



Meeting: **Cabinet**

Date/Time: **Thursday, 3 July 2025 at 12.30 pm**

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

Contact: **Mrs R Whitelaw (Tel. 0116 305 2583)**

Email: **rosemary.whitelaw@leics.gov.uk**

Membership

Mr. D. Harrison CC (Chairman)

Mr. J. Boam CC	Mr. V. Richichi CC
Miss. H. Butler 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 June 2025.	(Pages 3 - 4)	No
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2025.	(Pages 5 - 8)	No
3. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.		No
4. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.		No



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|----|--|-------------------|-----|
| 5. | Items referred from Overview and Scrutiny
- Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall. | (Pages 9 -
32) | Yes |
| 6. | Any other items which the Chairman has
decided to take as urgent. | | No |



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

PRESENT

Mr. D. Harrison CC (in the Chair)

Mr. J. Boam CC
Miss. H. Butler 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

Mr. C. Abbott CC, Mr. M. England CC, Mr. C. Smith CC, Mrs D. Taylor CC

1. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2025 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

2. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

3. 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.

4. Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive regarding the County Council's protocol for flying flags at County Hall. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 4', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- 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.

5. Items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

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

2.00 - 2.05 pm
12 June 2025

CHAIRMAN



Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 17 June 2025.

PRESENT

Mr. D. Harrison CC (in the Chair)

Mr. J. Boam CC
Miss. H. Butler CC
Mr. H. Fowler CC
Mr. C. Pugsley CC

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

In attendance

Mr. P. Harrison CC, Mr. J. Poland CC, Mr. C. Smith CC, Mrs D. Taylor CC

Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were reported on behalf of Mr. V. Richichi CC.

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. Provisional Revenue and Capital Outturn 2024/25.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources setting out the provisional revenue and capital outturn for 2024/25. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 3', is filed with these minutes. Comments from the Scrutiny Commission, which had considered a report at its meeting on 9 June, and from Mr. A. Innes CC, were circulated separately and copies are also filed with these minutes.

Mr. Harrison CC and Miss Butler CC explained that the Cabinet wanted to assess the implications of the Government's Spending Review announced on 11th June before deciding on the proposed bank risk share investment and procuring support to deliver savings, recognising the urgent need to address the budget gap.

Miss Butler thanked Mr. Innes for his comments and said he would be sent a written response to the points he had raised.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments of the Scrutiny Commission be noted;

- b) That the 2024/25 provisional revenue and capital outturn be noted;
- c) That the prudential indicators for 2024/25 as shown in Appendix E to the report be noted;
- d) That the net underspend be used for the additional commitments as specified in the report;
- e) That it be noted that the current Medium Term Financial Strategy gap of £90m by 2028/29 may be exacerbated by the Government's Spending Review announced on 11 June and that the Director of Corporate Resources report further to the Cabinet at its next meeting on the Spending Review, its implications for the County Council's finances and services;
- f) That in light of that further report, the procurement of external support to deliver savings be approved by the Cabinet at its next meeting.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To note the provisional revenue and capital outturn for 2024/25 and agree the transfers to earmarked reserves to fund future commitments.

To consider the implications of the Spending Review before making a decision on proposed treasury management investment and external support for the delivery of savings.

9. Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport regarding the outcome of public consultation on the draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland and seeking approval for its submission to full Council. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 4', is filed with these minutes. Comments from the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which considered a report on 11 June, were circulated separately and are also filed with these minutes.

Mr. Tilbury CC commended the Strategy, which would provide tangible benefits for the area, and thanked everyone who had been involved in its development.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the outcome of consultation on the draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (LNRS) including comments of the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- b) The LNRS be submitted to the Council meeting on 2 July 2025 for approval;

- c) That the Director of Environment and Transport, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, be authorised to make any final amendments to the draft LNRS and supporting documents prior to its submission to the Council meeting.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The County Council is the 'responsible authority' for the development of a LNRS for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland and as such has a statutory duty to produce an LNRS. The consultation has informed the content of the Strategy.

The LNRS identifies nature priorities for the area and will support national environmental targets as well as the UK's international biodiversity commitment.

The LNRS will form part of the Council's Policy Framework and thus requires approval by Council.

10. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2028.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services regarding the outcome of the consultation on the refreshed SEND and Inclusion Strategy and seeking approval of the Strategy. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 5', is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Pugsley CC referred to the Council's commitment to deliver better outcomes for children and young people with SEND and help them to thrive, and commended the Strategy.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the outcome of consultation on the refreshed SEND and Inclusion Strategy be noted;
- b) That the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2028 be approved.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To note the consultation feedback which has informed the final Strategy.

The revised Strategy will provide a framework for planning, commissioning and delivering SEND services and support by the Council and its partners for children and young people living in Leicestershire.

11. Adults and Communities Department Strategy 2025-2029: Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities regarding the outcome of consultation on the draft Adults and Communities Department Strategy 2025-

2029 “Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire” and seeking approval of the Strategy. A copy of the report, marked ‘Agenda Item 6’, is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Boam CC noted that the Strategy responded to changing demand for services and promoted personal independence and strong communities. It built on a proven model to provide effective and efficient services.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the outcome of the consultation on the Adults and Communities Strategy 2025-2029 “Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire 2025-2029” be noted;
- b) That the Adults and Communities Strategy 2025-2029 “Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire 2025-2029” be approved.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Strategy provides a framework for policy, process and ways of working for the Adults and Communities Department and supports the delivery of the County Council’s statutory duties, national policy and statutory guidance. The consultation feedback has informed the final Strategy.

12. Items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

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

2.00 - 2.24 pm
17 June 2025

CHAIRMAN

**CABINET – 3 JULY 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 for the Cabinet to respond to the request from the Scrutiny Commission that it reconsiders the Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall, which it had previously agreed at a meeting on 12 June. A supplementary report setting out any proposed revisions to the Protocol will be circulated to members in due course.

Recommendations

2. The Cabinet is recommended to consider whether it wishes to make any changes to the Protocol agreed on 12 June in the light of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Commission.

(Decision has previously been called in)

Reasons for Recommendation

3. The Scrutiny Commission called in the decision taken by the Cabinet at its meeting on 12 June. A copy of the call-in notice is attached as Appendix B to this report. The Scrutiny Commission subsequently met on 24 June and recommended that the Cabinet reconsider its decision. The recommendation of the Scrutiny Commission is attached as Appendix C to this report.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

4. None. The decision of the Cabinet at this meeting will be final.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

5. The protocol attached at Appendix A was the result of an agreement between the Group Leaders of the previous Council. It was revoked by the Cabinet on 12 June and replaced with the following:

- (a) the Union Flag and the County Flag to fly permanently from two of the three poles at the front of County Hall;
 - (b) 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;
 - (c) the fourth pole within the Quadrangle at County Hall be utilised to mark events such as Armed Forces Day, Commonwealth Day and Armistice Day.
- 6. Decisions in relation to all other requests to fly flags in relation to community events and celebration days were delegated to the Chief Executive following consultation with the Leader of the County Council.
- 7. The Scrutiny Commission considered the matter at its meeting on 24 June and made the following recommendations:
 - (a) That the Cabinet be asked to reconsider its decision regarding the adoption of a new Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall taken at its meeting held on 12 June 2025 having specific regard to:
 - (i) Resolution 4(b)(iii), that "the fourth pole within the Quadrangle at County Hall be utilised to mark events such as Armed Forces Day, Commonwealth Day and Armistice Day"; and
 - (ii) Resolution 4(c), "that decision 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."
 - (b) That the Cabinet be requested to speak with representatives of each of the Council's staff working groups, and to give due consideration to the comments received from the County Council as a Corporate Parent, from County Council social workers and from members of the public in advance of the Cabinet meeting at which the Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall is to be reconsidered;
 - (c) That the Cabinet consider whether the Union flag could also be flown on the fourth flagpole in the quadrangle (as well as outside the front of County Hall) when other specific flags were not being flown;
 - (d) That a copy of the minutes summarising all the comments now made by the Scrutiny Commission be presented to the Cabinet for consideration in support of (a) and (b) above.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Resolution 4(b)(iii) is considered too vague and unclear and should instead specifically state which of the flags in the list of the previously agreed Flag Flying Protocol will be flown. This is necessary to ensure clarity and

consistency.

Resolution 4(c) should be restricted to make clear that the delegation to the Chief Executive should only be exercised in response to exceptional national and/or international issues that arise from time to time.

To ensure that Staff Working Groups are properly consulted and their views taken into account in accordance with due process.

Resource Implications

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

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

9. None.

Officer(s) to Contact

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Lauren Haslam
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PART B

Background

10. The protocol appended to this report was in place from January 2025 until the Cabinet meeting on 12 June 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.
11. The Cabinet decision taken on 12 June to revoke the protocol and replace it with the protocol set out in paragraphs 5 and 6 of this report was a key decision and therefore could not be enacted until 5 working days had passed. During that time the decision was called in by the Scrutiny Commission, who considered the matter on 24 June and referred it back to the Cabinet. The decision taken on 12 June is therefore still to be enacted.
12. There is no further opportunity for call-in once the Cabinet has reached a decision at this meeting. The decision will therefore be enacted immediately.
13. The minutes of the Scrutiny Commission meeting will be appended to the supplementary report.

Proposals/Options

14. A supplementary report will be prepared setting out any proposed revisions to the existing protocol following the decision of the Scrutiny Commission.

Consultation

15. The Leader has undertaken to meet with the Chairs of Staff Networks and the outcome of that meeting will be included in the supplementary report. The Chairs of the Staff Networks also made representations to the Cabinet meeting on 12 June; these are attached as Appendix D to this report.
16. The Co-Chair of the Disabled Workers Group spoke on behalf of the Chairs of Staff Networks at the Scrutiny Commission meeting and her comments will be included in the minutes of that meeting.
17. Comments received on the Cabinet decision of 12 June, in the form of an open letter from Leicestershire County Council Social Workers, a comment from the County Council regarding members' role as a Corporate Parent and comments for and against the policy received via the Complaints Team were considered by the Scrutiny Commission. These comments are attached as Appendix E to this report.

Equality Implications

18. The introduction to the previous flag flying protocol, attached as Appendix A, clarifies the implications.

Human Rights Implications

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

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 12 June – Protocol on Flying Flags at County Hall
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=8191&Ver=4>

Report to the Scrutiny Commission on 24 June – Protocol on Flying Flags at County Hall – Call-in of the Cabinet Decision
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=85618#mgDocuments>

Appendices

Appendix A – Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall, revoked on 12 June but decision not yet enacted

Appendix B – Call-in Notice

Appendix C – Scrutiny decision

Appendix D – Representations received by the Cabinet for its meeting on 12 June

Appendix E – Comments received on the Cabinet decision on 12 June, previously considered by the Scrutiny Commission

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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 1 st 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

Date	Event	Pole 2	Pole 1	Pole 3	Quadrangle
July 1 st to 31 st (excluding July 14 th)	Disability Pride Month	County	Union		Disability Pride
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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APPENDIX B

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.

APPENDIX C



**Leicestershire
County Council**

SCRUTINY COMMISSION (SPECIAL MEETING)

TUESDAY, 24 JUNE 2025

DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held on Tuesday, 24 June 2025. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording which will appear in the minutes.

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

ITEM 4

**PROTOCOL FOR FLYING FLAGS AT COUNTY HALL
- CALL-IN OF THE CABINET DECISION.**

Chief Executive

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Cabinet be asked to reconsider its decision regarding the adoption of a new Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall taken at its meeting held on 12 June 2025 having specific regard to:
 - (i) Resolution 4(b)(iii), that “the fourth pole within the Quadrangle at County Hall be utilised to mark events such as Armed Forces Day, Commonwealth Day and Armistice Day”; and
 - (ii) Resolution 4(c), “that decision 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.”
- (b) That the Cabinet be requested to speak with representatives of each of the Council’s staff working groups, and to give due consideration to the comments received from the County Council as a Corporate Parent, from County Council social workers and from members of the public in advance of the Cabinet meeting at which the Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall is to be reconsidered;

- (c) That the Cabinet consider whether the Union flag could also be flown on the fourth flagpole in the quadrangle (as well as outside the front of County Hall) when other specific flags were not being flown;
- (d) That a copy of the minutes summarising all the comments now made by the Scrutiny Commission be presented to the Cabinet for consideration in support of (a) and (b) above.

REASON FOR DECISION:

Resolution 4(b)(iii) is considered too vague and unclear and should instead specifically state which of the flags in the list of the previously agreed Flag Flying Protocol will be flown. This is necessary to ensure clarity and consistency.

Resolution 4(c) should be restricted to make clear that the delegation to the Chief Executive should only be exercised in response to exceptional national and/or international issues that arise from time to time.

To ensure that Staff Working Groups are properly consulted and their views taken into account in accordance with due process.

Representations received by the Cabinet for its meeting on 12 June**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.

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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SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 24 JUNE 2025

COMMENTS RECEIVED

Comments received from Leicestershire County Council Social Workers

“To the Councillors/Cabinet Members of Leicestershire County Council,

We are writing to request the immediate reversal of the recent decision to remove certain flags such as the Pride flag and Disabled Workers' flag.

If we do not publicly oppose this, there might be a public perception that we are complicit in these actions. We need to be clear that the Social Workers of Leicestershire County Council overwhelmingly do not support this action.

It is vitally important that there is a visible symbol from the council that we are supportive of marginalised groups. This does not stop with a flag and will need continual work to support all, but a flag is an important outward symbol. Removing these flags promotes exclusion and marginalisation — it implies people represented by those flags are not welcome. This is in direct contradiction to the values and ethics of each and every Social Worker employed by Leicestershire County Council.

To be clear, there is no opposition to the proposed flags being flown such as the Union flag — it is about the active removal of other flags.

Although there are many people within the local authority who do not agree with the policy, we are writing this from a Social Work perspective due to the Social Work England standards. I have outlined these below and how the removal of certain flags contradicts our registrations. The specific standards this decision is relevant to are:

- Promote the rights, strengths and wellbeing of people, families and communities
- Establish and maintain the trust and confidence of people
- Act safely, respectfully and with professional integrity
- Promote ethical practice and report concern

In order to promote the rights of individuals, the respective flags are a positive outward symbol of support of already marginalised groups. It is also a positive step towards equality and equity. I am also reminded that the local authority has a strong commitment to anti-discrimination values. A flag is another important symbol of this.

It would be difficult to maintain confidence of the people we support from the affected communities if we were to stand by and not loudly object to the proposed action.

Given our duty to act with professional integrity, supporting or remaining silent during the removal of these flags goes against the integrity we are bound and proud to abide by. It would not be possible to promote ethical practice and be accountable for our practice if we were not loudly saying that we oppose the actions of removing certain flags.

We are committed to working for the people of Leicestershire as we have been collectively for many years. We want to abide by the standards we are signed up to and by the policies of the local authority. In order to do this and maintain our professional integrity, we are calling for an immediate reversal of the decision to remove certain flags from County Hall including, but not limited to, the Pride flag and the Disabled Workers' flag.

Yours sincerely"

Comment by the County Council regarding members' role as a Corporate Parents

"As corporate parents to our children in care and care leavers and in line with 'Our Promise to Children in Care and Care Leavers' as agreed with partners, we would want to demonstrate a commitment to celebrating and valuing all of our children and ensure that any decisions made take account of this and that visibly the authority celebrates each of them."

Comments against the Policy received via the County Council Complaints Team

Message from the Customer

Sent on 13/06/2025 14:40:03

"I am disgusted at Reforms Flag Policy change. The content of the policy, the lack of consultation and the manner in which its reportedly been done

As an ex-employee of Leics County Council in the education department I am horrified at this move. I was once so proud of working at County Hall and felt the council truly understood its population.

I am not directly represented by any of the flags that have been banned, but the act of flying inclusive flags does represent me. No longer.

You have not only alienated vulnerable groups in our community, but allies of those groups How is this unifying apart from building hatred and disenfranchisement.

Shame on you."

Message from the Customer

Sent on 14/06/2025

"Hi complaints team,

I might be sending this through the entirely wrong channel, if I am - please can somebody forward my complaint or pass me the details of the correct channel.

I would like to complain about the new british values flag rules policy. I completely disagree with this new policy - refusing to fly flags to mark events such as LGBTQ+ Pride Month, Gypsy Roma and Traveller History Month, and Windrush Day (flags which have all flown previously from the council building in Glenfield) in favour of flags that supposedly support british values is absurd. Celebrating our communitys differences is a key british value (mutual respect and tolerance) and crucially Leicestershire thrives BECAUSE of its diversity and not in spite of it. I think now, more than ever, it is important to show support for the people in our diverse community and flying a flag is a simple yet clear message that we are doing that.

When my complaint is responded too, please can you give me the details of the meeting where this decision was made and either direct me to the published minutes or let me know how I submit an FOI request."

Message from the Customer

Sent on 14/06/2025 15:55:04

"A recent EOM of the cabinet was recently called, with one item on the agenda, countys flag policy. My complaint is against the cabinet members and their lack of discussion or transparency in changing this policy, or the affect it will have on employees and residents. It was a pre determined decision. Along side my complaint I would also like to request a freedom of information on this "cost saving scheme" before a policy is changed it is good practice to show the public exactly how much this will save the tax payer, and mitigation to be discussed. On balance, I would also like to request an FOI for the cost of setting up the EOM of the cabinet."

Message from the Customer

Sent on 20/06/2025 14:20:09

"My complaint is [REDACTED] removing the pride flag from the county council building promotes homophobia. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I feel like [REDACTED] [they are] personally attacking the LGBTQ community in Leicestershire and [REDACTED] removing the flag because of [REDACTED] homophobic views. This has nothing to do with saving money as the council cannot even give an estimated figure of savings. British values include LGBTQ values and equality, celebrating people from all walks of life, not just cis white straight men. This incident must be investigated as a hate crime. The council is rife with homophobia and bigotry, which is illegal in the work place. the LGBTQ community in Leicestershire now doubts the council and is fearful of the council."

Comment in support of the Policy submitted via the Complaints Team
Message from the Customer

Sent on 15/06/2025 13:50:03

“Greetings, I write to complain that it is only complaints that are listed on the Council’s website. No where is the opportunity made available for people to congratulate, or say well done, to either an individual councillor or employee. This is a ridiculous situation and indicates that no one ever gets anything right. Well, believe me, that couldn’t be farther from the truth. As a Veteran I have had numerous dealings the many departments, in the Council, and I have never had anything other than maximum support. I have had many dealings with the Lord Lieutenant’s office with nothing but praise for the support I have received. The remainder of the Council, from Highways to finance, remembrance, and all other departments, has never been anything other than outstanding.

What brought me to make this observation was that I wanted to congratulate the Leader of the Council, on the common-sense decision, that has been taken, in respect of what Flags will be flown daily. If permission is given to other groups, such as the LGBTQ, then is it only fair that I request that a flag for Geminis, and Left-Handed people be flown? Not of course forgetting Dog Owners.

Please include a link to the positive, or better still remove all negative links, and just have a link to comments.”