



Meeting: **Cabinet**

Date/Time: **Tuesday, 28 October 2025 at 2.00 pm**

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

Contact: **Miss G. Duckworth (Tel. 0116 305 2583)**

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Membership

Mr. D. Harrison CC (Chairman)

Mr. C. Abbott CC

Mr. V. Richichi CC

Mr. K. Crook CC

Mr. M. Squires CC

Mr. H. Fowler CC

Mr. A. Tilbury CC

Mr. C. Pugsley CC

Mr. C. Whitford CC

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

AGENDA

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>
1. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2025.		(Pages 3 - 12)
2. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.		
3. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.		
4. Investing in Leicestershire Programme Annual Performance Report 2024-25.	Director of Corporate Resources	(Pages 13 - 48)
5. Delivering the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) 2025-2040: Next Steps.	Director of Environment and Transport	(Pages 49 - 64)



<u>Item</u>		<u>Report by</u>		<u>Key Decision</u>
6.	Leicestershire County Council's Approach to Flooding - Spending Proposals for £2 million Redistributed from Reserves.	Director of Environment and Transport	(Pages 65 - 82)	Yes
7.	Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) 2025-2035.	Director of Environment and Transport	(Pages 83 - 230)	
8.	Melton Local Plan Partial Update Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground.	Chief Executive	(Pages 231 - 238)	
9.	Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood Statement of Common Ground.	Chief Executive and Director of Environment and Transport	(Pages 239 - 246)	
10.	Leicestershire County Council Museum Policy Revision and Accreditation.	Director of Adults and Communities	(Pages 247 - 288)	
11.	Items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.			
12.	Any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent.			
13.	Exclusion of the Press and Public.			
	<i>The press and public are likely to be excluded during the following item of business in accordance with Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972:</i>			
	<i>Efficiency Review - Appointment of Consultant.</i>			
14.	Efficiency Review - Appointment of Consultant. <i>(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 10.)</i>	Director of Corporate Resources	(Pages 289 - 298)	



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

**CABINET – 28 OCTOBER 2025****INVESTING IN LEICESTERSHIRE PROGRAMME**
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024-25**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to set out the performance of the Investing in Leicestershire (IILP) for the 2024/25 financial year. The Annual Report is attached as the Appendix to this report.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the performance of the Investing in Leicestershire Programme for the period April 2024 to March 2025 as set out in the Annual Report, be noted.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. In accordance with the Cabinet's decision in September 2017, this report fulfils the requirement to report annually on the performance of the portfolio to both the Cabinet and the Scrutiny Commission, to demonstrate that the Programme is being managed professionally and prudently and in line with the Strategy approved by Council in February 2025.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

4. The Annual Performance Report was considered by the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 8 September 2025 and the Commission's comments are set out in paragraphs 27 to 37 of this report.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

5. The IILP was established as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023-27 on the review of the former Corporate Asset Investment Fund (CAIF) investment strategy.
6. In May 2014 the Cabinet established the principle of the management of the CAIF portfolio being overseen by an Advisory Board, comprising five Cabinet members. This subsequently became the IILP Advisory Board. At its meeting on 12 September 2025 the Cabinet agreed that the Board would be

expanded to include all members of the Cabinet. The Board considers the merits of any investment opportunities presented by the Director of Corporate Resources, which the Director may then approve under delegated powers or refer to the Cabinet for a decision.

7. The MTFS 2025-29 capital programme was approved by County Council on 19th February 2025 and includes the provision of £47m (subject to business cases) for the further development of the IILP during the period up to 2029. This allocation was subsequently increased after the year-end (March 2024) to £61m as a result of the re-phasing of expenditure from 2024/25. This is in addition to the £204m already invested in the IILP.
8. The Corporate Asset Management Plan 2022-26, approved by the Cabinet on 23rd September 2022, which is aligned with the Council's Strategic Plan, promotes the management of the Council's property assets in a way that contributes to the achievement of the five strategic outcomes whilst recognising in the case of the IILP the continuing need to deliver both financial benefits and address areas of specific economic or social market failure.

Resource Implications

9. The County Council's financial position has been challenging for a number of years due to significant growth in spending pressures, particularly from demand around social care and special educational needs. This was exacerbated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and significant increases in inflation, to levels not seen for many decades. The MTFS 2025-29 projects a funding gap of £4.7m in the first year that will need to be balanced by the use of earmarked reserves. There is a gap of £38m in year two, rising to £91m in year four. Delivery of the MTFS currently requires savings of £176m to be made from 2025/26 to 2028/29, unless service demand reduces, or additional income is secured.
10. The Council's four-year capital programme totals £439m. This includes investment for services, road, and school infrastructure arising from housing growth in Leicestershire, the IILP, social care accommodation and energy efficiency initiatives.
11. The MTFS 2025-29 which incorporates the investment strategy for that period confirmed the provision of funding to grow the IILP to £260m over the MTFS period. The exact level of investments made will depend on the availability of good investments, the cost of development, and the level of funding available. The expectation is that the returns (a combination of revenue income and capital growth) generated by the IILP will have a meaningful impact on the Council's budget to reduce the funding gap. The MTFS is currently being refreshed and the proposals for 2026-2030 will be submitted to the Cabinet in December.
12. The amount invested in the Programme on 31st March 2025 was £204m (the latest valuation of the portfolio which includes capital growth in the valuation of the assets held is £292m). Having regard to the potential sales that will occur over the MTFS period and planned reinvestment required to balance the portfolio, the

capital provision of £47m included within the MTFS 2025-29 capital programme to fund additional investments spread over the four years (2025/26 to 2028/29) would increase the total sum invested to the £260m target.

13. The Director of Law and Governance has been consulted on this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

14. None.

Officers to Contact

Declan Keegan, Director of Corporate Resources
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PART B

Background

15. The Council has owned and managed properties in the form of the existing commercial and County Farms estate for many years. These properties are held for the purposes of supporting the delivery of various economic development objectives and to generate revenue and capital returns to the County Council.
16. The creation of the CAIF and the associated Advisory Board in 2014 was aimed at increasing the Council's property portfolio and ensuring a more diverse range of properties, to continue to support economic development and generally increasing the quality and sustainability of the land owned by the Council and the income this generated.
17. The CAIF Strategy was updated in 2019 and 2022 to ensure that it fully reflected the objectives and outcomes of the Council's Strategic Plan. In February 2023, in order to reflect Treasury guidance, the IILP replaced the CAIF. The current Portfolio Management Strategy was adopted, and the Advisory Board became the IILP Advisory Board.
18. The Advisory Board is chaired by the Cabinet Lead Member for Resources supported by an officer group formed from strategic property, strategic finance, and legal services to provide advice on risks, deliverability and financial implications. Other service areas, for example Environment and Transport and the Growth Service, may also be asked to advise - for example on issues such as infrastructure and climate change and to ensure that proposed schemes are assessed/prioritised against the resources available. Specialist property investment support and advice is also obtained as necessary to provide an independent view and robust challenge. Following consideration by the Advisory Board, the Director of Corporate Resources approves investments (under his delegated powers) or refers the proposals to the Cabinet for a decision.
19. The purpose of bringing the Annual Report for review is to demonstrate on both qualitative and quantitative bases, that the Programme is providing security for the Council's monies invested in it, and to show that it is being managed professionally, prudently and in a commercially astute way, to ensure it is growing in line with the IILP Strategy and that the overall direction of travel of the Programme is approved annually.

Performance of the IILP

20. The IILP has grown significantly in value over recent years and has provided a means by which the Council can continue to provide high quality services to the people of Leicestershire despite significant pressures on public finances. The income generated by the investments has contributed to supporting Council services, without which further savings would have been required and service

provision to residents and businesses in the County would have been adversely affected.

21. The appended Annual Report sets out in detail the overall performance of the IILP during the 2024/25 financial year and a summary is given below.

Property

22. At the end of 2024/25, the direct property portfolio, including the value of the let areas of County Hall managed alongside the IILP properties, was valued at £231.8m and comprised £95.9m rural estate, £63.1m offices, £26.0m industrial properties and £4.7m of other property together with £42.1m of development properties.

Other Investments

23. In addition, the IILP holds financial investments that have been made in vehicles outside direct property ownership (diversifiers). These have been made to spread risk, in line with the Council's aim to increase its commercial activities to generate greater income that will support the Council's MTFS and future service delivery. These have a current value of £60.5m comprising £16.1m pooled property funds, £23.0m private debt, £8.7m pooled infrastructure funds and £12.7m pooled bank risk share funds. This brings the total value of the portfolio to £292.3m.

Overall Performance

24. Overall, the capital value of the IILP increased by £0.1m during 2024/25 due mainly to an increase in the value of the direct property portfolio of £16.6m and a similar reduction in the value of the diversified assets as a result of assets being realised during the year; revised valuations having been prepared by external consultants in accordance with current guidelines. In addition, the IILP generated a net income of £8.6m which will contribute directly to the provision of Council services.
25. The let property investments have produced a return of 11.6% with all direct property, including the development sector, achieving a return of 9.5% - well above the market return of 7.7%. In addition, the diversifiers produced an income return of 8.1%. It should be noted that the property portfolio continues to be valued as at 1st October each year, which results in the assessment of the portfolio's performance not being fully aligned with its benchmark, as the impact of yield changes in the second half of each year will not be reflected in values until the following year.
26. Overall, the performance has been limited due to reduced staff resources within the Strategic Property Service. Difficulties in recruiting to vacant posts and interim senior management has affected the Service's ability to identify new opportunities, instead focussing on maintaining the performance of the current portfolio. This is now being addressed, with a newly appointed Head of Service and work being re-focused.

Comments of the Scrutiny Commission

27. The Scrutiny Commission considered the Annual Report at its meeting on 8th September 2025, and its comments are summarised below.
28. Some Members argued whilst the overall performance had been boosted by the revaluation of the rural estate some of the IILP investments had performed poorly.
29. A Member questioned the comparisons being made to demonstrate the performance of the fund, suggesting that comparing returns against holding cash was not appropriate and not a fair comparison of risk verses return. The Director explained that the comparison stemmed from when the Council first chose to invest in non-direct property investments at a time when cash holdings were producing very poor returns below the rate of inflation; the non-direct property investments being made as an alternative to boost the Council's income compared to its traditional cash holdings.
30. It was noted that the percentage return on income over the whole fund might appear low. However, nearly half (47%) of the fund related to rural land which it was known did not provide a high rate of revenue return relative to other asset classes but the other portion was held in development land which would provide a much higher rate of return in the long term through capital growth.
31. Many sites were in the development phase or not yet fully let. Members noted that the income returns if the in-development and rural land were excluded would be approximately 5.4% which was higher than the average return on cash holdings. The Council also benefited separately from capital returns which continued to perform well (6.6%).
32. Officers advised that asset sales were a normal part of management of the Council's corporate estate and the estate would continue to evolve over time to ensure continued support in the delivery of Council services and to generate a good income.
33. Members noted that the IILP delivered wider benefits than revenue and capital returns by bringing forward land for development and much needed housing across Leicestershire. It also invested in the development of local industrial units to support local businesses, create jobs which benefited the local economy.
34. Members considered the £61m of non-direct property investments which had been made to spread risk through diversification. A Member commented that as a significant proportion of those investments were in pooled property funds and therefore subject to the same liquidity risks as direct property assets, this was not true diversification. It was suggested that other types of investment which did not share the same risks could be made which would likely perform better, for example, investments in equities which over the long term outperformed all types of other investment. However, other Members questioned this proposal suggesting this was too high a risk given the Council was managing council

taxpayer's money and so had a duty to ensure a higher degree of security compared to private companies and investors.

35. It was noted with some disappointment that two of the property funds invested in had been wound up early which had resulted in some capital losses to the Council.
36. Members commented that as custodians of the rural estate this should be managed more efficiently going forward (noting delays to rent reviews for the Autumn 2024 and Spring 2025 cycle). The Director assured members that plans were being developed to facilitate this.
37. Members questioned whether delays in carrying out revaluations and rent reviews had resulted in higher than average rent increases during the 2024/25 period. It was confirmed that increases were not substantial and were based on market rents, but where tenants had clear difficulties, the increase was phased in over an agreed period.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

38. There are no equality or human rights implications directly arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

39. The IILP Strategy, in relation to the acquisition, development and management of the Programme's property assets, incorporates measures that ensure that the direct property portfolio makes a positive contribution to the achievement of the Strategic Plan's Clean and Green Strategic Outcome.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet, 10th February 2023 "Investing in Leicestershire Programme Strategy 2023-2027" and minutes of that meeting

<https://cexmodgov01/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7073>

Report to the Cabinet, 22nd November 2024 "Investing in Leicestershire Programme Annual Performance Report 2023-24"

<https://cexmodgov01/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7511>

Report to Council, 19th February 2025 "Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26-2028/29" (Appendix H - IILP Strategy 2025-2029)

<https://cexmodgov01/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=7391>

Appendix

Investing in Leicestershire Programme Annual Performance Report 2024-2025

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Investing in Leicestershire Programme

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
2024 - 2025



INTRODUCTION

The Council first established an investment portfolio in 2014 with a view to it generating additional funding to improve financial resilience thereby supporting the continued delivery of essential quality frontline services.

From an initial investment of £15 million together with the industrial and farms properties held by the Council (valued at £40 million in 2014) the portfolio has grown to its current value of £292 million by the investment of a further £149 million in both direct and non-property investments , including a number developed on sites held by the fund.

In 2023 the fund was rebranded as the Investing in Leicestershire Programme (IILP) adopting its current strategy of focussing future investment in areas that addressed social and economic market failure whilst continuing to maximise financial returns from its assets.

The management of the portfolio is overseen by an Advisory Board and as part of its agreed governance an Annual Performance Report is produced each year. This the eleventh annual report sets out the overall performance of the IILP during the 2024-25 financial year providing details of its current investments and in respect of the direct property portfolio a detailed comparison with the wider real estate investment market. Further it reviews progress in respect of major projects and the future potential of the portfolio to enable the continued delivery of an ongoing income stream and capital receipts vital to the delivery of frontline services whilst continuing to support job creation and economic growth across Leicestershire



SUMMARY

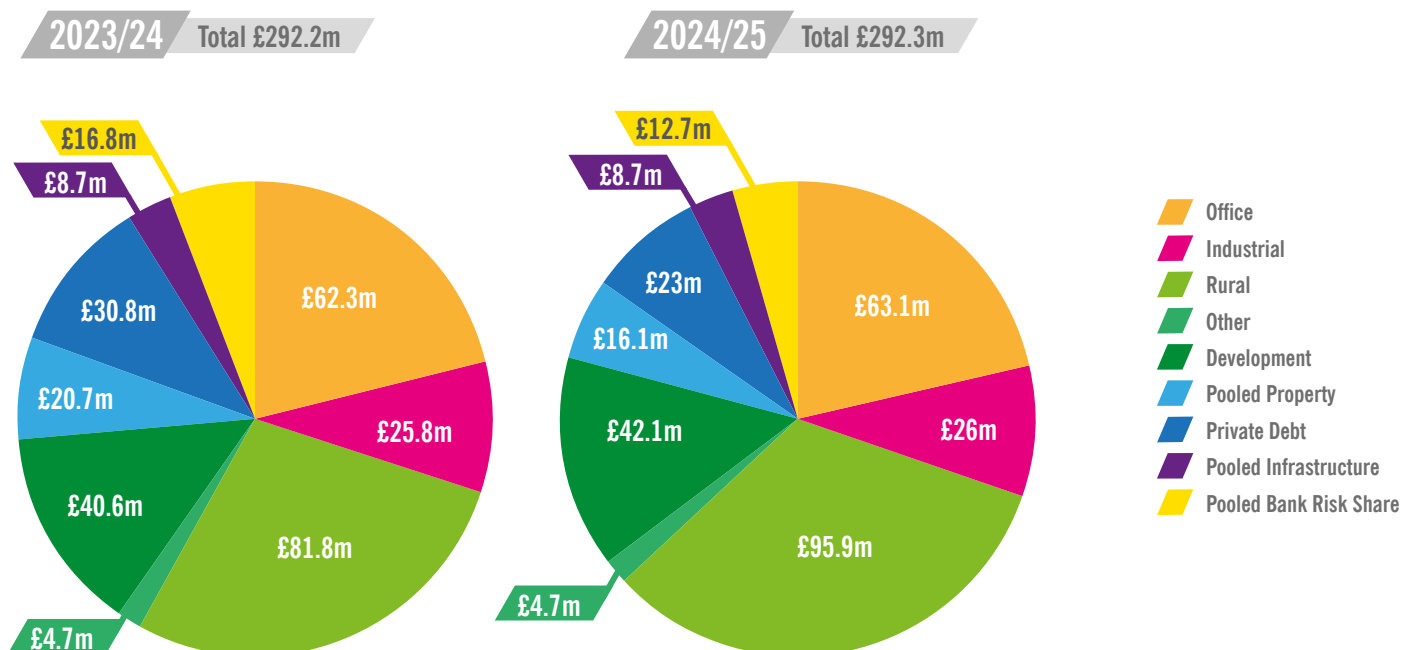
This report forms the annual review of the Investing in Leicestershire Programme (IILP) portfolio, reporting on performance for the year to 31st March 2025.

The IILP has continued to contribute to the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of the people of Leicestershire; making a significant contribution to the Council's Strategic Plan. The income generated by investment in high quality assets provides increased financial resilience and underpins the Council's ability to deliver a comprehensive range of quality services now and in the future.

The annual report examines the development and performance of the overall portfolio, the potential of the future investment programme to deliver enhanced returns and the outlook for the wider investment market and how it might impact on the future investment strategy.

TOTAL VALUE BY SECTOR (as of 31st March 2024)

TOTAL VALUE BY SECTOR (as of 31st March 2025)



As of 31st March 2025, the capital value of the portfolio, including the let areas of County Hall (currently managed alongside the portfolio), totalled £292.3 million compared with the value as of 31st March 2024 of £292.2 million. The opening and closing valuations were calculated based on a combination of internal and external asset valuations, with external valuations being undertaken in 2024-25 for the entire direct portfolio.

Looking ahead, the IILP is well-positioned to capitalise on emerging opportunities and deliver enhanced returns. Our strategic focus will remain on sustainable investments that drive economic growth, social development, and environmental sustainability.

Financial summary

	Value on 31st March 2024 (£m)	Transactions			Valuation Change (£m)	Value on 31st March 2025 (£m)	Net Income (£m)
		Acquisitions (£m)	Net Capital spend (£m)	Sales & Transfers (£m)			
Office inc County Hall	62.3		0.2		0.5	63.1	3.8
Industrial and Distribution	25.8				0.2	26.0	1.2
Rural	81.8				14.1	95.9	0.1
Other Property	4.7					4.7	0.2
Sub-Total Managed Property	174.7		0.2		14.8	189.7	5.4
Development	40.6		2.0		(0.5)	42.1	(0.3)
Direct property	215.3		2.3		14.3	231.8	5.2
Pooled Property	20.7			(5.1)	0.5	16.1	0.7
Private Debt	30.8		1.2	(6.2)	0.4	23.0	1.6
Pooled Infrastructure	8.7					8.7	0.5
Pooled Bank Risk Share	16.8			(2.5)	(1.6)	12.7	3.4
Total Diversifiers	77.0		1.2	(13.8)	(3.8)	60.5	6.2
Total	292.2		3.5	(13.8)	10.5	292.3	11.4
Additional Central Charges							(2.8)
Overall Total	292.2		3.5	(13.8)	10.5	292.3	8.6

Notes: (i) All figures are rounded to nearest 0.1m. (ii) Opening valuation figure adjusted to include the valuation of the let areas of County Hall managed in conjunction with direct property portfolio since 2023.

As of 31st March 2025, the Programme held managed direct property assets of £189.7m, including the let parts of County Hall and development property of £42.1m; a total of £231.8m representing an increase of £16.6m on the previous year. The majority of this increase is attributed to the uplift in the value of the rural estate due to the generation of “hope” value, i.e. the potential increase in the value of the estate is based on the expectation of future development or changes in use.

The portfolio also includes external pooled property funds, private debt investments, pooled infrastructure funds and pooled bank share funds, collectively referred to as the ‘diversifiers’. The diversifiers have a total value of £60.5m, a decrease of £16.5m from 2023-24, largely as a result of capital repayments and disposals amounting to £14.9m.

The direct property portfolio delivered a strong return of 9.5%, outperforming the broader market's 7.7% Capital growth, underpinned continuing increase in hope value within the rural sector as the pipeline of potential development sites progress through the planning system, showed an increase of 6.6% compared to just 1.8% in the market. With the exception of industrial and distribution sectors, the other sectors compared very favourably with the wider market. The initial hardening of the market in the second half of the year was not reflected in the valuation. Consequently, the mid-year valuation timing caused a mismatch in capital values, as it did not reflect the market's subsequent rise later in the year. This led to differences in yield and valuation trends. However, as the market stabilises, these effects are balancing out, therefore while industrial assets showed lower growth this year, future performance is expected to align more closely with the market.

In addition to the normal sinking fund provision (central charge) that is applied to revenue in line with previous years, an additional charge of £2.8m has been made in the 2024-25 year in order to assist in meeting the sinking fund's target level. This charge recognises the prudence of building a provision for future maintenance or unforeseen costs. A sinking fund can be thought of as a savings account or contingency fund which ensures that there are funds set aside to cover one-off expenses required in the future to maintain the assets' capital value.

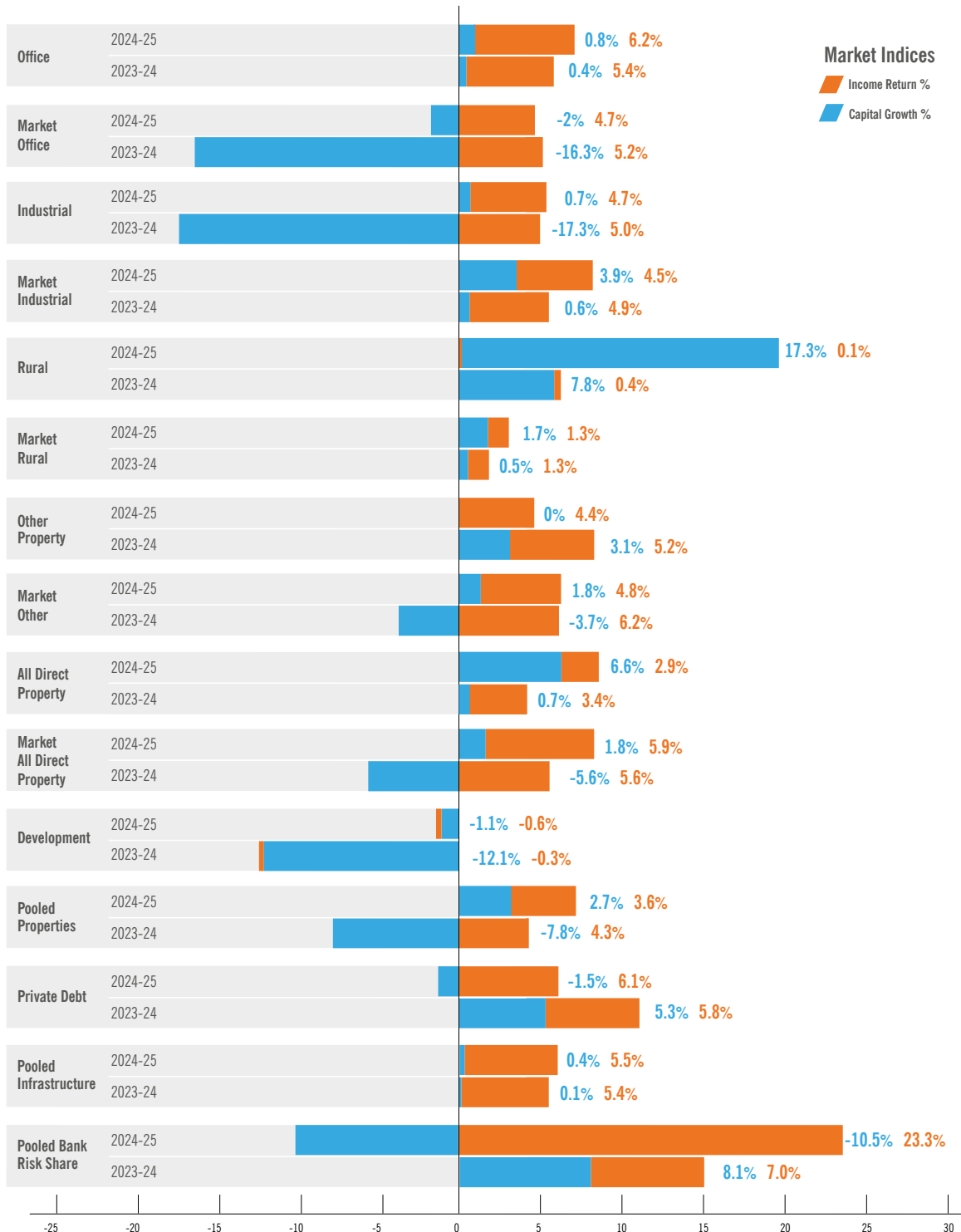
The LiLP also recognises potential bad debts and accounts for these in each financial year in line with the Councils policy for late payment for invoices. Once a bad debt provision is established by charging the profit and loss it is reassessed each year based on outstanding monies still to be received. The value held as a bad debt provision may fluctuate as income is received to clear debtor accounts. The assessment at the end of 2024/25 was that the provision did not need to be increased.

Net income also takes account of centrally incurred costs which are allocated to the main direct property sectors. These costs include employee costs, bad debt provisions and sinking fund contributions. The current target level for the sinking fund, to be built up over the period to 2027/28, is set at approximately £6m. This will be reassessed each year based on information regarding the assets within the Fund.

The net income from the direct property portfolio was £5.2m for the year. Together with the income from diversified investments, the total net income was £8.6 million, compared to £7.6 million in the previous year. The current year benefited from higher-than-expected income from the bank risk share investments within the diversifiers. For the year ended, the total portfolio generated a net income return of 2.9%, compared to 3.3% in the previous year. Excluding the Development and Rural assets, which are predominantly held for capital returns rather than revenue income, the equivalent figures are 5.4%.

PERFORMANCE AND COMPARISON AGAINST INDUSTRY BENCHMARK

PROGRAMME Performance



The Programme's benchmark is the "All Property" total return (capital growth plus income return) of the market benchmark monthly index. The total return for the portfolio for the year to 31st March 2025 was 9.5% compared to the target level of 6%.

The managed direct properties produced a total return of 11.6% which is well above both target and the market level of 7.7%. Importantly the fact that the property portfolio continues to be valued at 1st October each year will result in the assessment of the portfolios performance not being fully aligned with its benchmark, as the impact of yield changes in the second half of each year are not being reflected in values until the following year. Whilst the effect of this counterbalances over the longer term, as demonstrated by the returns over a 5-year period, at times of economic and market turbulence comparison with the market is difficult to assess accurately.

Accordingly, the managed direct property portfolio achieved an increase of 6.1% on the 2023-2024 year driven by higher than anticipated capital growth within the rural sector without which the managed direct property sectors would have achieved parity with the market.

- The office sector continues to perform consistently well against the market benchmark. Whilst producing a small capital growth of 0.8%, income return also outperformed the market at 6.2% delivering an overall return of 7.0% significantly better than the market return of 2.7% which continued to include negative capital growth with market values falling a total of more than 30% over the three year period of market correction. Net income rose by £0.3m to £3.2m over the year due largely to maintaining near full occupation of the major office assets.
- The returns from the combined industrial and distribution sectors were 5.4% compared with the previous year at minus 12.3%. Whilst capital growth remained constrained at 0.7% against a market level 3.9% due in part to the nature of the properties within the portfolio values now appear to be stabilising following the market corrections of late 2022 and 2023. However, the income return of 4.7% aligned with market levels.
- The rural sector achieved an overall return of 17.4% in 2024-2025 compared to the market level of 3.0%. Whilst the income return of 0.1%, impacted by the changes in valuation methodology introduced in 2022, and a substantial contribution towards the sinking fund, was again below the market level of 1.3%, capital growth of 17.3% accrued as the value of land within the future development pipeline increased in value reflecting its future development potential. Agricultural land prices are by their nature less volatile than other sectors, however, in recent years there has been strong growth in freehold values over the year as a result of investors recognising that it represents a "safe haven". This trend has slowed and with an increased supply prices have stabilised.
- The small alternative or other property sector produced a return of 4.4% slightly below market levels. However, the sector provides a stable income; the portfolio holding a mixed range of assets within this sector, including a car dealership in Leicester city, a petrol filling station in Loughborough and a supported education school which overall makes it less vulnerable to market volatility.

- The performance of the development sector showed a significant improvement on 2024-25 but still delivered a negative return of minus 1.7% compared to the previous year when economic conditions caused the market correction experienced by other sectors resulting in an overall negative return of minus 12.4%. The Lutterworth East development site remains the single most valuable asset within the development portfolio. Whilst capable of achieving significant capital growth, development properties are unlikely to generate than nominal income during the development phase. It is therefore normal that the cost of planning and promoting schemes will exceed any income received and consequently an anticipated small revenue loss resulted in an income return of minus 0.6%. It is anticipated that the sector will show positive returns as in future years as further developments are completed and other sites brought forward for disposal with the benefit of planning permission thereby generating either rental income or capital receipts.
- The pooled property investments are spread across four separate investment managers. A total of £25m was invested between 2015 and 2019. A 3.6% income return was welcome and ahead of budget, capital values across the pooled property estate did firm up over the year with a £0.5m increase after the fall in capital values experienced during the previous year when the effect of rising interest rates fed through to property valuations which had already suffered in the previous year when Bank of England base rates rose from 0.75% in April 2022 to 4.25% by March 2023.
- The Lothbury property unit trust, one of the four pooled property funds is still in the process of being wound up with the majority of the holdings having been sold and capital returned to investors following an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on the 28 March 2024. For clarity it is important to note that this winding up of a property fund is a forced sale over a period when property values have been depressed in comparison to the periods preceding the increase in the Bank of England's base rates. The forced nature of the sales means the liLP fund is not able to 'hold' the investment, collect the income and then choose when to exit. The overall expected capital loss (invested capital minus returned capital from asset sales) is expected to be £1.8m based on capital received to date and current valuation of the remaining assets. The total return including quarterly income distributions shows a positive return since inception, +0.4% (IRR, internal rate of return)
- The Fund invests in the Private Debt asset class via one institutional manager. The liLP has invested over a number of years in three different vehicles, starting with £20million in 2018 with further commitments being made in 2021 and 2023 to maintain exposure to this asset class as capital is returned. Private debt income returns were ahead of expectations in the year benefiting from the higher base interest rates that the underlying loans are linked to. The since inception internal rate of return (IRR) for three private debt investments were 5.1%, 6.6% and 9.6% respectively.



- The infrastructure investment is made via one manager. This is a globally diversified infrastructure fund investing in core assets. The assets are operational and provide a defensive focus. Investments in critical assets which are underpinned by long term contracts, supported by regulation in many cases and situated in developed markets are favoured. The in year net income was ahead of expectations. The Fund is denominated in USD with the quarterly income converted to GBP when received and carrying value translated to GBP. The carrying value of the investment in GBP is £8.7m and generated £0.5m income in 2024/25.
- The Fund has also invested in a bank risk share strategy in 2022/23. The total £15m was fully called by the manager by December 2022 with distributions commencing in January 2023. Income received during 2024/25 continued to be higher than originally expected due to the continued higher underlying bank base rates and the favourable market conditions when the manager was completing deals in 2022/23 which led to better priced deals. The interest rate conditions over the last two years which were unfavourable (higher for longer bank interest rates) for many investment sectors have been a positive for this diversifying investment. A net income of £3.4m was received in the year, well ahead of expectations. The excess net income for the liLP compared to the budget allowed for a sizeable acceleration in the build up of the sinking fund during the year. This investment, which has a fixed life has also started returning capital and work is underway to replace the exposure subject to approvals.
- Diversifier investments had a net return of capital in the year of £12.7m reflecting the return of capital from pooled property and private debt investments. The exposure to diversifiers has reduced as a percentage of the total liLP portfolio as a result over the year from the target allocation of one third. Plans are in place to replace diversifier exposure through 2025/26.



ANNUALISED RETURNS

Total Direct Property Portfolio

	2024-25	3 year	5 year
Net Income Return	2.9%	3.6%	3.6%
Capital Growth	6.6%	12.9%	10.4%
Total Return	9.5%	16.5%	14.0%
Total Market Return	7.7%	3.5%	4.4%

As the liLP has now been in operation for several years, the data for returns over the longer period better demonstrates the stability of the returns achieved by the assets in the portfolio by reducing the visible impact of any in-year peaks or troughs in performance.

Over the 3 year period including 2024/25, the total return of 16.5% was achieved against the market 3 year annualised returns of 3.5%; over 5 years, the market returns were slightly better at 4.4% still below that achieved by the liLP at 14.0%.

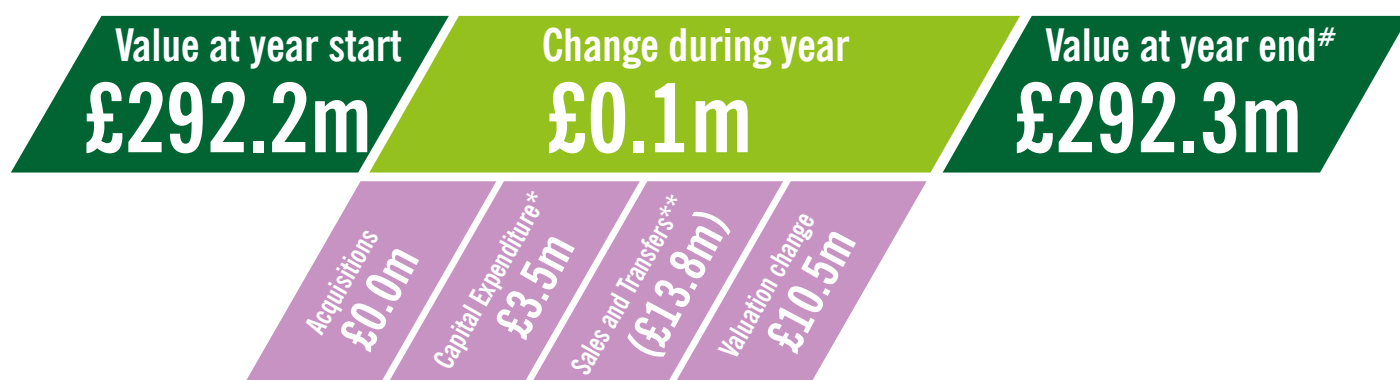
If the effect of the valuation methodology change within the rural sector in 23/24 is excluded, the total market returns still outperforms the market by a significant margin, at 6.4% over 3 years and 7.8% over 5 years.



CHANGES TO THE PORTFOLIO DURING THE YEAR

Summary of Changes

During the year, the value of the portfolio, including the value of the let areas of County Hall, increased slightly from £292.2m as at 31st March 2024 to £292.3m as at 31st March 2025; the chart below setting out details of transactions and changes in valuation.



[#]Direct portfolio properties valued as at 1st October 2024.

*This includes spend on farm estate buildings and the office and industrial properties.

** This sum is solely return of capital to the fund from diversified investments.



TRANSACTIONS THROUGH THE YEAR

Direct property acquisitions

There were no property acquisitions during the year.

Property Disposals

No property disposals were completed during the year. However, agreed sales to the value of £9.6m were carried over into future years of which £5.1m is due to be received in the current 25/26 financial year.

Property Transfers

No direct property transfers have been made during the year.

Diversifiers

No new diversifier investments were entered into during 2024/25. However, past investments in pooled property, private credit and bank risk share were returning capital throughout the year. In order to meet the investment strategy of holding around a third of total assets within diversifiers new commitments are planned pending formal due diligence and approval.

Pooled Property

One of the four pooled property funds, Lothbury property unit trust was being wound down during 2024/25, as a result the lilP received £5.0m from property sales conducted by the manager. The Fund expects to receive the remaining capital during 2025/26.



PORTFOLIO REVIEW

Yield

The yield from the direct managed portfolio is 4.5% (4.0% in 2023) somewhat below the market benchmark national figure of 5.6%; the portfolio's overall yield being impacted by a low yield from the development assets which has a disproportionate sector weighting compared to other portfolios meaning that overall, the portfolio will likely always fall just below the benchmark until such time as those developments are completed and become income generating or are released from the portfolio.

Sector Proportions

With no direct property transactions during the year only movements in value, particularly in respect of the rural sector, have resulted in further shifts in the sector weightings as illustrated earlier in the report. However, the reduction in the value of the Diversifier portfolio has resulted in a shift in the balance between the two areas of investment with direct property increasing from 73% to 79%; the previous weighting between the two being considered appropriate in the Hymans Robertson Report of January 2024.

In relation to the direct property portfolio the long-term aim is to maintain a balance between sectors that reduces risk and maximises the potential for achieving financial resilience in the shorter term. In considering future acquisitions, the Programme will continue to focus any property purchases on assets that address market failure and provide wider economic and community benefits and the capability of contributing to the achievement of the County Council's strategic goals as well as delivering a long-term income stream, as set out in the IILP Strategy.

Rent Reviews, Lease Expiries and Tenant Only Breaks

During 24/25 there were 10 rent reviews, 32 lease expiries and 11 tenant-only break options which fell due across the commercial property portfolio, of which one related to an asset earning in excess of £30k per annum; of these 10 rent reviews were concluded in the year, together with 6 lease renewals and 15 new lettings. Thirteen leases terminated during that timeframe and of these 8 units are currently being marketed, with the other 5 having been relet promptly. Consequently, whilst the vacancy rate increased slightly, the overall rent roll for the portfolio rose by £215k p.a. The negotiation of rent reviews and lease renewals forms part of normal day-to-day property management, however the particular circumstances of individual leases means that it is not always appropriate to action these immediately they fall due.

Following on from rent review notices served in respect of farm tenancies, 35 reviews have been agreed, with a further 4 remaining to be concluded. The total rental uplift across these agreements is £73,000 per annum (equating to 17% uplift overall).

New Major Lettings

Over the 2024/25 year the following major new letting(s) or pre-lets were achieved:

Ground Floor, Building 2, Lichfield. Following the departure of the tenant in April 2024 a settlement was agreed in respect of dilapidations and a refurbishment program proposed which included for the subdivision of the building into two self-contained units; ground and first floor.

New tenants were secured for the ground floor with occupation to commence following the completion of the refurbishment. An agreement for lease was entered into in June 2024 with the new lease commencing in July 2025 following the completion of the works. The passing rent is £159,633pa.

Future Investments

During 2024/25 funding of £62m was made available through the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024-2028 for additional investment. These funds were committed to the delivery of the following developments that will have the effect of further transforming the portfolio, achieving target rates of return, delivering additional income, and contributing to the realisation of wider strategic goals.

Leaders Farm South, Lutterworth

Background

This site formed part of the County Farms portfolio and was identified as having possible office and industrial development potential some years ago.

Following extensive marketing of the site demand has been identified for roadside and storage uses.

Two major roadside food and drink retailers expressed an interest in a parcel of land, extending to 1.6 acres at the north-western corner of the site. Whilst a departure from the Local Plan, because of a lack of demand for the Class B1 – office uses, the prospective tenants have been successful in securing planning permission for the proposed drive through units.

The drive-through units will generate an income of £190k pa. The planning consent required some s.278 highway works. A contractor has been procured to build the new units. It is anticipated that the works will commence Q3 2025

The future development of the balance of the 6.1-acre site is now being reviewed. There is interest for Light industrial/ Distribution use. However, this would be a departure from the current local plan. If the County Council is successful in obtaining planning for the employment units, they are projected to generate a rental income of circa. £550k pa. The overall construction cost is projected to be in the region of £6m (excluding the £2.5m already spent on the estate roads and services) giving an expected income return of c.6.2%.



Airfield Farm Business Park (Third & Final Phase)

Background

Following completion and the successful launch of Phase 2 of the new industrial development at Airfield Farm Business Park, planning consent was granted in July 2024 and building began in December 2024 for a 105,794 sq. ft. development on 7.69 acres of the site; 102,194 sq. ft for E class light industrial units (formerly known as B1 use) and 3,600 sq. ft for two Drive-thru units (Sui Generis). The layout incorporates a 60,000 sq. ft unit, a 14,000 sq. ft, two Drive-thru units, EV Charging bays and a range of starter and grow on units of between 1,500 sq. ft and 10,000 sq. ft being those elements of the original proposal for which there is a strong market demand and remain viable.

A pre let agreement has been completed for the 60,000 sq. ft unit. Other units totalling 19,000 sq. ft are under offer, as are one of the Drive Thru units and the EV Charging bays.



Solar Farm Development, Quorn

Background

The proposal, approved in 2024, sets out plans for a 10MW solar farm on County Farms land at Quorn. Over the past year, various delivery options were considered. Due to limited resources and the need to comply with planning consent and meet the grid connection deadline, the opportunity was marketed for a freehold sale. The sale was successfully completed in April 2025, and the new owner has now implemented the planning consent and aims to have the solar farm up and running by the end of the year, with the balance of the capital receipt payable on connection to the electricity grid.

Development Sites

The Fund holds a number of assets within the portfolio that have been expressly retained or purchased with a view to realising their development potential in order to realise capital receipts or wider finance benefits to support the Council's capital and revenue programmes.

Lutterworth East

The allocation of the East of Lutterworth SDA comprising 2,750 dwellings, 23 hectares of B1, B2 and B8 employment land, a community hub, two primary schools, 110 hectares of open space including a country park together with substantial highways infrastructure was secured as part of the Harborough Local Plan which was adopted on 30th April 2019.

A hybrid planning application (in outline for the residential and commercial development and in detail for the spine road and other highways infrastructure works) was considered by Harborough District Council's Planning Committee on 28th July 2020. The planning committee resolved to grant planning permission subject to conditions and the completion of a section 106 Planning Agreement.

The Section 106 Agreement was completed, and the decision notice issued on 17th May 2022, however, University Hospital Leicester lodged an application to seek a judicial review of the district council's decision. After an appeal, their challenge was dismissed.

A review of the site was undertaken in 2024, with some initial soft market testing, recognising how the context for the proposed development has changed since the application was submitted in 2019. The impact of COVID on where people work (less office space needed) and escalating costs due to build cost price inflation as well as the lack of grant funding. This has made the scheme challenging to the market to deliver in its current form due to the high levels of upfront infrastructure costs of approximately £140m required to bring the scheme forward.

As a result of this work a viability assessment was submitted to Harborough District Council providing a case to reduce the percentage of affordable homes on the site in order to improve the schemes viability. Productive discussions took place with the planning officers at Harborough District Council in order to find a way forward to improve the scheme's viability and to ensure that the district benefits from the delivery of houses that it had provided for in its Local Plan. Subsequently two applications were submitted to Harborough District Council. The applications focused on the review of the level of affordable housing, being reduced to a minimum of 10% (subject to a viability assessment on each of the four residential phases) and the size restrictions on the B8 units to the south of the site.

These applications were approved at the planning committee (3rd December 2024) and have significantly improved the sites viability. It is anticipated that the southern area of the site, designated for B8 distribution, will be offered for sale to the market in the final quarter of this year. This will provide capital income that will facilitate the initial phase of the highway's infrastructure making the residential site more attractive to potential delivery partners.



M69 Junction 2 – Stoney Stanton

Following the Cabinet decision in March 2020, work has been progressed on the promotion of 103 acres of County Council land as part of a larger residential-led mixed-use development of up to 5,000 houses. Working in collaboration with other landowners and their developer partners, submissions have been made to Blaby District Council's 'Call for Sites and Issues and Options' consultation and work is ongoing to provide the necessary evidence base to support the sites allocation as part of the emerging Blaby District Local Plan.

The local plan process has been significantly delayed with the result that the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission consultation is not now likely to take place until the end of 2025 pushing the likely date of adoption back to 2027. Subject to the scheme being included as a proposed allocation in the Pre-Submission Draft, it is currently proposed that an outline planning application be submitted in advance of the Examination in Public. The timing of surveys and site investigations is now being geared to the revised timetable with an Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Request submitted to Blaby District Council in June this year.

In addition, following negotiations with Stoney Stanton Parish Council a land exchange has been agreed which secures the land necessary to provide highway improvements that will divert traffic away from the village centres of Stoney Stanton and Sapcote and provides the parish with additional playing fields and informal open space.

Throughout the process, the Landowner Consortium has engaged with Blaby District Council, key stakeholders, and the local community, including the establishment of a community liaison group the feedback from which is being used to help shape the master planning of the scheme.

Other potential sites

A further pipeline of development sites is being brought forward on an ongoing basis largely through the local plan process, by their submission to Call for Sites consultations at the start of the plan review process and thereafter by making appropriate responses to the further consultations. By securing future local plan allocations, investment returns, and a stream of capital receipts will be maintained.

In addition to potential residential and employment opportunities, sites with potential to support the delivery renewable energy infrastructure or biodiversity gains are also being identified and could potentially form an integral part of the pipeline of future sites.

Voids

Despite leasing over 42,801 sq. ft. of office and industrial space during the year, the level of unoccupied units increased by 16,529 sq. ft. illustrating the continued turnover of units, with less space being leased out than returned by tenants. The overall voids level across the portfolio in 2024-25 was 5.6% (40,623 sq. ft. in 25 units) of core direct net floor area.

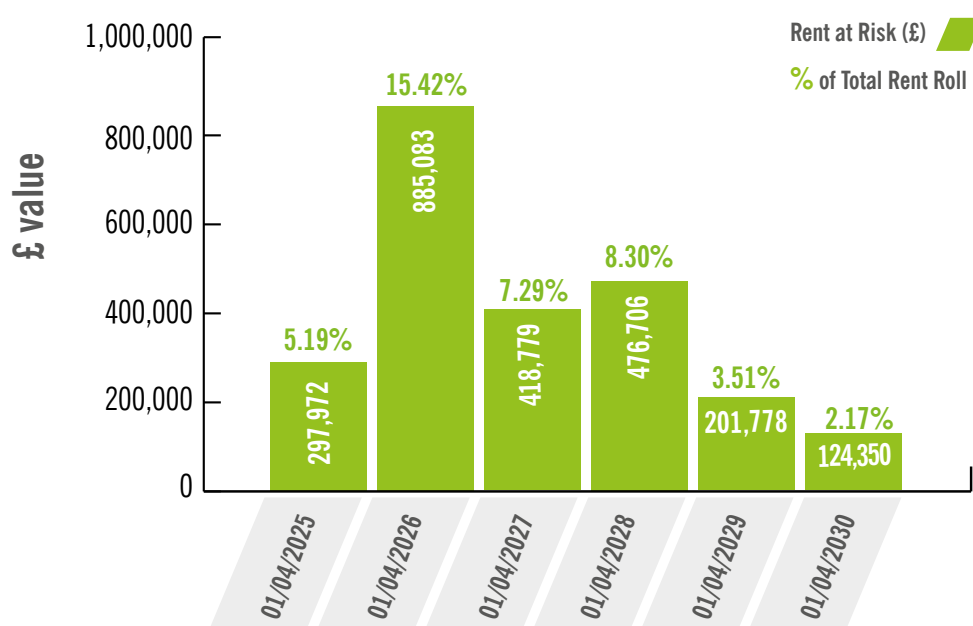
Continued strong demand for leases continues to suggest that the relatively low level of voids can be maintained.

Rent Arrears (Direct Portfolio)

As of 31st March 2025, total 90-day debt amounted to £981,000, equating to 11.1% of gross portfolio income, a fall of £60k (5.7%) on the previous year and although systemic debt, which is taken into account in determining the level of funding held in the bad debt provision, remains higher than desirable having built up over several years, rent collection remains in line with wider industry performance especially during the ongoing turbulent economic conditions with over 86% of rural rents and 82% of industrial and office rents collected on time for Q4. Payment of all outstanding debts is being actively pursued through debt management procedures. Further, no debt is written off until such time as all avenues including court action have been fully exhausted which account for its current level.

Lease Expiry Profile (Direct Portfolio)

The table below illustrates the profile of rents receivable from leases expiring in each year within the portfolio over the next 7 years both in terms of rental value and a proportion of total rental income. Where a tenant has an option to break within a lease, the worst-case scenario that the tenant will exercise such an option is assumed, whereas in practice it is likely that not every tenant will elect to do so.



The largest figure in the table above, and presenting the greatest risk to the portfolio, relates to the 2026 financial year when two leases at Embankment House, Nottingham and 6 of the 17 leases at Apollo Court, Coalville expire. In accordance with usual practice, a policy of early engagement with tenants is pursued with a view to agreeing lease renewals in advance of the termination date.

PROPERTY INVESTMENT MARKET REVIEW

Economic Conditions¹

UK gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have grown by 0.7% in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2025, with a further rise of 0.3% in Quarter 2 (Apr to June), unrevised from the first estimate. In output terms, growth in Quarter 2 2025 was driven by an increase in the services and construction sectors, however production fell by 0.3%. In expenditure terms, growth in the latest quarter was driven by increases in gross fixed capital formation, net trade and household consumption. However, monthly real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have fallen by 0.1% in May 2025, following a fall of 0.3% in April 2025 leading to fears that the economy will have shrunk in Q2 2025.

The unemployment rate stood at 4.7% at the end of Q2, up from 4.3% a year ago whilst the number of job vacancies and people employed continues to decline. In addition, at 5.6%, regular wage growth remains stubbornly high.

CPI inflation rose to a 18-month high of 3.8% in July and is expected to remain above the Bank of England 2% target until at least 2026. House prices and rents continue to rise while mortgage rates have fallen slightly over the past few months. The combination of expected economic weakness, above-target inflation and strong wage growth leaves the Bank of England in a difficult position, suggesting it will continue with its gradual approach to cutting interest rates; the Bank Rate currently standing at 4.25%.

Economic Outlook

Latest HM Treasury consensus forecasts predict growth of 1% this year and 1.1% in 2026. The IMF is more optimistic and believe UK GDP growth will improve from 1.2% this year to 1.4% in 2026.

¹ The information contained in this section of the report has been sourced from published central government data and research documents and news releases published by leading property agents including Colliers International, Savills and Lambert Smith Hampton.

Investment Market

While some European markets have recorded an increase in investment volumes in Q1 2025, the UK witnessed a decline from £16.1bn in Q4 2024 to £9bn and was 36% below the five-year quarterly average. The Q1 figure marked the weakest quarterly total since Q4 2023 and affected all the regional markets across England whilst Scottish markets saw a modest increase in investment. The most sought-after sector was offices, accounting for 25% of all investment volumes. Apartments including PBSA (21%), industrial (19%), retail (15%), and hotels (6%) follow. Despite the weak start to the year there are some signs the investment market that the investment market will show an improvement in H2 2025.

Property capital values have continued to recover as equivalent yields fell for the second consecutive quarter during Q1 2025 following ten consecutive quarters of increases.

Property Market Forecasts

The outlook for the commercial real estate sector remains uncertain. However, rising capital values, less restrictive access to commercial finance, optimism in the latest market survey results and further anticipated interest rate cuts all indicate that the conditions exist to deliver a sustained recovery. Nevertheless, it is still anticipated that annual investment volumes in 2025 could still be below those of with the uplift coming in 2026. Whilst interest rates may end the year at 3.75% the potential for yield compression will be constrained by the lack of movement in gilt yields which are not expected to move significantly this year. At the All-Property level, forecasts predict that equivalent yields will fall by 0.25% over the year to 6.37% with further moderate declines expected over the remainder of the period to 2029. The property yield/gilt spread narrowed to a 17-year low of 2% in 2024 and it is considered possible that contract further in 2025 before widening again in 2026.



The recovery in capital values is likely to be modest by historical standards, with growth of 5% expected in 2025 before slowing over the following 4 years with anticipated growth over the period to 2029 averaging 3.4% per annum. Sustained positive income returns and an improvement in capital values will result in positive total returns growth of 9.8% at the All-Property level in 2025, before reducing to 8.4% in both 2026 and 2027 reflecting the slowing in capital growth. Over the period from 2025 to 2029 Shopping Centres (10.9% per annum) and Retail Warehouses (9.4% per annum) will see the strongest growth in total returns as a result of solid income returns.

It is predicted that investment volumes are likely to remain weak in the coming months with liquidity in the market only returning as interest rates and debt costs reduce further. With a slowdown in construction activity coupled with signs of downward pressure on vacancy rates and sustained rental growth for prime assets the office market should become more attractive. There are indications that yields have started to stabilise across most sub-markets, but it is considered that yield compression will be constrained due to debt costs remaining higher for longer than originally forecast. However, as initial market data for Q1 2025 show significant yield shifts it is predicted that yields will fall by 0.35% in 2025. Thereafter, it is expected that yields will continue to slowly compress further over the next few years. Prime rents should see further rises due to the now more limited supply of high-quality space. However, secondary and lower quality office rents are likely to see very limited growth. Forecasts predict that average rents across all offices will increase by between 2.5% and 3% in 2025, before slowing to 2.2% and 2% in subsequent years.

Total returns across the office sector are predicted to be 7.7% in 2025 as capital values recover and are forecast to average 6.7% pa over the period to 2029.

Industrial investment volumes fell markedly over Q1 2025 and at £1.7bn were 50% below the 5-yearly quarterly average. Average yields appear to have stabilised but remain nearly 2% above 2022 levels. Currently most investors are targeting Core+ and Value-Add strategies, focusing on assets offering near-term reversion, whether through rental growth or asset repositioning, particularly for assets located in prime locations. In general, the sector performance is improving and forecasts suggest that total returns will be in excess of 10% this year, moderating to around 8% in 2026. As is the case with all the other sectors, yield compression will be somewhat limited as borrowing costs remain higher for longer than previously anticipated. Occupier demand is currently much reduced as companies delay expansion plans amid economic and geopolitical uncertainty; demand focusing mainly on high quality new build space. This has resulted in an increased level of available space and a consequent fall in the level of new starts stabilising the market over the next year.

Rents are forecast continue to rising over the next 5 years although the rate of growth will slow further falling to between 3% and 4% per annum from the exceptionally strong rates recorded during 2021 and 2022.

In common with other sectors quarterly investment volumes across the retail sector slowed in the Q1 2025 from the Q4 2024 three-year high of £3bn with total transactions 30% below the five-year quarterly average of £2bn. Retail parks continue to be in high demand with the potential for further yield compression following reported falls of 0.35% over the past 12 months and a further modest reduction in Q1 2025.

Despite unfavourable economic conditions a modest increase in retail sales is predicted for 2025 and with online sales stabilising at 2023 levels physical shopping still accounts for over 70% of the market.

However, with a number of significant retailers going into administration releasing a large number of properties to the market data for Q1 shows vacancy rates across high street shops rose with retail warehouses and supermarkets recording record or near-record vacancy rates although shopping centres experienced an increased take up of space.

The market readjustment that led to negative rental growth in the years between 2018 and 2022 meant that All Retail rents have risen at their highest rate since 2005 over the past 2 years.

It is expected that retailers will continue to re-focus on physical stores for the immediate future resulting in rental growth at the all-sector level accelerating from 2% in 2024 to 2.7% in 2025 with. Standard Retail – Central London (+4.5% pa) and Retail Warehouses (3% pa) seeing the strongest growth over the 2025-2029 forecast horizon. With strong income returns and solid capital growth All Retail total returns are expected to be c. 12% in 2025, driven by Retail Warehouses at an estimated 13.5%. Total returns are then expected to stabilise at around 8% per annum.

Rural Property remains a safe haven for investors. Income returns of c.1.3% are forecast to be maintained over the period to 2029. Although subject to regional variations overall modest increases in capital values are forecast to be maintained over the period to 2029 following an initial period of readjustment in the current year; the focus on properties offering further long term capital growth through the realisation of development potential. However, following the increased supplies of land on the market in 2024, as a result of investors moving back into other sectors or forced sales as farmers faced increasing financial pressures, the supply has significantly fallen in H1 2025 as the farming industry takes stock following the IHT reforms thereby stabilising the market.

Sales volumes and the general performance of the alternative sector in 2024 mirrored that of the market generally; a trend that has continued into 2025. The investment market in this sector has generally been subdued being affected like the other sectors from the weak economic outlook, combined with higher than anticipated interest rates and the slower than expected fall in the cost of debt. The strong demand for investments in segments such as student accommodation which peaked in H1 2022 has declined sharply since with the level of transactions in Q1 2025 remaining below the 5-year quarterly average. Following the increase in yields of more than 1% over the period since H2 2022 rates have now stabilised providing the prospect of future capital growth which coupled with strong income returns will deliver positive overall returns.

In common with the market in general it would appear that the market for pooled property investments is also beginning to stabilise following significant falls in value and negative returns over recent years. However, the level of returns going forward are likely to remain modest even as the wider economy recovers making other alternative investments more attractive.

Investment Strategy Update

The Portfolio Management Strategy for 2025 to 2029 is aimed at supporting the development of the Portfolio to further enhance its contribution to the delivery of strategic goals whilst continuing to improve the Council's financial resilience as demand on services and operating costs continue to rise. It outlines how the Council will look to direct investments during this period developing the Portfolio to address areas of specific economic or social market failure and how it will manage these to help achieve the strategic priorities of the Council.

The Strategy is an integral part of the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and intrinsically linked with the Corporate Asset Management Plan (CAMP) and the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy and it should be read in conjunction with these documents.

The specific aims of this Strategy are to ensure investments funded or held in the Portfolio:

- Support the objectives of the Council's MTFS, Corporate Asset Management Plan, Strategic Plan, its Economic Growth Plan, and the County-wide Local Industrial Strategy.
- Support growth in the county and its economic area of influence and ensure there is a more diverse range of properties and land assets available to meet the aims of economic development.
- Maximise returns on Council owned property assets.
- Supports the delivery of front-line services through increased income generation from existing investments, or through capital investments that will reduce operating costs.
- Maintain a diverse portfolio of energy efficient and sustainable direct property and other investment assets which support economic growth and environmental sustainability.
- Support the Council's strategic objectives by working with partners to maintain momentum in the development of strategic sites and renewing existing employment sites and premises where there is demand thereby addressing areas of market failure.
- Contribute towards the development and implementation of a Net Zero Carbon 2030 Plan for the Council by reducing demand for energy and increasing the generation and use of renewable energy.
- Channelling new investment into schemes that:
- Maximise the potential to address economic and social market failure.
- Improve property assets for a direct strategic/policy purpose.
- Enhance the value and marketability of property assets enabling capital receipts to be used to support improved service delivery.
- Manage investment risk by investing in diverse sectors.
- Support the Council in maximizing the benefit from its financial assets in a risk aware way (not including standard treasury management activity)

The implementation of this strategy coupled with robust performance monitoring measures will ensure that the portfolio operates effectively and delivers value for money.

The Programme's strategy continues to be reviewed annually, and an updated strategy will be incorporated within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy which will be considered by Cabinet and full Council later in the year.

Rural Estate Management Review

- **Rent reviews 2024** – 14 notices were served for autumn 2024, with one exception which is linked to a lease renewal, these have all been agreed achieving a rental uplift of £60k (29%)
- **Rent reviews 2025** – 39 notices were served for spring 2025 of which 35 have now been agreed, achieving £73k rental uplift (17%). The remaining four remain with the Council's agents to be concluded.
- **Ongoing reviews** – internal review of the rental levels, tenancy agreements, etc. concluded that there is no scope for further notices to be served for autumn 2025, or spring 2026. Where rent changes are anticipated, these are linked to tenancy renewals.
- **Lease renewals September 2024** – all leases have now been agreed with a rental uplift of £15k, which equates to 30% increase achieved.
- **Health & Safety and Compliance** – a concerted investment of time and management has been made by the Rural management team, to complete a full audit of the Council's records. The team are developing a plan of action, which will ensure the Council is up to date with its statutory compliance obligations. It will involve a programme of works to ensure that all aspects of statutory compliance are at a satisfactory level within 2 years, projected to cost c.£860,000 funded from a combination of revenue budgets and sinking funds held by the IILP for such purposes. Alongside this, further work is progressing with the Corporate Health & Safety team to identify any additional requirements beyond statutory compliance matters.
- **Outstanding rent** – working with colleagues in EMSS and Legal Services, the levels of arrears has decreased by over £130k (vs the 2023 baseline) and a clear management policy is now in place to ensure that consistent action is taken, and issues are identified and addressed early. Legal action has been initiated against a number of debtors, with bankruptcy and possession proceedings being required in the most serious cases. It is anticipated that 2025/26 will bring substantial reductions in the legacy debt as legal actions take effect.
- **Documentation** – work is ongoing to address the issues of missing or incomplete documentation with a further 36 new tenancy agreements and 6 updated licence agreements have been issued. On completion of these, all live agreements will have appropriate documentation in place.

- **Inspections** – the annual inspections process is now embedded in normal management, with a particular focus on repairs and maintenance in the current year.
- **Repairs & maintenance** – following on from the annual inspections, work is now commencing to build up a comprehensive planned maintenance programme.
- **End of tenancy compensation** – along with reminders to tenants of the statutory protocols for tenancy compensation, work has been ongoing to collate and formalise agreements for improvements already in place to ensure accurate records are held.

Rural Estate Strategy

The overarching strategy for the Rural Estate for the period from 2025 to 2040 is currently being developed and will be subject to consultation with both internal and external stakeholders, including elected Members, over the coming months.

The Strategy will align with both the Council's Strategic Plan and IILP programme and confirm how Leicestershire's estate operates within a framework of national legislation, policies and agricultural markets, all of which should shape and influence how the estate is managed. The strategy will set out the vision, ambitions, challenges and opportunities for the estate for the next 15 years and will detail a comprehensive restructuring and investment programme in order that the estate can be resilient to future economic and structural changes within the industry whilst continuing to deliver positive financial benefits to the County Council. In addition, the strategy will detail how the estate will be managed in order to ensure that its implementation is both efficient and effective, and achieves value for money.



GLOSSARY

90 Day Debt: For LCC KPI purposes, debt over 90 days past due is performance benchmarked.

All Property Yield: All Property Yield is the calculation of the Yield (defined below) across all property asset classes (i.e., a portfolio yield)

Bad Debt: Bad debt is taken as any debtor account (most likely rent) which has remained due beyond 6 months. A bad debt provision is held against the debtor sum, and when the debt is cleared the provision is credited back to the revenue account.

Capital Growth: Capital Growth is the increase of the capital value, net of capital expenditure or income expressed as a percentage of capital employed.
$$\frac{(\text{Closing Value} - \text{Opening Value} - \text{Capital Expenditure} + \text{Capital Receipts})}{(\text{Opening Value} + \text{Capital Expenditure})}$$

Diversifiers: This describes investments which are not directly owned properties within the Leicestershire boundaries. As a result they are not subject to the same risks as directly owned property. The investments are made subject to the investment strategy for the liLP which was last updated in early 2024. The current investments include UK diversified commercial property and are accessed by investments in institutional property funds, global private credit funds which provide finance to corporate borrowers for a fixed term and global infrastructure funds where the underlying holdings include ports, toll roads and renewable energy assets.

Lease Expiry: Most commercial and agricultural leases do not automatically terminate on expiry but continue to “hold over” with the tenant bound to perform the obligations of the lease. There is no specific requirement to renew the lease, but the tenant usually gains a more flexible position in respect of notice to quit provisions. The Landlord remains bound by statutory restrictions on termination such as grounds for notice or time limitations.

Net Income Return: Net Income Return is the net income receivable expressed as a percentage of capital employed. This differs from the Initial Yield as it considers costs of ownership, including capital expenditure.
$$\frac{(\text{Net Income})}{(\text{Opening Value} + \text{Capital Expenditure})}$$

Rent Review: Commercial and agricultural leases usually allow for periodic review of rents. Most commonly on a 3 year cycle, the rent due is reviewed by negotiation and reference to comparable rents or a statutory formula. Occasionally rents will be reviewed by reference to RPI or other inflationary measures, although these are less common for the types of assets held by liLP.

Rent Roll: The rent roll is the total annual income achievable by the property without deduction for rental allowances (i.e., rent-free periods) or other incentives, back-dated charges, premiums, or non-rental charges.

Sinking Fund: A sinking fund is an accounting device whereby funds are held on the balance sheet to offset or mitigate possible future costs incurred such as major incidents, significant revenue expenditure, etc.

Total Return: Total Return is the sum of the Capital Growth and Net Income Return.

Voids: Where commercial or agricultural property is vacant but physically capable of being leased or occupied it is classified as a void; property which does not meet statutory requirements for letting and is pending refurbishment, or unoccupied but leased is not included within the void figures.

Yield: Yield is the rental income expressed as a percentage of capital value.
$$\frac{(\text{Rental Income})}{(\text{Opening Value})}$$
 In the context of this report, yield is used as a valuation comparator rather than solely as an expression of returns.



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**CABINET – 28 OCTOBER 2025****DELIVERING THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP4) 2025-2040**
NEXT STEPS**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the development of the Enabling Travel Choice Strategy (ETCS), which forms part of the full Local Transport Plan 2025-2040 (LTP4), and to seek approval of draft key 'policy positions' that are intended to form the fundamental basis of the ETCS for consultation.
2. The report advises the Cabinet of work undertaken to prepare three Multi-Modal Area Investment Plans (MMAIPs) pilots. The MMAIPs also form part of the full LTP4.
3. The Cabinet's approval is sought to undertake an initial consultation exercise (explained in Part B of this report), to inform the development of the ETCS and of the MMAIPs.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that
 - a) The work undertaken to date on the development of the Enabling Travel Choice Strategy (ETCS) be noted;
 - b) The draft key 'policy positions' that are intended to form the fundamental basis of the ETCS (set out in paragraphs 42 to 67 of this report) be approved for consultation;
 - c) The work undertaken on the development of three pilot draft Multi-Modal Area Investment Plans (MMAIPs) for Market Harborough, Hinckley, and South-east Leicestershire be noted;
 - d) An eight-week initial consultation exercise be undertaken to inform the further development of the ETCS and three pilot MMAIPs;

- e) Subject to the outcomes of the consultation exercise, the Director of Environment and Transport:
 - i. following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, the Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance, undertake further work to develop the ETCS, including a draft suite of policies;
 - ii. following consultations with the Cabinet Lead Member, undertake further work to develop the three draft MMAIPs;
 - iii. submits further reports to the Cabinet regarding the revised draft ETCS and each pilot MMAIP.

Reasons for Recommendation

- 5. The ETCS and the MMAIPs are being prepared as part of the Council's full LTP4.
- 6. The draft 'key policy positions' are fundamental to the ETCS, to ensure that the work progresses in the right direction. Subject to the outcome of the initial consultation proposed, it is intended that these will form the basis for the ETCS.
- 7. The ETCS policy position is also important for development of the MMAIPs. The MMAIPs are not themselves policy documents but will reflect the Council's existing and emerging policies/strategies including the ETCS.
- 8. The proposed initial consultation exercise would inform the development of the draft ETCS and the MMAIPs.
- 9. Further work to be undertaken by officers following the initial consultation exercise will enable the production of a draft ETCS and three MMAIPs, to be submitted to a future Cabinet meeting for a second consultation exercise.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

- 10. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, it is intended that an eight-week initial consultation exercise will take place in November and December 2025.
- 11. The Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a report at its meeting on 6 November 2025 as part of the initial consultation.
- 12. Following the completion of the initial consultation exercise, a report will be presented to the Cabinet in spring 2026 to highlight the outcomes and present a draft ETCS document for consultation.

13. The timetable for the development of the draft MMAIPs and further consultation on the drafts will be finalised following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

14. The LTP4 CD was approved by the Cabinet on 22 November 2024 and subsequently by the County Council on 2 July 2025.

Resource Implications

15. The development of the LTP4 is being funded from existing Departmental budgets. A total of £250,000 has been allocated in the Department's Advanced Design Budget for 2025/26 to 2027/28. Alongside this, the Department for Transport (DfT) provided funding of approximately £179,000 for the development of the LTP4.
16. The LTP4 is a key document that informs the development of the Council's transport programmes, including the allocation of the Local Transport Grant (awarded to the Council by the DfT). It also provides the basis for funding submissions. Furthermore, it provides a basis for seeking to secure developer contributions through the development management (planning application) process.
17. The delivery of transport solutions under the ETCS or MMAIPs will be subject to the availability of funding, including as appropriate through future reviews of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the development of future Highways and Transportation Capital and Works programmes.
18. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Legal Implications

19. It is intended that the ETCS will set out policies that deal with matters relating to the development of Local Plans (prepared by the district councils) and to the planning application process.
20. The planning system is governed by a complex suite of legislation, regulation and guidance and it will be necessary for the ETCS to be lawful in this regard.
21. The Director of Law and Governance has been involved with the work to date to develop the ETCS and will continue to be closely involved in its further development to ensure it is lawful in planning terms.
22. No specific legal implications have been identified in respect of the preparation of the MMAIPs at this time.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

23. This report will be circulated to all Members.

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PART B

Background

What is a Local Transport Plan?

24. There is a legal requirement for each Local Transport Authority (LTA), such as the County Council, to prepare an LTP. LTPs help to promote transport as an enabler to deliver on economic, environmental and social objectives by planning for transport infrastructure and initiatives to help people and goods travel around.

What is the LTP for Leicestershire (LTP4)?

25. The full LTP4 consists of several elements:



Figure 1: The elements of the full LTP4 for Leicestershire

26. The development work for the Council's LTP4 began in late 2021 and it is being phased.

Phase 1 – Completed

27. Phase 1 comprised the development and the adoption of the LTP4 CD. The LTP4 CD is a high-level document that, amongst other details, sets out a strategic vision for transport across the County, along with five Core Themes and six Core Policies. This was approved by the Council in July 2025.

Phase 2 – Underway

28. Phase 2 includes the development and the implementation of a series of Focused Strategies, of which the ETCS is one. Each Focused Strategy will set out more detail and explanation (than the LTP4 CD) about a particular area of work, for example as set out in this report about the Council's work to enable travel choice.

29. It will also include the development and implementation of MMAIPs, starting with the three pilot areas. The MMAIPs will set out the detailed work to be delivered in particular areas in line with the policies set out in the LTP4 CD and Focused Strategies.

Phase Three – At Early Stages

30. Phase Three will set out the LTP4 monitoring and review processes and also the Council's approach to looking ahead to a post-2050 vision for transport to ensure that the LTP4 and transport solutions can adapt to accommodate travel behaviour change, innovation, and changes to national policy.

Enabling Travel Choice Strategy – General Overview

What is the purpose of the ETCS?

31. The ETCS will set out in detail how the Council, as the LTA, will seek to enable people living and working in the County, in existing and new communities, to make informed travel choices.
32. The ETCS will sit above the current range of policies, plans and strategies that deal with particular means (modes) of travel (topic-specific strategies), such as the Cycling and Walking Strategy, the Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy, and the Network Management Policy and Strategy and Plan.
33. The ETCS will seek to give people opportunities to travel by all appropriate and relevant modes (see also paragraphs 38 to 41 below).
34. Making different choices of travel can bring health and environmental benefits. Where it helps to reduce traffic congestion, it can also bring economic benefits through reduced delays and interruptions to the movement of materials and goods. Enabling travel choice is also vital to achieving the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), to the delivery of the Core Themes and Policies of the LTP4 CD, and to supporting the delivery of the strategic outcomes set out in the Council's Strategic Plan 2024-2026.
35. The primary purposes of the ETCS are, as per the vision for the DfT's proposed Integrated National Transport Strategy to:

“put people who use transport and their needs at its heart;”, and

“empower local leaders to deliver integrated transport solutions that meet the needs of their local communities”.

36. It is intended that the ETCS will focus on how the LTA can help to enable communities, current and future, to have improved access to the societal and economic services and facilities that they might need to use as part of their daily lives, such as workplaces, schools, education, healthcare, shops, and

leisure opportunities. The ETCS will also seek to enable access to local labour pools for existing and new businesses.

What will the ETCS Cover?

37. The ETCS will cover two key areas of work:

- a) How the LTA (and its partners, such as Public Health, Education, Adults and Communities, as necessary) will work with existing communities to understand them and any travel barriers that they face in seeking to access the services/facilities in their daily lives, and to seek to enable them to have realistic choices about how they travel to those services/facilities. That understanding will not just be about transport issues; it will include wider matters such as health, inequalities, levels of deprivation, and educational achievement. In some cases, enabling improved access might be about transport provision - such as an improved or new footway or cycleway, increasing the capacity of a junction, or providing a new passenger transport service. In other cases, it might be about bringing a service or facility closer to a community; for example, this could be a new surgery that is built as part of a new development, which would mean that people would then have a choice to walk to the surgery rather than having to drive to one that is much further away.
- b) How the LTA will seek to work with Local Planning Authorities (which at present, pending any local government reorganisation, are the district councils in Leicestershire) and with promoters of new developments (such as house builders) to deliver new places that will achieve genuine sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF. That is, to deliver places that contain new services and facilities and/or are well connected by a realistic and genuine choice of transport to services and facilities in the local area.

What modes of travel will the ETCS cover?

38. Leicestershire is a mixture of differing places, including rural areas, villages, towns, and urban areas adjoining the City of Leicester. It is therefore not possible to impose a one-size-fits-all approach to enabling travel choice across the County; rather, through the ETCS, the LTA will seek to identify realistic transport solutions, prioritising those modes of travel that are most relevant for communities and places, both existing and planned for the future.
39. In some cases, the most realistic (and perhaps the only genuine) choice of travel will be by car. The ETCS therefore proposes to embrace all appropriate and relevant modes of travel, not just 'sustainable' travel.
40. Through the ETCS (and the other relevant local and national policies, strategies and plans), the LTA will continue to seek to make travel by car as safe, time

reliable and delay free as is reasonably possible, and to support people to switch to electric vehicles in line with the Government's policy.

41. The ETCS is not concerned solely with building new or improving existing infrastructure (such as capital funded solutions, like a new length of footway or cycleway, or a junction improvement) to enable travel choice but also measures that help to educate and promote travel choice opportunities (such as revenue funded solutions, like support for a new 'bus' services or travel education and training).

The ETCS – Proposed Key 'Policy Positions'

42. As indicated in Part A of this report, the ETCS is currently at an early stage of development and the next step is now to consult on the proposed 'policy positions' that will enable a strategy to be formulated. It is intended that the ETCS will contain a suite of policies that will provide a clear and transparent framework within which the LTA will work.
43. An initial set of six draft key 'policy positions' is set out below, representing an intended direction of travel.

1. Policy Position: Working to understand communities' needs

44. The LTA holds lots of evidence about the state and operation of the highways and transport networks in Leicestershire. But with the adoption of the LTP4 CD and creation of the ETCS, it is necessary to broaden its knowledge.
45. The ETCS will state that the LTA should work with a range of partners to understand Leicestershire's communities, including in respect of their health, economic circumstances/levels of deprivation, and educational attainment.
46. The LTA would then work with those partners to enable travel choice (including to bring services closer to people so that they can have a choice to walk or cycle) and help to tackle barriers so as to enable easier or better access to health care, jobs or educational opportunities, for example.
47. The ETCS will be open and realistic about what the LTA is able to achieve for communities. Notwithstanding recent transport funding announcements from the Government, it will be necessary to manage expectations. So, the focus of the full ETCS will have to be built around understanding and seeking to address communities' needs rather than wants.

2. Policy Position: Working through the Local Plan process

48. The NPPF dictates a 'plan-led' system, meaning that Local Plans should form the fundamental basis for planning to meet the future homes and job needs of an area and the allocation of sufficient land to meet such needs. Decisions made by the district councils that are responsible for the development of Local

Plans are thus fundamental to achieving sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF.

49. The ETCS will set out how the LTA will seek to work with district councils:
 - a) To ensure that the Local Plan evidence bases are accurate and include the current levels of accessibility to services and facilities;
 - b) To ensure that the authority responsible for the development of the Local Plan demonstrates how it has responded to the evidence:
 - i. To justify the selection of proposed site allocations;
 - ii. Through the development of the Plan's policy framework, especially to provide a clear and strong framework that requires new developments to be truly connected to existing communities and the wider area;
 - c) To ensure, where relevant, that for clusters of proposed allocation sites or sites that are proposed to be allocated along key transport corridors (such as main roads) that the Local Plan sets out, including through policies, how:
 - i. The master-planning of the sites is to be coordinated to promote the delivery of new services and facilities;
 - ii. The cumulative transport impacts are to be addressed, including in respect of securing developer contributions to deliver transport solutions to address the cumulative impacts.
50. The ETCS will make clear that the LTA will no longer consider a Local Plan to be in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF (that is, in planning terms, where it is not 'sound') where for example:
 - a) The spatial strategy is being justified as sustainable simply by dint of proposed site allocations' geographic locations;
 - b) The existing transport choices for the proposed allocation sites fail to provide appropriate, suitable, and safe access to services and facilities that future occupiers of the developments are most likely to require to access in meeting their daily needs;
 - c) The Local Plan fails to provide a sufficiently clear and strong policy framework to require and guide the site promoters to bring forward the proposals for enabling and improving transport choices as part of the overall 'visions' for their sites.

3. Policy Position: Working with Local Planning Authorities and site promoters through the planning application process

51. As set out above, the LTA will expect Local Plans to provide a robust policy basis for creating new communities and places of employment that provide occupiers with a genuine and realistic choice of travel.
52. Building on that foundation, it will be important to ensure that the LTA, through its role as a Statutory Consultee in the planning application process, can clearly understand how the Local Plan policies are being translated into reality in respect of site-specific development proposals and planning applications. The ETCS will set out that the LTA will expect site promoters:
 - a) To provide, in accordance with NPPF requirements, a clear vision for a site ('place vision'). The ETCS will be clear that the preparation of a 'place vision' is essential, because that will then dictate the site's economic and societal relationships with the 'outside world', which in turn is essential to inform the development of a 'transport vision' for that place.
 - b) To demonstrate how the place and transport visions will be delivered in practice (how they are validated) over the lifetime of a development. This includes where to validate the vision, it is essential and necessary to improve the inadequate existing transport provision (such as to improve an existing cycleway or footway).
 - c) To prepare a 'Monitoring and Management Strategy', against which the delivery in practice of the visions will be tracked over the lifetime of a development.
53. The ETCS will mark a move away from simply assessing a proposed development's peak hour traffic impacts (albeit, that is likely to still be an important consideration) to a more wholistic 'vision-led' approach based around understanding the existing and future needs of communities to access services/facilities, and identifying and delivering the transport solutions that are of an appropriate, suitable and safe standard.

4. Policy Position: Piloting new and innovative ideas

54. Whilst the Council has piloted transport solutions - such as the initial 'Fox Connect' service and School Streets - it is keen to take steps to be more proactive in the light of the LTP4. The ETCS should set out that the Council, as the LTA, will take opportunities to pilot, trial and learn where new or innovative solutions are identified that would meet a community's or business' identified needs.
55. The Director of Corporate Resources will be closely involved in the development of the wording for any 'piloting' policy that is to be included in the ETCS, including in respect of any budget setting implications.

5. Policy Position: Considering what represents 'value for money'

56. The Council will continue to make best use of its own budgets, and the funding that the Council receives from external sources will remain of the upmost importance.
57. However, the Government has signalled that it intends to change the national guidance (known as 'The Green Book') that is used to appraise project business cases to put less emphasis on the monetary benefits of a proposal and greater emphasis on the wider benefits of a project. An example given (at section 3.2 of the Findings and Actions document) is in terms of achieving growth in household incomes through building more housing and improving transport connectivity.
58. Reflecting the direction of changes to national guidance, the ETCS will set out that in considering what represents 'value for money', the Council will not simply consider how much an intervention costs (although that will remain an important consideration), but what other benefits it might achieve or deliver in tackling wider identified issues, such as in respect of:
 - a) Enabling active travel to address a health issue;
 - b) Helping to tackle environmental issues (such as poor air quality);
 - c) Addressing inequality or social exclusion or providing for the needs of those in the community who are more vulnerable.
59. The Director of Corporate Resources will be closely involved in the development of the wording of any 'value for money' policy to be included in the ETCS.

6. Policy Position: Facilitating efficient delivery of safe and suitable infrastructure that supports local community need

60. The design of highway infrastructure delivered in Leicestershire, as with all places, is informed by national and local design standards. This includes schemes ranging from cycle lanes, footways and crossings through to complex junctions, bridges, and large distributor roads. These design standards are outlined in an array of guidance, which includes the County Council's Leicestershire Highway Design Guide, the Government's Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, the Government's Manual for Streets and the Government's Local Transport Notes, including LTN 1/20 (Cycle infrastructure design).
61. Design standards aid the consistent delivery of safe and suitable schemes. As recognised through national standards, an inclusive part of the guidance and the processes which outline design standards includes consideration and accommodation for "departures" from design standards in certain circumstances.
62. Departures are an important element of enabling successful and efficient delivery of safe and effective schemes, by addressing and overcoming

constraints which might be associated with a specific location, and also by enabling innovation to be included in schemes which bring about a betterment.

63. Departures from design standards often relate to proposed improvements to existing roads, where there are often greater constraints: seeking to provide a segregated cycleway along an existing road fronted by houses would be more difficult than for an open plot of land for, say, housing or employment use.
64. Departures are exceptions which can vary in their nature and scale, with corresponding levels of risks. Whilst minimising departures is important in terms of minimising risks, that should not be a reason to stifle innovation or hinder the delivery of a scheme that would otherwise provide a betterment in provision for the communities that need it and that will ultimately use it.
65. Therefore, it is intended that the ETCS will foster a positive approach to design departures. The LTA will work with scheme promoters and other partners, such as Local Planning Authorities, towards reaching acceptance of a scheme which involves existing or new highway infrastructure, provided that its design and delivery meets a range of criteria and objectives. These could include, for example, where a scheme that is being proposed:
 - a) Supports the wider principles of LPT4 and its core policies;
 - b) Aligns with the ETCS policies and objectives;
 - c) Aligns with the Local Plan, Place Vision and Transport Vision for the location - where applicable;
 - d) Is considered safe, as demonstrated by a road safety audit;
 - e) Is innovative in its design and/or delivery approach;
 - f) Does not place the Council at an unacceptable risk in terms of legal, financial or reputational liability;
 - g) Would not represent a contradiction to a reasonable duty of care;
 - h) Duly considers network resilience and maintenance;
 - i) Provides a betterment that is in the best long-term interests of communities and businesses by supporting positive outcomes.
66. The intention is that the Council's design departure procedure will be updated in line with the policies that will ultimately be set out in the ETCS.
67. The Director of Corporate Resources (in respect of their insurance and assurance responsibilities) will be closely involved in the development of the wording of any departures policy to be included in the ETCS.

Multi-Modal Area Investment Plans and the Relationship to the ETCS

68. Further to the Cabinet's decision in November 2024, work is being undertaken on draft MMAIPs for the three pilot areas of Market Harborough, Hinckley, and South-east Leicestershire.
69. Whilst the ETCS is countywide, the MMAIPs will focus on particular areas of the County. Their development and implementation will be driven, amongst

other things, by the policies in the LTP4 CD and the Focused Strategies, such as the ETCS. Thus, MMAIPs will summarise the issues that people living in those areas face in reaching the services/facilities that they need and will build up the detail of the actions for the Council to undertake in particular areas.

70. As well as reflecting countywide policies, the MMAIPs will also draw on information from the existing and emerging local policy and strategy documents (for example, the 2017 Market Harborough Transport Strategy). They will also draw on any new evidence, including as collected through the proposed initial consultation exercise that is set out in the next section of this report.
71. As communities and businesses across Leicestershire vary in nature, it is likely that their priorities in respect of access to services and facilities, and labour pools, will also differ. This has implications for the 'objectives' and 'themes' that a MMAIP will be built around, and in turn, this has implications for the types and priorities of the solutions to enable choices of travel.
72. Drafts for each of the three pilot MMAIPs will be prepared, as informed by the proposed initial consultation exercise outlined below. Once prepared, they will be presented to the Cabinet for approval to consult; the reports to the Cabinet will set out why the evidence has led to the identification of the 'objectives' and 'themes', and in turn the actions that the Council is planning to undertake and deliver that are particular to that area.

Proposed Initial Consultation Exercise

73. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, the initial exercise is planned to take place for eight weeks during November and December 2025.
74. In the interests of efficiency and minimising the number of separate ways in which the Council engages the exercise has been designed to cover the development of both the ETCS and the pilot MMAIPs. It is intended that it will be branded as 'The Big Travel Survey'. It will therefore focus on communities and business across the County, including in the three MMAIP pilot areas. The partners and stakeholders that are to be engaged will include health bodies, education bodies, parish, town and district councils, and the 'development industry' (including, landowners and developers, such as house builders, promoters and those who provide specialist advice, including planning consultants and agents and lawyers).
75. In recognition that differing audiences are likely to have differing interest, it is proposed that the exercise will be developed around two channels but with all of the consultation materials being available to all parties.
 - a) Communities channel: a key purpose of the exercise will be to gather evidence about existing communities and the services that they are needing to access, alongside businesses and their employees and any travel-related challenges that they face. It will thus seek views on:

- i. The location and types of services, facilities that people need to reach, and any issues they have in accessing these in a safe, easy and relevant way.
 - ii. The labour pools that businesses need to access.
 - iii. The objectives/themes that should be prioritised for the area.
 - iv. The potential solutions that could help to support and/or improve the connections to services, facilities and labour pools for existing and future communities and places of work. The solutions may not be limited to transport-specific interventions but could involve, for example, bringing services closer to communities.
- b) Partners and stakeholders channel: this will provide an early opportunity for comments to inform the development of the draft ETCS, including the first draft of policies, and to share the work that has been completed to date on the development of the three pilot MMAIPs. It will thus:
- i. Explain why an ETCS is being prepared and what it is and is not in principle.
 - ii. Set out the policy areas that the ETCS is intended to cover, including the draft key 'policy positions'.
 - iii. Set out the MMAIP pilot proposals and the existing evidence that has been identified, and to ask for any evidence that partners or stakeholders might hold that could be valuable to support the development of the drafts of the three pilot MMAIPs.
76. It is expected that there will be particular interest from the district councils and the 'development industry' in the ETCS, especially the draft key 'policy positions' relating to the development of Local Plans and the site promotion and development.
77. The outcome of the initial consultation exercise will be used by officers to develop a draft of the ETCS document, including a first draft of its policies. It will also be used to inform drafts of each of the three pilot MMAIP documents.
78. The proposals for the future consultations on the draft ETCS document and on each of the three draft MMAIP documents will be set out in future reports to the Cabinet.

Concluding Summary

79. The ETCS will provide the Council with a countywide strategy to enable communities to be able to access the services and facilities that they are likely to need as part of their daily lives with a genuine and realistic choice of travel and help businesses to access pools of labour.
80. The ETCS has will also have significant implications for district councils in preparing Local Plans and for parties looking to promote new developments.

81. The draft key 'policy positions' set out above will provide the foundation for a suite of policies which will form the ETCS, providing a clear and transparent policy framework that sets out how the County Council will seek to work with the Local Planning Authorities (and site promoters) whilst managing communities' expectations.
82. Development of MMAIPs for three pilot areas - Market Harborough; Hinckley; and South-east Leicestershire - will be driven, amongst other things, by the policies that were set out in the LTP4 CD and the ETCS. They will focus on issues faced by people living and working in those areas and build up the detail of planned work.
83. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, the initial consultation exercise will be undertaken in November and December 2025 to seek views from communities, partners and stakeholders to inform development of a draft ETCS document and the draft MMAIPs for each of the three pilot areas. When these drafts have been prepared, they will be submitted to the Cabinet for further consideration.

Equality Implications

84. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) screening was first undertaken in 2021 at the inception stage of the LTP4 project, which identified a neutral impact. A full EHRIA was produced in October 2021.
85. A refreshed Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken in 2024, as part of the LTP4 CD's development. This helped to shape the final document, and it was presented to the Cabinet in November 2024.
86. Equality implications will continue to be considered as the ETCS and the MMAIPs are developed.

Human Rights Implications

87. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Other Implications and Impact Assessments

Health Implications

88. In agreement with Public Health, a high-level Health Impact Assessment of the LTP4 CD was undertaken in April 2024; it identified a positive impact.
89. For the ETCS, it has further been agreed with the Council's Director of Public Health to prepare an initial health impact assessment, with a full assessment to be completed on the draft Strategy. A similar approach is likely to be taken for the development of MMAIPs.

90. The initial consultation exercise will provide opportunities to gather further information that will inform the ongoing assessment of health implications. These opportunities are likely to include seeking to understand communities' access to health service needs, seeking data about the health of communities, and to understand the extent to which enabling active means of travel in an area might be an appropriate solution to helping communities to better access services and facilities.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

91. A high-level Strategic Environmental Assessment was undertaken in April 2024 on the LTP4 CD. A full assessment was presented to the Cabinet in November 2024.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 24 May 2024 – Development of the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) 2026-2040

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7506&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet on 22 November 2024 – Local Transport Plan (LTP4) – Outcome of Consultation and Approval of Core Document

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7511&Ver=4>

Report to the County Council on 2 July 2025 – Local Transport Plan 4

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=7859&Ver=4>

A Local Transport Plan for Leicestershire – Core Document 2025-2040:

https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/LTP4-Core-Documents-2025-2040_0.pdf

**CABINET – 28 OCTOBER 2025****LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO FLOODING
– SPENDING PROPOSALS FOR £2 MILLION REDISTRIBUTED
FROM RESERVES****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's approval for a programme of flood mitigation and climate adaption and resilience measures. The programme will be funded using £2m previously allocated for carbon reduction initiatives.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet:
 - a) Notes the extent and impact of flooding events in Leicestershire over the last two years and the work undertaken to date by the County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and the Local Highway Authority (LHA), including progress since February 2025, to support communities;
 - b) Approves the proposed use of £2m, reallocated from the earmarked reserve for carbon reduction, towards flood related activities and adapting services to help mitigate the impacts of severe weather and to increase future resilience as set out in paragraphs 27 to 29 of this report;
 - c) Notes and approves the requirement for £0.64m of additional permanent resource to enable the delivery of the proposed initiatives and a continued, more resilient, business as usual resource to manage flood risk impacts, building on the previous one-off resource funding allocated in February 2025, to be put forward for prioritisation as part of the 2026-30 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS);
 - d) Authorises the Director of Environment and Transport, following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Lead Member and the Director of Corporate Resources, to make decisions and finalise the details of use of these funds and adjust priorities within the key focus for this funding.

(KEY DECISION)

Reasons for Recommendation

3. In July 2025, the Cabinet decided to reallocate £2m from carbon reduction work to flooding mitigation initiatives and to adapting services to mitigate the impacts of severe weather events.
4. Recent flood events over the past two years, as outlined previously, have had a significant impact on many communities across Leicestershire and this in turn has placed substantial pressure on the resources of the County Council in its capacity as the LLFA and the LHA in trying to support those communities.
5. The LLFA's and the LHA's resource is focused on statutory requirements. Whilst the LLFA will endeavour to do everything it can to support communities in the management of local flood risk, it should be emphasised that the LLFA is not responsible for, nor is it required by law to, resolve all flooding matters. The LLFA does not receive funding for this purpose. Likewise, the LHA applies a risk-based approach to gulley cleansing to the best of its capabilities within the available resource levels.
6. Additional one-off funding for temporary resource, allocated as part of the 2025-29 MTFS, as set out in paragraphs 22 to 24 below, has helped to manage some of this pressure. However, it is recognised that the higher level of demand in this area, including work as a statutory consultee in planning, projects and investigatory work, as well as work with communities, has become business as usual. In order to sustain this work and deliver the proposed £2m programme, it will be necessary to make the one-off funding permanent. Therefore £0.64m of permanent resource is proposed for consideration as part of the 2026-30 MTFS process.
7. Previously, the Authority has been unable to resource work to carry out a detailed review of the Council's climate risk register, which will be critical to assess the impacts of climate change and consider appropriate mitigations, particularly in relation to the Council's own services. The reallocation of part of this funding to this task will provide the Authority with necessary resource to progress this.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

8. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, the Director of Environment and Transport will implement the actions outlined within the report, making any necessary adjustments following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources and Cabinet Lead Members.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

9. On 16 January 2020, following significant flooding events in October and November 2019, the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up a Flooding Scrutiny Review Panel which considered the role of the Council as the LLFA, and the roles of other Flood Risk Management

Authorities such as water companies, the district councils, and the Environment Agency.

10. The Review Panel reported to the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 January 2021.
11. On 5 February 2021, the Cabinet noted the final report of the Flooding Scrutiny Review Panel and approved its recommendations, one of which was for a refresh of the Leicestershire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LLFRMS).
12. On 26 May 2023, the Cabinet approved the draft refreshed LLFRMS and the associated documents for public consultation.
13. The updated LLFRMS supports work towards achieving the outcomes in the County Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026, notably those relating to the need to protect and enhance the environment and to ensure that communities are resilient in the face of emergencies.
14. On 24 November 2023, the Cabinet approved the updated LLFRMS and the associated documents (including a range of policies) for adoption and publication. The final updated documents were published in February 2024.
15. On 7 February 2025, the Cabinet approved £1.5m of additional funding to enable the LLFA and the LHA to support Leicestershire communities recovering from the most recent flooding events across the County. The implications of this were set out in the proposed 2025-29 MTFS.
16. On 15 July 2025, the Cabinet approved the reallocation of £2m from the earmarked reserve for carbon reduction work to flooding mitigation initiatives and to adapting services towards mitigating the impacts of severe weather events.

Resource Implications

17. The occurrence of multiple significant flood events has increased the workload for both the LLFA and the LHA. Such events have become more frequent in recent years.
18. Whilst this additional funding will be beneficial and help build on the work undertaken by the LLFA and the LHA in supporting communities to be more prepared and resilient from flood events, it will inevitably require extra resources to deliver the additional work that this funding will enable.
19. As supported by the Cabinet on 15 July 2025, it is proposed that £0.64m revenue (reported as £0.6m but subsequently uplifted to £0.64m to reflect the 2025/26 pay award) towards additional permanent staff resource be put forward and set out in the proposed 2026-30 MTFS, which will be presented to the County Council for approval in February 2026.

20. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

21. This report will be circulated to all Members.

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PART B

Background

22. Following the floods of January 2024 and January 2025, a total one-off allocation of £2.90m was made available by the Council in 2024/25 to fund:
- a) Supplementary staff resources to support Section 19 investigations (a duty under section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010), flood projects and the statutory consultee role in planning.
 - b) An additional permanent flood engagement officer to educate on roles, responsibilities and being flood ready.
 - c) Support for community flood resilience.
 - d) Highways related drainage activities.
23. This amount includes the additional £1.5m approved by the Cabinet on 7 February 2025, as outlined in the 2025–29 MTFS. A remaining balance of £2.36m from the £2.90m is available, of which £2.31m is scheduled for expenditure during the 2025/26 financial year and £0.05m in 2026/27. These funds will be allocated to staffing resources, gulley cleansing and jetting, drainage repairs, culvert replacement, asset mapping, and survey activities.
24. The Council's budgets for flooding for the next four years are shown in Figure 2 below. This includes the remaining £2.36m of the one-off revenue funding across both the LLFA and the LHA responsibilities. The split of this one-off revenue funding alongside ongoing revenue funding is shown for each area in Figure 3 below.

Figure 2 – MTFS revenue and capital flood related spend

	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	Total £000
Capital					
Property Flood Risk Alleviation	2,058	49	0	0	2,106
Highway Flood Alleviation	698	501	501	501	2,201
Total Capital	2,756	550	501	501	4,307
Revenue					
Gulley Emptying	2,430	1,629	1,636	1,642	7,337
Camera Van	85	84	85	85	339
Drainage Repairs	1,780	1,443	1,449	1,454	6,127
Flood Alleviation and Resilience	700	0	0	0	700
Total LHA	4,995	3,157	3,170	3,181	14,503
LLFA Resourcing	712	620	579	584	2,495
Flood Alleviation and Resilience	340	0	0	0	300
Total LLFA	1,052	620	579	584	2,835
Total Revenue	6,047	3,777	3,749	3,765	17,338
Total (Capital and Revenue)	8,803	4,327	4,250	4,266	21,645

Figure 3 – Revenue flood related spend: core budget and the additional one-off funding

	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	Total £000
One-off Revenue Funding	1,817	0	0	0	1,817
On-going Revenue Funding	3,178	3,157	3,170	3,181	12,686
LHA Revenue	4,995	3,157	3,170	3,181	14,503
One-off Revenue Funding	490	50	0	0	540
On-going Revenue Funding	562	570	579	584	2,295
LLFA Revenue	1,052	620	579	584	2,835
Total Revenue	6,047	3,777	3,749	3,765	17,338

25. Whilst this additional funding has helped and will help both the LLFA and the LHA to manage the significant increase in work following the recent flood events, the following paragraphs set out priorities for the £2m of reallocated carbon reduction funding approved by the Cabinet on 15 July 2025.

Reallocation of £2m Carbon Reduction Funding

26. On 15 July 2025, the Cabinet:

- a) Approved the reallocation of the £2m carbon reduction reserve towards flood mitigation initiatives and adapting services towards mitigating the impacts of severe weather events.
- b) Approved proposed priority activities to support the above aims.
- c) Was advised that it would be necessary to make permanent additional staffing resources (reported as £0.6m but subsequently uplifted to £0.64m to reflect the 2025/26 pay award) to deliver this programme together with other priority flood related activity such as formal flood investigations (Section 19) and community engagement.

27. The proposed allocation of funding is based on a number of working assumptions, namely:

- a) The programme should be realistic and deliverable and therefore delivered over a 2- to 3-year period with flexibility on the amount allocated to a particular initiative and where it is focussed over that period.
- b) There should be a clear and visible benefit to the public and progress openly reported.
- c) There should be a focus on reducing the impact of flooding on Leicestershire's residents and businesses and adapting to be more resilient to severe weather events.
- d) The programme is limited to £2m at present and represents discretionary investment, therefore it must be made clear that these initiatives may not be continued or ongoing unless further funding is made available.
- e) This represents an opportunity to trial new initiatives and approaches and as such it may be necessary to review and change aspects of the programme as progress is evaluated.

- f) There should be recognition of the Council's statutory responsibilities as the LLFA and the LHA, and a need to ensure a proper use of the funding in line with the Council's financial responsibilities.
- g) The current level of LLFA staffing (temporarily funded for 2025/26) is made permanent.

28. It is therefore proposed to allocate the £2m over three main categories as follows:

1) Working with Communities (£0.4m)

- a) Provision of 'alternatives to sandbags' scheme – providing flood resistance equipment to at risk communities through working with Flood Wardens, town and parish councils.
- b) Community Grants – providing grants to reduce flood risk or increase resilience.
- c) CCTV Project – investigating the condition / performance of private assets linked to flood risk where there are complex ownerships or disputed responsibilities.

2) Adaptation to Protect Priority Assets (£0.3m)

- a) Resource to update the climate risk register and identify measures that can form a realistic action plan.
- b) Work with high-risk service areas (highways and property) to identify and implement mitigation to protect assets, save reactive spend and ensure continuous services for Leicestershire residents and businesses.

3) Effective Management and Investment of Highways Drainage Assets (£1.3m)

- a) Proactive culvert maintenance – introduce a proactive programme where the current approach is reactive and undertake high priority repairs and/or replacements.
- b) Project to develop a system of management for Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) as they become more commonly adopted.
- c) An increased gulley emptying trial – introduce a 40-month cycle for priority 3 gullies.
- d) Further mapping of underground drainage assets to improve the Council's ability to investigate issues and plan maintenance activities.

29. The table below provides a summary of how it is proposed to divide the funding across these categories over the 3-year period (2026/27 to 2028/29).

Figure 4 – Proposals of how to use £2m funding 2026-2028

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
Working with Communities	£135,00	£135,000	£139,000	£409,000
Adaptation and Resilience Action Plan	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£300,000
Repair / replace highway culverts	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£300,000
Inspect highway culverts	£90,000	£90,000	£90,000	£270,000
Agency resource for SuDS project	£30,000	/	/	£30,000
SuDS maintenance	/	£50,000	£50,000	£100,000
Highway ditch cleaning	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£90,000
Gulley trial	£67,000	£67,000	£67,000	£201,000
Map underground assets	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£300,000
Total				£2,000,000

30. The programme is indicative at this stage with the intention that it can be amended in year or over the life of the programme as appropriate. This could include consideration of demand and scale of community schemes or issues emerging from inspection and risk assessment work. It may also include installing signing and or depth gauges at appropriate locations.
31. Officers are also currently developing the Local Transport Grant programme and will include capital flood risk schemes on the highway where appropriate and therefore it is not proposed to use the reallocated funding for this purpose.

Proposed Programme Summary

Community Flood Resilience Proposals

32. There are a number of alternatives to sandbags on the open market. It is proposed to purchase these products and distribute them via town or parish

councils and to Flood Wardens to disseminate to their respective communities. In addition, Council staff will distribute them to members of the public as a trial offer when conducting investigation work, site visits, public engagement events etc. This supports the initiative to promote self-help and encourage communities to Be Flood Ready.

33. Community grants in practice mean targeting funding at local flood schemes led by parish and town councils only. The aim is to develop community resilience through the purchasing of equipment or delivery of small-scale project work. Projects could include the creation of small flood storage areas, embankments or channels, culvert (pipe) removal, improvements on ordinary watercourses, natural flood management work, or improving community flood resilience through awareness raising and preparedness and purchase of specific equipment (pumps, gauges etc). The LLFA must be satisfied that any works will not increase flood risk to other parts of the community and may require permissions from them, or the Environment Agency. Proposals will need to meet a set of criteria in order to receive funding, and this information will be published. As this is a new scheme, these criteria will be reviewed regularly and amended if there are any relevant lessons learned.
34. The Communities team can support with the communication and administration of the community grant proposal. Grants will not be used for individual households to purchase flood defence measures/equipment.

Adaptation to Protect Priority Assets

35. The climate change risk assessment update will be supported by the development of service specific action plans and the coordination and delivery of prioritised actions that seek to mitigate risk to the most vulnerable service areas such as property and highways services, as well as working with partners, where possible, to increase resilience to severe weather events across the County.

Management and Investment of Highways Drainage Assets

36. Moving from reactive to proactive culvert maintenance and priority 3 gulley emptying will be managed through the annual asset management programme. These activities will be added to the annual Highways and Transportation Capital and Revenue Works Programmes and monitored in this way.
37. The mapping and SUDs projects will be undertaken within the team and officers will monitor progress and assess the benefits of the scheme to ensure the proposals are contributing to managing flood risk and resilience as anticipated.

Progress since February 2025

Multi-Agency Flood Drop-in Sessions

38. The LLFA has coordinated a number of public multi-agency flood drop-in events over the past two years in response to major flood events but to also

improve community and personal flood resilience. Events were held in late March/early April 2025 in Blaby, Melton Mowbray, Great Glen and Syston with further events in Coalville and Sileby held in October 2025. Each event has been represented by all key Risk Management Authorities (including the Environment Agency, water companies, Canal and River Trust, district councils) and have been positively received and attended by nearly 1000 members of the public. Further sessions will be scheduled in the future.

39. The LLFA has also arranged for Flood Mary and the Flood Pod to be in attendance at these meetings. Flood Mary and the Flood Pod has been extremely well received at previous meetings as she represents unrivalled independent support for flood affected communities. Having been flooded herself, she can offer first hand advice and guidance to help residents and businesses recover.
40. The LLFA initiatives described above can be promoted at the drop-in events as a further tool to help boost community resilience and promote the Be Flood Ready messaging.

2025/26 Funding

41. Of the £1.5m funding allocation agreed by the Cabinet in February 2025, £100,000 is being used to support a range of activities during the 2025-26 financial year. This includes:
 - a) The purchase of a flood house - model representation of two sides of a house, one side with property flood resilience equipment installed, the other which does not, along with other engagement materials.
 - b) The provision of the Flood Pod and Flood Mary at three public drop-in events.
 - c) Small scale purchase of pipes and associated materials locally in Long Clawson to help improve watercourse conveyance.
 - d) Detailed CCTV surveys in high-risk communities supporting flood investigation work.
 - e) Watercourse clearance/obstruction removal in very high-risk areas.
 - f) Trash screen improvement in high-risk communities.
 - g) River gauge installation in key priority high risk communities to enable better preparedness when river levels start to rise.
42. The portion of the £2m additional funding being allocated towards working with communities will build on this work.

Coordination with the Government

43. Whilst the Council is taking its own active steps to bolster local funding towards supporting communities at risk of and affected by flooding, the LLFA is also actively engaged with national initiatives to help influence decision making to bring about positive change for flood risk management. The Director for Environment and Transport attends the Government's Flood Resilience Taskforce, chaired by Flood Minister Emma Hardy MP and has actively

campaigned for change to the National Flood Recovery Framework. In addition, through working with the association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) a letter was issued directly to Emma Hardy MP and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) asking for more change to the framework to improve fairness. This work follows off the back of the challenges faced by the LLFA in administering the current grants from the National Recovery Framework activated in Storms Babet and Henk and also the lack of activation of the framework for Leicestershire flooding in January 2025, as Leicestershire experienced flood impacts to a greater degree than most areas of the country. In addition, the LLFA has also fed into a number of other national initiatives, including the Property Flood Resilience review (being led by Sir Peter Bonfield) and proposed changes to DEFRA's flood funding rules. Local Members of Parliament, Amanda Hack MP and Jeevun Sandher MP, expressed their support for Council's aim to challenge the negative impacts of these proposed changes.

44. As the autumn/winter 2025/26 season approaches, there has been an increase in MP interest in flood related activities, requests for feedback relating to maintenance of highway assets and watercourses and also queries relating to outstanding formal flood investigation responses (Section 19). In response to this, the LLFA has produced an updated position which was shared with MPs on 1 October 2025 which also included an update on the work that the Council is doing with ADEPT and the National Flood Resilience Taskforce and concerns around national funding via DEFRA.

Section 19 Flood Investigations

45. With the additional resource granted in February 2025, following the 6 January 2025 flooding, the LLFA has been working to progress the significant number of outstanding formal flood investigations. Draft multi-agency action plans (a key part of formal investigations) have been produced and shared with affected communities. The current estimated publication deadlines are available on the Council website <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/flooding-and-drainage/lead-local-flood-authority/formal-section-19-flood-investigations>.

Local Highway Authority Recovery Work

46. Significant work on the highway has been completed by the Council to support recovery efforts and to work towards flood resilience and preparedness in the future. Since the most recent flooding in January 2025, the LHA officers:
 - a) Emptied 62,000 gullies, 6,500 of them on the high-speed road network, as part of the routinely scheduled maintenance.
 - b) Attended 990 sites for additional jetting and camera surveys.
 - c) Carried out an additional cleanse of 5,000 gullies in response to the flooding.
 - d) Carried out 395 localised drainage repairs.
 - e) Attended 1,300 locations as a result of reported blocked gullies.

- f) Replaced six highway culverts and completed one drainage scheme with a further six programmed for this financial year.

Conclusion

- 47. Leicestershire has been heavily impacted by several major flood incidents in the past five years and the Council, in performing its duties both as the LLFA and as the LHA, has undertaken a significant amount of positive work towards preparedness for the future and improving local flood resilience. This has generated significant pressure on the existing Council resources, and this pressure continues as flood events appear to be becoming more frequent. The reallocation of the £2m carbon reduction funding, approved by the Cabinet on 15 July 2025, will allow the Council to build on the good work undertaken to date, to assist communities to Be Flood Ready and more resilient to future flooding events, subject to the resource requirements set out above.

Equality Implications

- 48. An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken to support the development of the LLFRMS. This assessment identified that some groups with protected characteristics are potentially more vulnerable to flood risks (for example elderly, pregnant, or disabled persons). Whilst this is recognised, the Strategy focusses on reducing the impacts of flooding on communities, in turn benefitting those vulnerable members of the community.
- 49. Officers will continue to explore opportunities to address the impacts of flooding on groups with protected characteristics, particularly when working with partners and in seeking external funding.

Human Rights Implications

- 50. Residents in flood affected areas have the risk of losing their homes and shelter would be adversely impacted. However, the work of the LLFA focusses on reducing this risk. The additional resources and actions identified within this report will also have a positive impact on the risk to human rights arising from severe flood events.
- 51. Climate change has other impacts on residents and services in addition to the effects of flooding; these include the effects of extreme temperatures such as excessive heat. The climate adaptation risk analysis will consider the risks of severe heat waves and their impact on service delivery and directly on individuals and investigate the mitigation measures to protect against these risks.

Other Implications and Impact Assessments

- 52. A Strategic Environmental Assessment was undertaken to develop the LLFRMS and as the action and proposals set out within this report are in line with those assessed in the Strategy, there are no negative environmental impacts arising from the content of the report. However, it should be noted that

the increased number of weather events and associated increased workload will mean that there will be a longer timeframe for the identification of potential solutions and the delivery of schemes.

53. Flooding has significant impacts on health and wellbeing. These impacts occur both acutely and over the long-term. While the immediate dangers to physical health from flooding events are highly visible, longer-term health effects associated with flooding are harder to identify and may include effects relating to displacement. Most of the health burden associated with flooding in England is, however, due to impacts on mental health and wellbeing. Measures to reduce the risk and effects of flooding will reduce such impacts. The proposals within this report will allow officers to provide more information in a timely manner, reducing some negative impacts on health.
54. The impacts of changing climate can be varied and affect many aspects of people's lives. In addition to flooding there are risks from excessive heat such as impacts on people's health and damage to buildings, homes and infrastructure. There are also impacts which can affect business and the economy which in turn affect jobs and people's lives and wellbeing. Mitigation of the risks of climate change will increase in importance over time in order to avoid increased costs and risks to people's health and wellbeing.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

55. A principle for the work of the LLFA as set out in the LLFRMS is organisational partnership working. Maintaining this principle will be essential for the successful delivery of flood risk management activities. Officers will continue to work with partner authorities and Risk Management Authorities (including, but not limited to, the police, the Fire and Rescue service, district councils, Leicester City Council, Rutland Council, the Environment Agency, and the Regional Water Authorities), ensuring a good understanding of the role and the responsibilities.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet, 5 February 2021, Scrutiny Review Panel of Flooding:
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6440&Ver=4>
 (item 484)

Report to the Cabinet, 24 November 2023, Leicestershire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy – Public Consultation Outcomes and Publication:
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7080&Ver=4>
 (item 296)

Report to the Cabinet, 22 October 2024, Leicestershire County Council Lead Local Flood Authority Protocol:
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7510&Ver=4>
 (item 386)

Report to the Cabinet, 7 February 2025, Flooding in Leicestershire in January 2025 and Implications for the Lead Local Flood Authority and Local Highway Authority:
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7873&Ver=4>
 (item 421)

Report to the Cabinet, 15 July 2025, Leicestershire County Council's Approach To Flooding,
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7878&Ver=4>
 (item 26)

Report to the Cabinet, 15 July 2025, Proposal to Reprioritise Net Zero Action Plans:
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7878&Ver=4n>
 (item 27)

Leicestershire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy:
<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-02/Local-Flood-Risk-Management-Strategy-for-Leicestershire.pdf>

Leicestershire's Asset Register
<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/flooding-and-drainage/flood-risk-management>

Leicestershire's Formal Section 19 Flood Investigations
<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/flooding-and-drainage/lead-local-flood-authority/formal-section-19-flood-investigations>

Appendix

Sources of flood risk and responsibilities

Appendix - Sources of flood risk and responsibilities

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency (EA) is a national body legally required to carry out strategic supervision over all matters relating to flood and coastal erosion risk management across the UK in accordance with the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The EA's strategic leadership role means they are required to facilitate a joined up and consistent approach for the management of flooding and coastal change from all sources. This includes sources where other Risk Management Authorities (RMA) have operational responsibilities such as the County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). In its role it also provides flood risk advice and specifically preliminary advice to planning applicants and Local Planning Authorities.

Water Authorities

Severn Trent Water Ltd (STW) and Anglian Water Ltd are public limited companies based in the Midlands, responsible for water supply management and waste water treatment and disposal. It also has an obligation to reduce flood risk associated with rainfall overloading the public sewerage network. Water authorities have five-year Asset Management Periods (AMPs) agreed with Ofwat which include investment and funding allocated to upgrade networks to alleviate current flood risk and help accommodate future growth, such as new housing developments within Leicestershire.

Internal Drainage Boards

Internal Drainage Boards are responsible for regulation of watercourse management within their designated area. The Boards also provide drainage related planning advice to the Local Planning Authority for proposed development within the board's jurisdiction. There is a small part of the Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board within Leicestershire covering parts of the Melton Borough.

Landowners (riparian responsibility for maintenance and passage of flow)

A 'riparian landowner' is someone who owns land next to a river, stream or ditch. They are considered the owner of a stretch of watercourse if it runs on or under their land and/or on the boundary of their land, up to its centre point.

A watercourse can be any stream of water flowing in a defined channel or through an underground pipe or culvert (an underground structure that water can flow through). Leicestershire County Council is a riparian owner of any such underground assets that pass underneath adopted public highway, or on the Council's own premises and land.

Each riparian owner has certain responsibilities for the section of watercourse in their ownership. They must let water flow naturally, remove blockages, fallen trees or overhanging branches from their watercourse, or cut back trees and shrubs on the bank, if they obstruct or affect a public right of navigation or reduce the flow or cause

flooding to other landowners' property and keep any trash screen, weir, mill gate or other structure clear.

They must report any incidents to the EA incident hotline to report flooding from main rivers, blockages which could cause flooding, pollution, unusual changes in the flow of water, collapsed or badly damaged banks or any work or activity on or near a watercourse that may not have permission.

Flood Risk Management Board

The Flood Risk Management Board is a forum of RMA officers and others formed to oversee a strategic, multi-agency approach to flood risk management in Leicestershire. The board facilitates the implementation of the Leicestershire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) and action to manage local flood risk.

The board consists of senior officers from RMAs in Leicestershire:

- Lead Local Flood Authority (Leicestershire County Council),
- Local Highway Authority (Leicestershire County Council, National Highways),
- Environment Agency (Representation from each region),
- Anglian Water,
- Severn Trent Water,
- District councils,
- Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board.

Others invited to attend include:

- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Prepared,
- Rivers Trusts,
- Leicester City Council,
- Rutland Council.

Whilst each authority has specific responsibilities under the legislation, the Board seeks to ensure a joint and coordinated approach is taken, wherever reasonable, on all aspects of flood risk management in Leicestershire with specific focus on local flood risk.

The Board will monitor application of the LFRMS, including the five objectives:

- Watercourses, assets and catchments - To manage local flood risk through the effective management of flood risk assets, watercourses, and catchments.
- Encouraging sustainable development - To manage local flood risk through encouraging sustainable development.
- Flood preparedness response and recovery - To manage local flood risk through effective preparedness, response to, and recovery from flood events. (The Local Resilience Forum Flooding Sub-Group is however the

main forum of discussion for flood preparedness, response and recovery or for discussing during/after a countywide flood event).

- Better understanding flood risk - To better understand local flood risk and impacts, informing approaches to managing this risk.
- Local projects - To manage local flood risk through developing and or managing local projects for at-risk communities.

Monitoring

The Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee will act as the 'Flood Risk Management Committee' and monitor the performance and activities of the Leicestershire Flood Risk Management Board, in accordance with Section 9FH of Schedule 2 of the Localism Act 2011. The Board will exist all year round and its remit is to facilitate discussion as appropriate. Meetings will take place twice a year at the End of Winter (March) and October. Meetings are chaired by Leicestershire County Council.

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**CABINET – 28 OCTOBER 2025****RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (RoWIP) 2025-2035****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to advise the Cabinet of the outcome of the public consultation on the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) 2025-2035, and to seek approval of the RoWIP and the associated Action Plan (Appendices A and B respectively).

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet:
 - a) Notes the outcome of the 12-week public consultation exercise on the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) 2025-2035, including the comments of the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
 - b) Approves the RoWIP 2025-2035, and its Action Plan.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. The Government's statutory RoWIP guidance recommends that authorities undertake a 12-week public consultation on a draft RoWIP to allow for representations to be made.
4. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires relevant authorities to assess and review a RoWIP every 10 years. Approval of the RoWIP will also enable completion of the action 'S12', set out in the County Council's Cycling and Walking Strategy (CaWS) Action Plan, to prepare a revised RoWIP by 2026.
5. To ensure the Action Plan remains current, effective, informative and deliverable over the 10-year period of the RoWIP.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. A public consultation on the draft RoWIP document was undertaken for a period of 12 weeks between 22 May and 14 August 2025.
7. A report on the draft RoWIP was considered by the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 5 June 2025 and the Committee's comments are set out in paragraphs 51 to 53 of this report.
8. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, the Council's updated RoWIP will be published on the Council's website.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

9. From 21 November 2002, relevant authorities in England were required by legislation to prepare and publish a RoWIP, with first Plans to be completed by 2007. This advice was subsequently amended by a requirement to fit elements of the RoWIP into the Second Local Transport Plan (LTP) process.
10. On 22 March 2006, the LTP2 was approved by the County Council. Details of the draft RoWIP were appended to the report and were considered by the County Council at that time.
11. Following consideration by the Cabinet on 5 September 2006, the RoWIP was approved by the County Council on 20 September 2006.
12. The 2006 RoWIP was updated in 2011 as an Action Plan to support the LTP3. The LTP3 provided a long-term strategy for transport within the County, including the public rights of way network. The LTP3 was approved by the Cabinet at its meeting on 8 March 2011 for submission to the County Council. The LTP3 was subsequently approved by County Council on 23 March 2011.
13. On 20 July 2021, the CaWS and its Action Plan were approved by the Cabinet. The CaWS Action Plan contains a short-term action 'S12' to prepare a revised RoWIP by 2026.
14. On 22 November 2024, the LTP4 Core Document was approved by the Cabinet, and then approved by the County Council on 2 July 2025. The LTP4 is a key document in the development of the Council's transport programmes, providing the overarching strategic direction in support of sustainable travel and transport, including active travel and the public rights of way network.
15. In May 2022, the County Council approved its Strategic Plan (2022–2026), which was subsequently updated in 2024. The RoWIP helps to deliver positive actions towards all the Strategic Plan's five strategic outcomes:
 - a) 'Safe and Well' - active travel is proven to improve health and wellbeing, both physically and mentally. The public rights of way network facilitates easy access to cycling, walking, wheeling and riding routes for regular journeys.

- b) 'Clean and Green' - the public rights of way network provides sustainable access to nature and green space for all.
 - c) 'Great Communities' - the public rights of way network helps connect all Leicestershire communities, encouraging community cohesion in a sustainable way.
 - d) 'Improved Opportunities' - the public rights of way network helps to connect communities to wider services in a healthy, environmentally friendly way, helping children and young people get the best start in life.
 - e) 'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure' - the public rights of way network in Leicestershire spans over 1915 miles (3084 kilometres) of routes, providing accessible travel options for all.
16. On 19 February 2025, the County Council approved the 2025/26 to 2028/29 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Spending towards maintaining and improving public rights of way are contained within the MTFS.
 17. On 18 March 2025, the Cabinet considered a report on the development of an updated RoWIP 2025-2035 and approved the undertaking of a public consultation on the draft RoWIP document for a period of 12 weeks between May and August 2025.
 18. On 15 July 2025, the Cabinet considered a report regarding highways and transport funding which included an indicative budget for rights of way improvements.

Resource Implications

19. The updated RoWIP and its actions are intended to be delivered through the existing agreed capital and revenue budgets set out in the MTFS, in addition to any further grants or external funding, such as that secured through the planning arena. The current revenue budget is £258,000 for 2025/26.
20. The allocated capital maintenance budget for the public rights of way for 2025/26 is £360,000 (£15,000 base amount with a one-off funding of £345,000 from the Local Transport Grant) levelling out to £17,000 until 2028/29.
21. To support delivery of the RoWIP actions, recognising the increasing cost pressures in managing and maintaining the public rights of way network, it is intended that additional capital funding will be included in the Highways and Transportation Capital and Works Programmes using some of the Local Transport Grant funding. This will be subject to the Cabinet's approval in spring 2026.
22. A report - Additional Highways and Transport Funding Awards 2025/2026 - was taken to the Cabinet in July 2025. This report set out the Local Transport Grant Programme of works and a Reserve Programme which includes an indicative budget envelope in cost band B, of between £201,000 to £1m for public right of way improvements across the County. An agreed programme of works for this financial year is largely completed with expenditure broadly aligned to budget – it is expected that any in-year underspends will be reprofiled to contribute to

funding future programmes. Further programmes for the next three years are being revised and elements of that work are set out in the Action Plan accompanying the RoWIP. The Action Plan will be reviewed each year to update scheme delivery.

23. The overall approach to maintaining the public rights of way network and the delivery of actions within the RoWIP will be through a risk-based assessment, aligned to the above core budgets available, which is being developed in parallel with the RoWIP.
24. In addition, the Council will continue to seek to improve and link paths with new developments. There are already a number of Section 106 (developer) contributions confirmed for such improvements, which will be programmed in for delivery over the coming years as the trigger points for the release of those funds are reached.
25. The RoWIP is being developed within the framework of the current and future funding available. It is accepted that this will be subject to variations and the Action Plan can be updated to reflect future changes. All opportunities will continue to be explored and maximised towards securing external funding towards the sustainable management and improvement of the public rights of way network. This includes seeking to secure funding through the planning arena, Government grants, partnerships, local parish and district authorities where possible and appropriate.
26. The Director of Law and Governance and the Director of Corporate Resources have been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

27. This report will be circulated to all Members.

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PART B

Background

28. The LTP4 Core Document, approved by the County Council on 2 July 2025, is a key document in the development of the Council's transport programmes, providing the overarching strategic direction in support of sustainable travel and transport, alongside the CaWS, for active travel and the public rights of way network.
29. The RoWIP is a 10-year plan which explains how improvements made to the public rights of way network in Leicestershire, alongside effective management and maintenance, will provide a better experience for all users when walking, wheeling, cycling, and horse riding. It also aims to help connect Leicestershire communities with each other and through nature and green spaces.
30. The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (approved by the Cabinet in 2017) sets out the Council's operational procedures in undertaking a risk-based approach to asset management, aligning with Government guidance 'Well-managed highway infrastructure a code of practice 2016'. The Code is designed to promote the adoption of an integrated asset management approach to highway infrastructure based on the establishment of local levels of service through risk-based assessment.
31. Aligned operational procedures and service levels for maintaining the public rights of way network are now being developed to support the RoWIP. Together the RoWIP and risk-based operational procedures will set out the Council's overall approach to maintaining the public rights of way network.
32. The Government's statutory guidance sets out that RoWIPs are required to consider at least the following:
 - a) The extent to which rights of way meet the needs of the public;
 - b) The opportunities for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation;
 - c) A statement of the action the Authority proposes to take for the management of local rights of way.
33. In the context of rights of way, the Council has a statutory role as:
 - a) Local Highway Authority to maintain and sign routes on the ground and to keep them open for people to use.
 - b) Local surveying authority to map all of the paths on the Definitive Map (of public rights of way) and let people know where they are.
 - c) Access authority to look after open access sites and rights.
34. The Council, working with other authorities and agencies, including the voluntary sector, aims to:

- a) Develop and manage a public rights of way network that meets the current and future needs of the local community.
- b) Provide a good quality and value for money rights of way service.
- c) Enable as many people as possible to walk, wheel, cycle, and ride, with particular focus on those currently excluded, including those with mobility constraints.
- d) Contribute towards improving the health of residents of Leicestershire and reduce their carbon footprint.
- e) Promote Leicestershire as an attractive place to walk, wheel, cycle and ride for all, including those living in or visiting the County.
- f) Monitor and report at regular intervals on how these goals are being achieved.

35. An up-to-date RoWIP is a key part of delivering towards these aims. The RoWIP aligns with:

- a) Current Government legislation and statutory guidance;
- b) Latest Council policies and strategies, including the LTP4 Core Document and the CaWS;
- c) The Council's risk-based approach to asset management.

Consultation and Engagement

36. Consultation and engagement were embedded in the approach to developing and updating the RoWIP. Engagement has taken place throughout the development of the draft RoWIP to help shape its content before formal consultation was undertaken on the draft document.

37. The statutory guidance stipulates a range of stakeholders that must be engaged with when preparing an updated RoWIP; for Leicestershire that included:

- a) Highway Authorities whose areas adjoin Leicestershire;
- b) District and parish councils;
- c) Natural England;
- d) Local Access Forums.

38. The Council hosts the Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF). This is a statutory group that advises the Council and other bodies on the improvement of public access for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. The LLAF includes member representation and has played a key part in helping shape the RoWIP and supporting engagement with the Council's biggest stakeholder, the public.

39. There were two planned periods of engagement and consultation as part of updating the RoWIP, pre-consultation engagement during development, and then formal consultation on the draft RoWIP, thus ensuring all stakeholders had the opportunity to help shape the RoWIP and review the draft.

Pre-Consultation Engagement

40. In line with the Government's statutory guidance, several pre-consultation engagement activities were held, involving various stakeholders, over a four-week period during February and March 2025.
41. The pre-consultation engagement included:
 - a) Direct elected member engagement - County Councillors, district council members and parish councils were asked for their views and about any priorities for improvements to the public rights of way network in their areas. They were also invited to participate in the online survey and map-based feedback exercise.
 - b) Direct engagement with statutory and other key stakeholders - these included neighbouring highway authorities, Natural England, and advocacy groups. These were contacted directly to comment on their priorities for improvements to the public rights of way network in Leicestershire and were also invited to participate in the online survey and map-based feedback exercise.
 - c) Online public survey - an online survey was held between 19 February to 16 March 2025 to collect responses covering a range of subjects in relation to the Leicestershire rights of way network. Questions included how often the network is used, what barriers stop people from using the network, and what would encourage people to use the public rights of way network more often. Over 1200 responses were received.
 - d) Online map-based feedback - a map-based online engagement tool (Social PinPoint) was used during February and March 2025 which allowed people to leave comments on specific areas of the public rights of way network via placing pins on a virtual map of Leicestershire. The participants were able to highlight their favourite routes, which they use most often, and what improvements they would like to see and where.
 - e) Hosting a special forum with focus group workshops - members of the LLAFF joined the Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Forum for a special meeting inviting all interested parties along to take part in discussion, learn about the development of the RoWIP and how they could help shape it. This gave an opportunity to get more detailed feedback in a face-to-face environment.
42. All these engagement activities were advertised through social media and via the County Council website and the Choose How You Move website. Posts received 711 clicks and 82 shares across the different platforms. Summary analysis of the pre-engagement survey outcomes showed:
 - a) There were 1245 survey returns:
 - i. 89% of which were Leicestershire residents;

- ii. 39% of respondents identified as male, 60% identified as female, and 1% used another term;
 - iii. 15% had a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity;
 - iv. 97% selected White as their ethnic group;
 - v. 98% had access to at least one car or van available for use by their household.
- b) How respondents said they use the Leicestershire's public rights of way network, and how often:
- i. 94% walk on the network, with 81% walking at least about once a week;
 - ii. 46% cycle on the network, with 14% cycling at least about once a week;
 - iii. 19% horse ride on the network, with 14% riding at least about once a week.
- c) How respondents said they use the network:
- i. 85% said they use the network for health, fitness and wellbeing purposes;
 - ii. 71% of respondents start journeys from home;
 - iii. 6% said they use the network to travel to work.
- d) Respondents most common barriers to using the public rights of way network in Leicestershire (respondents could select multiple options):
- i. 51% of respondents said maintenance/cleanliness issues prevented them from using the network;
 - ii. 29% physical access to route (i.e. cannot get to route due to an obstacle);
 - iii. 27% said that lack of signage was an issue.
- e) What respondents said would encourage their use of the public rights of way:
- i. 93% would like to see paths/cycleways/bridleways better maintained;
 - ii. 88% would like to see better quality paths/cycleways/bridleways;
 - iii. 84% said better signage would encourage them great deal;
 - iv. 79% would like to see more online information on where to walk/cycle/ride;
 - v. 70% would like to see more printed information on where to walk/cycle/ride on the network;
 - vi. 66% would like to see improved accessibility, including more routes with gates instead of stiles.
- f) Sources where respondents access public rights of way information, maps and/or walking routes (respondents could select multiple options):
- i. 80% use mapping apps (e.g. OS Maps, Strava, Google maps);
 - ii. 38% use the Council website;
 - iii. 6% use libraries (printed and digital material).
- g) Getting in touch to report an issue - 50% of respondents confirmed they know how to report an issue on the network.

- h) Responses also highlighted that:
 - i. 95% agreed that developers should be encouraged to provide more riding and walking opportunities;
 - ii. 88% would like to see a 'Greenways' network of high-quality rights of way routes introduced linking villages and towns;
 - iii. 69% agreed most heavily used public rights of way should be prioritised for maintenance.

Formal Consultation on the Draft RoWIP

- 43. Following consideration of the pre-consultation engagement responses, a draft RoWIP was developed. Public consultation on the draft RoWIP then took place over a 12-week period between 22 May and 14 August 2025.
- 44. During this period, the draft RoWIP was shared online, with an accompanying online survey. Participants were asked to consider whether they felt the Plan would help achieve the goals of ensuring the public rights of way network meets the present and future needs of users, provides opportunities for all users to access nature, open-air recreation and exercise, and does so in an efficient cost-effective and sustainable way.
- 45. Details regarding the consultation responses are appended to this report (Appendix C) and a summary is given below.
- 46. In summary, analysis of the survey, which had 254 returns, showed:
 - a) 81% of respondents were Leicestershire residents;
 - b) 10% were County, district or parish/town councillors;
 - c) The gender split of the respondents was 53% male, 45% female;
 - d) 97% of the respondents identified as White, 2% Other ethnic group, and 1% Asian or Asian British;
 - e) 28% of the respondents have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity;
 - f) The respondents' main modes of transport on the public rights of way network were walking at 76%, cycling at 8%, horse riding at 6% and 4% motor vehicles.
- 47. Summary feedback regarding the RoWIP and its Action Plan showed:
 - a) 68% of the respondents agreed with the RoWIP overall, with only 8% disagreeing.
 - b) When asked to what extent people agreed with actions in the Plan, the responses were positive:
 - i. Actions listed under 'Highway Authority': 60% agreed, 27% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 6% disagreed;
 - ii. Actions listed under 'Surveying Authority': 60% agreed, 28% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 4% disagreed;
 - iii. Actions listed under 'Planning and Development': 54% agreed, 28% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 9% disagreed;

- iv. Actions listed under 'Access Authority': 57% agreed, 28% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 8% disagreed.
48. The survey offered respondents the opportunity to provide any other comments on the draft RoWIP. Many responses were detailed and demonstrated the passion people have for local public rights of way; all were considered when developing the RoWIP.
49. The main summary themes of these responses were:
- I. Maintenance comments about specific paths or locations - these were passed to the Public Rights of Way Team to investigate and action accordingly.
 - II. Desire for more accessible paths by use of more gates over use of stiles and better connectivity between settlements - the Action Plan has been updated to include more detail on actions that improve accessibility, such as the plan to implement a Greenways programme to identify and improve priority routes between settlements, which includes reducing stiles and replacing with gates or gaps in physical barriers to better connect communities.
 - III. Desire to include more detail of specific scheme items included in the Action Plan - this has been done, for example, actions detail improvements utilising developer funding including: PD9.1 surfacing footpath number J17 in Syston, PD9.4 improving bridleway number U67 in Burgage, and PD9.10 surfacing improvements to footpaths numbered O89, O91 and bridleway number 092 in Ashby de la Zouch.
 - IV. That the consultation documents were overly complex - this will be taken into account in preparation of any future consultation and engagement material.
 - V. Respondents emphasised the importance of adequate resources and funding - the intention is that investment in the public rights of way will be proportionately increased using Local Transport Grant funding. Further detail of current funding plans are set out in the resources section of this report at paragraphs 19-25.
 - VI. Respondents urged better collaboration between councils, landowners, volunteers, and developers, and stressed the need for developers to maintain connectivity and avoid blocking existing routes. The Action Plan includes measures to:
 - i. Facilitate better collaboration with landowners and farmers;
 - ii. Ensure the Council maximises opportunities to influence land development toward positive outcomes for public rights of way;
 - iii. Increase the number of volunteers recruited.
 - VII. Respondents expressed concerns about the maintenance of public rights of way across Leicestershire - the RoWIP stresses the importance of

maintenance, by maximising available funding through use of the Council's risk-based approach to asset management, alongside actions included in the Action Plan aimed at maintaining and improving the quality of paths. These include actions HA2: undertaking 'Inspection of all sealed surface paths, i.e. asphalt.', HA9: to 'survey and inspect Bridge assets and identify replacement structures.', and HA10.1 to HA10.12 which will provide tarmac surfaced paths in many locations including Melton, Shepshed, Wigston, Blaby.

- VIII. Respondents expressed concerns about road safety, especially for vulnerable users and conflicts between other users and motorists where route connectivity means paths meet and interact with roads - the Action Plan includes a programme of small-scale schemes to improve access and suggestions received through the consultation and ongoing engagement will inform these.

50. The draft RoWIP and Action Plan were updated in consideration of the consultation outputs. Changes included:
- a) A summary of the consultation being added.
 - b) More information on the network of volunteers that help manage and maintain the public rights of way network and emphasising how people can get involved.
 - c) More detail on actions to improve accessibility, which include reducing stiles and replacing with gates or gaps in physical barriers to better connect communities.
 - d) More detail of specific scheme items being included in the Action Plan.

Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments

51. On 5 June 2025, the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report by the Director of Environment and Transport, on the development of the draft RoWIP 2025-2035. The report sought the Committee's views on the draft Plan and the actions identified as part of the public engagement process to manage and improve the public rights of way network.
52. Arising from the discussion, the following points were made:
- a) It was highlighted that, of those that said they used the public rights of way network, over 85% said this was for health and fitness purposes. Members suggested that the Authority should be encouraging local residents to make use of this resource.
 - The Action Plan includes several actions to promote, encourage and support people to access public rights of way, including action EE1 which will 'Promote the PRow [Public Rights of Way] network and its use via Choose How You Move', and EE8 which will 'Provide information and education provision to schools in Leicestershire on PRow and the Countryside Code'.

- b) It was noted that the Local Transport Fund had been allocated for one year and would deliver some of the maintenance work required on the network. Although a very small budget, this was considered a local priority and a shared asset. It was recognised that local people were keen on supporting this based on the noticeable improvement work already carried out so far.
- The Action Plan includes several actions to help maintain the public rights of way network by maximising funding available.
- c) Members supported the idea of community activities being held to support the delivery of improvement plans. It was suggested that there were communities within rural areas that would and could support these initiatives. However, it was also noted that this was a complex situation, the Council having legal duties and only a small budget which would not support the entire network.
- The RoWIP sets out how people in local communities can get involved in helping to improve public rights of way. The Action Plan includes several actions to promote and support volunteering to support rights of way, including HA18 which will 'Promote volunteering to recruit and appoint volunteers, supporting them in helping to manage and survey the network. Includes promoting and running Volunteer days'. And HA20 which is to 'Host and support the volunteers of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF), including holding three meetings annually'. And SA3 that will recruit and support new research volunteers to research existing historic Definitive Map Modification Order claims and associated evidence, and SA10 which will recruit, appoint and support volunteers helping to carry out historic research on orders.
- d) It was noted that, as with cutting grass verges, the Authority would always provide the core service to keep public rights of way accessible. However, there were communities that had the capacity to maintain these over and above what the Council was able to provide. The Director emphasised that there were practical constraints on what the Council could enable and encourage the public to do.
- e) A Member suggested that maintenance of the public rights of way network could be delivered by those sentenced to community service orders and that this might be a better use of their time. It was suggested that this option could be explored but that this would come with associated costs.
- This has since been undertaken and working with the service it was agreed this would not be operationally practical but opportunities for community work are being explored.
- f) Members acknowledged the importance of maintaining historic footpaths across the County but raised concerns about the increase in byways open to all traffic which were being abused and left impassable. It was suggested that this was due to the behaviours of some and although there were sensitive issues and strong feelings by different parties, the overall

impact on the Local Highway Authority responsible for maintaining the byways was becoming problematic.

- The Local Highway Authority through a risk-based approach to asset management and maintenance will assess these issues.
- g) Members shared their frustrations with signage being left behind upon the completion of road work carried out in the highway, noting that this often ended up in hedgerows and waterways. It was noted that the Council shared in this concern and the Director highlighted the difficulties faced by the Council in addressing this. It was noted that companies carrying out works on the highway now used multiple contractors, each carrying out specific works and who were responsible for putting up and taking down all signage. The Authority could seek to encourage the behaviour of companies to act on this more quickly and the Director asked that any signage left behind after completed works be reported to the Department.
- The Local Highway Authority takes opportunities through its New Roads and Street Works Act responsibilities to encourage good behaviour from relevant parties in relation to this matter.
- h) A Member raised a concern about overgrown vegetation on a footpath alongside Gartree prison.
- This has since been cut back as part of scheduled maintenance work.
53. The Committee noted that report and that its comments would be considered as part of the consultation process, and would be presented to the Cabinet.

Delivering the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and its Actions

54. The RoWIP covers a 10-year period, with its Action Plan being a living plan, responsive to change. The Action Plan will be monitored, reviewed and updated annually every financial year in response to the changing priorities, funding available and continued engagement with the partners, organisations, and volunteers the Council works with who help deliver the Plan. This annual review and update will include engagement with the LLAF, including presenting an annual progress report, to ensure that progress and any updates can be collectively and collaboratively discussed to inform any changes and future actions.
55. This approach will help ensure the actions in the Plan continue to deliver outcomes that support the successful management and improvement of the public rights of way network for all of the people that use it throughout the duration of RoWIP.

Conclusion

56. The updated RoWIP has been developed through engagement and collaboration with stakeholders, and in line with current Council policies, strategies and Government guidance to create a compliant, achievable, and affordable Plan.

57. The updated RoWIP and its delivery will help achieve the goals of maintaining and improving the public rights of way network that meets the present and future needs of users, providing opportunities for all users to access nature, open-air recreation and exercise, and does so in an efficient, cost effective and sustainable way.
58. This RoWIP, if approved, will enable the Council to continue building on the successes of the significant work that has been undertaken to date to manage and maintain the public rights of way network in Leicestershire, providing continued accessible and sustainable travel options for everyone over the next ten years from 2025 to 2035.
59. The updated RoWIP and Action Plan is appended to this report (Appendices A and B).

Equality Implications

60. The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping was assessed by the Environment and Transport Departmental Equalities Group, and Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group, and has been updated following the completion of the engagement and consultation activities set out in this report. The EIA indicates a neutral impact and is appended to this report (Appendix D).

Human Rights Implications

61. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Other Implications and Impact Assessments

62. The Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (HIA) has been updated following the completion of the engagement and consultation activities set out in this report. The HIA is appended to this report (Appendix E).
63. The RoWIP will facilitate the continued successful management and improvement of the public rights of way network through Leicestershire countryside, facilitating and encouraging access to nature and green spaces for all. Therefore, the RoWIP is considered to help deliver positive benefits to residents and visitors to Leicestershire, in support of the goals set out in the Environment Strategy and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Background Papers

Report to County Council on 20 September 2006 - 2006 Rights of Way Improvement Plan

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=1502&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet on 20 July 2021 - Cycling and Walking Strategy and Action Plan (CaWS)

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6445&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet on 22 November 2024 - Fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4) Core Document

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7511&Ver=4>

Report to County Council on 18 May 2022 - Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026)

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=6482&Ver=4>

Report to the County Council on 19 February 2025 - Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=7391&Ver=4>

Government guidance - Local authority rights of way improvement plans

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-authority-rights-of-way-improvement-plans>

Report to the Cabinet on 18 March 2025 - The Development Of An Updated Rights Of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) 2025-2035

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7874&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet on 18 March 2025 –Environment And Transport 2025/26 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme And Works Programme

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7874&Ver=4>

Report to Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 05 June 2025 - Draft Rights Of Way Improvement Plan 2025-2035

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1293&MId=7842&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet on 15 July 2025 - Additional Highways and Transport Funding Awards 2025/26

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7878&Ver=4>

Appendices

Appendix A - Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2025 -2035)

Appendix B - Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2025 -2035) – Action Plan

Appendix C - Draft RoWIP Consultation Outcome (May-August 2025)

Appendix D - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix E - Health Impact Assessment

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Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2025-2035



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Foreword



**Councillor
Charles Whitford**

Lead Member for Highways,
Transport and Waste

Across Leicestershire we are lucky to have a fantastic network of nearly 2,000 miles of public rights of way. These wonderful footpaths, bridleways and byways link our towns, villages and rural landscapes, giving us all access to both nature and green spaces.

Every year we see so many people enjoying these rights of way alongside our rural and urban pathways. Whether you are walking, wheeling and riding to get to work, taking your children to school, simply on a walk or even on a horse ride, these networks are a vital part of our county and communities.

Many of these rights of way have been around for hundreds of years and have naturally changed over time. Now, we have developed a new Rights of Way Improvement Plan based on government requirements.

This plan will help to deliver positive outcomes that we have laid out in both our Cycling and Walking Strategy and Local Transport Plan over the next ten years.

Encouraging active travel sits at the heart of these strategies and it is an important factor in improving physical and mental health, as well as our environment.

Rights of way are precious, and we know how many local people appreciate them. That is why residents are the key focus of this Improvement Plan, ensuring that it meets both current and future needs, as well as helping more people to access them.

In spring 2025, the County Council reached out to the public for their views through a survey, both online and in person at community events.

Many people had their say and alongside their helpful feedback we have used over 20,000 comments from rights of way users, gathered over the last decade, to help inform the Plan. In summer 2025 the draft Plan was put to consultation, and more people gave their views to shape this final Plan.

Communities change over time as new development comes forward, so we want to make sure that new housing and employment areas are designed with better long-term resilience built in. That means planning and delivering better provision for walkers, riders and wheelers, giving a realistic option for local journeys.

This Improvement Plan will help us to protect and improve rights of way today and in the future, to the benefit of Leicestershire's residents and communities.



1. Introduction

Leicestershire County Council is responsible for over 1,915 miles (3,084km) of public rights of way, including paths in both the countryside and urban areas. They are important for leisure, travelling to work or school, as well as peoples' health and wellbeing. The wonderful and diverse public rights of way are part of what makes Leicestershire a special place to live, work and thrive.

Although Leicestershire's rights of way network has developed over hundreds of years, it is important that it continues to meet the needs of the people that use it, both now and in the future. Enabling everyone to make the best use of the network, connecting our communities, and providing access to nature and the countryside is key to maintaining a healthy and prosperous rural county.

Every council that is responsible for public rights of way is required to have a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). This document is Leicestershire's RoWIP, which sets out how the network of rights of way will continue to be managed and improved over the next ten years between 2025 and 2035.

What is a Right of Way?

A right of way is a public highway that anyone, by law, has the right to use. There are four types:

- **Footpaths** for walking, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs
- **Bridleways** for walking, horse riding, cycling, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs
- **Restricted byways** for walking, horse riding, cycling, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs and horse-drawn carriages
- **Byways open to all traffic** for all modes including motorised vehicles



Footpath to
Foxton Locks
1 1/2



2. Policy Context

Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan sets out the Council's long-term vision and priorities.

Environment Strategies and Policies

Our Environment Strategy and related strategies and policies provide an overarching framework with the aim to protect and enhance the environment, which includes supporting green and blue infrastructure projects through partnerships and collaboration to support biodiversity. Good management and improvement of the rights of way network contributes toward these aims.

Increasing mode shift to active travel through the use of the rights of way network and reducing Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) motor vehicle use also helps us to achieve our environment goals.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan and its actions have been developed in the context of key policies and strategies, to ensure the plan is aligned with wider policy objectives that benefit our communities. These cover the areas of travel and transport, the environment and public health.

Leicestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Encouraging more active travel use is vital for improving public health and wellbeing. Improving the rights of way network for our communities helps to deliver the incredible positive value that regular physical exercise has on public health.

Local Transport Plan (LTP4)

The direction and policy framework for the RoWIP is set by our Local Transport Plan (LTP4). The LTP4 Core Document, adopted in November 2024, sets out the vision for transport for Leicestershire over 2025 - 2040. The vision for transport is:

'Delivering a safe, connected and integrated transport network which is resilient and well managed to support the ambitions and health of our growing communities, safeguards the environment whilst delivering economic prosperity.'

Cycling and Walking Strategy (CaWS)

The RoWIP is an important element of the Cycling and Walking Strategy, helping to support people make more sustainable travel choices.

Public rights of way are vital in enabling our communities to access green and blue spaces and in connecting our communities. Encouraging and enabling use of the rights of way network can help towards improving public health and wellbeing, reducing negative impacts on the environment and air quality, and supporting the rural economy.

Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy

The highway network plays a key role in keeping people and places connected, especially in a rural county. Public rights of way make up over 40% of the highways network. Keeping our highway network in good condition is important for our communities, with the public rights of way and the RoWIP being a key part of the overall highway asset management framework.

Multi Modal Area Investment Plans (MMAIPs)

MMAIPs are holistic long term investment plans and are one of the delivery mechanisms for the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) that help secure investment and prioritise improvements to the transport networks, including the public rights of way network, to help mitigate transport challenges.

Biodiversity Duty Plan

The Biodiversity Duty Plan sets out the current and future actions that the Council will need to undertake to meet the strengthened biodiversity duty. One of the main areas where the Council has an opportunity to conserve and enhance biodiversity and demonstrate that it is meeting the duty is in relation to the land that it manages, which includes our rights of way network.

Access for Nature Delivery Plan

The Access for Nature Delivery Plan, which supports the Council's Action for Nature Strategic Approach to Biodiversity, Habitat and the Local Environment, includes actions to work with partners to seek funding and support to implement enhancements on the rights of way network.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan and its actions have been developed in the context of key policies and strategies, to ensure the plan is aligned with wider policy objectives that benefit our communities. These cover the areas of travel and transport, the environment and public health.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)

LCWIPs set out cycling and walking networks and infrastructure priorities in an area for investment, including rights of way. Alongside the plans are linked educational and promotional programmes to help encourage people to travel actively.

Leicestershire Highway Design Guide

As the Local Highway Authority for the county, the Council's primary focus is on prioritising the safety and efficiency of a cohesive transport network that also helps deliver accessible places that offer benefits for the environment and our health and wellbeing. This includes providing practical guidance to land developers and their agents on Leicestershire's expectations when designing sustainable developments, ensuring they promote active travel, including the use of the rights of way.

Tree Management Strategy

The many trees across our rights of way network provide huge benefits to physical, mental and social health, providing calming and peaceful environments and promoting general well-being.

Trees provide huge environmental benefits improving air quality, reducing air pollution, giving off oxygen and absorbing carbon dioxide, which help to mitigate the effects of climate change. They also retain water and stabilise soils, thereby reducing flood risk.

Key Guidance and Legislation

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act)

The requirement for local highway authorities to have a Rights of Way Improvement Plan is set out in the CROW Act.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

This legislation sets out various duties relating to rights of way, including the duty to keep the definitive map and statement under continuous review. This is the legal record of public rights of way in Leicestershire.

There is a range of key guidance and legislation relating to local highway authorities in respect of preparing, publishing, assessing and reviewing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). These all play a role in informing the development and delivery of our RoWIP.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

This includes legislation relating to development and public rights of way.

Highways Act 1980

This sets out legislation pertaining to the highway.

Over 40% of the highways network is made up of public rights of way.

Rights of Way Improvement Plans - Statutory Guidance to local highway authorities in England - published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) November 2002.

This document sets out Government's guidance for local highway authorities (LHA's) on preparing, publishing, assessing and reviewing Rights of Way Improvement Plans.

LHA's are required to assess and review plans, and decide whether to amend them or not, at intervals of not less than 10 years.



3. What We Do

3.1 Looking After the Network

Within Leicestershire there are more than 1,915 miles (3,084km) of public paths. It is a significant resource to manage. Leicestershire County Council has a role to ensure the safe passage of people wanting to use the paths. Below are the main areas that collectively make up the ongoing programmes of work undertaken to look after the public rights of way network.

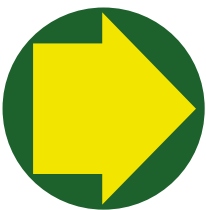
Signing Paths

The Council is required to maintain a direction post at the start of each path where it meets the carriageway. In Leicestershire, that is at nearly 7,000 locations in the county that meet this criterion

The signs, especially from urban areas, provide a gateway to the rural network, some include next village information and a distance. Within urban areas they also highlight routes that lead to schools or shops with local destination information on them. The largest number are on rural lanes showing where paths meets the carriageway. The traditional fingerposts point to the path as it joins the lane. Waymarker posts then guide users. On some promoted paths the signs include information on the promoted route, as well as local destinations where possible. The Leicestershire Round benefits from this and promotes itself at the junction points. One element of the local indicator for rights of way, which is used to monitor performance, includes measuring the number of posts that are provided.

The Council is also under a duty to sign paths along their route. In Leicestershire this utilises yellow waymarker posts at key sighting points along paths, to show the route ahead. Waymarker discs are also used at crossing points with colours that identify the status of the path. From the many compliments and messages

of thanks received, the council continues to have a very good reputation on the quality of its signage across the county. This includes compliments and thanks from those visiting the county.



There are now just over 15,000 locations for waymarker posts, and it is estimated that the Council has nearly 40,000 waymarkers in use at any one time located on other infrastructure across the network as well as posts. The waymarker discs are coloured to denote the status (type of right of way) of the route and the immediate direction of travel. The colour and status of the routes are:

Type of right of way	Waymarker Colour
Footpaths	
Bridleway	
Byways	
Restricted Byways	

The main focus of the waymarkers is to establish the legal routes of paths on the ground for the public and to ensure that the public keep to the paths.

Bridges and Structures

Just like other highways, the rights of way network has many bridges. These structures vary in size and condition, ranging from smaller stream crossings to the much larger structures with replacement costs of over £1million. The replacement of the bridges inventory is estimated to be over £12m.

There has been a rise in flooding incidents leading to bridges being washed away. In conjunction with Climate change policies, flood resilience has become a real issue for elements of the network. This has resulted in a changed design for bridges to allow a better chance of survival during peak flows. When older bridge structures reach the end of their life, they are replaced with bridges meeting the new design as part of the asset renewal process, providing improved resilience to impacts of climate change.

The larger and historic bridges are complex to manage. They vary in age from Medieval structures through to recent constructions. The older structures can be very expensive to maintain. Several bridges are listed and three are scheduled ancient monuments. Both planned and emergency repairs place strain on available funding due to the nature of the work. The Council is looking to add PROW bridges onto the wider highway bridge asset register to provide one register, facilitating more efficient management of bridges for routine maintenance and unplanned failure events.

Not all elements of some bridges are maintained by the authority. Bridges over rail lines are mainly maintained by Network Rail. This includes the longest bridge on the network, which is nearly 300 metres in length.

The failure of a bridge, or danger posed to users by the structure being weakened, will lead to closures. Public safety is paramount in such circumstances. The closure of a bridge has a knock-on effect to the local network and may mean local path links are severed, therefore reducing the number and duration of any bridge closure is important. In such circumstances we prioritise repairs as far as possible to reduce the impact on the network.



Boundary Crossings

Rights of way differ from most other highways in that they often have barriers across them. If a path crosses an area of land capable of holding livestock the occupier can apply for permission to place a fence across it. Nearly all the current fences have historical usage permission. The landowner is required to provide a suitable crossing, usually a stile or a gate. Nearly a fifth of all reports received from the public about rights of way are about these crossings.

The COVID-19 pandemic in the early 2020's saw an increase in the number of people using local paths. The number of reports regarding stiles saw a large increase with new users exploring paths.

Improving access to the wider community has included programmes to replace stiles. Under the previous RoWIP the Council had a policy of 'gap, gate, stile'. The best replacement to a barrier is a gap. A gate is easier to use than a stile. The authority has encouraged gaps to replace stiles in areas with no livestock. It also supported the replacement of more than 1,700 stiles with gates, which have proved popular with users and land managers.

Routes on the network near urban areas and those that link settlements on key green corridors will be subject to 'gap, gate, stile' support where funding is available, to improve access for more people on these priority paths.

Applications for new barriers for livestock will require a gate, ensuring that it meets the Council's design requirements in the online standard drawing¹.

Surfacing

Public paths vary in condition and usability, particularly when it comes to the surface of a route. Most paths in urban areas are either sealed by use of material such as asphalt, or stoned, whilst most rural paths have no sealed or stoned surfacing. Paths that cross arable fields can be ploughed and then restored to provide a level walk.

A path that can be ploughed and an urban surfaced path are different for users, yet both are public highways. The surface of the path is fundamentally different, reflecting the number of people using it. One is close to where many people live, while the other may not be. A sealed surface path does need to be inspected on a programmed basis to ensure proper maintenance.

Paths originating from urban areas, including rural shorter loops, going directly to another close town or village see more use. All reports from customers on any path have been, or are intended to be, investigated. To improve the ongoing maintenance of surfaced routes, a programmed inspection regime is intended to be introduced. This will ensure that regularly used surfaced routes are checked and maintenance works identified.

Key path networks near urban areas, as well as village to village cross field routes, will have a higher level of priority for improving and widening access, such as stile replacement, drainage and stoning.

A much smaller part of the path network are byways, which are carriageways that are mainly used by walkers and riders, but sometimes by vehicles. This RoWIP also includes other minor county roads which have no sealed surface. The legislation that requires local highway authorities to reclassify routes as byways included the provision that there was no liability to surface routes to be suitable for vehicles. Walkers and riders however, do need to be catered for.

¹ www.leicestershirehighwaydesignguide.uk/materials-and-construction/standard-drawings-and-specification/rights-way-standard-drawings

Inspection Regimes

The authority responds and investigates all defect reports no matter where they are on the network. The reports are usually allocated to inspectors who specialise in rights of way work. As well as responsive inspections, the authority also has a programme to inspect all sealed routes. These are mostly in urban areas but also include routes such as cycleways on rural routes. An annual inspection programme is already in place for most of the urban sealed routes. The other routes are to be scheduled for inclusion in the yearly inspections over the early years of the action plan.

Planning

The county is subject to a wide range of planning proposals. These vary in scale from large mineral sites, distribution centres, urban extensions and smaller housing sites. Paragraph 105 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that “Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance Public Rights of Way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks...”.

The Council is a statutory consultee in the planning process, providing advice in relation to public rights of way in relation to planning proposals and applications.

Where public rights of way are impacted by development the Council will expect that consideration is given not just to replacement or reinstatement, but enhancement of the provision, to reflect the increased potential of local usage.

This recognises the impact that development can have on a public right of way, which is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, including future transport options.

As an example, a new large housing site on the periphery of an existing settlement will need to offer local travel options for new residents, including walking, wheeling and cycling to schools, shops and wider links into the rural network to access the wider environment.

Developers are requested to check if a site is crossed by any paths or is alongside any others. An online map is available for free inspection to check where the paths are. This can be used by any party².

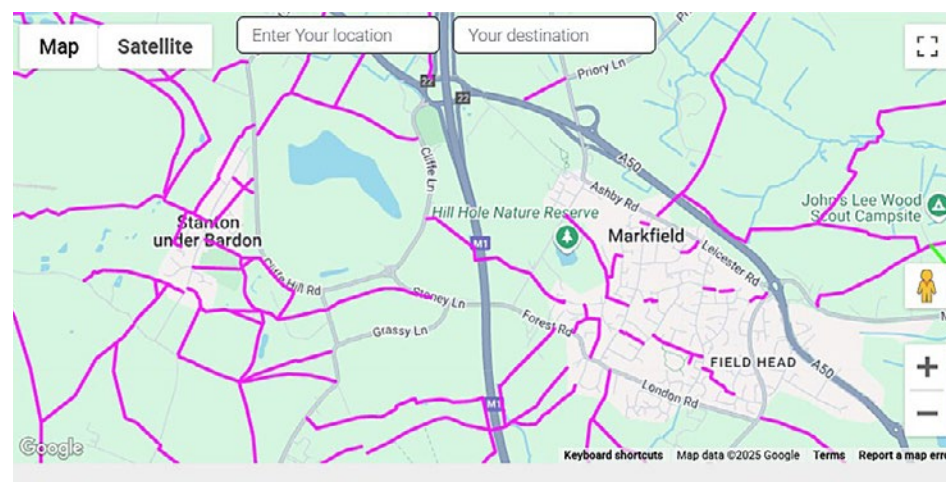


Figure 1 - Where to walk and ride map resource available to the public.

² www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/cycling-and-walking/where-to-walk-and-ride-in-leicestershire

Where sites are subject to public rights of way, or could be linked to others, the Council has developed a wider Leicestershire Highway Design Guide³ (LHDG), which includes advice relating to rights of way. The LHDG is an online and dynamic guide, that will continue to be updated when required, to ensure it provides the most up to date advice in relation to development and rights of way.

At sites crossed by public rights of way there are several matters that should be considered when designing the layout of a development.

Details of how all existing and proposed public rights of way will be treated should be provided within the planning application. This should include provision for their management during construction, boundary treatments, surfacing, width, structures, signage and landscaping. Future maintenance will also need to be formally agreed.

Consideration should be given as to who will use the public rights of way and why, to maximise non-motorised travel. Users of all abilities need to be considered at the outset for surfacing, path widths and gradients and in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010⁴.

Some large sites have significant development periods, including phasing. Building works cannot begin until existing routes have been subject to a temporary closure or a full-time diversion or extinguishment. The long-term temporary closure of paths during construction is often a frustration to the public. Conversely, site security and safety on sites, including for local people, has to be recognised. These two issues need to be balanced, but safety must be paramount.

Both temporary and longer-term orders to divert or close routes are subject to statutory provisions that will take time to process. Developers should build this into the early planning of a site. The obstruction or diversion of an existing right of way is not permitted without obtaining the consent of the County Council, as the local highway authority, even if planning permission has been granted.

In the past, there have been several new estates built without finalising an official diversion of a path that crosses the site. This results in plots being crossed by a highway, making the conveyancing process far more difficult for all parties involved and causing difficulties for occupiers who wish to sell a unit soon after buying. Resolving these issues before they occur is advantageous for all parties concerned.

Paths should be routed through public open spaces where appropriate, and ideally away from estate roads. If the use of footways or cycleways is unavoidable, the route should be as direct as possible, taking account of where people would like to go. Parallel paths and footways should be avoided.

The Council will resist the provision of routes that take the form of narrow passageways bounded by walls, hedges or close-boarded fencing.

Planting should consider the mature sizes of the species being used and be set back from the path to ensure clear passage and minimise maintenance. If a route is curved or has corners, the distances between planting and the path should be increased to maintain satisfactory visibility.

Developments may have a significant effect on the level of use of the surrounding network of public rights of way, particularly where they may become important routes to neighbouring areas, shops, schools, services and places of employment. Requests may be made for improvements to the local path network beyond the development boundary. In addition, access to the wider rural network may need to reflect the new numbers of residents that are likely to use them.

³ www.leicestershirehighwaydesignguide.uk/

⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

The National Planning Policy Framework has supported the principle, and the delivery of, 'Green Infrastructure'. In land use terms this is an overarching description of areas of green and blue (water) that can and do deliver a wide range of benefits. These corridors can extend from urban areas out into the countryside. The rights of way network often provides the key access for the public. Green Infrastructure also supports carbon reduction, flood alleviation and providing cool corridors in urban areas in summer.

The river corridor from Leicester to Cossington is a good example. A Green and blue corridor linking a number of green areas of parks and country parks with the river and lakes, as well as nature areas. The footpaths and cycleways give access to the corridor from surrounding communities and offer a linear route from the heart of Leicester city into the wider county rural landscape.

3.2 Recording the Network

As well as managing the path network, the Council also has a surveying function to record the network of paths. One of the key elements of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949⁵ is to require local highway authorities to record the location of all paths and then produce a legal record. The Definitive Map of public rights of way is maintained by the County Council. It is a legal record of all public highways in Leicestershire that are either footpaths, bridleways or byways.

The map is conclusive evidence of the existence of a path, its status, and its position on the ground. Only highways shown on the Definitive Map have such conclusive protection.

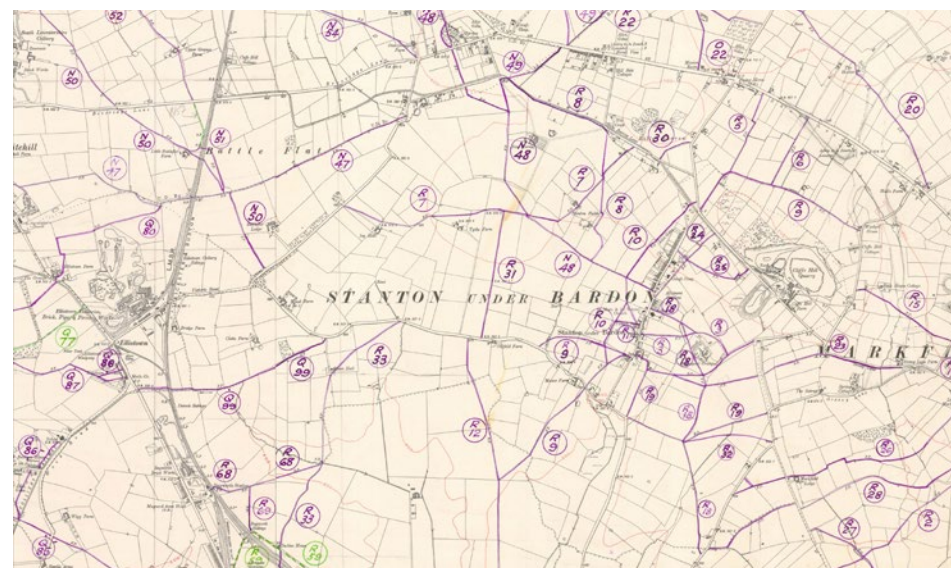


Figure 2 - Extract of 1957 Definitive Map.

⁵ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/12-13-14/97/enacted

A first survey was carried out and a map produced in 1952, based in part on surveys carried out by local parish councils. The Act required that the map be updated every 5 years. In 1957 a further map was published. Thereafter no further maps were produced, until the introduction of the Wildlife & Countryside Act in 1981⁶. This brought in a system of continuous review, so the map could be amended with each legal change and updated.

Each change to the map results in a legal process, known as a Definitive Map Modification Order⁷ (DMMO). For older legal orders this is an administrative task. To update the 1957 map to the new map more than 1,500 DMMO orders need to be 'made'. Once completed, the map will be subject to continuous review.

Although conclusive, the map can be changed. Anyone can apply to have a route added, provided they have enough evidence to prove a case. Claims to add routes to the map can be based on historical evidence that a highway came into being in the past or that a route has been used for many years without challenge. The evidence will be considered by the Council before deciding whether to make an order. Dealing with such orders is very resource intensive for the Council. As well as compiling witnesses' statements, historical evidence needs to be checked or collated. This enables a decision to be taken on whether to proceed or not. Even if the order is made, anyone may object and most orders have formal objections. At this point of the process the case is passed to the Planning Inspectorate for determination. In most cases this leads to a full public inquiry, although sometimes a Hearing is held.

In 2015 Government published the Deregulation Act⁸. One element related to simplifying the system for rights of way orders. It proposed to introduce a cut-off date for any new claims, closing the map for claims based on historical evidence. All historic highways not recorded by that date and not shown on a Definitive Map were to be extinguished, ending the 'once a highway, always a highway' perspective. This resulted in a large number of claims being made to the authority before the cut-off date. Over time the list of outstanding cases has risen from 40 to nearly 200.

To enact the elements relating to rights of way from the Act, further legislation needed to be drafted and time given to enact. Since 2015 only the cut-off date was enacted into law. Subsequently the Government repealed the provision, and the system is back to the position prior to 2015, albeit with a large number of claims.

The Council is required to maintain an online DMMO application claims register⁹ which lists all the claims made. This is published and updated when necessary. For conveyancing purposes, the Definitive map may be checked to see if land is crossed by a path. A full check also asks if there are any claims or proposals that may also have a bearing on the conveyance.

Government has indicated that some of the proposals linked to the Deregulation Act may be pursued to assist parties determining orders. Currently there is no firm timetable, and the changes will not be major. That leaves a large list of claims awaiting determination. Currently orders are required to be made or submitted to the Secretary of State for determination within 12 months. The new draft provisions have sought orders to be dealt with more quickly. Due to the sheer scale of claims and evidence submitted, because of the then assumed cut-off date, the threshold is extremely challenging with the resources available for the task.

⁶ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69

⁷ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/section/53

⁸ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/20/notes

⁹ www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/cycling-and-walking/definitive-map-modification-orders

The number of outstanding cases needs a pragmatic and efficient approach to move them forward, with an appropriate process in place. The approach to outstanding cases will be a priority in the action plan. It is recognised that any further legislative and guidance changes will require a further review, depending on the requirements set out.

The 1949 Act required a physical map to be published to a set format. With further legislative updates, local highway authorities are required to have a copy of the Definitive map for inspection and also supply a copy to each District authority in two tier authority structures. Parish Councils can also request copies for their area.

All mapping data that shows rights of way is derived from the Definitive Map. This includes the information supplied to the Ordnance Survey for inclusion on national mapping products¹⁰.

With the introduction of digital mapping systems and the ability to deliver mapping to people's homes and mobile devices, the Council has provided an online version of the map¹¹. Although not the official Definitive Map, it does provide an online resource of the information for people to access.

There are also other digital highway data sets that utilise the path mapping. Government has created a National Street Gazetteer (NSG) to list all streets and provide a framework for the management of the highways network. Leicestershire County Council has included the public rights of way within the NSG. There is still more work to be done to further integrate the data and meet future data requirements. FindMyStreet¹² is a Government initiative to make the NSG data available to the public online. This includes some other meta data, such as who is responsible to maintain the route.

Modern digital data not only allows for delivery over the web it can also contain meta data to assist other parties with access to it, including asset and report data. Larger projects, such as new minerals sites and other large infrastructure projects, often need large amounts of data to plan ahead. As such, the information is an important resource for a wide audience. Whilst there is a requirement for the Definitive Map to be kept up to date it also feeds and supplies other data resources.

The management of the Definitive Map will continue to meet legal requirements. The increasing use of the path data, as well as further meta data requirements in other systems, reflects a changing landscape. It is information that feeds into bigger data sets and needs to reflect this and be compatible.

¹⁰ <https://shop.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/map-ranges/os-paper-map-ranges/>

¹¹ www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/cycling-and-walking/where-to-walk-and-ride-in-leicestershire

¹² www.findmystreet.co.uk/

3.3 Open Access

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduced a new piece of legislation that sought to record all areas of mountain, moor, heath and down. In addition, this data was to also include all registered common land.

The legislation granted public access rights to this land. The County Council became the 'Access Authority' for Leicestershire to manage access to these sites. Within the county most sites are small, although there are over 100 of them and there are some larger sites. New powers allowed for byelaws and wardens, if necessary.

The principal sites are:

- Charnwood Lodge - 184 acres
- Loughborough Meadows - 165 acres
- Burbage Common - 75 acres
- Burrough Hill - 75 acres

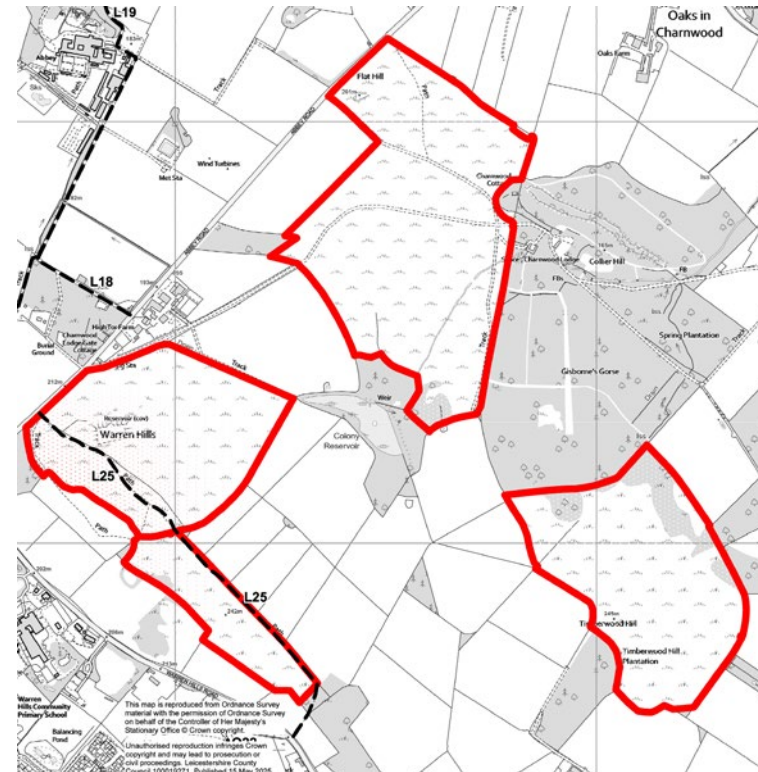


Figure 3 - Areas of open access at Charnwood Lodge.

The Access authority is asked to ensure that all sites can be accessed by the public and that appropriate signage is in place. The Council has been assisted in this work by the Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF). As well as carrying out repeat site inspections, the group has liaised with the site managers to ensure people can enjoy the sites.

There is a review required of the sites by 2030. This will be carried out by Natural England.

3.4 Encouraging Use

In 2021 the County Council adopted the Cycling & Walking Strategy (CaWS). The vision of the strategy is to inspire more people to walk, wheel and ride. Underpinning this was maintaining and enhancing walking, wheeling and cycling routes and providing information and training to the public. Promoting, encouraging and enabling the use of the rights of way network by walking, wheeling and riding is carried out under our Choose How You Move (CHYM) brand, in support of the CaWS objectives.



Choose How You Move (CHYM) is the brand for our programme of measures designed to encourage and enable people across Leicestershire to choose active and sustainable travel. The key aim of the CHYM programme is to take a life-cycle approach that begins with children and includes all residents regardless of age or background to help them to travel actively through walking, wheeling and riding.

Some of the great work being done as part of our CHYM programme in collaboration with neighbouring local authorities includes:

- Creating walking, wheeling and cycle route maps
- Promotion of guided walks and walking groups in local areas
- Cycle training for all users
- Promotion of cycle groups and clubs in local areas
- Personalised travel planning for communities and businesses
- Helping schools with their school travel plans to support staff, parents and children
- Active travel grants – helping businesses empower their employees to use active travel
- E-bike trials
- Incentivised activity monitoring with Better Points rewards.

In addition to the CHYM programme, there are lots of partner organisations and individual volunteers who dedicate their time to help promote and encourage use of the rights of way network, including the Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF).

3.5 Volunteers and Partnership Working

The Council works with a range of individuals, groups, councils, agencies and funding partners to deliver the network we see and use. This range of volunteers and voluntary groups include:

Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF)

Key facts:

- Independent advisory body to Leicestershire County Council
- Represents land managers, users, and stakeholders
- Meets every 4 months with interim sub-groups
- Active for approximately 20 years

The LLAF represents the interests of people concerned with public access in Leicestershire including both users and landowners. The forum also promotes the use of rights of way, country parks and open access for recreational use, as well as for commuting. Members of the group are volunteers.

The main role of the Forum is to advise all levels of local government, and relevant agencies on policy proposals and issues relating to access. The forum also carries out regular site visits to assess the state of public land across the county, and to advise the authority's responsible for access.

The Forum holds public meetings and will have a hands-on role in monitoring delivery of the RoWIP to see how the Actions in the plan are being delivered. The Action plan will be reviewed, including an annual update to the Forum.

Leicestershire Round Task Team

Key facts:

- Affiliated with Leicestershire Footpath Association (LFA)
- These volunteers help with tasks including vegetation clearance, sign maintenance, path surveys, and reporting obstructions using the Definitive Map
- Active for approximately 7 years

Public Rights of Way Maintenance Volunteers

Key facts:

- Covers the entire rights of way network
- These volunteers help with tasks including vegetation trimming, sign and waymark post repairs, path surveys, and removal of invasive weeds

Public Rights of Way Research Volunteers

Key facts:

- These volunteers help with tasks including site surveys, historical and legal research using libraries, record offices, and posting of notices on site.
- They also assist with evidence compilation and case documentation relating to unrecorded PROW claims.

The Trail Riders Fellowship

The Trail Riders fellowship has assisted with some surface work on several byways in the county through volunteers and funding.

Partnerships with Parishes

Under Section 43 of the Highways Act, Parish Councils have powers to carry out works on footpaths and bridleways. Parish Councils already carry out some vegetation clearance and limited works. The County Council runs a Parish Pilot scheme that supports parish, town councils and community organisations with carrying out small-scale improvements and path maintenance of local paths.

Local planning authorities

Local planning authorities engage with highway authorities in seeking appropriate funding from new development. Developers contribute the largest sums to improve access in and around developments, as part of their obligation to help mitigate the impact of the development. This includes Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) payments, to improve paths beyond the development itself.

Other local authorities have historically also assisted with joint bids to outside parties and some funding for access. Planning policies also highlight the importance of public access within the development framework.

Sustrans

The charity Sustrans, whose aim is to make it easier for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle, has been a major funding partner in the past and continues to work on schemes in the county, as well as managing some routes. The organisation has assisted with the creation of significant cycleways.

Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership

Currently the Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme is contributing towards access improvements in the area, which is backed by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The National Forest has been supportive of access projects, including funding elements. This has included improvements to a route from Leicester city to Bradgate Park. The Forest also developed the National Forest Way.

The Big Lottery

The Big Lottery, which is an organisation that gives millions of pounds from the UK's National Lottery to good causes has, over time, contributed towards over £1million of work on public rights of way, mainly though cycleway development.

Central Government

Government funding has been a major trigger in the past. Previously most funding came from what is now Defra - Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs. A precursor to this was the Countryside Commission, which funded works and staff for nearly 10 years. The Department for Transport (DfT) is now the main source of direct Government funding. This includes the multi modal funding and a range of interrelated schemes and proposals linked to wider access and non-vehicular transport.

The Aggregates Levy, which is a tax levied on the commercial exploitation of rock, sand and gravel in the UK, has provided funding over the years towards works on the public rights of way network.

Making a difference

The impact individual volunteers and voluntary groups have is invaluable, helping to support access and conservation, collaboration with local authorities and communities, as well as enhancing outdoor experiences for all users.



Interested in
volunteering?
Get Involved!

Email: footpaths@leics.gov.uk

Contact us for more information on how you
can join our network of volunteers helping
the public rights of way network.





4. Achievements

Over the past few decades the Council has successfully managed the public rights of way network as a whole, by ensuring it is well maintained and accessible for the public. The network we see today is different to that of 20 years ago. In particular, funding has been focused on things that make paths easier to use by the public. As an example, within the county you are likely to start on a path that is signed from the roadside, is waymarked on its route and has reasonable boundary crossing points.

Since the start of the first Rights of Way Improvement Plan much has been done to improve access to the network. In raw numbers, the figures below demonstrate the size of the network and the extent of the works. During that period, the authority has:

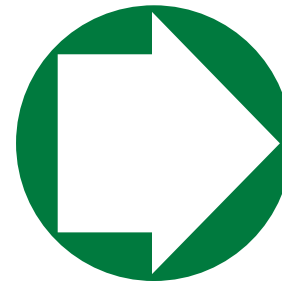


Installed more than
15,000
waymarker posts
to show the way ahead

Installed more than
1,700
hand or kissing gates
to replace boundary
structures

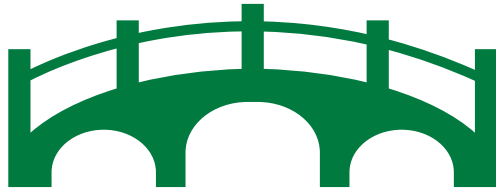


Placed
40,000
waymarkers



Managed nearly
7,000
sites where
finger posts
are required



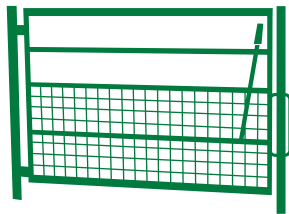


Installed or replaced
more than
250
larger bridges

Made more than
10,000
visits to clear
vegetation



Strimmed more than
1,000
miles of paths



Installed around
300
new bridle gates
with easy opening
latches for riders

Repainted
more than
25,000
posts

Installed more than
1,000
new smaller
sleeper bridges

Removed over
1,500
stiles



The main focus has been on the area improvement schemes that looked at path networks in specific areas. During the lifetime of the first RoWIP most of the network was surveyed to ensure the paths were open, in the right place and brought up to a usable standard.

The signing of the paths has been greatly appreciated by the public. Visible clear signing helps people who are unable to follow a map in a rural setting and has removed barriers to new users of routes. Making paths a little bit easier to use helps many. A hand gate is so much easier to use than a stile or field gate.

Wanting easier boundary crossings is one of the main report types we receive. This has had a fundamental impact on the route's visibility and accessibility for the public.

Going back 20 years to the start of the first RoWIP, the Council has dealt with over 37,000 reports from the public. All of these have been investigated over the lifetime of the plans. The main items dealt with include:

Just under
4,000
stile reports

Over
3,000
surface
vegetation reports

6,000
reports of
overgrowth
of verges,
hedges and trees,
both rural and urban

2,000
reports of
surface damage

Well over
2,000
reports regarding
fingerposts

2,200
gate reports

1,400
waymarking reports

1,100
bridge reports

This is the foundation for keeping the network open and available.

The Council has worked with Network Rail to replace all pedestrian and bridleway crossings on the Midland Main Line with safer crossing points. This included 6 new bridges put in place near crossings, amounting to a significant capital investment. The largest being a bridle bridge near Loughborough which is over 300 metres long. This work has also assisted in the scheme of electrification for the Midland Main Line.

The proposals for HS2, and the eastern leg through parts of Leicestershire, involved proposals for 42 path crossings. In the first Rights of Way Plan the Council recognised the damage done to the network by large linear infrastructure projects, such as the motorway network. The Council worked with HS2 Ltd to try to minimise local network disruption and provision of suitable crossings. With the abandonment of the eastern leg the work has ceased, but remains in place should it be revived.

Since 2006 the Council has carried out nearly 500 Definitive Map Modification Orders to keep the map up to date. The orders also deal with claims for historic routes and routes claimed through use by the public. The map has now been digitised and a version is now available online for public and business use. The data has been utilised for the delivery of the National Street Gazetteer and other data sets, including other online datasets such as www.findmystreet.co.uk. The Council has also dealt with over 600 applications to divert paths. Some of these orders are objected to and are required to be referred to the planning inspectorate for determination. The Council has engaged with that process on multiple occasions.

The service also assists the conveyancing industry to ensure potential purchasers understand if a holding is affected by a public path. Under the planning process, the Council has considered and commented on relevant applications. Some applications are very large and affect local networks. As examples, the extension to the Bardon Quarry involved the movements of several paths for a number of phases over several years. The proposals for the new East Midlands Gateway logistics park included multiple paths and changes to railway crossings, which are now all in place. Housing forms most applications, from larger urban extensions to individual units. Many enhancements to paths have been delivered by developers or, alternatively, the developer has funded enhancements delivered by the Council. The network has benefited from several million pounds worth of schemes since 2006, funded by the development process.

This year is the 25th anniversary of the National Forest. Access was always a key outcome and the main project affecting rights of way during that time was the establishment of the National Forest Way. The Council supported the establishment of the route. The primary long-distance path in the county is the Leicestershire Round. This 100 mile stroll around the county has seen a partnership with the Leicestershire Footpath Association. The group now operates with some active volunteers and the support of the County Council to look after the route.

The Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF)¹³ has actively worked with the Council during the period of the plans. The LLAF represents the interests of everyone concerned with public access in Leicestershire, including both users and landowners. The LLAF also promotes the use of rights of way, country parks and open access for recreational use, as well as for commuting. It also hosts public meetings dealing with public access in the county.

¹³ www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/cycling-and-walking/leicestershire-local-access-forum



5. Consultation and Engagement

5.1 Engagement Process

To help develop a Rights of Way Improvement Plan it is key to understand the priorities and needs of those using the public rights of way network.

In order to get an understanding of the current and likely future needs of people using, or wishing to use, the rights of way network, we undertook an engagement exercise to seek the views of the public and a wide range of statutory and non-statutory stakeholders.

This engagement process was undertaken in several ways to get a balanced view, helping everyone have their say. The range of engagement activities included:

Public Rights of Way Survey

An online survey (also available in paper format) was launched between 19th February and 17th March 2025. The survey was made available to the public via the Council's Have Your Say webpage, as well as being shared directly with stakeholders who were identified in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan Statutory Guidance, which was published by the Government agency DEFRA (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs).

Social PinPoint

Using the engagement tool Social PinPoint, an interactive map was created displaying layers of information relating to public rights of way in Leicestershire. Users were able to add a marker to a specific location/right of way and provide detail which related directly to that site such as highlighting good or bad routes, suggestions for improvements, maintenance or accessibility issues.

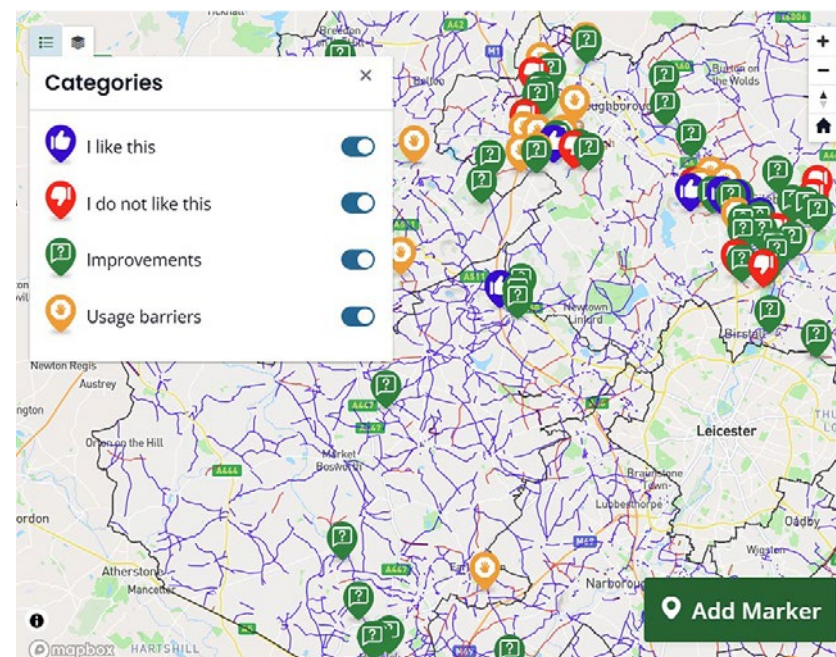


Figure 4 - Map available for people to use through the Social PinPoint engagement tool.

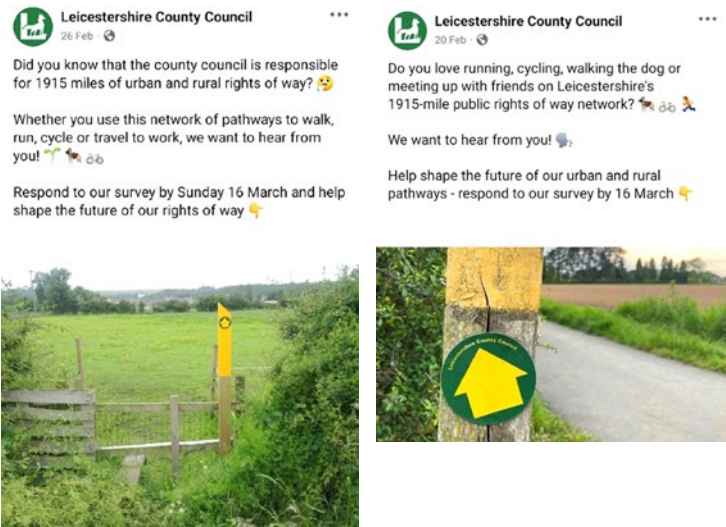
Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Forum

A public meeting of the cycling, walking and wheeling forum was held at County Hall in Glenfield on Monday 3rd March 2025, with over 40 attendees. This event was held through the established forum, which is a hybrid forum, meaning it can be attended either in person or online. A presentation was provided giving an overview of the rights of way in Leicestershire, along with the development of the rights of way improvement plan. A rights of way workshop was also included as part of the event providing attendees the opportunity to provide detailed feedback and discuss their thoughts on the network.



Social Media

We promoted the online survey, the cycling walking and wheeling forum and social pinpoint through the Council’s corporate social media channels. Our posts received 711 clicks and 82 shares across the different platforms.



Images above show examples of social media posts made as part of the engagement process.

Local Access Forum

The Local Access Forum represents the interests of everyone concerned with public access in Leicestershire, including both users and landowners. It was therefore vital to work closely with its members during the engagement period, to help shape this Plan. The Local Access Forum and its members are key engagement and delivery partners in ensuring the Plan is a continued success over the next 10 year.

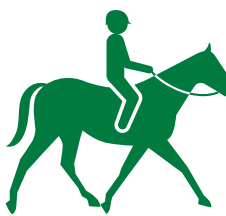
5.2 Engagement Survey Summary

89% were Leicestershire residents

 **39%** male
 **60%** female
1% use another term

 **94%** Walk on the network
with **81%** walking at least once a week

 **46%** Cycle on the network
with **14%** cycling at least once a week

 **19%** Horse ride on the network
with **14%** riding at least once a week

How respondents use rights of way



71%
of respondents
start journeys
from home



85%
said they use
the network for
health, fitness and
well being purposes



6%
said they use
the network to
travel to work



Common Barriers to using the Rights of Way Network in Leicestershire

51% of respondents said maintenance/cleanliness issues prevented them from using the network

29% physical access to route

27% lack of signage was an issue



What respondents said would encourage use

53% better quality of paths/cycleways/bridleways

62% would like to see paths/cycleways/bridleways better maintained

46% said better signage would encourage them great deal

38% would like to see improved accessibility including more routes with gates instead of stiles

42% would like to see more printed information on where to walk/cycle/ride on the network

Getting in touch

50%
of respondents know
how to report an issue
on the network

Moving forward

Respondents agreed most heavily used
rights of way should be prioritised for maintenance

78% of respondents agree that developers should be
encouraged to provide more riding and walking opportunities

Most would like to see 'greenways' network
introduced linking villages and towns

5.3 Engagement Analysis

Survey Overview

We received over 1,240 responses to our online survey which included responses from:

- Leicestershire residents
- Visitors to Leicestershire
- County, district or parish/town councillors
- Representative of a public sector organisations
- Representative of a voluntary sector organisation, charity or community groups
- Representative of a business or private sector organisations

How People Access and Travel on the Rights of Way Network in Leicestershire

Walking remains the highest form of activity on the network, with 35% of respondents said they walked on the public rights of way network several times a week. 60% of journeys were between 2 and 4 miles.

12% of respondents said that they had used the network for horse riding several times a week, with many travelling between 5-10 miles per journey.

8% of respondents noted that they cycled several times a week on the network, with 29% saying that they travelled between 5-10 miles.

Most people began their journey and accessed the rights of way network from home, with 71% saying they walked, cycled or rode from home. 5% of respondents used their cars to access a starting point and only 1% of respondents used public transport to access the network. 3% specified “other”, which included equestrians beginning their journeys from stables or transporting their horse to access byways. Less than 1% of respondents said they travelled along byways using motor vehicles.

What is the Network Being Used For?

The rights of way network plays an important role in health, wellbeing and social inclusion with 85% of respondents saying they accessed the rights of way for leisure, health and fitness. There is also a high percentage of users accessing the network to walk with groups or friends and to exercise their pets/ animals. It is also interesting to note that rights of way provides access to work and education, provides access to local amenities such as shops, cafes, pubs and also offers connections to other modes of passenger transport, such as bus and rail. The survey also showed that respondents accessed the network for hobbies such as birdwatching and general access to nature. A very low percentage said that they used the network to ride motorcycles or drive vehicles.

What is Preventing People from Using the Network?

As well as knowing what works well and why people use the network the way that they do, we also wanted to understand what might prevent the public from using the public rights of way network in Leicestershire. The survey showed that:

- 51% of respondents highlighted that maintenance prevented them from using the network, as well as 29% noting that physical access to routes were an issue for them. This includes things such as stiles making routes inaccessible for users with disabilities and mobility issues, gates restricting horse riders along routes, as well as issues with flooding and overgrown vegetation restricting access to paths.
- More accessible links to bridleways was also a common theme, as respondents noted that equestrians had to use the main road network to reach off-road bridleway, which can be some distance away.
- When asked what would encourage respondents of the survey to use public rights of way more often:
- Maintenance was a clear theme for all users, with 62% agreeing that better maintained paths, cycleways and bridleways would encourage more frequent use.
- When asked if more accessible routes, with gates instead of stiles, would encourage more use of the network 38% responded that it would a great deal, an additional 28% saying it would somewhat help.

We also found that 84% of people responding to the survey would like to see:

- Clearer signage when out using the network
- More printed and digital route information being more readily accessible, 70% and 79% respectively.
- To some extent respondents also acknowledged that improved personal safety measures would encourage more usage
- More facilities such as cafes, toilets, seating and picnic areas on routes.
- 36% said they would like to see better parking facilities near routes including free or reduced parking charges.

Incentives

When asked “did you know you can earn rewards when walking or cycling on the rights of way network by using the 'BetterPoints' app?” 93% said no.

Interestingly, 51% said that receiving incentives would not encourage them to use the network more often, with only 10% responding that it would a great deal.

Information Provision

We found that 80% of respondents access public rights of way information, such as maps and/or walking routes, through digital websites/Apps, for example OS Maps, Strava and google. Less people access information from the County Council's website.

A high percentage of respondents said they felt confident when using either online maps or printed maps to follow a path across fields, but more information should be available to provide help and support to those who need it. People would like to see an improvement in the wayfinding across the network to help them identify routes, with 46% agreeing that this would encourage them a great deal. When asked if more printed information on where to walk/cycle/ride would encourage more use on the rights of way network 41% responded that it would to some extent.

Reporting a Problem

Half of respondents know how to report a problem on the public rights of way network, with 21% of those not having done so before.

Overall, the respondents that had reported a problem to Leicestershire County Council found the service satisfactory. When reporting an issue on the public rights of way network 12% rated the service ok, with acknowledgement that a high number of reported issues were resolved following a report. However, some respondents highlighted that they had not received any feedback, with response times being too long and they would have liked to be informed of progress after reporting a problem.

Priorities

We want to understand what the public and stakeholder's priorities are, to help shape the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan and action plan. From the results of the survey, we can see:

- 46% of respondents tend to agree that the most heavily used public rights of way routes should be prioritised for maintenance
- 43% agreed that this should include promoted routes, such as the Leicestershire Round.
- A high proportion noted that they felt vehicles should be restricted from using unsurfaced rural lanes during winter months, as this is when most damage occurs.
- Responses to whether future improvements should focus on routes nearer to where most people live was neutral, however 29% did tend to agree.
- Most respondents believed that developers should be encouraged to provide more walking and riding opportunities.
- Respondents would like to see a 'greenways' network of high-quality rights of way routes that link towns and villages developed.

Social PinPoint

This online mapping tool allowed users to populate and pin information specific to footpaths, bridleways and byways. There were four categories to choose from including I like this, I don't like this, improvements and usage barriers. We received 125 pins, with analysis showing:

- 65% of respondents noting maintenance as an issue
- 14% highlighted physical barriers/accessibility being a problem on some routes.
- Other areas that were noted included safety and network connectivity.

This data shows very similar themes to the survey results, where maintenance and accessibility appears to be a key priority.

5.4 Consultation Process

Undertaking the initial engagement process was invaluable in helping shape the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan and its actions. Once the draft plan had been developed it was published as part of a twelve week consultation between 22 May to 14 August 2025. This provided the opportunity for residents, visitors, partners and stakeholders, including the Parish and District/ Borough Councils and statutory consultees, to review the draft plan and actions set out for the next 10 years.

Survey on the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan

An online survey (also available in paper format) was launched between 22 May to 14 August 2025. The survey was made available to the public via the Councils Have Your Say webpage, as well as being shared directly with stakeholders who were identified in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan Statutory Guidance. There were 254 survey responses.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Roadshows

Seven roadshows were held across the county at local libraries where all members of the public were invited to ask questions relating to the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan, speak to Public Rights of Way specialists and complete paper copies of the survey.

Social Media

The council promoted the online survey and roadshows through social media channels with posts receiving 1208 clicks and 127 shares across all platforms.

5.5 Consultation Survey Summary



53%
male

2% use another term



45%
female



76%
Walking



8%
Cycling



6%
Horse riding



4%
Motor Vehicles

How respondents use rights of way

81% were
Leicestershire
residents

10% were County, district or
parish/town councillors

68% of respondents agreed
with the Rights of Way
Improvement Plan

Action Plan

- 60% of the respondents agreed with the actions identified in 'Highway Authority' (27% were neutral and 6% disagreed).
- 60% of the respondents agreed with the actions identified in 'Surveying Authority' (28% were neutral and 4% disagreed).
- 54% agreed with the actions identified in 'Planning and Development' (28% were neutral and 9% disagreed).
- 7% agreed with the actions identified in the 'Access Authority' (28% were neutral and 8% disagreed).

5.6 Consultation Analysis

Survey Overview

We received over 254 responses to our online survey and responses showed:

- 81% of respondents were Leicestershire residents
- 10% were County, district or parish/town councillors
- The gender split of the respondents was 53% male, 45% female, 2% use another term
- 97% of the respondents identified as White, 2% Other ethnic group, and 1% Asian or Asian British
- The age range of those who stated their age was between 28 and 94 years of age with the mean age being 61 years old.
- 28% of the respondents have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity
- The respondents' main modes of transport on the public rights of way network were: walking at 76%, cycling at 8%, horse riding at 6% and 4% motor vehicles.
- 19% of respondents also responded to the first survey.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan as a whole

Overall, 68% of respondents agreed with the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, 18% strongly agreed and 50% of respondents tend to agree, with 20% who were neutral and 8% disagreeing.

Information in the ROWIP

- 70% of respondents agreed that the information in the 'Policy Content' section, makes it clear how the draft plan aligns with key policies and strategies.
- 77% of respondents agreed that the 'What we do' section, is clear on what Leicestershire County Council's responsibilities are when it comes to managing the Rights of Way network.
- 47% agree that the achievements noted within the plan reflect what they see when using the network, with 30% neutral and 21% disagreeing.

Priorities

- 52% of respondents agreed that the priorities identified from the initial engagement reflect their views and needs as users, and 26% were neutral. The priorities identified are shown in section 5.3 Engagement Analysis.

The RoWIP Action Plan

In terms of the actions identified in various areas:

- 60% of the respondents agreed with the actions identified in ‘Highway Authority’ (27% were neutral and 6% disagreed).
- 60% of the respondents agreed with the actions identified in ‘Surveying Authority’ (28% were neutral and 4% disagreed).
- 54% agreed with the actions identified in ‘Planning and Development’ (28% were neutral and 9% disagreed).
- 57% agreed with the actions identified in the ‘Access Authority’ (28% were neutral and 8% disagreed).

Themes of Other Responses

The survey offered respondents the opportunity to provide any other comments on the draft RoWIP. The consultation reveals concerns about the maintenance and accessibility of public rights of way across Leicestershire. Many respondents reported issues with overgrown vegetation, poor surface conditions, and missing signage, which make paths difficult or unsafe to use. There was a strong call for improved access for wheelchair users, horse riders, cyclists, and dog walkers, including replacing stiles with gates and ensuring paths are wide and well-drained.

Feedback also highlighted conflicts between different user groups, such as tensions between horse riders and pedestrians, or between motorcyclists and other non-motorised users, particularly where shared use leads to erosion or safety risks. There was also concern about road safety, especially for vulnerable users, and a desire for more connected routes between villages to support active travel.

Respondents urged better collaboration between councils, landowners, volunteers, and developers, and stressed the need for developers to maintain connectivity and avoid blocking existing routes. Many people felt the consultation documents were overly complex and lack clear, measurable actions, suggesting the need for simpler summaries and improved digital mapping tools.

Finally, respondents emphasized the importance of adequate resources and funding, improved reporting systems, and a more ambitious transport-focused vision for the PROW network that prioritizes everyday use over leisure.

Many responses were detailed and demonstrated the passion people have for local rights of way; all were considered when developing the RoWIP and its Actions, and will inform its delivery.

Undertaking the initial engagement process was invaluable in helping shape the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan and its actions. Once the draft plan had been developed it was published as part of a twelve week formal consultation, to ensure everyone had the chance to review it and provide feedback.

A summary of the 12 week Consultation will be included here in the final version of the Plan.

5.7 It Doesn't End There

Engagement will continue to support the delivery of the actions, also helping steer the updating of the actions over the next 10 year period, to make sure that the plan remains appropriate and deliverable for all users.

We will continue to measure user satisfaction through our existing processes and ensure there are opportunities for engagement, enabling open and continuous conversations.

To read more about how we will continuously monitor our progress against the action plan see the Monitoring and Evaluation section below.



6. Assessment of the Network

6.1 The Network and its Users

The approximate 1,915 miles (3,084km) of public paths within Leicestershire is a significant resource to manage. Placed end to end this is the equivalent of looking after a long-distance path between Leicester and Moscow.

The network is made up of different types of routes shown in table 1 below:

Route Type	Waymarker Colour	User Type				Percentage of Network of each Route Type
		Walkers	Cyclists	Riders	Motors	
Footpaths	Yellow	1517	0	0	0	80%
Bridleways	Blue	349	349	349	0	18%
Byways	Red	35	35	35	35	2%
Restricted Byways	Brown	9	9	9	9	<1%
Sub Total (Miles)		1910	393	393	44	100%
Total Percentage of the Network available to each User Type		100%	20%	20%	2%	

Table 1 - The number of miles and percentage of each route type available to each user type.

The extent of paths available for use is different for each of the user types. Walkers have access to the full network. Horse riders are entitled to use 20%, while motor vehicles are restricted to less than 2%.

A network plan of the above types looks very different. This results in a more fragmented network for horse riders. As shown in figure 5, the left plan shows the rights of way network for walkers and the right plan shows the network for riders. The eastern half of the county has more bridleways than the western.



Figure 5 - Paths available to walkers and riders.

As well as the path network, users utilise the carriageway network. This includes walkers using shorter sections to link footpaths and horse riders using extensive sections to link bridleways.

Whilst the density does vary, the path network broadly covers the county. The network near to where most people live is denser, since paths tend to go from one settlement to another. However, the path network also crosses rural areas and is often considered to be a network that crosses farmland. In fact, 50% of the path network is within urban areas or within a quarter of a mile (402m) of them.



Figure 6 - Areas of the rights of way network within a quarter of a mile (402m) of where people live in towns and villages.

Analysis demonstrates that 75% of households are within one fifth of a mile (322m) of a path. This shows that the path network is on the doorstep of the wider population.

As part of the early consultation of this document the Council commissioned an online survey, including asking respondents what prevented them from using the network and the barriers they faced. In addition, analysis has been carried out on nearly 20,000 reports on issues on paths from the public over the past 10 years.

Both the survey carried out for the first RoWIP and the survey for this plan highlight that most journeys start from a doorstep, where people live, attend school, work or shop. This extends to recreational walking, be it walking the dog or simply exploring the local area.

An analysis of the public reports dealing with issues on the rights of way network underlines this, with some trends to note. Looking at reports and the distance from the reporter’s general postcode there is a clear link.

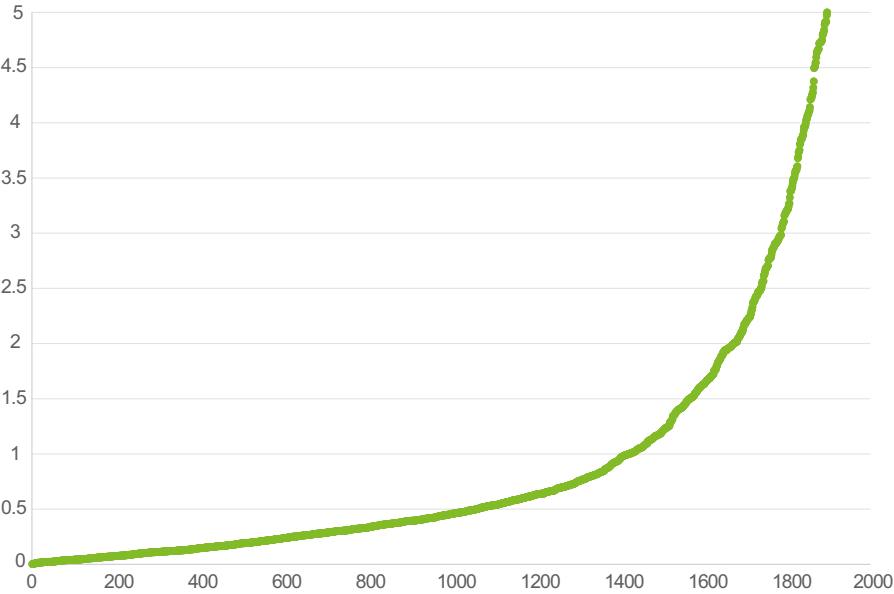


Figure 7 - Distance of Reports from the reporter’s home. 51% are within half a mile.

This underlines that most journeys using paths start at the front door. In addition, these reports are likely to be on routes where repeat visits occur. A study of reports received shows that 510% are within 0.5 miles of where the reporter lives. 70% are within 1 mile of where the reporter lives.

Nearly all paths have reports associated with them demonstrating that the wider network is used throughout. This use is on a lesser extent.

Looking at the figures shown in map, figure 8 below, within built up areas and a quarter of a mile (402m) beyond, contains 50% of the path network. These areas contain 65% of all reports. The remaining 50% of the network contains 35% of reports. Reports are more frequent in the urban and near urban routes, near to where people live. This is no surprise and challenges the view perception that rights of way are just rural routes.

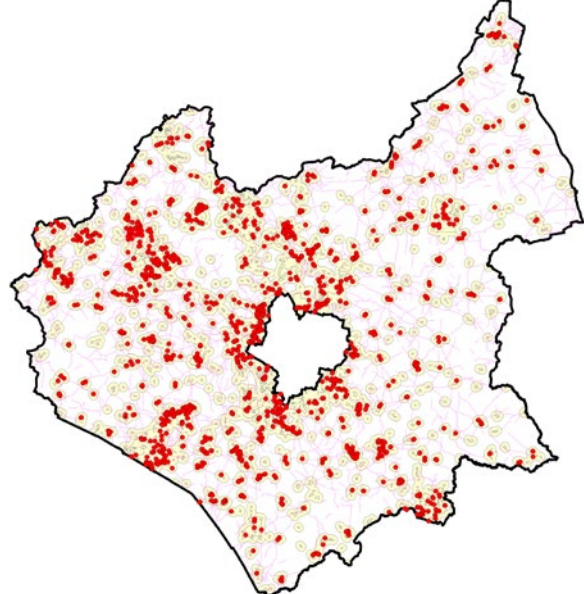


Figure 8 - Within a quarter of a mile of where people live are 65% of all reports and 50% of the network.

6.2 Our Role as a Highway Authority

The primary role of Leicestershire County Council as a highway authority is to ensure the safe passage of people wanting to use the paths. Whilst there are a series of duties and powers, the fundamental responsibility is ensuring anyone can pass and repass along any route¹⁴.

The Council receives reports from the public on a daily basis. Over the past 10 years nearly 20,000 reports have been received. This equates to nearly 40 reports per week. Each of these reports includes details on the nature of the problem found and what was done to rectify the issue. As such, it is a very good measure of what causes concerns to users and occupiers. The reports form a wide range of categories that represent the issues that the public must face when using paths. Some issues are rarely reported, others frequently reported. The number and category of reports is show below in figure 9.

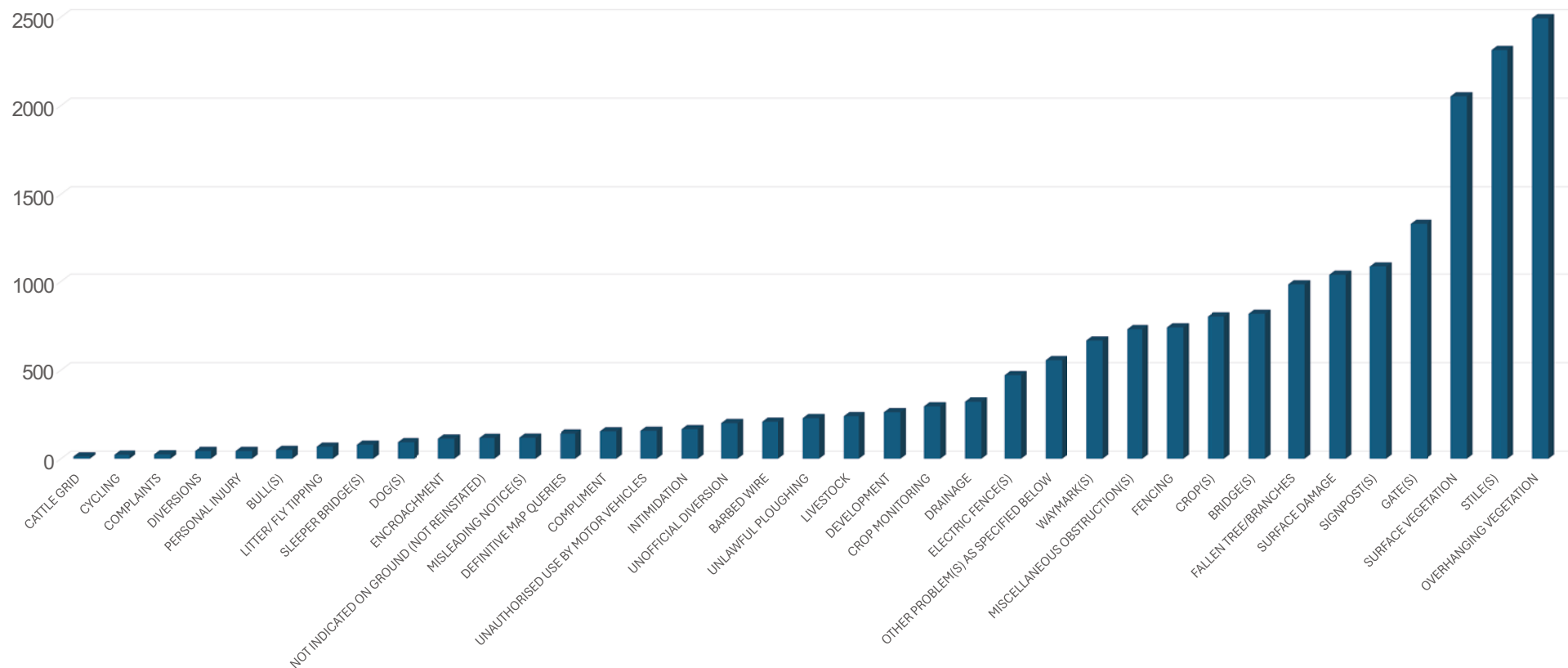


Figure 9 - Number of reports by category over the last 10 years.

¹⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/section/41

The primary categories of reports over the 10-year period are shown below in table 2.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Crop(s)	84	89	112	72	105	50	89	75	79	45	800
Bridge(s)	37	44	70	60	64	97	140	91	78	129	810
Fallen tree/ branches	75	59	122	106	99	102	99	102	66	103	933
Surface damage	111	97	92	86	77	109	135	87	111	117	1022
Signpost(s)	140	93	71	119	109	139	128	113	79	82	1073
Gate(s)	136	131	124	144	128	159	162	129	92	98	1303
Surface vegetation	176	208	272	211	228	101	187	134	269	260	2046
Stile(s)	207	170	159	190	201	268	392	305	205	192	2289
Overhanging vegetation	288	240	254	224	303	176	244	172	294	277	2472

Table 2 - Primary categories of reports by year over a 10-year period.

Vegetation and crops make up four of the top ten categories. Nature dictates that these are items that recur on a yearly basis. They also highlight that the parties responsible to keep the route clear aren't always the highway authority. Natural vegetation from the surface of the highway is the responsibility of the highway authority. Hedges alongside highways are invariably the responsibility of the occupier, as are crops.

It remains the duty of the highway authority to ensure that the third parties carry out their responsibilities. Stiles and gates are the responsibility of the occupier, whilst signage and bridges are the responsibility of the County Council.

The frequency and pattern by month of reports are shown in figure 10, which shows the use of the network and when peak increases in reports coincide with problems, such as vegetation growing season. This covers a period of 5 years. The pattern is consistent each year, as is the resource requirement.

The only significant variation is during the COVID-19 pandemic year. Assuming a ratio of reports to numbers using the network, there was about a 20% increase for periods that coincided with COVID-19 travel lockdowns. Overall, the pattern is very similar each year. As such, it is expected that this will repeat over the lifetime of this document.

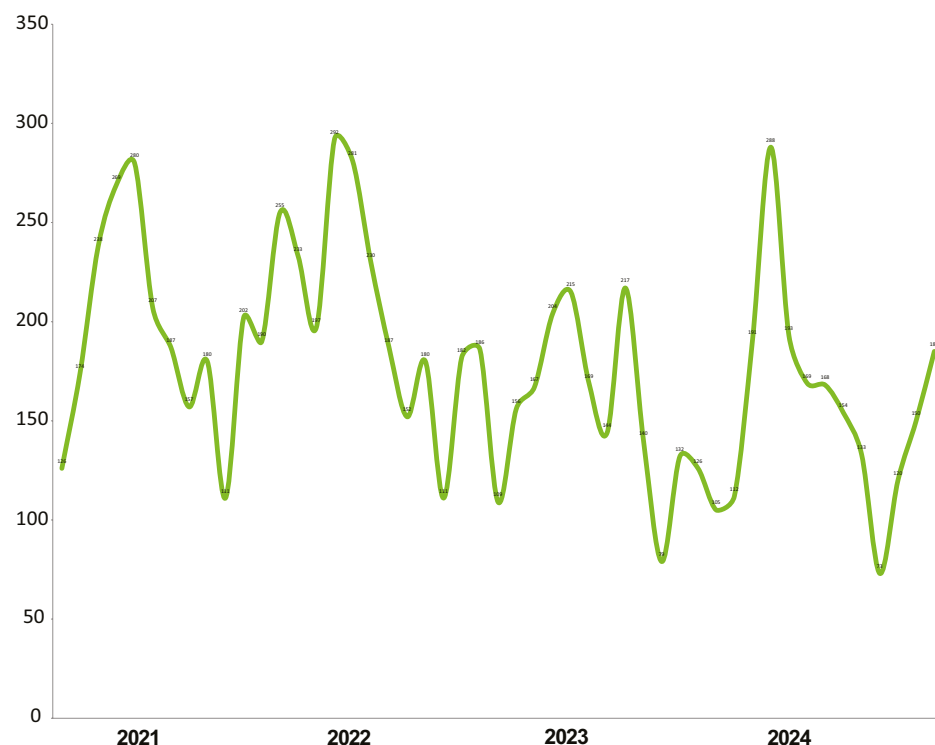


Figure 10 - Number of reports by month over last 5 years.

The number of reports and their frequency over the calendar year is largely predictable, as is the changing resource level to deal with associated responses. There is, of course, an annual average figure of reports and the state of the network.

To assess how path networks were being managed, Government established a Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 178). In general, it measured the ease of use of the path network for the public. It also set a comparable standard measure between authorities to monitor performance. The first RoWIP included this as a yearly measure of performance.

Subsequently Government dropped this indicator from the national figures. However, the Council carried on recording results as a local indicator until 2018.

The measure was based on a series of checks for each path surveyed, with any failure in any category failing the whole path:

- If the path has a fingerpost at the start
- Is the path waymarked
- If it crosses any bridges, are they adequate
- Are boundary crossing adequate, such as stiles
- Is the route obstructed
- Is the path affected by ploughing or crops
- Is the surface reasonable

In 2024, as part of the development of this RoWIP, the Council carried out a survey, with a further repeat survey carried out in 2025 to give a comparable figure. The result in 2025 was a small 4% drop from 2017 and a 2% rise from 2024. Some fall was expected, as investment set out in the last RoWIP had come to an end several years ago. There is a strong correlation between investment on certain items on the network and the survey results. Other issues are linked to items such as vegetation growing seasons, which vary considerably.

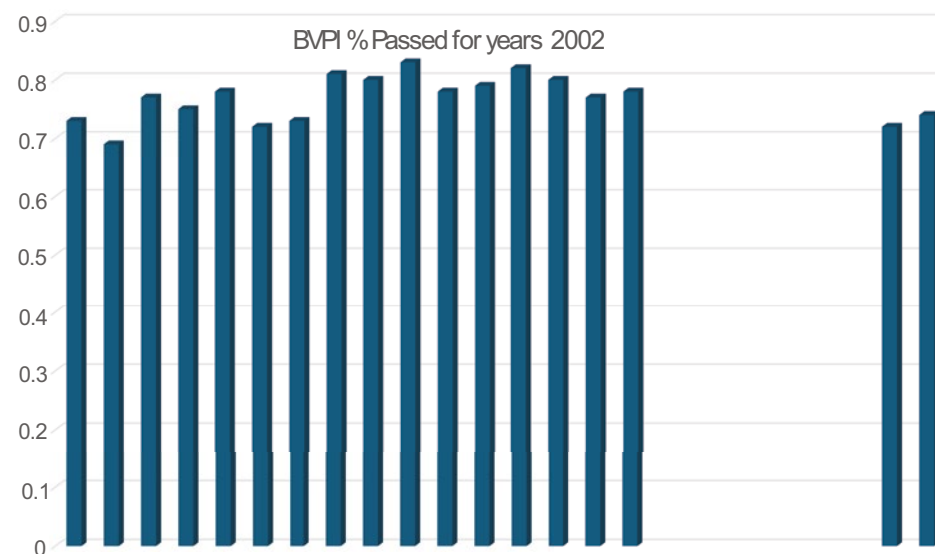


Figure 11 - Local indicator performance since 2002. Not collated 2018 - 2023.

Some failures are linked to private parties managing land that is crossed by a path, which is outside initial control of the Council (albeit effective enforcement can help to resolve issues). This includes crops, vegetations and boundary crossing points, such as stiles or gates. Wetter warm years have had a significant bearing on the number and severity of growth-related issues.

As well as consistent report numbers over time, the nature of those reports has stayed comparable too. Figure 11, shows numbers of the main report subject categories over time. The numbers of reports for each category are consistent, with the exception of the COVID-19 pandemic period. This included the restricted travel lock down periods that led to more people at home beginning to explore their local area when they had limited options.

As such, it is possible to plan ahead on likely volumes and subcategory volumes. Figure 12 shows the main report type numbers over time:

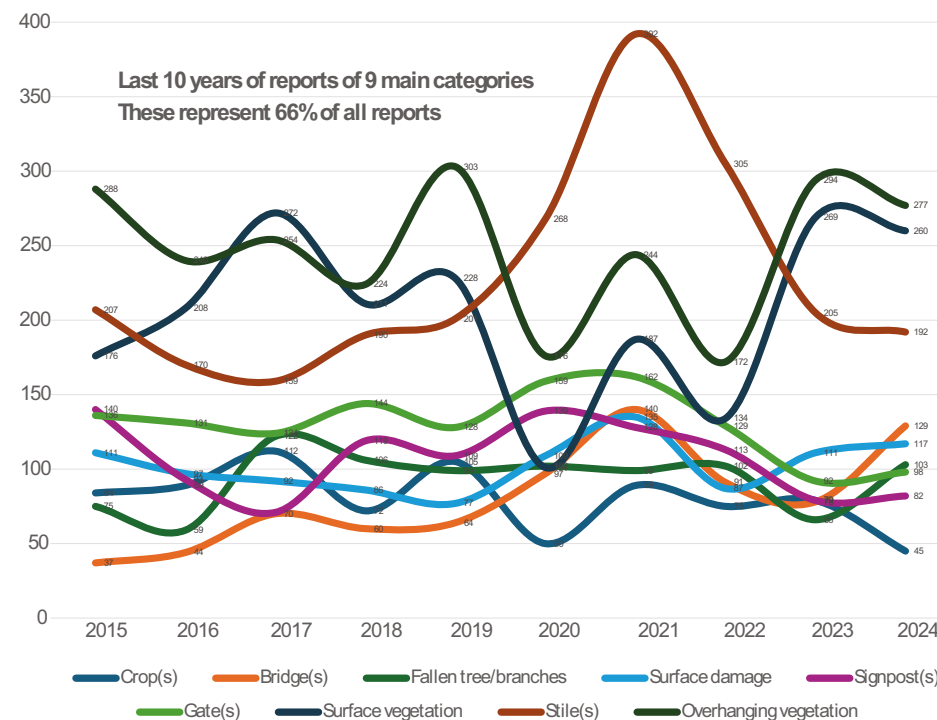


Figure 12 - Number of reports covering nine main categories over last 10 years.

Periods of COVID-19 related travel lockdown highlighted the increase in use of the local path network during later lockdown periods and the type of reports from potential new users. The standout figure was the significant increase in boundary crossing reports. The barriers and crossing points appeared to have a disproportionate effect on new or less experienced users during that period, suggesting that easier livestock barriers, such as gates, are important to attract new users.

In broad terms it is possible to predict the volume of report numbers and types of reports for the next few years, unless something significant changes. In addition, the wider concentration of reports near to where people live provides further evidence to target certain report types and locations, to maximise usage.

The Council has a cyclical programme of vegetation cuts on rights of way, with two cuts carried out each year. The first is at the end of May or early June once the first growth spurt has started. A second cut then happens in late summer. The cuts are focused on routes that are subject to multiple reports and offer a clear benefit to users. They are also tied into the wider highway cyclical programme. In total more than 40 miles of routes are in the programme.

This proactive intervention needs to be financed and balanced against available funding and calls on the rights of way budget. The balance of proactive and reactive funding is always subject to review. Proactive funding can be targeted on parts of the network that are most used. Reactive work ensures that no part of the network is forgotten and that requests from the public can be dealt with.

The issue of overhanging vegetation is still the largest group of reports received. Boundary fences and hedges alongside paths are invariably the responsibility of the adjoining landowners. As such, the Council must assess the report and then, if action is required, contact the occupier. If needed, a request that the vegetation is cut back is made.

Some of these issues may have to result in some form of enforcement. The authority has an adopted Enforcement Protocol. This sets out how any report will be dealt with and the enforcement procedure that will be followed by the Council in a consistent manner and in line with legislation.

The main method used to report issues on the network is via the 'Report a road problem'¹⁵ web page on the council's website.

This allows users to report an issue, including when out on a path with a mobile phone. A report will feed directly back to the data management system and work allocation systems and will then go to an officer for action. The report will also be updated and, if requested, the customer will be updated. This includes details of works allocated by the same system.

The Public right of way 'report it' form on the webpage is supported with mapping that shows the paths. There have been requests from the public for background mapping to include more detail including field boundaries to allow reports to be more precisely placed.

When reporting a problem the Council would also like to encourage the use of photos from the reporter of the issue at hand. This allows reports to be more quickly actioned and speed up the response. This helps inspectors find the issue more quickly.

¹⁵ www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-maintenance/report-a-road-problem

The Council monitors how long a case takes from receipt to the matter being closed. In broad terms half of all reports are dealt with within 12 days. Two thirds of reports are resolved within a month. The closure times for reports is shown in Figure 13.

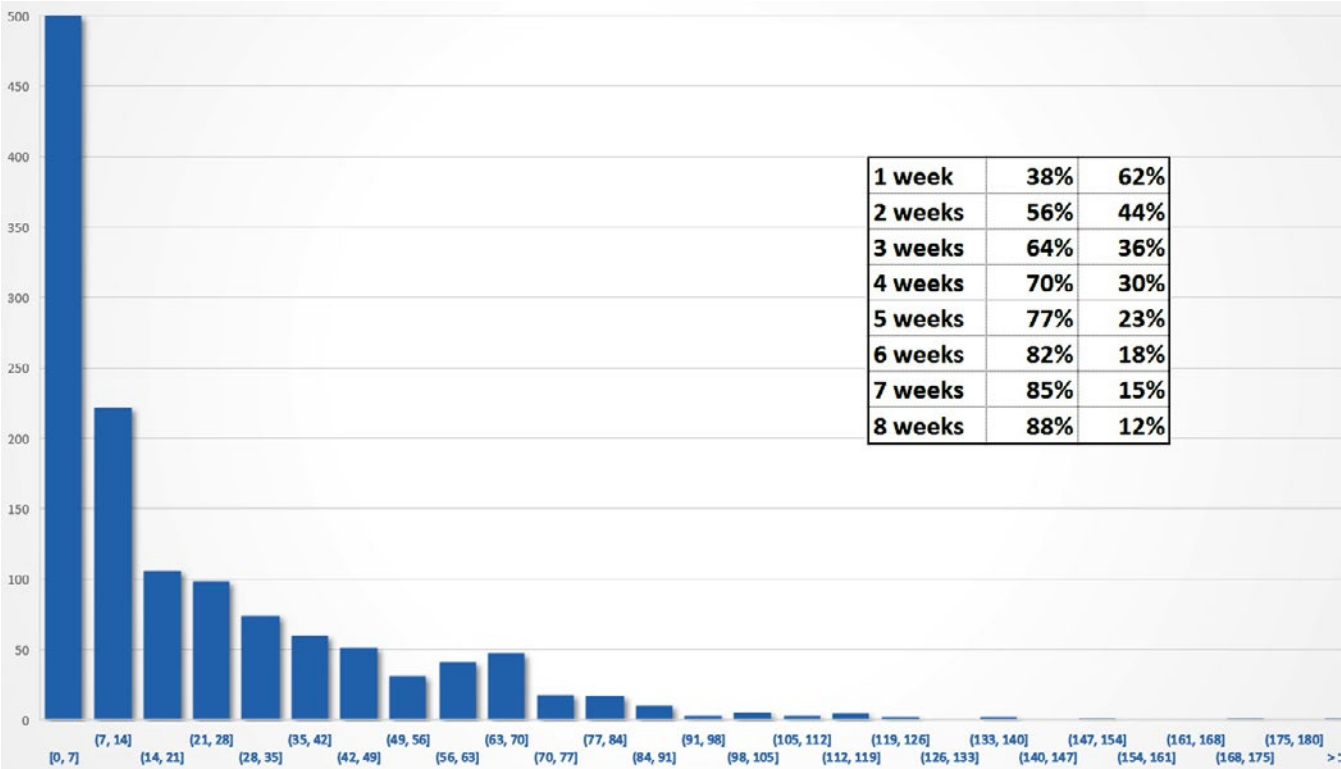


Figure 13 - Time taken to resolve reports from public.





7. Action Plan Summary

The assessment of the network and its users is key to developing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This evidence contributes to the development of planned future actions, which will deliver outcomes that successfully manage and improve the network for users over the plan period.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) legislation requires local highway authorities to prepare and publish “a statement of the action they propose to take for the management of local rights of way, and for securing an improved network of local rights of way, with 10-year to the matters dealt with in the assessment”. The Current Action Plan appended to this document represents the statement of action the Council is proposing to take over the next 10 years as part of this RoWIP.

The Action Plan is a living document, which will be monitored and reviewed annually and updated with new or amended actions in response to the changing priorities and funding available. This approach is intended to ensure that the RoWIP continues to be relevant and fit for purpose over the 10-year period, delivering the outcomes that support the successful management and improvement of the rights of way network for all of the people that use it.

Delivering the Action Plan

Delivering the actions set out in the action plan is a collaborative and collective effort across many parties, with the Council at its heart driving forward the positive change and sustainable management of the rights of way network. As set out in the partnership working section of this document, the Council worked successfully in partnership with many organisations to help deliver past RoWIP's. It will continue to do so with this latest RoWIP.

Funding and Resourcing Delivery

Funding and resources to support the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the network comes from a variety of sources. The Council's ability to deliver on many of the actions in the RoWIP action plan will be governed by the availability of funding, both capital and revenue, and the vital ongoing support of our partners.

We all want to see improvements to the network for current and future generations of people that use the network. Although the Council has limited resources to deliver on some of the actions at the scale and ambition that we would like, the ambition and determination to work towards improving the network with our partners remains.

Works to manage and improve rights of way are often delivered through combining funding and resources from across different parties. Some of the key sources of funding includes:

- **County Council budgets**

Balancing the needs and priorities across all areas of an Council's responsibilities and how they are funded is a difficult task, and any spending must always provide value for money. The funding for all the work the Council does to support managing and improving the rights of way network and its users is set out each financial year in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The MTFS can be viewed online on the council's website.

- **Direct Government Funding**

Grants from central Government that are applicable for projects that support the rights of way network are an important source of funding. This type of funding can be for specific infrastructure projects such as new bridges, or for wider programmes that improve the network or help users access it. Therefore, bidding for the limited funding that is available from central Government and its agencies continues to be an important part of the efforts to secure money towards rights of way projects.

- **Land Developers**

As in all areas of the country, land development affects many areas of Leicestershire. Delivering housing and economic growth is vital to supporting a prosperous society, but new housing and employment sites must be delivered in a sustainable way that works with the natural environment, which of course includes the impacts on public rights of way. All development sites are required to be sustainable and encourage and enable active travel, which will include either directly undertaking work to improve rights of way or making contributions through Section 106 (S106) monetary contributions towards the delivery of improvements by another party. Many improvements to the network are related to new housing and employment development

- **Farming Community**

Farmers throughout the county provide structures and clear paths for the public. When you cross a stile or walk through a field of crops cleared for the path, it is a farmer that has done the work. Farmers have also been very supportive of the waymarking programmes of the past to help keep users on the paths. And lastly, many works that need access for plant and vehicles require access being granted across private land.

- **Charitable Organisations**

The Council works with many charitable organisations to help deliver improvement to the network. This includes national bodies like Sustrans who are responsible for the national cycle network, and the Canal & River Trust whose work includes caring for the canal towpaths.

- **Other Councils**

Other councils, such as district and parish councils, have funding opportunities that are not available directly to the County Council. Working in close partnership with other councils is a great way to get projects delivered that benefit local communities and help to achieve aligned goals in local areas.

Local planning authorities (LPA's) perform a vital function in ensuring any development is undertaken in accordance with guidance, making sure developers mitigate the impact of their development and contribute towards rights of way where they are impacted. This is through S106 contributions and direct delivery of works

- **Volunteers**

The value of volunteers in supporting the rights of way network cannot be understated, they help care for rights of way across Leicestershire. The Council works with many volunteers, from individuals to associations, and every hour that every volunteer dedicates to helping keep our rights of way network up to standard is valued.

- **The Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF)**

The role that the Forum has in representing the interests of people concerned with public access in Leicestershire, including both users and landowners, as an invaluable one. Members of the group are volunteers, and they have a hands-on role in the delivery of any RoWIP, including this one. The Forum is essential to the successful delivery of the action plan and will be a continuous partner in informing the plan over the next ten years.



8. Delivering Outcomes

Making a Difference in our Communities



Enabling Health And Wellbeing

Improving and successfully managing our rights of way network helps remove barriers to enabling more people in our communities to be physically active and more often.

Physical activity is proven to significantly improve people physical and mental wellbeing, increasing life expectancy. The Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines has long established that adults should aim to be physically active every day for at least 150 minutes a week to stay healthy.

150 minutes of physical activity a week helps:

- Reduce the risk of developing breast cancer by 25%
- Reduce to the risk of dementia by 30%
- Reduce depression by 30%
- Reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis by 50%
- Reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 40%
- Reduce the risk of developing heart disease by 40%

In the Annual Chief Medical Officer Report 2024, Chris Whitty stated: **“Making walking and cycling more practical and safer, and access to green space easier and more equitable, would go a long way toward removing barriers to improving physical activity levels and could significantly improve the health of England’s increasingly urban population.”**

Even in a rural county, access for all to green spaces is a key part of helping to improve public health.

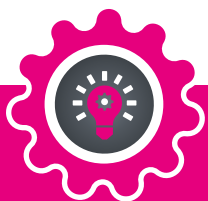
The Rights of Way Improvement Plan helps deliver our Local Transport Plan (LPT4) five Core Themes and objectives under our Cycling and Walking Strategy (CaWS), by delivering outcomes that make a difference to our communities.



Protecting The Environment

Protecting the environment is a duty for us all. The rights of way network provides one of the easiest ways for people to access nature. Encouraging and enabling access helps people value the environment and want to help protect it. Over 20,000 reports from users have helped the Council to maintain the rights of way network in Leicestershire, in turn helping to protect the environment.

Many of the paths that make up the network are in, or next to, a wide variety of habitats that all support healthy biodiversity. Sharing the responsibility to maintain the environment on our paths through proper use and management is vital to ensuring the network continues to work in harmony with nature, promoting biodiversity in all its forms.

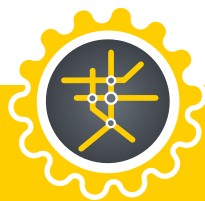


Embracing Innovation

Embracing innovation is often about improving existing practices. In the context of the RoWIP this includes ensuring all users can continue to access the rights of way network through innovative ways of managing and improving the network with the funding available.

An essential part of embracing innovation is engaging with users, including through the Local Access Forum and working with volunteers and partners to help shape innovative ways of managing and improving the network, and identifying resources to support delivery.

Innovation is also about identifying and utilising new technology. Innovation in digital mapping helps us digitally record the network and enables it to be viewed online. Innovation in the way we record asset information can also help improve the way we manage the network.



Enhancing Our Transport Network's Resilience

Connecting our communities is important, and the rights of way network plays a vital part in this. The network helps people travel around the surrounding environment without the need to use a car, helping to mitigate the negative impact on our roads and the environment, enhancing Leicestershire to be a special place to live, work and thrive.

The rights of way network is a great asset to Leicestershire, and as such it requires maintaining and improving over time to ensure it continues to be a reliable, resilient and accessible transport network asset for all its users. Through using a maintenance approach based on assessing risk, which helps prioritise maintenance across the network, it ensures the network can continue to be a safe and accessible asset for people to enjoy.

A well maintained network fit for all supports equestrians, walkers, wheelers, cyclists and off-road motor enthusiasts alike in accessing and enjoying the countryside.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan helps deliver our Local Transport Plan (LPT4) five Core Themes and objectives under our Cycling and Walking Strategy (CaWS), by delivering outcomes that make a difference to our communities.



Delivering Economic Growth

Housing and employment developments are key to supporting the delivery of economic growth. Many developments interact with existing rights of way and ensuring that all new development is designed with active travel at its heart, with due consideration to working in harmony with the environment and the network, ensures that future residents and workers have sustainable access to green and blue spaces via the rights of way network.

There are many businesses that make up a thriving rural economy, and rights of way have their place in supporting growth.

The British Horse Society in their Making Way for Horses report stated that: **“Rights of way and other forms of off-road access are essential facilities for this industry to flourish, and to save riders from having to risk their lives riding on the roads”.**



9. Monitoring and Evaluation

Effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation of the rights of way network is vital in providing the necessary data that helps enable successful management of the network. This includes tracking the progress towards delivering the actions in the RoWIP action plan. It also helps identify if any changes need to be made to the actions, or whether new actions need to be added to the action plan in future.

9.1 Inspecting the Network

Inspecting routes in an efficient and appropriate way is part of how the network is successfully monitored. This is undertaken through an inspection regime. The authority's inspection regime, which informs this RoWIP, is split into two categories, annually inspected and reactively inspected.

Annually Inspected:

- Most routes with a sealed surface currently receive an annual inspection. Sealed surfaces include surfaces such as asphalt.
- It is intended to ensure that all paths with a sealed surface are subject to an annual inspection within the first two years of this plan.

Reactively Inspected:

- All remaining unsealed routes will be reactively inspected following reports received by people who use the network. This includes the public, user groups and our network of partner councils, volunteers that work with the authority through the Local Access Forum.

As part of efforts to ensure that up-to-date data on the rights of way network is recorded, the whole network is reviewed to capture all sealed public rights of way routes that are the Council's responsibility to maintain. This data then informs the inspection regimes.

In addition to the inspections set out above, are areas that may benefit from funding.

Scheme Inspected:

- Within the Action Plan are proposals to carry out improvements to routes around certain urban areas and the linear Greenways network linking towns and villages.
- Each scheme will include one-off surveys of all paths in the scheme to assist with proposals for funding and works.

9.2 Evaluating Performance of the Network

As mentioned in the “Assessment of the Network” section in this document, the Council has used the Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 178) as a way to monitor performance of the paths on the network in the past, and intends to use this method going forward during this plan period.

The measure is based on a series of checks for each path that is inspected:

- If the path has a fingerpost at the start
- Is the path waymarked
- If it crosses any bridges are they adequate
- Are boundary crossing adequate, such as stiles
- Is the route obstructed
- Is the path affected by ploughing or crops
- Is the surface reasonable

These inspection criteria then provide an overall percentage as the performance indicator to help track the performance of the network over time, to help inform future management and improvements.

9.3 Monitoring and Evaluating the RoWIP Action Plan

Monitoring and evaluation of this RoWIP’s action plan will be undertaken annually.

The action plan will be updated every financial year, to show progress made against each action. This annual review and update will also include engaging with our Local Access Forum to ensure that progress and any updates can be collectively and collaboratively discussed to inform any changes and future actions.

This progress of the RoWIP and its action plan is part of the wider delivery of measures to improve active travel use in Leicestershire under the Cycling and Walking Strategy (CaWS), which itself supports the delivery of the Council’s Local Transport Plan (LTP). The current LTP4 vision is **‘Delivering a safe, connected and integrated transport network which is resilient and well managed to support the ambitions and health of our growing communities, safeguards the environment whilst delivering economic prosperity’**.



10. Additional Guidance and Information

Further information on wider public rights of way policy and guidance can be found at the various sources below.

Leicestershire County Council Websites

- **Where to walk and ride in Leicestershire:**

Our Where to Walk and Ride webpage contains lots of useful information to help you access the rights of way network in Leicestershire. You can access an interactive map helping you find a specific route and navigate the wonderful rights of way network.

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/cycling-and-walking/where-to-walk-and-ride-in-leicestershire

- **Public rights of way information for parishes and communities:**

If you want a quick reference guide to rights of way you can find out more here:

<https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/parishes-and-communities/public-rights-of-way>

- **How to report an issue on a public rights of way:**

You are able to report any problems on a rights of way by using our 'Report it' form.

<https://leicestershirecc-self.achieveservice.com/service/report-it>

This allows you to report problems such as overgrown paths, crops, obstructions, misleading signs, or damaged bridges, stiles or gates.

- **Local Access Forum**

Local Access Forums are at the heart of collaborative management of the rights of way network by involving the community. Every local authority that looks after rights of way has a Local Access Forum, and you can get involved too. Find out more here:

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/cycling-and-walking/leicestershire-local-access-forum

Leicestershire Highway Design Guide (LHDG) - Guidance for Land Developers

The Leicestershire Highways Design Guide (LHDG) is a key reference point for the council's policy, principles and technical guidance relating to the delivery and adoption of proposed highway and transportation assets that form part of the new development in the county. This includes developments that impact public rights of way.

The LHDG is also the foundation on which the Council provides highway observations on planning applications in its role as local highway authority (LHA). The LHDG can be access at:

www.leicestershirehighwaydesignguide.uk

Choose How You Move

- **The Choose How You Move (CHYM) website has lots of information about walking, wheeling and cycling in Leicestershire, including:**

Walking/Wheeling:

An interactive map of over 150 walks:

www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/walks

Downloadable maps grouped by geographical areas or interests, such as family fun, history or long distance trails:

www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/walking/walking-maps

Guided walks:

www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/walking/guided-walks

Walking groups:

www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/walking/walking-groups/

Cycling:

An Interactive cycle map:

<https://leicestershire.activemap.co.uk>

Downloadable maps by area:

www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/cycling/cycle-maps

Adult cycle courses:

www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/cycling/cycling-courses

Cycling clubs and groups:

www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/cycling/cycling-clubs-and-guided-rides

- **Earn rewards whilst walking, wheeling and cycling on the rights of way network**

The Choose How You Move rewards challenge is powered by BetterPoints and allows you to earn points for walking, running and cycling. Track your journeys using the free BetterPoints app to earn points and redeem them for high street vouchers or donate them to your favourite charity. Find out how here:

www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/betterpoints

Government Website

- **Rights of Way, Local Authority Responsibilities**

If you want to know more about the many varied roles and responsibilities that local authorities have in regard to public rights of way, you can find it here:

www.gov.uk/guidance/public-rights-of-way-local-authority-responsibilities



Birstall village
Loughborough

Route 1
Thurmaston 1
Coston 4 48

Route 1
Leicester 5



Document Control

Control Details	
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Document Owner	Sustainable Travel & Transport Team

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Date	Version	Reviewer	Approved By	Next Review Date
October 2025	V1	Sustainable Travel & Transport Team		October 2030

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Rights of Way Improvement Plan

2025-2035

Action Plan



11. Appendix - Action Plan

The statement of action the council propose to take over the next ten years for the management of local rights of way, and for securing an improved network of local rights of way, is set out in this current Action Plan.

The Action Plan is a living document, which will be monitored, reviewed and updated annually in response to the changing priorities, funding available and continued engagement feedback with all the partners, organisations, and volunteers the council works with. This will help ensure the actions in the plan continue to deliver outcomes that support the successful management and improvement of the rights of way network for all of the people that use it.

The current actions and their progress are set out below:

Themes Managing and Maintaining (MM) Encouraging and Enabling (EE) Working Together (WT) Improving the Network (IN)	Action Number	Action	Description	Frequency	Status / Progress	10 Year Programme Tracker									
						● = Scheduled ○ = To Be Confirmed ✓ = Completed									
						2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
						Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Highway Authority (HA)															
(WT)	AR1	Annual Reporting to LLAf	Produce an Annual Report on the progress of the RoWIP, and present to Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF).	Annual	Next report due in 2026	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(WT)	AR2	Update RoWIP Action Plan	Update RoWIP Action Plan to provide latest progress on Actions & review existing Actions &/or need for new Actions.	Annual	Next update in 2026/27	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (IN)	HA1	Annual survey of the network	Measure the percentage of rights of way that are easy to use based on LI178, including use of volunteers.	Annual	2025 survey	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (IN)	HA2	Annual review of sealed surface routes	Inspection of all sealed surface paths, i.e. asphalt.	80% to 100% over 2 years	Annual Inspections after 2028	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Themes Managing and Maintaining (MM) Encouraging and Enabling (EE) Working Together (WT) Improving the Network (IN)	Action Number	Action	Description	Frequency	Status / Progress	10 Year Programme Tracker									
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						Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
(MM), (IN), (WT)	HA3	Provide online defect reporting service	Reporting service that enable the public to report defects on paths using online system with photo option.	Ongoing	Review 2026	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (IN), (WT)	HA4	Investigate all reports received	Investigate and prioritise all reports received from the public and stakeholders.	Ongoing	50% closed within 1 month	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (IN), (WT)	HA5	Apply enforcement protocol	Defect reports about paths dealt with in line with the Enforcement Protocol.	Ongoing	All over 1st year	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (IN)	HA6	Keep Enforcement protocol up-to-date	Ensure Enforcement Protocol is kept up to date, in line with legislation changes, for use by officers as necessary.	Ongoing	Currently up-to-date	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
(MM), (IN)	HA7	Manage vegetation on priority paths	Undertake an annual programme to manage vegetation on priority paths.	Two Cuts	2025 2 cut programme	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (IN)	HA8	Integrate PRoW assets into wider highway network assets	Integrate PRoW surface assets into wider highway network asset management.	Ongoing	60% currently	●	●	●							
(MM), (IN)	HA9	Survey and inspect bridge assets	Survey and inspect Bridge assets and identify replacement structures.	Ongoing	70% complete 2025	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (IN), (WT)	HA10	Integrate wider improvement plans with PROW schemes	Identify suitable programme of PRoW improvement schemes to support delivery of wider walking and cycling programmes.	2026 onward	2026 5 year programme	●	●	●	●	●					
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA10.1	Bridleway K9 improvement scheme Quorn	Creation of a 3m wide stoned surface Multi-user path between Quorn and Woodhouse (Between Buddon lane and Public Footpath K49) for both recreation and commuting to school / work.	One-off scheme	To be scheduled	○	○	○	○	○					
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA10.2	Footpath V40 improvement scheme Sapcote	Construction of Tarmac surface to available width of the path between Park Road Recreation Ground and Bassett Road, completing surfaced path link between Park Road Park and All Saints Primary School.	One-off scheme	To be scheduled	○	○	○	○	○					

Themes Managing and Maintaining (MM) Encouraging and Enabling (EE) Working Together (WT) Improving the Network (IN)	Action Number	Action	Description	Frequency	Status / Progress	10 Year Programme Tracker									
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(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA10.3	Footpath E9 improvement scheme Melton Mowbray	Construction of 2m wide Tarmac surface and installation of new culvert / ditch crossing between Kirby Lane and Fisher Drive, completing surfaced path link between new developments and the centre of Melton.	One-off scheme	To be scheduled	○	○	○	○	○					
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA10.4	Footpath K62 improvement scheme Shepshed	Construction of 2m wide Tarmac surface between Leicester Road and Kings Road, completing surfaced path link between the centre of Shepshed and the Lidl / McDonalds recently constructed.	One-off scheme	To be scheduled	○	○	○	○	○					
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA10.5	Footpath S36 improvement scheme Barlestone	Construction of Tarmac surface to available width of the path approx. 70 metres from Newbold Road, completing surfaced path link between Newbold Road and Meadow Road.	One-off scheme	To be scheduled	○	○	○	○	○					
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA10.6	Footpath U57 improvement scheme Burbage	Construction of Tarmac surface to available width of the path between Coventry Road towards Grange Drive, approx. 180m, completing Tarmaced route between Coventry Road and Grange Drive.	One-off scheme	To be scheduled	○	○	○	○	○					
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA10.7	Footpath C26 improvement scheme Wigston	Construction of 2m wide Tarmac surface between Harrington Drive and Embleton Close approx. 227m, Completing surfaced path link between Tendring Drive and Mere Road.	One-off scheme	To be scheduled	○	○	○	○	○					
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA10.8	Footpath Z77 improvement scheme Whetstone	Construction of 2m wide Tarmac surface between Greenfields and recreation ground. approx. 90m, completing surfaced route to recreation ground.	One-off scheme	To be scheduled	○	○	○	○	○					
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA10.9	Bridleway W5 improvement scheme Braunstone	Construction of 3m wide Tarmac surface for approx. 100m between Watergate Lane to Centurion Way improving commuter route to the industrial estate.	One-off scheme	To be scheduled	○	○	○	○	○					

Themes Managing and Maintaining (MM) Encouraging and Enabling (EE) Working Together (WT) Improving the Network (IN)	Action Number	Action	Description	Frequency	Status / Progress	10 Year Programme Tracker									
						● = Scheduled ○ = To Be Confirmed ✓ = Completed									
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						Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA10.10	Footpath Z56 improvement scheme Blaby	Construction of 2m wide Tarmac surface for approx. 430m, from Lutterworth Road to the surfaced Footpath Z67 improving heavily used route for commuters, school access and residents accessing shops.	One-off scheme	To be scheduled	○	○	○	○	○					
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA10.11	Footpath U12 improvement scheme Hinckley	Construction of 2m wide Tarmac surface for approx. 85m between Forest Road and Public Bridleway U11, improving route for residents and school access.	One-off scheme	To be scheduled	○	○	○	○	○					
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA10.12	Footpath P114 improvement scheme Ashby De La Zouch	Construction of 3m wide Stoned surface for approx. 576m and undertake culvert repairs between Willesley Lane and Hicks Lodge Cycle Centre, creating a surfaced off-road route between Ashby and the Hicks Lodge cycle centre and the wider National Forest surfaced paths, which is well used by cyclists.	One-off scheme	To be scheduled	○	○	○	○	○					
(MM), (IN)	HA11	Proactive sign renewal checks on priority routes	Undertake signage improvements and renewal to provide directional and destination information for users on the PRoW network.	2026/27 onward	Dependent on funding aligned with wider area improvement works	●	○	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○
(MM), (IN)	HA12	Improve access on promoted PRoW	Improve access on promoted PRoW routes including the Leicestershire Round.	2026/27 onward	Dependent on funding		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
(MM), (WT), (IN)	HA13	Implement Greenways programme	Implement Greenways programme to identify and improve priority routes between settlements. Improvements to include surfacing, signage and reducing stiles and replacing with gates or gaps in physical barriers such as hedges and fence lines, to better connect communities.	Annual	Annual programme to begin 2026/27		●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○

Themes Managing and Maintaining (MM) Encouraging and Enabling (EE) Working Together (WT) Improving the Network (IN)	Action Number	Action	Description	Frequency	Status / Progress	10 Year Programme Tracker									
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						Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
(MM), (WT), (IN)	HA13.1	Identify and Implement Greenways in Market Harborough and surrounding area, to improve priority routes between settlements	Undertake work to identify and then implement Greenways. These will include Renewing fingerposts with destination information, on key links improve access with gaps and some gates, renew signage and waymarking, improve surfacing, ensure infrastructure is in a fit state, such as bridges or crossings and assets recorded. Scheme aim is to increase walking and cycling levels and opportunities and improve access to wider countryside and connections to surrounding communities. Work to be programmed in tandem with other urban walking and cycling programmes as appropriate.	2026/27 onward	Scheduled		●	●	●	●	●				
(MM), (WT), (IN)	HA13.2	Identify and Implement Greenways in Melton Mowbray and surrounding area, to improve priority routes between settlements	Undertake work to identify and then implement Greenways. These will include Renewing fingerposts with destination information, on key links improve access with gaps and some gates, renew signage and waymarking, improve surfacing, ensure infrastructure is in a fit state, such as bridges or crossings and assets recorded. Scheme aim is to increase walking and cycling levels and opportunities and improve access to wider countryside and connections to surrounding communities. Work to be programmed in tandem with other urban walking and cycling programmes as appropriate.	2026/27 onward	To be scheduled		○	○	○	○	○				
(MM), (WT), (IN)	HA13.3	Identify and Implement Greenways in North Of Leicester and surrounding area, to improve priority routes between settlements	Undertake work to identify and then implement Greenways. These will include Renewing fingerposts with destination information, on key links improve access with gaps and some gates, renew signage and waymarking, improve surfacing, ensure infrastructure is in a fit state, such as bridges or crossings and assets recorded. Scheme aim is to increase walking and cycling levels and opportunities and improve access to wider countryside and connections to surrounding communities. Work to be programmed in tandem with other urban walking and cycling programmes as appropriate.	2027/28 onward	To be scheduled			○	○	○	○	○			

Themes Managing and Maintaining (MM) Encouraging and Enabling (EE) Working Together (WT) Improving the Network (IN)	Action Number	Action	Description	Frequency	Status / Progress	10 Year Programme Tracker									
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						2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
						Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
(MM), (WT), (IN)	HA13.4	Identify and Implement Greenways in Hinckley and surrounding area, to improve priority routes between settlements	Undertake work to identify and then implement Greenways. These will include Renewing fingerposts with destination information, on key links improve access with gaps and some gates, renew signage and waymarking, improve surfacing, ensure infrastructure is in a fit state, such as bridges or crossings and assets recorded. Scheme aim is to increase walking and cycling levels and opportunities and improve access to wider countryside and connections to surrounding communities. Work to be programmed in tandem with other urban walking and cycling programmes as appropriate.	2027/28 onward	To be scheduled			○	○	○	○	○			
(MM), (WT), (IN)	HA13.5	Identify and Implement Greenways in Loughborough and surrounding area, to improve priority routes between settlements	Undertake work to identify and then implement Greenways. These will include Renewing fingerposts with destination information, on key links improve access with gaps and some gates, renew signage and waymarking, improve surfacing, ensure infrastructure is in a fit state, such as bridges or crossings and assets recorded. Scheme aim is to increase walking and cycling levels and opportunities and improve access to wider countryside and connections to surrounding communities. Work to be programmed in tandem with other urban walking and cycling programmes as appropriate.	2028/29 onward	To be scheduled				○	○	○	○	○		
(MM), (WT), (IN)	HA13.6	Identify and Implement Greenways in South Of Leicester and surrounding area, to improve priority routes between settlements	Undertake work to identify and then implement Greenways. These will include Renewing fingerposts with destination information, on key links improve access with gaps and some gates, renew signage and waymarking, improve surfacing, ensure infrastructure is in a fit state, such as bridges or crossings and assets recorded. Scheme aim is to increase walking and cycling levels and opportunities and improve access to wider countryside and connections to surrounding communities. Work to be programmed in tandem with other urban walking and cycling programmes as appropriate.	2028/29 onward	To be scheduled				○	○	○	○	○		

Themes Managing and Maintaining (MM) Encouraging and Enabling (EE) Working Together (WT) Improving the Network (IN)	Action Number	Action	Description	Frequency	Status / Progress	10 Year Programme Tracker									
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						2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
						Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
(MM), (WT), (IN)	HA14	Manage highway verges improving access	Undertake feasibility assessment of highway verges with a view to improve access for users, providing wider connectivity of the PROW network, including equestrian users.	2026 survey	Initiation date to be confirmed, expected to begin 2025/26	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
(MM), (WT), (IN)	HA15	Survey the Leicestershire Round	Work with Leicestershire Footpaths Association volunteers to maintain and promote the Leicestershire Round.	2025-27 survey	80% complete	●	●				○	○			
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA16	Assist Parish councils who want to help look after local paths	Assist Parish councils who want to help look after local paths in their areas.	Ongoing	Increase the % of paths currently looked after by Parish councils	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA17	Provide support to organisations supporting and promoting the network	Provide support to Leicestershire Footpaths Association volunteers and other volunteers in maintaining Leicestershire Round.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA18	Promote volunteering to recruit wider Volunteers	Promote volunteering to recruit and appoint volunteers, supporting them in helping to manage and survey the network. Includes promoting and running Volunteer days.	Ongoing	Ongoing Volunteer days programme	✓	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA19	Host the Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF)	Host and support the volunteers of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF), including holding three meetings annually.	Ongoing	3 meetings per year and support for sub group work	✓●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●
(WT)	HA20	Consult with the LLAF on policy or service changes that effect PROW	Consult with the LLAF on policy or service changes that effect PROW, to ensure improvements meet the needs of current and future users.	Ongoing	Yearly report & Forum	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	HA21	Engage with the public Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Forum on PROW projects and schemes	Engage with the public Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Forum on PROW projects and schemes, to ensure all users are given the opportunity to input into the design of schemes and projects before they are delivered.	Ongoing	Group agenda when appropriate	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Themes Managing and Maintaining (MM) Encouraging and Enabling (EE) Working Together (WT) Improving the Network (IN)	Action Number	Action	Description	Frequency	Status / Progress	10 Year Programme Tracker									
						● = Scheduled ○ = To Be Confirmed ✓ = Completed									
						2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
						Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
(MM)	HA22	Management of Unsurfaced carriageway network	Survey and inspect unsurfaced carriageway network.	Ongoing	20% per annum		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(EE), (WT)	EE1	Promoting the Network and its use	Promote the PRoW network and its use via Choose How You Move (CHYM).	Ongoing	Review 2026	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(EE), (WT)	EE2	Targeted Promotion and Engagement	Engage users and promote the PRoW Network and its uses to under represented communities using the network.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(EE), (WT)	EE3	Provide online and printed information on PRoW routes and events	Provide online and printed information for people to help the use PRoW routes and attend events and training.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(EE), (WT)	EE4	Facilitate guided walks and rides on the PRoW Network	Help volunteers and groups facilitate guided walks and rides on the PRoW Network to help encourage and attract new users to the network and travelling actively.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(EE), (WT)	EE5	Provide targeted information to improve accessibility of the network for users	Provide targeted information, promotions and communication campaigns, to ensure that there is clear information on the accessibility of individual PRoWs to enable people to make informed and safe plans for using them.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	EE6	Engage and work in partnership with others to improve access for underrepresented user groups	Improve and increase working in partnership with groups/volunteers/organisations/service providers that serve underrepresented user groups including those with protected characteristics, to promote, encourage and enable use of the PRoWs for all.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Themes Managing and Maintaining (MM) Encouraging and Enabling (EE) Working Together (WT) Improving the Network (IN)	Action Number	Action	Description	Frequency	Status / Progress	10 Year Programme Tracker									
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						Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	EE7	Engage and work in partnership with Landowners and Farmers to minimise conflict with livestock and users	Engage and work in partnership with Landowners and Farmers to minimise conflict with livestock and users on the network.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(EE), (WT)	EE8	Provide information and education provision to schools in Leicestershire on PROW and the Countryside Code	Providing information provision and practical skills training on using the PROW network in line with the countryside code. This will include getting to know signs and symbols using the countryside, being considerate and protecting the environment.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Surveying Authority (SA)															
(MM), (IN)	SA1	Maintain an up-to-date Definitive Map	The Definitive Map to be updated following all legal changes and published for inspection by the public.	Ongoing	Within six weeks of change	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (IN)	SA2	Publish a Definitive Map Modification Order(DMMO) priority policy	Take account of legislative requirements and amending legislative proposals which are expected within the 3rd year of this plan, and to develop a DMMO priority policy.	3rd Year	2027			●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
(MM), (WT), (IN)	SA3	Recruit and support Research Volunteers	Recruit and support new Research volunteers to research existing historic DMMO claims and associated evidence.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
(MM)	SA4	Maintain a DMMO online register	Provide an online register of claims for the public to inspect.	Ongoing	100%	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (WT), (IN)	SA5	Provide PROW datasets to 3rd parties	Provide PROW data to organisations, including Ordnance Survey, Government and its agencies as part of the National Street Gazetteer (NSG) record. These organisations can also include private sector developers and their agents.	Monthly	100%	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Themes Managing and Maintaining (MM) Encouraging and Enabling (EE) Working Together (WT) Improving the Network (IN)	Action Number	Action	Description	Frequency	Status / Progress	10 Year Programme Tracker									
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						Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
(MM), (IN)	SA6	Inform public of temporary orders that affect PROW	Update National data database with Temporary diversion, closure and Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders(TTROs) on PROW.	Ongoing	Continuous	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (IN)	SA7	Respond to legislative changes	If enacted, deregulation proposals affecting PROW to be implemented and processes reviewed, to ensure these are inline with government legislation.	Subject to Parliament	As enacted				○	○					
(MM), (IN)	SA8	Reduce anomalous PROW data recorded on the definitive map	Reduce contradictory PROW data recorded on the definitive map, when assessed with current land management data, to minimise impact on users and landowners.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (IN)	SA9	Publish an online register of Legal Orders	Maintain an online register of all Legal Order applications and process, and update in response to further legislative changes.	Ongoing	100%	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	SA10	Recruit and support Historic Volunteers	Recruit, appoint and support volunteers helping to carry out historic research on orders.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Planning & Development (PD)															
(MM), (WT), (IN)	PD1	Provide advice and support to Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) for routes affected by development	Support the legal process of temporarily closing or moving routes during construction and assisting with permanently diverting paths under the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA).	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
(MM), (WT), (IN)	PD2	Maintain up-to-date PROW Design Guidance	Ensure the latest relevant information regarding PROW is included in the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide, to aid land developers, their agents and other parties when designing and delivering developments.	Ongoing	100%	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

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(MM), (WT), (IN)	PD3	Provide PROW formal advice to Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) and Secretary of State (SoS)	Provide formal advice to Local Planning Authorities (LPA's), and Secretary of State (SoS), on applications that are directly affected by PROW.	Ongoing	As submitted	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (WT), (IN)	PD4	Provide PROW advice to Developers and their agents on development proposals	Act as a point of expertise to advise land developers and their agents on development proposals that may directly affect PROWs.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	PD5	Obligate and deliver PROW improvements identified through the planning process	Ensure necessary PROW improvements are obligated from relevant parties as part of housing and employment land development, and support their delivery through Section 278 agreements or Section 106 funding use.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (WT), (IN)	PD6	Provide PROW input into Local Plan development process	Provide PROW input into Local Plan process, to ensure access opportunities are maximised to connect communities as part of long term land development.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (WT), (IN)	PD7	Ensure Green Infrastructure proposals are aligned to access and the PROW network	Ensure Green Infrastructure proposals are aligned to access and the PROW network, including supporting climate change mitigation and flood risks.	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
(MM), (WT), (IN)	PD8	Provide advice and work with government agencies including Network Rail on infrastructure improvements	Provide advice and work with government agencies including Network Rail on infrastructure improvements and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs).	Ongoing	Ongoing	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	PD9	Deliver Programme of PRow improvements schemes utilising Section 106 Developer funding	Deliver series of improvement schemes, including surfacing paths, linked to development sites utilising Section 106 developer funding.	Within S106 agreement period	Ongoing	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	PD9.1	Footpath J17 improvement scheme Barkby Road, Syston	Resurfacing route in Tarmac and associated works of Public Footpath J17 Barkby Road, Syston, (Ref 2013/0925/02).	Within S106 agreement period	Construction Works to commence October 2025	●									
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	PD9.2	Footpath U74 & U26 Improvement scheme Earl Shilton	Surfacing footpath U74 between Belle Vue Road and Heath Lane South, the installation of 2x Fingerposts to be located either end of footpath U74 and surfacing of Public Footpath U26 between the boundary of the development site and Mountfield Road, (Ref 2014/1279/04).	Within S106 agreement period	Scheduled for delivery 2026/27		●	●							
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	PD9.3	Footpath A23, A24, A37 improvement scheme Airfield Farm, Leicester Road, Market Harborough	Upgrading of Public Footpaths at A23 Leicester Road to The Green in Lubenham and A24 and A37 north of Gallow Field Road. To improve sustainability and provide linkages to the town centre and to improve leisure and recreation opportunities, (Ref 2011/0112/03).	Within S106 agreement period	Construction Works to commence 2025-26	●									
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	PD9.4	Bridleway U67 improvement scheme Sketchley Park, Burbage	Improvements to Public Bridleway U67 to allow walking and cycling between the new access and Sketchley Lane, (Ref 2013/0529/04).	Within S106 agreement period	Scheduled for delivery 2026/27		●	●							
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	PD9.5	Footpath A14 improvement scheme Fleckney	Surfacing approx. two thirds of Footpath A14 in Saddington Parish, Fleckney, (Ref 2016/01355/FUL).	Within S106 agreement period	Scheduled for delivery 2026/27		●	●							
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	PD9.6	Footpath K28 improvement scheme Rothley	Improving footpath K28 in vicinity of development site at Linkfield Farm, Mountsorrel / Rothley, (Ref 2018/0662/02).	Within S106 agreement period	Scheduled for delivery 2026/27		●	●							

Themes Managing and Maintaining (MM) Encouraging and Enabling (EE) Working Together (WT) Improving the Network (IN)	Action Number	Action	Description	Frequency	Status / Progress	10 Year Programme Tracker									
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(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	PD9.7	Footpath D20 improvement scheme Bushby	Improvement works to Footpath D20 to improve surfacing near Land off Uppingham Road, Bushby, (Ref 2017/02162/REM).	Within S106 agreement period	Scheduled for delivery 2026/27		●	●							
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	PD9.8	Various footpath improvement scheme Hinckley	Improvement works to ProW within the vicinity of the development site off Dodwells Road, Hinckley including: - signage, surfacing and structural improvements, (Ref 2015/0188/04).	Within S106 agreement period	Scheduled for delivery		●	●	●						
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	PD9.9	Footpath O89 improvement scheme Ashby de la Zouch	Improvements to Public Footpath O89 near Land off Woodcock Way, Ashby de la Zouch, (Ref 2014/0769/07).	Within S106 agreement period	Scheduled for delivery		●	●							
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	PD9.10	Various footpath and bridleway (O89, O91, O92) improvement schemes Ashby de la Zouch	Various footpath improvement schemes relating to Money Hill development off Wood Street, Ashby de la Zouch including: - surface improvements to footpath O89 between North Street and Footpath O90; - surface improvements to footpath O89 between Plantagenet Way and proposed footpath in development; - surface improvements to bridleway O92 north of Featherbed Lane and O89 and O91; - contribution towards legal and advertising costs to upgrade FP O89 between Resolution Road and O92 to bridleway; - contribution towards legal and advertising costs to divert Footpath O91 between Plantagenet Way and Bridleway O92; - provision of a cycle ramp to connect Bridleway O92 to existing cycle facilities on A511, (Ref 2013/0335/07).	Within S106 agreement period	Scheduled for delivery	○	●	●	●						

Themes Managing and Maintaining (MM) Encouraging and Enabling (EE) Working Together (WT) Improving the Network (IN)	Action Number	Action	Description	Frequency	Status / Progress	10 Year Programme Tracker									
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						Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Access Authority (AA)															
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	AA1	Ensure designated open access sites are accessible to the public	Work with land managers and the Leicestershire Local Access Forum volunteers on site access surveys of larger open access sites.	5 yearly	Await Natural England review for which open access sites are on the register		●	●					●	●	
(MM), (EE), (WT), (IN)	AA2	Assist land managers to dedicated land as open access	Work with landowners who wish to dedicate land for open access.	Ad hoc	Liaising with Landowners as required	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Document Control

Control Details	
Document Location	Transport Strategy and Policy Team Environment and Transport Department Leicestershire County Council
Document Owner	Sustainable Travel & Transport Team

Document Amendment Record				
Date	Version	Reviewer	Approved By	Next Review Date
October 2025	V1	Sustainable Travel & Transport Team		2026

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Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2025-2035)

Consultation Outcome (May – August 2025)

To help ensure the Rights of Way Improvement Plan meets the needs of communities within Leicestershire, a consultation on the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan and associated Action Plan took place for 12 weeks from 22 May to 14 August 2025. This provided the opportunity for residents, visitors, partners and stakeholders to review the draft document and actions set out for the next 10 years. This also included seeking the views of all the parish and district councils within Leicestershire in addition to other statutory consultees.

Consultation Process

Survey:

An online survey (also available in paper format) was launched between 22 May to 14 August 2025. The survey was made available to the public via the Council's Have Your Say webpage, as well as being shared directly with stakeholders who were identified in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan Statutory Guidance. There were 254 survey responses.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Roadshows:

A total of seven roadshows were held across the County at local libraries where all members of the public were invited to ask questions relating to the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan, speak to Public Rights of Way specialists and complete paper copies of the survey.

Social Media:

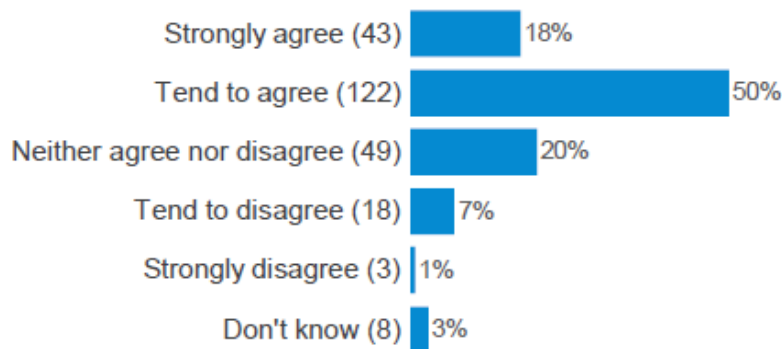
The Council promoted the online survey and roadshows through social media channels: posts received 1208 clicks and 127 shares across all platforms.

Public Rights of Way Consultation Outcome Summary

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan as a whole

Overall, 68% agreed with the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, 18% strongly agreed and 50% of respondents tend to agree. It is noted that 20% were neutral.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan overall?

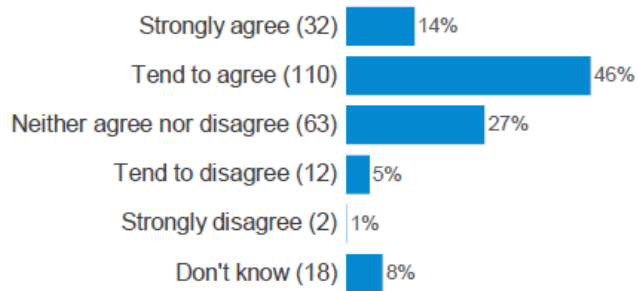


The Rights of Way Improvement Plan - Action Plan

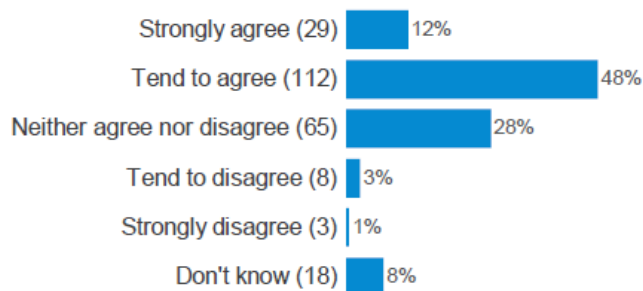
In terms of the actions identified in various areas (i.e. Highway Authority, Surveying Authority, Planning and Development, and Access Authority):

- 60% agreed with the actions identified in 'Highway Authority' (14% strongly agreed and 46% of respondents tended to agree) .
- 60% agreed with the actions identified in 'Surveying Authority' (12% strongly agreed and 48% of respondents tended to agree).
- 54% agreed with the actions identified in 'Planning and Development' (11% strongly agreed 43% of respondents tended to agree).
- 57% agreed with the actions identified in the 'Access Authority' (13% strongly agreed and 44% of respondents tended to agree).

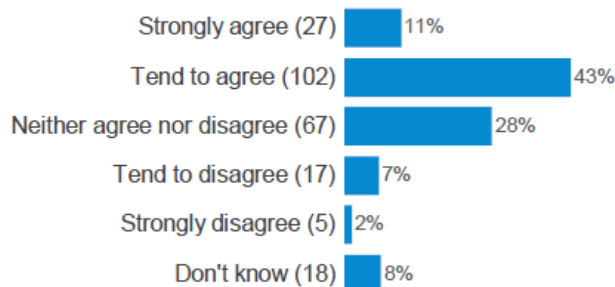
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions identified in the following areas? (Actions listed under 'Highway Authority')



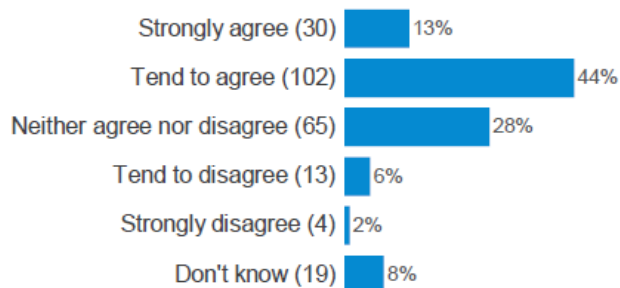
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions identified in the following areas? (Actions listed under 'Surveying Authority')



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions identified in the following areas? (Actions listed under 'Planning and Promotion')



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions identified in the following areas? (Actions listed under 'Access Authority')

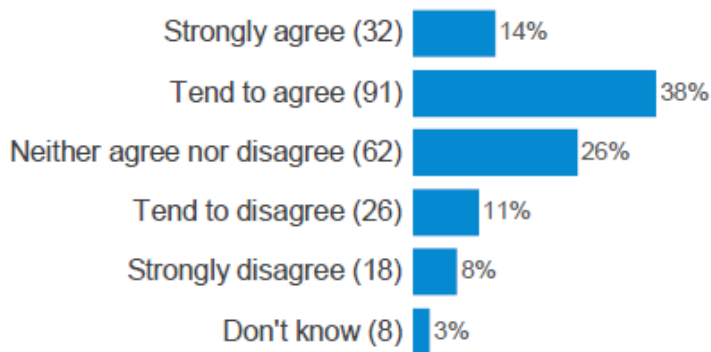


*Note: Actions listed in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan Action Plan under Planning and Development, were referred as 'Planning and *Promotion*' in the survey – this was a misnomer in the survey question and did not affect the Rights of Way Improvement Plan or its Actions.

Priorities

A total of 38% of respondents tended to agree that the priorities identified from the initial engagement reflect their views and needs as users, 14% strongly agreed and 26% were neutral. (The priorities identified are shown in section '5.3 Engagement Analysis' of the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan).

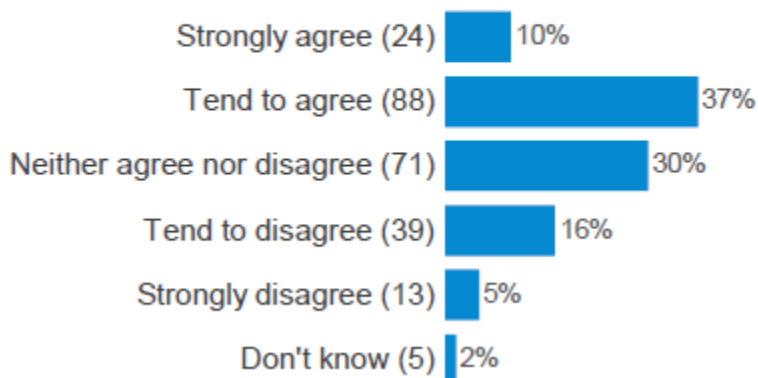
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (The priorities identified from the initial engagement reflect my views and needs as a user.)



Achievements

47% agree that the achievements noted within the Plan reflect what they see when using the network, and 10% strongly agreed and 37% of respondents tended to agree.

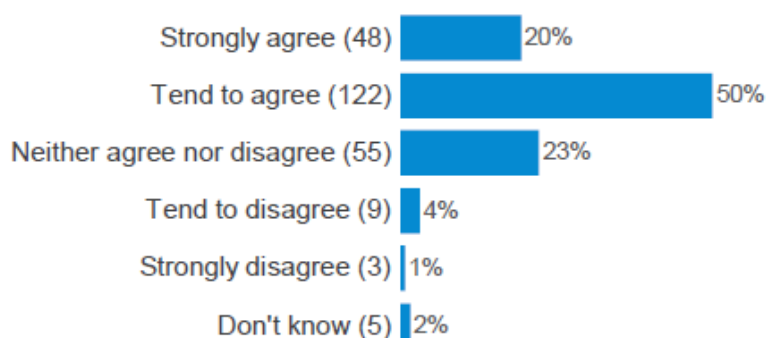
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (The achievements noted within the plan reflect what I see when using the network)



Information in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan

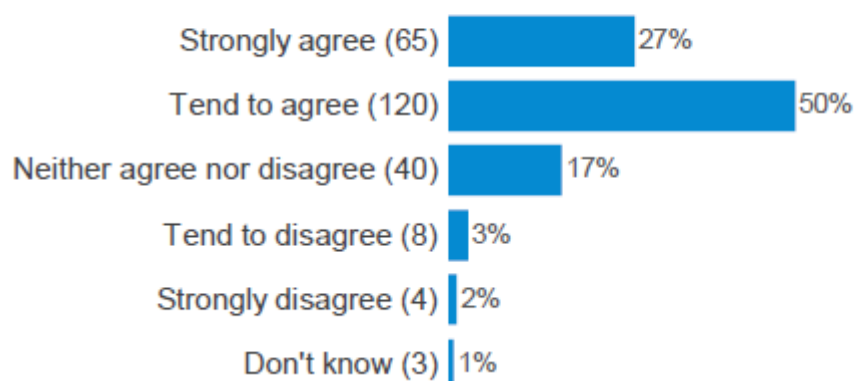
For the information in the 'Policy Content' section, 50% of respondents tended to agree that the section makes it clear how the draft plan aligns with key policies and strategies, and 20% strongly agreed.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (The information in the 'Policy Content' section makes it clear how the draft plan aligns with key policies and strategies)



For the information in the 'What we do' section, 50% of respondents tended to agree that the section is clear on what Leicestershire County Council's responsibilities are when it comes to managing the Rights of Way network, and 27% strongly agreed.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (The information in the 'What we do' section is clear on what Leicestershire County Council's responsibilities are when it comes to managing the Rights of Way network)



Themes of Other Responses

The survey offered respondents the opportunity to provide any other comments on the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The consultation revealed concerns about the **maintenance** and **accessibility** of public rights of way across Leicestershire. Many respondents reported issues with overgrown vegetation, poor surface conditions, and missing signage, which make paths difficult or unsafe to use. There is a strong call for improved access for wheelchair users, horse riders, cyclists, and dog walkers, including replacing stiles with gates and ensuring paths are wide and well-drained.

However, the consultation also highlighted **conflicts between different user groups**, such as tensions between horse riders and pedestrians, or between motorcyclists and other non-motorised users, particularly where shared use leads to erosion or safety risks. There is also concern about **road safety**, especially for vulnerable users, and a desire for **more connected routes** between villages to support active travel.

Respondents urged **better collaboration** between councils, landowners, volunteers, and developers, and stressed the need for developers to maintain connectivity and avoid blocking existing routes. Many felt the consultation **documents** are overly complex and lack clear, measurable actions, suggesting the need for simpler summaries and improved digital **mapping tools**.

Finally, respondents emphasized the importance of adequate **resources and funding**, improved **reporting** systems, and a more ambitious **transport-focused vision** for the public rights of way network that prioritizes everyday use over leisure.

Demographics

Role in Responding to Survey

253 respondents stated their role in relation to the survey, 205 (81%) of the respondents to the consultation stated that they were Leicestershire residents. Another 25 (10%) said that they were County, district or parish/town councillors. Six stated that they were visitors to Leicestershire for either work or pleasure, a further six stated that they were public sector representatives. Four respondents stated that they were voluntary sector representatives and five were Council staff with these categories each making up approximately 2% of survey respondents. Two (1%) respondents stated that their role was outside of these categories.

Employment Status

207 survey respondents declared their employment status. 68 (33%) stated that they were in full-time employment, 21 (10%) stated they were in part-time employment (less than 30 hours per week) and 5% were self-employed or part-time. 92 (44%) of these respondents were retired from work with one (1%) stating they were unemployed and available for work and four (2%) stating they were permanently sick and disabled. Six (3%) respondents stated that they were looking after their home and four (2%) were doing activities outside of these categories.

Parental or Caring Responsibilities

Of the 205 survey respondents to answer this question, 30 (15%) said they were either a parent or full-time carer for a person aged 17 or under and 175 (85%) said they were not.

Gender Identity

Of the 206 survey respondents who answered this question, 109 (53%) identified as male and 93 (45%) identified as female, with a further four (2%) respondents stating that they used another term to describe their gender identity.

Sexual Orientation

Of the 196 survey respondents to state their sexual orientation, 170 (87%) stated that they were heterosexual, eight (4%) identified as gay or lesbian, six (3%) identified as bisexual and another 12 (6%) stated that they use another term to describe their sexual orientation.

Age

The age range of the 198 survey respondents who stated their age was between 28 and 94 years of age with the mean age amongst these respondents being 61 years old.

Disability

205 out of the 254 survey respondents stated their disability status, with 58 (28%) respondents stating that they were disabled or suffering from a long-standing illness or infirmity, and 147 (72%) stating they did not.

Ethnicity

206 out of the total 254 survey respondents stated their ethnic identity with 199 (97%) respondents stating that they were White, 2 (1%) stating that they identified as Asian or Asian British and 5 (2%) declaring they were part of another ethnic group.

Vehicle Ownership and Use

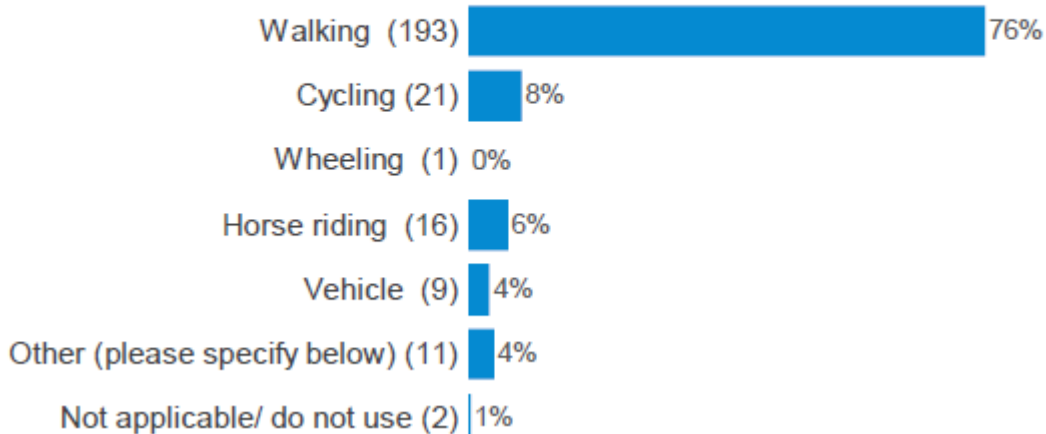
204 respondents to the survey stated the number of car or vans either owned or in use by members of their household. Of these respondents, eight (4%) said their household used or owned neither a car nor a van, 72 (35%) stated that they had one car or van in the household, 90 (44%) said they had two cars or vans and 22 (11%) said they had three. There were nine respondents (4%) who stated that their household had four or more cars, and three (2%) respondents did not know the number of cars and vans in their household.

How respondents use rights of way

- Walking 76%
- Cycling 8%
- Horse riding 6%
- Wheeling <1%
- Vehicle 4%

- Other 4% (these 11 responses included: eight running, one motorcycle, one walker and wheelchair, one powerchair and scooter)
- 1% (two responses were N/A / do not use)

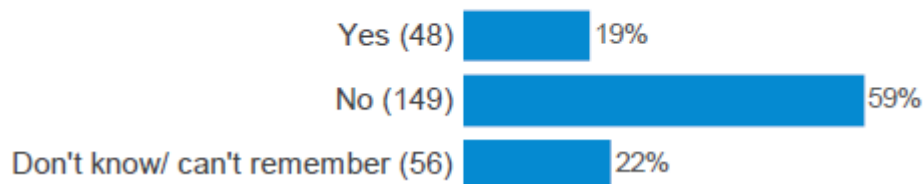
When using the Rights of Way Network what is your main mode of transport? (Please select one option only which best reflects your most used mode)



Fraction of respondents in this survey who had responded to previous survey

59% of respondents in this survey had not responded to previous survey. 19% of respondents in this survey had responded to previous survey.

Earlier this year we ran a separate public engagement survey to help inform the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). Did you respond to that previous survey?



Appendix D

Equality Impact Assessment Form

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

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

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

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

Once the EIA has been approved by the Senior Responsible Officer, please ensure that a copy is placed on the SharePoint folder: “Equalities Board, EIAs”

1- Policy details	
Name of policy	Rights of way Improvement Plan Update
Department and service	E&T - Network Management
Who has been involved in completing the Equality Impact Assessment?	Lee Quincey, Head of Service Network Management
Contact numbers	Lee.Quincey@leics.gov.uk
Date of completion	17/04/2025, and updated 05/09/2025

2- Objectives and background of policy or practice change	
Use this section to describe the policy or practice change What is the purpose, expected outcomes and rationale? Include the background information and context	
What is the proposal?	The proposal is to update Leicestershire County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) to ensure that it aligns with the new Local Transport Plan for Leicestershire (LTP4) and Government legislation. The Council has a duty to produce a RoWIP ¹ which assesses "the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public....for exercise and

¹ Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

What change and impact is intended by the proposal?

other forms of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area." It should be reviewed every ten years, ensuring that use of the network is being maximised in the most cost-efficient way, and is in line with the current Local Transport Plan (LTP4).

The Council, by working with other agencies, including the voluntary sector and other authorities, aims to:

- Develop and manage a public rights of way network that meets the current and future needs of the local community.
- Provide a good quality and value for money rights of way service.
- Enable as many people as possible to walk and ride, with particular focus on those currently excluded including the young and those with mobility problems.
- Contribute towards improving the health of residents of Leicestershire and reduce their carbon footprint.
- Promote Leicestershire as an attractive place to walk, cycle and ride for all, including those living in or visiting the County.
- Monitor and report on how we are achieving these goals at regular intervals.

The ongoing ambitions to improve the public rights of way network and progress made to date is having an overall positive impact for all, including many with protected characteristics.

The Plan is designed to address equality and access issues for users and does not, in itself, create new concerns. The RoWIP is intended to enable the Authority to continue to successfully manage and improve the rights of way network over the next 10-year period, to ensure it meets the current and future needs of its users, including those with protected characteristics and minority user groups.

What is the rationale for this proposal?	Relevant local authorities are required to have an up to date RoWIP as set out in Legislation. The current RoWIP is now due for review and update. The Council also recently developed and published an updated LTP4. The public rights of way network is an integral part of the transport and travel network and is key in supporting aims to encourage active travel and a move away from car use, reducing congestion and air pollution, and improving physical and mental health and wellbeing.

3- Evidence gathered on equality implications - Data and engagement

What evidence about potential equality impacts is already available?

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

What equalities information or data has been gathered so far?	An online survey (also available in paper format) was launched between 19 February and 17 March 2025. This included questions regarding demographics of respondents, barriers to using the rights of way network, and priorities for users that would encourage them to use the network.
What does it show?	Key demographics stats of survey respondents: • 70% were between the ages of 25 and 64 • 60% identified as female • 15% have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity

- 97% identified as White ethnic group
- 92% were Straight/Heterosexual
- 20% were a parent or carer of a young person aged 17 or under
- 98% had access to a car

Key findings include the following:

Barriers to increasing usage of public rights of way:

- Pathway condition
- Physical barriers such as gates and stiles
- Lack of signage
- Safety concerns
- Information provision
- Accessibility of paths
- Lack of awareness of the network

Things that would encourage respondents to use the public rights of way network include:

- Parking facilities near routes
- Better quality routes
- Better maintained routes
- Better parking facilities near routes
- Clear signage
- Improved accessibility of routes
- More information on where to walk or ride
- Better connected routes

What engagement has been undertaken so far?

Public Rights of Way Survey

An online survey (also available in paper format) was launched between 19 February and 17 March 2025. The survey was made available to the public via the Leicestershire County Council's Have Your Say webpage as well as being shared directly with stakeholders outlined in the RoWIP Statutory Guidance published by the Government agency DEFRA - Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.

Social PinPoint

Using the engagement tool Social PinPoint, an interactive map was created displaying layers of information relating to public rights of way in Leicestershire. Users were able to add a marker to a specific location/right of way and provide detail which related directly to that site such as highlighting good or bad routes, suggestions for improvements, maintenance or accessibility issues.

Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Forum

A public meeting of the cycling, walking and wheeling forum was held at County Hall in Glenfield on Monday 3 March 2025, with over 40 attendees. This event was held through the establish forum, which is a hybrid forum, meaning it can be attended either in person or online. A presentation was provided giving an overview of the rights of way in Leicestershire, along with the development of the RoWIP. A rights of way workshop was also included as part of the event providing attendees the opportunity to share detailed feedback and discuss their thoughts on the network.

What does it show?

The engagement feedback has been analysed providing the below insights.

What is preventing people from using the network?

As well as knowing what works well and why people use the network how they do, it was important to also understand what might prevent the public from using the public rights of way in Leicestershire. The survey showed that 51% of respondents highlighted that maintenance prevented them from using the network as well as 29% noting that physical access to routes were an issue for them. This includes things such as stiles making routes inaccessible for users with disabilities and mobility issues, gates restricting horse riders along routes, as well as issues with flooding and overgrown vegetation making access to paths restrictive. More accessible links to bridleways was also a common theme, as respondents noted that equestrians have to use the main road network to reach off-road bridleway which can be some distance away.

When asked what would encourage respondents of the survey to use public rights of way more often, maintenance was a clear theme that came through from all users with 62% agreeing that better maintained paths, cycleways and bridleways would encourage more frequent use.

When asked if more accessible routes with gates instead of stiles would encourage more use of the network, 38% responded that it would a great deal, an additional 28% saying it would somewhat help.

84% of people responding to the survey would like to see clearer signage when out using the network, along with more printed and digital route information provision readily accessible, 70% and 79% respectively. To some extent respondents also acknowledge that improved personal safety measures would encourage more usage along with more facilities such as cafes, toilets, seating and

picnic areas on routes. 36% said they would like to see better parking facilities near routes including free or reduced parking charges.

Information Provision

80% of respondents access public rights of way information such as maps and/or walking routes through digital websites/Apps such as OS Maps, Strava and Google (with less people visiting the Council website for information).

A high percentage of respondents said they felt confident when using either online maps or printed maps to follow a path across fields, but more information should be made available to provide help and support to those who need it. People would like to see an improvement in the wayfinding across the network to help them identify routes with 46% agreeing that this would encourage them a great deal. When asked if more printed information on where to walk/cycle/ride would encourage more use on the public rights of way network, 41% responded that to some extent it would.

Priorities

From the results of the survey, 46% of respondents tend to agree that the most heavily used public rights of way routes should be prioritised for maintenance. With 43% agreeing that this should include promoted routes such as the Leicestershire Round. A high proportion also noted that they felt vehicles should be restricted from using unsurfaced rural lanes during winter months as this is when most damage occurs. Response to whether future improvements should focus on routes nearer to where most people live was neutral; however, 29% did tend to agree. Majority of respondents believe that developers should be encouraged to provide more walking and riding opportunities.

	Respondents would like to see a “greenways” network of high-quality rights of way routes that link towns and villages developed. <u>Social PinPoint</u> This online mapping tool allowed users to populate information specific to footpaths, bridleways and byways. There were four categories to choose from, including ‘I like this’, ‘I don’t like this’, ‘improvements’ and ‘usage barriers’. There were 125 pins received and after analysing the comments 65% of respondents noted maintenance as an issue with 14% highlighting physical barriers/accessibility being a problem on some routes. Other areas that were noted included safety and network connectivity. This data shows very similar themes to the survey results where maintenance and accessibility appears to be a key priority.
Consultation undertaken	To ensure the RoWIP meets the needs of communities within Leicestershire, a consultation took place for 12 weeks from 22 May to 14 August 2025 providing the opportunity for residents, visitors, partners and stakeholders to review the draft RoWIP document and actions set out for the next 10 years. This also included seeking the views of all the parish and district councils within Leicestershire in addition to the statutory consultees. <u>Consultation Process</u> Survey:

What it showed

An online survey (also available in paper format) was launched between 22 May to 14 August 2025. The survey was made available to the public via the Council's Have Your Say webpage, as well as being shared directly with stakeholders who were identified in the RoWIP Statutory Guidance.

RoWIP Roadshows:

Seven roadshows were held across the county to enable people from all communities to have their say. Members of the public were invited to ask questions relating to the draft RoWIP, speak to Public Rights of Way specialists and complete paper copies of the survey.

Social Media:

The online survey and roadshows were promoted through social media channels and the posts received 1208 clicks and 127 shares across all platforms.

Public Rights of Way Consultation Summary

The RoWIP as a whole

Overall, 50% of respondents tended to agree with the RoWIP. It is noted that 18% strongly agreed and 20% were neutral.

The RoWIP Action Plan

In terms of the actions identified in various areas (i.e. Highway Authority, Surveying Authority, Planning, and Access Authority):

- 46% of respondents tended to agree with the actions identified in the 'Highway Authority' (14% strongly agreed);
- 48% of respondents tended to agree with the actions identified in the 'Surveying Authority' (12% strongly agreed);

- 43% of respondents tended to agree with the actions identified in the 'Planning and Promotion' (11% strongly agreed);
- 44% of respondents tended to agree with the actions identified in the 'Access Authority' (13% strongly agreed).

However, 27% of responses were neutral towards the actions identified in all the areas.

Priorities

38% of respondents tended to agree that the priorities identified from the initial engagement reflect their views and needs as users, and 26% were neutral.

Achievements

37% of respondents tended to agree that the achievements noted within the Plan reflect what they see when using the network, and 10% strongly agreed.

Information in the RoWIP

For the information in the 'Policy Content' section, 50% of respondents tended to agree that the section makes it clear how the draft Plan aligns with key policies and strategies, and 20% strongly agreed.

For the information in the 'What we do' section, 50% of respondents tended to agree that the section is clear on what Leicestershire County Council's responsibilities are when it comes to managing the public rights of way network, and 27% strongly agreed.

Themes

The consultation revealed concerns about the **maintenance** and **accessibility** of public rights of way across Leicestershire. Many respondents reported issues with overgrown vegetation, poor surface

conditions, and missing signage, which make paths difficult or unsafe to use. There is a strong call for improved access for wheelchair users, horse riders, cyclists, and dog walkers, including replacing stiles with gates and ensuring paths are wide and well-drained.

However, the consultation also highlighted **conflicts between different user groups**, such as tensions between horse riders and pedestrians, or between motorcyclists and other non-motorised users, particularly where shared use leads to erosion or safety risks. There is also concern about **road safety**, especially for vulnerable users, and a desire for **more connected routes** between villages to support active travel.

Respondents urge **better collaboration** between councils, landowners, volunteers, and developers, and stress the need for developers to maintain connectivity and avoid blocking existing routes. Many felt the consultation **documents** are overly complex and lack clear, measurable actions, suggesting the need for simpler summaries and improved digital **mapping tools**.

Finally, respondents emphasized the importance of adequate **resources and funding**, improved **reporting** systems, and a more ambitious, **transport-focused vision** for the public rights of way network that prioritizes everyday use over leisure.

Demographics

Role in Responding to Survey

253 respondents stated their role in relation to the survey, 205 (81%) of the respondents to the RoWIP consultation stated that they were Leicestershire residents. Another 25 (10%) said that they were County, district or parish/town councillors. Six stated that they were visitors to Leicestershire for either work or pleasure, a further six stated that they were public sector representatives. Four respondents stated that they were voluntary sector representatives and five were Council staff with

these categories each making up approximately 2% of survey respondents. Two (1%) respondents stated that their role was outside of these categories.

Employment Status

207 survey respondents declared their employment status. 68 (33%) stated that they were in full-time employment, 21 (10%) stated they were in part-time employment (less than 30 hours per week) and 5% were self-employed or part-time. 92 (44%) of these respondents were retired from work with one (1%) stating they were unemployed and available for work and four (2%) stating they were permanently sick and disabled. Six (3%) respondents stated that they were looking after their home and four (2%) were doing activities outside of these categories.

Parental or Caring Responsibilities

Of the 205 survey respondents to answer this question, 30 (15%) said they were either a parent or full-time carer for a person aged 17 or under and 175 (85%) said they were not.

Gender Identity

Of the 206 survey respondents who answered this question, 109 (53%) identified as male and 93 (45%) identified as female, with a further four (2%) respondents stating that they used another term to describe their gender identity.

Sexual Orientation

Of the 196 survey respondents to state their sexual orientation, 170 (87%) stated that they were heterosexual, eight (4%) identified as gay or lesbian, six (3%) identified as bisexual and another 12 (6%) stated that they use another term to describe their sexual orientation.

Age

The age range of the 198 survey respondents who stated their age was between 28 and 94 years of age with the mean age amongst these respondents being 61 years old.

Disability

205 out of the 254 survey respondents stated their disability status, with 58 (28%) respondents stating that they were disabled or suffering from a long-standing illness or infirmity, and 147 (72%) stating they did not.

Ethnicity

206 out of the total 254 survey respondents stated their ethnic identity with 199 (97%) respondents stating that they were White, 2 (1%) stating that they identified as Asian or Asian British and five (2%) declaring they were part of another ethnic group.

Vehicle Ownership and Use

204 respondents to the survey stated the number of car or vans either owned or in use by members of their household. Of these respondents, eight (4%) said their household used or owned neither a car nor a van, 72 (35%) stated that they had one car or van in the household, 90 (44%) said they had two cars or vans and 22 (11%) said they had three. There were nine respondents (4%) who stated that their household had four or more cars, and three (2%) respondents did not know the number of cars and vans in their household.

Survey background:

How respondents use rights of way

- Walking 76%
- Cycling 8%
- Horse riding 6%
- Wheeling <1%
- Vehicle 4%

	• Other 4% (these 11 responses included: eight running, one motorcycle, one walker and wheelchair, one powerchair and scooter) • 1% (two responses were N/A / do not use) Fraction of respondents in this survey who had responded to previous survey 59% of respondents in this survey had not responded to previous survey. 19% of respondents in this survey had responded to previous survey.
Future Engagement	Continuous engagement, following the adoption of the updated RoWIP, will be part of delivering the Plan. This will be undertaken through the Access forum, and working with partners/groups/organisations/service providers and volunteers.

4- Benefits, concerns and mitigating action

Please specify if any individuals or community groups who identify with any of the '[protected characteristics](#)' may **potentially** be affected by the policy and describe any benefits and concerns including any barriers. Use this section to demonstrate how risks would be mitigated for each affected group. If a group will not be affected by the proposal please state so.

Group	What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	What are the concerns identified and how will these affect those from the following groups?	How will the known concerns be mitigated?
Age	Elderly people and young children are less likely to use public rights of way. By continuing to map, manage, improve, and encourage use of the network, it is anticipated that it will	The revised RoWIP should not introduce any new significant concerns as its purpose is to improve access for all.	Include actions in the Action Plan that: • Improve and increase working in partnership with groups/organisations/service providers that serve people in different age groups,

	become more accessible, appealing, and used by people in these age groups. Enhancing safety measures and tackling perceptions of the likelihood of crime will also play a big part in encouraging this group of people to use the routes.	There may be a small risk if the use of public rights of way is promoted as accessible and appealing without carrying out necessary improvements. People may try to use them and end up in difficulty. There may be a perception of an increased risk of crime due to additional vulnerabilities which could be difficult to relieve.	including the elderly, children and family groups, to promote, encourage and enable use of public rights of way, such as through arranging group walks. • Provide targeted information, promotions and communication campaigns for different age groups, to ensure that there is clear information on individual public rights of way to enable people to make informed and safe plans for using them. Include actions in the Action Plan that improves: • Accessibility of routes, including reducing stiles and replacing with gates or gaps in physical barriers such as hedges and fence lines. • Quality and type of path surfaces. • Effectively and efficiently manage and maintain public rights of way to provide safe and accessible routes. • Better connect communities including by creating a 'Greenways network' of high quality accessible routes connecting settlements.
Disability	Many, but not all, people with disabilities (including visible, invisible,	As for "Age" above:	Include actions in the Action Plan to:

	neurodiverse or mental disabilities) are generally disadvantaged by accessibility issues with public rights of way. The RoWIP aims to actively reduce the various barriers as much as possible for all. This ranges from the most obvious improvements, such as path condition and removal of physical barriers, to providing more information or working with partners and volunteer network who can help build confidence for people who feel unable to try them. There is also opportunity to provide information, such as maps and guides in accessible formats.	The revised RoWIP should not introduce any new significant concerns as its purpose is to improve access for all. There may be a small risk if we promote the use of public rights of way as accessible and appealing without carrying out necessary improvements people may try to use them and end up in difficulty. There may be a perception of an increased risk of crime due to additional vulnerabilities which could be difficult to relieve.	• Improve and increase working in partnership with groups/organisations/service providers that serve people with disabilities, to promote, encourage and enable use of public rights of way. • Provide targeted information, promotions and communication campaigns for this user group, to ensure that there is clear information on the accessibility of individual public rights of way to enable people to make informed and safe plans for using them. This would include both physical disability, neurodiversity and mental disabilities. Include actions in the Action Plan which: • Improves accessibility of routes, including reducing stiles and replacing with gates or gaps in physical barriers such as hedges and fence lines. • Improves quality and type of path surfaces • Better connect communities, including by creating a 'Greenways network' of high quality accessible routes connecting settlements
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			Effectively and efficiently manage and maintain public rights of way to provide safe and accessible routes.
Race	There could be a greater perception among some people of different races of the risk of crime, in particular hate crime, especially as instances in the media of this appear to have recently increased. This may be a deterrent from using public rights of way if they are considered to be secluded with low footfall. Improvements to lighting, visibility, cutting back overgrowth could go some way to alleviating some concern. There is opportunity to consider how to publicise and encourage use of public rights of way to people of all races and communities, including those who may also not read English very well, through availability of information, including maps and guides or working with community groups to promote.	No new concerns are raised by the revised RoWIP, but it is possible that concerns/perceptions about personal safety and crime could be difficult to address.	Encouraging groups/services that serve specific ethnicities to use public rights of way, such as through arranging group walks. Include actions in the Action Plan to: - Improve and increase working in partnership with groups/organisations/service providers catering for specific ethnicities to promote, encourage and enable use of public rights of way, such as through arranging group walks. - Provide targeted information, promotions and communication campaigns for this user group, to ensure that there is clear information on the accessibility of individual public rights of way to enable people to make informed and safe plans for using them. - Improve quality of routes including providing clear signage. - Better connect communities, including by creating a 'Greenways network' of high quality accessible routes connecting settlements. - Effectively and efficiently manage and maintain public rights of way to provide safe and accessible routes.

Sex	Personal safety concerns and the perception of crime is a particular barrier for women in choosing to use public rights of way, especially in isolated areas or where visibility is poor. The improvement ambitions set out in the revised RoWIP will have a physical impact on safety.	No new concerns are raised by the revised RoWIP, but it is possible that concerns/perceptions about personal safety and crime could be difficult to address.	Include actions in the Action Plan to: • Improve and increase working in partnership with groups/organisations/service providers predominantly catering for women, to promote, encourage and enable the use of public rights of way, such as through arranging group walks. • Provide targeted information, promotions and communication campaigns for this user group, to ensure that there is clear information on the accessibility of individual public rights of way to enable people to make informed and safe plans for using them. • Improve quality of routes by providing clear signage. • Effectively and efficiently manage and maintain public rights of way to provide safe and accessible routes.
Gender Reassignment	Some people who have transitioned/are transitioning may have similar concerns about safety and violence as women and people of other ethnicities. The improvement ambitions set out in the revised RoWIP will have a physical impact on safety.	No new concerns are raised by the revised RoWIP, but it is possible that concerns/perceptions about personal safety and crime could be difficult to address.	Include action in the Action Plan to: • Provide targeted information, promotions and communication campaigns for this user group, to ensure that there is information on how to access public rights of way across the network

			enabling to help make informed and safe plans for using the network. • Improve quality of routes by providing clear signage. • Effectively and efficiently manage and maintain public rights of way to provide safe and accessible routes.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No specific additional benefits are anticipated.	No specific additional concerns are anticipated.	
Sexual Orientation	Some LGBT+ people may have similar concerns about safety and violence as women and people of other ethnicities. The improvement ambitions set out in the revised RoWIP will have a physical impact on safety.	No new concerns are raised by the revised RoWIP. Concerns about personal safety and crime cannot be mitigated by the RoWIP actions alone.	Include action in the Action Plan to: • Provide targeted information, promotions and communication campaigns for this user group, to ensure that there is information on how to access public rights of way across the network enabling to help make informed and safe plans for using the network. • Improve quality of routes by providing clear signage. • Effectively and efficiently manage and maintain public rights of way to provide safe and accessible routes.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Personal safety, health and accessibility are likely to be concerns for some during pregnancy or maternity.	No new concerns are raised by the revised RoWIP.	Include actions in the Action Plan to: • Provide targeted information, promotions and communication campaigns for this user group, to ensure that there is clear information on how

	The improvement ambitions set out in the revised RoWIP will have a physical impact on these. There is also opportunity to publicise the health benefits of using public rights of way.	Concerns about personal safety and crime cannot be mitigated by the RoWIP alone.	to access public rights of way for physical exercise and mental wellbeing. • Improve quality of routes by providing clear signage. • Effectively and efficiently manage and maintain public rights of way to provide safe and accessible routes.
Religion or Belief	No specific additional benefits are anticipated.	No specific additional concerns are anticipated.	
Armed Forces (including veterans)	No specific additional benefits are anticipated.	No specific additional concerns are anticipated.	
People with lived care experience	No specific additional benefits are anticipated.	No specific additional concerns are anticipated.	
Other groups: e.g., rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee	Improvements made through the Plan should benefit all citizens. The Plan has a significant role to play in improving public health through exercise and air quality. It also provides a free leisure opportunity as well as better connectivity across the county.	The Plan itself does not create any new concerns; however, there are opportunities to identify and help improve access and use of rights of way for those people experiencing rural isolation, health inequality or deprived communities in respect of free access to transport options, green spaces and physical exercise.	In regard to those experiencing rural isolation, health inequality or deprived communities in respect of free access to transport options, green spaces and physical exercise: Include actions in the Action Plan to: • Better connect communities by creating a 'Greenways network' of high quality accessible routes connecting settlements.

communities, looked after children, deprived or disadvantaged communities	Improvements to visibility and lighting will encourage use for longer hours, extending the opportunity to make the best use of public rights of way. This could improve accessibility for people such as those with caring responsibilities or restrictions on what they can do during the daytime.		• Effectively and efficiently manage and maintain public rights of way to provide safe and accessible routes. • Improve and increase working in partnership with groups/organisations/service providers that serve people in these groups, to promote, encourage and enable the use of public rights of way. • Provide targeted information, promotions and communication campaigns for these user groups, to ensure that there is clear information on public rights of way and supporting services on how to access them to encourage and enable the use of public rights of way from these user groups.
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5- Action Plan			
Produce a framework to outline how identified risks/concerns identified in section 4 will be mitigated.			
What action is planned?	Who is responsible for the action?	Timescale	Expected outcome
Provide targeted information, promotions and communication campaigns, to ensure that there is clear information on the	Sustainable Travel and Transport Team Communications Team	Ongoing each year in accordance with actions set out in the RoWIP.	• Increase in usage, particularly amongst people with protected characteristics or are otherwise disadvantaged.

accessibility of individual public rights of way to enable people to make informed and safe plans for using them.	Partnership organisations		• Health improvements. • Reduced car usage.
Improve and increase working in partnership with groups/organisations/service providers that serve people with specific protected characteristics, to promote, encourage and enable the use of public rights of way.	Sustainable Travel and Transport Team Identified partnership organisations and individuals	Ongoing every year in accordance with actions set out in the RoWIP.	• Increase in usage, particularly amongst people with protected characteristics or are otherwise disadvantaged. • Health improvements. • Reduced car usage.
Improve accessibility of routes, including reducing stiles and replacing with gates or gaps in physical barriers such as hedges and fence lines.	Sustainable Travel and Transport Team	Ongoing every year in accordance with actions set out in the RoWIP.	• Increase in usage, particularly amongst people with protected characteristics or are otherwise disadvantaged. • Health improvements. • Reduced car usage.
Better connect communities including by creating a 'Greenways network' of high quality accessible routes connecting settlements.	Sustainable Travel and Transport Team	Begin in 2026/27 in accordance with actions set out in the RoWIP.	• Increase in usage, particularly amongst people with protected characteristics or are otherwise disadvantaged. • Health improvements. • Reduced car usage.
Effectively and efficiently manage and maintain public rights of way	Sustainable Travel and Transport Team	Ongoing every year in accordance with actions set out in the RoWIP.	• Increase in usage, particularly amongst people with

to provide safe and accessible routes.			protected characteristics or are otherwise disadvantaged. • Health improvements. • Reduced car usage.
Improve quality and type of path surfaces.	Sustainable Travel and Transport Team	Ongoing every year in accordance with actions set out in the RoWIP.	• Increase in usage, particularly amongst people with protected characteristics or are otherwise disadvantaged. • Health improvements. • Reduced car usage.
Improve quality of routes by providing clear signage.	Sustainable Travel and Transport Team	Ongoing every year in accordance with actions set out in the RoWIP.	• Increase in usage, particularly amongst people with protected characteristics or are otherwise disadvantaged. • Health improvements. • Reduced car usage.

6- Approval Process

Departmental Equalities Group

(please post any comments from the Departmental Equalities Group here) Set out the date when the EIA was considered

Original EIA was considered on 23/04/2025 – prior to the formal public consultation:

	▪ Comment received on 02/05/2025 stated: <i>“We’ve had a look at this EIA, and it looks thorough and carefully considered. It is commendable that you have already done some engagement. Perhaps more work could be done to engage with ethnic minority communities to encourage people to know about and use the Rights of Way.”</i>
Corporate Policy Team	Please set out comments from the Corporate Policy Team
Sign off by the Senior Responsible Officer for the Project.	Ann Carruthers Director Environment and Transport 16/09/2025

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Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (HIA) Tool to Support Leicestershire County Council Decision Making

Appendix E

Proposal Name: Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)

Department: Environment & Transport **Name of contact:** Lee Quincey

How to use this tool

This is your tool to enable you to carry out a 'desktop' HIA. It will help you look at the potential impacts of your proposal on the health and wellbeing on our communities in Leicestershire, and consider the impact on health inequality.

Below are some tips on how to fill out the columns:

- **Impact** – To complete this section, have a think about what impact your proposal may have on each themes listed in the rows below, and importantly, if this impact will be positive or negative. Tick the '+' column for positive impacts and '-' for negative impacts.
- **Likelihood** – What is the likelihood of each impact? Try to support these decisions using available evidence. Tick the '?' column if you are uncertain an impact will occur and '!' if you are certain / have evidence an impact will occur.
- **Description of Impact** – How will the proposal impact on the population? If it will impact specific group or populations differently, identify this- you could add in multiple rows to show this. How severe is the impact likely to be? Will it be instant or in the future?
- **Recommendation** – This is the space to write recommendations around how positive impacts could be maximised and negative impacts minimised. This may include further research and links to information you have found.

Further guidance completing this form can be found in the HIA Support and Guidance notes.

What impact if any will the proposal have with regard to the themes listed below?

Theme	Nature		Likelihood		<u>Description of impact</u> • Scale -Think about inequalities- who will it impact on, which groups? • Severity- Mild/ Moderate/ Severe? • Timing- Short/ Medium/ Long term	Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)
	+	-	?	!		
Social Cohesion and Community Does the proposal encourage social interactions in the community, help to install a sense of neighbourliness and local pride in the area? Does the proposal encourage community participation and increase social inclusion?	+		?		The purpose of the RoWIP is to increase accessibility to public rights of way (PRoWs) throughout Leicestershire and to promote their use as a viable alternative to private vehicles. The PRoWs provide a free amenity for leisure and necessary trips. As improvements are made and publicised, there is opportunity to encourage specific communities or service user groups to use them collectively, such as through arranging group walks. Improvements made through the Plan can also improve connectivity between communities. TIMESCALE: the Plan covers a period of 10 years from approval.	Include actions in the Action Plan to: • Improve and increase working in partnership with groups/organisations/service providers that serve people: ○ in different age groups, including the elderly, children and family groups, to promote, encourage and enable use of the PRoWs, such as through arranging group walks. ○ with disabilities, to promote, encourage and enable use of the PRoWs. ○ of specific ethnicities to promote, encourage and enable use of the PRoWs in underrepresented communities. • Provide targeted information, promotions and communication campaigns for all users, including: ○ different age groups, to ensure that there is clear information on individual PRoWs to enable people to make informed and safe plans for using them. ○ People with disabilities, to ensure that there is clear information on the accessibility of individual PRoWs to enable people to make informed and safe plans for using them. This would include

Theme	Nature		Likelihood		Description of impact	Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)
	+	-	?	!	- Scale -Think about inequalities- who will it impact on, which groups? - Severity- Mild/ Moderate/ Severe? - Timing- Short/ Medium/ Long term	
						both physical disability, neurodiversity and mental disabilities. - People specific ethnicities to promote, encourage and enable use of the PRowS in underrepresented communities. - Better connect communities by creating a 'Greenways network' of high quality accessible routes connecting settlements increasing social cohesion and improving access to local essential services. - Provide online and printed information for people to help with the use of the PRow routes and attend events and training. - Facilitate guided walks and rides on the PRow network to help encourage and attract new users to the network and travelling actively. - Improve and increase working in partnership with groups/organisations/service providers that serve underrepresented user groups, including those with protected characteristics, to promote, encourage and enable use of the PRowS for all. - Engage and work in partnership with landowners and farmers to minimise conflict with livestock and users on the network. - Provide orienteering and map reading training session for user groups to empower users to confidently navigate the network. - Provide information provision and practical skills training to schools in Leicestershire on using the

Theme	Nature		Likelihood		Description of impact	Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)
	+	-	?	!	- Scale -Think about inequalities- who will it impact on, which groups? - Severity- Mild/ Moderate/ Severe? - Timing- Short/ Medium/ Long term	
						PRoW network in line with the countryside code. To include getting to know signs and symbols using the countryside, being considerate and protecting the environment. - Recruit and support volunteers helping to manage the network - Host the Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF) open to local people from all walks of life helping involve people in the decision making, ensuring all users are represented. - Assist parish councils who want to help look after local paths in their areas.
Employment and the Economy Does the proposal create new employment in the area or boost local economy/use of services Does the proposal reduce unemployment and economic activity, improve workplace conditions, offer access to gaining new skills? Health inequalities are driven by structural determinants- including the economic and environmental conditions in which people age and work	+		?		There is potential for improved PRoWs to be a viable commuting alternative whilst also offering health and wellbeing benefits. There are opportunities to work with interested employers, education establishments and individuals to increase skills through training, educational programmes and volunteering.	Include actions in the Action Plan to: - Better connect communities by creating a 'Greenways network' of high quality accessible routes connecting settlements increasing social cohesion and improving access to local essential services and businesses. - Recruit and support volunteers to help manage the network whilst gaining knowledge and skills. - Host the LLAF open to local people from all walks of life helping involve people in the discussions, planning, and decision making processes that enable successful management of the network,

Theme	Nature		Likelihood		<u>Description of impact</u> • Scale -Think about inequalities- who will it impact on, which groups? • Severity- Mild/ Moderate/ Severe? • Timing- Short/ Medium/ Long term	Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)
	+	-	?	!		
					Promoting the use of the PRoWs for all, or part, of journeys to and from work/study.	helping forum members gain knowledge and skills. • Provide orienteering and map reading training session for user groups to empower users to confidently navigate the network and gain skills. • Provide information provision and practical skills training to schools in Leicestershire on using the PRoW network in line with the countryside code. • Improve and increase working in partnership with groups/organisations/service providers, to promote, encourage and enable use of the PRoWs for all to access training, education and employment.
Transport Does the proposal impact on road safety, active travel, cycling and walking facilities and infrastructure Does the proposal cause community severance? Or impact on accessing Public transport?	+			!	The Plan is a fundamental part of the wider Local Transport Plan (LTP4) and is designed to facilitate successful management, maintenance and improvement of the PRoW network, increasing accessibility for all users promoting active travel and improving community severance.	Include actions in the Action Plan to: • Support the successful management, maintenance and improvement of the PRoW network infrastructure, in order to facilitate the use of the network for all current and future users. • Implement Greenways programme to identify and improve priority routes between settlements – improving surfacing, signage and reducing stiles and replacing with gates or gaps in physical barriers, such as hedges and fence lines, to better connect communities.

Theme	Nature		Likelihood		<u>Description of impact</u> • Scale -Think about inequalities- who will it impact on, which groups? • Severity- Mild/ Moderate/ Severe? • Timing- Short/ Medium/ Long term	Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)
	+	-	?	!		
						• Provide information provision and practical skills training to schools in Leicestershire on using the PRow network in line with the countryside code. To include getting to know signs and symbols using the countryside, being considerate and protecting the environment. • Promote, encourage and enable the use of the PRowS for all, for health, wellbeing and as a means of sustainable transport for peoples' journeys.
Physical Activity Think about how the proposal may impact on people being physically active, participate in active play or active travel. Health behaviours are influenced by wider determinants of health including income.	+			!	The Plan is designed to encourage and enable active travel such as walking, cycling and riding. By making improvements to accessibility, safety and general appeal, alongside increasing awareness, the PRowS provide a free and inclusive way of encouraging physical activity for all.	Include actions in the Action Plan to: • Help increase physical activity through encouraging and enabling active travel on the PRow network. • Support the successful management, maintenance and improvement of the PRow network infrastructure, in order to facilitate the use of the network for all current and future users. • Promote, encourage and enable the use of the PRowS for all, for physical and mental health, wellbeing and as a means of sustainable transport for peoples' journeys.

Theme	Nature		Likelihood		Description of impact	Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)
	+	-	?	!	- Scale -Think about inequalities- who will it impact on, which groups? - Severity- Mild/ Moderate/ Severe? - Timing- Short/ Medium/ Long term	
						Provide information provision and practical skills training to schools in Leicestershire on using the PRow network in line with the countryside code.
Housing Think about any effects the proposal may have on the affordability of housing, Affordability of heating home, neighbourhood design, access to green/blue space. Health inequalities are driven by structural determinants- the economic and environmental conditions in which people live, age and play	+			!	The RoWIP will improve and maintain free access to green and blue spaces for all people helping reduce inequalities. The RoWIP will also increase connectivity between settlements and their communities, improving access to essential services. This includes maximising opportunities to improve the network through the planning arena.	Include actions in the Action Plan to: - Support the successful management, maintenance and improvement of the PRow network infrastructure, in order to facilitate the use of the network for all current and future users. - Ensure the latest relevant information regarding the PRow is included in the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide, to aid land developers, their agents and other parties when designing and delivering developments. - Provide formal advice to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), and Secretary of State (SoS), on planning applications that are directly affected by the PRow. - Act as a point of expertise, to advise land developers and their agents on development proposals that may directly affect the PRow. - Ensure that the necessary PRow improvements are obligated from relevant parties as part of housing and employment

Theme	Nature		Likelihood		Description of impact	Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)
	+	-	?	!	- Scale -Think about inequalities- who will it impact on, which groups? - Severity- Mild/ Moderate/ Severe? - Timing- Short/ Medium/ Long term	
						land development, and support their delivery through Section 106 funding use. - Provide PRow input into Local Plan process, to ensure access opportunities are maximised to connect communities as part of long-term land development. - Ensure Green Infrastructure proposals are aligned to access and the PRow network, including mitigating flood risks. - Provide advice and work with Government agencies, including Network Rail, on infrastructure improvements.
Diet and Nutrition Think about how the proposal could encourage or discourage people from accessing healthy food choices, affordability of healthy choices, ability to grow own food. Does the proposal impact on sustainable food production? Health behaviours are influenced by wider determinants of health including income.	+		?		The RoWIP will also increase connectivity between settlements and their communities, improving access to essential services and employment potentially helping to address financial inequalities in affordability of healthy food.	Include actions in the Action Plan to: - Support the successful management, maintenance and improvement of the PRow network infrastructure, in order to facilitate use of the network for all current and future users. - Implement Greenways programme to identify and improve priority routes between settlements – improving surfacing, signage and reducing stiles and replacing with gates or gaps in physical barriers, such as hedges and fence lines, to better connect communities by improving access to essential services, training/education and employment.

Theme	Nature		Likelihood		Description of impact	Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)
	+	-	?	!	- Scale -Think about inequalities- who will it impact on, which groups? - Severity- Mild/ Moderate/ Severe? - Timing- Short/ Medium/ Long term	
Education and skills Think about how the proposal could encourage or discourage people from improving their educational attainment? Impact on opportunities to develop new skills? Providing opportunities for volunteering/ apprentices. Educational attainment is linked to health behaviours and health outcomes.	+		?		There are opportunities to work with interested employers, education establishments and individuals to increase skills through training, educational programmes and volunteering. Opportunities in promoting, encouraging and enabling the use of the PRoWs for all, or part, of journeys to and from training and education.	Include actions in the Action Plan to: - Better connect communities by creating a 'Greenways network' of high quality accessible routes connecting settlements increasing social cohesion and improving access to local essential services including training and education establishments. - Support the successful management, maintenance and improvement of the PRoW network infrastructure, in order to facilitate the use of the network for all current and future users. - Recruit and support volunteers to help manage the network whilst gaining knowledge and skills. - Host the LLAF open to local people from all walks of life helping involve people in the discussions, planning, and decision making processes that enable successful management of the network, helping forum members gain knowledge and skills. - Provide orienteering and map reading training session for user groups to empower users to confidently navigate the network and gain skills. - Provide information provision and practical skills training to schools in Leicestershire on using the PRoW network in line with the countryside code. - Improve and increase working in partnership with groups/organisations/service providers, to promote, encourage and enable use of the

Theme	Nature		Likelihood		<u>Description of impact</u> • Scale -Think about inequalities- who will it impact on, which groups? • Severity- Mild/ Moderate/ Severe? • Timing- Short/ Medium/ Long term	Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)
	+	-	?	!		
						PRoWs for all to access training, education and employment.

Theme	Nature		Likelihood		<u>Description of impact</u> • Scale -Think about inequalities- who will it impact on, which groups? • Severity- Mild/ Moderate/ Severe? • Timing- Short/ Medium/ Long term	Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)
	+	-	?	!		
Air Quality & Noise Think about how air pollution and noise could be impacted reducing car use, traffic congestion, reducing noise disturbances	+		?		An increase in use of the PRoWs, particularly for commuting/necessary journeys, should directly reduce the number of miles travelled by car or	Include actions in the Action Plan to: • Support the successful management, maintenance and improvement of the PRoW

Theme	Nature		Likelihood		<u>Description of impact</u> • Scale -Think about inequalities- who will it impact on, which groups? • Severity- Mild/ Moderate/ Severe? • Timing- Short/ Medium/ Long term	Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)
	+	-	?	!		
					other polluting vehicles within Leicestershire. This will improve congestion and air quality. Successful management of trees and vegetation improves air quality and biodiversity.	network infrastructure, in order to facilitate the use of the network for all current and future users. • Better connect communities by creating a 'Greenways network' of high quality accessible routes connecting settlements increasing social cohesion and improving access to local essential services. • Support management of trees and vegetation on the network to maintain and improve biodiversity and a healthy environment, including twice annual programme of cutting and clearing path maintenance.
Crime Reduction and Community Safety Does the proposal discourage crime and antisocial behaviour, reduce fear of crime, promote safe environment.	+		?		The Plan provides opportunities to improve and maintain paths to improve safety and perceptions of safety of users on the network. This includes implementing and applying enforcement protocol for third-party owners of overgrown vegetation on paths. Overgrown vegetation in urban environments can lead to users entering the carriageway, increasing risk of conflict with motor vehicles and associated road safety impacts.	Include actions in the Action Plan to: • Support the successful management, maintenance and improvement of the PRoW network infrastructure, in order to facilitate the use of the network for all current and future users. • Better connect communities by creating a 'Greenways network' of high quality accessible routes connecting settlements increasing social cohesion and improving access to local essential services via routes that segregate user from the main road network and motor vehicles, reducing risks of conflict and road collision related casualties.

Theme	Nature		Likelihood		Description of impact	Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)
	+	-	?	!	• Scale -Think about inequalities- who will it impact on, which groups? • Severity- Mild/ Moderate/ Severe? • Timing- Short/ Medium/ Long term	
					Some more isolated overgrown routes could be particularly off-putting due to concerns about personal safety.	• Support management of trees and vegetation on the network, including twice annual programme of cutting and clearing path maintenance. • Apply enforcement protocol on third-party owners of overgrown vegetation to ensure paths are safe and clear for users. • Ensure the latest relevant information regarding the PRoWs is included in the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide, to aid land developers, their agents and other parties when designing and delivering developments to help improve safety, including maximising natural surveillance of paths through urban environments. • Provide formal advice to LPAs, and SoS, on planning applications that are directly affected by the PRoWs. • Act as a point of expertise to advise land developers and their agents on development proposals that may directly affect the PRoWs. • Ensure that the necessary PRoW improvements are obligated from relevant parties as part of housing and employment land development, and support their delivery through Section 106 funding use.

Theme	Nature		Likelihood		Description of impact	Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)
	+	-	?	!	- Scale -Think about inequalities- who will it impact on, which groups? - Severity- Mild/ Moderate/ Severe? - Timing- Short/ Medium/ Long term	
Alcohol, Tobacco, Illegal drug use Does the proposal impact on the supply/use of alcohol and tobacco. Will it create an environment that discourages illegal drug use? Health behaviours are influenced by wider determinants of health.						N/A
Energy Use, Waste Minimisation Does the proposal impact on energy use, energy efficiency and waste?	+		?		The resulting reduction in use of fuelled transport will lead to an improvement in energy use (fuel) and emissions.	Include actions in the Action Plan to: - Support the successful management, maintenance and improvement of the PRoW network infrastructure, in order to facilitate the use of the network for all current and future users. - Promote the PRoW network and its use via Choose How You Move (CHYM), and forums to encourage and enable all users to travel sustainably to help reduce some car journeys.
Access to Public Services Does the proposal may impact demand for local services. Does the proposal impact on accessing health or social care services. Health inequalities can be driven where there are differences in distribution of resources, services	+		?		As with access to employment and education, some improvements to certain PRoWs could provide a real alternative to private vehicles in accessing public services.	Include actions in the Action Plan to: - Better connect communities by creating a 'Greenways network' of high quality accessible routes connecting settlements increasing social cohesion and improving access to local essential services. - Support the successful management, maintenance and improvement of the PRoW

Theme	Nature		Likelihood		<u>Description of impact</u> • Scale -Think about inequalities- who will it impact on, which groups? • Severity- Mild/ Moderate/ Severe? • Timing- Short/ Medium/ Long term	Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)
	+	-	?	!		
						network infrastructure, in order to facilitate the use of the network for all current and future users. • Improve and increase working in partnership with groups/organisations/service providers, to promote, encourage and enable the use of the PRoWs for all. • Promote the PRoW network and its use via CHYM, and forums to encourage and enable all users to travel sustainably to help reduce some car journeys.

Useful Contacts

Advice and support to fill out this form can be obtained through the Public Health team please email HIA@leics.gov.uk

**CABINET – 28 OCTOBER 2025****MELTON LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL UPDATE DUTY TO COOPERATE
STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND****REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet on the progress of Melton Borough Council's Local Plan and to seek approval for the County Council to become a signatory to a Statement of Common Ground with Melton Borough Council (Melton BC) regarding the two Authorities' 'Duty to Cooperate'.
2. The Statement of Common Ground (appended to this report) confirms that Melton BC and the County Council have effectively cooperated ahead of the examination of the Melton Local Plan Partial Update. Specifically, it confirms the consensus for the Melton Local Plan Partial Update period to mirror the period in the adopted Local Plan to 2036 and to confirm Melton BC's commitment to start a new Local Plan immediately after the adoption of the Local Plan Partial Update.
3. The agenda for this Cabinet meeting also includes a report recommending that the Council becomes a signatory to a separate Statement of Common Ground with Melton BC, concerning the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that the County Council becomes a signatory to the Melton Local Plan Partial Update Statement of Common Ground.

Reasons for Recommendation

5. The Duty to Cooperate (DtC) 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 (SoCG) has been jointly produced by Melton BC and the County Council to confirm that the parties have effectively and regularly cooperated to address matters associated with the production of the Melton Local Plan Partial Update.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. The SoCG will need to be approved by both Leicestershire County Council and Melton BC to support the submission of the Melton Local Plan Partial Update.
7. Melton BC is aiming for the submission of the Local Plan Partial Update by the end of 2025 and seeks to have this SoCG formally signed ahead of its Council meeting in November 2025.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. In December 2023 the Cabinet approved the response to the Melton Local Plan Update Issues and Options Consultation. This was a Regulation 18 consultation, the first formal stage of consultation for the Local Plan.
9. In February 2025 the Cabinet approved the response to the Pre-Submission Local Plan Update consultation. This was a Regulation 19 consultation which represents the final stage of public consultation before a plan is formally submitted and allows for representations on the plan's soundness and legal compliance.

Resource Implications

10. There are no resource implications arising from the recommendation in this report. The County Council has committed significant resources to engaging in, and supporting, a collaborative approach to strategic planning in order to facilitate the delivery of growth within the County and to mitigate the negative impacts of development, to the extent that it is reasonably possible to do.
11. The County Council continues to seek to provide support for a Local Plan that provides as robust as possible policy platform for securing the provision of infrastructure and services required to support its successful delivery.
12. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

13. This report will be circulated to members representing the Melton area – Mr. A. Innes CC, Mrs. K. Knight CC, Mr. B. Lovegrove CC and Mr. J. Orson CC.

Officers to Contact

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PART B

Background

14. The current Melton Local Plan was adopted by the Borough Council in October 2018 and covers the Plan period 2011 to 2036. It is a legal requirement that Councils review their Local Plan within five years of adoption, to decide whether the plan needs to be updated, either in whole or in part.
15. The outcomes of a five-year review of the Melton Local Plan were considered by Melton BC at its meeting on 28 September 2023. The review concluded that a partial update was required as most of the development management style policies required revision, whilst the Plan's overall strategic policies relating to the spatial strategy, housing targets and allocations continued to be appropriate and did not need an update.
16. The County Council has since submitted responses to Melton BC's Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation in December 2023, and Regulation 19 Pre-submission draft consultation in February 2025.
17. The Council's substantive response to the Pre-submission consultation was considered and approved by the Cabinet in February 2025 and the main comments are summarised as follows:
 - This is a partial (not full) review and the fundamentals of the development (spatial) strategy, plan period and housing allocations remain unchanged.
 - Strong justification is given to maintaining the plan period to 2036 with a view to undertaking a full review with an extended plan period. The recognition of the need to embark on a full review quickly following adoption of this partial review is supported.
 - The proposed revised policies reflect the Education infrastructure being planned for in Melton.
 - The Local Transport Authority (LTA) has no fundamental issues to raise in respect of the partial review.

Duty to Cooperate

18. The Duty to Cooperate (DtC) 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. To demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, the NPPF recommends that authorities 'prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these'. As stated in Part A of this report, this SoCG has been jointly produced with Melton BC.
19. The SoCG notes the consensus for the Melton Local Plan Partial Update period to mirror the period in the adopted Local Plan to 2036 and confirms Melton BC's commitment to start a new Local Plan immediately after the adoption of the Local Plan Partial Update.

20. This SoCG is produced without prejudice to other matters of detail that the parties may wish to raise during the Local Plan examination, including the matters around the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood and associated Statement of Common Ground which are the subject of a separate report to this Cabinet meeting.

Next Steps

21. The County Council and Melton BC will continue to engage as the plan progress towards an anticipated submission of the Local Plan Partial Update later in 2025 and subsequent examination in 2026.

Equality Implications

22. There are no equality implications arising from this report.

Human Rights Implications

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

Environmental Implications

24. The County Council will continue to work closely with Melton BC and other partners to minimise the impact of the planned growth on the environmental assets of Leicester and Leicestershire.
25. The impact upon the environment is a key consideration in all planning decisions made within the context of an approved or emerging Local Plan, and the County Council will seek to ensure that opportunities are taken to enhance the environment through biodiversity net gain and sustainable forms of development.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

26. The County Council works closely with the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Planning Partnership, which includes Melton BC, the other six district councils in Leicestershire, Leicester City Council and the Leicester and Leicestershire Business and Skills Partnership.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 19 December 2023: Response to Melton Borough Council's Local Plan Partial Update – Issues and Options Consultation - <https://bit.ly/4a51P7j>

Report to the Cabinet on 7 February 2025: Response to Melton Local Plan Partial Review Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Consultation Draft - <https://bit.ly/4mq5JMG>

Appendix

Melton Local Plan Partial Update Statement of Common Ground between Melton Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council



Melton Local Plan Partial Update

Statement of Common Ground between Melton Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council

1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) sets out areas of agreement and/or disagreement between Melton Borough Council, the plan-making authority, and Leicestershire County Council.
2. With this SoCG, Melton Borough Council seeks to demonstrate the cooperation between both local authorities ahead of the examination of the Melton Local Plan Partial Update. More specifically, Melton Borough Council seeks to:
 - a. Confirm the consensus for the Melton Local Plan Partial Update period to mirror the period in the adopted Local Plan: to 2036.
 - b. Confirm Melton Borough Council's commitment to start a new Local Plan immediately after the adoption of the Local Plan Partial Update.

Plan Period

It is common ground that:

3. As indicated in the [Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement](#) (section 2) Leicestershire County Council was consulted in May and July 2023 in relation to the conclusions of the statutory Local Plan Review.
4. Leicestershire County Council has been kept informed about the scope of the Melton Local Plan Update, the Local Plan period and any other relevant ongoing update through existing forums such as the Planning Officers Forum (POF).
5. As indicated in the [Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement](#) (section 3.1), a formal Duty to Cooperate meeting with several parties was held on the 22nd of October 2024 where the matter was covered, parties were invited to comment and no concern was raised at this point.

Considering the above, Leicestershire County Council agrees with the Melton Borough Council Local Plan Partial Update period to 2036.

New Local Plan

It is common ground that:

6. Melton Borough Council has indicated throughout the Local Plan Review and Local Plan process that a new Local Plan will be started immediately after the adoption of the Local Plan Partial Update.
 - a. [Local Development Scheme](#) (September 2023, superseded), paragraph 7.2 referred to as ‘further local plan update’
 - b. Duty to Cooperate meeting (October 2024)
 - c. [Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement](#) (January 2025), section 3.2
 - d. [Pre-Submission Local Plan Update](#) (January 2025), Policy SS6
 - e. [Local Development Scheme](#) (February 2025), paragraphs 3.9 and 7.2
7. Melton Borough Council will start a new Local Plan immediately after the adoption of the Local Plan Partial Update.
8. Melton Borough Council will seek to simplify its [Pre-Submission Local Plan Update](#) draft Policy SS6 (currently making reference to ‘local plan update’ in some of its paragraphs) and relevant supporting text during the examination (and subject to the Inspector’s considerations) by:
 - a. Simplifying the policy to the following (or similar) wording: *Policy SS6 – New Local Plan. The council will commence a new Local Plan immediately upon adoption of this partial update. On adoption of the partial update, the council will publish a Local Development Scheme to set out the timescales for the new Local Plan.*
 - b. Amending paragraph 109 to say: *As identified in the Local Development Scheme (2023) and subsequent updates, the council is committed to commence the preparation of a new local plan covering a longer plan period immediately after the adoption of this Local Plan Partial Update. This plan will be prepared under the provisions of the reformed approach to plan-making.*
 - c. Deletion of the remainder of the supporting text for this policy (paragraphs 110 to 121).
 - d. Adding reference in paragraph 24 to our commitment to continue working collaboratively with other authorities to meet unmet needs within the Housing Market Area.

Considering the above, Leicestershire County Council agrees that Melton Borough Council should commence the preparation of a new Local Plan immediately after the adoption of this Local Plan Partial Update.

Melton Local Plan Partial Update

Statement of Common Ground between Melton Borough Council and **Leicestershire County Council**

Signed on behalf of Melton Borough Council	Signed on behalf of Leicestershire County Council

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**CABINET – 28 OCTOBER 2025****MELTON SOUTH SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD STATEMENT
OF COMMON GROUND****REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND THE DIRECTOR OF
ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the County Council to become a signatory to a Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood Statement of Common Ground.
2. The Statement of Common Ground relates to the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood, and Southern Melton Mowbray Distributor Road and has been prepared jointly by the County Council, Melton Borough Council, Davidsons Developments Limited and Bloor Homes ('the parties'), to support the Melton Local Plan Partial Update examination. The Statement is currently being drafted and will be the subject of a supplementary report to this meeting.
3. The agenda for this Cabinet meeting also includes a report recommending that the Council becomes a signatory to a separate Statement of Common Ground with Melton BC, concerning the Local Plan Partial Update Duty to Cooperate.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that the County Council becomes a signatory to a Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood Statement of Common Ground subject to the actions and principles set out in Part B of this report.

Reasons for Recommendation

5. The Duty to Cooperate (DtC) 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 (SoCG) seeks to set out the ongoing commitment of the parties towards the joint working and delivery of the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood and Southern Melton Mowbray Distributor Road.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. The SoCG will need to be approved by the relevant parties to support the Melton Local Plan Partial Update examination.
7. Melton BC is aiming for the submission of the Local Plan Partial Update by the end of 2025 and seeks to have this SoCG formally signed ahead of its Council meeting in November 2025.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. In October 2023 the Cabinet considered a report on the latest position in relation to the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road South project. The Cabinet confirmed the County Council's ongoing commitment to Melton BC's existing Local Plan strategy but noted that the County Council was unable to draw down any further grant monies from the Housing Infrastructure Fund and was unable to proceed at present with the contribution of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road South.
9. In December 2023 the Cabinet approved the response to the Melton Local Plan Update Issues and Options Consultation. This was a Regulation 18 consultation, the first formal stage of consultation for the Local Plan.
10. In February 2025 the Cabinet approved the response to the Pre-Submission Local Plan Update consultation. This was a Regulation 19 consultation which represents the final stage of public consultation before a plan is formally submitted and allows for representations on the plan's soundness and legal compliance.

Resource Implications

11. There are no resource implications arising directly from the recommendation in this report. The County Council has committed significant resources to engaging in, and supporting, a collaborative approach to strategic planning in order to facilitate the delivery of growth within the County and to mitigate the negative impacts of development, to the extent that it is reasonably possible to do.
12. The County Council continues to seek to provide support for a Local Plan that provides as robust as possible policy platform for securing the provision of infrastructure and services required to support its successful delivery. The Council recognised that planned growth reduces the potential risks and costs associated with speculative development and therefore is supportive of the strategic approach to site allocation set out in the SoCG.
13. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

14. This report will be circulated to members representing the Melton area – Mr. A. Innes CC, Mrs. K. Knight CC, Mr. B. Lovegrove CC and Mr. J. Orson CC.

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PART B

Background

15. The current Melton Local Plan was adopted by the Borough Council in October 2018 and covers the Plan period 2011 to 2036. The County Council continues to work with Melton BC to deliver the proposal in this adopted Plan, in particular the key infrastructure which the County Council is responsible for. This includes the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road.
16. Melton BC is in the process of undertaking a Partial Update of its Local Plan to ensure the effectiveness of the policies is maintained and to reflect the changes to national planning guidance. The County Council submitted responses to Melton BC's Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation in December 2023, and Regulation 19 Pre-submission draft consultation in February 2025.

Duty to Cooperate

17. As part of the Local Plan process, both Melton BC and the County Council need to demonstrate the Duty to Cooperate (DtC). This 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. To demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recommends that authorities 'prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these'.
18. The agenda for this Cabinet meeting also includes a report recommending that the Council becomes a signatory to a separate Statement of Common Ground with Melton BC, the 'Local Plan Partial Update Duty to Cooperate'. This focuses on the engagement related requirements on the duty and is produced without prejudice to other matters of detail that the parties may wish to raise during the Local Plan Examination.

Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood Statement of Common Ground

19. This report and the recommendations are to address a further SoCG on the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood (MSSN). It reflects the work undertaken by Melton BC, the County Council, Davidsons Developments Limited and Bloor Homes (as promoters for the South Sustainable Neighbourhood) ('the parties') with regards this strategic allocation and the associated infrastructure, Melton Mowbray Distributor Road South. This SoCG will inform the Examination of the Local Plan Partial Update, specifically the changes to Policies SS4 (Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood) and IN1 (Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy).
20. The Local Plan strategy identifies two 'Sustainable Neighbourhoods', one to the north and one to the south of the town. The Melton North and Melton South

Sustainable Neighbourhoods make a substantial contribution to meeting the borough's needs for development up to 2036 and beyond.

21. The two allocated Sustainable Neighbourhoods include provision for a Melton Mowbray Distributor Road (MMDR) to relieve traffic congestion in the town centre. The MMDR forms a key component of the essential infrastructure which underpins the spatial strategy of the adopted Local Plan, to provide for a greater scale of future growth in Melton Mowbray and the wider borough and to enable and support the regeneration of the town centre as a tourism and leisure destination.
22. The County Council has worked closely with Melton BC to determine the route of the outer distributor road and to secure public funding, alongside developer contributions, to support the delivery of the road. The full distributor road will connect Nottingham Road to the northwest of the town to Burton Road to the southeast (North and East Melton Mowbray Distributor Road, NEMMDR) round to Leicester Road to the southwest of Melton Mowbray (Southern Melton Mowbray Distributor Road, S-MMDR).
23. The County Council successfully secured government funding for the North and East Melton Mowbray Distributor Road and is currently delivering the scheme using the Large Local Majors funding from central government funding combined with its own contribution and funding from the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and developer contributions. Work started in 2023 and is expected to be complete by Spring 2026.
24. The County Council was also successful in securing funding from Homes England for the South Melton Mowbray Distributor Road. However rising costs meant that it was not possible for the Council to meet the funding conditions and there has been a need to explore alternative approaches to the delivery of this section of the distributor road and the South Sustainable Neighbourhood. There has been particularly close working over the last 12 months to ensure it can come forward as a sustainable neighbourhood, containing the key services and facilities desired. This has included reviewing the masterplan proposals for the sustainable neighbourhood that were developed in support of the Housing Infrastructure Fund application.
25. Education and health officers are comfortable with the proposed amendments for this strategic allocation.
26. In respect of highways and transport considerations the County Council has formally committed to phased delivery of the MMDRS, subject to no funding for the scheme being required from the County Council. The latest transport evidence work demonstrates that phased delivery is possible in practical terms and further details on the phasing strategy and funding mechanisms are expected to be developed through further joint working and form part of appropriate planning applications. For example land will need to be safeguarded for full road construction in the current planning applications submitted by Bloor and Davidsons for the MSSN allocation. Positive resolution to planning applications prior to the Local Plan Examination next summer,

which should provide the best evidence of the soundness of the plan and officers have challenged the developers to seek to work towards this.

27. Officers will continue to input into the Local Plan Partial Update to safeguard the County Council's position regarding the future delivery of the MMDRS. This will include relevant Local Plan policies relating to the Southern Sustainable Neighbourhood.

Next Steps

28. Officers will be guided by the following principles in seeking to agree a SoCG;
 - Continued support for delivery of growth through the MSSN
 - Maintaining a policy basis within the Local Plan for delivery of sustainable growth with appropriate infrastructure including school provision and the MMDR S
 - Recognition of the need to phase the delivery of infrastructure with reference to site viability and cash flow considerations
 - Continued joint working between all parties to secure delivery of the MSSN
29. Subject to agreement the parties will continue to work together to deliver the site, using the agreed principles set out in the SoCG to inform joint masterplanning, phasing and delivery work to support the delivery of the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood within and beyond the plan period. This will include a senior level meeting with Melton Borough Council officers in finalising the SoCG.

Equality Implications

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

Human Rights Implications

31. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Environmental Implications

32. The County Council will continue to work closely with Melton BC and other partners to minimise the impact of the planned growth on the environmental assets of Leicester and Leicestershire.
33. The impact upon the environment is a key consideration in all planning decisions made within the context of an approved or emerging Local Plan, and the County Council will seek to ensure that opportunities are taken to enhance the environment through biodiversity net gain and sustainable forms of development.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

34. The County Council works closely with the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Planning Partnership, which includes Melton BC, the other six district councils in Leicestershire, Leicester City Council and the Leicester and Leicestershire Business and Skills Partnership.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 24 October 2023: Melton Mowbray Distributor Road South
<https://bit.ly/42RW5LO>

Report to the Cabinet on 19 December 2023: Response to Melton Borough Council's Local Plan Partial Update – Issues and Options Consultation
<https://bit.ly/4a51P7j>

Report to the Cabinet on 7 February 2025: Response to Melton Local Plan Partial Review Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Consultation Draft
<https://bit.ly/4mq5JMG>

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**CABINET – 28 OCTOBER 2025****LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL MUSEUM POLICY REVISION
AND ACCREDITATION****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to present the revised Museum Access Policy 2025-2030 and Collections Development Policy 2025-2030 and ask the Cabinet to approve the policies. The policies are attached as Appendices A and B respectively to this report.
2. The report also informs the Cabinet on the Museum Accreditation returns which have been submitted to Arts Council England (ACE).

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that:
 - a) The Museum Access Policy 2025-2030 and Collections Development Policy 2025-2030 be approved.
 - b) Subject to Cabinet approval, the Museum Access Policy 2025-2030 and Collections Development Policy 2025-2030, be submitted to Arts Council England, as per accreditation guidelines.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The current Museum Access and Collections Development policies expire in November 2025. The policies are a key requirement of the UK Museum Accreditation Standard.
5. The UK Museum Accreditation Scheme is administered by Arts Council England. The scheme encompasses the nationally agreed standards for UK museums. The standards ensure all museums are sustainable, focused and trusted and inspire the confidence of the public, funding organisations and governing bodies.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft policies at its meeting on 1 September 2025. The Committee's comments are set out in paragraph 53 of this report.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

7. Accreditation supports the 'Great Communities' outcome in the County Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026; "helping to ensure that cultural and historical heritage and the natural environment are enjoyed and conserved".
8. The policies were previously reviewed in 2021 and approved by the Cabinet on 19 November 2021.

Resource Implications

9. There are no additional financial resource implications to deliver this work.
10. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the contents of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

11. This report will be circulated to all members of the County Council.

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PART B

Background

12. The County Council has five accredited museum sites. These are Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, the 1620s House and Garden at Donington-le-Heath, Charnwood Museum (in partnership with Charnwood Borough Council), Harborough Museum (in partnership with Harborough District Council) and Melton Carnegie Museum.
13. The Access Policy sets out the County Council's Museum Service commitments to create a culture where people of all backgrounds and experiences feel appreciated and valued, providing access for everyone in terms of its sites, programming and collections.
14. The Collections Development Policy sets out the vision and purpose for the County Council's Museum Service and how it will deliver against these through its collections, acquisitions, disposals, and collections care.
15. These two policies form the basis of the Collections Development Framework, which also contains procedural guidance and action plans used by the Museum Service to guide its activity, ensure consistency, transparency, effective use of resources and adherence to museum ethics.

The Accreditation Standard

16. Accreditation normally lasts for five years and museums are required to maintain the standard throughout that period. Should a museum experience a significant change during the accreditation period, the terms and conditions of the standard require the organisation to notify ACE, so they can carry out a significant change review which could result in a change to the museums' accreditation status.
17. The Accreditation Standard links directly to 'Spectrum', the UK Collections Management standard, and the Museum Association 'Code of Ethics'.
18. Spectrum gives advice on the practices museums follow to manage their collections. There are nine primary procedures and a UK museum has to demonstrate it meets all nine as part of the Accreditation Scheme. They cover daily activities such as moving objects around and updating locations records and occasional activities, like updating insurance cover.
19. The Code of Ethics for Museums sets out the key ethical principles and supporting actions museums should take to ensure an ethical approach to their work. All museums are bound by national laws and international conventions relevant to museums and the code of ethics supports this legal framework and sets a standard for museums. The standard is made up of three principles which apply to museums and those that work in and with them, are summarised in the paragraphs below:

- a) Public engagement and public benefit:
 - Actively engage and work in partnership with existing audiences and reach out to new and diverse audiences.
 - Treat everyone equally, with honesty and respect.
 - Provide and generate accurate information for and with the public.
 - Support freedom of speech and debate.
 - Use collections for the public benefit – for learning, inspiration and enjoyment.
 - b) Stewardship of collections:
 - Maintain and develop collections for current and future generations.
 - Acquire, care for exhibition and loan collections with transparency and competency in order to generate knowledge and engage the public with collections.
 - Treat museum collections as cultural, scientific or historic assets, not financial assets.
 - c) Individual and institutional integrity:
 - Act in the public interest in all areas of work.
 - Uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct at all times.
 - Build respectful and transparent relationship with partners. organisations, governing bodies, staff and volunteers to ensure public trust in the museum's activities.
20. Gaining the standard is an endorsement that a museum is professionally run, sustainable and trustworthy. It also provides access to certain funding streams, including National Portfolio Organisation funding from ACE, which the County Council's museums and libraries currently receive.
21. The Accreditation Scheme is administered by ACE and award decisions are made by an Accreditation Panel. The possible decision outcomes are: Full accreditation (current status); Provisional accreditation; Remove accreditation; or Exclude from accreditation, due to deliberate non-compliance.
22. The Accreditation Standard is split into three sections and museums are required to have appropriate plans and policies in place. Below is a summary of each section:
- a) Section 1 – Organisational Health - A clear statement of purpose; appropriate constitution; satisfactory structure for governance and management of the museum; forward plan/business plan; financial sustainability; secure occupancy of all premises containing collections; risk assessment of security arrangements; a clear emergency plan.
 - b) Section 2 – Managing Collections - A description of collections held; scope, size and status of individual collections; an approved Collections Development Policy; an approved documentation policy; evidence the museum follows Spectrum documentation procedures; an approved

Collections Care and Conservation Policy; a Collections Care and Conservation Plan.

- c) Section 3 – Users and their Experiences - An approved Access Policy, which covers methods used to interpret collections and provide public access to collections, buildings and information; an Access Plan; evidence of non-users and the methods by which data is gathered; evidence that user feedback informs the development of the museum; a plan for developing a range of users; evidence of stimulating learning and discovery activities; evidence of effective marketing and promotion.

Museum Access Policy

- 23. The purpose of the Access Policy, attached as Appendix A, as set out in Section 3 (paragraphs 3.1-3.3), “is to state the commitment to increasing access to services and resources by identifying ways to provide an accessible, engaging, innovative, sustainable, relevant and responsive service of the highest quality”.
- 24. The service vision statement adopted in 2024: “Create space to spark imagination, celebrate communities and enhance wellbeing” (Section 1, paragraph 1.2) has been included.
- 25. The Policy scope (Section 2, paragraphs 2.1-2.6) covers museum venues, collections, learning programmes and resources, visitor services and communications.
- 26. Section 4 of the Policy recognises there are many barriers to access and makes a commitment to maximise access and uphold the statutory requirements.
- 27. The Policy defines eight key barriers to access, these being: Attitudinal, Cultural, Economic, Geographic, Cognitive, Physical, Sensory and Technological (paragraph 4.1). The term ‘Cognitive’ has replaced the term ‘Intellectual’ used in the 2021–2025 version of the Policy.
- 28. Section 6 (paragraphs 6.1-6.17) includes policy statements for each of the eight key barriers which set out how the service will seek to minimise or eliminate their impact. Many of these actions reflect ongoing activity, for example, under Economic Access, “Bosworth Battlefield and 1620s House and Garden at Donington-le-Heath take part in Heritage Open Days each year with free access”. Some are pieces of work under development, or not yet achieved at all museum venues. For example, under Sensory Access: “provide quieter spaces with less sensory engagement for those who need it”.
- 29. The statement on technical access, paragraph 6.16, has been expanded to include Artificial Intelligence, following feedback from the Departmental Equalities Group. The statement now recognises “...tools which use artificial intelligence (AI) are providing new ways for us to interpret our sites and collections, tell our stories and engage with our audiences.” and commitment to

being “...transparent about when AI is used to support interpretation and work in line with the County Council’s AI policy”.

30. Section 7 references the key policies, legislation and guidance the services uses to inform and support best practice delivery in this area.
31. The current Policy expires in November 2025 and the revised Policy is proposed to run until 2030.

Collections Development Policy

32. The purpose of the Collections Development Policy, attached as Appendix B, is to set out how the County Council’s museums will collect, care for and make accessible the collections it holds.
33. In order for users of the service, and potential donors and depositors to have a better understanding of the collections, the variety of natural and human activities are grouped into themes. The collections are stored, cared for, managed and retrieved by type under the following thematic approaches to the life of the County.
34. Below is a brief overview of each collection theme. A more detailed description of each theme is provided in Section 3 of the Policy under ‘An Overview of Current Collections’.

Natural Life

35. The collections, primarily of specimens and information, reflect the landscape, flora and fauna of the county. They demonstrate the changing natural environment of Leicestershire and its place in the rest of the world over time, comprising two main groups of botany and zoology.

Archaeology

36. The collections provide evidence of human activity in what is now Leicestershire. They cover all periods of time from the prehistoric to the modern, some half a million years. Collections include both finds and documentary archives from excavations, fieldwalking, metal detecting and chance finds across the County.

Home and Family Life

37. The collections reflect domestic life now and in the past. Alongside changes in domestic and personal technology they record important aspects of family life including rites of passage, family structures and entertainment. Objects include games, toys, sporting equipment and the ephemera and objects related to things like festivals and special occasions, shopping and holidays all fall within this collection.

Working Life

38. Collections reflect local trades and industries, partly through tools and equipment, focussing on the work of traditional craftspeople, such as the blacksmith, wheelwright, farmer and food producers. They also reflect the commercial life of the County's market towns in the 19th and 20th centuries.
39. More recent collecting has concentrated on local businesses, mainly small and innovative concerns producing a unique local product, through the acquisition of finished products, ephemera and images.
40. Collections include larger manufacturing industries of the 19th and 20th centuries and reflect the growth and decline of the industrial era and focus on engineering, transport and travel, coal mining and other extractive industries.

Cultural Life

41. Collections reflect the cultural interests of the people of Leicestershire and its centres of skills development for the creative industries. The collections form two main parts: the art collection and the fashion collection.
42. The art collection consists of sculpture, works on paper and easel paintings which reflect the artist's record of the changing landscape and built environment of the County; portraits of local people and their working and social lives and traditional pursuits particularly in the field of country sports.
43. The fashion collection reflects fashionable and occupational dress of adult men and women from the middle of the 18th century to the present day.
44. Leicestershire is a predominantly rural county with specialist centres of manufacturing, trade, learning, innovation and cultural and sporting activity. Each museum site reflects the particular nature of the area and the communities they serve. These are also reflected in the focus of collecting through these sites.
45. Section 4 of the Policy 'Themes and Priorities for Future Collecting' details priorities for future collecting and any types of collection that will not be accepted. Collections are primarily acquired through gift/donation. In exceptional circumstances, and when external funding can be secured, items may be purchased, for example, archaeological objects that become available for acquisition through the procedures laid down in the Treasure Act 1996.
46. The Policy ensures that the Museum Service operates in accordance with all relevant legislation, in particular the provisions of UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property (paragraph 8.6); UK laws concerning the treatment of biological and geological material (paragraph 10.1); The Treasure Act 1996 (paragraph 11.2); and the statement of principles in relation to "Spoilation of Works of Art", 1999 (paragraph 13.1).

47. The Policy outlines how the service reviews its collections (Section 5) both on an ongoing basis and a project basis. In the event these reviews recommend rationalisation, the policy sets how the museum seeks approval to dispose of individual objects, groups of objects or large collections and ensures disposal is undertaken in accordance with approved standards and best practice.
48. The current Policy expires in November 2025 and revised Policy is proposed to run until 2030.

Consultation

49. Officers from Charnwood Borough Council and Harborough District Council have been consulted on the revised policies and are supportive.
50. A co-creation workshop was held with Museum Service volunteers, participants and staff on 22 May 2025 as part of the review of the Collections Development Policy. The key comments from the workshop related to where the focus for proactive contemporary collection should be and the themes of Home and Family Life, Cultural Life and Working Life were identified.
51. In addition, the workshop made recommendations as to how this might be achieved. For Family Life they wished to see Leicestershire's contemporary family life reflected in the collections, including domestic and personal technology, popular culture, toys and games. For Cultural Life, they wished to see local people and communities and those who make significant contribution to life in Leicestershire with a series of commissioned portraits (photographic and other media). For Working Life, they wished this to reflect local service, manufacturing and distribution economies including local technological and creative industries.
52. These conclusions are reflected in the revised Policy and will form part of the Collections Development Plan, which is under development.

Comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

53. The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft policies at its meeting on 1 September 2025 and its comments and officer responses are summarised below.
54. Members queried if storage issues could affect museum accreditation. Officers confirmed archival storage challenges but clarified these were separate from museum accreditation. Improvements over four years have mitigated risks.
55. Concerns were raised about the volume and condition of stored items. Members requested details on the reserve collection policy, income generation from loans, acquisition and disposal processes. Officers explained loans followed a detailed collections development framework and were mainly to accredited museums, with no recent damage incidents reported. Officers undertook to share the loans policy with Members.

56. Acquisitions were reviewed by curatorial staff and approved by the Collections and Learning Manager. Disposals followed legal and policy guidelines, with routine cases handled by the Director of Adults and Communities and controversial disposals escalated to Members for consideration.
57. Members noted much of the collection was in storage and were concerned they were rarely seen and potentially incurred high storage costs. Officers confirmed that it was common for museums to have 5–8% of collections on display at any one time and explained that retaining stored items allowed flexibility for future needs and highlighted the collection's cultural value. Access was provided via five public sites, researcher visits, partnerships with educational institutions, and digital access through the museum collections website.
58. Officers advised that the policy included regular reviews to identify items for disposal, prioritising public rehoming. Most items were donated and cared for long-term, with disposal only considered when items no longer had a purpose. Officers welcomed discussion on improving access.
59. A recent book on Market Harborough used photographs from the museum collection, demonstrating its public value.
60. Virtual museums were noted as a valuable tool to enhance public access and complement physical exhibitions.
61. It was agreed that site visits would be arranged for Members of the Committee to better understand the stored collection and the challenges faced.

2025 Accreditation Returns

62. In December 2024, the County Council's five accredited museums received notification from ACE to submit accreditation returns for each museum by 1 August 2025. These returns have been acknowledged by ACE and a decision is expected within six months.
63. If the above museums have their accreditation status renewed, accreditation is expected to last until 2030, unless there are any significant changes that require reassessment before this date.
64. The service has responded to a series of questions via an online portal and submitted the following additional documentation and evidence to support the application:
 - a) The Collections Development Policy: 2021-2025 and Access Policy: 2021-2025 were submitted as part of the return. If the revised policies are approved by the Cabinet they will replace the versions submitted.
 - b) Published corporate information was provided including the County's Council's Constitution, Statement of Accounts, and Adults and Communities Strategy 2025-2029.

- c) Local plans and procedures included: Staff structure charts; Collections Management Framework; forward plans for each museum site; security assessments for all museum sites; marketing and communications plan; Targeted Audience Engagement Plan 2022–2027; Creative Learning Services Museum Learning Offer and Plan.

Conclusion

65. The Museum Service Access Policy and Collections Development Policy have been reviewed and updated within the review period and required guidance. Adoption of these plans will support the County Council to continue to provide a robust and efficient Museum Service and meet the accreditation standard.

Equality Implications

66. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for the Access Policy and was reviewed by the Adults and Communities Departmental Equalities Group. No areas of concern have been identified, but based on the feedback, paragraph 5.8 has been updated to include a reference to the Service's audience data strategy, which ensures equalities data is used to inform decision making and a statement on the use of AI included in paragraph 6.16.
67. There are no equalities issues in relation to the Collections Development Policy.

Human Rights Implications

68. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

69. Charnwood Museum is delivered in partnership with Charnwood Borough Council and Borough Council officers with operational responsibility for the museum have provided relevant information in support of the return for Charnwood Museum.
70. Harborough Museum is delivered in partnership with Harborough District Council and the Market Harborough Historical Society. Harborough District Council officers have contributed to the return for Harborough Museum.

Background Papers

Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2022-2026

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/faq/2022/4/12/Appendix-B-LCC-Strategic-Plan-2022-26.pdf>

Report to Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 8 March 2021 – Museum Accreditation – Review of Last Period of Submission (2015-19) and Preparations for Next Submission (2022-2026)

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=6461&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet: 19 November 2021 – Updated Policies for Leicestershire County Council’s Museum Service

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6448&Ver=4>

Report to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 1 September 2025 – Leicestershire County Council Museum Policy Revision and Accreditation

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=7854&Ver=4>

Accreditation Scheme Standard

https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Accreditation_Standard_Nov2018_0.pdf

Spectrum Collections Management Standard

<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/spectrum/>

Appendices

Appendix A - Museum Access Policy 2025-2030

Appendix B - Collections Development Policy 2025-2030

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Leicestershire County Council
Culture Leicestershire

Museum Access Policy

2025-2030

Contents

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Section 2	Scope
Section 3	Purpose
Section 4	Definition of terms
Section 5	Responsibilities
Section 6	Policy statements
Section 7	Related policies, legislation, and guidance
Section 8	Policy review date

Section 1

Introduction

- 1.1 Leicestershire County Council museums form part of the Council's wider cultural offer, which includes Leicestershire Libraries. Together as [Culture Leicestershire](#) we have a shared vision, with a distinct mission and purpose as museums.

Vision

- 1.2 Create space to spark imagination, celebrate communities & enhance wellbeing

Mission

- 1.3 Work to shape Leicestershire as a place with a rich and distinctive history that values its heritage, engages its communities, welcomes those who visit the county and works together to ensure a future for the past.

Purpose

- 1.4 The purpose of Leicestershire Museums is to safeguard the future of the rich and irreplaceable natural and human heritage of Leicestershire and to provide an accessible, engaging, innovative, sustainable and responsive service of the highest quality.

Section 2

Scope

- 2.1 The policy covers user access to all our sites and services.
- 2.2 Our Heritage and Museum sites are Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, 1620s House and Garden at Donington le Heath, Harborough Museum, Charnwood Museum, Melton Carnegie Museum.
- 2.3 Our collection facilities are The Collections Resources Centre; The Eastern Annexe (County Hall); Unit 1, Stephenson's Court; Unit 8 Riverside Court, Measham; Snibston Colliery Park.
- 2.4 Our microsites, social media platforms and other online activities.
- 2.5 Our outreach activity delivered in other venues e.g. schools, universities and community venues.
- 2.6 The 'Culture to You' service, delivered in peoples in homes has a separate policy.

Section 3

Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to state our commitment to increasing access to our services and resources by identifying how we will provide an accessible, engaging, innovative, sustainable, relevant, and responsive service of the highest quality.
- 3.2 Leicestershire County Council invests in creating a culture where people of all backgrounds and experience feel appreciated and valued. It is committed to achieving equality of opportunity in service delivery, volunteering and employment.
- 3.3 Discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (or any other unjustifiable criterion) will not be tolerated.

Section 4

Definition of Terms

- 4.1 When we refer to access, we mean the opportunity to engage with our service through our buildings, collections, content, events, and expertise. We have listed the key barriers to access below, with an example to illustrate how they could be experienced.
 - **Attitudinal** - e.g. Some people may feel museums are not relevant to them and our service does not reflect their lived experiences.
 - **Cultural** - e.g. **Some people may feel that our collections do not reflect their communities, social and cultural heritage, or interests.**
 - **Economic** - e.g. Some people may not be able to afford to visit our sites or have access to the internet.
 - **Geographic** - e.g. **Some people may not be able to visit our sites due to their location.**
 - **Cognitive** - e.g. Some people may find our stories, and the way that we tell them, difficult to understand.
 - **Physical**- e.g. Some people with physical disabilities, limited mobility, hearing or visual impairment may not be able to access our sites, activities, websites, or social media channels.
 - **Sensory** - e.g. Some people may experience sensory discomfort when visiting our sites and might need alternative information or need to experience them in an alternative way.
 - **Technological** - e.g. Some people may not have access to the internet and therefore are excluded from our digital content.

Section 5

Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Museum Service reviews performance, policies, and procedures through the County Council's governance and reporting structure. Cabinet is responsible for the executive functions and decisions of the Council.
- 5.2 The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the executive functions and decisions of the County Council in respect of the Adults and Communities Department. Together they help ensure the Museum Service, the Department and the Council meet their obligations under the Equality Act (2010) and the associated Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 5.3 This will include removing and/ or minimising disadvantages, taking steps to meet the needs of different people and encouraging people from protected groups to participate in society.
- 5.4 The Head of Service is responsible for ensuring service managers work with their teams and colleagues to maximise access by addressing the barriers outlined above.
- 5.5 The council requires all its employees to behave in ways that promote equality and are non-discriminatory. This applies to the way they behave to members of the public in the delivery of services and to other employees in the course of their work. We provide front of house welcoming training and follow best practice guidelines from Visit England.
- 5.6 Employees should participate actively in measures introduced by the council to ensure that there is equality of opportunity and non-discrimination.
- 5.7 Should employees, through the course of their employment, be found to have caused or encouraged discrimination, this will be regarded as a particularly serious offence, rendering them liable to disciplinary action.
- 5.8 Our service carries out regular evaluation with audiences and consults stakeholders on any proposed changes to services. We are committed to improving our understanding of our non-users to help ensure the broadest possible access to our facilities, services, and collections. We are developing an audience data strategy which will improve our ability to make informed decisions, based on robust audience data.
- 5.9 Leicestershire County Council has a Corporate Equalities Policy and Action Plan, this is disseminated through Departmental Equality Groups, which focus on addressing areas for improvement and reviewing Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). These may be carried out on council services to assess how services are provided to individuals and different sections of the community. An EIA may highlight areas for improvement and set out those improvements could be achieved. We will seek out all funding opportunities to make improvements where they are identified.

Section 6

Policy Statements

- 6.1 We are committed to maximising access and will uphold the statutory requirements of the Equality Act (2010). We will do this in a number of ways, including, but not limited to:

Attitudinal access

- 6.2 We will strive to remove barriers to our service created due to a lack of understanding, misconceptions or bias.

- 6.3 We will do this by:

- Engaging with a range of communities and groups to understand potential barriers, including those where there are low levels of engagement.
- Ensuring our choice of language is inclusive, accessible and appropriate
- Working with communities on Cocurated projects.
- Fully embedding our corporate values of Positivity, Trust & Respect, Flexibility, Openness & Transparency.
- Providing training that supports our staff and volunteers to effectively communicate and engage with different types of visitor.
- Ensuring our activities and platforms do not use negative stereotypes or reinforce misconceptions.
- Our sites are breast feeding friendly.

Cultural access

- 6.4 We recognise that our service and the stories that we tell may not reflect the cultural experiences, heritage and interests of all the communities of Leicestershire and therefore we will strive to reflect our communities better. We want to be a relevant and welcoming place for everyone.

- 6.5 We will do this by:

- Evaluating and identifying areas where we can improve the relevance of our museums, collections and the stories we tell, to communities who are not currently well represented.
- Working in a collaborative way with specific groups and communities to remove cultural barriers and make sure that our museums, collections and stories we tell are more representative.
- Ensuring our staff and volunteers receive training and resources to support them to identify and overcome cultural barriers to accessing our services and providing welcoming spaces.
- Consulting with specialist user groups and organisations to make sure that we are doing things in the right way.

Economic access

- 6.6 We recognise that entry and activity charges can prevent some audiences from accessing of our service, so we will ensure we offer a variety of

programmes, activities and price points to make it easier for these audiences to engage with us.

6.7 We will do this by:

- Charnwood Museum, Harborough Museum and Melton Carnegie Museum are free to enter.
- Bosworth Battlefield has a temporary exhibition space.
- Bosworth Battlefield and 1620s House and gardens at Donington le Heath take part in Heritage Open Days each year with free access.
- Offering a variety of prices within our retail and refreshment offers.
- Offering a range of prices for our programming of events and activities.
- Providing community offers.
- Offering free activities and resources on site and online.
- Delivering sessions in schools through Creative Learning Services.
- Creating a flexible 'pay as you go' offer on resources for schools.
- Museums are free for self-led visits for schools' groups.
- Access to collections at stores are free by appointment.

Physical access

6.8 Physical access to our service makes an important contribution to people's health and wellbeing and we will take all reasonable steps to ensure our venues and the buildings we operate are accessible. We work in historic buildings and landscapes which means we are committed to putting in place measures for those that cannot access fully the buildings.

6.9 We will do this by:

- Providing accessible seating throughout our galleries.
- Ensuring our sites and facilities are wheelchair accessible where possible.
- Providing alternative engagement opportunities when access is difficult.
- Providing high quality online content for those who cannot leave their homes.
- Engage in projects such as 'Culture to You' where collections go out to homes.

Sensory access

6.10 We will consider sensory needs when developing our services and designing our buildings and strive to provide alternative and additional methods of engagement for those with sensory access requirements.

6.11 We will do this by:

- Providing services in alternative formats.
- Considering sensory requirements in the design of our buildings, exhibitions and engagement.
- Striving to consult on sensory requirements with users and non-users and working with specialist organisations.

- Providing quieter spaces with less sensory engagement for those who need it.
- Providing access to objects suitable for handling at our sites, in schools and community venues.
- Providing training for staff and volunteers.

Cognitive access

6.12 We recognise that not everybody thinks, learns and understands in the same way and we will try to provide a variety of ways to provide access to the programmes and information we provide which cater for a range of audiences and needs.

6.13 We will do this by:

- Providing signage and information that is accessible to a broad range of visitors.
- Using best practice standards and guidelines (including the Museums Style Guide and MENCAP guidelines) to ensure the text we use in exhibitions, educational resources, publications, websites and social media channels meet the needs of our intended audiences.
- Providing a varied informal and formal learning programme for schools.
- Providing lifelong learning events such as author talks and family learning events such as theatre performances and trails.
- Using technology and interactivity and providing information in other formats to help people engage with our displays and exhibitions.
- Consulting with specialist user groups and organisations to make sure that we are doing things in the right way.
- Working in a collaborative way with specific groups to make sure that our stories are told in ways that are engaging and effective.
- Providing information to researchers and access to the collections.
- Providing information in different languages where possible.

Geographic access

6.14 We will make the most of our existing network of buildings and acknowledge some sites will be difficult for some of our audiences to access in person. We will seek to provide offers that allow audiences to engage in different ways.

6.15 We will do this by:

- Providing a varied and engaging temporary exhibition programme so our objects and stories are available in different locations.
- Online exhibitions and content through our microsites.
- Loaning objects to other museums and galleries nationally and internationally, and receiving loans from other museums and galleries, enabling Leicestershire residents to see things that they would not normally be able to see.
- Providing quality online experiences and resources which enable people across the world to engage with our collections and stories.

- Continuing to develop our learning programme for schools, colleges and universities.

Technical access

6.16 New technologies, including tools which use artificial intelligence (AI) are providing new ways for us to interpret our sites and collections, tell our stories and engage with our audiences. However, we recognise lack of access to technology, poor content and systems and applications that do not meet access standards create new barriers for audiences and we are committed to avoiding this. We will be transparent about when AI is used to support interpretation and work in line with the County Council's AI policy.

6.17 We will do this by:

- Making our websites and mobile applications accessible, in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018 (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2).
- Ensuring that our onsite Wi-Fi provision allows our users to engage with our digital interactives and content on their own specialist devices if required.
- Commitment to increasing access to our expertise and resources for those that cannot access our digital offer. This could include activities and events, written and phone based engagement, face to face visit
- Sharing our technological learning and practice with other heritage and community organisations.
- Offering a range of communication methods, including print, phone and face to face interaction, in addition to digital and online means.
- Providing choice of platforms to engage with our services which use caption videos ALT Text and subtitles.

Section 7

Related policies, legislation, and guidance

7.1 Government

- The Equality Act 2010 (2023 update)
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2023/1425/introduction/made>
- Accessible communication formats
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/accessible-communication-formats>
- Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps>

7.2 Leicestershire County Council

APPENDIX A

- Leicestershire County Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024--2028 <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-10/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2024-2028.pdf>
- Working together for the benefit of everyone, Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2024-2026 <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/LCC-Strategic-Plan.pdf>
- International WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standard <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/about-the-council/equality-and-diversity/equalities-policy-statement>

7.3 Museum and Heritage Service

- Collections Management Framework
- Collections Development Policy

7.4 Guidance

- Autism East Midlands Environmental Audit
- Kids in Museum Audit
- Museums assessed and content on www.accessable.co.uk
- Association for Accessible formats <https://www.ukaaf.org/>
- Expertise advice from SENSory Atelier
- Arts Council Investment Principles <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030/investment-principles>
- [Access policy – Collections Trust](#)

Section 8**Policy Review Date**

- 8.1 To be reviewed by 30 November 2030.

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Leicestershire County Council Culture Leicestershire

MUSEUMS COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2025-2030

Name of museum: Leicestershire County Council Museum Services (LCCMS)

Name of governing body: Leicestershire County Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:

Policy review procedure:

The Collections Development Policy will be published and reviewed, at least once every five years and more frequently if substantial change in either policy or delivery is required (e.g. significant re-structuring of the Service).

Date at which this policy is due for review: 2030

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

Section 1 - Relationship to Other Relevant Policies/Plans of the Organisation:

1.1 The museum's statement of purpose is:

The purpose of Leicestershire Museums is to safeguard the future of the rich and irreplaceable natural and human heritage of Leicestershire and to provide an accessible, engaging, innovative, sustainable and responsive service of the highest quality.

Our Vision: To create space to spark imagination, celebrate communities & enhance wellbeing.

Our Mission: Work to shape Leicestershire as a place with a rich and distinctive history that values its heritage, engages its communities, welcomes those who visit the county and works together to ensure a future for the past.

Leicestershire Museums ('the Museum') form part of the Culture Leicestershire Service alongside Libraries, Archives, and Creative Learning Services, and is part of the Adults and Communities Directorate in Leicestershire County Council.

The service is solely responsible for Bosworth Battlefield, Melton Carnegie Museum and the 1620s House and Garden at Donington-le-Heath.

Charnwood Museum and Harborough Museum are delivered in partnership with the relevant borough and district councils and other organisations.

The Museum houses its collections at the Collections Resources Centre, Barrow upon Soar; the Eastern Annexe of County Hall, Glenfield; collections spaces on the Snibston site in Coalville; Unit 1 Stephenson's Court, Coalville and Unit 8 Riverside Court in Measham.

1.2 The Museum's acquisition policy is:

To collect and record the natural life of the County of Leicestershire and to reflect the histories, interests and aspirations of the people who have made it their home and place of work.

We do this by working closely with the Museum Services of Leicester City Council, Rutland County Council and the many independent museums across Leicestershire.*

*(The agreement reached with Leicester City Museum Service (LCMS) in 1999 on the sharing of museum collections, following local government re-organisation, specified certain areas of specialism for the LCMS, and LCCMS respectively. This means the County Service does not acquire material in those areas being developed by LCMS, and vice versa. In effect, this limits collecting by mutual agreement and is supported by robust access arrangements for the joint use of certain collections. In November 2017 Leicester Arts and Museums and Leicestershire County Council Museums agreed that the active process of collections sharing had reached a conclusion. This agreement allows for the future transfer of any objects, parts of objects, material, and information between the two Services by mutual agreement.)

- 1.3 The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.4 By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- 1.5 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.6 The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Arts Council England (ACE) Museum Accreditation Standard (2018). This includes using Spectrum primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, financial resources, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.7 The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 1.8 The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.
- 1.9 If, after following the Themes and Priorities for Rationalisation and Disposal (see Section 5) and the Disposal Procedures (see Section 15), any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections.

Section 2 - History of the Collections

- 2.1 The Leicestershire County Council Museum collections were formed from the core collections of the Leicester Town (and later City) Museum and the Melton Mowbray Museum.
- 2.2 Leicester Museum developed from the middle of C19th with the support of the Town and later (from 1922) City Councils and the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society. In the 1930s a Schools Loans collection was created as a significant part of service delivery. In the 1940s some rationalisation of collections transferred material from the main collections to School Loans and also out of the service to other UK museums which had sustained losses due to war time bombing.
- 2.3 In 1974 the re-organisation of local government in Leicestershire created the Leicestershire County Council Museums, Arts & Records Service (LMARS) with responsibility for museums in Leicester, Leicestershire and the historic county of Rutland.
- 2.4 Between 1974 and 1997 LMARS developed collections based on curatorial specialisms of Fine Art, Archaeology, Social History, Biology, Geology, Science & Technology and Decorative Arts (including Costume, Ethnography and historic buildings and interiors). Museums reflecting these collections were developed in Leicester and local community museums were developed in Melton Mowbray, Market Harborough, Oakham and Donington-le-Heath Manor House. The County Record Office was responsible for archive collections.
- 2.5 Active collecting continued throughout this period and the collections grew in size and the curatorial departments developed focussed specialisms and increased numbers of staff.
- 2.6 From 1983 a separate collection group was formed to reflect the new partnership arrangements that created the new Harborough Museum in Market Harborough. The new museum collection was formed around the founding collection of the Market Harborough Historical Society ownership of which is retained by the Society.
- 2.7 In 1992 LMARS opened Snibston Discovery Museum to showcase its coal mining and other Science and Technology collections.
- 2.8 In 1997 subsequent reform of local government in Leicestershire awarded unitary status to Leicester City and to Rutland and effectively formed three museum services, one for each authority area.
- 2.9 In 1998 Charnwood Borough Council commissioned LMARS to co-create the Charnwood Museum in Loughborough using existing collections and curatorial knowledge. In 2007 the new Bosworth Battlefield Heritage centre was awarded Accredited Museum status with an associated collection of objects discovered through the process of landscape investigation to determine the actual site of the battle.

- 2.10 From 1999 the collections sharing agreement between Leicester City, Rutland and Leicestershire County Councils and the subsequent Acquisition and Disposal Policies of the three authorities have defined the collecting priorities and lead areas for the services.
- 2.11 In 1999 LMARS re-named its collecting areas on a thematic basis, re-forming the previous curatorial specialisms into commonly understood concepts of Natural Life, Home and Family Life, Working Life, Cultural Life and Sporting Life with Archaeology as a process driven collection that underpins all of the other themes.
- 2.12 The Harborough Museum Collection continues to be developed under its own collections title.
- 2.13 In 2014 Harborough Museum became part of a new culture hub on the first floor of the Symington Building as a result of a redevelopment project by Harborough District Council, Leicestershire County Council supported by the Market Harborough and The Bowdens Charity.
- 2.14 In 2015 Leicestershire County Council took the decision to close Snibston Discovery Museum, objects on display were returned to their 'home location' storage spaces, returned to lenders or loaned to other museums and heritage bodies.
- 2.15 In 2016 Donington-le-Heath Manor House was transformed into The 1620s House and Garden, a curatorially-led project to re-interpret the house and its gardens in a more focussed way.
- 2.16 Since 2019 Leicestershire County Council has been investigating the viability of co-locating the museum collections, Creative Learning Services and the archive collections in a partial redevelopment/new development on the County Hall site at Glenfield.
- 2.17 As part of Culture Leicestershire, this policy has been co-created with representatives from local communities who were invited to an interactive session to brief them about the policy and record their feedback about what our collecting priorities should be for the period of this policy. This consultation will inform our new Collections Development Plan.
- 2.18 From 2025 there will be a programme of work to co-locate museum collections from some of our smaller stores into the Eastern Annex Collections Centre.

Section 3 - An Overview of Current Collections

3.1 Natural Life

Collections primarily of specimens and information which reflect the landscape, flora and fauna of the county. They demonstrate the changing natural environment of Leicestershire and its place in the rest of the world over time, comprising two main groups of botany and zoology. They include supporting archives about individual collectors, groups, societies and institutions that help tell the history and development of the study of natural science. They include type and voucher specimens,

microscopy, a comprehensive historic and modern reference library, some comparative specimens for reference, educational and display purposes. The collections are linked to environmental information, species and site records (much in digital formats) and has strong connections to Leicestershire & Rutland's Environmental Records Centre.

Botany Areas of Excellence

- British non-flowering plants (lichens and bryophytes)
- Records and personalia of significant Leicestershire naturalists and collectors (including Pulteney, Bloxham, Berkeley, Sowter, Ballard, Fletcher, Hesselgreaves, Hering, Iliffe)
- Leicestershire flowering plants, ferns, slime moulds and fungi.
- Microscope slides of historic collections of algae

Zoology Areas of excellence- Important reference collections of the Vice County of Leicestershire & Rutland (VC55) insects, from the 1800s to the present day and supporting reference collection of insects taken in the UK.

3.2 Archaeology

The archaeology collections provide evidence of human activity in what is now Leicestershire. They cover all periods of time from the prehistoric to the modern: some half a million years.

The collections include both finds and documentary archives resulting from excavations, fieldwalking, metal detecting and chance finds across the county.

The Finds Archive comprises a variety of archaeological materials, including human and animal remains.

The Documentary Archive comprises information relating to the discovery, recovery and conservation of, and research into, the finds, together with archaeological fieldwork archives and published reports.

Areas of excellence:

- Lower Palaeolithic stone tools
- The Hallaton Treasure
- Coal mining before the Industrial Revolution
- The Bosworth Collection. The collection contains material traditionally associated with the battle as well as over 5000 artefacts collected during the Bosworth Battlefield Survey. Other material includes objects from an important Roman temple site.

3.3 Home and Family Life

The home and family life collections reflect domestic life now and in the past.

Alongside changes in domestic and personal technology the collections also record important aspects of family life including rites of passage, family structures and entertainment.

Objects including games, toys, sporting equipment and the ephemera and objects related to things like festivals and special occasions, shopping and holidays all fall within this collection.

The home is also an outlet for creative expression and objects associated with interior decoration, furnishings and home crafts are an important aspect of the collection.

Areas of excellence

- The Palitoy toy company collection
- The Ladybird book collection

3.4 Working Life

This collection reflects local trades and industries, partly through collections of tools and equipment, focussing on the work of traditional craftspeople such as the blacksmith, wheelwright, farmer and food producers. It also reflects the commercial life of the County's market towns in the 19th and 20th centuries.

More recent collecting has concentrated on local businesses, mainly small and innovative concerns producing a unique local product, through the acquisition of finished products, ephemera and images.

The collections also include the larger manufacturing industries of the C19th and C20th and reflect the growth and decline of the industrial era and focus on engineering, transport and travel, coal mining and other extractive Industries.

Areas of Excellence

- C18th – C19th Leicestershire clock makers - including the contents of the Deacon Family clock making workshop.
- Horse-drawn vehicles (including the Beaumanor Coach of 1740)
- The Thomas Cook collection
- N.C.B. Era coal mining artefacts
- Leicestershire aircraft design and manufacture
- Brush Electrical Engineering

3.5 Cultural Life

The cultural life collections reflect the cultural interests of the people of Leicestershire and its centres of skills development for the creative industries. The collections form two main parts: the art collection and the fashion collection.

The art collection consists of sculpture, works on paper and easel paintings which reflect the artist's record of the changing landscape and built environment of the county; portraits of local people, their working and social lives and traditional pursuits particularly in the field of country sports.

The fashion collections reflect fashionable and occupational dress of adult men and women from the middle of the eighteenth century to the present day.

Areas of excellence

- Symington collection of corsetry, foundation-wear and swimwear
- NEXT archive and collection
- The paintings and drawings of John Ferneley Snr and his family

3.6 Reflecting Leicestershire Life at our Market Town Museums

Leicestershire is a predominantly rural county with specialist centres of manufacturing, trade, learning, innovation and cultural and sporting activity. Each museum site reflects the particular nature of the areas and communities which they serve and these are in turn reflected in the focus of collecting through these sites, objects collected to reflect life in these areas enters the collections within the thematic groups listed above.

- 3.7 The exception to this is the Harborough Museum Collection. The museum is a formal partnership with the Harborough District Council and the Market Harborough Historical Society, whose collection of local history items and antiquities is the foundation of the museum*. Consideration is given to the collecting policies of other museums in this area including Lutterworth, Fleckney, Foxton, Hallaton, Desborough and Rothwell. Consideration is also given to the collecting policies of the Accredited museums in Northamptonshire.

*The Market Harborough Historical Society has ownership of its own collection and appoints an Honorary Curator to liaise with collections teams to ensure its care and management.

- 3.8 The Harborough Collections reflect the history and development of the town and surrounding villages, local domestic and social life and record the contribution of local individuals and communities of Market Harborough and the parishes in its surrounding area.

Market Harborough and Surrounding Parishes			
Arthingworth	Ashley	Billesdon	Blaston
Brampton Ash	Braybrooke	Bringhurst	Caldecot
Church Langton	Clipston	Cottingham	Cranoe
Desborough	Dingley	Drayton	East Carlton
East Farndon	East Langton	Fleckney	Foxton
Glooston	Goadby	Great Bowden	Great Easton
Great Oxendon	Gumley	Hallaton	Harrington
Haselbech	Horninghold	Husbands Bosworth	Ilston
Kelmarsh	Kibworth Harcourt	Kibworth Beauchamp	Lampport
Laughton	Little Bowden	Lubenham	Lutterworth
Maidwell	Marston Trussell	Medbourne	Middleton
Mowsley	Naseby	Nevill Holt	North Kilworth

Noseley	Rockingham	Rolleston	Rothwell
Rushton	St Mary in Arden	Saddington	Shangton
Sibbertoft	Slawston	Smeeton Westerby	South Kilworth
Stoke Albany	Stonton Wyville	Sulby	Sutton Bassett
Swinford	Theddingworth	Thorpe Langton	Tur Langton
Walcote	Walton & Kimcote	Welford	Welham
West Langton	Weston by Welland	Wilbarston	Wistow

- 3.9 Melton Carnegie Museum exhibits the changing nature of rural Leicestershire and the relationship of the countryside with the market town. It reflects agriculture, local food production (particularly Stilton cheese making and pork pie production) animal husbandry and countryside management and diversification.

The Museum leads on the collecting and recording of material associated with fox hunting and its related trades, crafts, and roles and its social and cultural life.

3.10 The Hunting Collection

Because of Melton's unique position both as a centre for fox-hunting and as a pivotal location in the evolution of fox-hunting as an organised sport, special consideration needs to be afforded to the scope and content of the hunting collections which have been developed in association with the Museum of Hunting Trust. All the objects which relate to the history of fox hunting are accessioned items in the County Council's collections.

The collection reflects, at a representative level only, the broad scope of hunting and its opposition in the UK. This provides a national context against which the more detailed local collections can be set.

These are specific to the 'Leicestershire' hunts (which straddle the county boundary) and represent all facets of the sport, its social milieu and its impact on the landscape of Leicestershire and its neighbouring counties.

- 3.11 Charnwood Museum is a partnership with Charnwood Borough Council and reflects the communities, working life and natural life of the area. The objects relating to the area are drawn out of the established collecting themes.

3.12 Heritage Sites and Landscapes

The 1620s House and Garden at Donington le Heath is a late Medieval manor house with Tudor and early Stuart additions. The contents of the building are a mixture of accessioned, un-accessioned historic and replica objects which tell the story of the lifestyle of the people who lived there during the early C17th.

Bosworth Battlefield interprets the landscape and events of the decisive battle of the Wars of the Roses on 22nd August 1485; the end to the Plantagenet dynasty and the

beginning of the Tudor period. Displays include material from the Battlefield Research Project (see 3.2 Archaeology Collections Areas of Excellence).

3.13 The 'Reserve' Collection

The 'Reserve' is a collection of historic objects originally established for use by the Museum Education Service as handling loan material for schools during the 1930s and has been continuously added to since then. It is now used to support displays, exhibitions and loan requests. Some of the original loans boxes have been retained as evidence of the service's early activities.

Section 4 - Themes and Priorities for Future Collecting

4.1 Natural Life

The focus of collecting over the next five years will be limited due to a lack of curatorial specialism in this area, however volunteer organisations and individuals who work closely with the museum will on occasion:

- add new species recorded in the county
- reflect the continuing activities of local societies, institutions and individuals.

The Collection will not accept any further spirit collections or specimens, large taxidermy, specimens requiring taxidermy or unprepared archives and collections of material which are unrelated to Leicestershire.

4.2 Archaeology

The focus of collecting over the next five years will be:

- Archives from professional and amateur fieldwork in Leicestershire that meet the standards laid down in '*The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Leicestershire Museum (2024)*'.
- Objects from Leicestershire that become available for acquisition through the procedures laid down in the Treasure Act 1996 and the Treasure (Designation)(Amendment) Order 2023, subject to curatorial assessment of significance and availability of financial resources including external funding.
- Digital elements of archaeological archives (including photographs etc) will be deposited with Archaeology Data Service (ADS) which acts as a digital storage organisation for most local authority archaeological archives.

The collections will not accept:

- archives and collections from living creators, extant bodies and trading businesses that do not meet the minimum standards laid down in '*The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Leicestershire Museums (2024)*'.
- archives and collections no part of which derives from Leicestershire.
- objects that lack a provenance or were found outside Leicestershire.
- human remains lacking explicit scientific justification for their retention in an archaeological archive.

4.3 Home and Family Life

The focus of collecting over the next five years will be:

- The home and family lives of people who are currently underrepresented in our collections. Contemporary collecting will be linked to targeted community engagement and participation. Where possible our approach will be through collaborative and co-curated projects representing the views and voices of local people as part of the collecting process.

The collections will not accept furniture, large domestic appliances, sewing machines or duplicate Ladybird books.

4.4 Working Life

The focus of collecting/recording over the next five years will be:

- Leicestershire's innovation and diversification from traditional working life.
- Leicestershire's small businesses and creative industries.
- Contemporary collecting will be linked to targeted engagement and participation with businesses, employees, trade unions etc. Where possible our approach will be through collaborative and co-curated projects representing the views and voices of local people as part of the collecting process.

We will not collect vehicles and/or large industrial machinery.

4.5 Cultural Life

The focus of collecting over the next five years will be:

Fashion Collection

- Clothing created and worn by people who are currently under-represented in our collections. Contemporary collecting will be linked to targeted community engagement and participation. Where possible our approach will be through collaborative and co-curated projects representing the views and voices of local people as part of the collecting process.

The Collections will not accept wedding or civil partnership outfits that are not connected with a ceremony conducted in Leicestershire.

Art Collection

- Commission local artists to produce works that record, reflect or comment on specific aspects of Leicestershire life.

Section 5 - Themes and Priorities for Rationalisation and Disposal

- 5.1 Please note Section 1, paragraph 1.3: By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound

curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

- 5.2 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well-managed collection.
- 5.3 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process
- 5.4 A programme of collections review and rationalisation ensures that our collections are accessible, well looked after and fit for use. Where gaps in the collections (usually in terms of representation of our communities) are identified, targeted collecting will be planned to fill them. This review and rationalisation also informs our recommendations to dispose of material no-longer relevant to our collections or Service offer.
- 5.5 This disposal of objects from the museum collections is done in accordance with the Accreditation Standard for Museums, taking into account the Museum Association's (MA) Code of Ethics (2014 – currently under review)) and SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on Disposal.

5.6 OUR COMMITMENT:

Collections will be reviewed periodically, and rationalised where necessary, to ensure they remain relevant to the services offered and reflect the cultures and aspirations of the communities they represent.

5.7 Policy Points

- The Service undertakes to review its collections in the light of the requirements of its communities, partner and supporting organisations, local and regional heritage networks and the objectives of the county council.
- Collection rationalisation, as well as targeted collecting, will be undertaken to ensure the collections are relevant and fit for use.
- The approved procedures for disposal of objects, or groups of objects from the museum and related collections MUST be adhered to in all circumstances.
- Significant acquisitions and all disposals will be proposed by the professional Head of Service and considered by the Director under delegated responsibilities. If there are any significant community sensitivities associated with the proposed disposals it will be referred to Cabinet Lead Member, and if necessary Cabinet. They will also maintain an overview of museum collecting activity and instigate disposal procedures where necessary.

Outline plan for the review and rationalisation of specific collections areas 2025-30

Coal mining and other working life objects	Previously identified duplicate, incomplete, irrelevant objects or those in poor condition.
Fashion Collection	Women's clothing from 1940 to 1970.
Archaeology	De-selection of bulk material where this has not occurred prior to deposition. Timbers (including Hemington River crossing and Lounge mining etc)
Natural Life Spirit Collection	Review and rationalisation of Spirit Collection currently in the care of Leicester City Museums service relating to their plans to relocate.
Subject library collections	Focus on coal mining library at Snibston.
General	Collections containing hazardous materials

Section 6 -Legal and Ethical Framework for Acquisition and Disposal of Items

6.1 The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

Section 7 - Collecting Policies of Other Museums

7.1 The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museums/organisations:

We maintain regular contact with Rutland County Museum and Leicester City Arts and Museums and with independent museums in Leicestershire.

We continue to engage with Arts Council England's Museum Development Midlands, giving us the ability to access the regional museums network.

7.3 The agreement reached with Leicester City Museum Service (LCMS) in 1999 on the sharing of museum collections, following local government re-organisation in 1997, specified certain areas of specialism for the LCMS, and LCCMS respectively. This means the County Service does not acquire material in those areas being developed by LCMS, and vice versa. This limits collecting by mutual agreement and is supported by robust access arrangements for the joint use of certain collections. In November 2017 Leicester City Arts and Museums and Leicestershire County Council Museums agreed that the active process of collections sharing had reached a conclusion. This agreement allows for the future transfer of any objects, parts of objects, material, and information between the two Services by mutual agreement.

Section 8 - Acquisition

8.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

The Museum's acquisition policy is

To collect and record the natural life of the County of Leicestershire and to reflect the histories, interests and aspirations of the people who have made it their home and place of work.

8.2 Authorisation Procedure

Items offered to the service are considered by museum The Collections & Conservation and Curatorial teams. Decisions are made on the basis of relevance to the acquisition policy, significance, ability of the service to preserve the object in the long term and that the item is not already represented in the collection. If necessary, recommendations on the decision to acquire an object or collection are put to the Collections and Learning Manager.

Acquisition falls within the scheme of delegation to the Head of Service, otherwise Cabinet Lead Member or Cabinet approval is required (e.g. high value or sensitive items).

The position regarding rights (including copyright) should be clarified, the preferred option being a transfer of relevant rights to the Service where the owner of the object also owns those rights.

If the item is offered for sale on the open market, the funding to support its purchase must be in place, including grant monies, and approval by an appropriate authority (normally the Head of Service) obtained before the purchase is finalised.

8.3 General Restrictions

The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition.

The Service recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure adequate care of collections, documentation arrangements and proper use of such collections.

It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collection and public access arrangements.

All items being considered for addition to the collections should conform to the following criteria:

- Acquisition does not contravene any legal, ethical or local laws or regulations.
- The item should fall within the 'Collecting the Life of the County' rationale.
- The item is best acquired by this Service rather than another. In deciding this, the Service will take account of the collecting policies of other national and in particular local and East Midlands museums collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of

interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

- The ownership of the item should be clearly established.
- There should be a clear reason why the Service needs the item.
- The Service has the knowledge, professional care and management skills, space and financial resources to ensure the object's future.
- The Service can house the item and store it to an appropriate standard.
- Given the object's condition the Service can conserve or preserve the item within an acceptable timescale and allow access to it to an appropriate professional standard.

8.4 Acquisition

Acquisition is the permanent addition of an item or collection into the Museum collections through the transfer of legal title by gift or sale. Items may be acquired through:

- Agreed gifts (donation) and bequests (usually via an executor).
- Purchase from reputable dealers and auctioneers, organisations or individuals who either have legal title, or are acting on behalf of parties that have legal title.
- Collecting by staff, contractors or associates to support research, excavation, interpretation or similar activities.
- Transfer from like institutions.
- Deposits of archaeological archives on indefinite loan by the owners or their legitimate agents (such as The Church of England) where those organisations are prevented from donating objects in their ownership.

Many of these processes may involve intermediaries who can be neutral or can act either for the owner or for the Service. The position of intermediaries should be established and recorded as part of the acquisition procedure.

Transfer of title and any relevant rights (or deposit on indefinite loan) can only be done by the legal owner or by a legally appointed intermediary (e.g. executor, agent or legal representative).

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the Senior Management Team following a strong recommendation from the museum collections teams and having regard to the interests of other museums.

8.5 Curatorial Selection

Curatorial, Conservation and Collections Management staff consider acquisitions to the collections with reference to our acquisition policy and to needs of our museums. This group may consult others outside the organisation to give opinion as required.

The remit of the Curatorial, Conservation and Collections Management Teams is to:

- Provide an overview of acquisitions across the Service so everyone has knowledge of what is coming into the Service and why.
- Develop and review a Collections Development Plan to support the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy, which is part of the Collections Development Policy.
- Manage a range of issues relating to collections and their management (e.g. standards for storage and conservation) as necessary.
- Support documentation procedures and develop a plan for managing these.
- Ensure the profile of collections, their requirements and management is maintained in the Service and outside.
- Initiate and carry out fundraising initiatives for the acquisition of key objects when necessary.
- The Senior Curator and Collections and Conservation Manager support curatorial decisions on the routine acceptance of objects for the collections and decide on acceptance or rejection of less clear-cut offers of gift.
- The Collections and Learning Manager advises on acquisitions to the collection which may have implications beyond the responsibility of the Senior Curator and Collections and Conservation Manager.
- The Collections and Conservation Manager and Documentation Officer make recommendations for rationalisation and/or disposal after discussion with the wider Museum Teams. These are presented to senior officers and, when relevant, elected members for a final decision.

8.6 Period of time and/or geographical area to which collecting relates

The collection covers the human experience from the pre-historic Palaeolithic period (around 500,000 years ago) to the present day and is predominantly of material directly associated with Leicestershire.

The museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from 1 November 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

Section 9 - Human Remains

- 9.1 As the museum holds or allows within this policy the acquisition of human remains over 100 years old, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005. This is in line with the museum service's Human Remains Policy 2025.

Section 10 Biological and geological material

10.1 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

Section 11 - Archaeological Material

11.1 The museum will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.

11.2 In England, Wales and Northern Ireland these procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure (i.e. the Coroner for Treasure) as set out in the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009 and Treasure (Designation) (Amendment) Order 2023).

Section 12 - Exceptions

12.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin.

In these cases, the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

Section 13 - Spoliation

13.1 The museum will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

Section 14 -The Repatriation and Restitution of Objects and Human Remains

14.1 The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all

ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

- 14.2 The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums'.

Section 15 - Disposal Procedures

- 15.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the Spectrum primary procedures on disposal.
- 15.2 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 15.3 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 15.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by transfer by gift or sale, or as a last resort - destruction.
- 15.5 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.
- 15.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by transfer, gift, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 15.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 15.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).

- 15.9 The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.
- 15.10 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England.
- 15.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 15.12 Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with Spectrum procedure on deaccession and disposal.

Disposal by exchange

- 15.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

Disposal by destruction

- 15.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 15.15 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 15.16 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
- 15.17 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.

- 15.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 10 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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