

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Glenfield on Friday, 12 September 2025.

PRESENT

Mr. D. Harrison CC (in the Chair)

Mr. C. Abbott CC
Miss. H. Butler CC
Mr. K. Crook CC
Mr. H. Fowler CC
Mr. C. Pugsley CC

Mr. V. Richichi CC
Mr. M. Squires CC
Mr. A. Tilbury CC
Mr. C. Whitford CC

In attendance.

Ms. S. Douglas, Independent Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board, Mrs. D. Taylor CC, Mr. M. Mullaney CC.

33. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2025 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

34. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

35. 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. No declarations were made.

36. Draft Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Yearly Report 2024-2025.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services regarding the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Yearly Report 2024-2025. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda item 4", is filed with these minutes.

Comments of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which had considered the Yearly Report at its meeting on 2 September, and comments from Mrs. K. Knight CC were circulated separately and copies are filed with these minutes.

Regarding the comments from Mrs. Knight, the Director referred to the Council's duties as a statutory Safeguarding Partner and said that, as indicated in the report, the reserve funds would be used to offset cost increases.

Mr. Pugsley CC commended the report and stressed the importance of the safeguarding work being done by the Partnership.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- b) That the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Yearly Report 2024-2025 be welcomed.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The County Council is one of the statutory Safeguarding Partners which have a shared and equal statutory duty with the local Integrated Care Board, the Police, and Rutland Council to agree and make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Leicestershire and Rutland.

It is a statutory requirement, as set out in Working Together (2023), that the Safeguarding Partners publish a report at least once every twelve months on the arrangements and their effectiveness.

In Leicestershire, the Yearly Report has traditionally been presented to the Cabinet and to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Presenting the Yearly Report enables the Cabinet to comment on the content of the document and consider whether it identifies matters that it wishes to address in relation to the effectiveness of safeguarding within the work of the Authority.

37. Draft Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2024-2025.

The Cabinet considered a report of Independent Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board regarding the draft Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report (LRSAB) 2024-2025. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda item 5", is filed with these minutes.

Comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which had considered the Annual Report at its meeting on 1 September, and comments from Mrs. K. Knight CC were circulated separately and copies are filed with these minutes.

Presenting the report, the Independent Chair highlighted the role of the Partnership in quality assurance, collaborative working, undertaking Safeguarding Adults Reviews and disseminating learning from these. Regarding the comments from Mrs. Knight, the Independent Chair explained that as a statutory Safeguarding Partner the Council contributed to the Partnership's budget needed to carry such work.

Mr. Abbott CC thanked the Board and its subgroups for their commitment to the safeguarding work and commended the report.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- b) That the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report for 2024-2025 be welcomed.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The LRSAB is a statutory body. The County Council is the host organisation for the Board and also has a duty to ensure that it is enabled to operate effectively.

It is a requirement of the Care Act 2014 that the LRSAB Annual Report be reported to the Leader of the Council together with the Chief Executive of the Local Authority, the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Police and Crime Commissioner, and local Healthwatch.

In Leicestershire, the Annual Report has traditionally, as a way of discharging these responsibilities, also been presented to the Cabinet and to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

38. Medium Term Financial Strategy - Budget Monitoring and MTFS Refresh.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources regarding the Council's overall financial situation, the revenue budget monitoring position at the end of Period 4 (the end of July), and seeking approval for changes to the capital programme, for additional investment in a bank risk share product, and to expand membership of the Investing in Leicestershire Programme Board. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda item 6", is filed with these minutes.

Comments of the Scrutiny Commission, which had considered a report at its meeting on 8 September, were circulated separately and a copy is filed with these minutes.

Miss Butler CC said that protecting frontline services remained a priority, new investment opportunities for the Council were being explored, and the reversal of the previous rise in Council Tax was being considered.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments of the Scrutiny Commission be noted;
- b) That the significant financial challenges faced by the County Council be noted;
- c) That the Period 4 monitoring position from the current financial year be noted;
- d) That the proposed approach outlined in the report to updating the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved;
- e) That the revised Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2028/29 as set out in Appendix C to the report be approved;
- f) That additional investment in bank risk sharing product (capital release funds) in line with the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy, up to a maximum investment of £20m at any one time, be approved;
- g) That the membership of the Investing in Leicestershire Programme Board be extended to include all members of the Cabinet.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To note the revenue monitoring position for the current year, as at Period 4.

The revised capital programme for 2025-29 required amendment as a result of the latest forecast financial position.

To approve the approach to the development of plans to update the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2026-2030 in order that work can be progressed.

To approve additional treasury management investments in a bank risk sharing product (capital release funds), up to a maximum of £20m at any one time, in line with the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy. An investment of £12m is currently held which is returning capital.

The Cabinet previously agreed the Terms of Reference of the Investing in Leicestershire Programme Board.

39. Local Government Reorganisation.

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Resources, and Director of Law and Governance regarding the Government's policy on local government reorganisation, the local response made earlier in the year, the current position across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and elsewhere, and financial modelling being undertaken which would inform the Council's final proposal. A copy of the report and a supplementary report, marked "Agenda item 7", are filed with these minutes.

Mr. Harrison CC commented on the context including the recent Council resolutions and changes to the Leicester boundary being sought by the City Mayor. He noted the Government's stated timetable for the reorganisation and devolution and highlighted the need for clarity from the Government as to how it intended to proceed.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the contents of the report be noted; the uncertainty about the progress of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill following the resignation of the Deputy Prime Minister and the sacking of the Minister of State; and the expectation nevertheless that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) will receive more final submissions in November than the number of interim plans submitted in March;
- b) That the Cabinet anticipates an assessment by MHCLG after November of whether all reorganisation and devolution proposals can proceed to the Government's timetable of completion in the life of this Parliament;
- c) That the Cabinet acknowledges the decision of the County Council at its meeting on 30 July not to support any expansion of Leicester City Council's boundaries and the public unpopularity of the boundary changes proposed by the Mayor of Leicester, but also recognises the need to provide evidence of the financial, service and other impacts of those changes on the County, its residents and taxpayers;

- d) That the modelling exercise currently underway looking at six different options for reorganisation into a unitary structure for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) be supported; and
- e) The outcomes of the modelling be considered as soon as possible and the Cabinet will welcome the views of the Scrutiny Commission and all members before a final submission on a unitary structure for LLR is made by the Cabinet.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To note the latest position regarding local government reorganisation and the next steps to be taken by the County Council, and to inform decision-making on a final submission to Government on a unitary structure for LLR (required to be submitted by 28 November 2025).

40. Home Care for Leicestershire Procurement.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities regarding the procurement of home care contracts for Leicestershire residents with eligible social care needs, for the period 2026 to 2034. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda item 8", is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Abbott CC noted that the provision of home care was a key Council service and the changes to the commissioning model would ensure a sustainable provider market whilst also achieving best value for the Authority.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the procurement of contracts for the provision of services in respect of home care, continuing health care, and Live in Care/24-hour care under an open Framework, for the period 2026 to 2034, be approved;
- b) That the Director of Adults and Communities be authorised to enter into any contractual arrangements necessary to bring into effect the provision of services in respect of home care, continuing health care, and Live in Care/24-hour care with effect from 1 September 2026.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to undertake an assessment of any person who appears to be in need of care and support, and to provide services to meet any unmet care and support needs identified through that assessment. The authority must develop a wide range of sustainable high-quality care and support services, which will be available to their communities. A wide range of high-quality services will give people more control and help them to make more effective and personalised choices over their care.

The existing Home Care for Leicestershire Framework expires in October 2025 with a potential one-year extension until October 2026; there are no options remaining to extend the arrangements beyond that. With the introduction of the Procurement Act 2023 in February 2025, it is timely to re-commission the service under current legislation. The

Procurement Act 2023 introduces open frameworks (a scheme of successive frameworks on substantially the same terms) with a combined term of eight years. Procuring services under an open framework will reinforce sustainability in the Leicestershire market. The open framework mandates re-opening to allow new providers on to the Framework. The Framework is planned to re-open at the end of year one and in year five of the eight-year term.

By redesigning parts of the Framework (for example, the zone boundaries) the Council will be able to demonstrate a more efficient commissioning model.

41. Corporate Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2024-2025.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources regarding the Council's Corporate Complaints and Compliments Annual Report for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda item 9", is filed with these minutes.

Comments of the Scrutiny Commission, which considered a report on 8 September, were circulated separately and a copy is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments of the Scrutiny Commission be noted;
- b) That the Corporate Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2024-2025 be noted.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure requires the production of an annual report pertaining to cases managed under that Procedure (paragraph 6.1 'Publishing complaints data'). Annual reports are available on the Council's website.

Additionally, statutory complaints processes set out requirements for reporting annual performance and this is mirrored in recommended reporting arrangements set out in the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code, 'Organisations should produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge' (paragraph 8.1 of the Complaint Handling Code).

42. Outcome of the 18-Month Medium Term Financial Strategy Street Lighting Dimming Trial.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport regarding the outcome of the 18-month street lighting dimming trial (carried out from January 2023 to June 2025) and seeking approval for County streetlights to be dimmed to 30% intensity permanently from 20:00 hours to 07:00 hours. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda item 10", is filed with these minutes.

Comments of the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which had considered a report on 4 September, were circulated separately and a copy is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Whitford CC noted that significant savings had been achieved, there had been minimal adverse feedback, and the Police had raised no concerns, and he was therefore pleased to endorse the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments of the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- b) That the outcome of the trial be noted;
- c) That the dimming of County streetlights to 30% intensity from 20:00 hours until 07:00 hours be approved;
- d) That the Director of Environment and Transport be authorised to make alterations to the dimming of streetlights following feedback from Leicestershire Police and other key stakeholders in accordance with the approved risk assessment.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24-2026/27 identified potential savings by reducing the street lighting service. The following savings have been achieved through the trial:

- a) Reduced street lighting energy costs by £539,759;
- b) Reduced street lighting energy consumption by 1,442,770 kWh;
- c) Reduced carbon emissions by 319.3 tonne.

The trial had a positive impact on reducing costs while leaving lighting in place, albeit at reduced levels.

Dimming of streetlights will result in future savings in the form of reduced future energy costs due to reduced energy consumption. However, if the price per unit of energy increases, associated electricity costs will also increase.

Delegation to the Director will enable a prompt response to any future issues that may arise.

Dimming of streetlights to 30% from 20:00 hours until 07:00 hours across the County is considered a “departure from standards” and does not meet criteria for lighting classes within the British Standard for roadway lighting BS5489. It therefore required the Cabinet’s approval to implement as a permanent measure.

43. A5 Concept Link.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport regarding work being undertaken on a potential road link to connect the A5 and A47 in Hinckley and seeking approval to undertake engagement activities to help develop the concept and ascertain its potential for delivery. A copy of the report, marked “Agenda item 11”, is filed with these minutes.

Comments from Mrs. A. Pendlebury CC, the local member for Hollycroft division, were circulated separately and a copy is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Whitford CC was pleased to support the collaborative work to develop the scheme and assured Mrs. Pendlebury that her concerns would be taken into account.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the key factors that have led to the development of the scheme, as set out in paragraphs 21 to 23 of the report be noted;
- b) That the work undertaken to date to address the issues and constraints that exist along the A5 corridor in respect to transport, economic development and road safety that pose a potential barrier to sustainable development in the future and to develop a potential mitigation measure be noted;
- c) That the Director of Environment and Transport be authorised to
 - i. undertake, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, necessary engagement activities with stakeholders, landowners and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council to support work on the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan and to address other policy, technical and procedural matters necessary to progress the A5 Concept Link scheme;
 - ii. continue to develop the proposed scheme, noting that further reports will be made to the Cabinet as necessary.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The A5 is on the Strategic Road Network and is managed by National Highways (NH). There are existing issues and constraints at the Longshoot-Dodwells junction (two junctions between the A5 and the A47 to the west of Hinckley) that cause problems of congestion, road safety, and re-routing of vehicle trips onto the local road network that the County Council, as the Local Transport Authority, is responsible for.

Uncertainty regarding the programme of improvements to be implemented by NH and the possibility of new land use developments nearby has led the Council's officers to develop a potential scheme to address the existing and future issues in this location.

It is understood that a further draft of the next Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan is being prepared for consultation in autumn 2025. The A5 Concept Link will be a key transport measure that will help to enable the substantial amount of proposed growth in the Local Plan to be delivered in a sustainable manner in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Engagement with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will enable the A5 Concept Link to be used to support the progress of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan and assist in discussions with the developers of the nearby sites.

44. A511 Growth Corridor - to Commence Construction of a Small Section of Works on the Bardon Link Road, Coalville.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport regarding the construction of a small section of works on the Bardon Link Road (part of the A511 Major Road Network improvements) in order to implement planning consent, which would otherwise expire in January 2026. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda item 12", is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the delivery of the works on the Bardon Link Road, which comprise setting out of the drainage pond and the construction of a short section of haul road, as illustrated on the drawing appended to the report, ahead of the scheme securing Full Business Case approval from the Department for Transport (DfT) be approved;
- b) That the latest position with regards to costs and timescales for the scheme be noted.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The planning permission for the Bardon Link Road will lapse on 16 January 2026 unless construction works commence on site before this date. It was originally anticipated that the construction would commence in spring 2025 but the Early Contractor Involvement process, whilst providing significant benefits for the smooth delivery of the scheme, has delayed the start.

It would be necessary to submit a new, full planning application for the Bardon Link Road if the deadline to commence works was not met. This would incur significant additional cost and it would delay the overall programme by approximately one year while the new consent was sought, putting DfT funding at risk of being withdrawn.

The Cabinet's approval is sought as these initial works would be delivered ahead of the Government formally confirming its commitment to fund the A511 Major Road Network improvements (which is subject to the approval of a Full Business Case due to be submitted in February 2026). In a letter issued to Leaders of Local Authorities dated 8 July 2025, the Government reconfirmed its 'in principle' support of the project.

45. Harborough Local Plan - Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground with Leicestershire County Council.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive regarding Harborough District Council's Local Plan and seeking approval for the County Council to become a signatory to a Statement of Common Ground with the District Council regarding the two Authorities' 'Duty to Cooperate' on strategic and cross-boundary matters associated with the production of the Local Plan. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda item 13", is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Fowler CC commented on the importance of dialogue and cooperation between the two councils and noted that there were significant infrastructure matters to be addressed.

RESOLVED:

That the County Council becomes a signatory to the 'Harborough Local Plan Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground with Leicestershire County Council'.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Duty to Cooperate is a legal duty for local planning authorities, county councils and relevant bodies to 'engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in any process' including the preparation of development plan documents. This Statement of Common Ground has been jointly produced by Harborough District Council and the County Council to confirm that the parties have effectively and regularly cooperated to consider strategic and cross boundary matters associated with the production of the Harborough Local Plan.

46. Items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

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

11.00 am - 12.15 pm
12 September 2025

CHAIRMAN