



Meeting: **Scrutiny Commission (Special Meeting)**

Date/Time: **Tuesday, 24 June 2025 at 2.00 pm**

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

Contact: **Mrs J Twomey (Tel: 0116 305 2583)**

Email: **joanne.twomey@leics.gov.uk**

Membership

Mrs D. Taylor CC (Chairman)

Dr. J. Bloxham CC	Mrs K. Knight CC
Mr. M. Bools CC	Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC
Mrs. L. Danks CC	Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC
Dr. S. Hill CC	Mr. B. Piper CC
Mr. A. Innes CC	Mr J. Poland CC
Mr. P. King CC	Mr. K. Robinson CC

AGENDA

Please note: this meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's web site at <http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk>

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>
Webcast. A webcast of the meeting can be viewed here .	
1. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2025.	(Pages 3 - 8)
2. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.	
3. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.	



4. Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall - Chief Executive (Pages 9 - 26)
Call-in of the Cabinet Decision.

A Call-in was received on Monday, 16 June 2025 in relation to the Cabinet decision taken on 12 June 2025 on the Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall, a copy of which is attached to this agenda.

The decision of the Cabinet on this matter, together with the report which was considered by the Cabinet on 12 June, the previously agreed Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall and representations received and considered by the Cabinet is attached as follows: -

- Call-in Notice (Pages 9 – 10)
- Cabinet Decision (Pages 11 – 12)
- Cabinet report on Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall – 12 June 2025 (Pages 13 – 16)
- Appendix - Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall (Pages 17 – 22)
- Comments received by the Cabinet (Pages 23 – 25)

5. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled to take place on Monday, 8th September 2025.



Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 9 June 2025.

PRESENT

Mrs D. Taylor CC (in the Chair)

Dr. J. Bloxham CC
Mrs. L. Danks CC
Mr. M. Durrani CC
Mr. S. J. Galton CC
Mr. A. Innes CC
Mr. P. King CC

Mrs. K. Knight CC
Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC
Mr. B. Piper CC
Mr J. Poland CC
Mr. K. Robinson CC
Mr. C. A. Smith CC

1. Appointment of Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that Mrs D. Taylor CC has been appointed Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2026 in accordance with Article 6.05 of the County Council's Constitution.

2. Appointment of Vice Chairman.

It was moved by Mr C Smith and seconded by Mr J Poland:

“That Mr Michael Mullaney be elected Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.”

It was moved by Mr A Innes and seconded by Mr B Piper:

“That Mr J Bloxham be elected Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council”.

The Chairman informed members that both candidates had been duly proposed and seconded. In accordance with item 4 of Standing Order 27 a secret ballot would therefore take place.

The Chief Executive announced the results of the ballot, as follows:

The motion “That Mr Michael Mullaney be elected Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council” was carried unanimously.

3. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2025 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

4. Question Time.

The following question, received under Standing Order 34 of the County Council's Constitution, was put to the Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission:

Question asked by Mr Stares

"Given that the Council's new leadership has pledged to bring in outside auditors to audit the council's finances, does the council have a projection for how much this service is likely to cost, and is there money set aside for this in the current 2025/26 budget?"

Reply by the Chair

"The Budget for 2025/26 was set in advance of the recent County Council elections, hence it is not possible for any new initiatives to be specifically incorporated at this stage. Leicestershire County Council has a significant savings challenge, and expenditure will continue to be required, on an invest to save basis, to investigate and implement efficiency initiatives. If new approaches such as the use of external auditors are proposed they will either replace or complement existing activity with the aim of meeting the savings challenge and would need to be commissioned through the Council's decision making process."

Mr Stares asked on the response to his question whether the final part of the answer meant that, so far, there hadn't been a proposal for the use of external auditors."

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Assistant Director of Corporate Resources responded "No, there was no current proposal for the use of external auditors."

The Chairman thanked Mr Stares for his questions.

5. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

6. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

7. 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.

8. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

9. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 35.

10. Provisional Revenue and Capital Outturn 2024/25.

The Commission considered a report and a supplementary report of the Director of Corporate Resources the purpose of which was to set out the provisional revenue and capital outturn for 2024/25 and to seek members views which would be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 17 June. A copy of the report and supplementary marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion the following points were made:

- (i) Members raised concerns regarding the current forecasted gap of £90m in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) by 2028/29 and questioned how this would be addressed. It was noted a number of savings initiatives were already being developed but these were not yet sufficiently detailed to be factored into the MTFS. Work to identify further efficiencies and income sources was also taking place across all departments. Once fully developed these would then need to be considered by the Cabinet for inclusion in the next iteration of the MTFS.
- (ii) The Council's budget for 2025/26 had been approved and balanced with the use of some reserves (£4.7m). Immediate action was, however, necessary to identify savings that would ensure delivery of a balanced budget for 2026/27.
- (iii) The Director reported that there was no single solution to address the financial gap, the magnitude of which was not dissimilar to that faced by other councils. The Council's funding position was difficult and complex given the number of statutory services it had to deliver. A varied approach had always been adopted to both reduce demand, lobby government to increase grant funding, as well as locally seeking to increase income including increases in council tax.
- (iv) A Member emphasised that the Council's budget was dictated by demand and growth in demand was caused by factors outside its control. As it had a statutory responsibility to deliver certain services its financial position would not improve significantly without more funding from Government.
- (v) A member commented that recent publications regarding Reform UK's proposed Doge-style scheme had questioned the efficiency of procurement in local government and suggested that improvements in this area could yield further savings. The Director explained that around 75% of Council spend was through contracts with third parties and this would therefore always form part of the Council's future savings plans. However, this would not just be targeted toward procurement efficiencies but also challenging how and why the Council procured those services in the first place.
- (vi) At the request of the Chairman, the Leader commented that he did not think the County Council would receive a visit from Reform UK's Doge-style scheme. He confirmed that careful planning was needed and therefore consideration would be given to involving a professional, external body to assist the Council in identifying

future savings opportunities. It was acknowledged that this would come at a cost to the Authority. The Leader provided assurance that he and his Cabinet were working at pace to consider this but said he could not give a specific timeframe for when external consultants would be instructed. However, he undertook to keep members informed.

- (vii) The Government's spending review was expected to provide some insight into the Government's funding priorities. Additional grant funding for local government was, however, looking unlikely. A member raised concern that the Government's focus on deprivation as part of future funding reform proposals would likely further disadvantage Leicestershire.
- (viii) A member questioned the impact local government reorganisation (LGR) and potentially transferring land to the City might have on the County Council's MTFs, suggesting this would be detrimental, reducing the County's council tax base and therefore its financial stability. The Director acknowledged the concern raised and agreed this would be something the Council would need to be mindful of. However, it was noted that despite this challenge, reorganisation would still have the potential to generate significant savings, particularly the option for a single county unitary.
- (ix) The Leader emphasised that the implications of LGR were significant and he would therefore be meeting with the City Council Mayor to discuss this. It would be important for them to look at all options on the way forward and to consider what would be realistic and acceptable to the people of Leicester and Leicestershire. He would also enter into discussions with district councils as appropriate. However, he highlighted that the situation was complex, involving 9 local authorities. In response to further questions raised, the Leader said he would not confirm his preferred view on the best approach for LGR at this time, clarifying that it would not be appropriate until discussions with partners had been held.
- (x) Concerns were raised about how debts and the financial responsibilities of existing authorities would be managed as part of LGR. The Director advised that so far, the Government had confirmed it would not absorb councils existing debts. This would therefore need to be managed locally as part of the reorganisation proposals put forward. It was recognised that the more complicated arrangements became the more costly this would likely be.
- (xi) Members identified the worsening position regarding the High Needs Block (HNB) deficit, and the impact this was having on the Council's overall budget, as an area of serious concern. It was noted that the HNB deficit was in addition to the £90m MTFs funding gap identified. Whilst the Council had been part of a government program aimed at delivering better value in this area the situation continued to deteriorate. It was further highlighted that the Council had itself employed external consultants at cost to identify new ways to bring the deficit down and although considerable savings were being achieved though this, the deficit was still growing due to increased demand.
- (xii) The Director emphasised that this continued to be an area of focus for the Children and Family Services Department through delivery of its Transforming SEND in Leicestershire programme (TSIL) and assured members that savings were being delivered as a result of the work being undertaken. However, this was not sufficient to close the gap due to continued rising demand. Members noted that

the position was unlikely to change without national reform which was a matter for the Government. It was suggested that the Commission be provided more information on the complexities surrounding the HNB deficit and the delivery of savings through the TSIL programme which was being monitored by the Children and Family Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- (xiii) Confirmation that the HNB statutory override would continue was awaited but it was hoped that this would be addressed as part of the Government's spending review. A member commented that the Council's deficit was not unique and that some authorities were in a significantly worse position having been put into the Government's Safety Valve Programme. The Director advised that this programme had now been terminated as it had not delivered the savings expected, further emphasising the need for change at a national level.
- (xiv) The underspend in Adult Social Care Services was welcomed. However, this was a demand led service affected by increases in inflation and pay. This was difficult to predict for future years and so would be monitored closely.
- (xv) Diversification in the Council's investments was supported and considered to be a prudent approach. However, a member questioned if the bank risk sharing investment proposal was high risk, noting that the targeted 13% rate of return was high compared to UK and European small business lending rates. The Director advised that the investment was not a lending product but a type of insurance and whilst the risk of loans to small businesses do carry a risk, this was more predictable and so could be costed in advance. Such investments were also not affected by fluctuations in the national and international economic position. The Director confirmed that the leverage was also small for this type of investment and undertook to provide further details after the meeting.
- (xvi) It was noted that the Council had made its initial investment in bank risk sharing some years ago following a detailed presentation to this Committee at that time. The investment formed part of the Council's Investing in Leicestershire Programme (IILP) which were overseen by the IILP Board which consisted of five Cabinet Lead Members. The board considered all such investments before these were approved by the Cabinet and their performance was monitored annually by the Commission. The Director undertook to provide more detailed information regarding these types of investments within the portfolio as part of its next performance update to be presented in September.
- (xvii) A Member asked if, as an alternative, consideration had been given to investing in shares as bank risk sharing appeared to be bespoke and niche type of investment. The Director advised that the Council had always taken a prudent approach when making investments and whilst investments in shares could generate a higher return, they could also be more volatile.
- (xviii) A member questioned whether the Council's deficit could be eliminated without raising council tax, and queried if council tax was not increased, what affect this would have. It was noted that the Council's MTFs was prepared on the assumption there would be an increase in council tax. The current MTFs presumed a 2.99% increase each year which equated to approximately £12m additional income per annum. If removed, this would generate an additional £40m funding gap approx. over the life of the MTFs.

- (xix) It was noted that the Council had repaid some debt during the year which meant this was below what had been previously forecast. In response to questions raised the Director undertook to provide clarification regarding the split between the level of internal and external debt after the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the comments now made by the Scrutiny Commission be presented to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 17th June 2025;
- (b) That the Director be requested to:
- (i) provide more information on the complexities surrounding the HNB deficit and the delivery of savings through the TSIL programme;
 - (ii) confirm the leverage for the proposed bank risk sharing investment;
 - (iii) provide more detailed information regarding ILLP non-direct property investments as part of its next performance update to be presented in September;
 - (iv) provide clarification regarding the split between the level of internal and external debt held by the Council.

11. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25

The Commission considered the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report which summarised some of the key highlights of scrutiny work undertaken during 2020/21. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

At the Chairman's request, Mr Mullaney, the previous Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission, welcomed the report and thanked officers and the previous Scrutiny Commissioners, Mrs Page, Mr Bannister and Mr Hunt, along with the past Chairmen and Vice Chairman of each of the standing overview and scrutiny committees for their input during the year.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25 be approved for submission to the County Council in July 2025.

12. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Commission would be held on 8th September 2025 at 10.00am.

**CALL-IN OF KEY DECISION IN ACCORDANCE WITH OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY RULE 14**

KEY DECISION BEING CALLED-IN [Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall](#)

DATE ON WHICH DECISION WAS MADE/PUBLISHED **Thursday, 12 June 2025**

REASONS FOR CALL-IN

We, the undersigned, would like to 'call in' the decision made by the Cabinet on 12th June 2025: PROTOCOL FOR FLYING FLAGS AT COUNTY HALL

We do not believe this decision has been thought through properly and appears to be very rushed. It has not been scrutinised, nor have any of the Staff Working Groups had their voices heard.

This decision is not clear and leaves the Chief Executive in a difficult position. A clear decision is needed by the administration regarding what flags can fly, when, and where. It cannot be left to a weekly decision.

Neither can the staff be left without any clear direction. This decision has weakened the current positive position of our approved Flag Flying Policy.

Staff and our residents deserve clear policies, as the previous Flag Flying Policy was agreed upon by all the Group Leaders of the last council.

We do not believe the Cabinet has taken into account The Public Sector Equality Duty as outlined below*

We do not believe the Cabinet has taken into account their duties as Corporate Parents, and how this decision could affect our children in care and care leavers.

*The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) means that public authorities in the UK must consider equality when making decisions and carrying out their functions. This duty requires them to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those who do not.

The PSED has three main aims:

- **Duty to Consider Equality:**

Public authorities must actively think about how their actions impact individuals and groups with protected characteristics.

- **Advancing Equality of Opportunity:**

This involves ensuring that people with protected characteristics have equal opportunities, regardless of their background.

- **Fostering Good Relations:**

This means encouraging positive relationships between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

SIGNED

1. Mrs Deborah Taylor CC
2. Mr Michael Mullaney CC
3. Mr Jewel Miah CC
4. Mrs Naomi Bottomley CC

DATE: 14th June 2025

[The signatories must be members of the County Council and at least two must be members of the Scrutiny Commission]

A REQUEST FOR CALL IN MUST BE MADE TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE WITHIN FIVE WORKING DAYS OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE.

CABINET

THURSDAY, 12 JUNE 2025

DECISIONS

Published on: Thursday 12 June 2025

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 12 June 2025. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording which will appear in the minutes.

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

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Mrs. R. Whitelaw (Tel. 0116 305 2583).

ITEM 4

PROTOCOL FOR FLYING FLAGS AT COUNTY HALL.

Chief Executive

- a) That the current flag flying protocol agreed by the political Group Leaders in the last council term be revoked;
- b) That a new protocol be agreed as follows
 - i. the Union Flag and the County Flag to fly permanently from two of the three poles at the front of County Hall,
 - ii. the third pole to fly the St George's flag, or the Lord Lieutenant's flag when he is present at County Hall in an official capacity,
 - iii. the fourth pole within the Quadrangle at County Hall be utilised to mark events such as Armed Forces Day, Commonwealth Day and Armistice Day;
- c) That decisions in relation to all other requests to fly flags in relation to community events and celebration days be delegated to the Chief Executive following consultation with the Leader of the County Council.

(KEY DECISION)

REASON FOR DECISION:

To agree a new protocol for flag flying at County Hall.

CABINET – 12 JUNE 2025**PROTOCOL FOR FLYING FLAGS AT COUNTY HALL****REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to present the County Council's current protocol for flying flags at County Hall.

Recommendations

2. The Cabinet is recommended to consider whether it wishes to make any changes to the current protocol.

(Key Decision)

Reasons for Recommendation

3. The Leader has requested the opportunity to reconsider the protocol.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

4. None.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

5. The existing protocol is the result of an agreement between the Group Leaders of the previous Council.

Resource Implications

6. There are no resource implications arising from this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

7. None.

Officer(s) to Contact

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PART B

Background

8. The protocol appended to this report has been in place since January 2025. Prior to that, all flags (all Pride Flags, the Commonwealth Flag, Emergency Services Flag, Ukrainian Flag, Armed Forces Flag and Red Ensign) were flown from the three flagpoles at the front of County Hall and the flagpole in the quadrangle was only used for flag raising ceremonies relating to the Armed Forces and Armistice Day.

Proposals/Options

9. The Cabinet is invited to amend the protocol as it feels is appropriate.

Consultation

10. There is no statutory requirement to consult on this matter. The current protocol requires the Corporate Equalities Board, a cross-departmental officer body which oversees delivery of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, to undertake an annual review of the protocol, involving consultation with the staff networks to ensure that correct flags have been identified and that each network is satisfied with the level of visibility. Any changes would be reported to Group Leaders for their approval.

Equality Implications

11. The introduction to the current flag flying protocol clarifies the implications.

Human Rights Implications

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

Background Papers

None.

Appendices

Appendix – Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall

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PROTOCOL FOR FLYING FLAGS AT COUNTY HALL

Introduction

1. Leicestershire County Council recognises the importance of flying flags as a means of marking important events, supporting campaigns, strengthening national identity, promoting community cohesion and demonstrating support to staff. The flag provides a visible symbol to the public and staff about the Council's commitment to certain causes.

Flags Flying at County Hall.

2. There are four flag poles on the County Hall site. Three are at the front of the building and a fourth is located in the inner quadrangle next to the Stand Easy memorial.
3. It has been decided that the three flag poles at the front of County Hall shall be designated as "public facing". The Union Flag and County Flag will fly on two of these poles. The third pole will be used to fly the Commonwealth Flag and, on the anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Flag.
4. At the request of the Lord-Lieutenant, the Lord-Lieutenant's flag will be flown from one of the flagpoles at the front of County Hall when he is present at County Hall in an official capacity.
5. All flags relating to community events and celebration days will be flown from the inner quadrangle. Where flags are proposed to be flown at the same time, the one with the shortest timeframe will take precedence.
6. It is important that the flying of a flag is part of an overall commitment to honouring or marking the community event. There will be internal or external communications to mark and explain why this event is important. There will also be a clear communications plan associated with each campaign, which promotes the initiatives the Council is undertaking alongside flying a flag.

Planning Consent

7. Regulations governing the flying of flags in England are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007, as amended. These regulations limit the number of flags which can be flown without advertisement consent, which in the County Council's case would have to be granted by Blaby District Council. None of the flags proposed to be flown outside the front of County Hall require planning consent.

Lighting Up County Hall

8. It is possible to light up County Hall to mark significant domestic and international events. These events will usually occur on an ad hoc basis. The exception to this is in relation to commemoration for Armistice, where County Hall is lit up in red for a period of two weeks, to coincide with the poppy appeal, prior to the 11th November.
9. Any ad hoc requests for the lighting up of County Hall should be submitted to the Assistant Director, People, Property and Transformation, for Corporate Resources for consideration. In conjunction with the Chief Executive, she will make a recommendation for Group Leaders to consider.

Governance

10. The Corporate Equalities Board will undertake an annual review of the protocol. This will involve consultation with the staff networks to ensure that correct flags have been identified and that each network is satisfied with the level of visibility. Any changes will be reported to Group Leaders for approval.

New Requests

11. All in-year requests to fly additional flags or to light up County Hall will be considered by the Assistant Director, People, Property and Transformation, for Corporate Resources. In conjunction with the Chief Executive, she will make a recommendation for Group Leaders to consider.

ANNEX 1 - Proposed community flag flying 2025

Dates	Event	Flag	Proposed flagpole
February 1 st to 28 th	LGBTQ+ History Month	Rainbow Flag	Quadrangle
March 17 th to 23 rd	Neurodiversity Week	Disability Pride Flag	Quadrangle
March 31 st	Transgender Day of Visibility	Transgender flag	Quadrangle
May 17 th	International Day against homophobia	Rainbow flag	Quadrangle
June 1 st to 14 th	LGBTQ+ Pride Month	Rainbow	Quadrangle
June 15 th to 19 th	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month	Romani Flag	Quadrangle
June 20 th	Windrush Day	Windrush Flag	Quadrangle
July 1 st to 31 st (excluding July 14 th)	Disability Pride Month	Disability Pride Flag	Quadrangle
July 14 th	International Non-Binary People's Day	Non-binary pride flag	Quadrangle
September 23 rd	Bi-Visibility Day	Bi Pride Flag	Quadrangle
October 1 st -31 st (excluding October 22 nd)	Black History Month	Black History Month flag	Quadrangle
October 22 nd	Beginning of Asexual Awareness Week	ACE Flag	Quadrangle
November 20 th	Transgender day of remembrance	Transgender flag	Quadrangle
November 22 nd to December 22 nd	UK Disability History Month (includes International Day of Persons with Disabilities)	Disabled Peoples Flag	Quadrangle

ANNEX 2 – full schedule of flags

Date	Event	Pole 2	Pole 1	Pole 3	Quadrangle
January 1st to 31 st		County	Union		
February 1 st - 19 th	LGBTQ+ History Month	County	Union		Rainbow
February 19 th - 25 th	Anniversary of invasion of Ukraine	County	Union	Ukrainian	Rainbow
February 26 th - 28 th	LGBTQ+ History Month	County	Union		Rainbow
March 10 th	Commonwealth Day	County	Union	Commonwealth	
March 17 th - 23 rd	Neurodiversity week	County	Union		Disability
March 31 st	International Transgender Day of Visibility	County	Union		Trans Flag
April 23 rd	St George's Day	St George	Union	County	
May 8 th	VE Day	County	Union		Armed Forces
May 17 th	International Day against Homophobia	County	Union		Rainbow
June 1 st to 14 th	LGBTQ+ Pride Month	County	Union		Rainbow
June 15 th to 19 th	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month	County	Union		Romani
June 20 th	Windrush Day	County	Union		Windrush
June 24 th to 29 th	Armed Forces Day	County	Union		Armed Forces
July 1 st to 31 st	Disability Pride Month	County	Union		Disability Pride

Date	Event	Pole 2	Pole 1	Pole 3	Quadrangle
(excluding July 14 th)					
July 14 th	International Non-Binary Day	County	Union		Non-binary flag
August 15 th	VJ Day (victory over Japan)	County	Union		Armed Forces
September 3 rd	Merchant Navy Day	County	Union		Red Ensign
September 9 th	Emergency Services Day	County	Union		Emergency Services
September 23 rd	Bi-visibility day	County	Union		Bi Flag
October 1 st - 31 st (excluding October 22 nd)	Black History Month	County	Union		Black History Month
October 22 nd	Beginning of Asexual awareness week	County	Union		ACE Pride
November 11 th	Armistice Day	County Union	Union		Wreath laying
20 th November	Transgender Day of Remembrance	County	Union		Trans
November 22 nd - December 22 nd	UK Disability History Month (includes international Disabled persons day)	County	Union		Disability Pride

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Disabled Workers Group Written Response to Cabinet Report - Flag Flying Protocol.

The Disabled Workers Group (DWG) chairs have been made aware of an additional meeting of the Cabinet which has been requested by the Leader on Thursday 12 June at 2.00pm to discuss the Protocol on Flag Flying. The DWG note that this is a single item agenda and that the Cabinet is recommended to consider whether it wishes to make any changes to the current protocol.

However, having reviewed the report contained within the agenda document pack, the DWG highlight that this contains the County Council's current protocol for flying flags at County Hall and does not include and suggested or recommended amendments. The DWG are highlighting that this does appear to align with County Council's core values of openness and transparency.

The DWG would stress that the existing protocol is the result of an agreement where significant interaction with the DWG was made prior to the final decision on the protocol. These meetings ensured that whilst the DWG did not necessarily agree with the policy and procedures, we were reassured of the support from the council for its disabled staff and service users. This open dialogue and willingness to engage with its staff networks facilitated a sense of honesty and trust, again aligning with the core values of the council and setting a positive precedent for relations between the council and its staff.

It is therefore disappointing that changes to the policy may occur without consultation with the staff networks, without prior knowledge or understanding of these changes before the meeting takes place. Though the flags provide a visible symbol to the public of the council's commitment, the converse is also important: the visible stripping of this symbol could send a message of decreasing support from the council to our staff members and to the public. This is important at a time of increasing uncertainty, during which we are looking for explicit, visible reassurance of the continued commitment of the council, its members and its staff to make disabled people of Leicestershire – and the council's workers – feel safe, supported, educated and uplifted.

Therefore, the DWG would request that should amendments be proposed to the policy during the Cabinet on the Thursday, 12 June 2025 at 2.00 pm, a formal consultation is conducted with the staff networks prior to any decisions being made.

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Staff Network Chair and Core Group Response to Cabinet Meeting, Flag Flying Protocol, 12 June

The Staff Network chairs and core group have been made aware of the cabinet meeting on the council's flag flying protocol, called by the Leader for Thursday 12 June at 2pm. We would like to acknowledge the DWG's response to the cabinet report and echo its sentiments in unison.

As Staff Network chairs (DWG, LGBTQ+, BAME) and members of the core group (BAME), our voice comes from the workforce. One of our responsibilities in this role is to bring to our members' attention any changes in the council that may affect them. This reciprocal relationship with council officers and members allows us to provide a space for staff to feel supported and to be effective at work – and signals to Leicestershire residents that we have their interests at heart.

We feel that the lack of time between our understanding of this event, and the meeting taking place, has hampered our ability to communicate, and promote the voices of those in our staff networks and beyond. With over 400 members in our groups – not including those who are LGBTQ+, disabled, or come from a BAME background who are not members, or staff who advocate for our communities – it is a significant segment of the workforce whose views on this topic we believe should be heard.

3 days' notice and no consultation have deprived your staff of this opportunity. We would also like to second the DWG's view that the existing protocol allowed for a sense of trust to be cultivated through open communication between the different groups in this conversation. It is our conviction that, no matter the administration, our work is most effective when there is honesty and transparency about the decisions and actions undertaken in this organisation. When open communication begets trust, trust begets a better working environment for everyone involved.

In anticipation of this cabinet meeting, we would recommend the cabinet members reflect on the purpose of flying flags as a local authority: it is an example of the Public Sector Equality Duty, our legal requirement to 'foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who don't.'

We recommend that members consider the reactions that might occur in response to a change in the flag flying protocol and seek out the views of those who will be impacted, especially in a time of increasing instability. This includes, but is not limited to the following questions: what messages could a change in the level of public support send, whether the use of flags is reduced, kept the same, or increased? How would morale of your staff, and their sense of belonging, be affected? Most pertinently, how do members intend to honour the council's public duty, and effectively support their staff and service users in these communities – so that they feel valued and able to thrive as part of the workforce or as part of the county?

We welcome the opportunity for more discussion on the topic, by echoing the DWG's suggestion: for a formal consultation with staff networks before a decision is finalised.

The LGBTQ+ Staff Network Chairs

The Disabled Workers' Group Chairs

The BAME Network Chair and Core Group

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