand
- Leicestershire has the infrastructure for sustainable economic and housing growth
- Leicestershire is an attractive place where businesses invest and flourish
- Economic growth delivers increased prosperity for all



Improved Opportunities

- Every child gets the best start in life
- Every child has access to good quality education
- Families are self-sufficient and enabled to be resilient
- Young people and adults are able to aim high and reach their full potential

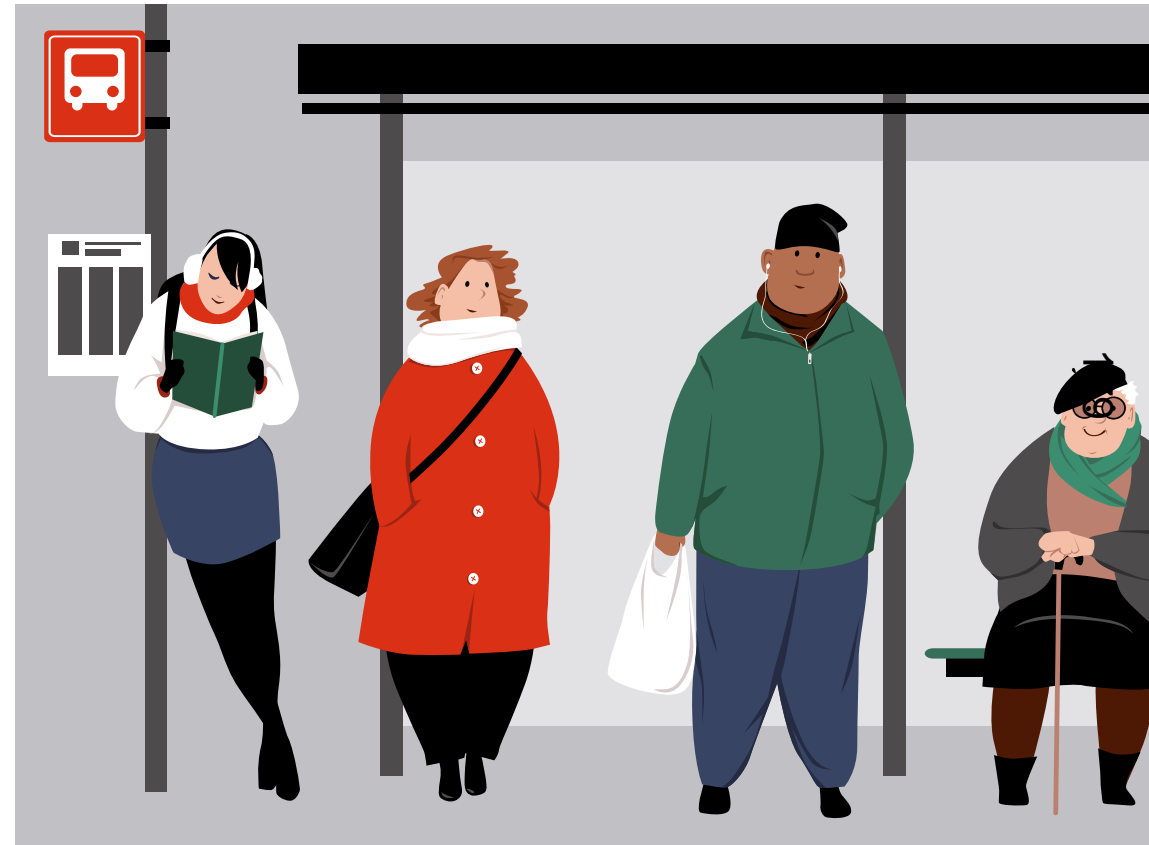
Review of LTP3

In 2011, Leicestershire County Council approved the final LTP3 that set out the vision for transport and included a framework for how the council would manage and develop the transport system across the county up to 2026.

LTP3 set out six strategic transport goals which were as follows:

- Goal 1** - A transport system that supports a prosperous economy and provides successfully for population growth.
- Goal 2** - An efficient, resilient and sustainable transport system that is well managed and maintained.
- Goal 3** - A transport system that helps to reduce the carbon footprint of Leicestershire.
- Goal 4** - An accessible and integrated transport system that helps promote equality of opportunity for all our residents.
- Goal 5** - A transport system that improves the safety, health and security of our residents.
- Goal 6** - A transport system that helps to improve the quality of life for our residents and makes Leicestershire a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

As mentioned, LTP3 is coming to an end in 2026, and it no longer accords with national planning, transport and environmental policy. In addition, it has a limited focus on health and wellbeing and the potential benefits that active travel provides in this area for local communities.



The Leicestershire Context

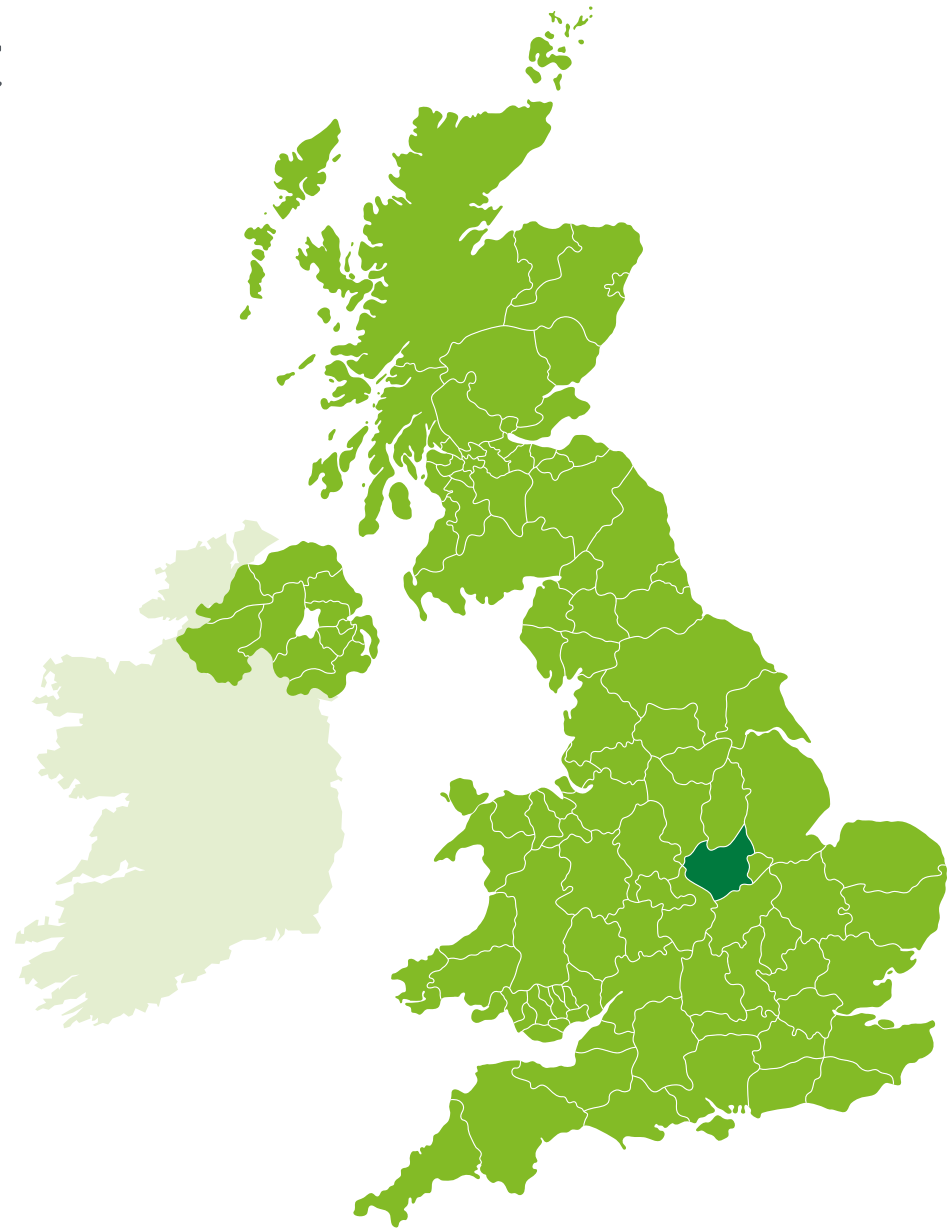
The county of Leicestershire is in the East Midlands and situated centrally to the national transport network, including the M1, M69, A42 and A46 Corridors of the Strategic Road Network, the Midland Mainline of the National Rail Network, and provides access to East Midlands Airport as an international gateway.

Leicestershire also borders neighbouring counties and local authorities including, Derbyshire, Leicester City, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Staffordshire and Warwickshire

Leicestershire County Council is the responsible Transport and Highway Authority for the county and seven District and Borough Councils of Blaby District Council, Charnwood Borough Council, Harborough District Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Melton Borough Council, North West Leicestershire District Council and Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, who are the Planning Authorities.

In its role as the Transport and Highway Authority Leicestershire County Council is responsible for the operation, maintenance and management of:

- **4,686km (2,921 miles) of roads across the county**
- **3,081km of Public Rights of Way across the county**
- **6 million miles of public transport routes across the county**
- **Providing support to 1.2 million miles of passenger transport services per year**



Challenges



Population Change

The rate of population growth in Leicestershire continues to be above the regional and national levels. The total population is 713,085 people of which 119,576 (16.8%) are under the age of 15.

Overall, the population across the county is weighted to older adults with 32.9% of the county aged between 40 and 64 and 20.6% aged 65 and over.

The population of Leicestershire is projected to increase by 23.3% to 830,618 between 2018 and 2043, an increase of 162,350 people. Whilst this growth is expected across all age ranges it is anticipated that the 65 and over age group will be the largest in 2043.

Population Distribution

Charnwood had the largest population of the Leicestershire districts in 2020 with a 188,416 people. Followed by Hinckley and Bosworth with a population of 113,666 people. Melton had the smallest population of 51,394 people.

By 2043, it is anticipated that all the districts will have experienced population growth since 2018 with Charnwood still maintaining the largest population which is projected to be 222,710 people, an increase of 23%.

North West Leicestershire is projected to experience the highest level of population growth, with its population growing by 34.4% by 2043. In addition, the largest projected age group in North West Leicestershire will be ages 65 and over with a 67% increase.

Except for Melton and Oadby and Wigston, all other districts in Leicestershire are expected to increase their population at a higher rate than the rates for the East Midlands and England.



Ageing Population

The demographics of the population in Leicestershire are changing, the largest age group at 26.9% were aged between 40-59 years old, after which those aged 60+ were the second largest age group at 26.6%. With 20-39 year olds equating to 24% and 0-19 year olds being the smallest age group at 22.5%.

Life expectancy in Leicestershire is higher than the national average for England. The average life expectancy for a male, born between 2017-2019, is 80.9, and 84.3 years and for a female, born between 2017-2018.

With an aging population, health needs are likely to increase due to the potential for the development of multiple chronic conditions.

Therefore, there is a need for a transport network which works with the community and health professionals to promote a healthy and active lifestyle, but also provides efficient access to health services and facilities when they are required by all modes of transport.

Loneliness and Social Isolation

Loneliness and social isolation can occur in any community but can be more of a common occurrence/ can be seen more by older communities, rural and isolated locations, disabilities or mobility issues, or having to rely on public transport due to being unable to drive or not having access to a car. Also, everyone can feel lonely at times which can undermine their health and wellbeing, especially their mental health.



Obesity

Obesity is a significant challenge effecting our communities across Leicestershire, and the opportunity to achieve a healthy and active lifestyle begins at childhood. However, by reception year, 19% of children in Leicestershire were classed as either obese/overweight in 2019/20, and by year six this figure had increased to 30.6% in 2019/20. Whilst both figures are below the national average, poor habits which develop in early childhood can be difficult to overcome.

Across Leicestershire, 64.5% of adults, aged 18 and over, were classed as overweight or obese in 2018/19 when compared to 62.3% for England. It is widely recognised that being overweight or obese heightens individuals to the risk to developing long term health conditions.

Therefore, there is a need for a transport network which works with the community and health professionals to promote a healthy and active lifestyle, but also provides efficient access to health services and facilities when they are required by all modes of transport.

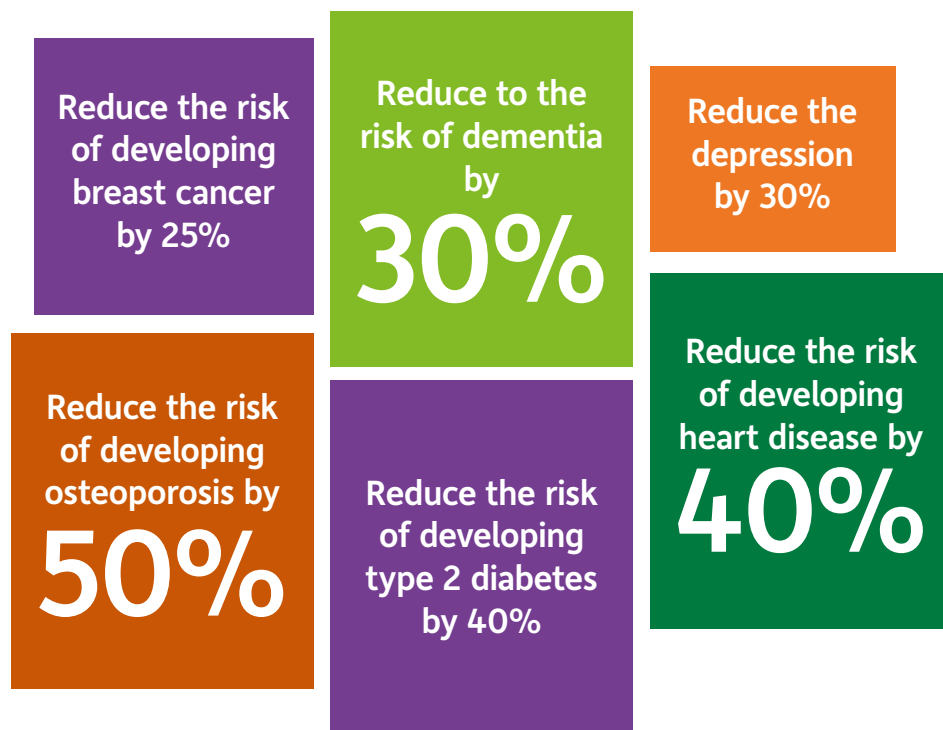
Physical Activity

Physical activity is important to maintaining a healthy weight and lifestyle, while also providing benefits to mental health and physical health. However, 26% of the population are identified as being inactive, undertaking less than 30 minutes of exercise a week.

Active transport is a key method to undertake physical activity by cycling and walking. However, only 2.4% of adults across Leicestershire cycled for travel at least three days a week in 2018/19 and only 18.5% walked for travel at least three days per week. Both of these statistics being below the national average.

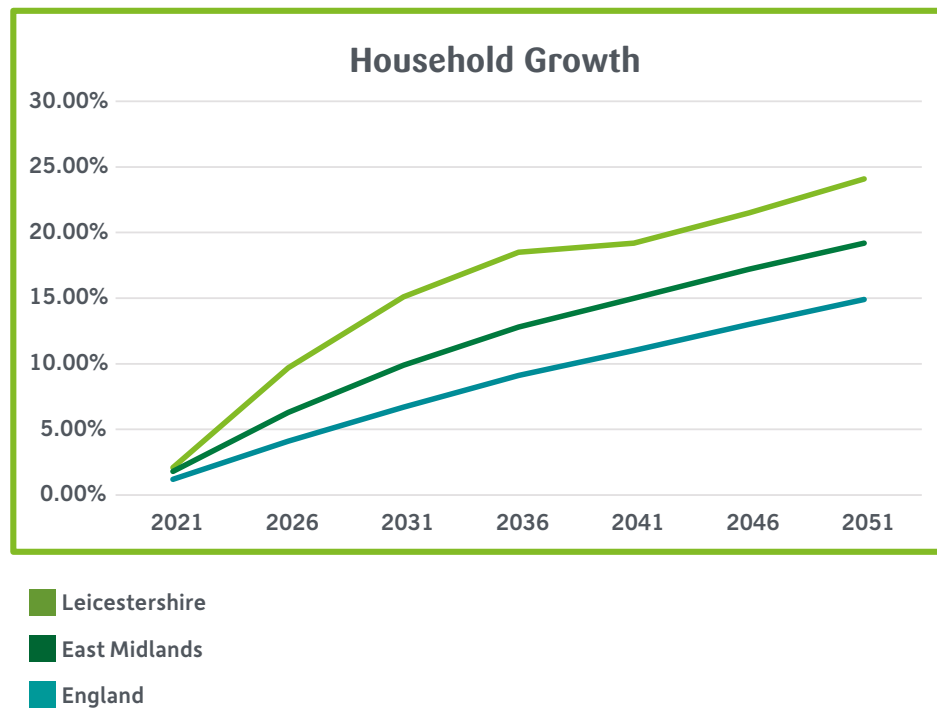
School journeys provide an opportunity for children to undertake physical activity, however just 2% of school children in Leicestershire cycle to school.

**Undertaking 150 minutes of exercise per week as an adult
can have the following health benefits**



Housing Demand

A key aspect of the LTP will be to support the Local Plan Process in the delivery of new homes across the county. The latest Leicester & Leicestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) commissioned by the local authorities and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) has identified that during the period of 2020 to 2041 an additional 120,000 dwellings will be required across the county.



Employment Demand

Leicester and Leicestershire equate to a £27 billion economy which supported over 550,000 jobs in 2019, and it is anticipated that by 2041 this figure will have increased by 14%.

A key element of the economy is freight and logistics which has seen substantial growth with existing logistic parks expanding, and new parks coming online, including East Midlands Gateway at M1 Junction 24 and the expansion of Magna Park on the A5. This demand is in part due to the excellent connectivity the county benefits from to the Strategic Road Network, the Rail Network and East Midlands Airport as an international gateway of importance for the movement of freight.

The HENA identifies a total employment land need across the county at 417.2 hectares, of which 365.2 hectares would be for industrial and logistic uses.

A Digital Economy

The COVID Pandemic demonstrated that remote and agile working were a viable and practical method of work, resulting in employees working from home more often compared to before the pandemic. This has changed the requirements of demand on the transport network with travel now reduced on certain days and the peak travel periods have changed, but the number of Heavy Goods Vehicles and Large Good Vehicles has increased due to an increase in online shopping.

In addition, greater demand has been placed on high speed and reliable broadband speeds, not only in urban centres but also rural communities. Through Project Gigabit, with funding from the UK Government, reliable internet is being delivered to hard to reach communities accessing reliable broadband. In January 2024 the government announced that gigabit coverage had reached 80 per cent of the UK, up from just six per cent in 2019, and the UK is on track to achieve 85 per cent by 2025.



Demand for Public Transport

The bus network plays a crucial role within the county as it provides accessibility and connections to urban centres and market towns to provide access to services and facilities, especially for those members of communities who do not have access to a car or are unable to drive, including younger generations who use the public transport network to access education, higher education and employment, as well as the older generation to access health services and social amenities.

Nationally, bus usage remains below pre-pandemic levels, with the Department for Transport publishing that bus boardings outside of London on Monday 8th April 2024 were 76% of the observed volume on an equivalent day in the third week of January 2020.

Across Leicestershire, 7.6 million public transport passenger journeys were undertaken across the county, which is low when compared to levels across the region. 12 million bus passenger journeys were undertaken in Derbyshire, and 17.7 million passenger journeys across Leicester City.

In terms of the bus network, (in mileage) for Leicestershire, it equates to 6 million miles, of which 4.8 million miles is commercial and 1.2 million miles supported by Leicestershire County Council.

However, in comparison the size of the network is smaller when compared to Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, and a greater level of the network is supported in comparison.

**7.6
million**
public transport
journeys taken
across county

**6 million
miles**
of bus network
across the county

4,917
bus stops
across
the county

**1.2 million
miles**
of bus network
supported by
Leicestershire
County Council

Demand for Rail

Passenger Services

Leicestershire is served by the National Rail Network with services operated by East Midlands Railway and CrossCountry which focus on Leicester Station which has been identified as having limited connections to the national rail network when compared to other comparable major cities across England.

Leicester Station is the busiest within the county and located in Leicester city centre. The wider county is served by stations in settlements across the county, which feed into Leicester station and provides the opportunity to interchange.

Department for Transport statistics show that nationally rail usage continues to be below pre-pandemic levels, with passenger journeys in the week ending the 31st March 2024 72% of those observed in the equivalent week in 2018.

In addition, only 27% of journeys are within the East Midlands region, and 73% of journeys being to and from other regions, showing that strategic trips are mainly undertaken by rail rather than locally focussed trips.

This issue is also observed through station entry and exit statistics published by the Office of Rail Regulation. All stations have a lower level of movements in 2022/23 when compared to 2017/18, with the only exception being South Wigston which has seen an increase in passenger movements.

Rail Freight

There are significant opportunities to increase the amount of freight moved by rail as a viable alternative to road-based freight movement, providing greater environmental benefits. Due to Leicestershire being located at the heart of the freight and logistics ‘golden’ triangle, there is clear demand with the approval of a rail freight interchange facility at East Midlands Gateway 2 and other proposals being developed through the planning process.

A key challenge going forward is to support the movement of freight by rail, whilst not compromising the existing and future provision of passenger services which can provide a viable alternative to road-based journeys.

Station	2017 / 18 Entries and Exits	2022 / 23 Entries and Exits
Leicester Station	5,392,710	4,869,863
Loughborough	1,292,244	1,227,122
Market Harborough	894,320	762,792
East Midlands Parkway	338,456	309,864
Hinckley	337,972	235,416
Narborough	393,814	207,592
Melton Mowbray	269,224	205,574
Syston	205,834	149,102
Sileby	111,890	109,414
South Wigston	74,234	90,504
Barrow-Upon-Soar	80,612	75,716
Bottesford	64,728	48,508

Demand for Road Based Travel

There continues to be a significant demand for road-based travel with 9.6 billion vehicle km driven in 2022 within the county, which was two per cent below pre-covid levels.

However, data published by the Department for Transport stated that on the 8th April 2024 traffic volumes nationally were 99% of the levels during the first week of February 2020 ,and that during the reporting period of between April 2023 and April 2024 weekday traffic volumes have been between 94% and 103% of the pre-pandemic baseline.

In terms of road-based movements within the county, 37% utilised the Local Road Network (LRN) and 63% utilised the Strategic Road Network (SRN), however the make up of traffic is very different. 84% of movements were undertaken by car on the LRN, whereas 75% of movements were car based on the SRN and 25% were movements by Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) or Large Goods Vehicles (LGVs).

Looking to the future, the movement by type remains the same in 2045, however it is anticipated that the vehicles Kms travelled across the network will increase by 2.1bn.

Car Ownership

Based on the 2021 census data, across Leicestershire just under 87% of homes have access to at least one vehicle. 13% of households have access to three vehicles or more, with the highest proportion being in Harborough at 15.5%. Oadby and Wigston has the highest proportion of households with no access to a vehicle at 16.8%.

Freight Movements

In 2022, nationally 1.64 billion tonnes of freight were moved by HGVs operating in the UK, which equated to 156 million HGV journeys. Of which 6 million were intermodal comprising of:

- **76% of intermodal HGV journeys began or ended at a shipping dock**
- **23% of intermodal HGV journeys began or ended at a rail terminal**
- **3% of intermodal HGV journeys began or ended at an airport**
- **Additionally, 5, 846 million kilometres were travelled by empty HGVs across the UK**

The freight and logistics sector is a key economic driver for Leicestershire due to it being placed at the heart of the freight and logistics 'golden triangle'. There are a number of new and existing logistic centres across the county including;

- **Magna Park, Lutterworth**
- **East Midlands Gateway, North West Leicestershire**
- **Logix Park, Hinckley**
- **Hinckley Park, Hinckley**
- **Grove Park, Blaby**

Demand for Aviation

East Midlands Airport

East Midlands Airport is a key international gateway of national and regional economic importance both for the movement of passengers and freight for the East Midlands region. However, one of the key challenges for the airport is that it can only be accessed primarily by road-based travel.

East Midlands Airport handled 3,932,000 passengers in 2023, 19.3% lower than passenger numbers in 2018. In addition, it handled 352,741 tonnes of freight with only Heathrow handling more freight across all airports.

Birmingham Airport

Whilst Birmingham Airport is in the West Midlands it does serve Leicestershire as an international gateway and is easily accessible through the M42 / A42 Corridor. Birmingham Airport also benefits from having access to the rail network through Birmingham International Station, but for access to Leicestershire this requires passengers utilising routes to enable interchange at Birmingham New Street or Coventry.

Birmingham Airport handled 11,479,000 passengers in 2023, 7.8% lower than passenger numbers in 2018. Birmingham Airport handled 21,371 tonnes of freight which is substantially less than East Midlands Airport.



3,932,000
passenger
movements
handled by
East Midlands
Airport in 2023

352, 751 tonnes
of freight
movements
handled by
East Midlands
Airport in 2023

11,479,000
passenger
movements handled
by Birmingham
Airport in 2023

21,371 tonnes
of freight
movements
handled by
Birmingham
Airport in 2023

190

Transport Network Emissions

In 2022 the transport sector across the UK generated 112.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide which is a four per cent increase on 2021. With the transport sector being the largest emitting sector nationally.

Between 2005 and 2019 the emissions share generated by transport within Leicestershire grew from 24% to 35%. The largest transport generator in the county is the road network, notably the SRN which will generate 68% of carbon dioxide emissions in 2045, 44% of which will be generated by HGV movements.

Electric Vehicles (EVs)

As of December 2023, there were 13,100 privately registered private and company EVs and there are 470 electric charging points across the county. There are no on-street electric charging points and a quarter of homes across the county have limited or no access to off-street parking.

Demand for EVs is expected to grow significantly to a projected 415,800 EVs in 2040, and a demand for 11,400 charging points to meet this demand. Through this take up of EVs, carbon dioxide emissions from cars and vans could be reduced by 29% by 2040.

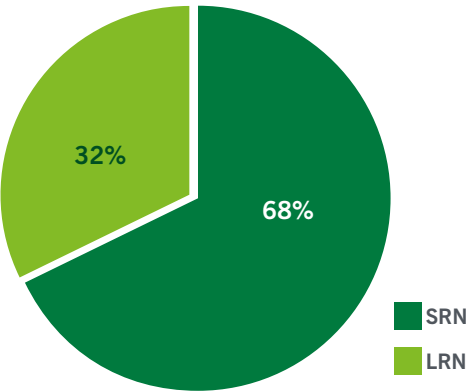
Alternative Fuels

Whilst electric power is viable for some vehicles it is not a reliable fuel for large vehicles including Heavy Goods Vehicles and Large Goods Vehicles. Looking to the future, we need to support alternative fuels and the required infrastructure to provide alternatives to diesel and oil-based fuels which reduce emission creation by the transport network.

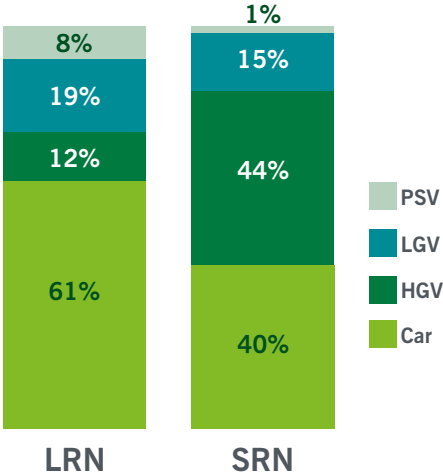
Air Quality

Across the transport network, road-based travel is a key contributor to poor air quality which undermines the health of our communities, notably with respiratory illnesses. Emissions including carbon dioxide, particulate matters and nitrogen oxides are generated particularly by diesel fuelled vehicles.

CO2e Emissions by Road Type



CO2e Emissions by Vehicle Type



Adapting to Climate Change

Leicestershire County Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, with the effects of climate change being felt locally with extreme weather events occurring more frequently. These included record-breaking temperatures of 39°C being recorded in the summer of 2022 and an increased number of storms being reported causing mass disruption. There have been 11 storms during the current storm season of 2023/24, including Storm Henk in January 2024.

These extreme events are having implications for the safe operation of the transport network and the maintenance of our assets. Moving forward we must adapt to these situations to ensure the transport network continues to operate in a safe efficient and reliable state.

Freezing Temperatures

Frost, ice, and snow are the most frequent severe weather events observed. To ensure the operation of the highway network we have an extensive winter service network comprising of approximately 48% network coverage for precautionary gritting.

The transport network is also impacted on by such events, in terms of road condition. The freeze thaw cycle causes significant damage to the road surface which has a considerable impact on road user journeys and experience. In addition, the rail network can also suffer with points becoming frozen and the need to operate at reduced speeds resulting in delay.

Strong Winds

Strong winds can cause extensive damage over a wide area. During periods of heavy winds measures may be put in place to ensure the safe operation of the transport networks speed restrictions, temporary road closures on bridges or raised highways can be put in place. The situation can be worsened should a tree fall, or if a building or structure fail which comprises the operation of the transport network.



Prolonged High Temperatures and drought damage

Prolonged high temperatures can reduce soil moisture content and lower the ground water table resulting in a reduction of strength in supporting soil conditions. This can lead to more occurrences of pavement deterioration and subsidence and surface failures such as significant road cracking, rutting and even subsidence.

On the rail network, during hot weather the rails can expand, or points fail, which results in reduced speeds and cancellations of services which results in delay to passengers.

Prolonged Rainfall

Prolonged rainfall over a sustained period can lead to both surface water and river flooding, and potentially also a rise in groundwater levels as soil reaches its saturation level. Such instances will reduce the capacity of the surrounding land and drainage systems to accept surface water and excess water progressively results in flooding impacting on the operation of the transport network. In addition, it can result in landslips occurring where elements of the transport network are in cuttings or on embankments causing delay and additional financial burdens.

Intense Rainfall

Intense rainfall can lead to localised surface water flooding and 'flash' river flooding. These can be highly localised and can last from a few minutes to several hours. Such instances can also reduce visibility significantly impacting on the safe operation of the transport networks.

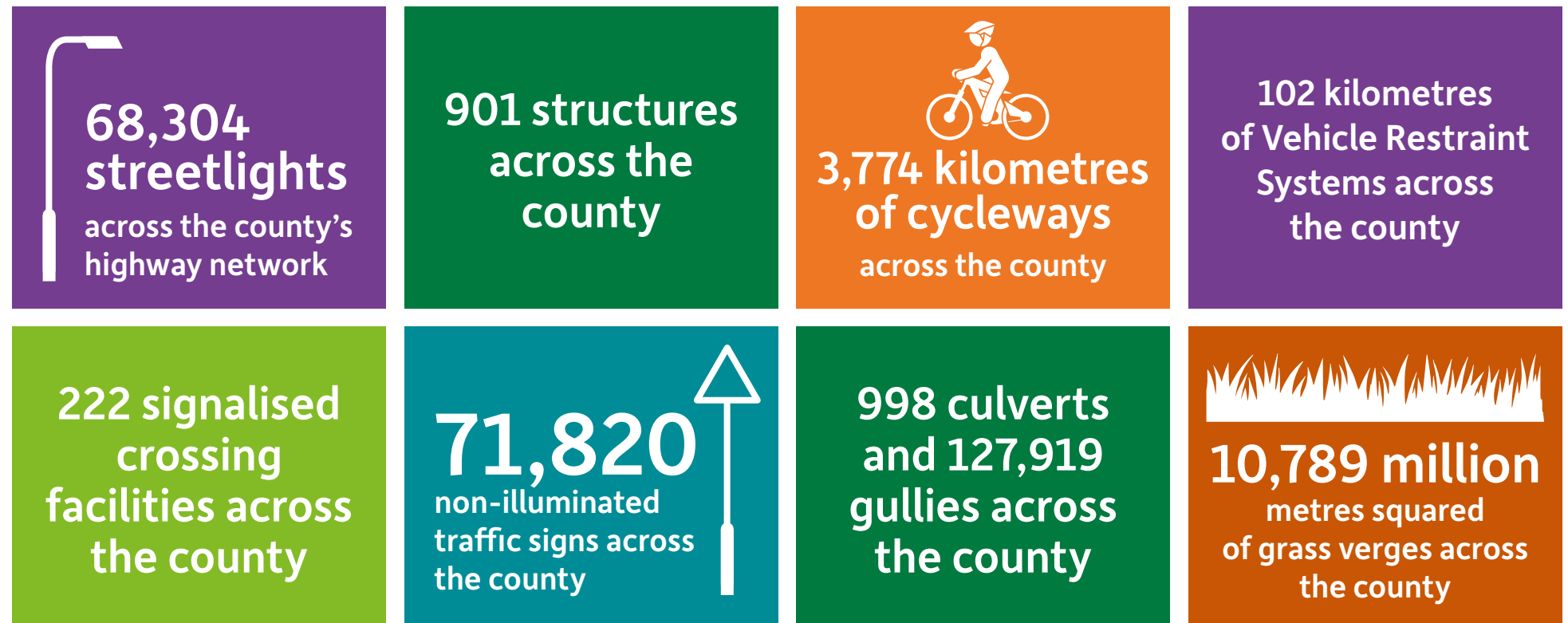
Events such as these can quickly exceed drainage capacity causing severe flooding and compromises the safe operation of the transport network. By their very nature, their exact location and intensity are often hard to forecast far in advance.



Asset Management

Through its legal requirements, Leicestershire County Council functions as the Local Transport Authority and Local Highway Authority and is responsible to ensure that the transport network is well managed to ensure its safe, efficient and resilient operation for all its users.

However, with challenges around climate change, resilience, larger heavier vehicles and finances is placing greater pressure on the condition of our assets, which include:



As we look to the future, in 2043 we expect these are the key challenges which we will need to address through LTP4

Leicestershire's population to grow by 23.3%



The largest population group is expected to be those aged 65 and over

29% increase in vehicle kilometres travelled across the county



52.1% increase in residents living with dementia between 2023 and 2040



A need to accommodate additional 120,000 homes

5.5% increase in carbon emissions impacting on air quality and the health of our communities

26% increase in a demand for rail travel



A nine per cent increase in the number of people suffering from common mental disorders by 2040



Seven per cent reduction in average speeds across the network

Adapting to climate change and extreme weather events to enable reliable and resilient transport network



Only a 1.2% increase in travel by active modes on existing low level of usage



30% increase in freight demand across the county



69% increase in delay observed across the network

Between 2023 and 2040 the total population aged 18 and over predicted to have diabetes will increase by 22.5%

The key areas of focus which were identified are:

- [illegible]

The Strategic Vision



The Strategic Vision - Core Themes

The following core themes have been identified which form the structure and the direction of LTP4.

In addition, these core themes will need to be fully considered for the identification, development and implementation of transport solutions and interventions across the county.

As well as those which are developed by developers, third parties and strategic infrastructure providers to ensure they are meeting the requirements of LTP4.



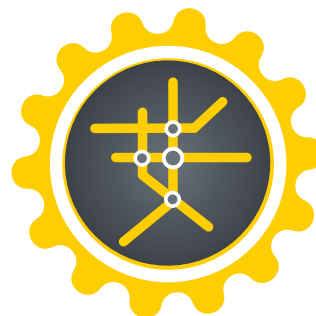
**Enabling Health
And Wellbeing**



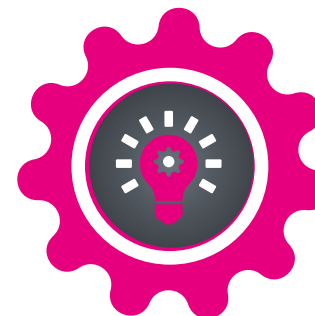
**Protecting The
Environment**



**Delivering
Economic Growth**



**Enhancing Our Transport
Network's Resilience**



Embracing Innovation

Our Vision for Transport Across Leicestershire

“Delivering a safe and connected transport network which is resilient and well-maintained to support the ambitions and health of our communities, deliver economic prosperity whilst safeguarding our environment.”



The Core Policies



Enabling Health
And Wellbeing



Protecting The
Environment



Delivering
Economic
Growth



Enhancing Our
Transport Network's
Resilience



Embracing
Innovation

Core Policy 1: Delivering the Vision

Ensure that all our transport solutions accord with the five core themes to deliver our vision for transport with regard to government policy for the benefit of our communities.



Core Policy 2: Managing Demand

Delivering a safe, accessible, connected and resilient transport network that is well managed and enables communities to access jobs, education and services. The network will also enable efficient movement and delivery of goods to support the local, regional and international markets.



Core Policy 3: Enabling Travel Choice

Enabling travel choice in all of our communities that reflects their unique needs which ensures their safety whilst promoting health & wellbeing and protecting the environment.



Core Policy 4: Delivering Solutions

Work collaboratively to identify and develop innovative transport related solutions which provide good value for money and enable travel choice, improve our transport network users' experiences, and benefit the environment and the health and wellbeing of our communities.



Core Policy 5: Embracing Innovation

Embrace innovation and collaboration, which enables us to decarbonise transport and adapt to climate change to ensure a resilient transport network, while benefiting the environment and promoting the health and wellbeing of our communities.



Core Policy 6: Evaluating Progress

Utilise data, monitoring and evaluation of our transport solutions to enable evidence-based programmes, provide a flexible approach to policy development, technology, and innovation to address changes and challenges which impact our communities.



The Core Policies - Implementation

Core Policy 1: Delivering the Vision

Ensure that all our transport solutions accord with the five core themes to deliver our vision for transport with regard to government policy for the benefit of our communities.

Policy Justification

Within the vision to provide a safe, connected, efficient, resilient and well-managed transport network we will identify transport solutions which meet the needs of our communities.

This will be achieved through the development of a Countywide Strategic Transport Investment Plan and locally focused multimodal area investment plans (MMAIPS) which will tailor the transport solutions to suit the local requirements. This will enable us to resolve the variety of challenges and needs which different localities across the county require.



Enabling Health And Wellbeing

Facilitate a transport network which benefits the health and wellbeing of our communities from transport solutions.



Protecting The Environment

Enable a transport network which minimises the impact and where possible provides benefit to the environment.



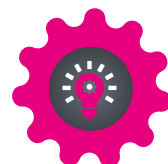
Delivering Economic Growth

Facilitate a transport network which delivers transport solutions that are viable and enable economic growth, and deliver best value for money.



Enhancing Our Transport Network's Resilience

Provide a transport network which ensures the delivery of transport solutions which minimise delay, enable travel choice and positive user experiences.



Embracing Innovation

Actively enable the transport network to trial and implement innovation which provides betterment to our communities and resilience to its operation.

Core Policy 2: Managing Demand

Delivering a safe, accessible, connected and resilient transport network that is well managed and enables communities to access jobs, education and services. The network will also enable efficient movement and delivery of goods to support the local, regional and international markets.

Policy Justification

A key objective of the LTP is to provide residents access to the transport network to enable them to achieve their goals, ambitions and aspirations as well as obtaining the goods and services they desire, while also ensuring the transport network supports businesses in meeting their requirements and needs.

To deliver this, the transport network needs to be resilient and reliable to make sure that users experience minimal delay between their origins and destination, and organisations and businesses can provide and deliver their goods and services in a timely and responsive manner to support the local, regional, national and international economies.



Enabling Health And Wellbeing

Deliver an accessible transport network that meets the requirements of users and provides them with the ability to access employment, education and social amenities which reduces inequality and isolation within our communities.



Protecting The Environment

Provide a transport network which minimises the impact on the environment, and where feasible enable enhancement and recovery towards a reliable transport network.



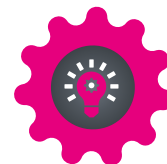
Delivering Economic Growth

Provide a transport network which enables the ability of people and goods to move with ease across the county to support and benefit the economy and our communities.



Enhancing Our Transport Network's Resilience

Provide a transport network which is safe, reliable and resilient which minimises the delay of people and goods across and through the county.



Embracing Innovation

Provide a transport network which responds to new technology, ways to travel and innovation which provides greater resilience in meeting the transport demands of our communities.

Core Policy 3: Enabling Travel Choice

Enabling travel choice in all of our communities that reflects their unique needs which ensures their safety whilst promoting health & wellbeing and protecting the environment.

Policy Justification

A key aspect to provide a resilient transport network is to enable travel choice for users of the transport network, which enables them to utilise the most appropriate form of transport for their unique needs and requirements.

To enable travel choice viable, safe and attractive transport alternatives need to be provided to reduce single occupancy vehicle journeys. This not only includes active and sustainable travel. This would also include access to new fuels and innovation which enable users to identify low carbon methods of travel, which will support and provide benefit to the health and wellbeing of our communities and the environment.



Enabling Health And Wellbeing

Enable travel choice which proactively encourages and allows users to make travel choices which meet their needs and requirements and benefits their and the wider communities health and wellbeing.



Protecting The Environment

Facilitate a transport network to enable travel choices which meet users needs and requirements whilst reducing carbon production, lowering emissions and provide benefit to the environment.



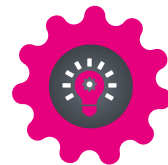
Delivering Economic Growth

Provide a transport network which supports the delivery of new homes and jobs across the county in a sustainable approach by ensuring the provision of transport connectivity to enable travel choice.



Enhancing Our Transport Network's Resilience

Have a well managed transport network which enables travel choice by ensuring viable transport alternatives to car-based journeys that are safe, reliable and resilient to better our communities.



Embracing Innovation

Enable the transport network to support the development of viable low carbon transport alternatives and fuels which provide benefit to the health and wellbeing of communities and the environment.

Core Policy 4: Delivering Solutions

Work collaboratively to identify and develop innovative transport related solutions which provide good value for money and enable travel choice, improve our transport network users' experiences, and benefit the environment and the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Policy Justification

The management, maintenance and improvement of the transport network requires collaboration with communities, key partners and stakeholders to deliver a safe, reliable and resilient transport network.

In addition, through the collaborative process transport solutions will be identified delivered which that maximise economic growth, support sustainable development and minimise delay across the transport network.

All transport solutions will need to fully consider the impact on the health and wellbeing of communities and the environment and seek and delivery benefits to these.



Enabling Health And Wellbeing

Identify and deliver transport solutions across the transport network which supports and benefits the health and wellbeing of our communities.



Protecting The Environment

Develop and deliver transport solutions across the transport network fully consider and where feasible provide betterment to the environment.



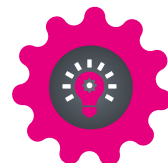
Delivering Economic Growth

Identify and implement viable transport solutions which support economic growth sustainable development and deliver best value for money.



Enhancing Our Transport Network's Resilience

Implement transport solutions which minimise delay and enable a well-managed and resilient transport network to the benefit of our community.



Embracing Innovation

Actively seek to implement innovation which provides betterment to our communities' health & wellbeing, protects the environment and supports economic prosperity.

Core Policy 5: Embracing Innovation

Embrace innovation and collaboration, which enables us to decarbonise transport and adapt to climate change to ensure a resilient transport network, while benefiting the environment and promoting the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Policy Justification

A key aspect of the vision and policy is to provide a reliable transport network which can adapt to challenges and demands in the future. Most notable the biggest challenge is from Climate Change and extreme weather events which can severely impact its operation in a safe and efficient manner.

As one of the largest carbon generators, the transport network needs to actively embrace trials, initiatives, innovation and new ways of working practices which enable the decarbonisation of transport and associated infrastructure and adapt to climate change.

We will seek to work collaboratively to lead the agenda around decarbonising and adapting the transport network to these challenges.



Enabling Health And Wellbeing

Work with our communities, key partners and transport infrastructure providers to embrace innovation which seeks to minimise the impact the transport network has on the health and well-being of our communities.



Protecting The Environment

In collaboration with our communities, key partners and transport infrastructure providers innovation will be embraced which minimises the impact, and where feasible provide benefit to the environment.



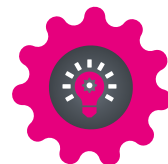
Delivering Economic Growth

Ensure that through maintenance, renewal and improvement identify innovation and activities which support the decarbonisation of the transport network and provide good value for money.



Enhancing Our Transport Network's Resilience

Working collaboratively with our communities, key partners and transport infrastructure providers to embrace innovation which proactively supports the decarbonisation and adapts to climate change.



Embracing Innovation

Work with our communities, key partners and transport infrastructure providers to embrace innovation that provides betterment to the operation of the transport network and reduces its carbon impacts.

Core Policy 6: Evaluating Progress

Utilise data, monitoring and evaluation of our transport solutions to enable evidence-based programmes, provide a flexible approach to policy development, technology, and innovation to address changes and challenges which impact our communities.

Policy Justification

We will proactively monitor and evaluate our transport solutions to identify the benefits which have been delivered in relation to the core themes, through the implementation of the core policies and demonstrate our success in providing betterment to our communities.

This information will enable us to utilise the data to focus on future trends and forecasting so that we are able to adapt the transport network to address these emerging challenges and opportunities.

This approach will also allow evidenced and informed decisions to be made for policy and programme development to support the implementation of innovation, new technology and secure funding opportunities to deliver the vision for the transport network in the county.



Enabling Health And Wellbeing

Work with key partners to identify and monitor the impacts which transport solutions are having on the health & wellbeing of our communities.



Protecting The Environment

Work with key partners to identify and monitor the impacts of transport solutions are having on the environment across the county.



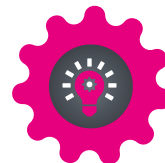
Delivering Economic Growth

Work with partners to understand the potential benefits which have been released through transport solutions to the economy, job creation, and housing delivery.



Enhancing Our Transport Network's Resilience

Work with partners and transport infrastructure providers to monitor and manage the transport network to ensure it operates in a safe, efficient, reliable and resilient manner.



Embracing Innovation

Actively monitor innovations and trials which have been implemented to support new ways of working and operating the transport network whilst ensuring best value for money.

Monitoring Our Success

LTP4 will be fully monitored on a regular basis through 'Monitoring Our Success'. This document will set out the core Key Performance Indicators and Performance Indicators which will be used to assess the success of the LTP4 Core Documents, supporting focused strategies, County Strategic Transport Investment Plan and Multi Modal Area Investment Plans. This will be developed and implemented under Phase 3 of the LTP4 development.

While this is developed, a series of indicators have been identified to assess the progress of the LTP4 Core Document. These will be utilised alongside the monitoring requirements and outputs for the Local Transport Fund, Road Resurfacing Fund and Bus Service Improvement Plan funding as required by the Department for Transport, and the requirements for the Active Travel England Capability Funding.

Monitoring will also include the roll-out of the focused strategies, County Strategic Transport Investment Plan and Multi Modal Area Investment Plans and delivering improvements and wider benefits for our communities.



Life expectancy
Levels of physical activity
Travel by active modes of transport
Public health indicators



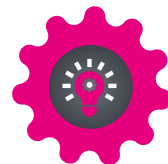
Travel and journey data
Air quality levels
Water quality levels
Biodiversity indicators



Economic growth indicators
Housing delivery
Education and skill levels



Modal share data
Journey time data
Maintenance and renewal indicators
Transport network incidents



Transport solution delivery
Carbon production levels from transport
Time and cost saving

Development of Plan

Phase 1

Phase 1 of the LTP4 began in December 2023 and is currently in progress with the development of the LTP4 Core Document which is anticipated to be adopted in September 2024.

The Core Document will be utilised to provide the strategic case and narrative to support the development and implementation of programmes for the following funding streams.

- **Local Transport Fund**
- **Road Resurfacing Fund**
- **Bus Service Improvement Plan**
- **Active Travel England Capability Funding**

In addition, a programme will be developed to set out the timescales for delivery of the elements set out in phases 2 and 3 of the LTP4 development.

Phase 2

Phase 2 of the LTP4 will take place between the summer of 2024 until spring 2026. During this phase the following initial activities will be undertaken.

Implementation of the LTP4 Core Document:

The LTP4 Core Document will be implemented to support the delivery of the programmes for the Local Transport Fund, Road Resurfacing Fund and Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Focused Strategies:

The programme for the focused strategies will be developed, by reviewing and updating existing strategies including the Cycling and Walking Strategy. As well as the identification of new focused strategies, initial topics will include:

- **Freight and Logistics**
- **Aviation**
- **Decarbonising the Transport Network**
- **A Safe and Accessible Transport Network**

County Strategic Transport Investment Plan:

An evidence led approach will be undertaken to identify the key strategic transport priorities for the county.

Multi Modal Area Investment Plans:

A programme will be developed for the development of the Multi Modal Area Investment Plans and a communications and consultation strategy will be implemented to enable communities, businesses and key partners to input into the development of the plan.

Phase 3

Phase 3 of the LTP4 development will take place between the summer of 2024 and winter 2026.

The core focus will be to set up the monitoring processes for LTP4 as well as the horizon scanning of key trends, changes and emerging policy which will impact on the transport network.

This will require the identification and understanding of the report requirements for the Department for Transport and other bodies including Active Travel England require around existing and future funding streams including;

- **Local Transport Fund**
- **Road Resurfacing Fund**
- **Bus Service Improvement Plan**
- **Active Travel England Capability Funding**

In addition, monitoring will also be focused on the core themes, and work will take place with partners to understand their reporting and how these can be linked to monitoring of the LTP4. Alongside the delivery of schemes and initiatives identified within the investment plans.



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Leicestershire County Council Local Transport Plan 4 Core Document
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Environmental Report – Non-Technical Summary
May 2024



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Document Control

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Contents

Non-Technical Summary	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 LCC Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) Core Document	1
1.3 The SEA Process	3
1.4 Determining the Scope of the SEA	3
1.5 SEA Objectives	4
1.6 Assessment Findings	5
1.7 Consideration of Alternatives	6
1.8 Monitoring	6
1.9 Consultation and Next Steps	6

Non-Technical Summary

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This is the Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Report prepared for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process to assess the environmental effects of Phase 1 of the fourth Leicestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP4). Phase 1 of LTP4 consists of the 'Core Document', containing the Strategic Vision, Core Policies, and Core Themes which will underpin LTP4 and its supporting strategies for the development, operation, and maintenance of new and existing transport systems across Leicestershire. The purpose of the SEA is to provide a high-level review of the environmental effects of the plan.

1.2 LCC Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) Core Document

- 1.2.1 As required by the Local Transport Act 2008, Leicestershire County Council (LCC) is required to update of their Local Transport Plan (LTP) periodically. While previous iterations of the LTP have included Leicester and Leicestershire, with LCC working in collaboration with Leicester City Council, the fourth local transport plan (LTP4) only accounts for the LCC administrative boundary. This area the plan covers includes the seven districts of Blaby, Charnwood, Dalby and Wigston, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth, Melton, and North West Leicestershire. LTP4 began development in 2021 when the current iteration was identified as being no longer fit for purpose.
- 1.2.2 LCC has identified five key themes from which to form the structure and direction of LTP4 which will need to be fully considered while establishing transport solutions across the County. The Core Themes are as follows:
- Enabling Health and Wellbeing
 - Protecting our Environment
 - Delivering Economic Growth
 - Enhancing our Transport Network's Resilience
 - Embracing Innovation
- 1.2.3 During early development, the decision was made for LTP4 to be produced across three phases. Phase 1 of LTP4, the LTP Core Document is the subject of this SEA. Future stages of LTP4 will require further separate assessment as they progress in development.
- 1.2.4 The LTP4 Core Document identifies those key challenges faced across Leicestershire in relation to transport. It provides an overarching Strategic Vision, Core Themes and Core Policies while outlining how these will be implemented. It

provides the strategic case and narrative to aid the development and implementation of the overall programme.

- 1.2.5 The following Strategic Vision for Transport across Leicestershire has been developed as part of LTP4 Phase 1:

“Delivering a safe and connected transport network which is resilient and well-managed to support the ambitions and health of our communities, deliver economic prosperity whilst safeguarding our environment.”

- 1.2.6 The delivery of this strategic visions will be supporting by the following six Core Policies as outlined below, as assessed in the SEA:

Core Policy 1: Delivering the Vision

“Ensure that all our transport solutions accord with the five core themes to deliver our vision for transport with regard to government policy for the benefit of our communities.”

Core Policy 2: Meeting Demand

“Delivering a safe, accessible, connected and resilient transport network that is well managed and enables communities to access jobs education and services. The network will also enable efficient movement and delivery of goods to support the local, regional and international markets.”

Core Policy 3: Enabling Travel Choice

“Enabling travel choice in all of our communities that reflects their unique needs which ensures their safety whilst promoting health & wellbeing and protecting the environment.”

Core Policy 4: Delivering Solutions

“Work collaboratively to identify and develop innovative transport related solutions which provide good value for money and enable travel choice, improve our transport network users' experiences, and benefit the environment and the health and wellbeing of our communities.”

Core Policy 5: Embracing Innovation

“Embrace innovation and collaboration, which enables us to decarbonise transport and adapt to climate change to ensure a resilient transport network, whilst benefiting the environment and promoting the health and wellbeing of our communities.”

Core Policy 6: Evaluating Progress

“Utilise data, monitoring and evaluation of our transport solutions to enable evidence-based programmes, provide a flexible approach to policy development,

technology, and innovation to address changes and challenges which impact our communities.”

1.3 The SEA Process

- 1.3.1 SEA is a legal requirement set out in The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004¹ (the SEA Regulations). SEA is a systematic process designed to:
- 1.3.2 *‘Provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.’*
- 1.3.3 SEA provides an iterative process which will help LCC with achieving sustainable development through their production of the LTP4 Core Document. The SEA predicts and evaluates the likely environmental impacts of implementing the LTP4 Core Document and its alternative options, so LCC can make informed choices over what policies and development to pursue in their Plan. The SEA also provides recommendations to LCC which, if adopted, would help to avoid or mitigate any likely adverse impacts of options or alternatively would help to enhance the likely positive impacts. The SEA seeks to make a meaningful contribution towards ensuring that the LTP4 Core Document delivers sustainable development through its transport network.
- 1.3.4 The definition of ‘environment’ includes not only the natural environment and built/historic environment, but also effects such as human health and material assets. It also requires a thorough analysis of a plan’s effects including secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects. Mitigation and monitoring measures are recommended to address significant effects.

1.4 Determining the Scope of the SEA

- To determine the scope of the SEA, a desk-based study was completed to assemble information on the baseline from which the assessment of the LTP4 Core Document would be completed. This first comprised of a review of other plans, programmes, and objectives. This helped to identify key issues, and identify any inconsistencies, constraints or any potential major sources of tension that could hinder the achievement of the objectives of the LTP4 Core Document. Baseline information, along with the identification of environmental issues was then collected in relation to a series of SEA Topics. Seven Topics were refined from those provided within the SEA Regulations in consideration of their relevance to the LTP4 Core Document. These were:

¹ Available online at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/made/data.pdf> [Accessed 08.05.24]

Biodiversity, Population and Human Health, Geology and Soils, the Water Environment, Air Quality, Climate Change, Waste and Material Assets, Cultural Heritage, and Landscape, Townscape, and Visual Amenity.

- 1.4.1 The baseline, in combination with a suite of SEA Objectives developed from the seven Topics, was then used to define the scope of the assessment. This was formally presented in a Scoping Report which also included the assessment methodology. The Scoping Report was published in April 2024 for a five-week consultation period with Natural England, Historic England, and the Environment Agency.

1.5 SEA Objectives

- 1.5.1 From those SEA Topics used to determine the Scope of the SEA, a series of 14 Objectives were developed to measure the performance of the LTP4 Core Document against the existing environmental and social baseline and other relevant plans, programmes, and environmental protection objectives. SEA Objectives in relation to each Topic are as follows:

- 1) To protect and enhance biodiversity
- 2) To protect and enhance human health and wellbeing
- 3) To reduce levels of crime and fear of crime associated with the transport network
- 4) To protect and enhance accessibility and connectivity
- 5) To promote alternative modes of travel, including active travel
- 6) To protect and enhance geodiversity and soil quality
- 7) To protect and enhance the water environment and reduce risk of flooding
- 8) To protect and enhance air quality
- 9) To minimise carbon emissions associated with the transport network
- 10) To ensure resilience to climate change
- 11) To minimise waste generation and support re-use and recycling
- 12) To protect function and usage of material assets
- 13) To conserve and enhance the historic and cultural environment
- 14) To protect and enhance landscape, townscape, and visual amenity

- 1.5.2 For each SEA Objective, a series of Guide Questions was developed to assist the assessment.

1.6 Assessment Findings

- 1.6.1 It should be noted that due to the LTP4 Core Document undergoing continued development during the completion of the Environmental Report, there is variation between the Vision and Core Policies assessed, and the latest iterations available. The LTP4 Core Document and Environmental Report will be subject to a consultation period. Following the results of this, those changes made since assessment was completed, along with any further amendments informed by the consultation period, will be subject to reassessment.
- 1.6.2 The performance of the LTP4 Core Document was evaluated against the SEA Objectives using an assessment matrix. Each of the six Core Policies and the Vision was assessed in this way. For each, a score between significant positive, minor positive, neutral, minor negative, significant negative alignment was assigned in relation to how they accorded with each SEA Objective. The certainty of this scoring between low, medium, and high was also provided.
- 1.6.3 For those SEA Topics and associated Objectives that relate to the natural and built environment, the version of the LTP Core Document assessed generally aligned positively. The Vision addressed the safeguarding of the environment while the Core Policies sought to protect and reduce impact while using innovation and collaboration to provide benefit. There could, however, be improvement through reference to supporting enhancement where possible to ensure improved delivery in relation to the SEA Guide Questions and therefore greater improvement in the long term. This recognises the role that the transport network has in helping deliver environmental enhancements as well as avoiding adverse effects.
- 1.6.4 There was also positive alignment to Population and Human Health, the Vision supporting, and Core Policies ensuring safety and promoting health and wellbeing. For further improvement, there could be greater consistency in relation to providing for *all* of Leicestershire's communities and more reference to actively supporting enhancement.
- 1.6.5 There was generally positive alignment to the SEA Objectives in relation to Climate Change through those indirect benefits associated with environmental protection and safeguarding, and direct reference to decarbonisation. There was also indirect benefit through the mention of delivery of a well-maintained, efficient network. This could be further improved by making, explicit reference to climate resilience.
- 1.6.6 The measures proposed in the SA to improve the Core Document wording will now be considered by LCC when finalising the LTP4.

1.7 Consideration of Alternatives

- 1.7.1 The SEA is required to include the consideration of *“any reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme”*. As part of the development of the LTP4 Core Document, a series of alternatives were considered by LCC for the Vision and Core Policies. In each instance, these alternatives were assessed within the Environmental Report alongside the preferred choice, considering how overall finding may have differed had they been adopted instead.
- 1.7.2 Also required is an outline of the reasoning for selection between each alternative and preferred option. This ensures there is transparency in relation to the decision-making process undertaken by LCC during the development of the LTP4 Core Document, providing an audit trail in relation to the selection of those elements being assessed by the SEA. Appraisal findings for each alternative are provided within the Environmental Report, alongside justifications given by LCC as to why each element was either selected or discounted.

1.8 Monitoring

- 1.8.1 A Monitoring Framework has been developed to negate the risk of the effects of the LTP4 Core Document differing from those anticipated, such as due to unforeseen circumstances. This will enable LCC to make relevant changes to the Core Document should any unexpected negative effects arise or expected positive effects do not occur. Similarly, indicators within the Monitoring Framework may be revised or replaced where they are not informing long term outcomes for the LTP4.
- 1.8.2 It should be noted that the Core Document is the first phase of LTP4 development and relates to the overarching Vision, Core Policies and Core Themes. It is, therefore, recognised that determining the exact impact of implementing these policies at this level will involve a significant amount of uncertainty and therefore successful monitoring will pose challenges. Future phases of LTP4 will include more specific and detailed proposals which will be simpler to monitor. The outline monitoring framework is provided within the Environmental Report.

1.9 Consultation and Next Steps

- 1.9.1 Consultation is integral to the SEA process, providing a mechanism to ensure that interested parties and organisations and the public have an opportunity to inform the process and comment on the decision-making process.

- 1.9.2 The Environmental Report will be subject to consultation alongside the draft LTP4 Core Document. Any significant changes made in response to consultation will be subject to further SEA assessment.

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**CABINET – 24 MAY 2024****IBSTOCK COMMUNITY MANAGED LIBRARY****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the outcome of the Registration of Interest (ROI) process for Ibstock Community Managed Library (CML) and associated consultation regarding alternative library provision in the event of the permanent closure of the Library.
2. Ibstock CML temporarily closed at the end of March 2024, since when, in accordance with the agreed process, the Council has sought to find a new group to run the library and consulted on alternative provision. More detail is given in Part B of this report.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that:
 - a) The outcome of the Registration of Interest process for Ibstock Community Managed Library (CML) and the associated consultation on alternative library provision be noted;
 - b) The closure of Ibstock CML be approved;
 - c) The Director of Adults and Communities, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member and the Local Member, be authorised to put in place the alternative library provision for Ibstock.

Reasons for Recommendation

4. The existing community management library group has ceased to operate, and the ROI process has not resulted in a viable new group being identified.
5. The library temporarily closed at the end of March 2024 and it is desirable to put in place permanent alternative library provision as soon as possible. The proposals consulted on can be put in place by June 2024 and do not require any additional financial resources.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, the alternative library provision set out in paragraphs 37 to 40 below will be put in place by June 2024.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

7. In September 2014, the Cabinet approved the remodelling of the library service to include the provision of a number of community managed libraries.
8. On 6 July 2018, the Cabinet approved the process the Council would follow should a community managed library group no longer be able to run a library.

Resource Implications

9. The alternative library provision proposed utilises existing mobile library infrastructure, including existing routes, so there are no additional cost implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
10. In the event of closure, the community managed library group is responsible for removing items that belong to them from the premises and Leicestershire Library Service will remove any items belonging to the County Council. There is an up-to-date inventory in place. Any items of furniture or shelving in suitable condition belonging to the Council will be offered for use to other CMLs before being disposed of.
11. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Legal Implications

12. The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 creates a statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient library service' for all persons who live, work or study in the area. The guidance issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport confirms that the councils must meet the duty this in a way which meets the needs of local library users taking into account the resources available and in consultation with communities and through analysis of evidence around local needs.
13. Beyond this the guidance recognises that *'Councillors need to make decisions about how money is invested in the interests of the whole community. They will have competing priorities across a wide portfolio of local service provision and councillors and officers must reconcile these matters against the background of their legal requirements. Councils can take their available resources into account when deciding how to deliver their public library service'*.
14. The steps referred to in the report showing the analysis of library use, the consultation on alternative options address the requirements referred to above.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

Mr. Dan Harrison CC - Ibstock and Appleby division

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PART B

Background

Ilstock Library

15. Ilstock CML is located between Ilstock Junior School and St. Denys CofE Infant School, Melbourne Road in Ilstock and occupies part of a mobile classroom, under licence with the County Council. The other part of the building is used as changing rooms by the Junior School.
16. Ilstock CML transferred to community management in 2019 and has since been open seven hours per week over three days. In 2023/24 it issued 3,371 books and had 145 active library users.
17. In September 2023 the Group running Ilstock CML gave notice to the County Council of their intention to close the library. The Group had struggled to generate support and despite its best efforts and support from Leicestershire Library Service and Voluntary Action Leicestershire, the Group felt it was no longer sustainable.

Procedure in the event of possible closures

18. The Cabinet in July 2018 approved the procedure to be followed in the event of any CML Groups being unable to continue to provide a library service (Appendix C to this report). The outcome of the ROI process and associated consultation on alternative provision is set out below.

Registration of Interest Process

19. Following notice being accepted a ROI process was launched on 9 November 2023, to seek a new group to take on the library. The process was promoted locally and on the County Council's website. Detailed information about the library, the ROI process and the ROI form was made available, and officers held an information event at the library on the 27 November 2023 for interested parties to find out more and ask questions.
20. The deadline for submission of ROIs was 22 December 2023 and two ROI were subsequently received. The information provided in the ROIs did not satisfy all the essential criteria and it was agreed to seek clarification on those areas. One of the ROI's was subsequently withdrawn, the submission having intended to show support for the library, rather than proposing to run the library.
21. The local Member for Ilstock and Appleby, Mr. Harrison CC, chaired a meeting on 11 March 2024 for the interested parties to seek clarifications. The meeting was attended by the Cabinet Lead Member for Adults and Communities and Library Service Officers. This was a positive meeting with all parties expressing their desire to seek the best outcome for Ilstock. As a result, it was agreed that

it was appropriate to give the group leading the remaining ROI additional time to update and amend their ROI following changes in circumstances.

22. The ROI was subsequently submitted on 5 April 2024. However, it has not been recommended to take forward to outline business case stage due to sustainability concerns. The principal concern related to the financial plan, which showed insufficient income to cover core operating costs, meaning the group would operate with a deficit. This position also meant that, even once established, the group would not hold the minimum three months of expenditure reserve which the County Council expects all CMLs to hold.

Consultation on alternative library provision

23. A concurrent seven-week public consultation took place from 9 November 2023 until 22 December 2023 to seek views on the County Council's proposals for alternative library provision in Ibstock, in the event the library closed. The options presented were to:
 - implement a Mobile Library Service stop in Ibstock;
 - signpost people to other libraries;
 - signpost people to the free digital library offer.
24. The consultation survey was available in digital format and paper copies were provided in Ibstock CML and printed on request at any County Council managed library.
25. Stakeholder meetings were held with Ibstock Junior School and Ibstock CML trustees and volunteers.

Consultation responses

26. The survey sought to understand how people currently use Ibstock CML and other parts of the library service and people's views on the alternative library provision described. There were 21 responses to the survey. The full details are attached as Appendix A and a summary of the key findings is given below.
27. Most respondents (53%) stated that they used Ibstock CML and the majority (55%) visited the library on a weekly basis. Almost all visited to borrow books (99%), with research and study (76%) and attending events (64%) the next most common reasons.
28. Half of those consulted (50%) also used Coalville library and 31% did not use another library.
29. Over half (53%) were aware of the digital library offer and of those 56% had used it. Views were fairly evenly split between those who would (48%) and those who would not use (53%) the digital library in the future.

30. People were less certain about whether they would use a Mobile Library Service, with 44% being undecided, 33% stated they would and 22% would not. Views on a preferred day of the week for the mobile to visit was fairly evenly split, but an afternoon stop was a strong preference.
31. The majority of respondents (75%) said they would use another library if Ibstock CML closed.
32. Most respondents (70%) disagreed with the proposals for alternative provision, although responses to the questions show that most already use another library alongside Ibstock, with Coalville as the nearest library being most used.
33. The free text comments indicated that Ibstock CML is valued by those that use the library.
34. A separate proposal was submitted to establish a new CML library in nearby Ravenstone. As this was not a ROI to operate Ibstock CML, it could not be considered under the ROI process but has been recorded as consultation feedback. Ravenstone is a similar distance from Ibstock as Coalville or Measham and therefore does not offer any additional mitigation in the event that Ibstock CML closes.

Proposals

35. As the ROI process has not identified another group to run Ibstock CML approval is sought to close the Library and put in alternative provision.
36. Ibstock CML temporarily closed at the end of March 2024 and in April a temporary weekly mobile library service was instated to serve the community. This stop is receiving an average of eight users a week.
37. If the closure of Ibstock CML is agreed, it is recommended that alternative library provision is confirmed as soon as possible. This would see a regular three-weekly mobile stop established. Usage would be reviewed after six months to see if any improvements could be made.
38. Staff at Coalville Library, the nearest County Council managed library, can support customers that previously used Ibstock CML. Coalville Library is open 56 hours per week and is approximately four miles from Ibstock. There is an hourly bus service to Coalville which takes around 22 minutes.
39. The Council's digital library offer is a free offer available to all library members who have a suitable digital device and internet access.
40. Anyone who is temporarily or permanently housebound and wishes to use the library service can access the Home Library Service. This service will arrange for a volunteer to deliver books to their home every three weeks and can also provide support in accessing the digital library offer, where people have access to a digital device.

41. If Ibstock CML is closed the current library space will be emptied (Ibstock Junior School will continue to use the other half of the building, in line with the lease arrangements) and future usage of the building will be considered as part of the County Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan.

Conclusion

42. The approved procedure in the event of possible closure of a CML has been followed. The ROI process has not identified a group in a position to enter into a support agreement with the County Council to operate the library. Therefore, in line with the procedure approval is sought to close Ibstock CML and put in alternative library provision.
43. This report will be circulated to members of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information.

Equality Implications

44. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and is attached to this report as Appendix B.
45. The EIA identifies a potential adverse impact to children and young families that currently use the library after school. Where families are unable to travel to Coalville or Measham to access the library service, and/or are unable to access digital library resources, the alternative provision is unlikely to meet their needs.
46. It is recommended that the mobile provision is reviewed at six months and one year, before moving to business as usual. This will provide an opportunity to respond to user demand, for example adjusting the length of stop, time or day of the week, subject to the capacity of the wider mobile library service timetable.

Human Rights Implications

47. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Health Implications

48. The following potential health implications have been identified:
 - a) Social Cohesion and Community - The library provides a community space and this would be lost if the library were to close. The impact is likely to be small given the library is only open seven hours per week and there are other community spaces in the village. Promotion of the alternative library provision and other community spaces will help mitigate any negative impact if the library were to close.

- b) Employment and the Economy - Libraries provide free access to advice and information and free use of public access PCs, these facilities can support those seeking employment and wishing to develop skills. The impact is likely to be small; the library has 145 active users. Residents that would benefit from these facilities and resource will be directed to nearby Coalville Library, which offers a wider range of resources and support for job seekers, including public access PCs and free Wi-Fi.
- c) Education and Skills - Libraries provide access to a range of resources which support learning and development for all ages and developing reading skills is proven to be a key for a child's development. Closure of the library would reduce access to these resources, but the impact will be limited. The library is available for seven hours per week, nearby libraries, in particular offer a good range of learning resources and activities that support the development of reading for young children, including under 5's. For those users with access to a digital device there is a comprehensive digital offer, including newspapers and magazines, as well as fiction and non-fiction publications.
- d) Access to Public Services - The local authority has a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. If Ibstock library were to close there are two other local libraries within four miles, a regular mobile library stop would be introduced, and the digital library offer is freely available to those with a digital device. In addition, individuals that are temporarily or permanently housebound can access the Home Library Service which delivers books to people's homes. These measures would help to mitigate any negative impact resulting from closure.

Background Papers

Leicestershire County Council - Corporate Asset Management Plan 2022-2026

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s178212/Appendix%20-%20CAMP%20Annual%20Performance%20and%20Strategy%20Update%202022-23.pdf>

Report to the Cabinet: 19 September 2014 - Outcome of Consultation on Proposals for Changes in the Delivery of Library Services

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=4190>

Report to the Cabinet: 6 July 2018 - Community Managed Libraries

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=5412>

Appendices

Appendix A - Results of the Consultation on Alternative Library provision in the event of closure

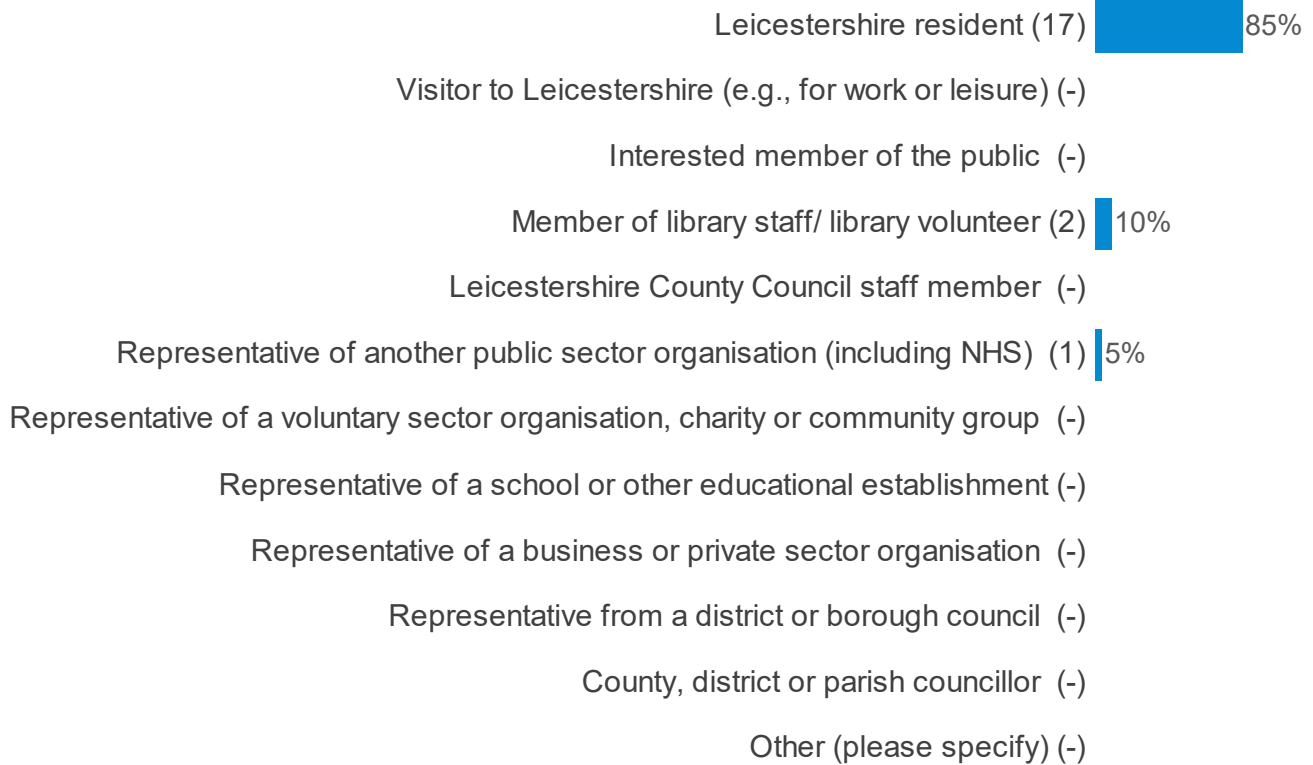
Appendix B - EIA

Appendix C - Procedure in the event of possible closure of a CML

Library Closure - Ibstock 2023

Overall 21 respondents completed this questionnaire.

In which role are you responding to this consultation?



If you indicated that you are a representative of a school, organisation or business, please provide your details (Organisation:)

Ibstock Parish Council

Are you providing your organisation's official response to the consultation?

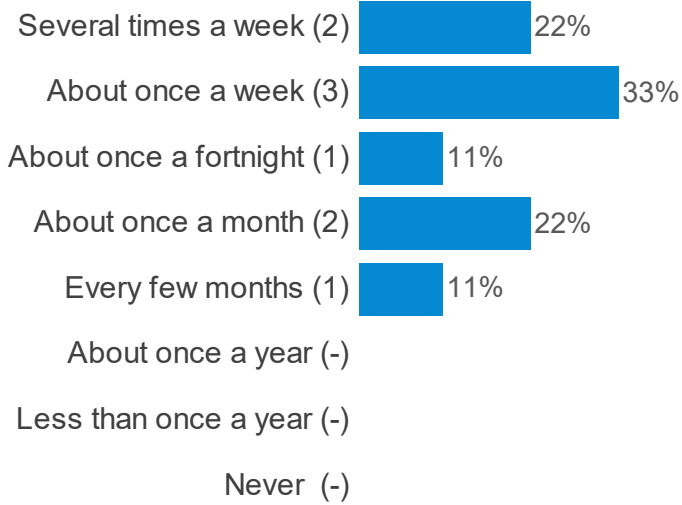


Do you use Ibstock library?

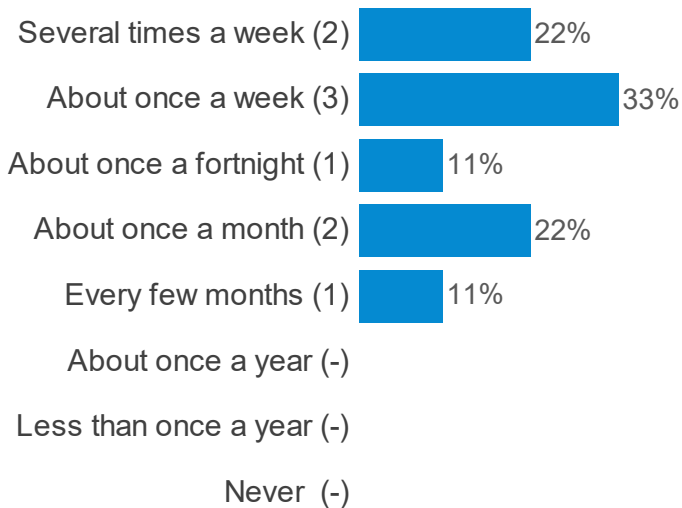


Library Closure - Ibstock 2023

How often, if at all, do you do the following at Ibstock library? Please select one option per row. (Visit the library)



How often, if at all, do you do the following at Ibstock library? Please select one option per row. (Borrow a book)





How often, if at all, do you do the following at Ibstock library? Please select one option per row. (Use the public computers)

Several times a week (-)

About once a week (-)

About once a fortnight (-)

About once a month (1)  14%

Every few months (1)  14%

About once a year (-)

Less than once a year (-)

Never (5)  71%

How often, if at all, do you do the following at Ibstock library? Please select one option per row. (Use the printing/photocopying services)

Several times a week (-)

About once a week (-)

About once a fortnight (-)

About once a month (-)

Every few months (2)  29%

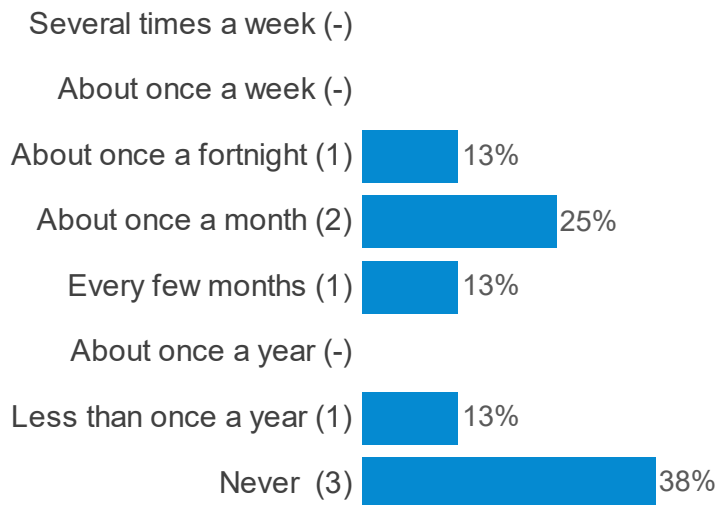
About once a year (-)

Less than once a year (-)

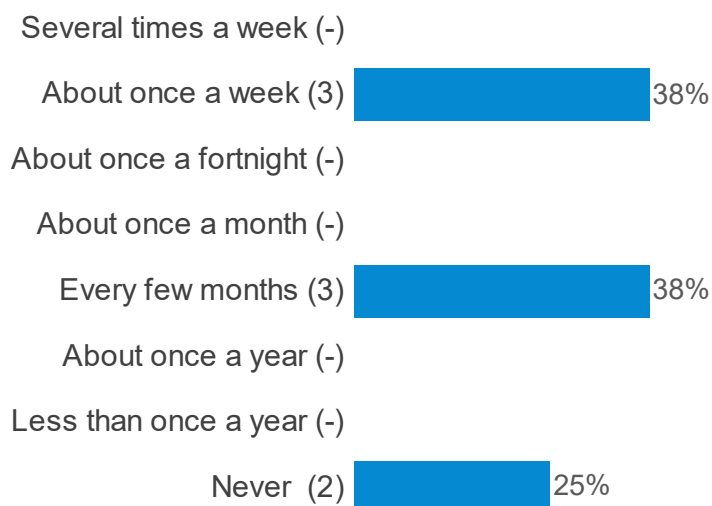
Never (5)  71%

Library Closure - Ibstock 2023

How often, if at all, do you do the following at Ibstock library? Please select one option per row. (Attend events at the library)



How often, if at all, do you do the following at Ibstock library? Please select one option per row. (Use the library for study/reference/education)



Library Closure - Ibstock 2023

How often, if at all, do you do the following at Ibstock library? Please select one option per row. (Access information)

Several times a week (-)

About once a week (-)

About once a fortnight (-)

About once a month (2)  29%Every few months (1)  14%

About once a year (-)

Less than once a year (-)

Never (4)  57%

How often, if at all, do you do the following at Ibstock library? Please select one option per row. (Access face-to-face advice)

Several times a week (-)

About once a week (1)  14%

About once a fortnight (-)

About once a month (-)

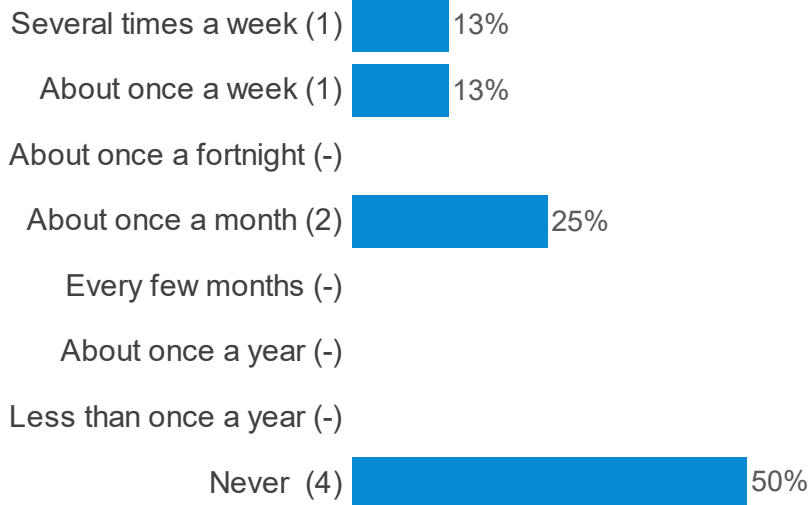
Every few months (1)  14%

About once a year (-)

Less than once a year (1)  14%Never (4)  57%

Library Closure - Ibstock 2023

How often, if at all, do you do the following at Ibstock library? Please select one option per row. (Use the library space to meet people)



Library Closure - Ibstock 2023

Do you use any other libraries? Please tick all applicable.

*Please note the libraries in bold are the nearest to Ibstock.

Anstey (-)	
Ashby de la Zouch (4)	25%
Barrow upon Soar (-)	
Birstall (-)	
Blaby (-)	
Bottesford (-)	
Braunstone Town (-)	
Broughton Astley (-)	
Burbage (-)	
Castle Donington (-)	
Coalville (8)	50%
Cosby (-)	
Countesthorpe (-)	
Desford (-)	
Earl Shilton (-)	
East Goscote (-)	
Enderby (-)	
Fleckney (-)	
Glenfield (-)	
Glenhills (-)	
Great Glen (-)	
Groby (-)	
Hathern (-)	
Hinckley (-)	
Ibstock (4)	25%
Kegworth (-)	
Kibworth (-)	
Kirby Muxloe (-)	
Leicester Forest East (-)	
Loughborough (1)	6%
Lutterworth (-)	
Market Bosworth (-)	
Market Harborough (-)	
Markfield (-)	
Measham (1)	6%
Melton Mowbray (-)	
Mountsorrel (-)	
Narborough (-)	
Newbold Verdon (-)	
Oadby (-)	
Quorn (-)	
Ratby (-)	
Rothley (-)	
Sapcote (-)	
Shepshed (-)	
Sileby (-)	
Stoney Stanton (-)	
Syston (-)	
Thurmaston (-)	
Wigston Magna (-)	
A non-county council library (e.g. in Leicester City, in another county, or a school library) (-)	
Mobile library (1)	6%
No (5)	31%

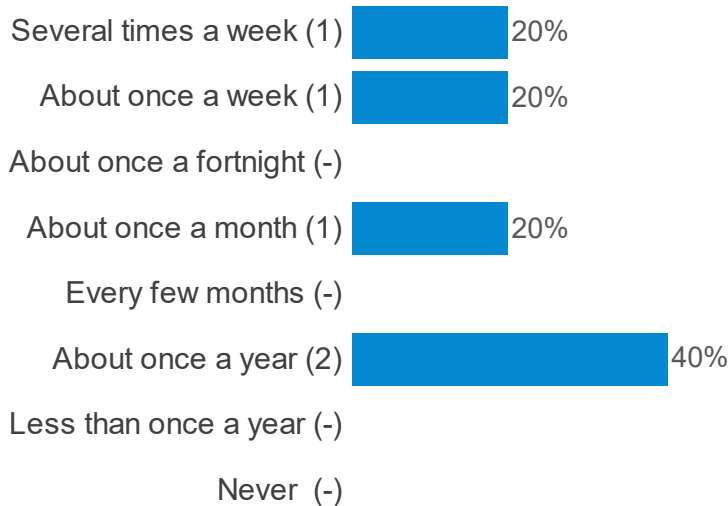
Are you aware of Leicestershire County Council's digital library services which offer free e-books, e-audiobooks, e-magazines and e-newspapers?



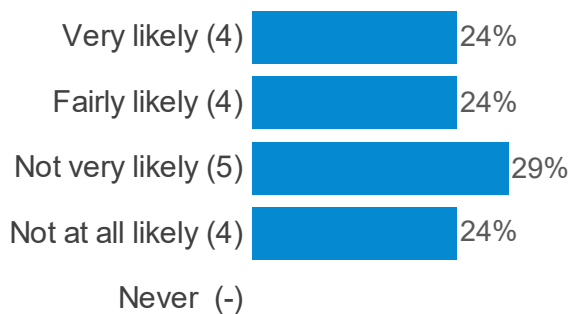
Have you used these digital library services before?



How often, if at all, do you use these digital library services? (Visit the library)

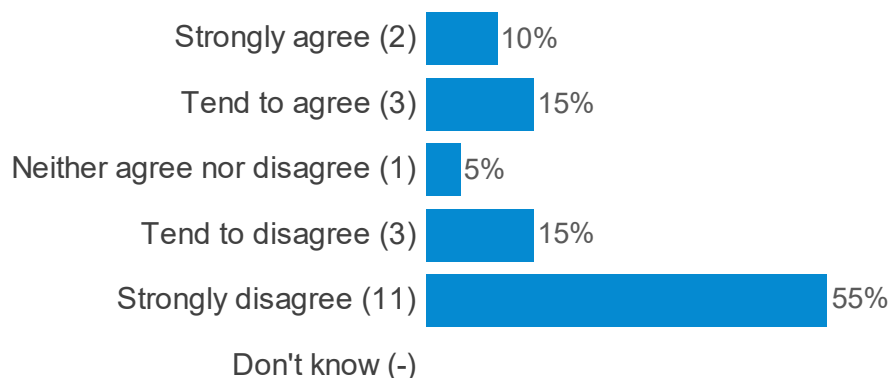


How likely, if at all, would you be to use Leicestershire County Council's digital library services in the future?



Library Closure - Ibstock 2023

Within the context of reducing council budgets, if Ibstock library were to close, to what extent do you agree or disagree that our proposals provide an adequate alternative to the current service?



Why do you say this?

had to use mobile library previously, but limited supply of books

You cannot replace books with digital there is no comparison

A library is a vital service to the community. Whilst having access to digital services or libraries in nearby towns is better than nothing, we are still at a disadvantage. Cuts to public transport mean that those who cannot drive cannot easily access the libraries in Coalville and Ashby. Having access to digital services may help this but it doesn't support those who need physical books, or parents who cannot afford the rising cost of baby and toddler groups so visit the library to get out the house. Literacy is so important to a civilised society!

The lack of printer and computer facilities for those who don't have access at home. No place for people to meet on a book bus. No opportunity for a book group, as has been run at Ibstock for many months now.

Not the same experience for children as actually going to a library and physically handling books.

Mobile library service once a month is not adequate. It does not offer computers or other services such as the book group. I live in the next village to Ibstock that does not have a bus service to Coalville. Ibstock library volunteers provide a friendly, helpful service which I appreciate as a retired, isolated person.

I use the library weekly with my children and it's a wonderful service. We attend after school and having the library so local to the schools, means my children's love of reading has increased. They are excited each time we come and to have this service stopped or taken away would be a travesty. A mobile library that arrives once a month, would not feed the appetite of my children's reading needs.

Ibstock is a large village which benefits from having a library. It particularly benefits children who live in the village as it is inexpensive to access and no transport costs are required to get to the next closest local library.

Mobile libraries are a poor substitute and public transport links to Coalville and other towns are not great, are an additional cost to families and an inconvenience ...deter people from using libraries.

I think everyone should have access to their local library

Providing a mobile library would be the best option to both library users and the council in these difficult economic times. I personally would be willing to wait for and meet the library van but not so keen to travel to Coalville I would probably revert to getting my books from charity shops.

A mobile service wouldn't provide the same frequency of service as the static library. Opening hours are already restricted and difficult for working people to access. Bus services within the village have been severely cut already.

Why do you say this?

There is no comparison to a physical book, mobile libraries will provide a smaller range. Also, digital resources only go so far as its easy for children to be distracted by apps etc, to confirm this is coming from someone who works in cyber security so this is not a biased view. I have a five year old who uses this library from the age of three frequently and its been fantastic, suffice to say its terrible news that the council isn't supporting what is essentially a valuable community source for education.

The library should be a book lending service. A mobile van does not provide the same service and the trip to access services in Coalville is not suitable for all

Are there any alternative solutions for a replacement service that you think the council should consider?

not really

No keep libraris open they are so useful to kids and children and families that cannot afford to purchase books

I appreciate that cuts to funding make it very difficult for services like community libraries to continue and something needs to give. It is a very sad and disappointing situation. Perhaps the opening hours of the library are hindering things at the moment? More people may be inclined to help if the library were open later in the evening or later on a Saturday to accommodate those of us who work but wish to volunteer? As for the cost, would a mobile library be beneficial for serving the smaller villages? Would the cost of this be cheaper than the cost of renting and heating a venue?

Mobile library, including Heather.

Share an existing community resource in Ibstock

Allow the schools to run the library together

A local story time with a book reader for the kids

Mobile library which visits the village daily

IF the community library in its current location cannot continue then partnering with other social hubs in Ibstock might be considered.

A volunteer library

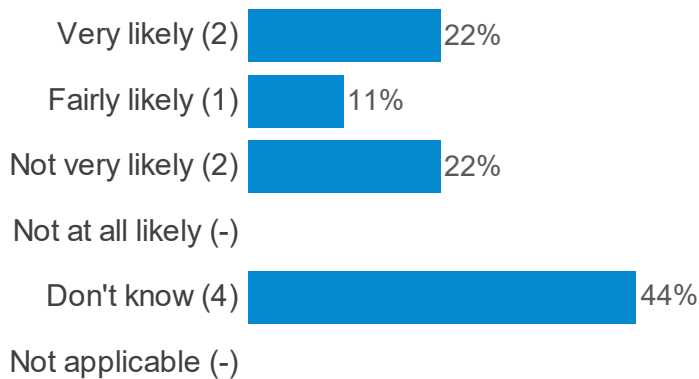
I can't think of anything.

A consortium where trustees run several volunteer run village libraries and pool their expertise.

The council should cover costs and keep it going, terrible that they are abandoning such resources to save money. Councils receive significant budgets and money could easily be taken from elsewhere.

If Ibstock library is closed (which seems sensible) it would be good to see any budget that has previously gone to Ibstock library re-allocated to Coalville & Ashby de la Zouch Libraries. To extend their stock & (crucially) the staffed hours at these libraries.

How likely, if at all, would you be to use this mobile library service?



Why do you say this?

difficult to visit other local libraries with my granddaughter after school

We would use this as paying for parking is a hassle when travelling further. However, books are loaned on a three weekly basis. Most people would surely go to the library every 3 weeks and not every month (this wasn't an option on the first page where we have to say how often we use the library. We visit every 3 weeks).

It depends on the day and time it's available- would it suit working people for example?

It depends on the day

We would like access to a library and it's books a lot more often than once a month

It would be the next best thing to a library. We would still be able to browse through the books and interact with the driver. My only comment would be that I have experienced times in the past when the library van hasn't turned up or has been very late. There is no shelter outside the Community College at Ibstock. It would be a great help if there was a 'bulletin board' on the Leicestershire libraries web site warning about late or 'no shows' if that could be possible.

Limited access, reduced range of materials, reduced operating times.

What day(s) and time(s) of the week would you prefer to use this mobile library service? Please tick all applicable. (Monday)

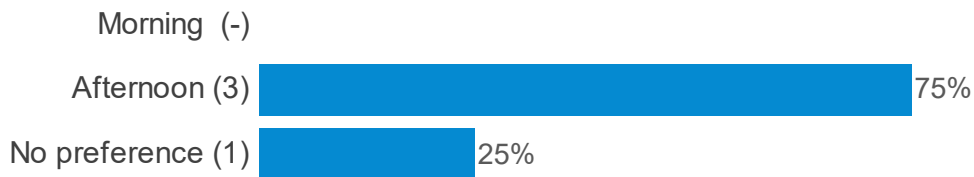


What day(s) and time(s) of the week would you prefer to use this mobile library service? Please tick all applicable. (Tuesday)

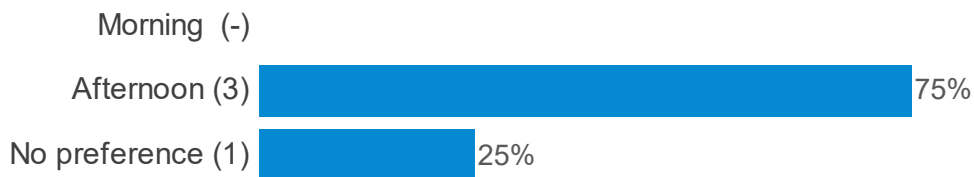


Library Closure - Ibstock 2023

**What day(s) and time(s) of the week would you prefer to use this mobile library service?
Please tick all applicable. (Wednesday)**



**What day(s) and time(s) of the week would you prefer to use this mobile library service?
Please tick all applicable. (Thursday)**



**What day(s) and time(s) of the week would you prefer to use this mobile library service?
Please tick all applicable. (Friday)**



Library Closure - Ibstock 2023

If Ibstock library were to close, which other libraries, if any, would you use? Please tick all applicable.

*Please note the libraries in bold are the nearest to Ibstock.

Anstey (-)	
Ashby de la Zouch (1)	13%
Barrow upon Soar (-)	
Birstall (-)	
Blaby (-)	
Bottesford (-)	
Braunstone Town (-)	
Broughton Astley (-)	
Burbage (-)	
Castle Donington (-)	
Coalville (5)	63%
Cosby (-)	
Countesthorpe (-)	
Desford (-)	
Earl Shilton (-)	
East Goscote (-)	
Enderby (-)	
Fleckney (-)	
Glenfield (-)	
Glenhills (-)	
Great Glen (-)	
Groby (-)	
Hathern (-)	
Hinckley (-)	
Kegworth (-)	
Kibworth (-)	
Kirby Muxloe (-)	
Leicester Forest East (-)	
Loughborough (-)	
Lutterworth (-)	
Market Bosworth (-)	
Market Harborough (-)	
Markfield (-)	
Measham (-)	
Melton Mowbray (-)	
Mountsorrel (-)	
Narborough (-)	
Newbold Verdon (-)	
Oadby (-)	
Quorn (-)	
Ratby (-)	
Rothley (-)	
Sapcote (-)	
Shepshed (-)	
Sileby (-)	
Stoney Stanton (-)	
System (-)	
Thurmaston (-)	
Wigston Magna (-)	
A non-county council library (e.g. in Leicester City, in another county, or a school library) (-)	
None (3)	38%

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

no

Need to stop cutting back and actually find services that are useful to people we loose more and more every year to more takeaways and beauty Parlours

If a mobile service is introduced, please consider weekends. Many people simply cannot go in the week unless it is open late in the evenings.

None

No

No

None other than it is a great shame that Ibstock Library may have to close as the staff there have done a wonderful job . It's a sad sign of the times. Good luck as you go forward.

Source council funding elsewhere, don't shut down a useful educational resource.

It would be great if some more licences could be bought for the most popular eaudiobooks on borrow box. Sometimes when I put a hold on a book it won't be available for me to download for more than a year.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT – Closure of Ibstock Community Managed Library

What is the proposal?

Closure of Ibstock Community Managed Library

Background

In 2019 Ibstock Library transferred from LCC to Ibstock Community Managed Library group. Ibstock Community Managed Library Group is a CIO registered with the Charity Commission. The Library is located in a mobile classroom situated on the grounds of Ibstock Junior School (on land partially owned by LCC and partially by St Denys CoE primary school).

They indicated their intention to give notice in August 2023 and this was followed by a formal written submission of notice in September 2023.

The group laid out their reasons for notice which included: lack of volunteers and trustees, condition of the building, the relationship with the school, long term funding and low usage numbers.

Following the receipt of this notice LCC launched a registration of interest process to seek a new group to operate the library and a consultation on alternative provision in the event the library was not able to re-open.

What change and impact is intended by the proposal? The preferred outcome is to find another group to operate the library, however, following the registration of interest process, the panel were unable to find a viable EOI option to take forward to the next stage of submitting a business plan. Therefore, in this scenario the proposal (subject to Cabinet approval) is to close the library.

The alternative library proposals being put forward which would provide access to the full range of library service offer and seek to mitigate the impact of closing Ibstock CML are:

- provide a regular 3-weekly mobile library stop in Ibstock;
- encourage use of other nearby libraries, Coalville being the closest, which has longer opening hrs and a wider range of facilities;
- encourage use of the free digital library offer.

What is the rationale for this proposal? As it has not been possible to identify a new group to operate the library, closure and options for alternative service provision must be considered. This is in line with the agreed process.

The service has put forward a number of alternative service provision measures which offer ways for residents of Ibstock to access library service should they wish to do so. It is felt that based on current usage of the Ibstock CML facility that the alternative provision outlined above is appropriate and offers a range of ways for local people to continue to access library resources.

What equalities information or data has been gathered so far?: There is an area profile for Ibstock <https://tableau.leics.gov.uk/#/workbooks/12987/views>

What does it show?:

Ibstock has a population of 7,600, with a similar age demographic profile to Leicestershire average as a whole. There is a slightly higher percentage of children aged 9 and under and a slightly lower percentage of people aged 65+.

51% of households are not classed as being deprived in any dimension, 33.4% deprived in one dimension 13% in 2 dimensions and 2.5% in 3 dimensions.

96.9% of residents identify as white, higher than the Leicestershire average of 87.5% and 98.4% have English as main language, higher than the Leicestershire average of 95.2%.

Ibstock has higher level of economic activity at 63.8% than the Leicestershire average of 58.6% . 16.7% of residents have a disability, similar to the Leicestershire average of 16.6% and 90.9% provide no unpaid care, the same as the Leicestershire average. 17.6% of residents are students slightly fewer than the Leicestershire average of 19.7%. The percentage of residents with no qualifications is 20.7%, higher than the Leicestershire average of 16.7%.

The survey received 21 responses, with the following demographics:

- 2 were male, 15 were female and 4 gave no response
- Age brackets (5) 25-34 (4) 35-44 (1) 45-54 (2) 55-64 (2) 65-74 (2) 75-84
- 9 were the parent/carer of children under 17 (6) 0-4 (4) 5-10 (2) 16-17
- 2 had a long standing disability, illness or infirmity
- 17 indicated they were white
- 10 had no religion, 5 Christianity and 1 any other religion
- 13 identified as Straight/Heterosexual and 2 used another term

What engagement has been undertaken so far?:

As part of giving notice, Ibstock CMLG put public notices in local publications, posters up around Ibstock and verbally informed customers coming into the Library.

LCC publicised the consultation which ran from Wednesday 8th November until Wednesday 20th December (6 weeks). This was advertised on the LCC website, the Libraries facebook page and posters were put up in Ibstock and at the nearest LCC Library (Coalville)

At the same time, a registration of interest process opened for any interested parties to come forward with their plan for running the library. This again ran from Wednesday 8th November until Wednesday 20th December.

Paper copies were made available as well as digital.

What does it show?: 21 people responded to the survey of those:

- 17 were Leicestershire Residents, 2 were Staff/Volunteers and 1 was a representative of another public sector organisation
- 9 indicated they used Ibstock Library
- Of other libraries used (4) Ashby (8) Coalville (4) Ibstock and (5) None
- 9 were aware of the digital services and of those 5 had used them
- The mobile as an alternative provision being suitable

(2) Strongly agreed (3) Tend to agree (1) Neither agree or disagree (3) Tend to disagree (11) Strongly disagree

- If the mobile Library service was given as an alternative provision 3 people indicated they were likely to use it

Evidence documents upload (optional):

Age:

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
No impact anticipated	Some parents visit the library with their children after school, due to the proximity. There could be a risk of disproportionately affecting young children and families

Disability:

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
No impact anticipated	No

Race:

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No impact anticipated 	No

Sex:

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
No impact anticipated	No

Gender Reassignment:

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
No impact anticipated	No

Marriage and Civil Partnership:

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
No impact anticipated	No

Sexual Orientation:

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
No impact anticipated	No

Pregnancy and Maternity:

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
No impact anticipated	No

Religion or Belief:

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
No impact anticipated	No

Armed Forces:

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
No impact anticipated	No

Other groups: e.g., rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived, armed forced, or disadvantaged communities:

What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	Is there any specific risks or concerns?
No impact anticipated	No

Action Plan:

What concerns were identified?	What action is planned?	Who is responsible for the action?	Timescale
Ibstock Library to close	Consultation completed Phase 1 of ROI process underway. Consideration of alternative provision if no option to continue with Library	Library Service/ Cabinet	TBC
Ability of mobile library service to be available at times/days that suit users and offer access to a range stock/services that are currently available in Ibstock library	Consultation on preferred days/times undertaken. If mobile were to be put in place as alternative provision, frequent review of stock, promotion of stock requests, etc to ensure meeting needs	Library Service	Initial consultation undertaken between Nov 23 and Dec 23. Feedback being sought during April and May (temporary mobile stop) Library staff to gather comments and

	Review usage of mobile stop at 6 months intervals for first year and consider timetable amendments if required		feedback if regular mobile service approved
People living in Ibstock unaware of the unaware of the Library service	Ensure information on the library service is available in the local community and promote on the website and social media	Library Service	April 2024 – March 2025

How will the action plan and recommendations of this assessment be built into decision making and implementation of this proposal?: The proposal for closing the library and putting in place alternative library provision will be subject to approval by Cabinet.

How would you monitor the impact of your proposal and keep the EIA refreshed?:

If a mobile service is provided to Ibstock this would be reviewed as part of the EIA following 12 months of operation to check effectiveness. Following this it would become part of ongoing mobile provision which is reviewed on an annual basis and any significant future changes to this would be subject to a new EIA.

Date of completion: 26/01/2023

Revised 6/2/23

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Procedure in the Event of Possible Closure of a CML

On 6 July 2018, the Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities titled ["Community Managed Libraries"](#) regarding progress made with the implementation of CMLs, arrangements to support their sustainable operation, and the proposed process to be followed should a CML Group no longer be able to run a library. An extract from the report setting out the procedure in the event of a possible closure is set out below -

"It is acknowledged that there may be situations in the future when a CML group decides that it is no longer able to continue the operation of the library. Should this arise it is proposed that the process outlined below would be followed.

The group in question would be obliged to give formal notice to the Council that it could no longer provide library services. The agreements with the CML groups require that six months' notice is given, but realistically it may not be possible for a service to continue to be provided during this notice period. It is therefore proposed that in the case of notice being given:

- a) The Local Member and Cabinet Member would be notified by the Director.
- b) Arrangements for interim library service provision would be put in place until a permanent solution had been agreed. The Director may appoint a group or organisation to act as a 'caretaker' on a time-limited basis, or may agree a replacement mobile library service as a temporary measure.
- c) The public would be advised and any group(s) willing to take over the management of the library would be invited to make submissions to the Council. Where appropriate the Council would assist the formation of a new group, or support the transfer of responsibility from the existing charity/group to the new group. (Depending upon the situation a formal registration of interest or other process may be required to ensure fairness and transparency; this would be a matter for the Director of Adults and Communities to decide).
- d) In the event of a CML group being identified and there being no significant reduction in the services provided, following consultation with the Local Member(s) and Cabinet Lead Member, the Director of Adults and Communities would agree the new arrangements.
- e) Should no community managed solution be found, the Director of Adults and Communities and the Assistant Chief Executive would make the necessary arrangements in order to initiate a public consultation on alternative library provision (e.g. mobile library services).
- f) All proposals received under c) and e) above would be assessed against a 'value for money' framework, which would include an evaluation of the quality of service and community cohesions/resilience factors, and equality and human rights issues, as well as purely financial considerations.
- g) Reference would also be made to the provisions of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, including whether it remained appropriate to continue to offer a library service at the location in question.

- h) The outcome of the public consultation, along with proposals for any alternative community managed solutions or service provision would be reported to the Cabinet, including a full Equality Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) being undertaken to inform decision making. The Cabinet would make the decision on the future of the service.
- i) Should it be decided to close a library the future of the building or site will be reviewed in accordance with the Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan."

Minute extract - Cabinet, 6 July 2018

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities regarding Community Managed Libraries, including proposals for a process to be followed should a community group find itself unable to continue to run a library. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Community Managed Library groups throughout Leicestershire be congratulated on their achievements in having developed their local libraries into thriving community hubs;
- (b) That the continued support in place to help Community Managed Library groups to run their libraries, including the availability of temporary support funds be noted;
- (c) That the process to be followed should any Community Managed Library group be unable to continue to provide a library service as set out in paragraphs 28–30 of the report be approved, noting in particular that this includes:
 - (i) Delegation to the Director of Adults and Communities, following consultation with Local Member(s) and Cabinet Lead Member, to agree alternative arrangements if this will result in no significant effect in the level of library provision;
 - (ii) A report to the Cabinet in the event that significant changes to library provision might result.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Community Managed Libraries (CMLs) are now in place across large parts of the County and are working well. The individual CML groups are responsible for ensuring they are sustainable and well managed and the Council continues to provide support where required. The Council has a statutory obligation to ensure provision of a "comprehensive and efficient" library service as detailed in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

The Council has ensured support is in place to help CML groups to manage their sustainability pro-actively and to advise and support them to deal effectively with emerging issues that may pose a potential risk to the future operation of the service as they arise. Most of the financial support will end in 2021/22.

In situations where a CML ceases operation, the Council will need to act swiftly to consider alternative provision.

**CABINET – 24 MAY 2024****EXCEPTION TO CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES - URGENT ACTION
TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN RELATION TO THE
EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of urgent action taken by the Chief Executive to approve an exception to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to enable the direct award of a contract to Liquid Personnel Ltd. for the provision of Education Psychologist Locums to provide assessment for children and young people undergoing an Education, Health and Care Plan Needs Assessment.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet notes the urgent action taken by the Chief Executive (following consultation with the Leader) to directly award by an exception in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules to enable the Director of Children and Family Services to agree a contract with Liquid Personnel Ltd. to provide 500 assessments for children and young people undergoing Education Health and Care Plan Assessments, up to a maximum value of £801,500, up to 15 May 2025.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. The County Council's Contract Procedure Rules (Part 4G of the Constitution) require that, where the estimated value of a contract exceeds £179,087, formal tenders must be invited.
4. Where an exception to the Contract Procedure Rules is required for contracts over £179,087, Rule 6 e) provides that Cabinet approval be obtained to the exception where this is justified on its merits and that in urgent cases the Chief Executive (after consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader save where this is not practicable) may direct that an exception be made subject to it being reported to the Cabinet. The exception was necessary to enable the Council to fulfil its duties under the relevant legislation to complete Education Health and Care Plan Assessments (EHCPAs) for eligible children and young people. Alongside this the Council will undertake a review of service requirements and,

depending on the outcome of the review, a compliant procurement process to award a contract or contracts for Education Health Care Plan Assessments by January 2025.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. The exception was agreed by the Chief Executive on 3 May 2024.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

6. The exception to the Contract Procedure Rules follows the Council's Constitution (Contract Procedure Rule 6 e)).

Resource Implications

7. The exception is to allow an award for 9 months initially (with flexibility for this to be extended for a further 3 months) to enable an additional 500 assessments (300 remote, 200 face-to-face) over a 9-month period to a maximum of £801,500. This will ensure statutory duties and compliance with the Children and Families Act (2014) and support the current Accelerated Progress Plan following the written statement of action November 2020.
8. National and local evidence and data consistently indicates the considerable pressures that Local Authority Educational Psychology Services face in their role in undertaking Statutory Assessments. These Assessments are critical to enabling local authorities to meet their statutory obligations in undertaking EHCPAs, for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as outlined in the Children and Families Act (2014).
9. Addressing the extensive waiting times for Statutory Educational Psychology Advice, which forms part of the EHCPA process is a key priority for the Department. As demand for EHCPs and professional advice continues to increase, requests for Educational Psychologist advice continue to significantly outstrip supply. This tension is seen nationally and reflects to ongoing challenges with Educational Psychologist workforce, local authority retention issues, and rising demand for ECHPAs. The County Council's Accelerated Progress Plan forms its response to the issues raised by OFSTED in the reinspection undertaken in November 2022 and includes the timeliness of Educational Psychology statutory advice as a key area requiring attention.
10. Subject to the outcome of the service review, a procurement exercise is required (in accordance with the procurement rules) to put in place a contract agreement, as soon as possible and in any event, by January 2025.
11. The contract will be funded through the Educational Psychology Budget
12. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

13. None.

Officers to Contact

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PART B

Background

14. The SEND Code of Practice 2014 sets out a number of requirements in relation to the EHCPA process including:-
 - That the purpose of an EHCP is to make special educational provision to meet the special educational needs of the child or young person, to secure the best possible outcomes for them across education, health and social care and, as they get older, prepare them for adulthood.
 - A local authority must conduct an assessment of education, health and care needs when it considers that it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made for the child or young person in accordance with an EHCP.
 - The local authority must gather advice from relevant professionals about the child or young person's education, health and care needs, desired outcomes and special educational, health and care provision that may be required to meet identified needs and achieve desired outcomes.
 - Advice and information must be sought from a number of parties including 'Psychological advice and information from an educational psychologist who should normally be employed or commissioned by the local authority. The educational psychologist should consult any other psychologists known to be involved with the child or young person'.
15. In Leicestershire, the average number of EHCPA requests agreed for assessment is currently 100 per month, in line with many local authorities.
16. The SEND Code of Practice sets out that 'the whole process of EHC needs assessment and EHC plan development, from the point when an assessment is requested (or a child or young person is brought to the local authority's attention) until the final EHC plan is issued, must take no more than 20 weeks'. In Leicestershire, increasing numbers of EHCPAs are well outside of this timescale. In the main this is due to resource challenges in relation to availability of Educational Psychologists and therefore the Department is unable to respond to the request for Education Psychology within the required timeframes.
17. The number of Educational Psychologist required to undertake the volume of assessments require far exceeds the number of Educational Psychologists employed by the Council's Educational Psychology Service. Despite a significant recruitment drive, the Department has been unable to fill 8 vacant posts. Challenges with recruitment and retention of Educational Psychologists within local authorities is national issue; 88% of Principal Educational Psychologists report that they are currently experiencing issues recruiting (DfE, June 2023).
18. Over the last two years, as a result of the increased demand, the Department has needed to procure additional Educational Psychologists externally in order to meet the demand. Careful consideration is given to the number needed.

Award of Contract

19. In September 2023 a request for quotation process was carried out to award a 6- month contract for the provision of Educational Psychologist Locums. Liquid Personnel Ltd. were successful in being awarded the contract. This contract ends on 14 May 2024 with no extension options. The direct award of a new contract to Liquid Personnel Ltd. will continue provision of the services on the same terms and conditions as the original contract and will provide an additional 20 Educational Psychologists to undertake 500 assessments.
20. In the meantime, the Department is undertaking a review of service requirements following which a procurement exercise will be undertaken by January 2025 for the ongoing provision of Education Psychology services.

Equality Implications

21. There are no equalities implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Human Rights Implications

22. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Background Papers

None.

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