

CABINET

TUESDAY, 18 MARCH 2025

DECISIONS

Published on: Tuesday 18 March 2025

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 18 March 2025. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording which will appear in the minutes.

The Constitution allows for the call-in of non-urgent Key Decisions. Action to implement these decisions will be taken on the expiration of 5 working days from the date of this decision sheet unless they have been called-in. This document will be amended as soon as a decision has been called in.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Ms. J. Bailey (Tel. 0116 305 2583).

ITEM 3

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

Mrs Taylor CC declared an other registerable interest in agenda item 10 (Lightbulb Service Business Case) as a member of Charnwood Borough Council. Mr. Breckon CC an other registerable interest in the same item as a member of Blaby District Council.

Mr. O'Shea CC declared an other registerable interest in agenda item 12 (Management of the County Council's Rural Estate) as a member of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

ITEM 4

ENGLISH DEVOLUTION WHITE PAPER: LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION.

*Chief Executive,
Director of Corporate
Resources, and
Director of Law and
Governance*

- a) That the outcome of the early engagement undertaken on the proposals for local government reorganisation including the comments of the Scrutiny Commission be noted;
- b) That the outline of the interim plan be approved for submission to the Government by the deadline of 21 March 2025;
- c) That the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Acting Leader, the Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance, be authorised to finalise the interim plan for

submission to the Government provided that these do not change the underlying principles as presented in the report.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The letter received from the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution on 5 February set out the formal invitation to all local authorities in remaining two-tier areas and neighbouring unitary authorities to develop a proposal for local government reorganisation and required interim plans to be submitted to the Government by 21 March 2025.

ITEM 5

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT 2025/26 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND WORKS PROGRAMME.

*Director of
Environment and
Transport*

- a) That the comments of the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- b) That the acute financial context in which the 2025/26 Highways and Transportation Capital and Works Programmes (the Programmes) have been developed and will be delivered, as set out in Part B of the report be noted;
- c) That the Programmes be approved;
- d) That the Director of Environment and Transport be authorised,
 - i. following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources and the Cabinet Lead Members for Highways and Transportation and Corporate Resources, to prepare and submit bids, as appropriate, to secure external funding for delivery of schemes identified in the Programmes;
 - ii. following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources, the Director of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Lead Member for Corporate Resources, to enter such contracts as is necessary to progress schemes in the approved Programmes to allow early contractor involvement to take place in advance of all external funding required to deliver the scheme being

secured, noting the challenges set out in paragraph 22 of the report;

- iii. following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources, the Director of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Lead Member for Corporate Resources, to undertake preparatory work as considered appropriate to develop savings as set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and to ensure that further savings are implemented in a timely manner.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

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

To enable the delivery of the Programmes for the 2025/26 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 Capital Programme.

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

ITEM 6

*Director of
Environment and
Transport*

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

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

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires relevant authorities to assess and review a RoWIP every 10 years.

An updated RoWIP will enable completion of the action 'S12', set out in the County Council's Cycling and Walking Strategy Action Plan, which sets out the intention to prepare a revised RoWIP by 2026.

The Government's statutory RoWIP guidance recommends that authorities undertake a 12-week consultation period on a draft RoWIP to allow for representations to be made.

ITEM 7

LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY 2024-2029 - OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION.

Director of Public Health

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

REASONS FOR DECISION:

It is a requirement that local authorities in England have a Suicide Prevention Strategy/Plan. Since 2019, all local authorities in England have had such a plan in place.

The Strategy seeks to reduce suicide and support people at risk of suicide in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland area and has been informed by individuals with experience of suicide, as well as the organisations supporting them.

ITEM 8

PROPOSED SUBMISSION DRAFT (REGULATION 19) HARBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2020-2041.

Chief Executive

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

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The County Council's response will set out key comments for consideration by Harborough District Council in progressing its new Local Plan. It seeks to ensure alignment with the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan, and to influence the content of the Local Plan in the interests of local communities, including ensuring that the Local Plan provides an as robust as possible policy platform for securing the provision of the infrastructure and services required to support its successful delivery.

ITEM 9

SECTION 106 POLICY AND CHARGING SCHEDULE FOR OFF-SITE AND SIGNIFICANT ON-SITE BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN.

Chief Executive

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

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The partners are currently unable to meet their statutory obligations without this monitoring process being in place. This will slow down or delay planning decisions because each Section 106 agreement between a landowner and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) requires a clause for the monitoring fee to be inserted. If this situation continues, it will put the BNG partnership at risk.

There is a risk to the Council of considerable loss of income if the policy is not approved. This is because the applicant should be charged for this monitoring compliance, and this charge cannot be secured without the partner LPA first inserting this monitoring fee into the Section 106 agreement.

ITEM 10

LIGHTBULB SERVICE BUSINESS CASE.

Director of Adults and Communities

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

Communities Department into the Lightbulb Service be noted;

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

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The County Council's SLA with Blaby District Council 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. The original agreement was due to expire on 31 March 2024. In March 2024, the Cabinet agreed to extend the SLA for a further 12 months, to allow for the conclusion of the review of the partnership and agreement to be reached on the new Business Case.

At the Lightbulb Executive Board meeting held on 24 February 2025, the district councils announced that in light of the recent Government announcements regarding local government reorganisation and devolution, they had taken the decision not to proceed with the implementation of the Business Case. Their view was that with the anticipated changes in the structure of local government in Leicestershire, it was best to continue with the existing Lightbulb Service structure until the position was clearer. In the interim, it is planned to pilot the caseworker model during 2025/26 and partners have agreed to additional top slicing of Disabled Facilities Grants for this.

ITEM 11

**LEICESTERSHIRE ADULT LEARNING SERVICE
OFSTED INSPECTION FINDINGS.**

*Director of Adults and
Communities*

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

presented to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee outlining progress with the actions in the Quality Improvement Plan in due course.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Good quality adult education supports individual opportunity and life chances and is central to the delivery of strategic outcomes such as economic growth and managing demands on public services. Inspection findings confirm that the Council's adult learning provision continues to be of a high standard and the quality of education is good. Learning activities effectively support adults develop skills and behaviours they need to advance their employment and improve health and wellbeing.

The Quality Improvement Plan, performance monitoring, and challenge through the governance framework will ensure residents continue to benefit from an effective adult education service.

Oversight of service performance by the Council's Executive (Cabinet) is good practice and is central to meeting the expectations of governance within the Ofsted inspection framework.

ITEM 12

MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RURAL ESTATE.

Director of Corporate Resources

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

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To respond to the communication received from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council on 13 February 2025 regarding its Notice of Motion citing the sale of County Farms.

To advise Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council regarding the management of the County Council's rural estate.

ITEM 13

PROPOSED EXPANSION OF AGE RANGE DESIGNATION FOR OAKFIELD SHORT STAY SCHOOL.

Director of Children and Family Services

- a) That consultation on an age range change for Oakfield School, from solely primary age provision to a school for children aged 4 to 16 years be approved;
- b) That the Director of Children and Family Services be authorised to approve the age range change for Oakfield School following the consultation subject to no significant issues/concerns having arisen.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide suitable full-time education to permanently excluded pupils from the sixth day of exclusion under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.

Children unable to attend a mainstream school, for which the Council has responsibility, must be on roll at a registered school. An age-range change would enable secondary aged children to be enrolled at Oakfield School to receive their education.

There would be no changes to the existing primary age provision, which will remain distinct. Secondary age pupils would not be taught on the same site as the existing primary age provision.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation, authorisation for the Director of Children and Family Services to approve the age range change will enable it to be made swiftly and will ensure that the Council can fulfil its statutory duty, plan the educational provision and provide certainty to staff.

ITEM 14

DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS.

Chief Executive

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

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

REASONS FOR DECISION:

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

ITEM 18

EXCEPTION TO THE CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY STAFF FOR 'HARD TO FILL ROLES' WITHIN THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT.

Director of Environment and Transport and Director of Corporate Resources

That an exception to the Contract Procedure Rules be agreed to enable the Director of Environment and Transport to approve the direct award of contracts to Designated Suppliers identified in the report for the temporary provision of specialist HGV drivers, plant operatives, and supervisors, with the contracts running until 30 September 2026 with a maximum combined spend of £1.6m.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

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.

Where an exception to the Contract Procedure Rules is required for contracts over £179,087, Rule 57 (d) provides that the Cabinet's approval be obtained to the exception where this is justified on its merits. The proposed contracts with other agencies outside the corporate contract are expected to have a combined

value not exceeding £1.6m, each of which is likely to be over the £179,087 threshold.

The circumstances and financial considerations surrounding the proposal, explained in Part B of the report, mean that other procurement processes are not possible in order to ensure business continuity.

The Environment and Transport Department has been unable to source all the necessary staff required via the Council's existing recruitment and agency arrangements.