MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT COUNTY HALL, GLENFIELD ON WEDNESDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2025

PRESENT

Mr. P. Harrison CC (in the Chair)

Mr. C. Abbott CC, Mr. R. Bailey CC, Dr. J. Bloxham CC, Mr. J. Boam CC, Mr. M. Bools CC, Mrs. N. Bottomley CC, Mr. S. Bradshaw CC, Mr. S. L. Bray CC, Miss H. Butler CC, Mr. N. Chapman CC, Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC, Mr. G. Cooke CC, Mr. K. Crook CC, Mrs. L. Danks CC, Mr. M. Durrani CC, Mr. M. R. England CC, Mr. H. Fowler CC, Mr. S. J. Galton CC, Mr. D. A. Gamble CC, Ms. B. Gray CC, Mr. D. J. Grimley CC, Mr. A. Hamilton-Gray CC, Mr. D. Harrison CC, Dr. S. Hill CC, Mr. N. Holt CC, Mr. A. Innes CC, Mr. P. King CC, Mrs. K. Knight CC, Mr. B. Lovegrove CC, Mr. J. McDonald CC, Mr. J. Melen CC, Mr. J. Miah CC, Mr. P. Morris CC, Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC, Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC, Mr. J. T. Orson CC, Mr. D. Page CC, Mrs. R. Page CC, Ms. A. Pendlebury CC, Mr. B. Piper CC, Mr J. Poland CC, Mr. C. Pugsley CC, Mr. V. Richichi CC, Mr. K. Robinson CC, Mr. P. Rudkin CC, Mrs B. Seaton CC, Mr. C. A. Smith CC, Mr. M. Squires CC, Mrs D. Taylor CC, Mr. A. Tilbury CC, Mr. B. Walker CC and Mr. C. Whitford CC

39. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Armistice

The County Council marked Armistice Day with a service and two minute silence on Tuesday 11th November. The short and dignified service was very moving, and the Chairman thanked Leanne Plummer for playing the Last Post and Reveille so competently. He was also pleased to see that County Hall was illuminated in red for the duration of the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal. He thanked those Members who were able to attend local services on Remembrance Sunday and lay a County Council wreath.

On 6th November at Bosworth Battlefield, the Chairman unveiled over 3,200 hand knitted poppies which had been hand crafted in schools, homes, community groups and libraries. It looked fantastic.

King's Award for Voluntary Service

The Chairman was pleased to inform Members that four local voluntary organisations had been awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service. The announcement was made on 14th November to mark the King's birthday.

The King's Award for Voluntary Service held the same value as an MBE and acknowledged the remarkable efforts of volunteer groups in their communities.

The winning organisations were:

- Asfordby Amateurs Ladies, Girls and Inclusive Football Club, based in Melton. The club provided a welcoming and safe environment for all abilities and ages to develop their skills through football, setting their

community up for future success.

- Bright Hope in Swannington. The charity was committed to serving the community by providing a range of free and accessible support including adult social care, counselling, wellbeing support services, and a community café in a purpose-built day centre.

- Heather Scarecrow Festival, a week-long annual scarecrow festival open to residents, businesses, and schools in Heather to raise funds to support local groups that serve the village. The festival provided creative activities, social cohesion, and financial support to the local community.

- There was also a winner in Leicester City. Shama Women's Centre, based in Leicester, was recognised for the work they do in supporting women to gain independence through education, training, counselling, and peer support.

Members joined the Chairman in congratulating all the organisations for their award.

John Sinnott

John Sinnott was retiring from the County Council after today's meeting, marking the end of an era in local government leadership. He was appointed Chief Executive in 1994 and was the longest serving chief executive in the country. During this time, he had overseen significant organisational change, managed numerous financial challenges and ensured the council maintained strong performance and stability.

John successfully led the Council through the last local government reorganisation in 1997. Following a number of years of no overall control, he played a critical role in brokering discussions that led to the first joint administration following reorganisation. He implemented a wide range of important corporate improvements which led to the Council being named 'Council of the Year' in the 2009 Local Government Chronicle Awards, as well as achieving the highest rating of '4 star, improving strongly' when national council rating systems were in place.

John had been at the helm for many notable achievements for the county including the reinterment of King Richard III, the 2012 Olympic Torch Relay, and the council's trio of Impower awards which recognised value for money. As the Clerk to the Lord Lieutenant, he coordinated efforts to pay local tributes to the late Queen.

John demonstrated strong leadership through the Covid pandemic which put a great strain on the county and tested councils up and down the country. John's calm approach steered the County Council through that difficult time.

Under John's leadership, the Council had earnt a reputation as one of the highest-performing councils in the UK, and one that delivered for the people of Leicestershire. The Council had consistently been in the top five of the county benchmarking league table over many years, despite being the lowest

funded county authority. John's ability to balance political complexity with operational excellence earned him wide recognition and a high level of respect across the local government sector, Whitehall, academia and with partner agencies.

John was awarded a CBE for services to local government in the 2010 New Year's Honours List, recognising his outstanding service and commitment to public life.

He was highly regarded by politicians and officers alike and would be greatly missed as the chief executive.

Lauren Haslam

This was also the last meeting before Lauren Haslam retired.

She had been Director of Law and Governance since 2016, having first joined the Council in 2000 as a solicitor in the employment team.

The County Council had a great deal to thank Lauren for. The Council's reputation for good governance and high standards of conduct was a result of her hard work, professionalism and integrity. Her expertise had ensured that the Council had operated with transparency and fairness. She had been a champion for staff wellbeing and made a key contribution to the corporate management of the Council.

The Chairman, on behalf of himself and his predecessors as Chairmen, expressed his sincere thanks to Lauren for her sound advice on the conduct of meetings and calming presence.

Members joined the Chairman in wishing both John and Lauren a long and happy retirement.

40. MINUTES.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr Hamilton-Gray and carried:

"That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 24th September 2025, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed."

41. MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr Hamilton-Gray, and carried:

"That the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 12th November 2025, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed."

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

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

No declarations were made.

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

(A) Mrs Page asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"Could the Council please confirm what measures and policies are in place to ensure effective, timely communication to members and how compliance to communication is measured?"

Mr D Harrison replied as follows:

"Mrs Page will recall the all member briefing on customer services and dealing with divisional issues which took place on Thursday 5 June and addressed a number of the issues set out in her question. I would remind her of the following information which was provided during that briefing:

- Where members have queries relating to Environment and Transport matters, there is a dedicated email address for members to contact the Customer Service Centre (CSC). The CSC will acknowledge the email within one working day and log the issue onto the system which will be assigned to the relevant team in the Environment and Transport Department. Once your issue is logged, you will receive a unique reference number. The Environment and Transport Department will provide updates and progress reports.

- For all other queries, please contact democracy@leics.gov.uk. You will receive an acknowledgement within one working day and response to your query within 10 working days, although sometimes the response may indicate that further work is needed. If you are not happy with the response you have received then it will be escalated to the appropriate Chief Officer and a further response will be received within 10 working days.

In terms of general communication to members, the weekly Member Digest is circulated on a Tuesday. This includes the latest Council news, information worth noting, details of upcoming meetings and all member briefings and provides links to the Council's events and have your say pages.
There is also a WhatsApp group for members where County Council news is shared. This is publicly available information which members can then share in their own WhatsApp group."

(B) Mrs Taylor asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"'During the Full Council meeting on the 24th of September, the Lead Member for Children and Families said:

"She {Deborah Taylor} also mentioned the fact that schools are underfunded which is why I find it quite bizarre, I'll even say hypocritical Mr Chairman, that the previous Lead Member will stand here and say to the Full Council that

schools are underfunded when roughly about this time last year her administration chose to move just under £3m, I think it was £2.8m away from the schools funding block into the high needs block to deal with a deficit which all of us have said here is not something we could fix as a local authority. So, I think championing that schools should have more funding, that there's an issue in schooling, at the same time as taking away £2.8m valuable money to a lot of schools, is something we should all remember."

The day before this meeting, on the 23rd of September, the Children and Family Services Department launched a consultation to pursue the same 0.5% transfer from the School Block to the High Needs Block for the 2026/27 financial year, with the stated intention of continuing the SEND Investment Fund. Can I, therefore, ask the Lead Member when he made those comments at Full Council:

1. Does he believe schools in Leicestershire are underfunded?

2. Did he know at the time he spoke at Full Council that his department had launched the consultation on transferring money from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block the day before?

3. Did the Lead Member pre-judge the outcome of this consultation by deciding before it had started that he would not support a transfer of money from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, regardless of the outcome of the consultation? If so, why did he spend officer time and taxpayers' money carrying out the consultation exercise?

4. If the Lead Member did in fact have an open mind on that issue, does he stand by his comments made to Full Council that if he decides to support the transfer of money from the School Block to the High Needs Block, that will indicate he would be hypocritical to be concerned about school funding? If not, would that show him to be hypocritical in his comments at Full Council?"

Mr Pugsley replied as follows:

"1. Despite an increase in funding to schools from national government, schools across Leicestershire are facing increasing financial challenges as a result of unfunded or partially funded pay rises, soaring energy bills and increasing costs required to support children to learn in the most effective way.

2. Yes, I was aware that a consultation had been launched on transferring money from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.

3. No, I did not prejudge the outcome of the consultation. The consultation was launched to seek the views of schools across Leicestershire on the block transfer in order to inform the decision of Cabinet on whether to ask the Secretary of State to agree a Schools Block Transfer.

4. I considered the outcome of the consultation alongside the pressures on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The matter

was considered at Cabinet on 18th November, where it was agreed to pursue an alternative option for funding to deliver pupil outreach support and work with schools to support ongoing mainstream inclusion."

(C) Mr O'Shea asked the following questions of the Leader or his nominee:

"In the Hinckley Times published on Wednesday, 30th April 2025, one day before this year's County Council elections, there was an article published where Reform UK is quoted saying:

'Reform UK won't make empty promises while the council is in such a state. Reform Councillors elected in May will introduce a British-style Doge to audit Leicestershire County Council, cancel the fraudulent contracts and stop waste' (Hinckley Times, 30/04/25, p.6).

1. Can the Leader advise whether he has found any fraudulent contracts?

2. If so, can he advise if those have been reported to Leicestershire Police as is indicated should happen at an early stage under 9.3 of Leicestershire County Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy?

If no fraudulent contracts have been found, can the Leader tell me:

3. What evidence do Reform UK have to make the statement that there are fraudulent contracts at Leicestershire County Council, and can the Leader share that with this Council please?

4. Does the Leader agree there was evidence at the time the article was written in April, that fraudulent contracts were in place at Leicestershire County Council? If so, as a sitting County Councillor, what action did he take – at that time before the election – to report this suspected fraud to either senior officers or the police?

5. If the Leader cannot provide this evidence, does he accept Reform UK was misleading people for electoral advantage? Will he apologise to the public for that, and to officers at this authority for disparaging them and bringing into question their integrity without the evidence to back that up?"

Mr D Harrison replied as follows:

"1. No fraudulent procurement contracts have been identified in the current (2025/26) financial year.

2. The Council has a zero-tolerance approach to fraud and other financial irregularity. This is set out in the Council's Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy. Where investigations have a potential criminal element to them, the established process is that dialogue will take place between the investigating department, Internal Audit and the Director of Law and Governance regarding grounds for making a

referral to the Police. At present, there is a historical case of procurement fraud that remains the subject of a significant and complex police investigation, involving other agencies too. In addition to the ongoing police action, contracts with the provider were terminated and losses fully recovered by the County Council.

3. Mr. O'Shea has been very selective in the article to which he's referring. The same article quoted the Conservative group leader saying they wanted to ensure the County Council remains a "financially sound and efficient council", but the sorry fact is they left this Council's finances in dire straits, which is why we have commissioned Newton to carry out a top to bottom efficiency review of every penny this Council spends, including looking at contracts and procurement processes. I am confident their work will bring results and shine a light on those areas forgotten by the Conservatives in their 24 years running this Council.

4. As I have said in previous answers to this Council since I became Leader back in May, the election addresses selectively referred to by Mr O'Shea were published centrally by the Reform UK party and I did not have any control over their content. Mr O'Shea has been an elected member of this County Council since 2013 and should be used to the nature of robust political language at election times contained in party political literature.

5. I am confident that the review into the Council's finances, procurement and spending will provide evidence of areas to save money and where we can make improvements to service delivery and how they are commissioned. Since May 2025, and as reported to the September 2025 full Council meeting in my Position Statement, we have made significant progress where the previous administration failed. For example, following a review of home care procurement fees, working with Reform UK Members and the Adult Social Care team at least £1m of savings is targeted to the contracts agreed by the previous Administration. The Children and Family Services Department expect to save over £800,000 this year by holding back recruitment of non-essential jobs. If Mr O'Shea wants examples of failure, I suggest he looks to his own benches."

(D) Mrs Taylor asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"I have serious safety concerns with dangerous and obstructive parking on Cropston Road, Anstey, outside Nomads Football Club.

There are vehicles parked over pavements, on grassed areas, and now cars are parking on the blind bend with double yellow lines in situ across the weekends.

I have asked for parking enforcement to visit the area on Sunday mornings, but this has not happened.

Can the lead member please take some action to ease the pressure on this

busy bus route?"

Mr Tilbury replied as follows:

"The Council is aware of the parking issues in the vicinity of Anstey Nomads Football Club and acknowledges the concerns raised by Mrs Taylor about some of the irresponsible parking behaviours of a minority of those attending the site and their lack of regard for other users of the highway.

As the highway authority, the Council has introduced parking restrictions (double yellow lines) to try and deter visitors parking irresponsibly and these are enforced by Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) who patrol the area. It is recognised that Sunday mornings tend to be the main period that parking issues occur and as such patrols are made to Anstey on Sundays to try and combat the indiscriminate parking by users of the football club. However, there is a finite resource, and the CEOs cannot be in all areas at all times.

There is the option of additional paid enforcement, however this would be subject to the CEOs' availability and willingness to volunteer to carry out additional hours.

We can confirm that CEOs have attended Cropston Road, Anstey on several occasions as listed below. However, only one penalty charge notice (PCN) was issued where the vehicle was parked in contravention of the restrictions. The attending CEOs did note a significant number of vehicles parked on verges but, as these are not subject to restrictions in place, no other PCNs were issued.

Since the football season has started, CEOs attended the site as follows:

- Sunday 24/08/2025: one PCN issued
- Sunday 14/09/2025: no PCNs issued
- Sunday 28/09/2025: no PCNs issued
- Sunday 12/10/2025: no PCNs issued

Unfortunately, whilst there is off-road parking at the football club, it is insufficient for the volume of users attending the site at certain times.

Previously, the Parish Council and Anstey Nomads worked together to create an events order that facilitated the use of 'no waiting at any time' parking cones on the unrestricted parts of the highway in 2021, which could also be enforced by CEOs. The Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) lasted for 18 months and has since ended. We are aware that Anstey Nomads are still engaging with the Parish Council and also the Local Beat team/Police on how they can work together to improve the situation, but there has been no appetite from the parties for a further events order as yet.

The success of the order would be subject to the availability of volunteers to place and remove the cones, which is suspected to be an issue during the previous events TTRO period. The Council will raise this again with the football club and the Parish Council to see if the circumstances have changed and there is now appetite from them for a further events order.

As a final point of note, if there is dangerous or obstructive parking then the Police have on the spot powers to carry out enforcement. Members of the public can report such incidents to the Police via their non-emergency 101 number or via their website reporting traffic issues: https://www.leics.police.uk/ro/report/rti/rti-b/report-a-road-traffic-incident/"

Mrs Taylor asked the following supplementary question:

"I thank the Lead Member for his answer and his shared concerns about dangerous and obstructive parking on roads. He has mentioned that there's a finite resource. This issue causes concerns across many areas in Leicestershire, not just in my area. Could the Lead Member please look at increasing this budget and employing more civil enforcement officers?"

Mr Tilbury replied as follows:

"I sympathise with your predicament because I've got a similar one in my ward with a local football club. There's not an easy way around it because it's a real fine line between balancing encouraging the people to park well and enforcement. I think the best thing for me to do is probably arrange a visit to come and see the site first and then we can look at it together. You can give your input on what you think you need to do, and I will do the same on my part. I and the Director of Environment and Transport can then come up with a solution for you."

(E) Mrs Taylor asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"Following the report to the Corporate Governance Committee on 24th November identifying that there have been 34 Complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct since 1st October 2024, can the Leader confirm:

1. How many of the complaints are about members of the current administration?

2. How many member complaints were received in the first seven months after the County Council elections in May 2021?"

Mr D Harrison replied as follows:

"1. For comparative purposes and in the interests of transparency, the response includes data relating to members other than the administration. Between 1st May 2025 and 12th November 2025, the complaints received were as follows:

	Number of complaints
Administration members	35
Non-administration members	3

The information provided above includes complaints which are at an early stage in the process and have not yet been subject to the initial assessment test. It is also important to note that 7 of the 38 complaints failed the initial test as they raise issues that are not capable of being

investigated under the Code of Conduct.

2. Between 1st May 2021 and 1st December 2021 there were 4 complaints in total."

Mrs Taylor asked the following supplementary question:

"Given the sharp increase in complaints compared to previous years, what impact has this had on the Council's resources, particularly in terms of staff costs, staff time, and the cost associated with processing and investigating these complaints?"

Mr D Harrison replied as follows:

"Obviously, you're aware of the finances and there's processes going on. We're living in a very tight situation and period in local government. We're not the only Council across the country suffering, but we are just looking at costs and expenses appropriately."

(F) Mrs Bottomley asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"How does the administration intend to use the new powers to franchise bus services to ensure that residents in smaller villages can access fit for purpose and functional public transport?"

Mr Tilbury replied as follows:

"We have recently commissioned an initial feasibility study into the suitability of bus franchising for Leicestershire. Officers are currently in the early stages of evaluating the findings.

Under our current enhanced bus partnership model, we have the partnership working and flexibility in place to plan services which are community focussed. During the past 12 months, we have utilised the Bus Service Improvement Plan grant funding to review and re-design 80% of the County's bus network resulting in enhanced service provision. This has included numerous trial services being put in place following the feedback obtained at our extensive public engagement sessions, and the introduction of 11 digital demand responsive services (DDRT) resulting in many settlements having access to public transport when there previously was none.

We are continuing with the review of the bus network at present and will consider franchising options further when we are fully apprised of the findings of the franchising feasibility study. A further consideration in relation to franchising and potential options would need to take account of the outcome of local government reorganisation to ensure that the appropriate geography is included."

(G) Mrs Bottomley asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"What data is the administration basing their desire to have 50% on site

working from staff on? What evidence is there that this will improve the services we provide and is cost effective?"

Mr Fowler replied as follows:

"Thank you for your question about the evidence and reasoning behind the Council's proposal for a 50% on-site working model.

The proposal is based on a combination of internal data, feedback from management, public and private sector-wide trends, alongside the need to balance service quality, cost effectiveness, and staff wellbeing.

As a local authority, we are a front-facing organisation, and our workforce is our most important and valued resource. Maintaining staff visibility and accessibility is essential for public confidence and for delivering effective services.

We want to make the best use of our Council offices, providing space for our staff as well as renting out areas to other public sector organisations. By adopting a more structured approach to attendance, we expect to make better use of our resources and strengthen team cohesion.

We also believe that a structured hybrid model will help us maintain or even improve service quality. It does this by supporting collaboration, knowledge sharing, and team responsiveness. Working remotely can limit networking, peer support, and informal learning. Reduced in-person interaction may also impact career progression and inclusion, particularly for newer staff. We believe that face-to-face environments are better for mentoring and professional development.

Mental health issues are a major cause of absence within the Council, and working arrangements significantly influence wellbeing. We believe that the balanced proposal will reduce the often blurred boundaries between home and work and feelings of isolation; alongside enabling staff to work remotely and flexibly for a proportion of their working week.

The proposed policy is also about fostering a sense of organisational identity and fairness. Many of our roles, especially those on the frontline, require a physical presence. We believe that all staff should spend time on-site, given the nature of Council services.

We believe it is reasonable to ask staff (hybrid workers) to balance their time between working on-site and working remotely.

Importantly, we would monitor the impact of this policy and report back to the Employment Committee, to ensure it meets its objectives and remains cost effective."

Mrs Bottomley asked the following supplementary question:

"Since no clear or measurable evidence has been presented to show that the current arrangements are negatively affecting service quality, collaboration, staff wellbeing, or organisational performance, could members please be

provided with the following information:

- On how many occasions have members of the public attended County Hall and been unable to receive adequate support specifically because the relevant staff are working from home?
- How many staff have reported that working from home has negatively impacted their career progression, sense of isolation or team cohesion?
- The number of staff who have raised concerns about the introduction of the 50% on-site working requirement.
- The anticipated total cost of implementing this policy, including any refurbishment, workspace adjustments, and parking or access arrangements needed to support this increased on-site attendance.
- How is this data being collected or gathered?

This would allow members to understand the actual evidence base and whether the proposed change is proportional and cost effective."

Mr Fowler replied as follows:

"It's difficult because there are contradictory reports across the private and public sector that say that some arrangements are better for people at home, some are better for in the office. We've taken it that because this is a public organisation and that the taxpayers are obviously funding people's salaries, we think it's the right move to make to get people back into the office because, based on the evidence we've seen, it increases productivity and collaboration. In terms of the actual numbers, I don't have them to hand right now, but I'm sure that can be arranged, that we can give you something supplementary. I can speak to you afterwards if you like. I do hear the concerns because it is about flexibility and making sure that we've got the balance right because for some roles it may be that it's much easier to do things at home but for some, especially when it's a public facing organisation as I said in my response, it is vital that there has to be somebody there to answer a call or answer somebody coming in and wanting to speak."

(H) Mrs Taylor asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"The Leader has mentioned his £72 million saving plans for Leicestershire several times in this chamber and recently during his BBC Radio Leicester interview on 2nd October 2025.

Therefore, could the Leader:

1. Share this plan with members?

2. Confirm that the plan has been shared with the Chief Executive?

3. Why has the Leader not implemented his £72 million saving plan during the past 6 months since he has been running the council, but instead overspent on the budget by £8.1 million?

4. Why was this plan not part of the Tender Documents for the deep dive into this council's finances?"

Mr D Harrison replied as follows:

"1. I'm not sure what the £72 million figure Mrs Taylor is referring to. Perhaps it was during my time as a Conservative councillor and I challenged her for the role of deputy leader of the group, where I may have used the figure as a general and hypothetical example to look at finding some savings within the organisation. Although supported by a significant number of her colleagues at the time, my challenge was not successful. However, what remains unarguable since taking over as Leader of the County Council in May, is the dire state of the finances inherited by my Administration.

2. The outgoing Chief Executive and his team of chief officers are fully behind my plans to engage Newton as expert external consultants to carry out a comprehensive efficiency review leaving no stone unturned, having a laser focus to reduce costs, identify efficiencies and ultimately savings this Council must find if it is to close the £90 million financial black hole left to us by the last Conservative administration.

3. Newton will help us identify savings and the £8.1 million overspend she refers to was an estimate for the current year made in September, I'm sure she will welcome the £5 million reduction in overspend reported earlier this month. I am confident that by the time this Council sets its precept and agrees its budget in February 2026, the MTFS will be back in balance.

4. The review of this County Council's finances, spending, commissioning and procurement processes and activities referred to in paragraph 3 above is unrestricted in scope. I am confident that this efficiency review will result in significant savings opportunities to allow this Council to regain sound finances and enable a sustainable future."

Mrs Taylor asked the following supplementary question:

"Could the Leader clarify what the £72 million figure refers to as he mentioned it during his BBC Radio Leicester interview on 2nd October 2025, when he was the Reform Leader and not a member of the Conservative Party? Does this figure represent a specific budget line, a combined savings target or a hypothetical example as previously stated?"

Mr Harrison replied as follows:

"It's the figure that I submitted during an election process where I contested the deputy leadership with you, and I was able to explain to members what I thought at that time. That was the beginning phase of trying to find efficiencies which was unsuccessful at that time. Yes, I have tried in the past but now I understand the sophistication and how it works. With a company like Newton's now, with a great record both nationally and internationally, this is the fourth time they're working with us. It is a different project, but I knew in

those stages we had to do something. It was all ignored so of course the debt grew, everything else happened, and here we are today. Hopefully from the start of this with Newton we will find where we can balance our budget. It's going to be critical going forward because we've got other areas of debt growing nationally, unconstrained, that the Government's not even attending to. We're left with it and we're paying the interest as well.

I have believed for a long time we have to review how we operate the business and the efficiency of the business. Hopefully we will get a conclusion which will be helpful to the Council as a body because we just couldn't carry on as we are."

(l) Mr Poland asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"SuDS [sustainable drainage systems] ponds are a vital measure to mitigate the flood risk of new developments in our communities. If they are not maintained properly, however, they cannot operate as efficiently as they are designed to and therefore reduce the protection offered to residents.

1. Can the Lead Member tell me if Leicestershire County Council plays any role in advising on the design, operation and ongoing maintenance of SuDS ponds to Local Planning Authorities?

2. Does the County Council specify who should be responsible for the maintenance of SuDS ponds in perpetuity (or could it if it doesn't already) and is there any mechanism in place to ensure that maintenance work is carried out on an ongoing basis?"

Mr Tilbury replied as follows:

"1. Leicestershire County Council, in its capacity as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) is consulted by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) during the planning process for major developments only. The LLFA provide advice on designs to the LPA on full and reserved matters applications, on such matters as the position of SuDS and suitable access for maintenance from the public highway and/or shared access ways.

   The LLFA recommends appropriate conditions to the LPA, relating to surface water drainage and maintenance. The LPAs are responsible for setting conditions as part of the planning approval process and enforcing against any non-compliance of those conditions.

   The County Council does not specify who is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of SuDS. The LLFA gives standing advice on maintenance to LPAs that states 'Note that it is the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority, under the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems, to ensure that a system to facilitate the future maintenance of SuDS features can be managed and maintained in perpetuity before commencement of the works.

2. If adopted by the relevant water company, then they will be the

responsible body for maintenance. If adopted by the County Council in its capacity as the Local Highway Authority (LHA), then the County Council will be responsible for ongoing maintenance.

The majority of SuDS on development sites are retained by the developer, therefore they are privately maintained by an appointed management company. The developer is responsible for maintenance during construction until such point that they appoint a maintenance company, or it is adopted by the water authority or the County Council. Failure to ensure adequate maintenance of SuDS would constitute a breach of planning conditions for the LPA to enforce."

(J) Mr Charlesworth asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"It has come to my notice following a request from a resident in my Ward, for me to seek answers about the offline status of a CCTV roadside camera in Wigston, that the camera in question had been offline between 02/01/25 and 25/06/25, six months in total. This information was supplied to me by Leicestershire County Council following my request.

Further, my resident informed me that the same camera was also offline in late August 2025, due to "technical difficulties." This information was given to my resident by the Traffic Prosecution Team at Leicestershire Police, when they requested CCTV footage from the relevant provider, to assist their investigation into a potential "hit and run" traffic collision in Wigston.

Questions:

1. Given the offline history of this camera, how widespread is this problem across the City and County, as it would appear that the public and the police, who rely on these cameras for safety and crime detection/ prevention are being let down?

2. Given that Area Traffic Control at Leicester City Council manage the CCTV inventory, can they now be approached formally to provide this information?

3. Has maintenance of and investment in, the CCTV infrastructure been systematically neglected to the detriment of public safety and crime prevention/detection and if so, is this neglect going under the radar of public and police awareness?

4. What assurances can be given regarding the current status of the CCTV provision and infrastructure given that residents and council tax payers have every right to expect this significant element of public safety to be functioning and maintained?

5. I now request as a matter of urgency, a root and branch investigation into the current status of the CCTV network in the Leicester City and Leicestershire local authorities."

Mr Tilbury replied as follows:

"1. The primary purpose of these cameras located in the County is for monitoring live traffic, rather than for safety and crime detection/ prevention purposes. These traffic cameras are managed by Leicester City Council on Leicestershire County Council's behalf and are used to validate data provided by traffic signal installation detectors cut into the road or mounted on traffic signal installations. They are an additional support for managing the road network, and as such when they are not operational, it does not constitute a safety risk for the public. Whilst the police can request footage recorded within 28 days of an incident happening, there is no guarantee that the camera would have been viewing that area of the junction at the time and could not be relied upon, even if fully operational at the time.

The initial fault for the traffic management camera in question at the location of Bull Head Street / Moat Street, Wigston was caused by a power supply issue that would normally be resolved as an urgent matter, however access to the CCTV's power supply was obstructed by large telecommunications cabinets that were installed directly in front of the access point.

Leicestershire County Council's Street Lighting team initially investigated the problem, but due to the limited access they were unable to resolve the issue. After communication between the relevant parties, the CCTV contractor was able to isolate the power to the CCTV cabinet before it reached that access point. Once the power supply fault had been resolved however, a second fault with the camera itself was identified, which took further time to repair.

Unfortunately, this meant that it was offline from 2 January 2025 to 25 June 2025.

2. All Camera Inventory Information is provided on the LCC Open Leicester data site (https://data.leicester.gov.uk/explore/dataset/cctv-cameras/information/?sort=camera_no&location=10,52.65903,-1.12781&basemap=jawg.streets). This is Leicester City Council's full CCTV inventory and includes all type of cameras, including those for public safety/crime prevention. Non-traffic cameras are not part of the service level agreement (SLA) that Leicestershire County Council has with Area Traffic Control for traffic monitoring purposes.

3. The camera in question is a traffic management camera and all cameras managed by Leicester City Council on Leicestershire County Council's behalf have the primary purpose of monitoring live traffic, not for safety and crime detection/prevention.

All traffic cameras under the ATC inventory are under a CCTV service contract. Key Performance Indicator (KPIs) reports show an above 95% attendance rate within the agreed response times by Graded Urgency (4hr/24hr/72hr). When cameras remain offline for a longer period, it is primarily because of an issue with the power supply or telecommunications to that camera and then becomes a third-party issue that may have a longer time frame to resolve.

4. All traffic cameras managed by Leicester City Council as part of the SLA with Leicestershire County Council have the primary purpose of monitoring live traffic, not for safety and crime detection/ prevention and KPI reports show an above 95% attendance rate within the agreed response times. Further capital investment is planned over the next two years to upgrade older cameras and communications from analogue technology to digital forms of communication. This will further improve reliability, maintenance, and connectivity to CCTV to allow ATC to monitor and manage the traffic network.

5. Any further requests for an investigation into all CCTV managed by Leicester City Council, including those in public areas, should be made directly to them.

Traffic management cameras managed by Leicester City Council as part of the SLA with Leicestershire County Council are in good working order as shown by the KPI reports. Where this has fallen below expectations is primarily when there is an issue with the power supply or telecommunications to that camera. Further capital investment is planned over the next two years to upgrade older cameras and communications that will further improve reliability, maintenance, and connectivity to CCTV."

(K) Mrs Taylor asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"1. Since the County Council elections in May 2025, can the Leader confirm whether he or any member of his Administration has had any contact whatsoever with Reform UK's DOGE Team regarding their repeated public offer to conduct a free, in-depth audit of Leicestershire County Council's finances?

Specifically:

2. Did the DOGE Team formally offer to visit and examine the Council's books at no cost to the taxpayer?

3. If so, why has the Administration never taken up this offer and instead chosen to spend £1.4 million of public money on an external consultant to do the same work?

4. Has the Administration ever issued a formal invitation for the DOGE Team to attend the authority, and if not, why not?"

Reply by Mr D Harrison:

"1. At the Scrutiny Commission's meeting on 8 September 2025, in response to questions from Members regarding the so-called DOGE team. I confirmed they had been invited to the County Council. However, I also said at that same meeting I felt the appointment of an external consultant would be the best approach to address the high level of savings that the County Council was required to deliver. This

is what the Administration ultimately decided to approve.

2. Not officially. However, Reform UK has said that it expected all councils it controls to be invited to conduct an audit. This is not the case in Leicestershire.

3. Newton is a professional organisation with expertise across the services provided by local government and has worked with this Council on previous occasions in both adults and children's services, commissioned by the previous Administration. It has an impressive track record of identifying areas for savings and service transformation. Newton was appointed on that basis and after an open procurement process to carry out the Efficiency Review.

4. No, for the reasons referred to in answer 3 above."

(L) Mr Boam asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"Following the routing of the Arriva bus service 12 along Church Lane, Whitwick in August 2025, there have been many complaints and concerns raised by residents about the suitability of Church Lane as a bus route. Those concerns have centred around the characteristics of Church Lane and buses (particularly the standard large buses) adding to an already congested road, the safety of the route and the siting of bus stops in the vicinity of residents' properties. In response Leicestershire County Council (LCC) committed to collate and review feedback received in conjunction with the operator, Arriva.

Can the Lead Member provide an outline of the review findings and what the position is on Church Lane continuing to be served by buses. In answering the question can the Lead Member cover:

- Why the service is being routed along Church Lane and not Brooks Lane as previously.
- Who decided on this bus service running along Church Lane.
- Who assessed the suitability and appropriateness of Church Lane being served by buses as well as bus stops.
- Any operational issues experienced along Church Lane since the service was introduced.
- The performance of the service including patronage from Church Lane."

Mr Tilbury replied as follows:

"Leicestershire County Council is fully aware of residents' concerns being raised about bus service 12 routeing along Church Lane and has been continually reviewing feedback received along with the performance of the service in liaison with Arriva, the commercial operator of the service.

Arriva made the commercial decision to route its service 12 along Church Lane having considered passenger requests for improved access to and from the Whitwick Health Centre and the Whitwick, Dumps Road area

alongside driver observations and usage data. The service is fully funded by Arriva.

Service 12 previously operated via Brooks Lane in Whitwick. This routing did not allow for return travel to the Whitwick Health Centre on North Street which restricted access to bus travel for residents. Re-routing via Church Lane opened access to more passenger journeys.

The changes to this commercial service, which receives no subsidy from the County Council, were registered with the Traffic Commissioner and subsequently approved.

Service 12 is now an hourly service operating Monday-Saturday between Hinckley and Coalville via Whitwick. The service operates with 1 bus per hour, and the bus does not park or idle at the bus stops along Church Lane.

As the changes resulted in increased return journey access for bus passengers in Whitwick no objections were raised by the County Council when Arriva registered them with the Traffic Commissioner.

Church Lane is a typical Leicestershire Street with business access, resident parking issues and ad-hoc congestion where traffic often needs to wait behind parked vehicles for oncoming traffic to pass. Whilst much of the Leicestershire bus network serves roads like Church Lane with standard size buses, the smaller bus being utilised for this route, which is equivalent to the size of a food delivery van, is more than adequate in size to suitably navigate through Church Lane. It has been noted however that on occasion a standard size vehicle has been used on the route when Arriva have not had a small vehicle available.

Arriva undertook their own assessment of the appropriateness of the routing via Church Lane and in their professional driver capacity, were confident that the route was suitable to operate a bus service.

In support of the route changes, the County Council reviewed and assessed the suitability and safety of the 5 new bus stop locations identified by Arriva along Church Lane to support the bus service and access for its passengers. No concerns were picked up as part of this assessment. The stops are currently temporarily denoted by concrete-based lollipop signs.

Other than some initial issues experienced in week 1 with some heightened parking obstruction, Arriva has confirmed that the route is operating well, with their drivers not experiencing any issues and the service is running smoothly and is punctual.

Arriva are seeing an increase in patronage in Whitwick since these changes were made. On review of a comparable 6-week period prior to the route changes, 37 passenger journeys were made from Brooks Lane, whereby during the initial 6-weeks following the changes, 217 passenger journeys were made from Church Lane.

Patronage has also increased overall across Whitwick with 922 journeys in 6 weeks previously and 1467 in the initial 6 weeks following the service

changes. A growth in patronage of 37%.

In light of the above, Arriva have advised that they intend to continue operating the current route on a commercial basis for the foreseeable future. The County Council will therefore be seeking to formalise the bus stops with permanent flags and poles."

Mr Boam asked the following supplementary question:

With so many Whitwick residents quite frankly furious about buses on the totally unsuitable route down Church Lane, can the Lead Member for Highways confirm whether the Council still has any power to stop this route or reroute the bus elsewhere?"

Mr Tilbury replied as follows:

"I confirm it's a commercial route which means the County Council will not subsidise it at all. It is the bus company's decision."

44. POSITION STATEMENTS UNDER STANDING ORDER 8.

The Leader gave a position statement on the following matters:

- Member Conduct;
- Local Government Reorganisation;
- Building Local and Regional Strategic Relationships;
- Villages Together.

The Lead Member for Resources gave a position statement on the Efficiency Review.

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

- Getting ready for winter (gritting and flood ready);
- Response to Storm Claudia.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission gave a position statement on the work of the Scrutiny Commission.

A copy of the position statements is filed with these minutes.

45. REPORT OF THE CABINET.

(a) Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium 2025.

It was moved by Mr Fowler, seconded by Mr D Harrison, and carried unanimously:

"That the Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium 2025 be approved."

46. REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE.

(a) Review and Revision of the Constitution.

It was moved by Mr D Harrison, seconded by Mrs Taylor and carried unanimously:

Motion 1

"(a) That the proposed changes to the Constitution, as set out in Appendix A to this report, other than those which relate to Standing Orders (the Meeting Procedure Rules), be approved;

Motion 2 – Procedural Motion in accordance with Standing Order 37

(b) That the changes to Standing Orders (The Meeting Procedure Rules), as set out in Appendix B to this report, be approved."

(NOTE: Standing Order 37 requires that this procedural motion, having been moved and seconded, stands adjourned until the next ordinary meeting of the Council.)

47. REPORT OF THE APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE.

(a) Appointment of Chief Executive.

It was moved by Mr D Harrison, seconded by Mrs Taylor and carried unanimously:

"(a) That Jane Moore be appointed Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service with effect from 4 December 2025, with remuneration at Grade 22, spinal column point 71, of the Leicestershire County Council Salary Scale 2025-26;

(b) That Jane Moore be appointed as Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer with effect from 4 December 2025."

48. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICES OF MOTION:

(a) Support for Family Carers.

It was moved by Mr D Harrison, seconded by Mr Crook and carried unanimously:

"(a) That this Council:

(i) Recognises the vital role played by carers in supporting vulnerable individuals across Leicestershire and acknowledges

the unique challenges they face in accessing services, employment, and community participation;

(ii) Notes that the Care Act 2014 grants carers the right to:

- A Carer's Assessment, regardless of the amount or type of care provided;
- Support services and personal budgets where eligible;
- Information, advice and preventative support to maintain wellbeing;
- Independent advocacy where needed.

(iii) Notes that the Children and Families Act 2014 entitles all young carers and parent carers to a needs assessment;

(b) That this Council therefore resolves to:

(i) Formally recognise carers as a group requiring particular consideration and support, specifically:

- To ensure carers are consulted and involved in shaping services;
- To review service delivery to remove barriers for carers;

(ii) Assess future decisions, services and policies made and adopted by the Council to determine the impact of changes on carers;

(iii) Ensure that these commitments are incorporated into the refresh of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Carers Strategy and any other relevant policies and strategies."

(b) <u>Opposing Labour's Digital ID Scheme.</u>

It was moved by Mr Mullaney and seconded by Mr Fowler:

"(a) That this Council notes the recent announcement by Keir Starmer's Labour Government of plans to introduce a mandatory Digital ID scheme for all UK residents.

(b) That this Council further notes that the Government's plan:

(i) Could require every resident to obtain a Digital ID to access public services and entitlements;

(ii) Could risk criminalising millions of people, particularly older people, those on lower incomes, or those without access to digital technology;

(iii) Raises significant privacy and civil liberties concerns;

(iv) Could result in billions of pounds of taxpayers' money being

wasted on a massive IT project, with no clear benefit or safeguards.

(c) That this Council believes that Labour's scheme:

(i) Represents an expensive measure that will undermine public trust;

(ii) Will do nothing to address the real priorities facing communities such as delivering more police on the streets, properly funding local schools and fixing broken roads and pavements;

(iii) Fails to protect our core British values of liberty, privacy and fairness.

(d) That this Council welcomes the Liberal Democrats' consistent national opposition to Labour's ID cards, having previously defeated Labour's original plans for ID cards in 2010, and opposes Labour's renewed attempt to impose them in digital form.

(e) That this Council resolves:

(i) To formally oppose the Labour Government's Digital ID plans;

(ii) To request the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for the Home Department and the Minister for Digital Infrastructure expressing this Council's firm opposition to Labour's mandatory Digital ID system and calling for the plans to be scrapped;

(iii) To work with local voluntary, digital inclusion and civil liberties groups to ensure that no resident in Leicestershire is penalised or excluded as a result of any national identification scheme."

On the motion being put and before the vote was taken, five members rose asking that a named vote be recorded.

The vote was recorded as follows:

<u>For the Motion</u>

Mr Abbott, Mr Bailey, Dr Bloxham, Mr Boam, Mr Bools, Mrs Bottomley, Mr Bradshaw, Mr Bray, Miss Butler, Mr Chapman, Mr Cooke, Mr Crook, Mrs Danks, Mr Durrani, Mr England, Mr Fowler, Mr Galton, Mr Grimley, Mr Hamilton-Gray, Mr D Harrison, Mr P Harrison, Dr Hill, Mr Holt, Mr Innes, Mr King, Mrs Knight, Mr Lovegrove, Mr McDonald, Mr Melen, Mr Morris, Mr Mullaney, Mr O'Shea, Mr Page, Mrs Page, Mrs Pendlebury, Mr Piper, Mr Poland, Mr Pugsley, Mr Richichi, Mr Robinson, Mr Rudkin, Mrs Seaton, Mr Smith, Mr Squires, Mrs Taylor, Mr Tilbury, Mr Walker, Mr Whitford

<u>Against the Motion</u>

Ms Gray, Mr Miah

Abstention

Mr Charlesworth

The motion was carried with 48 members voting for the motion and 2 members voting against.

(c) Urgent Action on SEND Funding.

It was moved by Mrs Taylor, seconded by Mr Smith and carried unanimously:

"(a) That this Council notes:

(i) The increasing number of children and young people in our county with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);

(ii) The growing pressure on schools, local authorities, and families to meet complex needs with limited resources;

(iii) That current funding levels for SEND provision are insufficient to meet statutory obligations and ensure equitable access to education.

(b) That this Council believes:

(i) Every child deserves access to high-quality education, regardless of their needs;

(ii) Underfunding SEND services risks long-term harm to children's development, wellbeing, and life chances;

(iii) Local authorities must be adequately resourced to deliver the support required under the Children and Families Act 2014.

(c) That this Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Education, urging an immediate review and uplift of SEND funding allocations for Leicestershire County Council."

(d) Community Flood Signage Scheme for Leicestershire.

Mr Poland sought and obtained the consent of the Council to move an altered motion.

It was moved by Mr Poland, seconded by Mr Tilbury and carried unanimously:

"(a) This Council notes:

(ii) That instances of surface water and fluvial flooding across Leicestershire are becoming more frequent and severe, posing

risks to life, property, and transport networks.

(iii) That road closures during flood events may at times be delayed because the Council's Operational Highways teams and emergency services cannot always attend immediately.

(iv) That Nottinghamshire County Council operates a Community Flood Signage Scheme (CFSS), which enables trained community Flood Wardens (who are employees of Nottinghamshire County Council) to deploy signage and temporarily close roads when pre-agreed flood trigger levels are reached, under the direction and authorisation of the County Council's Flood Risk Management Team.

(v) That this scheme has been recognised nationally for improving public safety, reducing emergency response demands, and strengthening local resilience.

(b) This Council has undertaken an initial feasibility assessment introducing a CFSS and recognises:

(i) That empowering local communities to act swiftly and safely during flooding events could significantly enhance public safety.

(ii) That subject to resolving legal and regulatory issues and with appropriate training, insurance, and operational protocols, community Flood Wardens could responsibly assist the Council in closing roads that are temporarily impassable due to flooding.

(iii) That implementing a CFSS in Leicestershire would align with the Council's objectives as the Lead Local Flood Authority and demonstrate proactive flood management.

(c) To introduce such a scheme this Council notes:

(i) That Volunteer Flood Wardens (VFWs) are currently managed by the Local Authority Resilience Partnership. The Resilience Partnership Management Board does not support the introduction of CFSS due to concerns over resource pressures, particularly during a severe weather event. It is also recognised however that many VFWs have called for the power to legally close roads during flooding events and giving them that power could help protect people and property during flood events.

(ii) In light of the Resilience Partnership Management Board's position, the management responsibility of the CFSS would need to be transferred to the Council from the Resilience Partnership in order to facilitate the scheme, including updating the role and responsibilities of the team providing the necessary training, supervision and oversight to effectively manage the responsibility and liabilities associated with a volunteer scheme of this nature.

(iii) That a transfer of responsibilities and appointing the necessary

resource would need to be managed to avoid disruption to services during the higher flooding risk time of year for the County Council's flood risk and drainage teams.

(iv) That implementation of the CFSS would be dependent on both the ability and willingness of VFWs to take on additional responsibilities and for those VFWs to be available at the time of a flood event. Any VFW who does not wish to have the responsibility of closing roads during a flood event would not be required to do so.

(v) Not all locations would be suitable for action by VFW, including high speed roads and isolated locations. These locations would continue to be addressed by the Local Highway Authority even where a CFSS was implemented.

(d) This Council therefore resolves to:

(i) Introduce a pilot scheme of enhanced resources allocated to prioritise 'quick response' to locations where road closures could reduce the risk to life (in addition to existing sites) and risk of property flooding caused by bow waves or other relevant locations promoted by VFWs. Initial locations during the pilot would be based on existing reports and local knowledge. Additional locations may be added over time dependent on the evaluation of the pilot. The objectives are similar to a CFSS but with the benefits of wider coverage and consistent application.

(ii) Work with VFWs to identify suitable locations for signage warning where a route is liable to flooding or where bow waves can cause internal property flooding.

(iii) Engage with the communities impacted by bow wave flooding to help and guide them on making their properties more flood resilient. All communities, residents and businesses need to be flood aware and prepared. It is acknowledged that whether through a CFSS or the quick response pilot, it will never be possible to remove the risk of flooding and neither scheme should be viewed as a 'solution' to flood risk, rather one of a set of tools that might reduce the impact.

(iv) Monitor the impact of this pilot and report back to the Environment, Flooding and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee after six months on the outcomes.

(v) Declare that it is the will of this Council to transfer the VFW service to the County Council and take forward a CFSS pilot. It is acknowledged that the CFSS scheme may not be in place for the 2025/26 flood season due to the insurance, training and other matters which will be required to be resolved for this scheme, but it is the intention of this Council to have the CFSS scheme in place in Leicestershire in time for the 2026/27 flood season. This Council requests Cabinet to identify the necessary resources for inclusion

in the County Council's 2026/27 budget."

2.00 pm – 5.51 pm
03 December 2025

CHAIRMAN