



Meeting: **Cabinet**

Date/Time: **Tuesday, 24 March 2026 at 2.00 pm**

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

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

Email: **gemma.duckworth@leics.gov.uk**

Membership

Mr. D. Harrison CC (Chairman)

Mr. C. Abbott 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

**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 3 February 2026.		(Pages 3 - 10)	
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.	Environment and Transport 2026/27 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme.	Director of Environment and Transport	(Pages 11 - 70)	Yes
5.	Delivering the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) 2025-2040 - Enabling Travel Choice Strategy.	Director of Environment and Transport	(Pages 71 - 112)	



6.	East Midlands Freeport: Change of Accountable Body and Governance Implications.	Chief Executive	(Pages 113 - 120)	
7.	Leicestershire School Term Dates Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032.	Director of Children and Family Services	(Pages 121 - 140)	Yes
8.	'Belonging in Education' Strategy 2026-2029.	Director of Children and Family Services	(Pages 141 - 180)	Yes
9.	Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2026-2029 - Permission to Consult.	Director of Children and Family Services	(Pages 181 - 308)	Yes
10.	Draft Leicestershire Carers Strategy 2026-2030.	Director of Adults and Communities and Director of Children and Family Services	(Pages 309 - 342)	
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 items of business in accordance with Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972:</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A511 Major Road Network Growth Corridor</i> • <i>Response to the Local Government Reorganisation Consultation</i> 			
14.	A511 Growth Corridor - Approval to Undertake Pre-Commencement Works and Submit the Full Business Case. <i>(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 10)</i>	Director of Environment and Transport	(Pages 343 - 354)	Yes
15.	Local Government Reorganisation - Response to Consultation. <i>(Exempt under Paragraphs 3 and 10)</i>	Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources	(Pages 355 - 360)	Yes



Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 3 February 2026.

PRESENT

Mr. D. Harrison CC (in the Chair)

Mr. C. Abbott 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

In attendance

Mrs. D. Taylor CC

85. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2025 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

86. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

87. 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.

88. Provisional Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2029/30.

The Cabinet considered a report and a supplementary report of the Director of Corporate Resources regarding the proposed Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2029/30 (MTFS), following its consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny bodies and receipt of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. Copies of the report and supplementary report, marked "Agenda item 4", are filed with these minutes.

Mr. Fowler CC thanked officers for their work on the MTFS and commented on the complexity of local authority finance and the pressures facing the Council: the proposals sought to reduce the budget gap whilst keeping the Council Tax increase below inflation. He and Mr. Harrison CC referred to the potential savings resulting from the Council's Efficiency Review, the delivery of which would be a priority for the coming year.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Scrutiny Commission (Appendix Q to the report) be noted;
- (ii) That a Council Tax increase for 2026/27 of 2.99% be recommended;

- (iii) That the following be recommended to the County Council:
- (a) That subject to the items below, approval be given to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which incorporates the recommended net revenue budget for 2026/27 totalling £613.4m as set out in Appendices A, B and E of the report and includes the growth and savings for that year as set out in Appendix C;
 - (b) That approval be given to the projected provisional revenue budgets for 2027/28, 2028/29 and 2029/30, set out in Appendix B to the report, including the growth and savings for those years as set out in Appendix C, allowing the undertaking of preliminary work, including business case development, engagement and equality and human rights impact assessments, as may be necessary to achieve the savings specified for those years including savings under development, set out in Appendix D;
 - (c) That each Chief Officer, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources and following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Lead Member(s), undertake preparatory work as considered appropriate to develop proposals and associated investment required to reduce the financial gap in all four years of the MTFS, to enable the Cabinet, subject to scrutiny processes, to consider a new multi-year transformation programme;
 - (d) That approval be given to the early achievement of savings that are included in the MTFS, as may be necessary, along with associated investment costs, subject to the Director of Corporate Resources agreeing to funding being available;
 - (e) That the level of the General Fund and earmarked reserves as set out in Appendix K be noted and the planned use of those earmarked reserves as indicated in that appendix be approved;
 - (f) That the risk assessment at paragraph 140 and the Director of Corporate Resources assurance statement at paragraph 155 be noted;
 - (g) That the recommended Council Tax increase for 2026/27 and the resulting precept be approved;
 - (h) That the Chief Executive be authorised to issue the necessary precepts to billing authorities in accordance with (g) above and the tax base notified by the District Councils, and to take any other action which may be necessary to give effect to the precepts;
 - (i) That approval be given to the 2026/27 to 2029/30 capital programme, totalling £501m, as set out in Appendix F;
 - (j) That the Director of Corporate Resources following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Resources be authorised to approve new capital schemes and revenue spend to save schemes, including revenue costs associated with their delivery, shown as future developments in the capital programme, to be funded from funding available;

- (k) That the financial indicators required under the Prudential Code included in Appendix N, Annex 2 be noted and that the following limits be approved:

	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m
Operational boundary for external debt				
i) Borrowing	194	200	225	255
ii) Other long term liabilities	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	195	201	226	256
Authorised limit for external debt				
i) Borrowing	204	210	235	265
ii) Other long term liabilities	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	205	211	236	266

- (l) That the Director of Corporate Resources be authorised to effect movement within the authorised limit for external debt between borrowing and other long-term liabilities;
- (m) That the following borrowing limits be approved for the period 2026/27 to 2029/30:

(i) Maturity of borrowing:-

	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
	%	%
Under 12 months	30	0
12 months and within 24 months	30	0
24 months and within 5 years	50	0
5 years and within 10 years	70	0
10 years and above	100	25

(ii) An upper limit for principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days is 25% of the portfolio.

- (n) That the Director of Corporate Resources be authorised to enter into such loans or undertake such arrangements as necessary to finance the capital programme, subject to the prudential limits in Appendix N;
- (o) That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2026/27, as set out in Appendix N, be approved including:
- (i) The Treasury Management Policy Statement, Appendix N; Annex 4;
- (ii) The Annual Statement of the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision as set out in Appendix N, Annex 1;
- (p) That the Capital Strategy (Appendix G), Investing in Leicestershire Programme Strategy (Appendix H), Risk Management Policy and Strategy (Appendix I), Earmarked Reserves Policy (Appendix J) and Insurance Policy (Appendix L) be approved;
- (q) That it be noted that the Leicester and Leicestershire Business Rate Pool has been revoked for 2026/27;

- (r) That the Director of Corporate Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Resources, be authorised to amend the provisional MTFs in response to changes arising between the Cabinet and County Council meetings, noting that any changes will be reported to the County Council on 18 February 2026;
- (s) That the Leicestershire School Funding Formula is subject to capping and scaling and continues to reflect the National Funding Formula for 2026/27;
- (t) That delegated authority be given to the Director of Children and Family Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Children and Family Services, to agree the funding rates for early years providers for 2026/27.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To enable the County Council to meet its statutory requirements with respect to setting a balanced budget and Council Tax precept for 2026/27, to allow efficient financial administration during 2026/27, and to provide a basis for the planning of services over the next four years.

To enable early work to be undertaken on the development of new savings and the Transformation Programme to address the serious financial position.

Applying capping and scaling to the Leicestershire School Funding Formula for 2026/27 will ensure the cost does not exceed the Schools Block Dedicated Schools Grant whilst continuing to fully reflect the National Funding Formula.

To enable rates to be set for early years providers for 2026/27. The delegation to the Director of Children and Family Services will enable the rates to be set for the providers within the government-prescribed timeline.

89. School Places Strategy 2026 to 2031.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services regarding the outcome of the consultation on the Council's draft School Places Strategy 2026 to 2031 and seeking approval of the final Strategy. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 5', is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Pugsley CC commended the Strategy, which set out how the Council would meet its duty to ensure a sufficiency of high quality school places in Leicestershire, including via its commissioning role and close partnership working with schools and others.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the outcome of consultation including the comments of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the draft School Places Strategy 2026-2031 be noted;
- b) That the School Places Strategy 2026-2031 be approved;

- c) That it be noted that a School Places Delivery Plan will be developed to support the implementation of the School Places Strategy.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

To note the feedback received from the consultation on the Strategy which has informed the final version.

The School Places Strategy sets out how the Council will meet its statutory duties to ensure that there are sufficient high quality school places in Leicestershire which are in the right place, at the right time. It outlines the background, principles and challenges of delivering school places in the County and how the Council will work with stakeholders to fund and deliver places between 2026 and 2031.

The School Places Delivery Plan will set out how the ambitions detailed in the Strategy will be achieved.

90. Children and Family Services Departmental Plan 2026-2029.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services regarding the Children and Family Services Departmental Plan for 2026 to 2029 which set out the high-level priorities for the Department. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 6', is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Pugsley CC commended the Plan, noting that it had been informed by feedback from children, young people, and families.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Family Services Departmental Plan 2026 to 2029 be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Plan has been developed to fulfil statutory duties and provide a basis for the Children and Family Services' vision, planning, commissioning and delivery of services until 2029. The Plan and associated actions provide a vehicle for Children and Family Services to work together on shared priorities, maximise resources and expertise, and avoid duplication. Service delivery plans will be developed for each service area and progress will be monitored and reported to the Department Management Team on a quarterly basis.

91. Climate Resilience Delivery Plan.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport regarding the Council's Climate Resilience Delivery Plan. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda item 7", is filed with these minutes.

Comments of the Environment, Flooding and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which had considered the Delivery Plan at its meeting on 26 January, were circulated separately and are also filed with these minutes.

Mr. Tilbury CC noted that the Delivery Plan reflected the change in focus previously agreed by the Cabinet from carbon reduction to climate adaptation, such as flooding mitigation.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments of the Environment, Flooding and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- b) That the Climate Resilience Delivery Plan be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Delivery Plan (previously the Net Zero Action Plans) has been produced in accordance with the Cabinet's decision from July 2025 to change the focus of activities from carbon reduction to climate adaptation and respond to severe weather events and projects that deliver financial savings or additional social, economic or environmental benefits.

The Delivery Plan includes actions reflecting the programme of flood mitigation and climate adaptation and resilience, as agreed by the Cabinet in October 2025.

92. Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities - Statement of Common Ground relating to Housing Distribution.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport regarding a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) produced by the Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities relating to housing distribution and seeking approval for the Council to become a signatory.

Mr. Harrison CC noted that the SoCG represented a pragmatic approach and would help the local authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire to work together and strategically to achieve sustainable growth for their communities.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the County Council becomes a signatory to the "Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities - Statement of Common Ground relating to housing distribution following the National Planning Policy Framework and new Standard Method published December 2024 (December 2025)" as set out in Appendix A to the report;
- b) That the completion of associated evidence work on the Updated Housing Distribution Paper, which informed the above Statement of Common Ground, as set out in Appendix B, be noted.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

On 27 November 2025, the Government confirmed that the Duty to Co-operate will not be retained under the current plan making system and will cease to apply when new plan making regulations come into force (expected later in 2026). Notwithstanding this change, the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) requires "maintaining effective co-operation" across administrative boundaries. Planning Inspectors are expected to continue to examine plans in line with these policies. In this context, SoCGs

remain an appropriate method to document cross-boundary strategic matters, record areas of agreement and disagreement, and set out next steps, demonstrating that effective and ongoing joint working has taken place. This is particularly important for the County Council due to its responsibilities for highway and education matters, given the scale and criticality of infrastructure dependencies.

The SoCG has been prepared jointly by the nine local authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire. It will directly support Blaby District Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, North West Leicestershire District Council and Oadby and Wigston Borough Council in the submission of their respective Local Plans to the Planning Inspectorate before the end of December 2026.

93. Items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

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

2.00 - 2.31 pm
3 February 2026

CHAIRMAN

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CABINET – 24 MARCH 2026

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT **2026/27 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION** **CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND WORKS PROGRAMME**

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 of the Environment and Transport Department 2026/27 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme (Programmes), both of which are appended to this report.
2. These Programmes have been developed in accordance with the overall budget envelopes included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2026/27 to 2029/30, as approved by the County Council on 18 February 2026. No additional funding is being sought through this report.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Cabinet:
 - a) Approves the 2026/27 Programmes, noting the acute financial context in which they have been developed and will be delivered, as set out in Part B of this report;
 - b) Notes the submission of the draft Local Transport Delivery Plan (LTDP) to the Department for Transport (DfT) on 20 March 2026 for review, to meet the DfT's requirements. A separate report will be brought to the Cabinet in September 2026, prior to the submission of the final LTDP;
 - c) Authorises the Director of Environment and Transport:
 - i) Following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources and the relevant Cabinet Lead Members, to prepare and submit bids, as appropriate, to secure external funding for delivery of schemes identified in the Programmes;

- ii) Following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources, the Assistant Director of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Lead Member for Corporate Resources, to enter such contracts as is necessary to progress schemes in the approved Programmes to allow early contractor involvement to take place in advance of all external funding required to deliver the scheme being secured, provided that any such arrangements are appropriately limited in scope and progressed in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules, and do not commit the Council beyond the intended early-stage works prior to the relevant funding and governance approvals being in place, noting the challenges set out in Part B of this report; and
- iii) Following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources, the Assistant Director of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Lead Member for Resources, to undertake preparatory work as considered appropriate to develop savings as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and to consider that further savings are implemented in a timely manner.

Reason for Recommendations

- 4. To highlight the challenging financial context in which the Programmes are being developed and will be delivered.
- 5. To enable the delivery of the Programmes for the 2026/27 financial year.
- 6. To enable the delivery of large capital schemes using a collaborative approach, to work with contractors to reduce risk and increase cost certainty. Working in this way will also provide necessary assurance to partners and third-party funders contributing to the cost of delivering the Capital Programme.
- 7. To enable early work to be undertaken on the development of new savings to address the worsening financial position.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

- 8. A detailed draft of the LTDP was submitted to the DfT by its deadline of 20 March 2026, meeting the DfT's requirements. This included all spending for 2026/27 and an outline plan to 2029/30.
- 9. The Highways, Transport and Waste Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked for its views on the draft Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme on 5 March 2026. The Committee's comments are set out in paragraphs 88 to 90 of this report.
- 10. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, the Programmes will be published on the Council's website afterwards.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

11. The Programmes are rolling financial and business plans that are updated annually.
12. The Government's budget, announced in October 2025, set out national spending totals for 2026/27 and a direction of travel in terms of future policy by the Government. In December 2025, the DfT provided details of the new local transport funding system for Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and confirmed the funding allocations for the next spending review period (2026/27 – 2028/29 for revenue funding; 2026/27 – 2029/30 for capital funding).
13. Alongside providing these multi-year settlements, the DfT now requires each LTA to produce an LTDP, setting out details of how all the available funding has been prioritised, with details of schemes and interventions or programmes and packages of spend. A detailed draft of the LTDP with all spending for 2026/27 and an outline plan to 2029/30, needed to be submitted by 20 March 2026. The final LTDP to 2029/30 is required by 18 September 2026, although it is anticipated that the finer details of the later years' plan will be developed closer to delivery. The Programmes comprise the first year of the LTDP.
14. Following the approval of the provisional MTFs 2026/27 to 2029/30 by the Cabinet on 16 December 2025, the Cabinet recommended at its meeting on 3 February 2026 a proposed MTFs 2026-30 for approval by the County Council. The County Council approved the MTFs at its meeting on 18 February 2026. This approval included an amendment of an additional £160,000 for footway works.
15. The Programmes have been developed with reference to the Department's key plans and strategies and align with these aims. These include:
 - a) Highways Asset Management Policy and the Highways Asset Management Strategy – originally approved by the Cabinet on 23 June 2017, the documents were updated in December 2020 and refreshed in June 2025.
 - b) Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan – originally approved by the Cabinet on 15 September 2017, it was updated in March 2023 and refreshed in September 2025.
 - c) Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan – approved by the Cabinet on 23 November 2018.
 - d) Environment Strategy 2018-30 – approved by the County Council on 8 July 2020 and its Action Plan 2025-2030.
 - e) Network Management Policy, Strategy and Plan – approved by the Cabinet on 15 December 2020.

- f) Leicestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP4) – approved by the Cabinet on 22 November 2024.
16. Leicestershire County Council's refreshed Strategic Plan 2024 – 2026 sets out the Council's long-term vision, which is based on five strategic outcomes:
- Clean and Green.
 - Great Communities.
 - Improved Opportunities.
 - Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure.
 - Safe and Well.
17. The effective functioning of Leicestershire's transport system is vital to day-to-day life and supports the area's future population and economic growth. As such, the Programmes will contribute to supporting all the Strategic Plan's five outcomes, in particular, they support the 'Clean and Green' and 'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure' outcomes, through maintaining and improving the highway network, which can help to reduce traffic congestion.

Resource Implications

18. The Programmes involve significant amounts of money and represent a continued commitment by the Council to deliver on its strategic objectives.
19. However, based on the current evidence, population growth projections and societal behaviours and expectations, the levels of funding available through the Council's own budgets and funding allocations from the Government, while delivering vital work, are insufficient to meet current and future needs of the County. This is evidenced through work underpinning Local Plans development and driven by the growth proposals that those Local Plans include (inclusive of meeting the Government's imposed housing number requirements). Without investment from other sources, growth will be frustrated and/or travel conditions on Leicestershire's transport system will deteriorate.
20. Leicestershire has traditionally been renowned for having well maintained roads. However, a lack of proactive investment over the last decade due to insufficient funding has led to a rapid deterioration of the road network, creating a maintenance backlog which will not be recovered in the short- to medium-term. The multi-year consolidated funding allocated by the DfT is welcomed and will go some way to address the current condition of the highway network but the funding is insufficient to address the overall decline of Leicestershire's existing highways assets (roads, cycleways and footways, verges, bridges, signs, and lines). Again, without additional funding from other sources, the condition of the County's roads and other assets will continue to decline.
21. The Department's risk register recognises that if services do not take into account current and future climate change in their planning, they may be unable to respond adequately to the predicted impacts, leading to significantly higher financial implications and service disruption, as well as making future adaptation more costly.

22. Thus, what monies are available, need to be invested in projects and measures that deliver the maximum benefit over the longest possible period. Also, the importance of ensuring that the Council is well prepared to secure additional funding from other sources, including via 'bids' to the Government and from developers (not just via planning applications, but also through ensuring that the Local Plans prepared by district councils provide a robust policy basis for seeking contributions), needs to be emphasised.
23. The Works Programme is resource intensive, both in staff and financial terms. Work by other bodies also creates resource pressures that have the potential to impact on the Programme's delivery. Additionally, like many sectors of the economy, skill shortages and/or the inability to retain the necessary skills will continue to impact on the Programme's delivery. The implications of this are the risk of slippage on the Programme's delivery and cost escalation as market prices increase. Thus, going forward, it will be evermore important to ensure that resources are focused on the effective delivery of the approved Programme.
24. Carrying out monitoring and evaluation for the Programmes is key to ensuring that the Council can assess the impact of the various schemes and interventions being delivered against its Strategic Outcomes and the new Local Outcome Framework (see paragraph 36). The monitoring and evaluation requirements for the new consolidated grant funding from the DfT (as outlined in paragraphs 36-38) will require additional resource to ensure that incentivisation requirements can be met and grant funding maximised.
25. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Assistant Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

26. This report will be circulated to all Members.

Officers to Contact

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PART B

Background

27. The development of the Programmes has taken place against a challenging and evolving backdrop. In general, the Programmes continue to be affected by increased costs on some major schemes, due to the impact of inflation and more frequent severe weather events, as well as additional pressures in highways maintenance. The following sub-sections of this report will provide further details.

Financial/Funding

28. In December 2025, the DfT announced that it would consolidate and simplify local transport funding for all LTAs, meaning that LTAs will receive the Integrated Transport Fund (ITF) and Bus Services Fund (BSF).
29. These pots will consolidate the following stable formula-based grants:
- a) Highways Maintenance (Capital),
 - b) Active Travel (Revenue and Capital),
 - c) Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Capability Funding (Revenue),
 - d) Local Transport Grant (Revenue and Capital),
 - e) Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG) (Revenue and Capital).
30. Certain funds which are used to deliver specific schemes (namely Major Road Network, Levelling Up Fund and Structures Fund) are not part of the ITF and BSF funding pots. Neither is the transport element of the resource funding paid via the Local Government Finance Settlement.
31. The purpose of consolidation is to give LTAs flexibility to use funding more effectively and efficiently across programmes and packages of spend to deliver the priorities set out in their Local Transport Plans (LTPs). LTAs will be able to make the strategic decisions that best support their local network and align with wider place-based and local/regional objectives (growth, spatial, environmental and social) and have the freedom to accelerate projects that are most beneficial.

Funding Allocations

32. Based on the 2025 spending review settlement and subsequent ministerial decisions, published allocations for Leicestershire County Council total £251.8m in funding from the DfT for 2026/27 to 2028/29 (2029/30 for capital). This consists of:
- a) £233,337,190 capital (covering 2026/27 - 2029/30),
 - b) £18,499,638 revenue (covering 2026/27 - 2028/29).

Table 1: Allocations, by year and spending category, in thousands (£000s)

Fund Type	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Capital	£48,704	£55,907	£60,684	£68,042
Revenue	£5,835	£6,333	£6,331	-
Total	£54,539	£62,240	£67,015	£68,042

33. Below is a breakdown the funding allocations by type with 2025/26 as a comparison.

Table 2: Allocations, by year and fund type, in thousands (£000s)

Allocations	Fund Type	2025/26 (£)	2026/27 (£)	2027/28 (£)	2028/29 (£)	2029/30 (£)
Active Travel	Capital	1,005	890	890	890	890
Active Travel	Revenue	442	279	279	279	
Highways Maintenance	Capital	28,789	29,785	34,668	37,451	42,815
LABG	Capital	3,146	2,698	2,752	2,806	2,860
LABG	Revenue	4,474	4,758	4,758	4,758	
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Grant (LEVI)	Revenue	217	217	217	217	
Local Transport Grant (LTG)	Capital	15,055	15,331	17,597	19,538	21,477
Local Transport Grant (LTG)	Revenue	581	581	1,079	1,076	
	Total	53,709	54,539	62,240	67,015	68,042

34. In summary, Leicestershire County Council is allocated funding of £14,273,817 from the BSF (corresponding to the LABG revenue line of Table 2 above), and £237,563,011 from the ITF.
35. The ITF is intended to be used to deliver a wide range of local transport outcomes, but the BSF should only be used to support outcomes for bus passengers/services.

Assurance, Monitoring and Evaluation

36. The funding allocations set out above are conditional on the submission to the DfT of an LTDP setting out how the Council plans to use the consolidated funding to achieve progress against the indicators in the Local Transport Outcome Framework over the funding period. This should provide details of schemes and interventions or programmes and packages of expenditure covering both ITF and BSF.

37. The DfT expects the LTDP to be updated and published annually with a formal submission through an online portal. The DfT and Active Travel England (ATE) should be updated of significant changes through regular reporting. The published delivery plan should also be updated in a timely manner to reflect any significant changes.
38. The DfT has introduced a new transport funding and accountability system which is broken down as below:
- a) **Set out what funding is available** - Single grant letters will be issued to LTAs alongside a Memorandum of Understanding that will detail how funding can be used and when DfT agreement is needed.
 - b) **Set out what the DfT expects LTAs to deliver** – DfT ministers will set priority outcomes – including through a new Local Transport Outcome Framework – that they want LTAs to achieve with this funding in delivering their local plans/priorities.
 - c) **LTAs develop delivery plans** - A single LTDP will detail how the LTA has prioritised the funding available to deliver shared outcomes.
 - d) **LTAs report to the Government** - LTAs will report to the DfT to show progress against the delivery plans, key monitoring data and the Local Transport Outcomes Framework via a new online data portal.
 - e) **Potential intervention by the Government** – The DfT will establish an intervention framework to identify where they can provide further enabling support to LTA delivery, or where additional reporting or engagement may be required. The DfT will monitor and assess LTAs against the reporting of outputs and outcomes – to assess LTA performance and if any DfT actions should be considered.
 - f) **Evaluation** – All LTAs will be responsible for evaluation of their own funding programmes and schemes. The DfT will undertake a programme level evaluation of its consolidated local transport funding to understand the impact of transport schemes and build a national picture.

Incentive Elements and Interventions

39. There are different incentive arrangements for different transport modes, reflecting their different purposes and characteristics.
- a) **Highways Maintenance:** As was the case in 2025/26, a portion of this funding will be designated as incentive funding. This funding will be subject to Local Highway Authorities demonstrating that they comply with best practice in highways maintenance, for example, through the amount of capital spending on highways maintenance and adopting more preventative maintenance. Leicestershire will receive a total of £105.4m in baseline maintenance funding with £39.3m available in incentive funding

over the four-year period.

- b) In all four years, at least 25% of the annual incentive funding will be dependent on the Local Highway Authority publishing transparency reports. All incentive funding will be withheld if reports are not published. The DfT will set out further details on the requirements for transparency reports for future years in due course.
- c) In 2026/27, 50% of the incentive funding will be subject to the Local Highway Authority's performance. To support the effective investment of the increased funding, the DfT announced a new traffic light rating system for Local Highway Authorities on 11 January 2026. Leicestershire County Council received a red rating overall based on data provided in the 2025 highways transparency report: <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-06/local-highways-maintenance-transparency-report.pdf>. A discussion has been held with the DfT officials setting out the County Council's position, requesting reassessment of Leicestershire's score on the basis of the total investment into capital maintenance for 2025/26 rather than only on the DfT's grant investment. The DfT's response is awaited and further details on the performance-based measure will be confirmed in due course.
- d) Local Authority Active Travel Capability Ratings will remain central to funding allocations for active travel. ATE has reserved some funding to uplift LTA's allocations in response to future increases in capability and performance. For LTAs who increase their capability ratings in 2027/28, the DfT plans to recognise this in Active Travel funding allocations in the following years. This will be paid as part of the quarterly grant payment.
- e) Bus funding is contingent on the timely receipt of a delivery plan satisfying the expectations of the DfT.

Wider MTFS Position

- 40. The challenges that local government has faced are expected to continue and, in all likelihood, worsen. This is due to over a decade of austerity, combined with significant growth in spending pressures, particularly from rising demand and cost within social care and special educational needs services, exacerbated by external factors such as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and significant increases in inflation not seen for many decades.
- 41. The Council is required to set a balanced budget each year. It also has a duty to secure best value by making "arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". This duty is supplemented by statutory guidance to which the Council must have regard.
- 42. The MTFS for 2026-30 projects gaps in all years, with the gaps in the second, third and fourth years being particularly concerning, especially as several mitigations have already been included, such as future increases in Council

Tax. There is a gap of £18m in the first year that (subject to changes from later information such as the Local Government Finance Settlement) will need to be balanced by the use of earmarked reserves. There is then a gap of £36m in year two, rising to £85m in year four, based on a 2.99% Council Tax increase. To have a realistic chance of closing the gap, the County Council will need to quickly identify additional savings or source additional income that allow 2027/28 to be balanced without the use of reserves, which the Efficiency Review will support.

43. The overall approach to developing the Authority's Capital Programme is set out in the MTFs and includes the following key principles:
- a) To invest in priority areas of growth, including roads, infrastructure, economic growth and to support delivery of essential services.
 - b) Capital schemes will only be added to the Programme once a Business Case has been completed.
 - c) To invest in projects that generate a positive revenue return (spend to save). Minimum 7% return on investment for new schemes.
 - d) No new forward funding of section 106 contributions.
 - e) Maximise external sources of income, including capital receipts, section 106 housing developer contributions and bids to external funding agencies.
 - f) No investment in capital schemes primarily for financial return where borrowing is required anywhere within the Capital Programme.
44. Over the period of the MTFs, a County Council Capital Programme of £501m is required, of which £134m is planned for 2026/27. The main elements for the Department total £275m, including completion of the Zouch Bridge replacement major scheme; investment in the Transport Asset Management programme – preventative and restorative highways maintenance - and the Environment and Waste Programme. Other significant projects include the Melton Depot replacement and the corporate wide vehicle replacement programme.
45. Through prudent financial management and robust budgeting, the Council is in a better position than many other authorities. However, it is severely limited as to the extent to which it is able to fund highway and transport works and programmes from its own budgets, in comparison to the challenges and demands it faces.

Population Growth

46. In December 2025, the Cabinet considered a report on strategic spatial and transport planning. It noted that the population of Leicestershire is projected to increase by 23% to 830,618 between 2018 and 2043. This is higher across all age bands in comparison to the East Midlands and England averages.
47. As the population of Leicester and Leicestershire increases, so will demands for travel (by individuals and, for example, through increased travel by businesses in order to meet the goods and services needs of a growing population).

48. Evidence points to one fundamental conclusion: the County Council cannot 'prevent' growth. Therefore, unless significant changes occur in societal behaviours and expectations, the extent to which the impacts of growth on the County's transport system can be mitigated in the future are very limited.
49. The key pieces of transport evidence conclude:
- a) There is no 'magic bullet' to meeting the needs of the area's growing population, such as a strategy that avoids the need for significant investment in strategic transport infrastructure.
 - b) There are cumulative impacts across areas or along particular corridors.
 - c) There are no longer any straightforward or inexpensive ways to mitigate the strategic transport impacts of growth.
 - d) The scale of strategic transport investment (for all modes) required to address the impacts of growth is becoming increasingly beyond that which a Community Infrastructure Levy, combined with likely future levels of public funding, can afford.
50. The scale of investment in the County's transport system has failed to keep pace with the increased travel demands generated by a growing population. As further growth is coming forward, there is no longer appropriate and suitable transport capacity to support it. In the absence of strategic infrastructure improvements, traffic conditions on existing routes will continue to deteriorate and/or traffic will be displaced on to far less suitable routes, with potential asset management, safety and environmental consequences.
51. Although the new consolidated funding from the DfT is welcomed, the demands on the network in terms of both the impacts of growth and asset deterioration are such that the County Council's ability to invest in constructing new infrastructure will still require significant funds from developers. Whilst the County Council will always be mindful of its statutory duty to ensure that highway safety is not compromised, there could be adverse impacts of development, such as congestion, if sufficient developer funding is not secured through the planning process.

Climate Resilience

52. Transport is an enabler of everyday lives; when it fails, normal life is disrupted. This is becoming ever more the case with the apparent impacts of changes in weather patterns.
53. Leicestershire County Council faces increasing risks to its operations and assets from climate change and extreme weather events. In 2021 the Council produced a Climate Change Risk and Resilience Review and Assessment report. This set out eight high risks and 56 medium risks to Council services due to changes in the UK climate which have already happened, as well as projected changes up to the end of this century.

54. The effects of warmer and wetter winters, hotter and drier summers and more frequent and intense weather extremes include:
- a) Increased levels of, and more frequent occurrences of, highway flooding that result in road closures or damage to vehicles (where people inadvisably attempt to drive through flood waters).
 - b) More wind damage to trees, resulting in road closures from blockages caused by fallen trees and, in some cases, fatalities where trees fall on vehicles.
 - c) Fresh damage to highway assets or worsening existing conditions, causing risks of increased vehicle damage (and subsequent increased levels of insurance claims to the County Council); in some circumstances, the need for road closures in the interests of safety.
 - d) Increases in demand as a result of the impact of bad weather, causing pressures to services which in turn will increase demand for climate adaption to the Council's assets.
 - e) Disruption of the delivery of the safe, resilient and operation of the Council's transport networks, including the bus network, which increases the potential for social isolation, which undermines the health and wellbeing of Leicestershire's communities and residents.
 - f) Disruption to planned maintenance programmes (for example, where temperatures are too hot to carry out surface dressing), which in the long-term will have implications for the condition of the highway assets.
55. Further, increased levels of flooding, including of property, places pressures on the County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, to be responding promptly by investigating the causes of such flooding, with corresponding resourcing (financial) consequences in terms of increased demand for revenue repairs and for the capital flood alleviation schemes. Therefore, long-term funding is required from the Government.

Highway Asset Condition

56. The impacts of population growth and climate adaption do not just have environmental impacts (including presenting challenges to managing extremes in weather) and economic implications (such as the impacts on businesses' operating efficiencies and costs arising from the increased traffic congestion), but population growth will also significantly impact on the condition of the County's highway assets.
57. The condition of the County's highway network has been deteriorating at an increasingly rapid rate. This is particularly the case in respect of the network overall, where the percentage of network requiring maintenance to prevent the need for structural intervention (full replacement rather than resurfacing or other treatment) is increasing. This situation is reflective of the UK Roads Liaison Group Report and the 2025 National Highways and Transport Network Survey results, which demonstrate a continuing national decline in the public satisfaction of highway maintenance services and the network condition.

58. The under-investment in highway maintenance over many years at a national level has meant that the Council has been unable to manage and slow the decline in the condition of the local highway network or mitigate the risks of further deterioration of the Council's highway assets. The Programmes in previous years have only been sufficient to maintain the rate of decline of highway assets.
59. Proactive, planned (as opposed to reactive and unplanned), consistent, and sustained investment in the Council's transport services, and infrastructure condition and capacity, is necessary to mitigate the implications of network deterioration, population growth and climate change. The Council, as the LTA has been operating in circumstances of one-year financial settlements from the Government (an approach that makes it difficult to plan spending effectively); until this year uncertainty in national spending promises; and one-off annual allocations from the County Council's own budgets.
60. For the reasons described in the above paragraphs, the introduction of the consolidated Local Infrastructure Fund allocated over multiple years is welcome. Having foresight of the funding available will allow the Council to develop and deliver more proactive asset renewal programmes rather than depending on short-term reactive interventions. This will start to mitigate the impacts on other service areas due to the impact of poor transport provision, which undermines the health and wellbeing of Leicestershire's communities, as well as the ability for businesses to deliver goods and services in a reliable and timely manner.
61. In recognition of the challenges faced in seeking to maintain the County's highway assets, a Resilient Network Strategy is being developed by the Council. This will codify the Council's risk-based approach to asset management, as laid down in the national Code of Practice 'Well-managed highway infrastructure' 2016 and will consolidate the Council's asset management policies and strategies.

National and Local Policy

62. In November 2024, the Secretary of State for Transport heralded an intended significant shift in national transport policy to put 'the needs of people first'. That is to move away from an approach that delivers transport choices for transport purposes to an approach that more widely reflects peoples' travel needs.
63. The Government called for ideas to inform the development of an Integrated National Transport Strategy (INTS), which will give effect to the policy shift. Following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, the Director of Environment and Transport submitted a response to the call for ideas under their delegated powers in March 2025. The Government is yet to publish the INTS, although it is anticipated in Spring 2026; unfortunately, this means that it is not available to inform the 2026/27 LTDP.
64. The Government will be publishing updated guidance on LTPs in due course, but it does not expect LTAs to update existing LTPs ahead of developing the

LTDP for 2026/27 (either for the March or September LTDP deadlines). From the information available, it appears that the County Council's LTP4 Core Document will be well aligned with the intent of the proposed INTS and the draft LTP guidance, as it is based on the premise of transport being an enabler to help improve the health, safety and wellbeing of Leicestershire's communities.

65. The evolving national and local policy situation has come too late to have a material impact on the contents of the proposed Programmes, but it is anticipated that it will have a significant impact on both the content and structure of the Programmes in future years, including the need for greater clarity about how the work of the LTA is helping to deliver on national and local policies and bringing wider health and environmental benefits to local communities. An example of this is when the Government published its new Road Safety Strategy on 8 January 2026, the first one in 10 years and moving forward, the Council will need to take account of the ambitions set out in this Strategy.

Accessibility

66. As part of the allocation of LTF and BSF funding, the DfT has advised that LTAs must role model inclusive policy making and embed active consideration of accessibility within the development and delivery of policies funded through their consolidated funding settlement.
67. In particular, LTAs must assess equalities impacts throughout the policy development and delivery lifecycle, and reflect such consideration in Equality Impact Assessments for individual projects, which must be made available to the Secretary of State upon request:
- i. Co-design policy, infrastructure and service change initiatives funded from consolidated funding with disabled groups.
 - ii. Align their processes with the Government's Transport Accessibility Charter, once published.

Local Transport Outcome Framework

68. The DfT has advised that ministers will set priority outcomes through the Local Transport Outcome Framework. This will outline measurable priority outcomes the Government wants LTAs to achieve, reflecting shared national and local priorities for transport in line with the Plan for Change and the priorities in the upcoming INTS.
69. Most indicators will be baselined against national data so there is consistency in how performance is tracked and monitored, and to avoid placing unnecessary data burdens on LTAs. In seeking a proportionate approach to reporting, the Framework does not capture every detailed priority and there are some areas – such as fares and ticketing and key aspects of accessibility – not currently included because there are no readily available measures at an LTA level.

70. As well as considering existing guidance documents, LTAs should also consider the detail in forthcoming national strategies – e.g. the INTS, LTP guidance, Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 3, the Road Safety Strategy and the cross-government strategy addressing violence against women and girls – when planning and delivering interventions, even if they do not relate to a specific, measurable outcome.
71. Whilst it does not intend to set explicit targets at this stage, the DfT will consider performance against these outcomes as part of an overall assessment of LTA delivery and may explore options for setting more explicit targets for improving outcomes in the future.

Quantifiable Carbon Guidance

72. LTAs are required to report on the forecast carbon emissions estimates of their LTDP as an outcome framework indicator. To achieve this, places must use the Quantifiable Carbon Guidance to provide the DfT with carbon metrics for their proposed programme of interventions. These metrics must include the methods and tools, assumptions, caveats, and justifications for the approaches taken to calculate them.
73. Further detail on reporting, including how places can use the Quantifiable Carbon Guidance to report against the carbon indicator, will be covered in further guidance from the DfT this spring.

2026/27 Highways and Transportation Capital and Work Programmes

General Overview

74. The Programmes reflect the Department's duties and the key highway service-related policies, strategies, and plans, as detailed above, whilst also taking account of the Council's future priorities. The Programmes will be monitored and evaluated to assess success against the LTP4 objectives and priorities.
75. The Programmes will be updated to reflect any changes in national or local legislation by the Director of Environment and Transport and the Director of Corporate Resources (using the existing delegated authority), following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Lead Member. Any decisions taken under delegated authority pursuant to the Recommendations will be exercised in accordance with the Council's Constitution and the relevant officer decision-making and recording requirements.
76. Furthermore, these Programmes will continue to be driven by wider strategic agendas, being heavily informed by transport evidence associated with district councils' work to develop Local Plans. The way particular projects support the delivery of growth is highlighted in the overview of the Programmes, set out further on in this report and in Appendix B.
77. The Programmes have been prepared using the most current information available and will be revised as necessary to ensure value for money and to

respond to changing circumstances (for example, changes in the Government's policy or funding announcements from the Government). The Programmes will continue to evolve, as outlined in this report.

78. A range of factors are considered when preparing the Programmes, such as:
- a) Progress with the delivery of prior year programmes.
 - b) Schemes/projects spanning across multiple financial years (such as continued commitment).
 - c) Alignment with policies, strategies, and plans.
 - d) Resource availability.
 - e) Circumstances, for example needing to adjust in the light of severe weather events.
 - f) Evidence such as the performance of and the condition of the highway assets, the Local Plans, environment and health, and from public engagement and consultations.
 - g) Funding.
 - h) Seeking to maximise value for money and benefits.
79. The Department's Capital Programme budget totals £275m over the four years 2026-30, of which the major part, £271m (99%), is the Highways and Transportation element (it should be noted that these figures do not include any potential slippage/acceleration). This capital funding comes from several sources, such as various grants from the Government and competitive funding streams; capital receipts; the County Council's capital budget and revenue balances; external contributions, such as developer contributions; and earmarked funds.
80. There will be a very limited scope to add further major capital schemes to the Capital Programme, but new LTF funding will allow the reintroduction and expansion of programmes that the Council has not had budget for in previous years, including:
- a) Resurfacing or proactive maintenance schemes on footways (this has been the case for many years, and, as mentioned, above results in safety issues, such as slips and trips).
 - b) Clearing of drainage pipes, culverts or other underground drainage assets.
 - c) Funding for major renewals, such as the replacement of major assets at the end of their lifespan.
 - d) Expansion of road safety and accessibility programmes to support communities.

The 2026/27 Capital Programme

81. The Capital Programme (attached as Appendix A) sets out a summary of the budget breakdown for each of the capital lines set out in the refreshed MTFS. It also presents figures for the period 2027/28 to 2029/30, although those may be subject to change because of future MTFS refreshes and/or funding announcements from the Government.

82. Over the period of the MTFS, a Capital Programme of £271.4m is required for Highways and Transportation (£501m for the entire Authority's Capital Programme) of which £72.4m is planned for 2026/27. The Programme reflects the need to ensure that monies available are invested in projects and measures that deliver the maximum benefit over the longest possible period whilst noting it still only leads to a managed state of decline. The areas of spend are as follows:

I. Major Schemes

- a) Melton Mowbray Distributor Road - North and East Sections, No additional allocation in 2026/27

A key element of the Interim Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy, which supports delivery of the Melton Local Plan. This project enables the strategic growth of the town, in particular helping to support the delivery of around 4,000 new homes and 30 hectares of employment land. Work on the main contract for the scheme is due to complete in spring 2026.

- b) Zouch Bridge Replacement – Construction and Enabling Works, £3.7m in 2026/27

A new bridge will replace the old bridge which has major structural issues and has had a temporary weight limit already imposed to protect the current structure. Main construction work has started and will continue until early 2027.

- c) Advance Design / Match Funding (Local Transport Plan Implementation), £3.2m in 2026/27

On 22 November 2024, the Cabinet adopted the LTP4 Core Document, which sets out the strategic vision, core themes and policy for how the Council will deliver the transport network to support people, communities and businesses across Leicestershire.

The Cabinet also approved progress onto Phase 2 of the LTP4 development, which will be undertaken over the 2026/27 financial year. This work will focus on the development of the Focused Strategies, the Multi-Modal Area Investment Plans (MMAIPs) Pilot and the Countywide Strategic Transport Investment Plan.

The Focused Strategies will provide transport solutions to issues and challenges which are affecting the vitality and prosperity of Leicestershire's communities and businesses across the County. Initial work has already begun on the development of the first focused strategy: Enabling Travel Choice Strategy. A programme of further focused strategies is also being developed.

The MMAIPs are a key delivery mechanism for the delivery of the LTP4 vision, core themes and policies at the local level, through the identification and implementation of transport solutions. This will be in the form of a strategy and supporting delivery plan covering a five-year period. The first three MMAIPs are being developed and will cover the following areas:

- i. Market Harborough,
- ii. South of Leicester,
- iii. Hinckley.

In these three areas, Local Plans have significant transport needs and challenges, which need to be addressed. In addition, the development of the wider MMAIP programme will also be progressed.

Alongside this, the Council will set out the strategic transport needs and requirements to support the delivery of the LTP4, as well as the objectives of the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan.

Initial evidence work has taken place, including:

- i. Planning for potential new future transport networks across south Leicestershire.
- ii. Exploring the potential benefits of improving strategic transport orbital connectivity around the east and south of the Leicester Urban Area.
- iii. Understanding more about the make-up of journeys made along the A6 south corridor, including through the Kibworth villages.

Whilst this initial work has not reached any definitive conclusions, it has provided a positive basis for identifying and taking forward further work, which builds on the initial evidence work. In response to local concerns, an initial set of scheme identification and development work has been identified:

- i. To develop a multi-modal, mapped strategic vision for the Housing Market Area's future transport system.
- ii. To examine options for improving strategic transport orbital connectivity around the east and south of the Leicester Urban Area.
- iii. To examine options for the A6 corridor to the south of the City of Leicester, including the Kibworth's villages junction feasibility work.
- iv. To explore options for the use of the Eastern District Distributor Road reservation in Oadby.

d) Melton Depot Replacement, £9.3m in 2026/27

To find an alternative highways depot site to replace the existing Melton depot for which the lease is due to expire in December 2027.

e) Market Harborough Improvements, £2.4m in 2026/27

The current programme includes the following schemes:

- i. Rockingham Road Cycling and Walking Enhancements - Delivery of a 3-metre shared-use cycle/footway and cycle and pedestrian priority crossings at side roads. The proposals also include upgrades to traffic signals and junction layouts at Gores Lane and at the Clarence Street/Kettering Road junction with St Mary's Road, as well as the installation of a new signalised crossing on Rockingham Road.
 - ii. Great Bowden Traffic Calming Measures - Implementation of a 20mph zone in Great Bowden, supported by associated traffic calming measures.
 - iii. Lubenham Hill Walking and Cycling Improvements - Provision of a 3-metre shared-use cycling and walking facility at Lubenham Hill.
 - iv. Bus Shelter Provision - Installation and upgrade of bus shelters at key locations.
 - v. Public Rights of Way Improvements - Enhancements to local public rights of way to support safer and more accessible active travel routes.
- f) Leicestershire Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Delivery, £0.81m in 2026/27

Budget to enable the development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan on the ground.

- g) A511 / A50 Major Road Network - awaiting Full Business Case approval, proposed to use £10m of section 106 funding in 2026/27

Allocated for the ongoing design work for the scheme, which is partly funded by the Government's Major Road Network programme. This project is a key element of the Interim Coalville Transport Strategy and is essential to enabling the ongoing growth in the area, including to support the delivery of 3,500 new homes in Southeast Coalville. Planning approval has been secured for the Bardon Link Road works, and the Compulsory Purchase Order for required land. together with the Side Roads Order, have both been confirmed by the Secretary of State for Transport for the scheme overall. Subject to the final funding confirmation by the Government, the works are intended to commence on site in winter 2026, with an anticipated completion date of winter 2028.

- h) The Parade Oadby, £1.0m in 2026/27

This scheme proposes to upgrade the junction of the A6 (Leicester Road and Harborough Road), joining Regent Street, Stoughton Road and the Parade to make it safer for cyclists and pedestrians.

- i) Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Full Roll Out, £0.3m in 2026/27

The Government capital funding to subsidise the installation of electric vehicle chargepoints across Leicestershire

II. Minor Schemes / Other

- a) Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG), £2.7m in 2026/27

Highway network improvements to support bus journeys.

- b) Property Flood Risk Alleviation, £1.2m in 2026/27

Flood alleviations schemes to mitigate the impact of flooding within Leicestershire.

- c) Safety Schemes, £2.5m in 2026/27

To enable the delivery of road safety and traffic management schemes where accident levels highlight that they are required or other community needs are identified.

- d) Active Travel Infrastructure Improvement, £0.6m in 2026/27

Improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling routes to provide active travel choices for residents.

- e) Plant Renewals, £0.1m in 2026/27

Scheduled plant replacement purchases to fully support operational teams with key equipment.

- e) Highways Depot Improvements, £0.2m in 2026/27

To carry out improvements to the various highway depots such as building alterations to Mountsorrel depot highway stores.

- f) County Council Vehicle Replacement Programme, £4.5m in 2026/27

Investment in new vehicles to replace aged vehicles and reduce running costs. It is a 20-year replacement programme.

- g) Externally Funded Schemes (section 106), £1.1m in 2026/27.

This covers developers/section 106 funded schemes.

III. Transport Asset Management

- a) Transport Asset Management Programme, £38.8m in 2026/27

For capital maintenance works for highways and transport assets across the County such as roads and footways. Types of maintenance works include surface dressing, patching, bridge repairs, street lighting column replacements, and traffic signal renewals.

Funding - Capital Grants

83. Grant funding for the Authority's Capital Programme totals £274m across the 2026-30 Programme. Most grants are awarded by the Government's departments, such as the DfT.
84. The main DfT grant for maintenance has been announced for 2026/27 as part of a four-year consolidated funding settlement to 2029/30 (see paragraphs 32-34):
 - a) Base line allocation 2026/27 – circa £21.8m.
 - b) New funding 2026/27 – the maximum potential is circa £8.0m, subject to incentivisation.

The 2026/27 Works Programme

85. The Works Programme (attached as Appendix B) contains actions (such as intervention/work/treatment), some of which are part of longer-term projects that will take place over several years or may be implemented beyond 2026/27. Appendix B provides more information behind the budget lines set out in Appendix A, further highlighting how the work is aligned to the delivery of strategies supporting growth.

Funding

86. The actions outlined in the Works Programme will be funded from a variety of sources, including capital budgets and current external sources of funding, including, for example, developer contributions. Officers will continue to explore and, as appropriate, pursue any additional sources of external funding should these opportunities arise.
87. Where schemes within the Programmes are funded in whole or in part through external contributions, including section 106 developer funding, expenditure will be applied in accordance with the relevant funding conditions and the purposes set out in the associated planning obligations.

Consultation

88. The Highways, Transport and Waste Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Programmes on 5 March 2026. Its comments are provided below:
 - a) It was reported that the Government had for the first time provided multi-year funding, enabling the Department to undertake longer-term planning for capital schemes and more efficient procurement. It was noted,

however, that wider local government finances remained challenging, with increased demands on services. Growth in population, housing and employment continued to place additional pressure on the highway network, while weather related impacts such as more regular and more severe flooding, were contributing to further deterioration of highways assets.

- b) In response to a Member query on how the Authority planned to manage increased network demand anticipated by population growth, the Director explained that work was underway through regional planning processes, including future infrastructure planning, public transport strategy development and ongoing collaboration with partner authorities. It was highlighted that any large scale schemes would require significant investment, far above current funding levels.
- c) Some Members raised concerns about the extent of Member involvement in selecting projects and the transparency of schemes not taken forward and the reasons for this. Officers highlighted that schemes were prioritised in line with adopted policies, using evidence, including safety data, flooding impacts and feasibility. Members were assured that flooding schemes were assessed based on severity and property impacts, with internal property flooding given top priority. It was suggested that there were some locations which were prone to river flooding and these were usually expensive engineering projects and that schemes not progressed were usually communicated locally but not shared more widely. The Director undertook to give this further consideration with a view to providing more information to the Committee at a future meeting.
- d) Members were assured that the LTDP submitted to the Government had input from the relevant portfolio leads. Due to tight deadlines and late Government guidance, it was difficult to bring this to the Committee but there would be a further final submission of the Plan in September that would allow for Member changes.
- e) A Member sought clarification regarding the replacement of the Melton Highways Depot and the potential relocation of the waste site. The Director provided assurance that work was progressing on a search for a new depot due to the significant operational needs in the area. Feasibility work for relocating the waste site was being considered and the Department was investigating the opportunity to merge the two existing facilities with the potential for funding through a future capital funding bid.
- f) It was highlighted that pothole reports had risen to more than three times the previous winter's highest monthly volume. Temporary repairs were being used to keep up with demand. Members were assured that the temporary repairs would be followed with permanent repairs as part of a schedule of works.
- g) A Member raised a query about progressing the southern link of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road. It was confirmed that the link remained

part of the Council's long-term strategy, with work continuing with the planning authority and developers as part of the Local Plan with an emphasis on developer led delivery and that potential future funding opportunities were being explored.

- h) It was suggested that although the Authority monitored innovation, it had limited capacity for investing in unproven technologies and that national legislation for autonomous vehicles was lacking. Bus services were operated commercially, and technology adoption would be led by operators.

89. It was resolved that the report be noted and that officers be requested to explore criteria for providing greater visibility of schemes not considered.
90. Where appropriate, individual schemes and projects will continue to be subject to further consultation with Local Members and the public, and reports will be presented to the Members, as necessary.

Conclusion

91. The commitment from the Government to a multi-year settlement is to be welcomed as it is something that the Authority has been campaigning for. However, this does come with its own risks and challenges such as recruiting the necessary staff and procuring contracts in competition with other authorities.
92. This year's Programmes have been put together against a challenging and evolving backdrop. Evidence is showing the enormous challenges faced in seeking to provide for population growth, whilst simultaneously seeking to maintain an effectively operating transport system and mitigate the effects of extreme weather. Furthermore, the condition of the County's road, footway and cycleway networks continue to deteriorate, and more and heavier vehicles will cause further damage to the road network, further exacerbating the problem. The additional funding will help to mitigate the demands on the highway network but will not be sufficient to address the backlog of maintenance to return them to a good state of repair.
93. This year's Programmes contain important projects that will help to support the County's growth and that ultimately seek to deliver improved facilities across all modes, including for cyclists and pedestrians.
94. The Programmes are of value and importance in delivering on the Council's Strategic Plan's outcomes and seeking to improve the health and wellbeing of Leicestershire communities.
95. Looking beyond 2026/27, the structure and content of future year Programmes are likely to evolve in the light of significant changes in local and national policy, including to reflect and align to the County Council's LTP4 and the proposed INTS, as well as mitigating extreme weather and discussions on local government reorganisation and devolution.

Equality Implications

96. There are no equality implications arising directly from the content of this report. It has not been necessary to undertake a detailed Equality Impacts Assessment on the Programmes.
97. Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out in relation to work undertaken on individual projects contained within the Programmes, when appropriate. This is in line with the latest guidance from the DfT on the commissioning of LTDP and funding expectations. Equality considerations will continue to be kept under review as individual schemes within the Programmes are developed and delivered, and Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken where appropriate.
98. The DfT has advised that the LTDP should comply with the LTA's statutory requirements, including to have due regard to the Public Sector Equalities Duty; and that the Authority should continue to monitor this and comply with the DfT's requirements. Accessibility and inclusion will be built into the new LTDP.

Human Rights Implications

99. There are no human rights implications arising from the content of this report.
100. Relevant assessments will be carried out in relation to work undertaken on individual projects contained within the Programmes, when appropriate.

Environmental Implications

101. No detailed environmental assessment has been undertaken on the Programmes but assessments will be carried out for major schemes and programmes as appropriate in line with the Equality Impact Assessment carried out for the Council's LTP. LTAs are required to report on the forecast carbon emissions estimates of their LTDP as an outcome framework indicator. To achieve this, places must use the Quantifiable Carbon Guidance to provide the DfT with carbon metrics for their proposed programme of interventions. Further detail on reporting, including how places can use the Quantifiable Carbon Guidance to report against the carbon indicator, will be covered in further guidance in early 2026.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

102. Working and consulting with key partners (such as Leicester City Council, the district councils, the DfT, National Highways, Network Rail, developers and Midlands Connect), will be considered along with any impact issues, and will continue to be important in seeking to secure additional funding to deliver future transport measures and infrastructure.

Risk Assessment

103. The Programmes have been risk assessed as part of a wider risk assessment of the Department's business planning process and robust governance is in place to identify, assess and mitigate risk across the Programmes.
104. The delivery of both Programmes is supported by the Department's business planning process and risk assessments will be undertaken for individual teams, schemes and initiatives, with mitigation strategies put in place to manage identified risks, as appropriate.

Background Papers

Report to the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 June 2022 – Corporate Climate Change Risk Assessment Review 2021
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1292&MID=6754>

Report to the Cabinet on 22 November 2024 – Leicestershire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) Core Document
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MID=7511&Ver=4>

Local highways maintenance transparency report – 30 June 2025
<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-maintenance/local-highways-maintenance-and-improvements>

Report to the Cabinet on 15 July 2025 – Leicestershire County Council's Approach to Flooding
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MID=7878#A185747>

Report to the Cabinet on 16 December 2025 – Strategic Spatial and Transport Planning
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MID=7882&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet on 16 December 2025 – Leicestershire County Council's Approach to Flooding – Spending Proposals for £2 million Redistributed from Reserves
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MID=7880&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet on 3 February 2026 – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2029/30
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MID=8304&Ver=4>

Appendices

- Appendix A - Environment and Transport 2026/27 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme
- Appendix B - Environment and Transport 2026/27 Highways and Transportation Works Programme

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ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT - CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026-30

Estimated Completion Date	Gross Cost of Project £000		Capital Programme					
			2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	Total £000	
		<u>Major Schemes</u>						
Apr-27	19,600	Zouch Bridge Replacement - Construction and Enabling Works	3,675	76				3,750
Mar-30	12,174	Advance Design / Match Funding	3,248	2,975	2,975	2,976		12,174
Mar-27	9,870	Melton Depot Replacement	9,321					9,321
Mar-28	2,509	Market Harbough improvements	2,421	88				2,509
Mar-30	3,818	Leicestershire Cycling Walking Improvements Plan Delivery	809	1,228	891	890		3,818
Mar-27	1,880	The Parade Oadby Cyclops	1,000					1,000
Mar-29	3,151	Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Full Roll out	299	599	2,237			3,135
								0
			20,773	4,965	6,103	3,866		35,707
		<u>Minor Schemes / Other</u>						
Mar-30	11,115	Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG)	2,697	2,752	2,806	2,860		11,115
Mar-28	1,528	Property Flood Risk Alleviation - funded externally + LCC	1,176	352				1,528
Mar-30	8,909	Safety Schemes	2,512	2,327	1,975	2,095		8,909
Mar-30	1,829	Active Travel Improvements	620	309	430	470		1,829
Mar-30	400	Plant renewals	100	100	100	100		400
Mar-28	575	Highways Depot Improvements	200	200				400
Mar-30	14,538	County Council Vehicle Replacement Programme	4,540	3,436	4,880	1,682		14,538
Mar-28	1,479	Externally Funded Schemes	1,128	351				1,479
			12,973	9,827	10,191	7,207		40,198
		<u>Transport Asset Management</u>						
Mar-30	19,884	Capital Schemes and Design	4,784	5,033	5,034	5,033		19,884
Mar-30	8,805	Bridges	1,755	1,385	1,165	4,500		8,805
Mar-30	3,320	Highways Flood alleviation	600	925	925	870		3,320
Mar-30	13,050	Street Lighting	3,398	3,320	3,321	3,011		13,050
Mar-30	4,231	Traffic Signal Renewal	866	1,199	1,174	992		4,231
Mar-30	49,037	Preventative Maintenance - (Surface Dressing)	11,780	12,509	13,336	11,412		49,037
Mar-30	66,883	Restorative (Patching)	14,436	15,671	17,515	19,261		66,883
Apr-29	1,711	Public rights of way maintenance	661	517	517	16		1,711
Mar-30	1,400	Network Performance & Reliability	350	350	350	350		1,400
Mar-30	27,056	Other LTG Funds - to be allocated across the TAM	0	5,978	7,844	13,234		27,056
			38,630	46,887	51,181	58,679		195,377
		<u>Environment & Waste</u>						
Mar-30	148	Ashby Canal	37	37	37	37		148
Mar-30	1,628	Recycling Household Waste Sites - General Improvements	511	390	437	290		1,628
Mar-27	490	Recycling Household Waste Sites - S.106 funded schemes	490					490
Mar-28	1,139	Food Waste Treatment Service Delivery	288	851				1,139
			1,326	1,278	474	327		3,405
		Total E&T	73,702	62,957	67,949	70,079		274,687

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2026/2027 Highways and Transportation Capital Works Programme

Major Schemes (1-7)

01. Zouch Bridge Replacement

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Charnwood Borough Council	A6006 near Zouch Zouch Bridge replacement scheme	Construction of replacement bridge on A6006 followed by demolition of existing bridge.	Cost Band A

Budget

£ 3,675,000

02. Advance Design/Match Funding

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Countywide	Emerging Priorities Fund	Fund to support any new initiatives which may arise from funding opportunities during the year.	Cost Band B
Countywide	Rail Strategy Contribution	Council annual contribution to funding for two Rail Officer posts created for dealing with rail matter as part of East Midlands Councils / Transport for East Midlands.	Cost Band D
Countywide	Multi Modal Area Investment Plans (MMAIPs) Development	To enable the development of the MMAIPs programme for the forthcoming MMAIPs pilots and to enable feasibility design for priority schemes under the MMAIPs.	Cost Band C
Countywide	Strategic Transport Planning and Feasibility	To support any work associated with the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan, and feasibility studies including the A6 in Kibworth.	Cost Band B
South of Leicester (area includes towns of Blaby, Oadby and Wigston)	South of Leicester MMAIP	Leicestershire's Local Transport Plan 2025-2040 (LTP4) includes a commitment to develop locally focussed MMAIPs. The MMAIPs will set out plans to invest in solutions that help people to connect in an easy, efficient and sustainable way, to the employment/education/health/retail/leisure	Cost Band D

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
		services and facilities that they need. The South of Leicester MMAIP is one of three pilot MMAIPs.	
Desford	Desford Crossroads	The overall objective of this scheme is to deliver the junction improvements at the A47/ B582 Desford Crossroads junction.	Cost Band B
North West Leicestershire	North West Leicester Growth Plan	Support to North West Leicestershire District Council for the development and adoption of its next Local Plan, including its transport evidence base. An adopted Local Plan will have the benefit of enabling the delivery of growth and supporting transport infrastructure to be best coordinated and provide the basis for securing developer contributions towards the delivery of such.	Cost Band C
Countywide	Resilient Transport Network Strategy	To enable the development of the Resilient Transport Network Strategy that will set out Council asset management policy and strategy in alignment with the LTP4 Core Document. Which will then set out the actions of deliverables in the Network Management Plan, Winter Maintenance Operational Plan, and Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan.	Cost Band D

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Countywide	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Development Programme	To support development of LCWIPs. LCWIPs represent a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking infrastructure improvements required at the local level. They enable a long-term approach to developing local cycle and walking networks, ideally over a 10-year timescale, and represent a vital part of the Government strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle.	Cost Band B
Countywide	Asset Management Advance Design	Advanced design for asset management schemes.	Cost Band C
South Leicester	South Leicester Joint Transport Evidence Programmes	To support work associated with the ongoing development of evidence work required to inform the delivery of the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan to 2050, including to inform the content of policies and Infrastructure Delivery Plans of Local Plans that will be key to the delivery of the vision in practice.	Cost Band D
Countywide	Local Transport Plan (LTP4)	To support the ongoing management of the development programme for LTP4 during Phase 2 of the MMAIPs Pilot and Focused Strategies development. In addition to the	Cost Band C

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
		implementation of the monitoring and evaluation procedures.	
Hinckley	Hinckley MMAIP	Leicestershire's LTP4 includes a commitment to develop locally focussed MMAIPs. The MMAIPs will set out plans to invest in solutions that help people to connect in an easy, efficient and sustainable way, to the employment/education/health/retail/leisure services and facilities that they need. The Hinckley MMAIP is one of three pilot MMAIPs.	Cost Band C
Market Harborough	Market Harborough MMAIP	Leicestershire's LTP4 includes a commitment to develop locally focussed MMAIPs. The MMAIPs will set out plans to invest in solutions that help people to connect in an easy, efficient and sustainable way, to the employment/education/health/retail/leisure services and facilities that they need. The Market Harborough MMAIP is one of three pilot MMAIPs.	Cost Band D

Budget

£ 3,248,000

03. Melton Depot Replacement

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Melton / Melton Mowbray	Melton Highways Depot and Recycling and Household Waste Site Replacement	Replacement highways depot due to existing site being unavailable past 2027 (due to housing construction). Replacement likely to be on former North East Melton Mowbray Distributor Road site compound location and to include relocation of the existing recycling and household waste site (subject to separate capital bid).	Cost Band A

Budget

£9,321,000

04. Market Harborough Improvements

<u>District / Parish</u>	<u>Location / Scheme Name</u>	<u>Intervention / Work / Treatment Description</u>	<u>Cost Band</u> A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Market Harborough Phase 1	Rockingham Road, Market Harborough	Junction improvements; Signal upgrades; New shared cycling and walking off road route; Priority cycling and walking side road uncontrolled crossings; New signalised crossing; One-way proposal for Clarence Street.	Cost Band A
Market Harborough Phase 2	Concept/preliminary design and surveys - The Square and Welland Park Rd/Springfield Street	Concept/preliminary design and surveys - The Square and Welland Park Rd/Springfield Street and Great Bowden Road.	Cost Band B
Great Bowden	Traffic calming Great Bowden	Speed cushions; Crossing facilities; Junction improvements; 20mph speed limit.	Cost Band B
Market Harborough	Cycling and walking improvements Lubenham Hill	New shared walking and cycling and walking off-road route; Walking and cycling priority crossings.	Cost Band B

Lubenham	Upgrading of footpaths at six locations: A23 Leicester Road to the Green in Lubenham; A24 and A37 north of Gallow Field Road.	Right of Way improvements	Cost Band D
Market Harborough	The installation of new and/or improvement to existing bus stops/shelter that serve the development	New bus shelter	Cost Band D

Budget

£ 2,421,000

05. Leicestershire Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plans Delivery

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Various	Various	Delivery of cycling and walking schemes identified in the LCWIPs, which will encourage people to travel more sustainably.	Cost Band B

Budget

£ 809,000

06. The Parade Oadby

<u>District / Parish</u>	<u>Location / Scheme Name</u>	<u>Intervention / Work / Treatment Description</u>	<u>Cost Band</u> <u>A = Over £1m</u> <u>B = £201,000 - £1m</u> <u>C = £51,000 to £200,000</u> <u>D = £50,000 and below</u>
Oadby and Wigston	The Parade, Oadby	Rescoped to a package of corridor interventions addressing multiple barrier points between Victoria Court and New Street junctions with Leicester/Harborough Road. Proposed measures include new controlled crossings, pedestrian priority treatments at side road junctions, shared use path widening, and a Toucan crossing to reduce A6 severance.	Cost Band A

Budget

£ 1,000,000

07. Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Full

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Various	Various	Central Government capital funding to subsidise the installation of electric vehicle chargepoints across Leicestershire by two chargepoint operators.	Cost Band A

Budget

£ 299,000

Minor Schemes/Other (8-14)

08. Bus Grant

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Countywide	Bus service improvements	Activity under consolidated Bus Grant funding to deliver bus service improvements.	Cost Band A

Budget

£ 2,697,000

09. Property Flood Risk Alleviation

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Various	Various Flood Risk Alleviation Schemes	Funding to alleviate flood risk to properties across Leicestershire.	Cost Band B
Various	Various study / early concept works for Flood Risk Alleviation schemes	Study / early concept works to explore options for Flood Risk Alleviation schemes in identified areas.	Cost Band C
Kilby, Blaby	Main Street	Main Street - measures to divert water away from reaching the bottom of Main Street, and / or drain it away more quickly.	Cost Band C
Appleby Magna, North West Leicestershire	Church Street, Bowley's Lane and Old End	Widening and naturalisation of the roadside watercourse to install a two-stage channel.	Cost Band C
Diseworth, North West Leicestershire	Diseworth Flood Alleviation Scheme	Flood alleviation works in Diseworth.	Cost Band B
Kibworth, Harborough	Kibworth Mead Sustainable Drainage System	Sustainable Drainage System in Kibworth Mead.	Cost Band C
Breedon on the Hill, North West Leicestershire	Breedon on the Hill Flood Alleviation Scheme	Final works and snagging.	Cost Band D

Budget

£ 1,176,000

10. Safety Schemes

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Countywide	Various	Vehicle Activated Signs replacement	Cost Band A
Countywide	Various	20 mph village schemes	Cost Band D
Countywide	Various	School zones	Cost Band D
Countywide	Various	Residents parking	Cost Band A
Countywide	Various	Pedestrian crossing	Cost Band B
Countywide	Various	Traffic calming	Cost Band B
Countywide	Various	Village gateways	Cost Band C
Countywide	Various	Road safety innovations	Cost Band C
Countywide	Various	Footway schemes	Cost Band B

Budget

£ 2,512,000

11. Active Travel Improvements

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Various	Various	Active travel	Cost Band B

Budget £620,000

12. Plant Renewals

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Countywide	Owned plant replacement	Plant purchases will be made to align with Council Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) requirements ensuring health and safety whilst supporting operational teams with key equipment. Purchases will focus on replacing end of life items and those where HAVS exposure can be improved upon.	Cost Band C

Budget

£ 100,000

13. Highways Depot Improvements

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Highways Depots	Highways Depots	Priority Depot Maintenance	Cost Band C
Mountsorrel Depot	Mountsorrel Depot Highways Stores	Petrol and Diesel Fume Mitigation	Cost Band D

Budget

£ 200,000

14. County Council Vehicle Replacement Programme

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Countywide	County Council Vehicle Programme	Vehicle twenty-year replacement programme. To support service delivery for service areas, with cost effective and least carbon, like for like compliant replacement vehicle. All vehicles are approved and purchased by Approved in Principle Vehicle Procurement Process. This supports all departments.	Cost Band A

Budget

£ 4,540,000

15. Externally Funded Schemes

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	<u>Cost Band</u> A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Various	Various	S106 secured funding for various improvements across the County works such as Kibworth delivery and further scheme development for A511 Major Road Network.	Cost Band A

Budget

£ 1,128,000

Transport Asset Management Schemes (16-24)

16. Capital Schemes and Design

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Harborough, Lutterworth	A4303 Coventry Road, Lutterworth Southern Bypass	Resurface carriageway	Cost Band C
Melton, Melton Mowbray	A607 Norman Way	Strengthen carriageway	Cost Band B
Melton, Waltham, Garthorpe	A607 Melton Road, Waltham Road	Strengthen carriageway	Cost Band B
Harborough, Market Harborough	A508 Northampton Road	Strengthen carriageway	Cost Band B
Oadby and Wigston, Oadby	A6 Glen Road and Harborough Road	Strengthen carriageway	Cost Band B
Melton, Melton Mowbray	A606 Leicester Street, Market Place, Burton Street, Sherrard Street	Strengthen carriageway	Cost Band B
Melton, Stapleford, Leesthorpe	Cuckoo Hill, Stapleford Road	Strengthen carriageway	Cost Band B
Harborough, Billesdon and Houghton on the Hill	A47 Leicester Road and Uppingham Road	Resurface carriageway	Cost Band B
Harborough, Market Harborough	A4304 / B6047 High Street / The Square	Remove concrete channel blocks and block paving and reconstruct with bituminous material, topped with coloured surfacing. 100mm	Cost Band B

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
		carriageway strengthen, including red asphalt.	
Melton, Sproxtton	From B676 Buckminster Road to B676	Retread or Bituminous Option	Cost Band C
Hinckley and Bosworth, Groby	A50 Bradgate Hill	Resurface carriageway	Cost Band B
Harborough, West Langton	A6 Roundabout at junction with A6 and B6047	Resurface carriageway and patch footway	Cost Band B
Melton, Saxelby and AB Kettleby	Saxelby Road	Strengthen carriageway	Cost Band B
Melton, Harston	Croxton Lane	Strengthen carriageway	Cost Band C
Oadby and Wigston, Wigston	A5199 Welford Road	Strengthen carriageway	Cost Band C
Blaby, Leicester Forest East	A47 Hinckley Road, Braunstone Lane, Ratby Lane	Resurface carriageway	Cost Band C
Harborough, West Langton and Kibworth	A6 Harborough Road	Strengthen carriageway	Cost Band B
Countywide	Various	Footway schemes	Cost Band C

Budget

£4,944,000*

* Total includes additional funding as approved by County Council 18 February 2026

17. Bridges (Structures)

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Harborough	London Road, Great Glen	Arch strengthening (concrete saddle)	Cost Band B
Harborough	Cosby Road, Broughton Astley	Deck replacement	Cost Band B
North West Leicestershire	Grace Dieu Brook	Concrete overslab	Cost Band D
North West Leicestershire	Mineral Railway, Groby (A50)	Waterproofing	Cost Band B
Blaby	Earl Shilton Road, Thurlaston	Culvert replacement	Cost Band C
Melton	Glebe Road, Stapleford	Arch strengthening (concrete saddle)	Cost Band C
Charnwood	River Wreake, Syston (SNB)	Expansion joint replacement	Cost Band D

Budget

£ 1,755,000

18. Highway Flood Alleviation

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Blaby	Whetstone, Enderby Road	Highway drainage improvement	Cost Band C
Blaby	Enderby, Mill Hill	Highway drainage improvement	Cost Band C
Harborough	Bitteswell, Lutterworth Road	Highway drainage improvement	Cost Band D
Harborough	Thorpe Langton, Bowden Road	Highway drainage improvement	Cost Band C
North West Leicestershire	Diseworth, Shakespear Close	Highway drainage improvement	Cost Band C
Charnwood	Cossington, Main Street	Highway drainage improvement – reserve scheme	Cost Band C

Budget

£ 600,000

19. Street Lighting

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Countywide	Countywide programme - Replacement of ageing columns and associated private cable networks (high level)	Replacement of ageing columns and associated private cable networks (high level).	Cost Band B
Countywide	Countywide Programme - Town centre wall mounted light replacement	Replacement of wall mounted town centre lights and associated private cable networks that have come to the end of their useful life.	Cost Band C
Countywide	Countywide Programme - Replacements from structural testing failures	Replacing street lights that have failed their structural test.	Cost Band B
Countywide	Countywide Programme - Illuminated sign replacement programme	Replacing illuminated sign lights with new energy efficient LED sign lights with Central Management System capability.	Cost Band B
Countywide	Countywide Column replacement programme (low level)	Replacing life expired low level lighting columns.	Cost Band A
Blaby district	Lubbesthorpe Way, Braunstone	Replacement of ageing columns and associated private cable networks (high level).	Cost Band C

Budget

£ 3,398,000

20. Traffic Signal Renewal

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band
			A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Blaby / Whetstone	A426 / Enderby Road	Traffic signal renewal dual crossing	Cost Band C
Blaby / Whetstone	Enderby Rd / A426	Traffic signal renewal dual crossing	Cost Band C
Hinckley and Bosworth / Hinckley	Trinity Lane / Mansion Street	Traffic signal renewal junction	Cost Band C
Charnwood / Loughborough	Ashby Road / Frederick Street	Traffic signal renewal junction	Cost Band C
Oadby and Wigston	Oadby Road / Estoril Avenue	Traffic signal renewal Toucan Crossing	Cost Band D
Charnwood / Loughborough	Ashby Road / University	Traffic signal renewal dual crossing	Cost Band C
Blaby / Narborough	King Edward Avenue SB / Black Pad	Traffic signal renewal Toucan Crossing	Cost Band C
Blaby / Narborough	King Edward Avenue / Leicester Road	Traffic signal renewal junction	Cost Band C
Charnwood / Loughborough	Epinal Way / Emanuel Way	Traffic signal renewal Toucan Crossing	Cost Band D
Hinckley and Bosworth / Hinckley	Bond Street / Hollycroft	Traffic signal renewal junction	Cost Band C
Oadby and Wigston	Bull Head Street / Near Glebe Close	Traffic signal renewal dual crossing	Cost Band C

North West Leicestershire / Coalville	London Road / Whitwick Road	Traffic signal renewal crossing	Cost Band D
Various	Various / Countywide CCTV Renewals and associated comms upgrades	CCTV and comms renewals	Cost Band C

Budget

£866,000

21. Preventative Maintenance

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Blaby	Various streets	Surface dress carriageways	Cost Band B
Charnwood	Various streets	Surface dress carriageways	Cost Band B
Harborough	Various streets	Surface dress carriageways	Cost Band B
Hinckley and Bosworth	Various streets	Surface dress carriageways	Cost Band B
Melton	Various streets	Surface dress carriageways	Cost Band B
Northwest Leicestershire	Various streets	Surface dress carriageways	Cost Band B
Oadby and Wigston	Various streets	Surface dress carriageways	Cost Band C
Countywide	Various streets	Retexturing	Cost Band B
Countywide	Various streets	Asphalt preservation/ micro-asphalt	Cost Band B
Countywide	Various streets	Joint sealing	Cost Band C
Countywide	Various streets	Carriageway patching (external)	Cost Band A
Countywide	Various streets	Road studs	Cost Band C

Budget

£11,780,000

22. Restorative

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
Countywide	Various locations	Footway patching	Cost Band A
Countywide	Various locations	Internal carriageway patching	Cost Band A
Countywide	Various locations	Pre-patching surface dressing	Cost Band A
Countywide	Various locations	Roadmender	Cost Band A
Blaby, Oadby and Wigston, Harborough and Hinckley and Bosworth	Various sites within the County – Vehicle Restraint Systems re-tensioning	Vehicle Restraint Systems (Safety Fencing) re-tensioning	Cost Band C

Budget

£14,436,000

24. Network Performance and Reliability

District / Parish	Location / Scheme Name	Intervention / Work / Treatment Description	Cost Band A = Over £1m B = £201,000 - £1m C = £51,000 to £200,000 D = £50,000 and below
The Resilient Network	SCRIM - carriageway skidding resistance survey	Road condition survey	Cost Band D
Countywide	PAS2161 road condition survey	A driven road condition survey captured by highway inspectors, using video and AI to capture asset condition and inventory data collection.	Cost Band C
Countywide	Footway and cycle route condition and inventory data collection	Footway Network Survey capturing asset location and condition.	Cost Band C
Countywide (where required)	Asset Data Improvement Projects	Primarily desktop exercises but may also involve site surveys, to support the identification and resolving of asset data gaps.	Cost Band D
Various	Various	Traffic Counter Renewal	Cost Band C

Budget

£ 350,000



CABINET – 24 MARCH 2026

DELIVERING THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP4) 2025-2040 **ENABLING TRAVEL CHOICE STRATEGY**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is:
 - a) To advise the Cabinet of the outcomes of the initial consultation that was undertaken to inform the development of the Enabling Travel Choice Strategy (ETCS), which forms part of the Council's full Local Transport Plan 2025-2040 (LTP4).
 - b) To seek the Cabinet's approval to undertake a further consultation on the draft ETCS document (as shown in appendix A), which is explained in Part B of this report.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:
 - a) The work undertaken to date on the development of the Enabling Travel Choice Strategy (ETCS) and the outcomes of the initial consultation held to inform its development be noted;
 - b) The draft ETCS document, attached as Appendix A to this report, be approved for consultation;
 - c) A twelve-week consultation on the draft ETCS document be undertaken;
 - d) Subject to the outcomes of the consultation, the Director of Environment and Transport, in accordance with the Council's Constitution:
 - i. Following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Highways, Transport & Waste, the Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Public Health, Law and Governance, undertake further work to prepare a final version of the ETCS;

- ii. Submit a further report to the Cabinet in Autumn 2026, seeking approval of the final version of the ETCS.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. The ETCS is being prepared as part of the Council's full LTP4.
4. The twelve-week public consultation exercise will seek the views and perspective of local communities, partners and stakeholders to inform the development of the final version of the ETCS.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, it is intended that a twelve-week consultation exercise on the draft ETCS document will take place from mid-April 2026 (post Easter) to early July 2026.
6. The Highways, Transport and Waste Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a report at its meeting on 4 June 2026 as part of the consultation.
7. Following the completion of the consultation, it is intended that a report will be presented to the Cabinet in Autumn 2026 to highlight the consultation outcomes and present the final ETCS document for approval.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. The LTP4 Core Document was approved by the Cabinet on 22 November 2024 and subsequently by the County Council on 2 July 2025.
9. On 28 October 2025, the Cabinet noted the work that had been undertaken to date on the development of the ETCS and the three pilot Multi Modal Area Investment Plans (MMAIPS), for Market Harborough, Hinckley, and South-east Leicestershire. The Cabinet approved an eight-week initial consultation exercise to inform the development of the ETCS and of the three pilot MMAIPS.

Resource Implications

10. The development of the LTP4 is being funded from existing Departmental budgets. A total of £375,000 has been allocated in the Department's Advanced Design Budget for 2026/27 to 2029/30. Alongside this, the Department for Transport (DfT) provided funding of approximately £179,000 for the development of the LTP4.
11. The LTP4 is a key document that informs the development of the Council's transport programmes, including the allocation of funding awarded to the Council by the Department for Transport. 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.

12. The delivery of transport solutions under the ETCS (and through the 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 Programme and Works Programme.
13. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Public Health, Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Legal Implications

14. As set out in the October 2025 Cabinet report, it is intended that the ETCS will set out the policies that deal with planning matters, relating to the development of Local Plans (presently prepared by the district councils in Leicestershire) and to the planning application process.
15. It should be noted that the ETCS will operate as part of the Council's wider transport policy framework and will not form part of the statutory development plan. The Strategy will instead provide guidance to inform the Council's engagement with the plan-making and development management processes.
16. 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. To ensure this, independent, external counsel advice has been sought. The independent counsel's advice has informed the preparation of the draft document. The advice itself is legally privileged and therefore not disclosed within this report.
17. Before the creation of the Public Health, Law and Governance Department, the previous Director of Law and Governance has been involved with the work to develop the ETCS.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

18. This report will be circulated to all Members.

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PART B

Background

19. The Local Transport Plan Core Document 2025-2040 was approved by the County Council on 2 July 2025. It includes a commitment to develop focused strategies, of which the ETCS is one.
20. The report to the Cabinet in October 2025 provided a detailed overview of the ETCS. To summarise, the ETCS will:
 - a) Be a County-wide strategy covering all modes (means) of travel.
 - b) Set out how the County Council, as the Local Transport Authority, will seek to enable people to make informed travel choices and provide opportunities for people to travel by all appropriate and relevant modes, in particular to work with:
 - i. Existing communities to understand them and the travel barriers they face in seeking to access the societal and economic services and facilities (such as education, healthcare and places of work) that they need as part of their daily lives.
 - ii. Existing businesses to understand any travel barriers faced by them or their employees and to enable them to have realistic travel choices.
 - iii. The district councils as the preparer of Local Plans and determiner of planning applications;
 - iv. The 'development industry' (including, landowners, developers, such as house builders, planning consultants and agents) to deliver new places that provide new services and facilities and/or are well connected by a choice of transport to services and facilities in the 'surrounding world'.
21. The ETCS will contain a set of policies to provide a framework within which the Council will seek to work. To inform their ultimate development, at its meeting in October 2025, the Cabinet approved an initial set of draft key 'policy positions' for the purposes of the initial consultation. They cover:
 - a) Working to understand communities' needs.
 - b) Working with the district councils through the Local Plan development process.
 - c) Working with the district councils (as the Local Planning Authorities) and site promoters through the planning application process.
 - d) Piloting new and innovative ideas.
 - e) Considering what represents 'value for money'.
 - f) Facilitating delivery of safe and suitable infrastructure that supports community needs.
22. In October 2025, the Cabinet also gave its approval to undertake an initial consultation exercise to inform the development of the ETCS and of the MMAIPs for the three pilot areas.

23. An overview of this initial consultation and a summary of its outcomes are set out in the next section of this report. This focuses on how they pertain to the ETCS, as a separate report will be brought to the Cabinet in due course in respect to MMAIPs and their development.

Initial Consultation

Overview

24. The initial nine-week consultation took place from 4 November 2025 to 11 January 2026.
25. In the interests of efficiency, the exercise was designed to cover the development of both the ETCS and the pilot MMAIPs. It was branded as 'The Big Travel Survey' (BTS), focusing on communities and business across the County.
26. The partners and stakeholders that were engaged included health bodies, education bodies, parish, town and district councils, and the 'development industry'.
27. The consultation consisted of a mix of online surveys; online tools for people to map their journeys (Social Pinpoint); and face-to-face events, including for the public and the 'development industry'. It was promoted through the media, the Council's social channels, regular officer liaison meetings (including with the district councils), and Leicestershire Matters.

Summary of initial survey outcomes

Development Industry

28. Direct engagement was undertaken with the 'development industry', including at a workshop held at County Hall on 4 November 2025. A very limited number of industry representatives attended the workshop, where following a presentation, they had the opportunity to discuss the proposed ETCS and were provided with an email address to provide comments.
29. It was hoped that the 'development industry' would provide views on the key 'policy positions' relating to planning matters. However, no such industry consultation responses were received.

District Councils

30. The district council Planning Officers were advised of the consultation through regular liaison meetings and by emails.

31. It was hoped also that the district councils would provide their views on the key 'policy positions' relating to planning matters. However, no such consultation responses were received.

Communities

32. There was a total of 1,003 survey responses. 915 were Leicestershire residents, 26 were visitors, 13 were Councillors and 7 were businesses or service providers.
33. Across all journeys and journey purposes, the main modes of transport are car/van 65% (2,882), Walking 16% (707), Bus 12% (517), Cycling 3% (133), Train 2% (71), Other 1% (64) and Taxi 1% (45).
34. Across age groups, the under 35-year-olds are the least car dependent; with youth relying heavily on the bus. From 45+ years old, car use jumps. Older adults still use the car but rely on walking and buses more. Walking is well used across all ages, reflecting use for accessing outdoor/green spaces, and local services such as healthcare (23% across all ages).
35. Students use the bus most by far at 77%, with those retired second most at 29%. Full and part-time employees use the car most at 84% and 83% respectively, with retired people second most again at 80%.
36. The most significant barrier which prevents people from accessing local services, opportunities and places they cannot currently access is public transport issues, affecting 87% (202) of responses to this question.
37. The results suggest that women experience greater barriers to transport than men across all modes and journey purposes.
38. The main mode of transport that people would want to use if barriers were removed was responded to as follows: Bus is most preferred at 62% (139 respondents), followed by private vehicle at 31% (70), Walking and Cycling both at 10% (22), Taxi and Cycling at 4% (8), and Other at 2% (5).

Businesses and service providers

39. There was a limited number of responses from this stakeholder group, and as such, caution has been used in drawing granular insight from the small sample size. Nevertheless, general themes of responses are of value.
40. Responses were received across the following types of organisation: the Public Sector, Government & Non-Profit bodies, Education & Training, and Health, Social Care & Emergency Services.
41. The size of organisations ranged from 1 – 250+ staff members.
42. The top five barriers that staff faced when commuting were:

- a) Public transport issues.
 - b) Personal safety concerns.
 - c) Limited parking availability for motor vehicles.
 - d) Journey took too long.
 - e) High cost of travel; Distance or location too far; and Poor cycling infrastructure.
43. This was also reflected in the top barriers/issues their staff/personnel face when travelling to other locations.
44. 71% of organisations confirmed that their customers/service users face challenges visiting their business/organisation, citing a lack of available parking, parking constraints (time/fees) and limited bus connectivity.
45. 29% of organisations confirmed that their suppliers faced challenges delivering to their business/organisation, citing poor parking behaviour limiting access to parking, no parking being available, and local parking restrictions.
46. 57% of organisations felt that travel choice and access currently impacts their businesses/organisations' growth, or that it will in the future, citing a lack of local parking, pickup/drop facilities and poor public transport connectivity as concerns.
47. 86% of organisations confirmed that their business/organisation or personnel need to travel to other locations (such as for meetings, training, services).
48. More than half of organisations confirmed that the following would make travel and access easier for their business/organisation and staff/personnel:
- a) Better parking and electric vehicle (EV) facilities (such as secure cycle racks, car/van/motorcycle parking, EV charging).
 - b) Better road infrastructure (such as reduced congestion and improved junctions).
 - c) Improved walking and cycling infrastructure (such as safer pavements, cycle lanes, lighting, crossings).
 - d) Lower travel costs (such as cheaper fares, fuel discounts, parking).
 - e) Personal safety improvements (such as lighting and CCTV at stops and routes).
49. To aid further analysis, the survey results have been mapped: the descriptive information provided by respondents about where they start their journeys and where they end them has been mapped (the data is anonymised, so that it is not possible to identify a particular individual's travel behaviours).
50. An example of what the mapping of the survey results looks like is shown in Appendix B. The red lines represent real journeys that respondents have said they are making, with the thicker the density of the lines the greater the number

of journeys that are being made between the places; so, the City of Leicester and the main 'county towns' stand out as 'hot spots' of journey activity, which is not surprising given the range of services and facilities that they variously offer.

51. Caution should be exercised in drawing any particular granular conclusions from, or about, the patterns shown in Appendix B, because the data has not yet been processed to a sufficient extent to enable definitive conclusions to be made. Also, relative to the population of Leicester and Leicestershire (in excess of one million as at the time of the 2021 Census) the survey sample size is very small.
52. Nevertheless, Appendix B serves to demonstrate that the ability to map survey results in this way could provide useful evidence to inform the future planning of, for example, passenger transport provision or wider provision of other types of services (such as by identifying where bringing a service or facility closure to a particular community can reduce the need to make longer distance journeys). A key message is that if more people respond to future rounds of the 'Big Travel Survey' consultation, the more reliable and robust the data will become for decision making, when considered alongside other transport data.

Summary of Social Pinpoint Map outcome

53. Social Pinpoint is a tool which, amongst other things, allows users to provide map-based (geographic) information. In this case, it provided BTS respondents with the ability to highlight where they started a journey and the destination(s). Those taking part in the BTS had the opportunity to provide information via Social Pinpoint.
54. There were 188 posts from 36 contributors.
55. Across all journey purposes:
 - a) How people travelled: Car/van: 56.9% (107); Walk/wheel: 17.6% (33); Bus: 14.9% (28); Cycle/scooter: 7.4% (14).
 - b) Journey difficulty: Easy (no issues): 60.1% (113); Average (some issues): 35.1% (66); Difficult (lots of issues): 4.8% (9).
56. Whilst the sample size was low, and the results should be treated accordingly, the insights nevertheless suggest that education, employment and retail related trips show some of the highest journey issues, suggesting targeted interventions (such as safer school streets, reliable peak hour buses, walking/cycling links to schools, workplaces and retail) could improve travel most.

Section Conclusions

57. The initial consultation focused on a better understanding of how people travel, where to and why, and what travel barriers they face.

58. The outcomes highlight that there are extant patterns to barriers across journey purposes and modes used. The themes of the responses confirms the purpose in-principle of the ETCS – which is to help 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. They further confirm the need for the ETCS to provide an overarching policy framework to guide future work to identify and develop proposals to help improve travel choice and access to the key services and opportunities for people.
59. The outcomes of the initial consultation exercise will continue to be used to develop and deliver the ETCS, when it is approved. The outcomes will also be used to inform the development of the three pilot MMAIPs and the associated investments, which will be the subject of a future separate report.

Draft ETCS document

60. The draft ETCS document reflects the outcomes of the initial consultation; the legal advice that was received; and through the involvement of not just transport officers, but those who are involved with public health and strategic planning.
61. Flowing from the key ‘policy positions’, the draft ETCS document contains 15 draft policies, which are split as follows:
- a) Four overarching policies that:
 - i. Covers a ‘one size does not fit all’ approach and provides for an approach that prioritises enabling travel choices that are most relevant to places, existing and future, as they differ across Leicestershire.
 - ii. Deals with ‘value for money’ considerations.
 - iii. Provides for a criteria-based approach to considering proposals that do not comply fully with the recognised design standards but nevertheless would otherwise be safe and provide betterment.
 - iv. Deals with the piloting of new or innovative solutions.
 - b) Three that cover working with existing communities and businesses to understand them and any travel barriers that they face.
 - c) Eight that deal with new communities and places, including through Local Plan making and the development management (planning application) processes.
62. The policies are followed by supporting text that provides for their justification.

Proposed Consultation on draft ETCS document

63. Subject to the Cabinet’s approval, a twelve-week public consultation will be undertaken between April and July 2026, timed to avoid Easter and the school holidays. It will seek the views of local communities, partners and stakeholders

on the draft ETCS document. It will take the form of an online survey available via the Council's website (with alternative formats that are available on request).

64. The consultation will be open to all residents, businesses, organisations, and other key stakeholders, such as the district councils as the local planning authorities and the 'development industry'. It will be promoted in similar ways to the initial consultation. The consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's consultation principles and relevant statutory duties.
65. As part of the consultation, the draft document will be presented to the Highways, Transport and Waste Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its views on 4 June 2026.
66. The outcomes from the consultation will inform the development of the final draft document which, subject to the outcomes of the consultation, will be presented to the Cabinet for approval in Autumn 2026.

Conclusions

67. The outcome of the initial consultation provides additional evidence (weight) as to why the ETCS is needed and as to its purpose in-principle.
68. The ETCS will provide the Council with a Countywide strategy to guide its work on seeking to enable communities, existing and new, to access the services and facilities that they may need as part of their daily lives, providing a genuine and realistic choice of travel and also helping businesses to access pools of labour.
69. The ETCS will have significant implications for the district councils in preparing the Local Plans and for parties that are looking to promote new developments. However, the intended outcomes of the ETCS and its implementation is such that these implications are considered to be reasonable and appropriate:
 - a) In the context of national policy and the requirement to deliver sustainable development via a vision-led approach;
 - b) In order to bring about positive change for the benefit of current and future Leicestershire communities and businesses.
70. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, consultation on the draft ETCS document will be undertaken between April and July 2026 to inform the development of the final ETCS document. Once prepared, the final ETCS document will be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration and approval.

Equality Implications

71. 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.

72. A refreshed Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken in 2024, as part of the LTP4 Core Document's development. This helped to shape the final document, and was presented to the Cabinet in November 2024.
73. Equality implications will continue to be considered as the ETCS is developed. The outcomes of the consultation exercise will also inform the ongoing consideration of equality impacts as the Strategy is refined.

Human Rights Implications

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

Other Implications and Impact Assessments

Health Implications

75. In agreement with Public Health, a high-level Health Impact Assessment of the LTP4 Core Document was undertaken in April 2024; it identified a positive impact.
76. For the ETCS, an initial health impact assessment has been drafted and will be updated as the development of the ETCS progresses. Subject to the outcome of this, the need for a full assessment will be considered, and completed if it is appropriate.
77. The consultation on the draft ETCS document 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 travel in an area might be an appropriate solution to helping communities to better access services and facilities.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

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

Background Papers

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

Report to the Cabinet on 28 October 2025 – Delivering the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) 2026-2040

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7880&Ver=4>

Appendix

A – Draft Enabling Travel Choice Strategy

B – Example Mapped Survey Results

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A Local Transport Plan for Leicestershire

Enabling Travel Choice Strategy (ETCS)



Draft for Consultation

Document Control

Control Details	
Document Location	Transport Strategy and Policy (TSaP) Department of Environment and Transport Leicestershire County Council
Document Owner	Head of Service (HoS) and TSaP Team Manager

Document Amendment Record				
Date	Version	Reviewer	Approved By	Next Review Date
-	V1	Not issued - prepared only as a stepping stone towards a first working draft.	N/A	N/A
-	V2	Not issued - prepared only as a further stepping stone towards a first working draft.	N/A	N/A
3 October 2025	V3	First working draft issued to TSaP colleagues for review and comment.	Strategic Transport Planning Lead	N/A
17 October 2025	V3	First working draft issued to HoS and Assistant Director for review.	Strategic Transport Planning Lead	N/A
2 February 2026	V4	Working draft issued for design purposes and proof reading review.	Strategic Transport Planning Lead	N/A
5 March 2026	V5	Finalised draft issued for approval by the County Council's Cabinet for the purposes of consultation.	Strategic Transport Planning Lead	N/A

Overall Introduction

As human beings, we are not individuals living separately. We are social creatures and require interaction with our surroundings; travel facilitates that. Additionally, we depend on a vast and intricate eco-system that supports our everyday lives, such as providing food and beverages in stores; having teachers present in schools to educate our children; ensuring that emergency services reach us when needed; and receiving our online purchases as expected. Although there are numerous complex processes that allow this eco-system to operate, at its core, transport and travel make it all possible.

So, whether we all realise it or not, highways and transport networks are vital to our everyday lives. But, this can be a double-edged sword, because poor functioning networks can have adverse impacts, for example, to peoples' health and safety; causing environmental damage; and be disruptive to the operation of businesses and to the movement of goods and materials.

Through our Enabling Travel Choice Strategy, giving people opportunities to make different choices of travel can have 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. It is also vital to achieving the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and to the delivery of the Core Themes of our Local Transport Plan (LTP4).

This strategy also responds to the National Planning Policy Framework vision-led requirement. We support a 'vision-led' approach, but it must be well thought-through and justified in practical terms. So, we intend this strategy to help to provide clarity about what a vision-led approach means to us and how we will expect it to be achieved in practice as new developments, such as new homes or places of work, are planned for and delivered across Leicestershire.

But, whilst important, those are not the primary purposes of this strategy. Rather, as per the vision for the national Integrated Transport Strategy (INTS), which will:

- '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'

at the heart of the ETCS is how we can help to enable our 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. Services and facilities such as workplaces, schools, higher-education, healthcare, shops, leisure opportunities, etc. Likewise, how can we help businesses to thrive and be successful through enabling access to the labour pool of skills that they require.

In some cases, enabling improved access might be about transport provision - such as an improved or new footway or cycleway to promote sustainable travel or 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 which means people now have a choice to walk to the surgery rather than simply just to drive to one much further away.

As the Local Transport Authority for Leicestershire, there are things that we can do to enable travel choices for our existing communities and businesses. But, for future new communities and businesses we are far more reliant on the actions of others, including Local Planning Authorities - who prepare Local Plans and determine planning applications - and developers, such as house builders. It is therefore important that we work with them collaboratively to seek to deliver quality places, where occupiers have a real choice of means of travel to access services and facilities they might need to use as part of their daily lives.

The Structure of this Strategy

To help readers to understand the content of this document, the remainder of it is structured as follows:

Our Local Transport Plan (LTP4)	Explains what our LTP4 is and how it is structured.
What is the ETCS?	Sets out how the ETCS fits in with our other strategies, plans and guides and provides an overview of what it does and does not cover.
The Key Principles Underpinning the ETCS	Sets out the key 'golden threads' that run through the ETCS.
Overarching Policies	Sets out policies that are common to the areas of work covered by the ETCS, and the justification for them.
Our Approach to Enabling Travel Choice for Existing Communities and Places	Sets out the policy framework that will guide our work with existing communities, and the justification for them.
Our Approach to Enabling Travel Choice for New Communities and Places	Sets out the policy framework that will guide our work with Local Planning Authorities and developers (such as house builders), and the justification for them.
Defining and Understanding 'Successful' Strategy Delivery - Achieving 'Results'	Explains how we will understand the benefits that the ETCS is achieving.

Our Local Transport Plan (LTP4)

Section Introduction

The ETCS forms part of the full Local Transport Plan for Leicestershire 2025-2040, which was approved by the [County Council in July 2025](#).

What is an LTP?

The LTP is a requirement of the Local Transport Act 2008, and the key mechanism for delivering integrated transport at a local level. It helps to promote transport as an enabler to address existing and future challenges, explains how transport impacts local communities and puts in place plans for infrastructure, initiatives and solutions to help people and goods travel around.

Core Document

Focused Strategies

Multi Modal Area
Investment Plans

County
Strategic Transport
Investment Plan

Monitoring our Success

The Structure of our LTP4

LTP4 consists of a series of documents that are identified below:

LTP4 Core Document: The [Core Document](#) sets out the context in which our LTP4 is being developed and the challenges that it will seek to address. It sets out a strategic vision for transport across Leicestershire. It identifies the core themes, core policies and how these will be implemented. It provides an action plan for the development, implementation and review of focused strategies, Multi Modal Area Investment Plans, County Strategic Transport Investment Plan and provides detail on how the Local Transport Plan will be monitored.

Reflective of the INTS vision, our LTP4's core themes recognise that transport is an enabler of peoples' everyday lives:

- Enabling health and wellbeing
- Protecting the environment
- Delivering economic growth
- Enhancing our transport networks resilience
- Embracing Innovation

Focused Strategies: A series of focused strategies, of which the ETCS is one, will be developed to identify and tackle specific challenges and matters related to the transport network.

County Strategic Transport Investment Plan: This document will set out the strategic transport investment needs across the county to support the delivery of strategic development sites. As well as identifying needs for investment and capacity enhancement on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and the rail network building on the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Priorities published in November 2020. This will also set out how we continue to support East Midlands Airport and the East Midlands Freeport.

Multi Modal Area Investment Plans: These will be focused on the local level and set out strategies and investment plans for integrated transport solutions to meet the needs and requirements of our communities. We will also work in partnership with neighbouring authorities where there are cross-boundary transport matters which can be addressed through the development and implementation of the Multi Modal Area Investment Plans.

Monitoring our Success: This will set out the core Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Performance Indicators (PIs) which will be used to assess the success of LTP4 and how these will be reported upon.



What is the ETCS?

What is its Purpose?

The ETCS covers all of Leicestershire and its purpose is to set out in greater detail (than the LTP4 Core Document) how the LTA will seek to enable people living and working in existing and new communities and places to make informed travel choices. And the key word is choices, because the purpose of the ETCS is not to force people to change their behaviours, rather to seek to enable those living and working in existing and future places to have genuine travel choice options.

How does the ETCS fit in with our other Strategies, Plans and Guides?

We have a wide range of plans, policies, and strategies pertaining to various forms of transportation, such as driving, including our Network Management Policy, Strategy, and Plan; walking and cycling, including our Cycling and Walking Strategy; and passenger transport including our Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy. We call these 'topic specific,' and you can find our entire set of topic-specific plans, strategies, and policies [here](#).

Enabling Travel Choice Strategy
Embraces consideration of all modes (means) of travel

Range of topic specific Policies, Plans and Strategies

Many of those policies, plans and strategies set out our approach to providing for specific, different modes of transport. However, the ETCS sits over these and drives an all embracing (integrated) approach to considering transport provision. In doing this, we recognise that Leicestershire is a mixture of differing places, including rural areas, villages, towns and places that adjoin the City of Leicester; therefore it is not possible to impose a one size fits all approach across the County. Rather through the ETCS we will seek to identify realistic transport solutions, that is to prioritise those that enable travel choices that are most relevant to meeting the identified needs of our communities and businesses, existing and future, as they differ by place across Leicestershire. In some cases, the most realistic (and perhaps the only genuine) choice will be travel by car; we recognise this and through the ETCS (and other relevant policies, strategies and plans) we will continue to seek to make travel by car as safe, time reliable and delay free as is reasonably practicable, and to support people to switch to electric vehicles in line with national Government policy.

The ETCS should also be read in conjunction with the [Leicestershire Highways Design Guide \(LHDG\)](#), which deals with highways and transportation infrastructure for new developments in areas for which Leicestershire County Council is the highway authority. The LHDG sets out highway design standards for new development and also requirements for assessment of the transport impacts of proposed developments. The ETCS contains policies that build on the LHDG and in some cases further defines requirements that developers will be expected to follow in preparing their development proposals and in delivering them on the ground.

What areas of our work does the ETCS cover?

In summary, the ETCS essentially covers two key areas:

- **How we will understand the transport needs of existing communities and businesses:** We will work with existing communities to understand them and any travel barriers that they face in seeking to access the services and facilities that they need as part of their daily lives, and to seek to enable them to have realistic choices about how they choose to travel to those services and facilities. This will not just be about understanding transport issues; it will include wider matters such as health, inequalities, levels of deprivation and educational achievement.
- **How we will seek to ensure that occupiers of new places will have travel choices:** We expect to work with Local Planning Authorities (district councils), who are responsible for preparing Local Plans and for considering planning applications, and with developers (such as house builders) to deliver new places that provide new services and facilities and/or are well connected by a realistic and genuine choice of transport to services and facilities in the 'surrounding world'. The ETCS marks a move away from simply assessing a proposed Local Plan's or a proposed development's peak hour traffic impacts to a more holistic 'vision led' approach based around understanding existing and future communities access to services and facilities needs and then identifying and delivering transport solutions that are of an appropriate, suitable and safe standard.

So that our communities, Local Planning Authorities and developers have an open and transparent understanding of how we will work the ETCS contains a number of policies. Those policies do not seek to impose a 'one size fits all' approach across Leicestershire; each existing community and business are different, and whilst we have a lot of evidence and knowledge, we don't know everything. Equally it is important to ensure that the 'vision-led approach' to the delivery of new development is applied in the context of the varying nature of locations across the County.

Neither does the ETCS set out specific scheme proposals; in many cases, transport solutions that we will be responsible for delivering will be developed through our Multi Modal Area Investment Plans and (subject to funding) delivered via our highways and transport capital programme and work programme approved by the County Council's Cabinet each year. However, there could be exceptions where we will work with a community to pilot a new or innovative solution to meeting its access to services and facilities needs.

What Means (Modes) of Travel does the ETCS Cover?

Leicestershire is a mixture of differing places, including rural areas, villages, towns and places that adjoin 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, that is to prioritise those modes of travel that enable travel choices that are most relevant to meeting the identified needs of communities and places, existing and future, as they differ across Leicestershire.

What types of transport solutions does the ETCS cover?

The ETCS covers not just building new or improving existing infrastructure (what are known as capital funded solutions) to enable travel choice but also measures that help to educate and promote travel choice opportunities (what are known as revenue funded solutions).

Key Principles Underpinning the ETCS

The ETCS is one of the most important of our LTP4 Focused Strategies. We have prepared it to be ambitious, as it goes to the heart of seeking to provide for meeting the needs of existing and future Leicestershire communities and businesses. In doing so, its development has been informed by the following key principles, which form the golden threads running through it:

- **We don't know everything or always know best.** It is important for us to ensure that we establish greater knowledge and understanding of our communities and businesses (places), present and future. This is not just in respect of travel, but wider factors such as health, social deprivation educational attainment and inequalities.
- **We need to be clear about how we will apply broad national policy and regulations to the unique place that is Leicestershire.** We have set out in practical terms how we can best work within national policy framework to enable travel choice for existing and future communities and businesses. It is important that those involved in planning for meeting the future needs of the area's growing population and those involved in building new homes and places of work to meet those needs have a clear understanding of this, particularly in respect of the 'vision led' approach and the Integrated National Transport Strategy.

- **We are not anti-car.** The ETCS is not a sustainable or active travel strategy, although these are modes of travel that we actively support and promote. Rather, it is about seeking to identify and prioritise as necessary the means of travel that are most relevant and realistic to a particular place, although these are modes of travel that we actively support and promote. One size does not fit all.

- **The ETCS needs to support the delivery of our LTP4 Core Document (CD):** The CD sets out an overall vision and provides a framework of core themes and policies. Focused Strategies, such as this ETCS, provide greater detail about the work we will be doing in certain areas, such as to enable travel choice.

- **We need to manage and be realistic about expectations.** We want the ETCS to make a genuine difference for existing and future communities and businesses. However, it is important for the ETCS to be open and realistic about what we are able to achieve. We do not have unlimited funding. Similarly, neither do developers; as with the application of other policies or strategies, the financial viability of a site will remain an important consideration when Local Planning Authorities come to consider and determine planning applications.

So, the focus of the ETCS is built around understanding and seeking to address communities' needs but not wants. We will need to prioritise, too, be that, for example, by place or by travel choice.

Overarching Policies

Section Introduction

Reflecting that ‘one size does not fit all,’ Policies 1 to 4 provide the general framework within which we will seek to work flexibly to enable travel choices for existing and future communities and places of work. This flexibility includes embracing the consideration of new or innovative solutions.

However, whilst flexibility can be positive - such as enabling the delivery of a solution that meets the needs of community that otherwise would not have been possible through a more rigid approach - we also need to be careful not to expose the Council to unreasonable risks or financial burdens.



Policy 1

We recognise that Leicestershire is a mixture of differing places, including rural areas, villages, towns and places that adjoin 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 we will seek to identify realistic interventions, that is to prioritise those that enable travel choices that are most relevant to places, existing and future, as they differ across Leicestershire.

Justification

The ETCS is not intended to be a ‘sustainable transport strategy.’ Cycling and walking can be ideal modes of transport over relatively shorter distances, in more built up areas where there are safe routes, and for those who are fit and able to do so. But, they are not ideal if you live in a rural hamlet or your personal circumstances mean that you are unable to walk or cycle.

In some cases, the most realistic (and perhaps the only genuine) choice of travel will be by car. That is recognised, and that is why the ETCS embraces all modes of travel appropriate and relevant to a particular place. Through the ETCS (and other relevant policies, strategies and plans) where it is appropriate to do so we 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 national Government policy.

Policy 2

In considering scheme proposals, we will not simply consider ‘value for money’, although that will remain an important consideration, but also what other benefits might be achieved/delivered in tackling wider identified issues such as in respect of:

- a) Enabling active travel to address a community health issue.
- b) Helping to tackle an environmental issue, such as poor air quality.
- c) Addressing inequalities or social exclusion.
- d) Providing for the needs of those in the community who are more vulnerable.

Justification

That we continue to make best use of the Council’s own budgets and the funding that we receive from external sources will remain of the upmost importance.

However, the Government has changed the national guidance (known as ‘The Green Book’¹) used to appraise project business cases. The changes seek to put less emphasis on the pure monetary benefits of a proposal, and place greater emphasis on the wider benefits that a project might have. An example given (at section 3.2 of the review document) is in terms of achieving growth in household incomes through building more housing and improving transport connectivity. The ETCS needs to reflect the direction of changes to national guidance.

¹ The Green Book Review 2025: Findings and actions.

Policy 3

We will work with scheme promoters and other partners, such as Local Planning Authorities, towards reaching acceptance of scheme proposals which involve new and/or existing highway infrastructure that do not comply with recognised national and local standards (design departures), provided its design and delivery:

- a) Supports the delivery of our LPT4.
- b) Aligns with and would help to deliver on other policies of the ETCS.
- c) Aligns with the Local Plan, ‘Place Vision’ and ‘Transport Vision’ for the location (where applicable).
- d) Is considered to be safe, as demonstrated by a road safety audit.
- e) Is innovative in its design and/or delivery approach.
- f) Does not place the County Council at an unacceptable risk in terms of legal, financial and/or reputational liabilities.
- g) Would not represent a contradiction to a reasonable duty of care in determination of the departure.
- h) Duly considers network resilience and maintenance issues and does not place an unacceptable maintenance burden on the County Council.
- i) Provides a betterment that is in the best overall interests of Leicestershire communities and businesses by supporting positive outcomes.

Justification

Design standards are an essential aid to the consistent delivery of safe, maintainable transport schemes. As recognised in national and local standards, an inclusive part of guidance and processes includes consideration and accommodation for “departures” from design standards in certain circumstances.

Departures from design standards are an important element of enabling successful and efficient delivery of safe and effective schemes, by addressing and overcoming constraints associated with a specific location and also by enabling innovation to be included in schemes which bring about a betterment. Constraints might include, for example, land availability, physical obstructions or heritage or other environmental concerns.

Departures from design standards most often relate to proposed improvements to existing highway infrastructure, where there are often greater constraints than starting with a ‘blank sheet of paper.’ An example would be that seeking to provide a segregated cycleway along an existing road fronted by houses would be more constrained than for a developer looking to develop a currently open plot of land for, say, housing or employment.

By their nature, design departures are exceptions which can vary in their type and scale of departure from a standard or standards, with associated level of risks that must be considered. Whilst minimising departures is important to ensure efficient and timely approval of designs, and ultimately the delivery of safe and suitable schemes, that should not be a reason to stifle innovation or hinder the delivery of a scheme that could provide a betterment to the existing infrastructure in a place for the communities that will ultimately use it.

Policy 4

Where new or innovative solutions are proposed to meet communities’ or businesses’ identified needs, we will take opportunities to pilot or trial such solutions so that we can learn more about their application in practice. That includes, for example, in respect of the solution’s effectiveness in meeting identified needs and any cost and/or risk implications arising.

Justification

The world seems to be constantly changing, for example with technology evolving on an almost daily basis. It is therefore important that we have the flexibility to respond to evolving circumstances. But, for example, innovation does not always bring benefits for all; might not be appropriate for places in Leicestershire; or could come with risks or cost implications. Having the ability to pilot, trial and learn about new or innovative solutions will give us the opportunities to understand the benefits, suitability, risks and implications. In turn, this will help us to make a judgement as to whether it is a solution that ultimately would be in the best interest of communities and business (existing and future) to embrace fully and roll out more widely across Leicestershire.

Our Approach to Enabling Travel Choice for Existing Communities and Businesses

Section Introduction

Whilst Leicestershire is an historic ceremonial county and a local Government administrative area, its existing communities and businesses that are its heart beat. When they are thriving Leicestershire is a successful and attractive place in which to live, work and to visit.

In a very extreme way, the pandemic of the early 2020s showed us all how vital access to services and facilities such as schools, higher-education, healthcare, shops, leisure opportunities, is as part of daily life. This also shows through information (evidence) about communities in Leicestershire; whilst at a headline level Leicestershire is a relatively prosperous and healthy place that should not disguise the fact that this is not the case everywhere across the County. There are places where people are suffering from the impacts of multiple deprivation, or communities that have significant health issues, or where access to higher education is poor or where levels of educational achievement are low.

The overall introduction to this strategy highlighted how vital the ability to travel is to peoples' lives and to the operation of businesses; where people are unable to travel this can be a contributory cause to some of the issues that are highlighted above.

To that end, the policies contained in this section provide the framework within which we will seek to work, along with other parties as required, to understand existing communities and businesses and to seek to deliver solutions to enable travel choice that support their day-to-day needs.

Policy 5

We will work with:

- a) Leicestershire communities to understand them and any travel barriers that they face in seeking to access the services and facilities that they need in their daily lives, and to enable them to make realistic choices about how they choose to travel to those services and facilities; and
- b) Businesses in Leicestershire to understand any travel barriers that they face in seeking to recruit and retain people with the skills and abilities necessary for them to thrive or likewise that their workforce experiences in seeking to get to work.

Justification

As the LTA, we know a lot about how Leicestershire highways and transport networks function; but, we do not know everything. We need to build our knowledge about existing communities, and this is not just from a transport perspective but from wider perspectives such as health, economic prosperity or deprivation and educational attainment. Without such an understanding, we cannot begin to work, along with partners as necessary, to deliver solutions to address any travel barriers or other highways and transport issues that are impacting on and affecting those communities. In the absence of such understanding, we risk delivering transport solutions for transport's sake.

Policy 6

In recognising a one size fits all approach is not appropriate, through our work with communities and businesses we will seek to identify solutions that are most relevant to meeting the identified (evidenced) needs rather than wants of their daily lives.

Subject to the availability of funding, those solutions might include:

- a) Improving existing roads, cycleways or footways, or improving existing passenger transport services.
- b) Building new things, such as a new piece of road, a cycleway, footway, or better 'bus stop' facilities.
- c) Training and education to help people to feel more confident and safer about trying a different mode (means) of travel.



Policy 7

We will work with communities and representative bodies, such as Parish Councils or other recognised bodies, to, as necessary and appropriate, educate and train them to enable them to deliver their own solutions to meeting identified needs.

Subject to the availability of funding we may consider providing grants or starter funding to support the implementation of community led solutions.

Justification

We want to do as much as we reasonably can to enable communities to access the services and facilities that they need to use on a daily basis and to support businesses to thrive by enabling them to have access to the pools of labour that they require. But, we do not have unlimited resources or funds; even with any grants or awards of funding from the Government we are never likely to have sufficient funding to address every barrier to travel across Leicestershire.

We will therefore need to focus our attention on understanding communities' and businesses' needs (that is, those that are most essential) rather than wants (that is, non-essential or just desirable). And even then, it is likely that we will need to prioritise by place and/or by mode of transport.

Recognising our resource and financial constraints, it may be that in some cases the best option is for us to support a local body, such that they can deliver solutions. This could include seed monies to 'pump prime' the delivery of a solution, that is to provide a grant to get it started.

Our Approach to Enabling Travel Choice for New Communities and Businesses

Section Introduction

As the population of Leicestershire continues to grow, more homes and new jobs are required to meet people's needs.

We, Local Planning Authorities, developers and many other bodies have roles and responsibilities in seeking to provide the required new homes and jobs. But, they do not appear by 'magic' and cannot exist in splendid isolation; it is incumbent on all parties involved to seek to deliver new communities and places that are integrated into the surrounding world. Such that, occupiers of new homes can access the services and facilities that they are likely to need as part of their daily lives as easily and directly as possible; in some cases that might be by bringing a service or facility to those occupiers (meaning that they have a choice to walk or cycle) and in others it might be to seek to ensure that travel to those services and facilities is as safe and efficient as is reasonably possible, including by car. Also such that, new businesses have good access to people with the necessary skills and that a lack of travel choice is not a barrier to people having opportunities to access such jobs.

We support a 'vision-led' approach to planning for meeting people's future needs. To that end, the policies contained in this section provide the framework within which we will seek to work with other parties to deliver new communities and places, as illustrated in the diagram to the right, such that a 'vision-led' approach is well thought-through and justified in practical terms.

Note: The Department for Transport has recently made available a [lite version of its Connectivity Tool](#), which is available for use by anyone. The Government has recently consulted on a proposed major overhaul of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which if brought into effect

would see the use of the Tool become embedded in national planning policy. As and when an updated NPPF is published, we will review how to incorporate use of the Tool into the ETCS's policies. In the meantime, we expect Local Plan makers and developers to make use of the Tool to inform their work.



Policy 8

To enable the delivery of well-designed, sustainable and popular places, we will support Local Plans where:

- a) The Local Plan making authority (presently district councils in Leicestershire) has provided evidence to demonstrate an understanding of:
 - i) The access to day to day services and facilities needs of existing communities; and
 - ii) Any current barriers to communities' ability to access those needs.
- b) The Local Plan making authority can clearly demonstrate how it has responded to that evidence in:
 - i) Arriving at a Plan's proposed spatial strategy and site allocations, in particular to demonstrate how the Plan can help to address any current access to services and facilities barriers experienced by existing communities.
 - ii) Setting out a sufficiently clear and strong policy framework, including via general policies and through site specific policies as appropriate, that:
 - Sets out the visions for the new places that will be created, including to reflect an understanding as to where occupiers of those places are likely to look to in terms of accessing services and facilities that are most likely to be important to meeting their daily needs

- Is reflective of those visions, specifies how new communities will be required to be provided with appropriate, suitable and safe access to services and facilities, be that by requirements for on-site provision and/or through ensuring that they are truly connected to existing communities and the wider surrounding world by means of transport connectivity.
- c) In the case that a Plan includes clusters of proposed allocation sites or several sites along a key transport corridor, the Plan provides a sufficiently clear and strong policy framework:
 - i) To require their cumulative travel demand impacts to be assessed.
 - ii) To require those sites to be strategically master planned in coordination such as to promote the provision of services and facilities that would otherwise not be possible if the sites were to be considered individually and in isolation.
 - iii) That sets out a lawful approach to securing the funding of services, facilities and transport measures required to deal with the cumulative impacts.
- d) In the case that neighbouring Plans contain adjacent proposed allocation sites:
 - i) They are underpinned by evidence bases that are consistent in demonstrating the overall travel demand impacts, including cross-boundary (administrative 'boundary blind'), of the allocations as a whole.

- ii) The Plans demonstrate how they have responded to that evidence, including through:
- The inclusion of consistent clear and strong policy requirements for those sites to be strategically masterplanned in coordination such as to promote the provision of services and facilities that would otherwise not be possible if the sites were to be considered individually and in isolation.
 - A consistent and lawful approach to securing the funding of services, facilities and transport measures required to deal with the overall impacts of the allocations as a whole.
- e) It is demonstrated how the Plan will help to deliver on the Core Themes and Policies of our Local Transport Plan (LTP4).
We will not support a Local Plan where it is not evidence-based and its policies are not justified, including where:
- f) The spatial strategy is being justified as sustainable simply because of proposed site allocations' geographic locations; and/or
- g) Whereby existing travel connectivity and transport choices for proposed allocation sites fail to provide appropriate, suitable and safe access to services and facilities that future occupiers of developments are most likely to require to access in meeting their daily needs; and/or
- h) Whereby the Plan fails to provide a sufficiently clear and strong policy framework to require and guide developers to bring forward proposals for improving travel connectivity and choices as part of overall 'Place Visions' and 'Transport Visions' for their sites.

Justification

Local Plans are a fundamental element of the planning system; the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that the planning system should be genuinely plan-led and that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making. They set the template for how an area is to be developed and provide the policy framework by which land for development is brought forward and planning applications for new development will be considered and determined.

It is therefore vital that Local Plans provide a strong foundation for ensuring that new places are identified and delivered in such a way that maximises the ability of people to access services and facilities by a range of appropriate travel choices, in the interests of achieving sustainable and popular places, and the delivery of the overarching economic, social and environmental objectives of the planning system, as set out in the NPPF. And this must not be a theoretical box ticking exercise; evidence shows that Leicestershire's transport system is not capable of providing for the levels of car borne travel demand that it is predicted will be generated by the area's growing population. So, it is really important that through the planning system opportunities for bringing services and facilities to people are maximised, meaning that people have opportunities to walk and cycle or make just very localised car trips, as necessary.

However, maximising peoples' accessibility to services and facilities is not about a proposed Local Plan site allocation being sustainable simply, say, because it is served by a bus service, if the evidence demonstrates that service does not presently run to the range of places where future occupiers of the development are likely to want to access to meet their daily needs.

It is therefore really important that Local Plan making authorities consider existing and future communities facilities' and services' accessibility needs through the proposed allocation of sites, including how existing communities might benefit from access to new services and facilities provided as part of new development (and thereby improving peoples' choices of travel to access those by services and facilities). It is also really important too that Local Plans provide developers with policy clarity about requirements and expectations on and of them in respect of demonstrating how their proposed development will be connected to the surrounding world by transport. Without such, there is likely to be confusion and delays as and when a site is brought forward as a planning application.

Land use planning and transport planning should be truly integrated if wider benefits are to be achieved, including in terms of enabling travel choice. It is therefore important that Local Plans demonstrate how they will help to achieve wider objectives that reflect national policy, including the Government's Missions, the Integrated National Transport Strategy and the NPPF, and more locally the Core Themes and Policies of our LTP4.

Policies 9 to 15

The following Policies 9 to 15 apply both to where sites are being promoted for inclusion in a Local Plan or are being brought forward or are intended to be brought forward as a planning application (and regardless of whether or not the site is a proposed or an actual Local Plan allocation site).

Policy 9

To achieve a vision-led approach that is applied in context, well thought-through, and justified in practical terms, where the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide requires a Transport Assessment to be provided in support of a development proposal, we will expect developers to also provide a separate, site bespoke document ('Place Vision') that at the least:

- a) Explains the nature of their development proposal and how it relates to its surroundings, including its envisioned relationship with existing and future communities, places, services and facilities. This will need to include at least:
 - i) For residential developments, consideration of the places, facilities and services that occupiers of the proposed development are likely to need to access as part of their daily lives, including to identify any new provision that it is intended will form part of the development.
 - ii) For employment and mixed use developments including employment elements, consideration of where workers are likely to be drawn from, relative to an understanding of the skills required (especially where co-location of new homes and jobs is being cited as sustainable development).
- b) Sets out the extent to which existing transport provision and/or how transport proposals for connecting the development to the surrounding world aligns with its envisioned relationship with existing and future communities, places facilities and services, and labour pools.
- c) Explains how any new transport provision and/or proposed new facilities and services that are to be delivered in support of the new development is/are proposed to be phased relative to site delivery considerations, including viability.

Policy 10

In developing their 'Place Vision' we will:

- a) Expect developers to consider how facilities and services that are to be provided as part of a new development might help to meet (as evidenced) existing and future communities' needs.
- b) Expect the developer to demonstrate how it will help to deliver on the Core Themes and Policies of our Local Transport Plan (LTP4).
- c) Encourage and support developers to propose services, facilities and transport provision that would help to meet existing communities' needs where that would remove existing car borne trips from the road network serving the development in order to make space for new (as evidence to be unavoidable and necessary) car borne trips that will be generated by the proposed development.

Justification

The NPPF embeds the principle of a vision-led approach to transport planning, and we support this. But, every location for new development is different. Thus, attempting to impose a generic one-size-fits all approach to understanding peoples' facilities and services access needs, and thus by extension their travel needs, is not appropriate.

Thus, for a vision led approach to be applied in context, it is really important that we are able to understand what a proposed new place is intended to be. For example, is it intended to be a brand new standalone place with plenty of onsite facilities and services that will help to meet many of the daily needs of its occupiers (and possible needs of existing communities, too)? Is it seeking to bolster the economy and vitality of a town? Or, is it too small to be a standalone place and will therefore need strong societal and economic relationships with the world around it? Or, is an employment

proposal seeking to play a role in helping to upskill the local workforce or that requires particular skill sets that are not readily available in the immediate area?

'Place Visions' flow from a vision led approach and demonstrate the application of the approach in context. We expect them to be site bespoke and to be genuine and realistic about relationships with the surrounding world and to draw on available evidence, including the views of local communities. That is vital, because the vision for the place is the bedrock for understanding, amongst other things, where people might want to travel to (forecast travel demands) in the surrounding world to access services and facilities to meet their day to day needs. By extension this will enable us to understand:

- Whether existing transport provision serving the site aligns to the sites forecast travel demands, for example by places accessed or by distance.
- How any proposed transport provision has been tailored to align with the forecast travel demand.
- The extent to which any need to phase the delivery of proposed transport (or other facilities and services) provision might impact on the achievement of the 'Place Vision' in practice.

Land use planning and transport planning should be truly integrated if wider benefits are to be achieved, including in terms of enabling travel choice; it is therefore important that new development demonstrates how it will help to achieve wider objectives that reflect national policy, including the Government's Missions, the NPPF, the Integrated National Transport Strategy and more locally the Core Themes of our LTP4.

Ensuring that there is clarity and agreement between ourselves and developers is really important, as it will help us to ensure that the process for assessing the proposed development's travel demand impacts can be completed as quickly and efficiently as reasonably possible.

Policy 11

Where in accordance with the requirements of the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide a transport assessment is required in support of a development proposal we will expect that the assessment will at the least:

- a) Reflect the bespoke 'Place Vision' for the proposed development.
- b) Evidence the travel demands and patterns forecast to be generated for all modes relevant to the proposed development, reflective of the nature of the place that is to be created and its envisioned relationship with the surrounding world.
 - i) As a minimum, forecast travel demands and patterns are to be presented in terms of mode type, quantum, distribution and trip length.
- c) Aligned to the forecast travel demand, sets out clear and realistic proposals as to how the occupiers of the new development will be connected to the surrounding world, in other words a practical, mapped vision ('Transport Vision') demonstrating how the development will be integrated in transport terms to the surrounding world by all relevant and appropriate modes of travel.
 - i) We will normally expect at least an initial 'Transport Vision' to be prepared to inform any strategic transport modelling of a development proposal, as required in accordance with the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide.

- d) Where the achievement of the 'Transport Vision' in practice has a reliance (in full or in part) on existing transport provision:
 - i) Demonstrate that that provision is appropriate, suitable and safe to accommodate the travel demand forecast to be generated; and where not
 - ii) Identify how it is proposed to improve the existing provision to an appropriate, suitable and safe standard relevant to the forecast travel demand and residual impact of the development.
- e) Where the achievement of the 'Transport Vision' in practice has a reliance (in full or in part) on new transport provision:
 - i) Identify specific appropriate, suitable and safe proposals that are to be delivered in conjunction with the proposed development.
- f) Reflect any phasing proposals for the proposed development.

A 'vision-led' approach needs to be well thought-through and justified in practical terms. So, we will not agree to transport assessments that:

- g) Are based on a generic application of a vision-led approach; and/or
- h) Are based on a non-bespoke, generic 'Place Vision'; and/or
- i) Are solely about demonstrating whether there is sufficient peak hour capacity for the road network to accommodate the forecast traffic generated by the proposed development (albeit that might still be an important consideration in some cases); and/or

- j) Cite existing transport provision, such as existing footways or cycleways or passenger transport services, as justifying why a location or development is sustainable in transport terms where there is no evidence to support that the provision is appropriate, suitable and safe to provide occupiers with access to the range of services and facilities that they are likely to need to use to meet the needs of their daily lives (residential developments) or for potential workers to access the location (employment developments or mixed use developments including employment elements).
- k) Are based on modal shift assumptions/targets that fail to reflect the 'Place Vision' or 'Transport Vision' and/or are out of kilter with existing or proposed transport provision.

Policy 12

Where in accordance with the requirements of the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide a travel plan is required in support of a development proposal we will expect that it will at the least:

- a) Reflect the bespoke 'Place Vision' for the proposed development.
- b) Capture the relevant aspects of transport provision as determined through transport assessment work carried out in accordance with Policy 11.

A 'vision-led' approach needs to be well thought-through and justified in practical terms. So, we will not agree to travel plans that:

- c) Are based on a non-bespoke, generic 'Place Vision' and/or
- d) Are based on generalisms as to the approach to promoting the use of active and sustainable travel modes.
- e) Are based on modal shift assumptions/targets that fail to reflect the 'Place Vision' or 'Transport Vision' and/or are out of kilter with existing or proposed transport provision.

Justification

The NPPF was first published in 2012 and had the creation of sustainable development at its heart. Despite that, research shows that car dependency of new homes has increased in every region of England (save for London) over the past 15 years.

Given the geographic nature of Leicestershire, car travel may be the only present choice of travel for some people. But, if future new development continues to perpetuate the car dependency trend the road network will become ever more congested, making Leicestershire an increasingly unattractive place to live in and to do business in.



In order to understand what genuine and realistic travel choices are or might be available to occupiers of a new development, it is really important to understand forecast travel demand and how that demand might be broken down by direction, distance and time of day. For example, if an existing or proposed facility or service is within 5km travel distance then for most people that would open up the choice of being able to walk or to cycle to it, providing that there is a route that is of an appropriate, suitable and safe standard. Conversely, if access is needed to services and facilities that are 20km or more away, the predominant travel choice is likely to be the car.

Mapping out a Transport Vision provides a clear and easy way to understand how existing transport provision might align to the forecast travel demands and patterns and to be able to identify where:

- Improvements are required to existing provision to achieve the ‘Place Vision’ and ‘Transport Vision’ in reality (that is, to validate them); and/or
- New provision is required likewise to achieve the Visions.

To seek to maximise travel choice, it is no longer appropriate to focus solely on journeys to work (which typically take place in the traffic ‘peak hours’), because people need to or might seek to access services and facilities throughout the day. Thus, transport assessments need to be more comprehensive in their consideration of travel demands and patterns and in considering how such might be met and provided for across a day, including through the improvement of existing or provision of new transport provision as necessary to deliver the ‘Place’ and ‘Transport’ Visions in reality.

Policy 13

We will encourage and support developers to undertake early discussions with third parties where the achievement in practice of a ‘Transport Vision’ in practice (that is, to validate the Vision) is reliant on something that is within the gift of another party to deliver (such as National Highways). We will expect that party to engage positively and proactively in seeking to enable the delivery of the ‘Transport Vision’ in practice.

Where it becomes apparent that another party is unwilling or unable to deliver an element essential to the delivery of a ‘Transport Vision’, we will work with developers as they revise the ‘Vision’ and to understand any consequential implications.

Justification

We recognise that there might be circumstances where another body, such as National Highways, might need to be responsible for taking forward the delivery of an essential element of the ‘Transport Vision’ for a proposed development. Thus, we will seek to support developers in engaging with such bodies such that the ‘Transport Vision’ is achievable in practice.

But where all best efforts fail, we will look to the developers to adapt and amend their ‘Transport Vision’ and as necessary the ‘Place Vision’, too, to reflect changed circumstances. (And to make amendments to the transport assessment and its conclusions, and to a proposed travel plan as appropriate.)

Policy 14

To accompany the 'Place Vision' and 'Transport Vision', we will expect developers to also provide details as to how the delivery of those Visions will be monitored (validated) in practice ('Monitoring and Management Strategy' - MMS). We will expect the MMS at the least to:

- a) Span the entire lifetime of a development, in other words from planning application preparation, and submission, granting of consent, on site delivery through to final build out and completion of the site.
- b) Cover all aspects of the development and its delivery that through the 'Place Vision' have been identified as being essential to achieving the Vision in practice (that is, to validate the vision).
- c) Cover all aspects of the 'Transport Vision'.
- d) To identify and 'fix' key milestones against which the delivery of the 'Visions' in practice can be assessed.
- i) For larger sites, that will be deliverable over many years, it will be appropriate to include a 'Visions' review milestone, this as a sense check that the Visions remain valid in the light of changing circumstances in the surrounding world.
- e) Set out proposals for corrective actions by the developer in the event that either one or both of the 'Visions' is failing to be delivered in practice (that is, not being validated in practice).

Policy 15

Throughout the lifetime of a development, we will seek to take all necessary, reasonable steps to ensure that the 'Place Vision' and 'Transport Vision' are delivered on the ground in practice (that is, are validated). We will do this including, through:

- a) Working with Local Plan making authorities to ensure that Local Plans provide the necessary policy framework for achieving such.
- b) Working with Local Planning Authorities to agree and secure appropriate planning conditions and/or planning obligations.
- c) Our role to:
 - i) Approve works to create new highway expected to be adopted by us as the Local Highway Authority; and/or
 - ii) To approve works on the existing public highway.
- d) The agreed Monitoring and Management Strategy (as secured by condition or obligation).

Justification

Having Visions for a place and for transport will mean nothing if they are just simply 'paper exercises'; they need to be brought to life in reality.

It is therefore really important that requirements for achieving them in reality are embedded in planning policy and secured through the planning application process.

It also vital that we are able to monitor and understand how a development is coming forward in reality to ensure that the Visions are validated in practice.

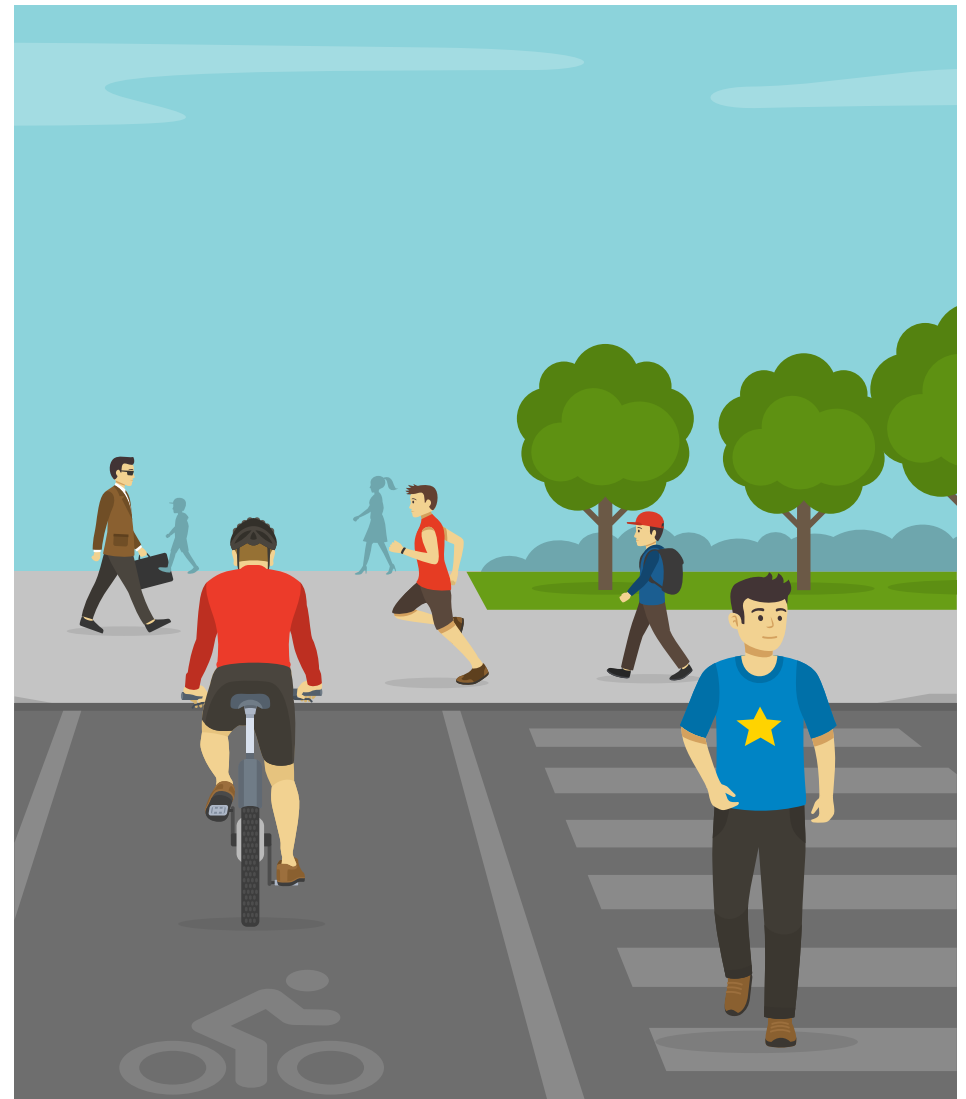
Given how fundamental the Visions are to assumptions about how occupiers might need to travel and by what choice of mode, it is important that the Visions are adhered to throughout the lifetime of a development's delivery and that there are measurable ways to assess this.

In respect of the 'Place Vision,' adherence includes the delivery of any facilities and services essential to its validation and in accordance with agreed timescales and phasing.

In respect of the 'Transport Vision,' adherence to it includes the delivery of any improvements to existing transport provision and any delivery of new transport provision essential to its validation and in accordance with agreed timescales and phasing.

In the event that at any stage in the development's lifetime there are evidenced circumstances as to why one or both of the 'Place Vision' or 'Transport Vision' cannot be or are not being delivered as originally envisioned, then it will be important to have a pre-identified and agreed corrective actions; in some cases those actions might be in respect of the provision of further transport interventions, but in other cases it might be reasonable and appropriate to enhance the nature or range of facilities on a site to promote shorter distance trips that can be undertaken by foot or on bike.

In this way, delays to the progress of a development's delivery should be kept to a minimum. This includes changes in the surrounding world that might impact on the Visions' delivery, which might include, for example, technological changes or impacts of national Government policy.



Defining and Understanding ‘Successful’ Strategy Delivery - Achieving ‘Results’

Section Introduction






Our LTP4 Core Document sets out the overall approach to monitoring its delivery, including through ‘Monitoring Our Success’. This document will set out the core Key Performance Indicators and Performance Indicators that will be used to assess the success of our full LTP4 Core Document and will be developed and implemented under Phase 3 of the LTP4 development. While this is developed, a series of indicators have been identified to assess the progress of the LTP4 Core Document. These will be utilised alongside any monitoring requirements and outputs associated with awards of funding from the Government (or awarded by any bodies responsible for distributing Government funding). Monitoring will also include the roll-out of the focused strategies, County Strategic Transport Investment Plan and Multi Modal Area Investment Plans and delivering improvements and wider benefits for our communities.

Our approach to monitoring the delivery of the ETCS

Within the overall LTP4 monitoring framework, we will develop proposals for monitoring the benefits of implementing the ETCS. Those proposals will be built around an approach that is not about setting modal shift or change targets, but rather is about:

- Understanding changes (improvements) to places connectivity, using the Department for Transport’s Connectivity Tool.
- The use of place surveys, for example of residents and businesses.
- Measuring outputs, for example numbers of places engaged with; new services designed; pilot projects undertaken; new footways delivered; or passenger transport services provided.

- Using a continuous, regularly updated and reprofiled/refocused Social Pinpoint facility available on our website.
- Over the long term, understanding changes in the health of a place, or changes in social inclusion, education attainment, etc.

	Life expectancy Levels of physical activity Modal share transport data Public health indicators
	Travel and journey data Air quality levels Water quality levels Biodiversity indicators
	Economic growth indicators Housing delivery Education and skill levels
	Modal share data Journey time data Maintenance and renewal indicators Transport network incidents
	Transport solution delivery Carbon production levels from transport Time and cost saving



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APPENDIX B

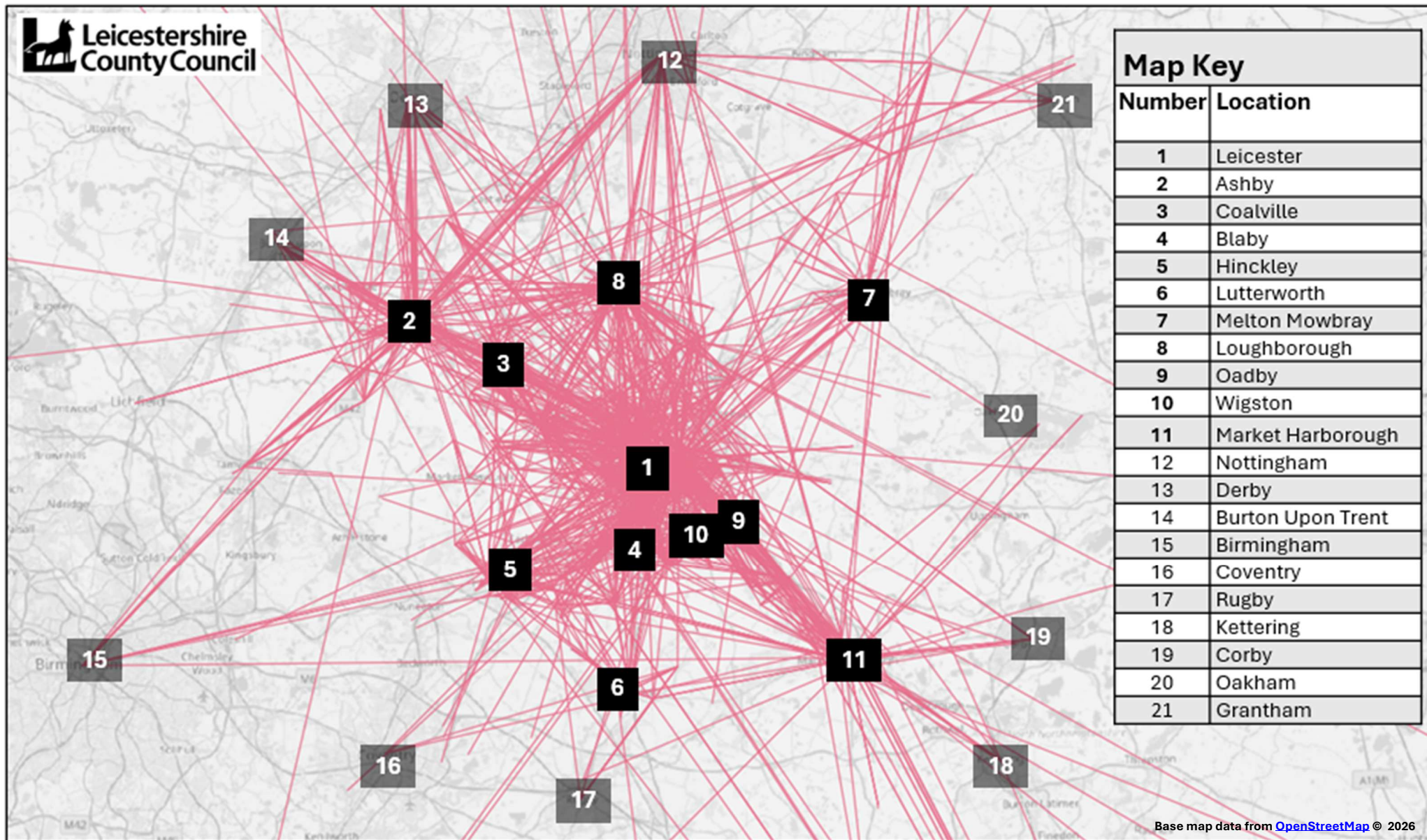


Figure 1: Big Travel Survey data - showing journey start and end points within Leicestershire and surrounding urban areas (partial data set)

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**CABINET – 24 MARCH 2026****EAST MIDLANDS FREEPORT: CHANGE OF ACCOUNTABLE BODY
AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS****REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present details of the transfer of the Accountable Body role for the East Midlands Freeport (EMF) from the County Council to the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA). This is following Government direction after EMCCA's establishment as a Mayoral Strategic Authority. The report also outlines the key issues, governance and voting implications, and states the County Council's position.

Recommendations

- 2 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
 - a) Notes the transfer of the Accountable Body role from the County Council to EMCCA, along with the governance, assurance and voting implications arising from this;
 - b) Delegates authority to the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources and the Cabinet Lead Member for Resources, to take all actions and decisions required of the County Council in its capacity as a member organisation of the East Midlands Freeport, excluding any matters reserved to, or exercised by, the County Council's appointed EMF Board Director.

Reasons for Recommendation

- 3 The transfer of the Accountable Body role is driven by national policy and ministerial directives. EMCCA is anticipated to assume responsibility as the Accountable Body for EMF, subject to approvals from the EMF Board, EMCCA Board, and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). This process must uphold robust governance standards, facilitate meaningful engagement from both public and private sectors, and ensure adequate mayoral oversight of EMF's strategic direction.

- 4 Any changes to EMFs governance arrangements arising from the Accountable Body transfer and the County Council's proposal will require unanimous agreement from all EMF Board members.

Timetable for Decisions

- 5 Ministerial direction has given a deadline of 31st March 2026 to complete the transfer, with new arrangements to go live on 1st April 2026.
- 6 Practically the transfer will happen through the novation of existing governance and funding agreements, including the Accountable Body Agreement, the Memorandum of Understanding with Government, and the Retained Business Rates Agreement.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

- 7 The establishment of the EMF and the County Council's role as Lead Authority and Accountable Body were agreed in accordance with national Freeport policy and Government requirements. New policy direction and ministerial guidance require that, following the establishment of EMCCA, the Accountable Body role for the Freeport should transfer.
- 8 The Council's decision to act as Accountable Body was taken by the Chief Executive under delegated authority on 23 April 2021, following consultation with the Leader, and was subsequently approved in a report to the Cabinet on 26 April 2022, along with the necessary governance, financial and operational arrangements. These decisions supported delivery of the Council's Strategic Plan (2022–26), in particular the outcome relating to a strong economy, transport and infrastructure, by enabling participation in a major, nationally significant economic programme.

Resource Implications

- 9 Once the transfer is complete EMCCA will assume responsibility for the Accountable Body governance and assurance functions, including compliance with Government requirements and the stewardship of public funds, in place of the County Council.
- 10 The County Council will no longer be financially liable for the Accountable Body function. All existing arrangements will be novated with appropriate indemnity and liability provisions agreed between the County Council and EMCCA.
- 11 The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

- 12 None.

Officer(s) to Contact

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PART B

Background

- 13 East Midlands Freeport (EMF) was incorporated as EMF Ltd in July 2022 as a company limited by guarantee. The final business case was signed off by Government on 30 March 2023. It is the only inland Freeport (with East Midlands Airport acting as the 'port') as part of a programme of Freeport creation by the previous Government. The Freeport covers three specific sites, namely:
- East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster (EMAGIC) in North West Leicestershire
 - Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station site in Rushcliffe, Nottinghamshire
 - East Midlands Intermodal Park (EMIP) in South Derbyshire.
- 14 EMF Ltd comprises twelve founding members: six corporate partners and six local authorities, each of whom appoints a director to the Board. Local authority representation is typically undertaken by Leaders or portfolio holders. An independent Chair brings the Board's total membership to thirteen.
- 15 A requirement for Freeport status is that an Accountable Body function must be provided by a local authority. Since its inception, the County Council has served as the Accountable Body for EMF. The responsibilities of the Lead Authority/ Accountable Body include, but are not limited to:
- Receiving funding on behalf of EMF and ensuring proper administration, compliance with relevant legislation and funding conditions, and delivering value for money in public expenditure.
 - Maintaining financial systems to account for all funds received and disbursed on behalf of EMF.
 - Embedding sound governance into decision-making, adhering to the Nolan principles and the National Local Growth Assurance Framework.
 - Retaining essential information and ensuring accurate monitoring, recording, and reporting of expenditure, activities, and outcomes.
 - Acting as the single point of contact for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on all matters relating to the Lead Authority/Accountable Body within the Freeport.
- 16 In correspondence dated 28 March 2025, MHCLG clarified that Accountable Body status should transfer from the County Council to EMCCA no later than two years following the establishment of EMCCA (i.e., by 28 February 2026). An agreement reached with MHCLG stipulates that this change will be effective at midnight on 31 March 2026, thereby streamlining implementation by aligning with accounting years and minimising officer time and public resources required for group account preparation.
- 17 The UK Industrial Strategy (June 25) further articulates the expectation that Freeports and Investment Zones should be integrated locally to provide greater

alignment and clarity to end users and investors under the designation of 'Industrial Strategy Zone' sites.

- 18 Government underscored that, with the establishment of EMCCA as a Mayoral Strategic Authority, the Accountable Body function should transition to EMCCA to ensure enhanced regional alignment.

Implications for Governance Arrangements

- 19 There are several principal agreements relating to Accountable Body Status that must be transferred from the County Council to EMCCA. These include the Accountable Body Agreement, the Memorandum of Understanding with MHCLG, and the Retained Business Rates Agreement involving the County Council and the relevant billing authorities. Additionally, the County Council is a signatory to grant agreements in its capacity as Accountable Body. All agreements are capable of being transferred (novated) from the County Council to EMCCA.
- 20 The Accountable Body Agreement outlines essential elements, such as the duties and responsibilities of the Accountable Body, the expected time commitment, procedures for reimbursement by EMF, and protocols for data sharing. The intention is for this agreement to be novated to EMCCA without any changes, thereby facilitating seamless transition.
- 21 EMF's governance framework incorporates several checks and balances, including the Accountable Body's power to veto the business plan and major financial decisions. Although the Accountable Body is not permitted to veto investments based on policy considerations, it does exert influence if concerns about value for money arise. This influence may take the form of advising EMF and the Board, referring issues to MHCLG, or withholding the signature and release of funds in accordance with principles governing public money and value for money. Such measures cannot be taken solely due to policy disputes or if an investment falls outside the county boundaries.
- 22 The Accountable Body Agreement contains a schedule of reserved matters, which require approval from different groups, including the Founding Members, the Accountable Body (who retain veto authority over certain decisions regardless of membership status), the EMF Board, and Public Sector Directors.
- 23 Most decisions taken by the EMF Board require a majority approval from both the public and private sector director cohorts. Significant changes, such as modifications to governance structures, necessitate unanimous approval from all Founding Members. Decisions concerning public funding are initially reviewed by a Section 151 sub-committee and subsequently by a public sector director sub-committee before being submitted to the wider Board (including private sector members) for strategic guidance. This process ensures a clear separation between decisions made by the entire Board and those specifically related to the management of public finances which are restricted to Public Sector Directors.

- 24 There are two categories of EMF Board membership: Associate Membership and Founding Membership. Notably, only Founding Members have the authority to appoint a Director to the EMF Board. The Membership Agreement and Articles of Association provide that changes to Founding Membership and EMF Board composition are matters for the EMF Board to decide. Where such changes affect governance or voting arrangements, they are treated as requiring unanimous Founding Member approval.
- 25 A determination regarding EMCCA's membership status within EMF is necessary. EMCCA's preferred position is to have both Accountable Body status and Founding Member status. Obtaining Founding Member status would allow EMCCA to appoint a director to the EMF Board, thereby securing a role in shaping the organisation's strategic direction. However, the appointment of EMCCA as a Founding Member may lead to potential representation or voting imbalances between the public and private sector members. EMCCA has provided assurance that this transition will not negatively affect the Leicestershire authorities.
- 26 There is also potential for an imbalance between EMCCA authorities and those not within the combined authority. This imbalance currently exists and so far has not caused issues, but there may be a need to adjust voting rights in the final version of the agreement to counteract this disparity.
- 27 Representatives from the County Council and North West Leicestershire District Council met with EMCCA in early February 2026 to discuss the implications of this imbalance. EMCCA has provided assurance that the transfer of Accountable Body from the County Council to EMCCA will not negatively impact Leicestershire Authorities.
- 28 The issue of Accountable Body governance was discussed at an EMF Board meeting on 26 February 2026. At this meeting the County Council proposed that Leicestershire be allocated an additional vote on the EMF Board, to be exercised by one of the Leicestershire local authority representatives in circumstances where EMCCA holds both Accountable Body status and Founding Member voting rights. The deployment of this additional vote would be agreed between the County Council and North West Leicestershire District Council. It was agreed that the EMF office will contact all EMF Board members and seek views on the EMCCAs and County Council's proposals. This will be subject to further discussions at EMF Board meetings.

Conclusion

- 29 The transfer of the Accountable Body role for EMF to EMCCA is required by national policy following the establishment of EMCCA. The proposed arrangements allow the transfer to be completed in an orderly and low risk manner through the novation of existing agreements, while maintaining governance and assurance. The County Council's proposal for an additional Leicestershire vote where EMCCA holds both Accountable Body and Founding Member status aims to give balance to the voting and governance issues arising from the Accountable Body transfer.

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.

Other Implications and Impact Assessments

32 There are no other implications or assessments required.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet – 22 June 2021 -

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s161918/East%20Midlands%20Global%20Gateway%20Freeport.pdf>

Report to the Cabinet – 26 April 2022 -

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s168678/East%20Mids%20Freeport%20FINAL.pdf>

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CABINET – 24 MARCH 2026

LEICESTERSHIRE SCHOOL TERM DATES **AUTUMN 2027 TO SUMMER 2032**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to consult on three potential models for Leicestershire school term and holiday dates covering the period from autumn 2027 to summer 2032 for schools maintained by the local authority.

Recommendations

2. The Cabinet is recommended to:
 - a) Approve a consultation to be undertaken on the proposed term date models for Leicestershire for the academic years 2027/28 to 2031/32, attached as Appendix A to this report;
 - b) Receive a further report in July 2026 presenting the outcomes of the consultation and the recommended term date model.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The Education Act 2002 places a statutory obligation on the County Council to determine the number of school days that schools under its control must open. The County Council is required to determine a pattern that ensures at least 380 sessions (190 days) during each school year.
4. A public consultation will seek feedback on three potential term date models to inform a recommended model for implementation.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. It is proposed to hold a 6-week consultation on the potential term date models. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, this will commence on 20 April and run until 31 May 2026.

6. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a report as part of the consultation exercise at its meeting on 2 June 2026.
7. It is intended that the Cabinet will receive a further report at its meeting on 21 July 2026 summarising consultation feedback and presenting a recommended term date model for approval.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. Term dates are determined by school employers following public consultation, as is set out in the Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999.
9. As the local authority is the employer for community, voluntary controlled and community special schools, any changes to agreed term time dates proposed by such schools must be agreed in advance by the Director of Children and Family Services.
10. Leicestershire's term dates were last reviewed by the Cabinet in September 2021 when it was agreed that they would follow the traditional Leicestershire pattern for the period autumn 2022 to summer 2027.

Resource Implications

11. There are no resource implications arising from this report. The cost of implementing the agreed term time pattern following approval by the Cabinet forms part of the existing Children and Family Services budget allocation.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

12. This report has been circulated to all Members of the County Council.

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PART B

Background

13. The local authority is responsible for setting school term dates for all maintained schools, which includes all community and voluntary controlled schools and community special schools, under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002.
14. In March 2026, there are 285 state-funded schools in Leicestershire. Of these, 24% are maintained, including 65 primary schools and 2 special schools. All other state-funded schools within the County, including all secondary schools, are academies.
15. Following the Deregulation Act 2015, academies are responsible for setting their own term dates. In practice, the majority of schools in Leicestershire tend to follow the pattern set by Leicestershire County Council, although some schools have moved away from the traditional Leicestershire term date pattern.
16. Schools in England must be open to pupils for 190 days in an academic year and 195 days for teachers.
17. Leicestershire County Council sets term date patterns for 190 days, providing all schools in the County, including those maintained by the Council, with the flexibility to identify five staff training days (often known as inset days) outside of the 190 days the school is open to pupils each academic year. While this approach is in contrast to neighbouring authorities who include suggested inset days in their term date patterns, it enables maintained schools to, where possible, align their inset days with other schools in their local area.
18. Home to school transport is provided on the days that schools are open to pupils.
19. The County Council works with Leicester City Council to set proposed dates for future academic years. This co-ordinated approach has been in place for a number of years and ensures that school term dates are aligned to minimise the impact on families and school transport providers working across both areas. Leicester City Council does include suggested inset days in their term date patterns and as such there are occasionally minor differences between the patterns.
20. The traditional term date pattern for Leicester and Leicestershire reflected the County's industrial heritage and included the *Leicestershire Workers' July Fortnight*, a county-wide holiday period introduced in 1965 where factories and businesses closed for the first two weeks of July to enable workers to avoid peak holiday periods. The July fortnight shutdown period is no longer widely observed as a result of the changing nature of employment and industry in the County.

21. Following the most recent term date consultation in 2021, Leicestershire maintained schools retained an early July finish to the school year, which is around two weeks earlier than some adjoining local authorities.

Proposed term date models for autumn 2027 to summer 2032

22. Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council have jointly developed three potential term date models for the five academic years between autumn 2027 and summer 2032. All proposed models provide for 190 school days. The proposed dates have also been shared with Rutland.
23. The proposed models for consultation include:
- **Model 1 (the Council's preferred option):** early annual autumn start, two-week autumn half term, more balanced terms, and a slightly shorter and earlier-than-average summer break.
 - **Model 2:** similar to model 1 but with a later summer break and a return to school date after the August bank holiday.
 - **Model 3:** keeps the historic pattern with a very early summer break but only a one-week autumn half term.
24. Many families like Leicestershire's traditional approach, which includes a very early summer break. This can mean cheaper family holidays, but some families face difficulties when children attending different schools in the same family, particularly around the County borders, follow different term time patterns.
25. The current 6-week summer break means schools in the County see a rise in child protection referrals; it also results in a loss of learning, and some families also struggle with the cost of childcare. The existing pattern includes terms of significantly different lengths, with a longer autumn term which children can struggle to manage, impacting their attendance, and shorter spring and summer terms.
26. The consultation will consider whether Leicestershire should keep the historic pattern or move to one of the alternative models listed above, which could help to address some of these concerns.
27. Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council have expressed a preference for model 1. This would continue to provide a relatively early summer break, maintaining one week of the traditional Leicestershire fortnight, enabling families to benefit from potentially cheaper holidays. A shorter summer holiday period may reduce the number of child protection referrals and will support families struggling with the cost of childcare and reduce learning loss over the break. This pattern will enable a two-week holiday during October, again potentially offering an opportunity for a cheaper or longer family holiday and ensuring more balanced term lengths throughout the rest of the school year.

28. All three options aim to ensure a similar number of days for the spring and summer terms. This means that while the Good Friday and Easter Monday bank holidays will be maintained and will be incorporated into the Easter holiday period, the two-week break may not always follow the traditional Easter pattern of the bank holidays being on the middle weekend of the two-week break. Depending on the timing of Easter, the Easter bank holidays may sometimes fall at the beginning or end of the holiday period.

Consultation

29. A public consultation will seek feedback on the three potential term date models to inform a recommended model for implementation. This will run from 20 April to 31 May 2026 and will be carried out primarily using an online survey, which will also be available in accessible print versions on request.
30. The consultation will be aligned with a consultation on term dates for Leicester City Council. Both councils will be consulting on the same term date models; however, the consultations will run independently to the same time scales. As the City Council proposes inset days as part of its published pattern, there may be some small differences.
31. Consultation feedback will be jointly reviewed by officers from both Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council following the closure of the consultation period. Recommendations will be presented to their respective decision-making bodies with the intent of aligning term dates across both areas. Ultimate decision-making will remain the responsibility of each local authority.
32. It is intended that the Cabinet will receive a further report at its meeting on 21 July 2026, including a recommended term date model for approval.

Equality Implications

33. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be completed as part of the consultation process to consider the impact of the proposed term date patterns on individuals with protected characteristics. There are no adverse equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Human Rights Implications

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

Partnership Implications

35. The proposed school term date patterns have been developed in partnership with Leicester City Council to ensure alignment across both areas.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 17 September 2021 “Leicestershire School Term-Time Patterns from Autumn 2022 To Summer 2027”

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s163631/Term%20Dates%20Consultation.pdf>

Appendices

Appendix A - Proposed school term date consultation document



Have your say on

Proposed School term and holiday dates from Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032

We want to hear your thoughts
on our proposed term dates

Online: leicestershire.gov.uk/term-dates-consultation

For general enquiries or comments about this consultation
please phone **0116 305 6324** or e-mail admissions@leics.gov.uk

Public consultation: We will be consulting on proposals for a
six week period from **20th April 2026 to midnight 31st May 2026.**

This consultation aims to seek your views on proposals for term time patterns in Leicestershire for the following proposed School term and holiday dates (from Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032).

Why does Leicestershire County Council get involved with this?

School term and holiday dates are determined by school employers. As Leicestershire County Council is the employer for community, voluntary-controlled, and community special schools in Leicestershire, it determines the term dates for these settings. Following the Deregulation Act 2015 academies have the power to set their own term time dates.

Leicestershire County Council's school term dates are currently set until the end of the 2026-27 academic year.

Do all community, voluntary-controlled, and community special schools in Leicestershire have to adopt the school term & holiday dates set by Leicestershire County Council?

In principle yes, but there is some flexibility to allow schools to amend term time patterns in-line with academies that have moved away from our patterns. In Leicestershire several secondary academies have partially moved away from our model. This can result in siblings in different schools having different term time patterns which causes difficulties with organising care arrangements and planning time off together as a family.

With this in mind, Leicestershire County Council has a recommended process that allows community schools to amend their term time patterns to fall in-line with the local secondary academy. The community school must request permission from Leicestershire County Council's Director of Children and Families to amend their term patterns to align with the local academy's.

Who determines the INSET days?

INSET (In-Service Education and Training) days are now responsibility of the Headteacher to set. Leicestershire County Council no longer proposes or sets these days. The term time patterns we are consulting on allow for 190 school days each year, however headteachers may choose to set inset days during the school year which would impact the individual term date pattern for their school.

What is Leicestershire's current school term pattern?

Traditionally, Leicestershire has always had a different school term pattern compared to surrounding areas and most other parts of the country. Compared to other areas, Leicestershire currently has:

- An early autumn break (autumn half term holiday)
- An early spring break (spring half term holiday)
- An early start to the summer holidays that follows the so-called traditional 'industrial July fortnight' pattern (where the summer break includes the last two working weeks of July)

Why consult?

To ensure schools and parents have sufficient notice about future school term dates, we now need to consult on term time patterns for the following five academic years (from Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032).

Previous consultations that included opportunities to align school terms with surrounding areas have confirmed Leicestershire's unique pattern is popular with the majority of parents. The pattern can however also cause issues for some parents and teachers, in particular when children in a single family attend schools with different term patterns or where teachers work at schools with different term patterns than those of the school attended by their children.

Leicestershire County Council therefore wants to consult parents, teachers and local residents on their preference: Should we maintain the current historic pattern of school term dates? Or align our school terms with other patterns in the region?

Working in partnership with us, Leicester City Council will also be running a consultation on the City term patterns using a very similar set of dates. This collaboration aims to improve outcomes for all those affected by the school term dates in the area and will seek to align dates across both Council areas where possible. The City Council does propose inset days as part of their term date pattern and in some cases these may not entirely align with the decisions taken by individual headteachers in Leicestershire on the timing of inset days.

The options in more detail

We have developed three different term time proposals for 2027 – 2032 that we welcome your feedback on. These three different proposals attempt to meet the range of different needs in the county. These needs include trying to reduce term time holidays by having early breaks and balancing the length of terms to try to reduce staff and student sickness. Overall, we aim to improve outcomes for Leicestershire children.

The three options proposed in this consultation are all based on the following key principles and aims.

Principles:

- The requirement to have 380 sessions (190 school days) during a school year;
- To ensure school holidays take into consideration Christian religious dates to allow families to observe religious occasions such as Christmas and Easter;
- Where possible, national bank holidays have been incorporated into school holidays;
- Where possible to try and aim for a summer break of more than a minimum of four weeks;
- To offer at least two options, that offer a two-week autumn half term to allow for a shorter autumn term;
- To offer one historic option.

Aims:

- To offer a range of Autumn half-term options;
- To offer options that provide a more balanced term length throughout the year compared to the current pattern;
- To offer a range of Summer break options;
- To consider Leicestershire term times alongside neighbouring local authorities.

Leicestershire preferred option is Proposal 1.

The key differences between the three options are:

Proposal 1 (Leicestershire's preferred option)

- An annual fixed autumn term start day (i.e. Wednesday before the August Bank holiday)
- A two-week Autumn half-term to reduce the length of such a long term
- Where possible to balance the Easter break between spring term and the summer term, meaning the Easter bank holiday may sometimes fall at the beginning or end of the 2 week Easter break rather than traditionally falling on the middle weekend
- An early start to the summer break (at least 1 week earlier than neighbouring areas)

Proposal 2

- An annual fixed autumn term start day (i.e. Tuesday after the August Bank holiday)
- A two-week Autumn half-term to reduce the length of such a long term
- Where possible to balance the Easter break between spring term and the summer term, meaning the Easter bank holiday may sometimes fall at the beginning or end of the 2 week Easter break rather than traditionally falling on the middle weekend
- A later start to the summer break

Proposal 3

- An annual fixed autumn term start day (i.e. Wednesday before the August Bank holiday)
- To continue with a one-week Autumn half-term
- Where possible to balance the Easter break between spring term and the summer term, meaning the Easter bank holiday may sometimes fall at the beginning or end of the 2 week Easter break rather than traditionally falling on the middle weekend
- To continue with a very early summer break

	PROS	CONS
Proposal 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic annual autumn start • Two-week autumn half term break • Shorter autumn term • All terms are more balanced across the whole year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slightly later start to the summer break
Proposal 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slightly later autumn start • Two-week autumn half term break • Shorter autumn term • All terms are more balanced across the whole year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Later start to the summer break
Proposal 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic annual autumn start • Very early start to summer break • All terms are more balanced across the whole year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one-week autumn half term break • Longer autumn term

Proposals for academic year 2027/28

	Proposal 1 Leicestershire's preferred option	Proposal 2	Proposal 3	
Autumn term	Aug Sep Oct	Schools open Wednesday 25 August until Friday 15 October 2027 (Bank Holiday Monday 30 August)	Schools open Tuesday 31 August until Friday 15 October 2027 (Bank Holiday Monday 30 August)	Schools open Wednesday 25 August until Friday 22 October 2027 (Bank Holiday Monday 30 August)
		Half-term: Monday 18 – Friday 29 October 2027	Half-term: Monday 18 – Friday 29 October 2027	Half-term: Monday 25 – Friday 29 October 2027
	Nov Dec	Schools open Monday 1 November until Friday 17 December 2027	Schools open Monday 1 November until Friday 17 December 2027	Schools open Monday 1 November until Friday 17 December 2027
	Jan Christmas holiday: Monday 20 December 2027 – Monday 3 January 2028 (Bank Holiday Monday 3 January)			
Spring term	Feb	Schools open Tuesday 4 January until Friday 18 February 2028	Schools open Tuesday 4 January until Friday 18 February 2028	Schools open Tuesday 4 January until Friday 18 February 2028
		Half-term: Monday 21 – Friday 25 February 2028		
	Mar Apr	Schools open Monday 28 February until Friday 7 April 2028	Schools open Monday 28 February until Friday 7 April 2028	Schools open Monday 28 February until Friday 7 April 2028
	Easter holiday: Monday 10 – Friday 21 April 2028			
Summer term	May	Schools open Monday 24 April until Friday 26 May 2028 (Bank Holiday Monday 1 May)	Schools open Monday 24 April until Friday 26 May 2028 (Bank Holiday Monday 1 May)	Schools open Monday 24 April until Friday 26 May 2028 (Bank Holiday Monday 1 May)
	Jun	Half-term: Monday 29 May – Friday 2 June 2028 (Bank Holiday Monday 29 May)		
	Jul	Schools open Monday 5 June until Friday 14 July 2028	Schools open Monday 5 June until Wednesday 19 July 2028	Schools open Monday 5 June until Friday 7 July 2028
	Aug	Summer holiday: Monday 17 July – Tuesday 22 August 2028	Summer holiday: Thursday 20 July – Monday 28 August 2028	Summer holiday: Monday 10 July – Tuesday 22 August 2028
	Schools open Wednesday 23 August (Bank Holiday Monday 28 August)	Schools open Tuesday 29 August (Bank Holiday Monday 28 August)	Schools open Wednesday 23 August (Bank Holiday Monday 28 August)	

NOTE: Five inset days need to set by school. The Local Authority no-longer set inset days.

Proposals for academic year 2028/29

	Proposal 1 Leicestershire's preferred option	Proposal 2	Proposal 3	
Autumn term	Aug	Schools open Wednesday 23 August until Friday 13 October 2028 (Bank Holiday Monday 28 August)	Schools open Tuesday 29 August until Friday 20 October 2028 (Bank Holiday Monday 28 August)	Schools open Wednesday 23 August until Friday 20 October 2028 (Bank Holiday Monday 28 August)
	Sep			
	Oct	Half-term: Monday 16 – Friday 27 October 2028	Half-term: Monday 23 – Friday 3 November 2028	Half-term: Monday 23 – Friday 27 October 2028
	Nov			
	Dec	Schools open Monday 30 October until Friday 15 December 2028	Schools open Monday 6 November until Friday 15 December 2028	Schools open Monday 30 October until Friday 15 December 2028
Jan	Christmas holiday: Monday 18 December 2028 – Monday 1 January 2029 (Bank Holiday Monday 1 January)			
Spring term	Feb	Schools open Tuesday 2 January until Friday 9 February 2029	Schools open Tuesday 2 January until Friday 9 February 2029	Schools open Tuesday 2 January until Friday 9 February 2029
	Mar	Half-term: Monday 12 – Friday 16 February 2029		
	Mar	Schools open Monday 19 February until Friday 23 March 2029	Schools open Monday 19 February until Friday 23 March 2029	Schools open Monday 19 February until Friday 23 March 2029
Summer term	Easter holiday: Monday 26 March – Friday 6 April 2029			
	May	Schools open Monday 9 April until Friday 25 May 2029 (Bank Holiday Monday 7 May)	Schools open Monday 9 April until Friday 25 May 2029 (Bank Holiday Monday 7 May)	Schools open Monday 9 April until Friday 25 May 2029 (Bank Holiday Monday 7 May)
	Jun	Half-term: Monday 28 May – Friday 1 June 2029 (Bank Holiday Monday 28 May)		
	Jul	Schools open Monday 4 June until Friday 13 July 2029	Schools open Monday 4 June until Wednesday 18 July 2029	Schools open Monday 4 June until Friday 6 July 2029
	Aug	Summer holiday: Monday 16 July – Tuesday 21 August 2029	Summer holiday: Thursday 19 July – Monday 27 August 2029	Summer holiday: Monday 9 July – Tuesday 21 August 2029
Aug	Schools open Wednesday 22 August (Bank Holiday Monday 27 August)	Schools open Tuesday 28 August (Bank Holiday Monday 27 August)	Schools open Wednesday 22 August (Bank Holiday Monday 27 August)	

NOTE: Five inset days need to set by school. The Local Authority no-longer set inset days.

Proposals for academic year 2029/30

	Proposal 1 Leicestershire's preferred option	Proposal 2	Proposal 3	
Autumn term	Aug Sep Oct	Schools open Wednesday 22 August until Friday 12 October 2029 (Bank Holiday Monday 27 August)	Schools open Tuesday 28 August until Friday 19 October 2029 (Bank Holiday Monday 27 August)	Schools open Wednesday 22 August until Friday 19 October 2029 (Bank Holiday Monday 27 August)
		Half-term: Monday 15 – Friday 26 October 2029	Half-term: Monday 22 – Friday 2 November 2029	Half-term: Monday 22 – Friday 26 October 2029
	Nov Dec	Schools open Monday 29 October until Friday 21 December 2029	Schools open Monday 5 November until Friday 21 December 2029	Schools open Monday 29 October until Friday 21 December 2029
	Christmas holiday: Monday 24 December 2029 – Friday 4 January 2030 (Bank Holiday Tuesday 1 January)			
Spring term	Feb	Schools open Monday 7 January until Friday 15 February 2030	Schools open Monday 7 January until Friday 15 February 2030	Schools open Monday 7 January until Friday 15 February 2030
		Half-term: Monday 18 – Friday 22 February 2030		
	Mar Apr	Schools open Monday 25 February until Friday 5 April 2030	Schools open Monday 25 February until Friday 5 April 2030	Schools open Monday 25 February until Friday 5 April 2030
	Easter holiday: Monday 8 – Monday 22 April 2030			
Summer term	May	Schools open Tuesday 23 April until Friday 24 May 2030 (Bank Holiday Monday 6 May)	Schools open Tuesday 23 April until Friday 24 May 2030 (Bank Holiday Monday 6 May)	Schools open Tuesday 23 April until Friday 24 May 2030 (Bank Holiday Monday 6 May)
		Half-term: Monday 27 – Friday 31 May 2030 (Bank Holiday Monday 27 May)		
	Jun Jul	Schools open Monday 3 June until Friday 12 July 2030	Schools open Monday 3 June until Wednesday 17 July 2030	Schools open Monday 3 June until Friday 5 July 2030
Aug	Summer holiday: Monday 15 July – Tuesday 20 August 2030	Summer holiday: Thursday 18 July – Monday 26 August 2030	Summer holiday: Monday 8 July – Wednesday 21 August 2030	
	Schools open Wednesday 21 August (Bank Holiday Monday 26 August)	Schools open Tuesday 27 August (Bank Holiday Monday 26 August)	Schools open Thursday 22 August (Bank Holiday Monday 26 August)	

NOTE: Five inset days need to set by school. The Local Authority no-longer set inset days.

Proposals for academic year 2030/31

	Proposal 1 Leicestershire's preferred option	Proposal 2	Proposal 3	
Autumn term	Aug Sep	Schools open Wednesday 21 August until Friday 11 October 2030 (Bank Holiday Monday 26 August)	Schools open Tuesday 27 August until Friday 18 October 2030 (Bank Holiday Monday 26 August)	Schools open Wednesday 21 August until Friday 18 October 2030 (Bank Holiday Monday 26 August)
	Oct	Half-term: Monday 14 – Friday 25 October 2030	Half-term: Monday 21 October – Friday 1 November 2030	Half-term: Monday 21 – Friday 25 October 2030
	Nov	Schools open Monday 28 October until Friday 20 December 2030	Schools open Monday 4 November until Friday 20 December 2030	Schools open Monday 28 October until Friday 20 December 2030
	Dec			
	Jan Christmas holiday: 23 December 2030 – 3 January 2031 (Bank Holiday Wednesday 1 January)			
Spring term	Feb	Schools open Monday 6 January until Friday 14 February 2031	Schools open Monday 6 January until Friday 14 February 2031	Schools open Monday 6 January until Friday 14 February 2031
	Mar	Half-term: Monday 17 – Friday 21 Feb 2031		
	Apr	Schools open Monday 24 February until Friday 4 April 2031	Schools open Monday 24 February until Friday 4 April 2031	Schools open Monday 24 February until Friday 4 April 2031
	May	Easter holiday: Monday 7 – Friday 18 April 2031		
Summer term	May	Schools open Monday 21 April until Friday 23 May 2031 (Bank Holiday Monday 5 May)	Schools open Monday 21 April until Friday 23 May 2031 (Bank Holiday Monday 5 May)	Schools open Monday 21 April until Friday 23 May 2031 (Bank Holiday Monday 5 May)
	Jun	Half-term: Monday 26 – Friday 30 May 2031 (Bank Holiday Monday 26 May)		
	Jul	Schools open Monday 2 June until Thursday 10 July 2031	Schools open Monday 2 June until Tuesday 22 July 2031	Schools open Monday 2 June until Friday 4 July 2031
	Aug	Summer holiday: Friday 11 July – Tuesday 19 August 2031	Summer holiday: Wednesday 23 July – Monday 25 August 2031	Summer holiday: Monday 7 July – Tuesday 19 August 2031
	Schools open Wednesday 20 August (Bank Holiday Monday 25 August)	Schools open Tuesday 26 August (Bank Holiday Monday 25 August)	Schools open Wednesday 20 August (Bank Holiday Monday 25 August)	

NOTE: Five inset days need to set by school. The Local Authority no-longer set inset days.

Proposals for academic year 2031/32

	Proposal 1 Leicestershire's preferred option	Proposal 2	Proposal 3		
Autumn term	Aug	Schools open Tuesday 26 August until Friday 17 October 2031 (Bank Holiday Monday 25 August)	Schools open Wednesday 20 August until Friday 17 October 2031 (Bank Holiday Monday 25 August)		
	Sep			Schools open Wednesday 20 August until Friday 10 October 2031 (Bank Holiday Monday 25 August)	
	Oct			Half-term: Monday 13 – Friday 24 October 2031	Half-term: Monday 20 – Friday 24 October 2031
	Nov			Schools open Monday 27 October until Friday 19 December 2031	Schools open Monday 27 October until Friday 19 December 2031
Spring term	Dec	Schools open Monday 3 November until Friday 19 December 2031	Schools open Monday 3 November until Friday 19 December 2031		
	Christmas holiday: Monday 22 December 2031 – Friday 2 January 2032 (Bank Holiday Thursday 1 January)				
	Jan	Schools open Monday 5 January until Friday 13 February 2032	Schools open Monday 5 January until Friday 13 February 2032		
	Feb	Schools open Monday 5 January until Friday 13 February 2032	Schools open Monday 5 January until Friday 13 February 2032		
Summer term	Half-term: Monday 16 – Friday 20 February 2032				
	Mar	Schools open Monday 23 February until Thursday 25 March 2032	Schools open Monday 23 February until Thursday 25 March 2032		
	Apr	Easter holiday: Friday 26 March – Friday 9 April 2032			
	May	Schools open Monday 12 April until Friday 28 May 2032 (Bank Holiday Monday 3 May)	Schools open Monday 12 April until Friday 28 May 2032 (Bank Holiday Monday 3 May)		
Summer term	Half-term: Monday 31 May – Friday 4 June 2032 (Bank Holiday Monday 31 May)				
	Jun	Schools open Monday 7 June until Friday 9 July 2032	Schools open Monday 7 June until Wednesday 14 July 2032		
	Jul	Schools open Monday 7 June until Friday 2 July 2032	Schools open Monday 7 June until Friday 2 July 2032		
Aug	Summer holiday: Monday 12 July 2032	Summer holiday: Thursday 15 July 2032	Summer holiday: Monday 5 July 2032		

NOTE: Five inset days need to set by school. The Local Authority no-longer set inset days.

Days per term Summary

		Option 1 Number of School Days (Leicestershire's Preferred Option)			Option 2 Number of School Days			Option 3 Number of School Days		
		HALF TERM		FULL TERM	HALF TERM		FULL TERM	HALF TERM		FULL TERM
Autumn 2027 to Summer 2028	1	37 days	Autumn	1	34 days	Autumn	1	42 days	Autumn	
	2	35 days	72 days	2	35 days	69 days	2	35 days	77 days	
	3	34 days	Spring	3	34 days	Spring	3	34 days	Spring	
	4	30 days	64 days	4	30 days	64 days	4	30 days	64 days	
	5	24 days	Summer	5	24 days	Summer	5	24 days	Summer	
	6	30 days	54 days	6	33 days	57 days	6	25 days	49 days	
		TOTAL	190		TOTAL	190		TOTAL	190	

		Option 1 Number of School Days (Leicestershire's Preferred Option)			Option 2 Number of School Days			Option 3 Number of School Days		
		HALF TERM		FULL TERM	HALF TERM		FULL TERM	HALF TERM		FULL TERM
Autumn 2028 to Summer 2029	1	37 days	Autumn	1	39 days	Autumn	1	42 days	Autumn	
	2	35 days	72 days	2	30 days	69 days	2	35 days	77 days	
	3	29 days	Spring	3	29 days	Spring	3	29 days	Spring	
	4	25 days	54 days	4	25 days	54 days	4	25 days	54 days	
	5	34 days	Summer	5	34 days	Summer	5	34 days	Summer	
	6	30 days	64 days	6	33 days	67 days	6	25 days	59 days	
		TOTAL	190		TOTAL	190		TOTAL	190	

		Option 1 Number of School Days (Leicestershire's Preferred Option)			Option 2 Number of School Days			Option 3 Number of School Days		
		HALF TERM		FULL TERM	HALF TERM		FULL TERM	HALF TERM		FULL TERM
Autumn 2029 to Summer 2030	1	37 days	Autumn	1	39 days	Autumn	1	42 days	Autumn	
	2	40 days	77 days	2	35 days	74 days	2	40 days	82 days	
	3	30 days	Spring	3	30 days	Spring	3	30 days	Spring	
	4	30 days	60 days	4	30 days	60 days	4	30 days	60 days	
	5	23 days	Summer	5	23 days	Summer	5	23 days	Summer	
	6	30 days	53 days	6	33 days	56 days	6	25 days	48 days	
		TOTAL	190		TOTAL	190		TOTAL	190	

		Option 1 Number of School Days (Leicestershire's Preferred Option)			Option 2 Number of School Days			Option 3 Number of School Days		
		HALF TERM		FULL TERM	HALF TERM		FULL TERM	HALF TERM		FULL TERM
Autumn 2030 to Summer 2031	1	37 days	Autumn	1	39 days	Autumn	1	41 days	Autumn	
	2	40 days	77 days	2	35 days	74 days	2	40 days	81 days	
	3	30 days	Spring	3	30 days	Spring	3	30 days	Spring	
	4	30 days	60 days	4	30 days	60 days	4	30 days	60 days	
	5	24 days	Summer	5	24 days	Summer	5	24 days	Summer	
	6	29 days	53 days	6	32 days	56 days	6	25 days	49 days	
		TOTAL 190	TOTAL 190		TOTAL 190	TOTAL 190		TOTAL 190	TOTAL 190	

		Option 1 Number of School Days (Leicestershire's Preferred Option)			Option 2 Number of School Days			Option 3 Number of School Days		
		HALF TERM		FULL TERM	HALF TERM		FULL TERM	HALF TERM		FULL TERM
Autumn 2031 to Summer 2032	1	37 days	Autumn	1	39 days	Autumn	1	42 days	Autumn	
	2	40 days	77 days	2	35 days	74 days	2	40 days	82 days	
	3	30 days	Spring	3	30 days	Spring	3	30 days	Spring	
	4	24 days	54 days	4	24 days	54 days	4	24 days	54 days	
	5	34 days	Summer	5	34 days	Summer	5	34 days	Summer	
	6	25 days	59 days	6	28 days	62 days	6	20 days	54 days	
		TOTAL 190	TOTAL 190		TOTAL 190	TOTAL 190		TOTAL 190	TOTAL 190	

How the consultation will work

The consultation will run from **Monday 20th April to midnight on 31st May 2026**.

To submit your views, please fill out the consultation survey and make sure it reaches us by **midnight on 31st May** at the latest. The survey is available online at **www.leicestershire.gov.uk/term-dates-consultation**.

Paper copies of the survey are available on request by calling **0116 305 6324**.

What happens next?

Following the consultation, we will consider all the responses received and a report, including a recommendation for a final proposed school term & holiday pattern will be taken to the council's Cabinet for their consideration in Summer 2026.

The different proposals and your suggestions will be put to Cabinet later this year. The pattern that is decided upon by the Cabinet will come into effect from Autumn 2027.

The decision will be published on our school admissions pages

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools-colleges-and-academies/school-admissions and on our consultation pages www.leicestershire.gov.uk/have-your-say/previous-consultations

The Cabinet report will also be publicly available.

You can view the latest information in a number of ways

Visit us online at leicestershire.gov.uk/term-dates-consultation

Our web pages will be kept up-to-date with the latest information and developments. You'll also be able to access the survey here.

Send an email to admissions@leics.gov.uk to register for the latest news and updates.

Follow us [@leicscountyhall](https://twitter.com/leicscountyhall) for general updates from the council, including the developments on the budget.

Alternatively, you can telephone **0116 305 6324** to ask for information in printed or alternative formats.

જો આપ આ માહિતી આપની ભાષામાં સમજવામાં થોડી મદદ ઇચ્છતાં હો તો 0116 305 6324 નંબર પર ફોન કરશો અને અમે આપને મદદ કરવા વ્યવસ્થા કરીશું.

નેકર તુહાનું ઇસ જાણકારી નું સમજાવ વિષ ભુષ મદદ ચાહીદી હૈ તાં વિરખા કરકે 0116 305 6324 નંબર તે ફોન કરે અતે અસીં તુહાડી મદદ લઈ વિસે દા પુષ્પ વર દવાંગી।

এই তথ্য নিজের ভাষায় বুঝার জন্য আপনার যদি কোন সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয়, তবে 0116 305 6324 এই নম্বরে ফোন করলে আমরা উপযুক্ত ব্যক্তির ব্যবস্থা করবো।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات سمجھنے میں کچھ مدد درکار ہے تو براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر کال کریں اور ہم آپ کی مدد کے لئے کسی کا انتظام کر دیں گے۔
0116 305 6324

假如閣下需要幫助，用你的語言去明白這些資訊，請致電 0116 305 6324，我們會安排有關人員為你提供幫助。

Jeżeli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tej informacji w Twoim języku, zadzwoń pod numer 0116 305 6324, a my Ci dopomożemy.

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**CABINET – 24 MARCH 2026****BELONGING IN EDUCATION STRATEGY 2026-2029****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to consult on the 'Belonging in Education' Strategy, which will aim to support all children and young people to have a strong sense of belonging in their school and provision environment as well as in their community. An outline of the Strategy is attached as Appendix A to this report and sets out the proposed approach to the consultation.
2. The Strategy will serve as the overarching strategic framework and direction for the education system within Leicestershire, working together to ensure a commitment to belonging, where all children and young people feel a sense of belonging in education, so they can live their best lives and be the authors of their own life stories.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that:
 - a) the draft Belonging in Education Strategy be approved for consultation;
 - b) a further report be submitted to the Cabinet in July 2026 presenting the outcomes of the consultation and the final Strategy for approval.

Reasons for Recommendation

4. The Strategy establishes a robust strategic framework designed to align all related policies, practices, and education improvement initiatives. It articulates clear aims and objectives for educational leaders and the broader Children's Partnership across Leicestershire to enhance outcomes for all children and young people. This Strategy has been developed collaboratively, particularly with schools, since the beginning of the academic year and much of the strategic direction and themes are reflected in the recently published White Paper, 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving'. A public consultation on the

Strategy will help to validate that the identified priorities reflect the appropriate focus for future improvement efforts.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a report as part of the consultation process at its meeting on 2 June 2026.
6. It is intended that the Cabinet will receive a further report at its meeting on 21 July 2026 to detail feedback from the consultation exercise and to present the final Strategy for approval. Comments from the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be included within the final Cabinet report.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

7. One of the primary pieces of legislation regarding children and young people is the Children and Families Act 2014. This sets out the duties that local authorities and Integrated Care Boards must fulfil.
8. A key interdependency for the Strategy is improvements in attendance rates for all pupils. This aligns with the statutory guidance 'Working together to Improve School Attendance' (August 2024).
9. The Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (February 2025) establishes a statutory framework for children and young people accessing alternative provision. Those participating in alternative provision will be identified as a distinct group within the Belonging in Education Strategy cohort.
10. In February 2026, the Department for Education published the Education Reform White Paper, 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving', which aligns with the strategic vision of this strategy and the department. In Every Child Achieving and Thriving, belonging is a key strategic theme:
 - A core condition for learning and achievement
 - A key indicator of system health
 - A justice issue, especially for disadvantaged and SEND pupils
 - Something schools must actively build, measure and improve
 - Central to the government's vision of inclusive, high performing education
11. On 3 March 2026, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the delivery of the Building Education Services Together Plan, to improve the service offer and help address the budget deficit.
12. The Cabinet, on 17 June 2025, approved the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2028, after a consultation period. Both the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2028 and the draft Belonging in Education Strategy 2026-2029 are aimed at providing the framework for additional support.

Resource Implications

13. This Strategy provides the strategic framework and direction for the Education system within Leicestershire. Officers will develop an implementation plan, closely linked to the Government's recently published White Paper – Every Child Achieving and Thriving.
14. The Strategy sets out a shared commitment for the Children's Partnership to work together to ensure all children and young people feel a sense of belonging in their educational setting and in implementing the Government's White Paper. Like all authorities, the County Council continues to face increasing demand for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), with attendance continuing to be an issue, alongside suspensions and exclusions, in line with national figures. The Strategy will provide a strong strategic vision and framework to address these issues, with 'Belonging' as the key driver. The Strategy has a focus on how partners can work together to better meet the needs of all children and young people, adapt to variability in settings and help children and young people feel a sense of belonging.
15. The Strategy will be implemented within existing resources, supplemented by additional reform grant funding provided by the Department for Education Reform Grant, to support the implementation of the published White Paper.
16. The Director of Public Health, Law and Governance and the Director of Corporate Resources have been consulted on this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

17. This report has been circulated to all Members of the County Council.

Officer(s) to Contact

Tim Browne, Interim Director of Education, Inclusion & Additional Needs
Telephone: 0116 3057429
Email: Tim.Browne@leics.gov.uk

PART B

Background

18. The Belonging in Education Strategy 2026 to 2029 sets out the education vision and priorities for the County Council and its partners for children and young people aged 0-18 and 19-25 for those young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in Leicestershire.
19. It provides the overarching strategic framework and direction for the education system across Leicestershire 2026-2029. The Strategy has been developed in consultation with local area partners, parents and carers.
20. Through co-production, the Strategy identifies four key priority areas over the next three years. These are:
 - **Priority one** – Every Child and Young Person has a sense of belonging in the Education setting they attend
 - **Priority two** – Building Relationships as Foundations
 - **Priority three** – Schools and professionals ensure children and young people feel autonomy and the authors of their own life stories.
 - **Priority four** – Schools feel equipped to support, especially when a sense of belonging breaks down and can reach out for appropriate external support, when needed.
21. Implementation of the Strategy will be monitored by the 'Building Education Services Together' Programme Board and, once established, the 'SEND Reform Implementation Board'.
22. The Strategy is supported by a comprehensive work plan that specifies deliverables, outcomes for each priority area, and key implementation roles. Progress will be monitored through a robust performance management framework and reported into the governing boards outlined above. Reviews of progress against the deliverables and outcomes for each priority area will be undertaken regularly. Subsequent reports will be presented to the Children and Families Partnership.
23. Progress in implementing the Strategy will be communicated to key partners through existing feedback routes. Feedback from parents/carers and children/young people will be sought on an on-going basis.
24. All service areas within the Education, Inclusion and Additional Needs are aligned to the new Strategy and strategic direction outlined, ensuring future development work is in adherence to the strategic direction, as laid out within this Strategy.
25. An Easy Read version of the Strategy will be developed. This will be available to support the consultation period.

Consultation

26. Several workshops have been held with school leaders over this academic year. These were to examine the vision for the Strategy, to understand what would be useful to include and to develop the four priority areas.
27. The draft Strategy has been produced based on these conversations and shared with staff, parent/carer representatives and health colleagues. All feedback was gathered and the draft Strategy was updated to reflect these suggestions. This multi-agency feedback loop has been crucial to help shape the Strategy and ensure it is fit for purpose. In addition, schools have been able to provide the voice of the children and young people that they have gathered as part of this work.
28. A full public consultation on the Strategy will seek to confirm that the priorities identified within it are the right focus for improvement activity to be prioritised over the next three years.
29. It is proposed to hold a six-week consultation process on the Belonging in Education Strategy 2026-2029. This will be conducted primarily by using an online survey, which also be available in accessible print versions on request. Subject to the Cabinet's approval this will commence on 20 April 2026 until 1 June 2026.

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

30. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a report as part of the consultation process at its meeting on 2 June 2026.

Equality Implications

31. The development of the Strategy will have a positive impact on equality, diversity, and inclusion for people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and more widely. Improvements to partner services will support all children and young people in Leicestershire to thrive and feel a sense of belonging in the educational provision that they attend. This Strategy aims to deliver the Council's vision for all children to thrive, fulfil their potential, belong, and live their best lives within their communities. Improvements to service provision should also benefit the parents, carers and families of children and young people in Leicestershire.
32. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed on the Strategy and consultation approach which can be found at Appendix B. It concluded that the Strategy would have a positive impact for all protected groups and other communities which are of special interest to the Council. The EIA will be revised following the consultation and submitted to the Cabinet.

Human Rights Implications

33. The EIA concluded that the continued work of the Partnership would benefit all protected groups and is expected to have a positive impact.

Other Implications and Impact Assessments

34. The partnership implications of the Strategy are set out in paragraphs 19-22 of this report.

Background Papers

Report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 March 2026 Building Education Services Together: Programme Plan -

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s194972/Building%20Education%20Services%20Together%20Programme%20Plan%20-%20Children%20and%20Families%20OSC%20030326.pdf>

Appendices

Appendix A – Belonging in Education Strategy 2026-2029

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment

Leicestershire's Belonging in Education Strategy

Leicestershire is a place where children can build strong foundations; be safe and belong, enjoy and achieve



2026-2029



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Statement of Intent

In Leicestershire, partners work together to ensure there is a commitment to belonging. All our children and young people feel a sense of belonging in Education, so they can live their best lives.

Forward

Every day in Leicestershire, I see the extraordinary potential within our children and young people. Their curiosity, courage, and resilience remind us why education matters—not just as a pathway to achievement, but as a place where identity, confidence and hope are shaped. It is this belief in possibility that underpins *Leicestershire’s Belonging in Education Strategy 2026–2029*.

Belonging is powerful. When a child truly feels they belong—when they are seen, heard, valued and celebrated—everything changes. They take risks. They grow in confidence. They learn with greater purpose. They form relationships that anchor them through challenge. And they begin to imagine futures that feel within reach. Belonging is not a “nice to have”; it is the foundation on which lives are built.

This strategy represents a shared vision for a county where every child and young person has that foundation. It calls us to be bold, compassionate and united in our commitment to inclusion. It asks us to listen deeply to our children—because their voices show us the way. And it challenges us to work differently across schools, families, services and communities, so that no young person ever feels alone or overlooked within their educational journey.

What inspires me most is that this strategy is not built from theory alone, but from the hearts, experiences and contributions of those who know our system best—children and young people, parent carers, educators, and partners from across Leicestershire. It is a collective promise to stand with our children and young people, especially when they face barriers, and to create environments that lift them up rather than hold them back.

Together, we have the opportunity to shape an education system where belonging is woven into every interaction, every decision, every classroom and every relationship. A system where children walk through the school gates knowing: *This is a place for me. I matter here. I can be myself here. I can thrive here.*

My hope is that this strategy ignites our shared purpose and reminds us of the difference we can make—one child, one family, one school community at a time. Thank you to every partner who has contributed to its development and who continues to work tirelessly for our children and young people.



Let us move forward with ambition, compassion and unwavering belief in what is possible for the children of Leicestershire. Because when we do, belonging stops being an aspiration and becomes a lived, powerful reality - ensuing no-one is left behind – with life being about what each child or young person can be; not about where or how their journey began.

Tim Browne

Director of Education, Inclusion and Additional Needs

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Introduction

One of the most cited definitions of Belonging arrives from Goodenow and Grady, who term it as “the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment” (Goodenow & Grady, 1993, p. 80)

In Leicestershire we want all our children and young people to feel a sense of belonging in Education, so they can live their best lives and be the author of their own life stories.

When children start their educational journey, social communities have a powerful impact on shaping their future. Extensive national research (Allen, KA., 2025a, 2025b; Allen et al., 2018a, 2018b; Basarkod et al., 2024a, 2024b; Korpershoek et al., 2020) shows that children and young people who feel safe, valued, and cared for at school are more likely to achieve academically, build strong social connections, and develop a confident sense of belonging. In contrast, those who feel out of place often face unnecessary learning barriers and may experience significant feelings of alienation. The [Schools Week](#) article (2026) summarises why belonging is important and the cultural shift that needs to occur; *“Children show us belonging is simple. If we see them, hear them, know them and accept them for who they are, everything changes. And when that happens, they try, they learn, and they come back tomorrow. Not because of a sticker chart. But because they belong.”*

In the current climate, we have a responsibility to work together as partners to support children to gain a sense of belonging through inclusive practice and adapting our responses to new challenges. Recent research showed that 40% of children and young people do not feel a sense of belonging at school, and 15-year-olds in the UK report one of the lowest levels of life satisfaction across the 38 countries that form the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Ingram et al, 2023)

To develop a sense of belonging in school, children and young people need to feel accepted and valued for who they are and to be offered a curriculum that is accessible and designed to help all children and young people successfully learn. All our schools and educational settings need to work relentlessly to establish and maintain a community that has the determination and flexibility to ensure every



young person can thrive. We recognise that this work is particularly paramount for those with certain protected characteristics, which may include those with additional needs (Equality Act, 2010). In addition to the protected characteristics, it is highly likely also to benefit those that have experiences trauma or Adverse Childhood Experiences, as belonging is so integral to attachment theory as a strong social work theory that sets the foundations for positive relationships, health and wellbeing.

Leicestershire's Belonging in Education Strategy sets out how we aim to achieve this goal for every child and young person in all educational settings across Leicestershire.

This strategy is the framework to guide action planning at both a strategic Local Authority level and at an individual educational setting level. As such, the establishment of this strategy has been born out of a range of work with partners, including:

- Children and young people
- Parent and carers
- Schools
- Post 16 institutions
- Early Years providers
- Professional from across the system, including health, social care and the 'Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland SEND and Inclusion Alliance'

Why is Belonging Important?

The belonging in education strategy is embedded in Leicestershire's Trauma-Informed Relationship Policy. The policy is entrenched in strong relationships being the foundation of a successful school, where all learners are valued, included and respected

As school and educational providers are fundamentally institutions; their impact depends on those who form their communities—the students, their families, staff members, and leadership. The approaches leaders take in thinking, decision-making, action, reflection, and application of expertise to develop strategic directions are vital to the well-being of both students and adults within the school environment.

Belonging is underpinned by how children and young people feel, and is often unseen, so ensuring opportunities to gather children and young people voice is paramount.

Key aspects of belonging in education include:

- **Feeling accepted and respected:** children and young people feel valued for who they are and respected holistically.
- **Feeling included:** children and young people feel like they are part of the school and wider community and that their contributions are valued.
- **Feeling supported:** children and young people feel that they have the resources and support they need to succeed academically and socially.
- **Feeling safe:** children feel physically and emotionally safe in the school environment.
- **Strong relationships:** positive relationships with teachers and peers are crucial for fostering a sense of belonging.

Using experiences of other Local Areas and the vast array of academic reading (Allen et al., 2021; Chenge et al., 2021; Solomon, 1996), we understand that enabling a child and young person to feel a sense of belonging is likely to improve:

- **Academic achievement.** A sense of belonging can positively impact student motivation, academic performance, and retention.



- **Social-emotional development.** Belonging can promote positive self-esteem, reduced anxiety, and improved mental health.
- **Increase attendance and presence.** Children and young people who feel a sense of belonging are more likely to attend school regularly and stay in school.
- **Positive classroom environment.** Belonging can create a more engaging and supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable taking risks and expressing themselves.

Fostering belonging in educational settings involves building strong relationships between staff and children and young people and facilitating opportunities for peer and friendships to blossom. Establishing a safe and inclusive environment is essential to ensure that every child and young person feels physically and emotionally secure, with their voices heard and respected.

Providing access to academic and social resources further supports children and young people throughout their educational journey. It is also important to celebrate diversity by recognising and appreciating the unique abilities and perspectives that each individual contributes.



Promoting positive behaviour entails supporting and acknowledging constructive actions while addressing challenges in a thoughtful manner. To cultivate a sense of belonging across the entire educational community, institutions should embed relationship-centred policies, assist children and young people struggling with attendance in forming trusting relationships with staff, and maintain consistent routines that reinforce safety and support.

Encouraging participation in activities outside the classroom such as sports or the arts, in addition to offering students the opportunity to propose new clubs, can further

enhance engagement. Constructive peer relationships can be promoted through mentoring and collaborative group work, while diversity may be honoured through multicultural events, inclusive curricula, and the display of diverse materials within classrooms.



When fostering a sense of belonging, leaders and staff are encouraged to consider whether all individuals, including children and young people, flourish in every setting or if some may face challenges or feel overlooked within certain areas of the provision. If such issues exist, it is imperative for leaders and staff to identify and implement changes that ensure belonging becomes an intentional practice rather than an incidental outcome.

Ofsted Inspection Framework

The sense of belonging is explicitly part of the new Ofsted inspection framework (November 2025), which focuses on the refrain of 'Achieve, Belong, Thrive'; the triad emphasising that academic achievement, attendance and behaviour is tied to feeling valued and connected to the school community.

For the first time, belonging isn't implied — it's explicitly part of the inspection lens. Inspectors will consider whether pupils:

- feel valued
- feel safe
- feel part of the community
- contribute and are heard

Inspectors, under the new framework, will look for evidence of a culture of belonging, not just written policies. This includes analysing pupil/staff voice, attendance data, and how well schools tackle barriers for, SEND, or, disadvantaged, pupils.



Vision, Ethos and Principles



Our Priorities

Working in partnership with schools, professionals, parent and carers and children and young people, we will bring to life the Vision, Ethos and Principles, through four key priority areas. These priorities will help to shape how we can work together to embed a sense of belonging in education for all children and young people. These priorities were born out of co-production with partners.

Priority 1

Every Child and Young Person has a sense of belonging in the Education setting they attend

Priority 2

Building Relationships as Foundations



**Belonging
Priorities**

Priority 4

Schools feel equipped to support, especially when a sense of belonging breaks down and can reach out for appropriate external support, when needed.

Priority 3

Schools and professionals ensure children and young people feel autonomy and the authors of their own life stories.

Priority 1

Every Child and Young Person has a sense of belonging in the education settings they attend.

As dictated by the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC), Article 28, every child and young person is entitled to an education and for this education to be positive.

The national direction of travel, as detailed in the Education Reforms '[Every Child Achieving and Thriving](#)' (2026), emphasises that children and young people should, wherever possible, be educated as part of their community in their local mainstream school or setting.

Establishing a supportive learning environment in which children and young people feel secure and valued helps to address foundational needs, including those related to belonging and self-esteem. When this is achieved, children and young people can be the best versions of themselves and live their best lives.

Deliverables:

- The Local Authority will provide a self-assessment for all educational provisions to understand their provision and support for those that may need additional interventions within their environment. This will be in place from the start of the 26/27 academic year and will be evidenced within educational providers Self Evaluation Framework (SEF), depicting how provisions know children and young people belong, focussing on opportunities to capture the voice.
- The Local Authority will work with school and educational leaders to develop an agreed suite of assessments for use in schools and settings to assess the needs of young people.
- Schools in Leicestershire will work with partners to reduce in year transfers wherever possible. This will be monitored from 26/27 academic year.
- School Leaders and Local Authority will work collaboratively to develop a robust approach to the practice of part-time timetables to ensure appropriate and time-limited use to support entitlement to full time education. Part-time timetables will be supportively explored with parent carers before agreement.
- The Local Authority will introduce and implement 'Universal Design for Learning', as a practical tool to support belonging in educational provisions.

Outcomes:

- Reduction in fixed term exclusions and permanent exclusions.
- Reduction of in year transfers between schools.
- Increase number of children in school full time.

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Priority 2

Building relationships as foundations.

Maslow (1943), highlights belonging as a fundamental need to be fulfilled. Positive relationships within schools and communities and between local areas ensures effective support for all children and young people.

Humans have a core social motive to engage in positive interactions with others. These interactions should occur within a framework of mutual consideration and respect (Baumeister et al, 1995). As a system we need to work collaboratively to get it right for children and young people.

Deliverables:

- All system partners will actively oppose discrimination, ensuring all voices are heard and acted upon. This work continues to be a priority.
- School leaders will develop a whole school training approach which builds on positive relationships, so every child and young person feels like they have a 'champion'.
- Build confidence and collaboration amongst all system partners.
- School staff will engage in open and transparent communications with parent carers, ensuring effective collaboration to improve children and young people's outcomes and lived experience.
- School leaders will ensure a quality supervision framework is in place to supervise all staff, to reflect on supportive networks. Staff should feel respected and valued, demonstrating long lasting concern for each other's welfare.
- Relationships between all staff and children and young people is embedded in the expectation that staff prioritise building relationships and restoring relationships where those have broken down.

Outcomes:

- Collaboration among partners and with families improve.
- Leicestershire maintains a transparent communication strategy for consistent messaging on inclusion and education.
- Families trust that the education system works together in their best interests.

- Voice and Lived Experience is collated meaningfully at every opportunity to understanding children and young people and their family's sense of belonging and to shape future developments.

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Priority 3

Schools and professionals ensure children and young people feel autonomy and the authors of their own life stories.

Fostering a sense of autonomy can not only build independence for children and young people, but it also pushes children and young people to understand that their choices and actions have outcomes, that they are responsible for. Autonomy has direct routes into fostering a sense of belonging for both children and young people and for educational providers (Ryan and Deci, 2000, 2017).

Learning, understanding, and expressing independence are significant steps to feel autonomous. Professionals must continue to work with and listen to the educational providers as they too need to have a sense of autonomy to be able to support all children and young people to feel a sense of belonging.

Deliverables:

- All partners will develop a co-ordinated approach to working across families and children and young people, to understand family networks and engage families to support.
- The Local Authority will develop and, with support from school leaders, will embed a community-based approach, using community resources to support interventions in schools and settings.
- All partners will develop language and confidence from an early stage, including appropriately gathering voice so children and young people feel seen and heard and that their opinions matter.
- School leaders will develop sharing of best practice between phases and key transition points, with a particular focus on readiness for the next phase and mirroring successful learnings from the previous phase.
- School leaders will develop better transfer of key information between services and educational providers to ensure, wherever possible, families and children and young people are having to tell their story once.

Outcomes:

- There is evidence in educational plans of being responsive to child and young person voice and the impact of this voice is clearly both referenced and measured.

- Ensure families and family networks are involved, wherever appropriate, to help support holistically and to support that sense of autonomy
- Have a robust sharing agreement across professionals and phases of Education
- 'Shaping SEND Futures' is used as a community-based support and practice from across the locality.

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Priority 4

Schools feel equipped to offer timely support, especially when a sense of belonging breaks down and can reach out for appropriate external support, when needed.

While most priorities focus on helping young people succeed in mainstream schools, there is a small group whose sense of belonging breaks down or whose needs require more support than a mainstream setting may be able to provide without holistic support. It's important to make sure that high-quality, suitable support is available for schools, and that appropriate alternatives are offered when necessary.

Appropriate external support can include Early Years Inclusion and Childcare services, Virtual Schools, Inclusion services, Public Health, Health support through Leicestershire Partnership Trust, teaching school hubs, English/maths hubs, governor support, Education Effectiveness, Specialist Teaching services, Educational Psychology and Oakfield outreach, amongst others.

Deliverables:

- Alternative Specialist Task Force to be in place, to support at first signs of escalation. This may be through existing forums such as Oakfield or more locality-based support models. This aligns to 'Experts at Hand' model, as detailed in the Education Reforms: Every Child Achieving and Thriving.
- Review and develop alternative provision for those with high levels of anxiety who struggle in a mainstream environment.
- Deliver a bespoke offer, which may include the use of alternative provision (AP), to reduce escalations.
- Carefully consider how, with the use of alternative provision, children and young people can still feel a sense of belonging, especially for those arrangements that are not hybrid. Schools to use a range of techniques through, for example, letters, videos and regular contact to bridge the gap for children and young people accessing an AP and then focussing on rebuilding their sense of belonging on return back to school environment.
- Facilitate and invite schools to share approaches to Alternative Provisions, with opportunities to describe their provisions under defined headings and to facilitate sharing of best practice through learning visits between schools.

- The Local Authority have a commitment to listen to schools on what the support that is required and to ensure school staff are equal partners and integral to the solution.
- The Local Authority and school leaders will work collaboratively to facilitate interventions at the earliest opportunity.

Outcomes:

- New APST model being utilised to support children and young people at risk of escalation.
- Reduce suspensions and permanent exclusions through use of alternative approaches, including the development of in-house alternative provisions (tier 1 and 2).
- Appropriate alternative provisions to be shared with schools and feedback positive in their use. Time-limited access monitored to ensure children and young people can reintegrate and continue to develop a sense of belonging.

Implementation

Key Roles

Everyone within the system will have a role to play within implementing the 'Belonging in Education' strategy. All partners will engage in ongoing dialogue to proactively address potential barriers and ensure effective solutions remain a priority.

1. The Local Authority will:

- a. provide schools with school, locality and regional data to help schools and providers to monitor the implementation and impact of the strategy
- b. provide necessary support services where needed to ensure 'belonging' becomes integral in Leicestershire's educational landscape
- c. bring together all existing toolkits and resources in an accessible resource bank and embed the use of the ARC toolkit to enable schools to self-assess, supporting schools to implement and deliver the above priorities.
- d. review the training options to identify any gaps that could hinder the effective integration of belonging within educational settings and point schools and institutions toward relevant training provided by various partners, supporting both whole-school development and individual staff growth
- e. support schools with the delivery of the strategy through Universal Design for Learning.
- f. align policies and procedures to belonging as the overall strategy in Education.
- g. continue to work in collaboration with the LLR SEND and Inclusion Alliance to ensure aligned commissioning arrangements and Shaping SEND Futures as a community-based practice continues to develop.

2. Schools/educational providers will:

- a. embed a culture of belonging in their schools/provisions to enable staff and children and young people to take risks, speak honestly, ask for help, and try again after they fall short.
- b. self-assess and plan for improvements
- c. seek support and help when needed
- d. be open for change and working collaboratively across the system.
- e. collaborate with parent carers to help pupils reconnect after being away, including:

- i. Maintain regular contact through email, video calls, or phone with a key staff member.
 - ii. Share updates about school events to keep children engaged.
 - iii. Supporting attendance at school/provisions to enable children and young people to maintain friendships.
3. Parent/Carers will:
- a. make sure that their children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any additional needs the child may have (Section 7 of the Education Act, 1996).
 - b. work collaboratively with school staff and professionals to ensure their children have the best opportunity to feel a sense of belonging.
 - c. communicate effectively and appropriately with their children to ensure they understand their child's wishes to support their autonomy.

How will we know the Strategy is working?

Monitoring success measures ensures we achieve our key objectives as a system.

The expected benefits of implementing this strategy will be to:

- Children and young people first and foremost tell us they belong. The Local Authority will work with educational providers to understand the best way to capture this voice in a meaningful way.
- Children and young people feel a sense of belonging in their educational setting, which will in turn improve:
 - Academic achievement
 - Social-emotional development
 - Absenteeism and dropout rates
 - Positive classroom environment
- Schools and educational providers feel supported to implement the strategy and supported when the sense of belonging breaks down.
- There is increased partnership between schools and educational providers and parent/careers.
- The use of data to understand the implementation of the strategy

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*Thank you to all schools and
professionals that inputted into
Leicestershire Belonging in
Education Strategy 2026-2029*



Equality Impact Assessment Form

1- Policy details	
Name of policy	Belonging in Education Strategy – consultation
Department and service	Children and Family Services, Education Strategy and Transformation
Who has been involved in completing the Equality Impact Assessment?	Olivia Dale, Head of Service - Education Strategy and Transformation
Contact numbers	01163050287
Date of completion	24 February 2026

2- Objectives and background of policy or practice change	
What is the proposal?	A new Belonging in Education Strategy for Leicestershire covering the period from 2026-2029.
What change and impact is intended by the proposal?	<p>The Strategy will aim to ensure that in Leicestershire, partners work together to ensure there is a commitment to belonging. All Leicestershire children and young people feel a sense of belonging in Education, so they can live their best lives.</p> <p>The Strategy sets out the Council’s strategic approach to ensure children and young people feel a sense of belonging in the educational provisions they attend.</p> <p>The Strategy will clearly set out to stakeholders the four key priority areas, aligned to deliverables and outcomes for each and key responsibilities for implementation.</p>

	<p>This Equality Impact Assessment Form is completed prior to the public consultation, which is due to take place for 6 weeks beginning 20 April, subject to Cabinet approval. The EIA will be updated following the consultation period.</p>
<p>What is the rationale for this proposal?</p>	<p>In Leicestershire, the council wants all county children and young people to feel a sense of belonging in Education, so they can live their best lives and be the author of their own life stories.</p> <p>In the current climate, the council have a responsibility to work together with partners agencies to support children to gain a sense of belonging through inclusive practice and adapting our responses to new challenges.</p> <p>To develop a sense of belonging in school, children and young people need to feel accepted and valued for who they are and to be offered a curriculum that is accessible and designed to help all children and young people successfully learn.</p> <p>Leicestershire’s Belonging in Education Strategy sets out how the council aim to achieve this goal for every child and young person in all educational settings across Leicestershire.</p> <p>This work aligns considerably to the Education Reforms White Paper “Every Child Achieving and Thriving” (February 2026)</p>

<p>3- Evidence gathered on equality implications - Data and engagement</p>	
<p>What equalities information or data has been gathered so far?</p>	<p>Leicestershire’s population was 712,336 at the latest census in 2021, a 9.5% increase to the county’s population over the last 10 years. This makes Leicestershire one of the fastest growing areas in the country in terms of population (national average 6.6%). Understandably, this has placed added pressures on services for Children and Young People in the County. The County has approx. 143,063 children and young people aged up to 19 years</p>

What does it show?

(including 36,154 0- to 5-year-olds). There were 296,400 households within the county. A further 10.2% growth in population is projected by 2031.

There are 101,247 children and young people educated in Leicestershire schools (aged 3-18) during the Autumn term census for 2025/26. This includes 54,454 Primary aged pupils, 44,722 Secondary aged pupils and 1,992 pupils in Special Schools. Children and Young People from minority ethnic groups account for 43.6% of all children living in Leicestershire, compared with 38% in the country as a whole. The largest minority ethnic groups are Asian or Asian British and Mixed.

From our School Census in Spring 2025, we know that	
Percentage of Black, Asian and other ethnic communities of the total school population (excluding unclassified)	24.6%
Pupils eligible for free school meals	17.2%
Pupils needing SEN support	13.4%
Pupils with EHCPs	4.7%

The latest School Census, which includes all pupils on roll at a school within Leicestershire (aged 4 to 16 years), reports that there are now 13,983 pupils on a SEN Support plan and 7,196 with an Education, Health and Care Plan. SEND pupils account for 18.1% of the Leicestershire school population. Leicestershire has a proportion of children and young people with SEND (identified through EHCPs and SEN support) broadly in line with the English average.

In 2025, the annual school census (Spring term) reported that 13.4% of children and young people were identified at SEN Support level in the County, just below the England average. Previous longer-term trends had indicated a lower-than-average level in Leicestershire, but this gap has now largely closed.

<p>What engagement has been undertaken so far? What does it show?</p>	<p>The strategy has been developed in conjunction with key stakeholders and responsible bodies.</p> <p>The Department have used their feedback to help us to shape the strategy, ensuring it reflects shared priorities and processes and is aligned with the current educational landscape.</p> <p>The consultation/engagement period will focus some of the engagement activity to reach people with a protected characteristic. There will be paper copies and staff available to support engagement to encouraged participation in the consultation. Responses will be monitored through the information gathered and form part of the feedback to Cabinet on the Consultation, to understand whether responses are representative from all protected characteristic groups.</p>		
<p>4- Benefits, concerns and mitigating action</p>			
<p>Group</p>	<p>What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?</p>	<p>What are the concerns identified and how will these affect those from the following groups?</p>	<p>How will the known concerns be mitigated?</p>
<p>Age</p>	<p>The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all age groups.</p>	<p>The consultation will predominantly be completed by young people and adults so likely not to include the voice of younger children specifically.</p>	<p>As part of the development work of the strategy, young people's direct voices have been fed into the work to help us understand impact of 'Belonging' in them. Further work is underway to</p>

	<p>The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.</p>		<p>understand where and when children and young people feel a sense of belonging. This will be reflected in the final strategy and included in the final Cabinet report. This work will also seek to identify if there are issues, themes or patterns (particularly related to intersectionality) that indicate children of specific ages and living in specific areas of Leicestershire may be disadvantaged in experiencing the delivery of the Belonging Strategy.</p>
Disability	<p>The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all, however may be particularly paramount to those individuals who have a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.</p>	<p>There may be less engagement activity with the consultation from those with a disability due to accessibility issues. This means we may be gather voice from this protected characteristic in the consultation.</p>	<p>There are paper copies and easy read versions of the Strategy available. An email address and a phone number will be made available. This will ensure there are multiple ways in which the public can help us understand if the proposed Strategy is meaningful to these families.</p>

Race	<p>The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all, however may be particularly paramount to those individuals who have a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.</p>	<p>Under representation in response from ethnic minority groups – response does not reflect the Leicestershire landscape.</p>	<p>This will be reviewed at the halfway point of the consultation and further engagement with particular groups will be planned to ensure fair representation in the consultation response.</p>
Sex	<p>The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all.</p> <p>The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.</p>	<p>Under representation in response from a particular sex, where the response rate does not reflect the Leicestershire landscape.</p>	<p>This will be reviewed at the halfway point of the consultation and further engagement with particular groups will be planned to ensure fair representation in the consultation response.</p>
Gender Reassignment	<p>The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all.</p>	<p>Under representation in response from those that identify from a different sex of that was assigned at birth, where the response rate</p>	<p>This will be reviewed at the halfway point of the consultation and further engagement with particular groups will be planned</p>

	The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.	does not reflect the Leicestershire landscape.	to ensure fair representation in the consultation response.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No direct impact identified.	None identified.	Not required.
Sexual Orientation	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all. The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.	Under representation in response from those that are from the LGBTQ+ community, where the response rate does not reflect the Leicestershire landscape.	This will be reviewed at the halfway point of the consultation and further engagement with particular groups will be planned to ensure fair representation in the consultation response.
Pregnancy and Maternity	No direct impact identified.	None identified.	Not required.
Religion or Belief	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all. The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing	Under representation in response from those that are from a religious community, where the response rate does not reflect the Leicestershire landscape.	This will be reviewed at the halfway point of the consultation and further engagement with particular groups will be planned to ensure fair representation in the consultation response.

	parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.		
Armed Forces (including veterans)	No direct impact identified.	None identified.	Not required.
People with lived care experience	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all. The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.	Under representation in response from those that have lived care experience, where the response rate does not reflect the Leicestershire landscape.	Established support groups and service users will be made aware of the consultation period and how they can contribute. This activity will be supported by the CFS Care Leavers Service.
Other groups: e.g., rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived or disadvantaged communities	The Strategy is all encompassing for all children and young people known to the Department. Improvements to children and young people feeling a sense of belonging will be beneficial to all. The consultation will be available to all Leicestershire residents and promoted through schools, providers, existing parent/carer and children and young people groups and by use of social media.	All the comms and consultation will be in English and we know there will be hard to reach families that may not be accessing schools, educational providers and community groups.	The strategy and consultation will be available in other languages, if requested, to ensure we are capturing the views of asylum seeker and refugee communities and those with English as an additional language.

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
Seek approval to consult on the Belonging in Education Strategy	Education Strategy and Transformation	Cabinet – 24/03/26	Ensuring the Strategy is agreed with elected members prior to wider consultation.
Public consultation on the Belonging in Education Strategy following approval to consult by Cabinet	Education Strategy and Transformation	C&FS Scrutiny Committee – 02/06/26 Cabinet – 21/07/26	Feedback on proposed strategy to ensure feedback is fully considered before Strategy is agreed.

6- Approval Process	
Departmental Equalities Group	
Corporate Policy Team	
Sign off by the Senior Responsible Officer for the Project.	

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CABINET – 24TH MARCH 2026

DOMESTIC ABUSE REDUCTION STRATEGY 2026–2029: PERMISSION TO CONSULT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's approval to undertake a public and stakeholder consultation on the Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2026–29. The draft Strategy (attached as Appendix A to this report) has been developed following a comprehensive SafeLives Needs Assessment and extensive engagement with survivors, professionals, voluntary sector partners and statutory agencies.
2. The report also outlines the statutory context, strategic priorities, and proposed approach to consultation and engagement.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Cabinet:
 - a) Approves the draft Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2026–2029 (attached as Appendix A) for a twelve week consultation exercise;
 - b) Agrees that a further report be submitted to Cabinet in July 2026 presenting the findings of the consultation and a final Strategy for approval.

Reason for Recommendations

4. Conducting a consultation will ensure that the final Strategy reflects the views of survivors, professionals, partners, and the public, and demonstrates transparency and accountability.
5. Consultation will allow further refinement of the Strategy, ensuring that the lived experiences of victims and survivors, including children recognised as victims under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, are embedded into the final proposals.
6. Consultation is required to ensure the Council is meeting its statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, including responsibilities relating to support for victims and survivors in safe accommodation.

7. Failure to consult may result in statutory non-compliance, insufficient alignment with survivor voice, reputational risk, and weak partnership assurance as well as operational and safeguarding risk.

Timetable for Decisions

8. Public and stakeholder consultation will be undertaken following Cabinet approval from April to June 2026. The draft Strategy will be presented for consideration at Scrutiny Commission in June 2026; the final draft will be brought back to Cabinet in July 2026 for approval and final sign off.
9. The Strategy will be shared with partnership boards for adoption in July 2026.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

10. The Strategy aligns with the Council's statutory responsibilities under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and supports delivery of the Council's Strategic Plan 2022–26, particularly the outcomes relating to keeping people safe, improving wellbeing, and supporting strong communities.
11. The previous Strategy was presented to Cabinet in October 2021; this Strategy replaces that one.
12. SafeLives Needs Assessment (2024) and previous Cabinet commitments to improving domestic abuse responses directly inform this Strategy, for example ensuring people at the most risk are protected from harm is a core Council outcome, vulnerable adults and children must be identified early and protected from harm and abuse; domestic abuse and sexual violence are specifically named priority areas within this commitment.

Resource Implications

13. Consultation costs will be met within existing budgets.
14. The Strategy will be delivered through existing domestic abuse funding, including central government allocations for safe accommodation duties. A full financial breakdown will be included in the Cabinet report to be presented in July 2026.
15. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Public Health, Law and Governance have been consulted on the contents of this report.

Circulation Under Local Issues Alert Procedure

16. This report will be circulated to all members.

Officers to Contact

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Gurjit Samra-Rai, Community Safety Manager
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PART B

Background

17. Domestic abuse remains one of the most significant safeguarding challenges facing adults, children and families in Leicestershire. SafeLives, a UK wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, undertook a Strategic Needs Assessment for the Council in 2024 highlighting high prevalence, hidden harm, and the need for consistent, trauma-informed and joined-up systems. Children are legally recognised as victims under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and require coordinated, holistic support.
18. The draft Strategy has been developed in partnership with survivors, voluntary and community organisations, statutory partners and specialist services.

Statutory Context

19. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places duties on Tier One authorities, including:
 - assessing local need and commissioning support in safe accommodation
 - recognising children as victims in their own right
 - ensuring multi-agency coordination across police, health, housing, education and specialist provision
 - embedding a whole system
 - trauma-informed approach.

Needs Assessment

20. In 2024, the Council commissioned SafeLives to undertake a comprehensive Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment (attached as Appendix B to this report). Findings highlight rising demand, increased numbers of under-18s experiencing domestic abuse, high levels of hidden harm, gaps in data quality and consistency, a shortfall in safe accommodation capacity, and opportunities to improve early identification, public awareness and trauma-informed practice.

The Draft Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2026–2029

21. The Strategy sets out a three-year programme shaped by survivors, partners and data. Its four priorities are:
 - 1) Improving Data Quality and Information Sharing
 - 2) Early Intervention, Prevention and Communication
 - 3) Targeted Support and Safe Accommodation (Part 4 Duties)
 - 4) Strong Partnerships

Proposed Consultation Approach

22. A 12-week consultation including a public online survey, focus groups with survivors of domestic abuse (including young people, men and older people) and engagement with

schools, Family Hubs and specialist providers, partner forums, and accessible materials for marginalized communities.

Conclusion

23. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, consultation will begin in Spring 2026. The findings will inform any amendments and a final Strategy will be presented to the Cabinet for approval in July 2026.
24. Approval to consult will ensure the final Strategy is evidence-based, survivor-informed and aligned with statutory duties, enabling the Council and partners to improve safety, reduce harm and deliver coordinated domestic abuse responses across Leicestershire.

Equalities Implications

25. An Equality Impact Assessment will accompany the final Strategy. Consultation will engage groups with additional barriers, including ethnically diverse communities, LGBTQ+ victims, disabled individuals, older people, men and young people.
26. Domestic abuse directly affects Article 2 (Right to Life), Article 3 (Freedom from inhumane treatment), Article 8 (Right to family life). Strengthening responses supports the Council's Human Rights duties.

Other Implications

27. The Strategy supports compliance with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Consultation ensures that the Strategy is lawful, robust and informed.
28. Domestic abuse has major health impacts and early intervention will support wellbeing.
29. The Strategy will strengthen prevention and the response to domestic abuse, contributing to crime reduction.

Background Papers

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Statutory Guidance)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62c6df068fa8f54e855dfe31/Domestic_Abuse_Act_2021_Statutory_Guidance.pdf

Appendices

- A - Draft Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2026–2029 Appendix A
- B - Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment (SafeLives, 2024) Appendix B

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Draft

Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2026-29

Forward

Cllr Charles Pugsley (Lead Member Children and Family Services and Chair of the Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board)

Domestic Abuse remains one of the most serious and pervasive challenges facing our communities. It causes profound harm to individuals, families and neighbourhoods, with lasting impacts on physical and mental health, wellbeing, housing stability, and life chances. As a local authority, we have both a moral responsibility and a statutory duty to do everything within our power to prevent abuse, protect victims and survivors, and hold perpetrators to account.

This Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy sets out our clear commitment to tackling domestic abuse in all its forms. It recognises that abuse can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, background, culture, disability or sexual orientation, and that it often remains hidden due to fear, stigma or a lack of confidence in services. We are determined to create an environment in which victims and survivors are believed, supported and empowered to seek help at the earliest opportunity.

The strategy has been developed in partnership with survivors, frontline professionals, voluntary and community sector organisations and other key partners. It reflects both local need and national good practice, and places a strong emphasis on early intervention, trauma-informed support, and prevention. Importantly, it also recognises the devastating impact of domestic abuse on children and young people and the need to safeguard and support them as victims in their own right.

Informed by lived experience, this strategy commits to:

- Putting survivors' voices at the heart of decision-making, service design and evaluation
- Believing and validating disclosures of abuse, without blame or judgement
- Providing consistent, trauma-informed support, recognising the long-term impact of abuse
- Reducing barriers to help, including for those facing additional inequalities or risks
- Ensuring safety, choice and control remain central to all interventions

Survivors' experiences remind us that effective domestic abuse responses are not defined solely by policies or processes, but by how safe, supported and empowered people feel when they seek help. This strategy is grounded in that understanding and will continue to be shaped by the voices of those with lived experience.

Reducing domestic abuse cannot be achieved by one organisation alone. This strategy reinforces our commitment to strong partnership working, shared accountability and continuous learning. It sets out how we will strengthen our response across prevention, protection and provision of support, ensuring that our actions are coordinated, effective and focused on achieving meaningful outcomes.

As the Elected Lead Member, I am proud to champion this strategy and the values it represents. I am committed to ensuring that domestic abuse remains a priority across the council and our partnerships, and that we continue to listen to survivors' voices as we improve our services. Together, we can work towards a future where everyone is safe in their home and able to live free from fear and abuse.

Sharon Cooke (Interim Director Children and Family Services)

This Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy outlines how Leicestershire County Council will work with partners to reduce Domestic Abuse (DA), support adult and child victims and survivors in Leicestershire and discharge the Council's statutory requirements within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

The Leicestershire Needs Assessment undertaken by SafeLives in 2024 demonstrates a year-on-year increase in under 18's becoming victims of DA; this was further confirmed by the group of young survivors who shared their experiences with us, highlighting the need to support children and young people to recognise the signs of abuse and seek support.

Leicestershire County Council's Children and Family Service is committed to being a trauma informed responsive department where we believe "we are stronger together". Our culture is one of partnership where we look for solutions and recognise the potential impact of trauma on the children and families we work with in Leicestershire.

The DA Act 2021 states: "*Children and young people are deemed to be victims under the 2021 Act as a result of seeing, hearing or otherwise experiencing domestic abuse between two people where the child is related to at least one of them whether that be the victim or perpetrator*".

We are committed to protecting all victims and survivors and supporting vulnerable children and families; we will strive to create a safe, compassionate, healing environment demonstrated through relationships based on trust, respect, hope and empathy and this has been demonstrated through the Council ring fencing government funding to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse and through a dedicated team within the directorate to support families.

Survivors' experiences remind us that domestic abuse is not only a crime but a safeguarding issue with lifelong consequences for children and families. This strategy sets out how Leicestershire County Council will meet its responsibilities, work in partnership, and ensure that every child and family affected by domestic abuse is supported with compassion, consistency and care.

Glossary

Commissioned

specialised providers formally chosen by public bodies to deliver specific services to vulnerable citizens following a rigorous commissioning process

Domestic Abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between anyone aged 16+ who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional.

DHR (Domestic Homicide Review)

A review into the circumstances around a death of an individual following domestic abuse. Public bodies (police, councils, social services, etc) come together to understand and learn from the circumstances and help raise awareness in local communities of how to help victims in order to prevent further loss of life. Home Office Guidance is expected to change DHRs to **DArDR (Domestic Abuse related Death Review)** and will include deaths by suicide where there was domestic abuse.

Early Intervention

An integrated public body approach, to support people to recover faster and live healthier and more independent lives.

MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

A meeting bringing agencies together to undertake a comprehensive assessment of a victim's needs including any children, and link them, and the perpetrator to appropriate services.

Marginalised communities

Those excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, and/or cultural life including ethnic minorities, low-income individuals, people with physical and mental disabilities, LGBTQ+, and older people.

Multi-agency

Professionals from different agencies working together to reduce duplication and improve services, whilst saving money.

Perpetrators

People who use abusive behaviours and actions to cause harm.

Prevention

Not all problems can be prevented, but for those that can, by providing people with the early support it reduces the need for crisis intervention.

Trauma Informed

A practice of recognising the widespread impact of trauma increasing professional's awareness of how trauma can impact individuals and delivering support in a personal way.

Victims/survivors

Someone who has been subjected to domestic abuse, including adults, children and young people.

Whole System

Local stakeholders come together, share an understanding of the reality of the challenges and consider how the local system operates bringing change through shared activities in an integrated way with long term benefit.

Introduction

Domestic Abuse continues to present a significant and complex challenge for many, including adults from marginalised communities, men, children, young people and families across Leicestershire. In 2024, Leicestershire County Council commissioned SafeLives, the UK-wide domestic abuse charity, to undertake a comprehensive needs assessment to support the Council in meeting its statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and to strengthen local responses for adults and children affected by abuse.

The SafeLives Needs Assessment highlights that domestic abuse in Leicestershire is widespread and often hidden, with many victims experiencing long-term patterns of harm before receiving support. It reinforces that abuse is not limited to physical violence and frequently includes controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional abuse and economic abuse forms of harm that are not always recognised by victims themselves, their families, or wider communities. This lack of recognition contributes to delayed disclosure and missed opportunities for Early Help.

Crucially, the assessment reflects the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 in recognising children as victims in their own right when they see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse. SafeLives' findings underline the profound impact domestic abuse has on children's safety, emotional wellbeing, development and educational outcomes, and the importance of safeguarding responses that fully understand and address this harm.

The needs assessment also identifies the importance of joined-up, trauma-informed systems. Survivors and professionals described how fragmented responses, unclear pathways and the need to repeat experiences across services can re-traumatise families and undermine safety. Where agencies worked together effectively - particularly across Children and Families services, early help, housing, health, police and specialist domestic abuse provision - families were more likely to receive timely and appropriate support.

SafeLives further emphasised the critical role of early intervention and communication. Many survivors reported that friends, family members and even professionals did not recognise abuse or were unsure how to respond. The assessment highlights the need for clearer, consistent communication across communities and services about what domestic abuse looks like, how it affects children, and how and where to seek help safely.

This Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy responds directly to the findings of the SafeLives Needs Assessment and to the insights survivors gave. It sets out how Leicestershire County Council, working through Children and Families Services and in partnership with local agencies, will strengthen prevention, improve early recognition, protect victim and survivors, and provide coordinated, trauma-informed support.

It describes how safe accommodation and support for domestic abuse (DA) victims and survivors will be provided over the next three years and outlines four objectives that will be the focus of delivery:

- 1. Improve the quality of data and information sharing**
- 2. Early Intervention and Prevention, including detailed communication campaigns**
- 3. Targeted Support**
- 4. Strong Partnerships**

Background

Domestic Abuse causes significant harm to individuals, children, families, and communities.

The scale and impact is vast. The SafeLives prevalence tool shows that 98,000 adults in Leicestershire have experienced DA at some point since the age of 16, with approximately 15% experiencing both partner and family abuse. Furthermore 30,500 adult victims have experienced Domestic Abuse in the last year with approximately 8% experiencing both partner and family abuse. 73,500 (68%) are estimated to be female and 35,000 (32%) are estimated to be male. It is further estimated that 6,000 were young victims (16-24 years old) and 6,000 were older victims (60+ years old); the overall number of victims has increased year on year.

A Survivor's Perspective

The following statement reflects the voices and experiences of survivors who have contributed to the development of this strategy. It is shared anonymously, with gratitude for their courage and insight:

“Domestic abuse doesn’t always start with violence. For many of us, it begins with control, fear, isolation and the slow loss of confidence. It can happen behind closed doors, while outwardly life appears normal. Speaking out is one of the hardest steps to take — often because you don’t know who to trust, whether you’ll be believed, or what will happen next.”

“When I finally asked for help, what mattered most was being listened to without judgement. I needed professionals who understood that leaving isn’t a single moment, but a process, and that fear doesn’t end just because the abuse has stopped. Practical support — with housing, finances, and my children — made the difference between surviving and being able to rebuild my life.”

“This strategy matters because it recognises that survivors are not all the same. We need services that are accessible, trauma-informed, culturally sensitive and joined-up, so we don’t have to repeat our story again and again. We need responses that focus on safety, dignity and choice.”

“Most importantly, I want others experiencing abuse to know this: you are not alone, the abuse is not your fault, and help should be there when you are ready — not just when you are at crisis point.”

Informed by lived experience, this strategy commits to:

- Putting adult and child survivors’ voices at the heart of decision-making, service design and evaluation
- Believing and validating disclosures of abuse, without blame or judgement
- Providing consistent, trauma-informed support, recognising the long-term impact of abuse
- Reducing barriers to help, including for those facing additional inequalities or risks
- Ensuring safety, choice and control remain central to all interventions

Survivors’ experiences remind us that effective domestic abuse responses are not defined solely by policies or processes, but by how safe, supported and empowered people feel when they seek help. This strategy is grounded in that understanding and will continue to be shaped by the voices of those with lived experience.

Many survivors told us that neither they, nor the people around them, recognised what was happening as domestic abuse. Friends, family members and even professionals often saw

behaviour as ‘relationship problems’ or ‘stress at home’, rather than abuse. This meant that warning signs were missed and support was delayed.

Survivors spoke about how controlling behaviour, emotional harm and financial abuse were normalised or minimised — not only by the perpetrator, but sometimes by those closest to them. Some said that when they tried to talk about what was happening, they were advised to ‘work it out’, ‘stay for the children’, or were not believed, as was the case for a male survivor. This left survivors feeling isolated and unsure where to turn.

Parents shared that fear of judgement, particularly around their parenting, made it even harder to seek help. What helped was when professionals clearly named abuse, explained the impact on children, and reassured survivors that asking for help was a protective step.

Children and young people also described not having the words to explain what they were experiencing. Survivors welcomed the recognition in the Domestic Abuse Act that children are recognised as victims but said that this needs to be matched by clear communication in schools, services and communities about what abuse looks like and how to get help.

Survivors consistently said that better communication - clear, consistent and accessible - could have helped them and those around them recognise abuse earlier. Knowing what domestic abuse is, where to get support, and that help is available without judgement was seen as critical to keeping victims safe.

Survivors’ voices are central to this strategy; their experiences remind us that legislation alone is not enough — it must be translated into compassionate, coordinated and effective local action.

DA Act 2021

The DA Act places a statutory duty on Tier One local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse including children within refuges and other safe accommodation.

The Act strengthens protection and support for victims and survivors by:

- Defining domestic abuse in law, including physical, sexual, emotional, economic and controlling or coercive behaviour
- Recognising children as victims of domestic abuse if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse
- Placing duties on local authorities to assess need and provide support for victims and their children in safe accommodation
- Requiring partnership working between councils, police, health services and other relevant agencies
- Embedding a survivor-centred approach, focused on safety, choice, dignity and long-term recovery

The Priorities

1. Improve the quality of data and information sharing

High-quality data and effective information sharing are essential to understanding the scale and nature of domestic abuse in Leicestershire, identifying risk earlier, protecting children, and delivering coordinated, trauma-informed responses. Current learning highlights variation in how domestic abuse is recorded, shared and used across services, which can limit our ability to respond effectively and to evidence impact.

The Needs Assessment has highlighted that within the datasets across the partnership, data capture for certain categories is lacking. This includes:

- **Ethnicity:** Different ethnic groups have different experiences of services and experience different barriers. It is important to ensure that ethnicity is captured appropriately to fully understand the demographic and needs of Leicestershire.
- **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity:** Those in LGBT+ relationships face additional barriers to reporting and accessing services. It is important to ensure that this information is asked and captured in order to fully understand the demographics and needs of Leicestershire.
- **Socio Economic status:** Research in the UK has consistently found vulnerability to DA to be associated with low income, economic strain, and benefit receipt.

There have been significant improvements in the level and accuracy of the data collected compared to the previous needs assessment particularly around age, gender and ethnicity. It is important to ensure that this information is asked and captured in order to fully understand the demographics and intersecting needs of victims and survivors within Leicestershire. There were challenges in the collection and the consistency of data provided including some partners being unable to provide any data at all.

A concern is that by not capturing the demographic data of the whole family, we cannot understand the needs of the whole family and provide appropriate support.

We will strengthen how domestic abuse data is collected, shared and used across Children and Families services and partner agencies, ensuring that information supports timely decision-making, safeguards children, reduces repeat harm and drives continuous improvement.

We will:

- Improve the consistency and quality of domestic abuse recording, including non-physical abuse and the lived experience of children and adults, across Early Help, safeguarding and commissioned services
- Strengthen information-sharing arrangements between Children and Families, Community Safety, Police, Health, Housing, Education and specialist domestic abuse services, in line with statutory guidance
- Reduce duplication and gaps by ensuring families do not have to repeat their experiences unnecessarily
- Develop shared data standards, definitions and pathways, enabling clearer tracking of journeys and outcomes
- Use data intelligently to identify risk earlier, target prevention activity and inform commissioning and service design
- Work with commissioned services to ensure there is a shared understanding of the requirements embedding data requirements into contracts

Intended Outcomes

- Targeted and appropriate support services for all communities both in terms of need and geography
- A clear understanding of victim's characteristics, areas of multiple disadvantage and complex needs
- A clearer, shared understanding of domestic abuse prevention and support need and patterns across Leicestershire
- Earlier identification of risk
- More coordinated, timely and proportionate responses across agencies
- Improved ability to evidence impact, outcomes and value for money
- Greater accountability and learning across the partnership

Performance Measures and Success Indicators

- Percentage of cases where the impact on children is explicitly captured
- Reduction in missing or incomplete domestic abuse fields across systems
- Percentage of relevant cases with evidence of timely multi-agency information sharing
- Reduction in the number of times survivors report having to repeat their experiences across services
- MARAC and multi-agency meeting records demonstrating improved data completeness and action tracking
- Regular publication of a multi-agency domestic abuse dashboard to inform strategic oversight
- Evidence that data is used to identify trends, target early help and improve service access for under-represented groups
- Annual reporting demonstrating how learning from data, audits and reviews has informed service improvement

Strategic Commitment

By improving the quality of data and information sharing, we will ensure that domestic abuse responses in Leicestershire are better informed, better connected and more effective. This priority underpins all others in the strategy and is critical to delivering safer outcomes for victims and survivors including children and families.

2. Early Intervention and Prevention including Communication

Early intervention and prevention are essential to reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse and improving outcomes for victims and survivors. Evidence from the local needs assessment and survivor engagement shows that opportunities to identify abuse earlier are often missed, particularly within universal services where families have regular contact but concerns may not yet meet statutory thresholds.

We will strengthen early intervention and prevention by embedding a clear, consistent domestic abuse response across Family Hubs, Early Help and education settings, ensuring that abuse is recognised early, responded to proportionately, and addressed before risk escalates.

We will:

- Embed domestic abuse awareness, safe enquiry and response within Family Hub services, including health visiting, midwifery, perinatal mental health, early years and parenting support
- Ensure Family Hubs act as trusted access points for advice, information and early help for parents and carers experiencing domestic abuse
- Provide clear pathways from Family Hubs into Early Help, specialist domestic abuse support and safeguarding services where required
- Embed domestic abuse consistently within Early Help assessment, planning and review processes, ensuring non-physical abuse and coercive control are recognised
- Ensure Early Help pathways clearly distinguish between healthy relationships, parental conflict and domestic abuse, enabling the right response at the right level
- Strengthen step-up and step-down arrangements so families experience continuity of support as needs change
- Strengthen the role of schools and colleges as key partners in early identification and prevention, recognising the impact of domestic abuse on attendance, behaviour and emotional wellbeing
- Support Designated Safeguarding Leads and school staff to recognise signs of domestic abuse affecting children and families, including where abuse occurs at home

- Ensure schools and colleges have clear routes into safeguarding services and support from specialist providers, and understand how to respond safely to disclosures
- Promote preventative education, including healthy relationships, safety and resilience, using age-appropriate approaches

Intended Outcomes

- Domestic abuse is identified earlier across universal and early help services
- Families receive timely, proportionate support before harm escalates
- Children affected by domestic abuse are recognised and supported sooner
- Improved confidence among professionals to act at the earliest opportunity
- Reduced escalation to crisis, statutory intervention and repeat harm

Performance Measures and Success Indicators

- Increase in identification of victims and perpetrators at an early stage
- Percentage of people signposted or referred to support soon after early signs are detected
- Proportion of practitioners trained in domestic abuse-informed practice
- Increase in timely engagement with services following first contact
- Reduction in repeat victimisation or repeat police callouts
- Improvements in survivor coping skills, confidence, and self-efficacy
- Reduction in stress, anxiety, and trauma symptoms
- Increased access to housing, financial support, legal advice, and social networks
- Changes in community attitudes toward domestic abuse
- Increase in help-seeking behaviours

Strategic Commitment

By embedding domestic abuse awareness into early intervention and prevention within Family Hubs, Early Help and schools, we will ensure that victims in Leicestershire receive the right support at the earliest opportunity. This approach shifts the system from crisis response to earlier, safer and more effective intervention, reducing harm and improving long-term outcomes.

Communication

Through engagement in Leicestershire, survivors highlighted the need for:

- Greater public understanding of domestic abuse, including non-physical and controlling behaviours
- Clearer information for friends, family and whole communities, so they can recognise abuse and respond safely
- Consistent messages across services, reducing confusion about thresholds, roles and support available
- Early conversations with parents and children, using accessible, age-appropriate language
- Visible, trusted routes to help, so survivors know where to turn when they are ready

Survivors' engagement has made clear that earlier recognition and better communication can change outcomes for victims; we shall work tirelessly to raise awareness amongst the public and professionals through various routes including:

- Face to face engagement eg community meetings and forums
- Digital and on lone channels eg Local authority website updates and news pages

- Printed communications eg newsletter and posters in GP surgeries
- Media engagement eg press releases and radio interviews
- Community partnerships eg working through faith/community leaders and schools

3. DA Act (Part 4) – Safe Accommodation

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a statutory duty on local authorities to assess the need for, and commission, support for victims and their children within relevant safe accommodation. This includes refuges, dispersed accommodation, sanctuary schemes and other forms of safe housing, alongside the specialist support required to help families remain safe and begin recovery.

There are currently 21 safe accommodation spaces in Leicestershire. The Council of Europe recommendation is 1 family place per 10,000 population. The population of Leicestershire is 706,155 therefore the recommended number is 70 spaces. The current provision available in Leicestershire is significantly below the recommended level furthermore, referrals for Safe Accommodation have increased significantly as have homelessness presentations

We will continue to strengthen our duties under Part 4 of the Act by ensuring that victims of domestic abuse and their children can access safe, appropriate accommodation and high-quality, trauma-informed support, regardless of their circumstances. This priority recognises that safe accommodation is not only about housing, but about safety, stability, dignity and long-term outcomes for families.

We will:

- Fulfil our statutory responsibilities by maintaining a robust local needs assessment, regularly reviewed and informed by data, lived experience and partnership intelligence
- Commission and coordinate a range of safe accommodation options, including refuge, dispersed and sanctuary provision, to meet diverse needs
- Ensure victims and their children receive specialist, trauma-informed support while in safe accommodation, recognising children as victims in their own right
- Strengthen pathways into and out of safe accommodation, including planned move-on, housing sustainment and community-based support
- Work through the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to provide strong governance, oversight and accountability for Part 4 delivery
- Reduce barriers to access, including for victims with additional needs or facing disadvantage, ensuring services are accessible and inclusive
- Ensure effective joint working with Children and Families services, safeguarding partners, housing providers and specialist domestic abuse services

Intended Outcomes

- Victims are able to access safe accommodation when needed
- Children in safe accommodation are recognised and supported as victims of domestic abuse
- Families experience coordinated, trauma-informed support that promotes safety and recovery
- Improved move-on outcomes, reducing repeat homelessness and repeat abuse
- Clear accountability and assurance in meeting statutory duties

Performance Measures and Success Indicators

- Availability and utilisation of safe accommodation aligned to identified need
- Reduced waiting times for access to appropriate safe accommodation
- Range of provision meeting the needs of families, including those with additional or complex needs, men and marginalised communities

- Percentage of adults and children in safe accommodation receiving specialist support
- Improved safety, wellbeing and stability reported by survivors and children
- Successful planned move-on from safe accommodation into stable housing
- Effective operation of the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board
- Regular reporting against Part 4 duties, needs assessment findings and commissioning outcomes
- Evidence that survivor feedback and learning inform service improvement

Strategic Commitment

Through this priority, we will ensure that Leicestershire County Council continues to meet its statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Part 4 while striving to go beyond minimum requirements. By working in partnership and keeping victims and survivors at the centre of our approach, we will deliver safe accommodation and support that not only protects from immediate harm, but helps them build safer, more stable futures.

Leicestershire and Rutland Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board

The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board provides strategic leadership, governance and accountability for the delivery of domestic abuse priorities across Leicestershire and Rutland, with a specific statutory role in overseeing duties under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 relating to support in safe accommodation. The Board brings together key partners to ensure a coordinated, survivor-centred and evidence-led response to domestic abuse, with a strong focus on safeguarding children and supporting families affected by abuse.

The Local Partnership Board:

- Provides strategic oversight of the Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy and associated delivery plans
- Supports the Council to meet its statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, particularly Part 4
- Oversees the development, review and implementation of the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment
- Agrees priorities for commissioning and service development, informed by data, lived experience and local need
- Champions a whole-system, partnership approach, ensuring alignment across Children and Families, Community Safety, Health, Housing, Police, Education and the voluntary sector
- Promotes trauma-informed, survivor-centred practice, recognising children as victims in their own right
- Ensures learning from survivor engagement, audits, Domestic Homicide Reviews and performance data informs continuous improvement

Membership of the Local Partnership Board reflects statutory guidance and local need and includes representation from across Leicestershire and Rutland, furthermore the Board ensures that survivor and lived experience voices are meaningfully embedded within its work through a Survivor Advisory Group.

The Local Partnership Board is accountable for:

- Ensuring clear lines of responsibility for the delivery of Part 4 duties and wider strategy priorities
- Agreeing and monitoring performance measures and outcomes, including access to safe accommodation and support for children
- Holding partners to account for their contributions to agreed actions and outcomes

- Escalating risks, gaps or system pressures to senior leadership and relevant governance bodies
- Ensuring decisions are evidence-based, transparent and focused on improving safety and outcomes

The Board operates with clear terms of reference, decision-making processes and reporting arrangements.

To ensure effective delivery, the Local Partnership Board:

- Receives regular performance reports against the Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy and Part 4 delivery plan
- Monitors trends in demand, access, outcomes and equality of service provision
- Uses a multi-agency domestic abuse performance dashboard to support oversight and decision-making
- Commissions or request audits, reviews and deep-dives where concerns are identified
- Ensures actions are taken in response to learning from data, survivor feedback and statutory reviews

4.Strong Partnerships

Domestic Abuse cannot be prevented or reduced by any single organisation working alone. Strong, effective partnerships are essential to identifying risk early, safeguarding children, supporting survivors, holding perpetrators to account and delivering coordinated, trauma-informed responses. Local evidence and survivor feedback consistently show that where agencies work well together, families experience safer, more timely and more effective support.

Leicestershire has strong partnership arrangements in place to share information and develop joint plans to protect victims and survivors and hold perpetrators to account – the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings continue to take a joint approach to risk assessment and safety planning for victims living in Leicestershire. A review of the MARAC has been undertaken by SafeLives and recommendations are being implemented across the partnership.

We will continue to strengthen and sustain partnerships across statutory, voluntary, community and faith sectors to ensure a shared understanding of domestic abuse, clear roles and responsibilities, and joined-up action at every stage of a victims journey.

We will:

- Strengthen multi-agency collaboration across Children and Families, Community Safety, Health, Police, Housing, Education, Probation and specialist domestic abuse services
- Ensure partners share a common vision and shared priorities, grounded in safeguarding children and supporting survivors
- Clarify roles, responsibilities and pathways, so survivors experience coordinated support rather than fragmented responses
- Value and support the role of the voluntary and community sector, recognising their expertise, trusted relationships and reach into communities
- Embed domestic abuse as a shared priority across strategic boards, partnerships and governance arrangements
- Promote a culture of mutual challenge, learning and accountability, using data, audits and lived experience to drive improvement

Intended Outcomes

- Consistent, joined-up responses to domestic abuse across agencies

- Clear and timely pathways for children, survivors and families
- Reduced duplication and fewer gaps between services
- Improved safety, experience and outcomes for families affected by domestic abuse
- Stronger system resilience and shared ownership of risk

Performance Measures and Success Indicators

- Regular attendance and engagement from key partners at strategic and operational forums
- Clear, agreed pathways and protocols in place and consistently used
- Partner feedback indicating improved clarity of roles and joint working
- Evidence of coordinated multi-agency plans for families affected by domestic abuse
- Reduction in delays caused by hand-offs or unclear responsibilities
- Improved timeliness of referrals and access to support
- Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews, audits and case reviews shared and acted upon across partners
- Joint training and development activity delivered and evaluated
- Evidence that partnership learning informs service design and commissioning
- Domestic Homicide Review recommendations are actioned across the system

Strategic Commitment

By investing in strong partnerships, we will ensure that domestic abuse responses are coordinated, consistent and effective, and that no single service carries risk alone. This priority underpins the whole strategy and reflects our commitment to working together to safeguard children, support survivors and reduce domestic abuse across our communities.

Domestic Homicide Reviews

A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a statutory, multi-agency review that must be carried out when the death of a person aged 16 or over has resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a current or former intimate partner, or a family member. The purpose of a DHR is not to apportion blame, but to identify learning that can improve future responses to domestic abuse and reduce the risk of further deaths. DHRs consider the contact that victims, perpetrators and their families had with statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and other services, and examine how agencies worked both individually and together.

Domestic Homicide Reviews are, by their nature, a partnership responsibility. Effective DHRs depend on the active engagement, openness and accountability of all relevant agencies, including local authorities, police, health, housing, probation, education and specialist domestic abuse services.

Within Leicestershire, DHRs are overseen through established governance arrangements within the Safeguarding Partnerships Board Office, with learning shared across strategic and operational partnerships, including the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, Children and Families Partnership, Safeguarding Children Partnership, Safeguarding Adults Board and Community Safety Partnerships.

Partnerships play a critical role in ensuring that:

- Reviews are conducted thoroughly, independently and within statutory timescales
- Agencies contribute openly and reflectively to the review process
- Learning is translated into practical, system-wide improvements, rather than remaining a paper exercise
- The victim and their family remain central to the process

Learning and System Improvement

Domestic Homicide Reviews provide vital insight into:

- Missed opportunities for early identification and intervention
- How information was shared, or not shared, between agencies
- The impact of domestic abuse on children and families
- Barriers faced by victims in accessing support
- How risk was assessed, managed and escalated
- Gaps in services and support available within the local community / across the service area

A key responsibility of local partnerships is to ensure that learning from DHRs is embedded across the system, not confined to the agencies directly involved in a specific case. This includes identifying recurring themes, systemic issues and workforce development needs.

Partnership Responsibilities for DHR Learning

Through this strategy, partners commit to:

- Treating DHRs as a collective learning process, with shared responsibility for improvement
- Ensuring that recommendations are owned, tracked and delivered through appropriate governance structures
- Sharing learning across Children and Families services, safeguarding arrangements, MARAC, Early Help, Family Hubs, schools and frontline practitioners
- Using DHR findings to inform policy, practice, commissioning, training and communication activity
- Considering the specific learning relating to children's lived experience, non-physical abuse, coercive control, and information sharing
- Reviewing progress regularly and challenging where change is not being achieved

The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board provides strategic oversight of DHR learning in relation to domestic abuse and ensures alignment with the Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy. The Board will:

- Receive regular updates on DHR progress, themes and actions
- Monitor delivery of agreed actions and escalate concerns where required
- Ensure learning is reflected in strategy priorities, delivery plans and performance frameworks
- Work alongside safeguarding and community safety partnerships to ensure coherent and coordinated responses

Domestic Homicide Reviews remind us of the serious consequences of domestic abuse and the importance of getting responses right. As partners, we commit to approaching DHRs with professional curiosity, humility and a shared determination to improve.

By learning together, challenging constructively and acting decisively, partnerships in Leicestershire will use DHRs to strengthen early intervention, improve information sharing, safeguard children and ultimately reduce the risk of future harm and loss of life.

How This Strategy Will Be Delivered

The Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy will be delivered through a whole-system, partnership-led approach, recognising that reducing domestic abuse and improving outcomes for victims and survivors requires coordinated action across statutory, voluntary and community partners.

Delivery will be underpinned by strong governance, clear accountability, effective partnership working, robust data and continuous learning.

Overall leadership and accountability for delivery of this strategy will sit with the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board. The Board will provide strategic direction, oversight and challenge, ensuring that the priorities of this strategy are delivered and that statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, including Part 4, are met.

Each strategic priority within this strategy will be supported by:

- A defined set of delivery actions
- Named lead agencies and partners
- Clear outcomes and performance measures
- Timescales for delivery

A detailed delivery plan will be maintained and reviewed regularly to ensure progress is tracked, actions remain relevant, and resources are targeted effectively.

Conclusion

The strategy will be delivered through a confident, skilled and supported workforce.

This will include:

- Multi-agency training and development aligned to strategy priorities
- Strengthening understanding of domestic abuse, including non-physical abuse and coercive control
- Embedding trauma-informed, strengths-based practice across services
- Supporting professionals to identify abuse early and respond appropriately

Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews, audits, MARAC and survivor feedback will be used to continuously improve practice.

Delivery will be informed by high-quality data and shared intelligence. A multi-agency approach to data and information sharing will support:

- Early identification of risk
- Monitoring demand, access and outcomes
- Identifying inequalities and unmet need
- Evidence-based decision-making and commissioning

Performance will be monitored through agreed indicators and reported regularly to the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board and relevant governance structures.

Survivors, children and families will remain central to delivery of the strategy.

This will be achieved by:

- Ongoing engagement with survivors and young people
- Using lived experience to inform service design, commissioning and communication
- Gathering feedback on service experience and outcomes
- Ensuring survivor voice informs review and improvement activity

This strategy is a living document. Progress will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains responsive to emerging need, learning and changes in the local or national context.

We will:

- Publish regular progress updates and annual reports
- Review and refresh delivery actions as required
- Track and deliver actions arising from reviews and learning
- Hold partners to account for agreed commitments

Our Commitment

Through strong leadership, shared accountability and effective partnership working, this strategy will be delivered in a way that is coordinated, evidence-led and focused on improving

safety and outcomes. By working together, we will reduce harm, strengthen early intervention, support recovery and ensure that children and families affected by domestic abuse receive the help they need, when they need it.

For further information about this Strategy please contact:
communitysafety@leics.gov.uk

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Leicestershire County Council

Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

November 2024

About SafeLives

We are SafeLives, the UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, for everyone and for good.

We work with organisations across the UK to transform the response to domestic abuse. We want what you would want for your best friend. We listen to survivors, putting their voices at the heart of our thinking. We look at the whole picture for each individual and family to get the right help at the right time to make families everywhere safe and well. And we challenge perpetrators to change, asking 'why doesn't he stop?' rather than 'why doesn't she leave?' This applies whatever the gender of the victim or perpetrator and whatever the nature of their relationship.

Last year alone, nearly 11,000 professionals working on the frontline received our training. Over 65,000 adults at risk of serious harm or murder and more than 85,000 children received support through dedicated multi-agency support designed by us and delivered with partners. In the last three years, over 1,000 perpetrators have been challenged and supported to change by interventions we created with partners, and that's just the start. Together we can end domestic abuse. Forever. For everyone.

Glossary

DA – Domestic Abuse

Dash – Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour-Based Violence

DHR – Domestic Homicide Review

HBV – Honour Based Violence

Idva- Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

IPV – Intimate Partner Violence

LA – Local Authorities

LPB – Local Partnership Board

Marac – Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

MSF – Most Similar Force (Police)

NRPF – No Recourse to Public Funds

VAWG – Violence Against Women and Girls

Content

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 - [Demographic Data](#)
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About this project

Context

SafeLives have been commissioned to provide support and coordination to Leicestershire County Council in carrying out the Safe Accommodation needs assessment in line with their statutory duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

This report outlines our findings, following review and analysis of data provided by agencies and organisations across Leicestershire, and from hearing the voice and experiences of victims and survivors.

We are very grateful to everyone who participated in this needs assessment. Their willingness to share information and expertise helped us immensely with drawing together the detail in this report.

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Project aims and objectives

The project aims were to support the Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Local Partnership in gaining an understanding of the current landscape for safe accommodation to enable effective planning and commissioning.

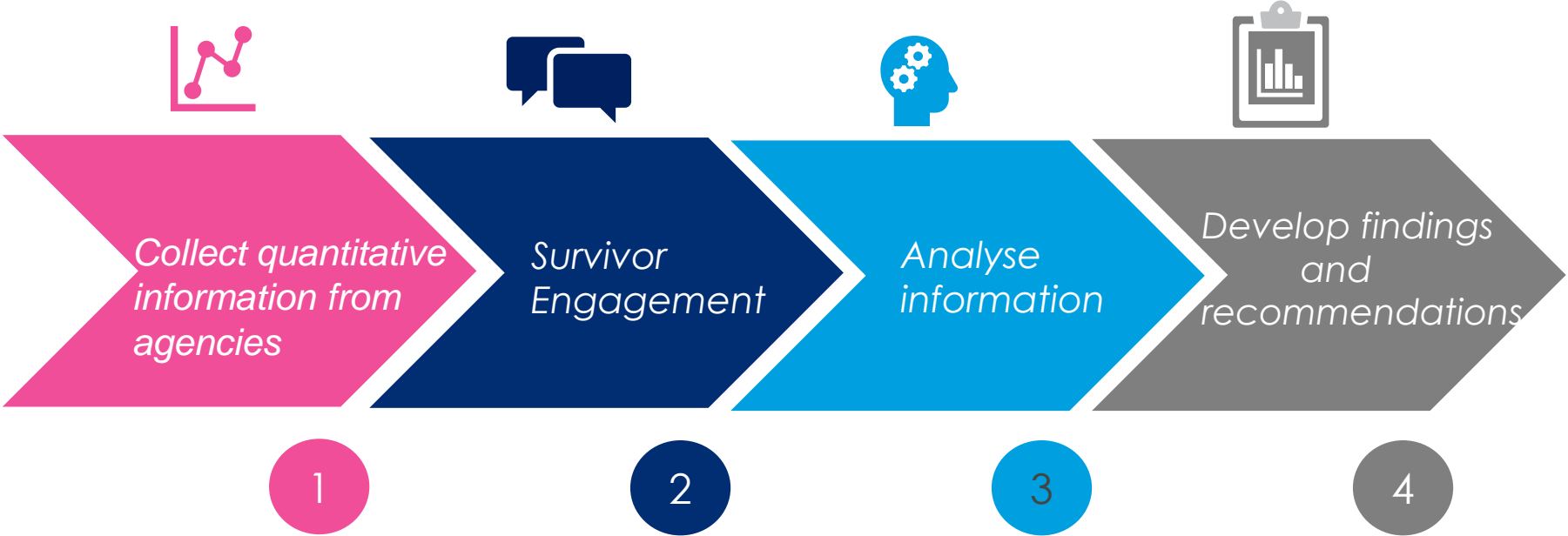
Key objectives were:

- Carry out a needs assessment of safe accommodation across Leicestershire County
- A review of safe accommodation provision
- Identify gaps and needs in safe accommodation provision
- Review and assess implementation of recommendations from the previous needs assessment

Data was collated using the MHCLG needs assessment tool. Comparative data from SafeLives national data sets was used and analysed using a number of SafeLives tools including the prevalence tool.

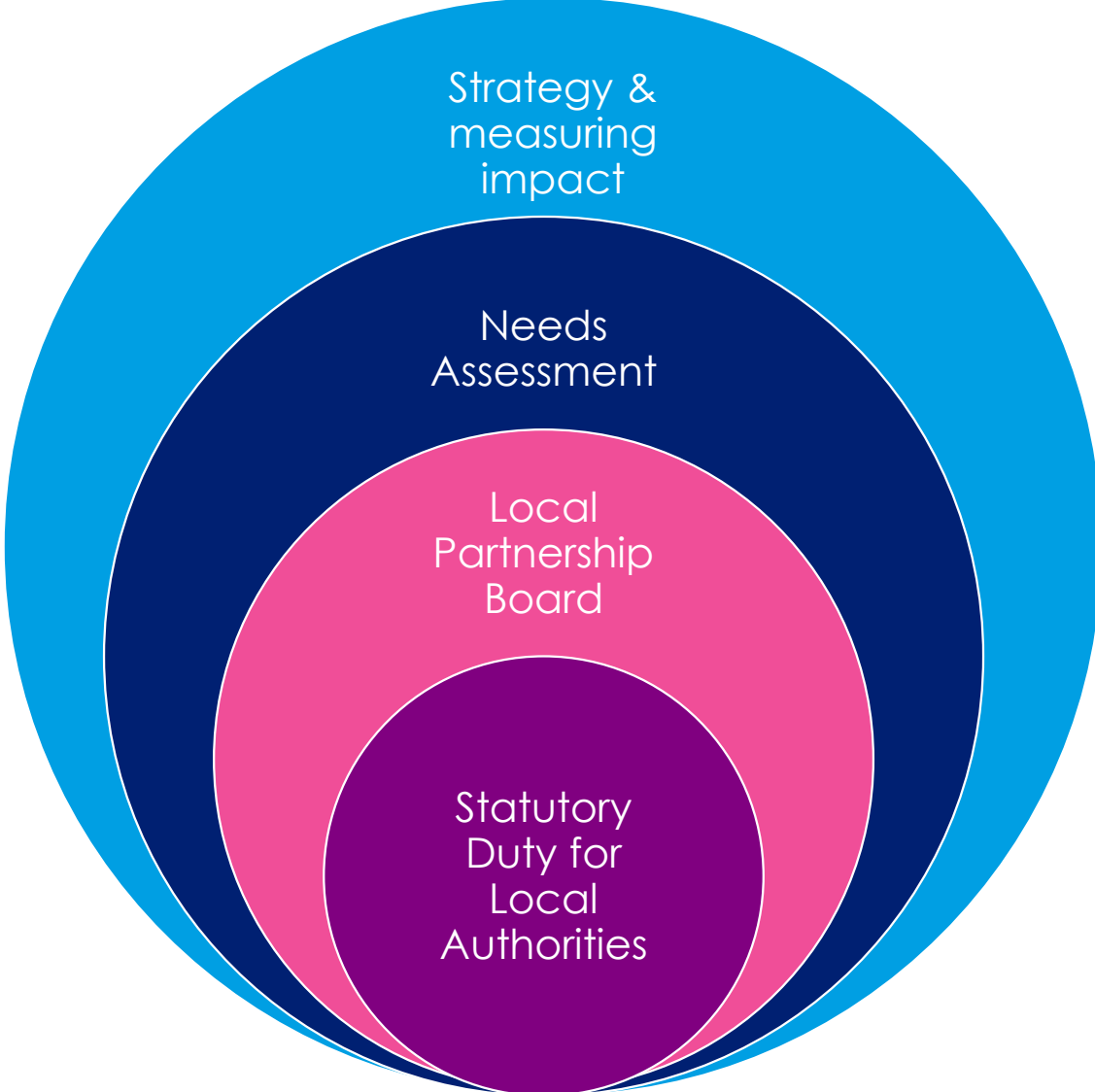
This work will enable Leicestershire County Council to gain a clearer understanding of local need in relation to safe accommodation and will help to inform their domestic abuse strategy and any subsequent commissioning.

Our Approach



A full list of agencies providing data is in Appendix A

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Duty



The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Duty



Statutory Duty for Local Authorities

Statutory duty on Tier One local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children within refuges and other safe accommodation.

A four-part statutory framework for the delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation and provides clarity over governance and accountability.

Local Authorities will be required to appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which will carry out a governance and consultative role as it performs certain specified function.



Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in Leicestershire County, including those who require cross-border support

When - every three years

How - Using the template provided gather data from local sources

Who - Tier 1 LA to carry out through DA Local Partnership Boards, others who must co-operate are Tier 2 LA, DA services, refuge services

What - Mapping current provision for safe accommodation and support

- Mapping current need, who and how much need for safe accommodation and support



Provide advice to Area about its functions under Section 55 of the DA Act

Core membership as set out in the DA Act and statutory guidance with Authentic Voice for both adult and child victims essential.

Responsibilities are

- Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in their area, including those who require cross-border support
- Develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the needs assessment
- Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning / de-commissioning decisions)
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy



Develop and publish: a strategy for provision of support, using the needs assessment

Develop a domestic abuse strategy encompassing the provision of support, informed by the needs assessment

- Implement the strategy through commissioning
- Tier 1 LAs in England must send an annual report to the Secretary of State on how it is realising the strategy
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.





Local Partnership Board

Domestic Abuse Partnership Board Membership

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 sets out a core membership of the Domestic Abuse Partnership board.

Since the previous needs assessment there have been changes made to the board and its membership. The Leicestershire Local Partnership Board has joined with Rutland Council to form the Leicestershire and Rutland Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board.

Having reviewed membership of the boards, there are opportunities to strengthen. It is noted that work to include the Survivor Advisory Board within the Partnership Boards is ongoing.

It is positive to see the inclusion of a specific post to represent the interests of adult victims of domestic abuse. There are opportunities to strengthen the role of the representative of the interests of child victims of domestic abuse which currently sits with one of the local domestic abuse services.

The Echo Project will support with the strengthening of both the adult and child victim representative role, amplifying the authentic voice of victims and survivors within the partnership board.

Another positive is the inclusion of a number of domestic abuse and specialist by and for services. This shows a clear commitment to understanding the differing and intersecting needs of victims and survivors, and the vital role specialist by and for services have in this.



Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

The Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment is a comprehensive tool that enables you to capture data covering a range of themes relating to safe accommodation.

This needs assessment will inform your strategy, not only for safe accommodation but for the domestic abuse system as a whole. It is important to view this in the context of a whole picture approach, not only doing what is necessary but thinking of the art of the possible.

Survivor voice is an essential component of this needs assessment and throughout the requirements of the Statutory Duty. By listening to the authentic, unmediated voice of victims and survivors, we truly understand the barriers, challenges and good practice they experience.

What can we learn, what are our gaps and how can we build on our success.

Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

Within this section we present the assessment for all victims accessing services. This is not inclusive of those accessing safe accommodation as this will be addressed further in the document.

Alongside the Tier 1 data provided by Leicestershire Children and Adult Services, the assessment utilises data submitted from Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC), Oadby & Wigston Borough Council (OWBC), North-West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC), Melton Borough Council (MBC), Harborough District Council (HDC). Blaby District Council (BDC) did provide limited data. Due to queries with the data which we were not able to resolve by the time of writing, we have been unable to use their homelessness data within the needs assessment. Their Domestic Abuse service data has been included. Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) were unable to provide a data return for this assessment.

It is likely that there are further victims about whom we have not been provided information of, and it is important to note that the figures included here only reflect those victims included in the data provided and the ones we are aware of. The data may also include duplicate counting as victims may have approached or been in contact with multiple services/agencies.

Where there are anomalies in the data, these are detailed within the relevant section of the report.

A full list of agencies who supplied data can be found in **Appendix A**

Throughout this work we have used our Prevalence Tool. These figures are estimates calculated with the site's prevalence data and have been rounded down to reflect that they are approximations. The joint prevalence figures for Area were calculated using combined data from two areas. There may be small differences between the joint prevalence figures and the combined totals of prevalence areas from the two areas due to the rounding process.

Further information regarding the Prevalence Tool can be found in the next section of this report.

Prevalence of Domestic Abuse

The Prevalence Tool

What is the prevalence tool?

The SafeLives prevalence tool estimates the prevalence of domestic abuse within local areas. This includes an estimation for the number of victims, perpetrators of abuse, and children in households with partner abuse. It also breaks down the victim estimations into visible victims only, Adult Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) victims only, and marginalised groups of people such as racially minoritised people, LGBT+ people, and disabled people.

How does it work?

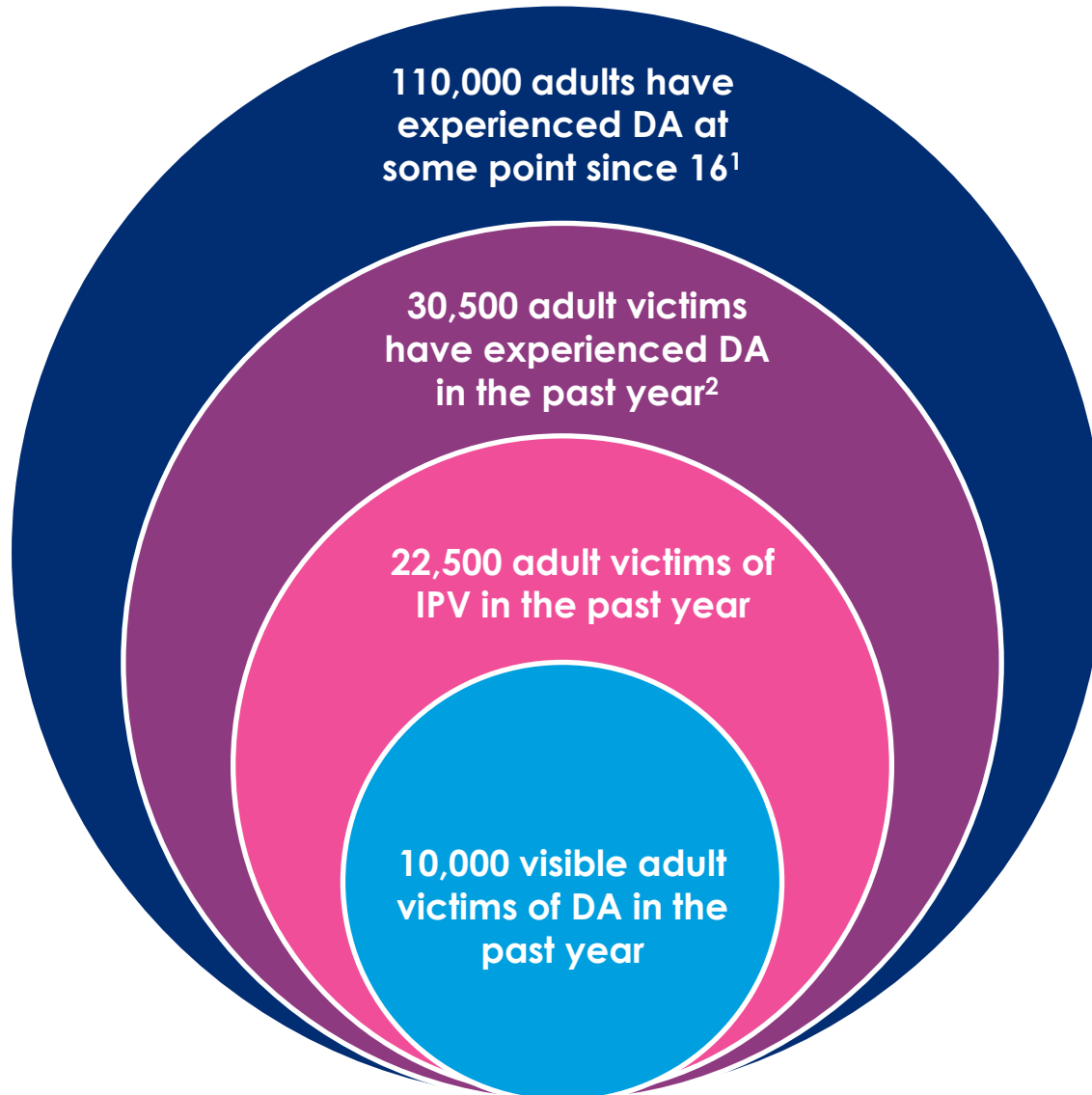
The tool calculates the figures by using several external and internal data sources for estimations of domestic abuse amongst different groups of people. This includes both 'set figures' which are consistent across all local areas, as well as 'local specific data'. The 'set figures' include data from the ONS (Office for National Statistics) including the 'Crime Survey for England and Wales' (2020) and the 'Family Resources Survey', Stonewall data, and SafeLives estimations such as the number of children experiencing abuse in their household. 'Local specific data' includes population data for each area on gender, age and ethnicity taken from the latest Census (2021) survey, as well as data on those at the highest risk of serious harm or homicide taken from the latest Marac dataset.

Please note:

The numbers provided are estimations and have been rounded down. All calculations are based on population data from the 2021 Census. The tool uses the 2020 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), we decided not to use the more recent CSEW version due to various data collection issues which means they have not been defined as national statistics.

Number of victims: Overview

Leicestershire



The SafeLives prevalence tool uses data from the Crime Survey England and Wales (CSEW) merged with local population data. It is in the ONS domestic abuse bulletin and more specifically the prevalence and trends paper. We also use Marac data to capture a true understanding of the prevalence of domestic abuse in a local area.

This details the estimated number of victims who have experienced domestic abuse (DA), not the number of victims who have accessed services. 222

¹Around 15% will have experienced both partner abuse and family abuse

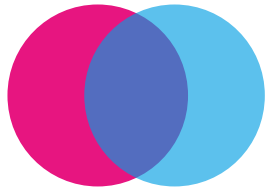
²Around 8% will have experienced both partner abuse and family abuse

Caveat: The CSEW dataset used is for the year ending in March 2020. This is due to a period of suspended data collection during Covid resulting in the March 2022 dataset which has much lower response rates and highly suppressed figures affecting the quality of estimates. CSEW data is to be updated with the July 2023 dataset when available.

Prevalence of adult victims – since the age of 16



We estimate there are **98,000** adult victims in Leicestershire who have experienced domestic abuse at **some point in their lives since the age of 16**



An estimated **15%** of these adult victims will have experienced **both partner and family abuse**



Of the total estimated adult victims **73,500 (68%)** are estimated to be **female**

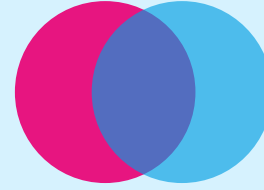


Of the total estimated adult victims **35,000 (32%)** are estimated to be **male**

Prevalence of adult victims – in the past year



We estimate there are **30,000** adult victims in Leicestershire who have experienced domestic abuse at **some point in the last year**



We estimate that around **8%** of those adult victims will have experienced **both partner and family abuse**



Of the total estimated adult victims in the past year, **20,500 (68%)** are estimated to be **female**



Of the total estimated adult victims in the past year, **9,500 (32%)** are estimated to be **male**

Caveat: Older (75+) victim prevalence rates are based on a proxy rate from the CSEW for abuse in the past year only for those aged 60-74. This is because there is no CSEW prevalence rate data for the year ending in March 2020 for those aged 75+.

The sum of females and males may not add up to the total due to rounding.



Prevalence of adult victims – in the past year – visible victims



- Visible victims in past year
- Non-visible victims in past year

Visible victims = the estimated number of adult victims in the local area who have experienced domestic abuse in the past year and who could be considered as wishing to access services. This is as they reported in the CSEW that they had “told other support professional or organisation”. This calculation uses a combination of Marac data to show visible high-risk victims and CSEW data for visible non-high risk victims.

Non-visible victims = the estimated number of adult victims in the local area who have experienced domestic abuse in the past year and who could be considered as not wishing to access service / not visible to services.

Caveat: Marac data recording can vary amongst local areas depending on their Marac processes, for instance some have triaging systems where not all the initial referrals are recorded. These differences will impact on the prevalence estimations for visible high-risk victims.

This shows the estimated number of **visible** adult victims in the local area in the past year. We estimate that a **third (34%) of female victims** and a **quarter (24%) of male victims** in the past year were visible. This calculation uses a combination of Marac data to show visible high-risk victims and data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for visible non-high risk victims as they reported in the CSEW that they had “told other support professional or organisation”.

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Prevalence of adult victims – in the past year – marginalised groups



We estimate that there were **6,000 Young victims** aged 16-24¹

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on Young People and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **6,000 Older victims** aged 60+²

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on Older People and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **1,500 Black, Asian and racially minoritised victims** who have experienced domestic abuse in the past year³.

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on 'Honour'-based Violence and Forced marriage and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **7,500 Disabled victims** of domestic abuse in the past year

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on Disabled people and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **5,500 LGB+ victims** of domestic abuse in the past year⁴

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on LGB+ people and DA](#)

1. The CSEW only provides prevalence rates for 16-19 and 20-24 year olds, therefore an average of these two was calculated for the 18-24 group.

2. Older (75+) victim prevalence rates are based on a proxy rate from the CSEW for abuse in the past year only for those aged 60-74. This is because there is no CSEW prevalence rate data for the year ending in March 2020 for those aged 75+.

3. The CSEW does not accurately reflect the impact of domestic abuse on Black Asian and racially minoritised people, thus, we multiply the number of victims with the Black Asian and racially minoritised proportion of the area including the following: 'Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh', 'Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African', 'Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups', 'White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller', 'White: Roma', and 'Other ethnic group' (data obtained from the ONS census 2021)

4 The prevalence statistic for LGB+ people is based on the CSEW aggregate for Gay and Lesbian people. It does not include trans people as the sample size is too small

Prevalence – in the past year – partner abuse (IPV)



We estimate that there were **22,500** adult victims in the local area who have experienced partner abuse in the past year¹.

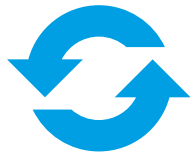


We estimate that there were **17,000 children living in a household with partner abuse** in the past year²

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on Parenting and DA](#) and our [Spotlights on Young People and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **18,000 people using abusive behaviours** in their intimate partner relationships in the past year in the local area



Of those **20%** are estimated to be **serial perpetrators of domestic abuse**³

1. Older (75+) victim prevalence rates are based on a proxy rate from the CSEW dataset for the year ending March 2020 for those aged 60-74 only. This is because there is no CSEW prevalence rate data for the year ending in March 2020 for those aged 75+.

2. Uses estimations of 41% of households with partner abuse having children in with an average of 1.85 children per household – this data comes from the ONS, with details in SafeLives '[A safe fund' report](#).

3. Robinson, A.L., Clancy, A. and Hanks, S., 2014. Prevalence and characteristics of serial domestic abuse perpetrators: Multi-agency evidence from Wales.

Overview of Data

Overview 2021 – 2022

15,019

 Total number of
 adult & child victims

Of these 15,019 records



Age 18 - 64



Under 18



Over 65



Unknown Age

Female	76.9%
Male	19.9%
Non Binary	0.05%
Trans*	0.02%
Other	0.03%
Unknown	0.2%



228

1. Those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in DA Relationships and/or victims of IPV.
 2. Adult Victims only

Overview 2022 – 2023

14,815



Total number of adult & child victims

Of these 14,815 records



Age 18 - 64



Under 18



Over 65



Unknown Age

Female	78.1%
Male	20.3%
Non Binary	0.03%
Trans*	0.04%
Other	0.04%
Unknown	1.5%



229

1. Those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in DA Relationships and/or victims of IPV.
 2. Adult Victims only

Overview 2023 – 2024

16,738



Total number of adult & child victims

Of these 16,738 records



Age 18 - 64



Under 18



Over 65



Unknown Age

Female	77.3%
Male	20.6%
Non Binary	0.06%
Trans*	0.04%
Other	0.04%
Unknown	1.6%



230

1. Those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in DA Relationships and/or victims of IPV.
 2. Adult Victims only

Number of Victims

The SafeLives Prevalence Tool, developed in line with our research, estimates that **110,000 adults** in Leicestershire have experienced Domestic Abuse at some point in their lives since the age of 16, with around **15%** experiencing both partner and family abuse.

It also estimates that **30,500 adult victims** have experienced Domestic Abuse in the last year, with around **8%** experiencing both partner and family abuse and **17,000 children** living in a household with partner abuse in the last year.

The total number of adult and child victims identified in the data sets provided by services/agencies in Leicestershire in each of the 3 years the needs assessment covers are:

2021-22



15,019

2022-23



14,815

2023-24



16,738

The overall number of victims has **decreased by 1.4%** from years **2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23**. However, there was a **13% increase** from years **2022 – 23 to 2023 – 24**.

There has been a significant increase in the number of victims identified by agencies since the previous needs assessment. An overall increase of **68%** from the end of the previous assessment to the end of this assessment period. There will be many reasons for this increase including improved identification of domestic abuse, improved or new ways of recording on systems, an increased number of services working with victims such as the housing link workers and more agencies contributing to this assessment.

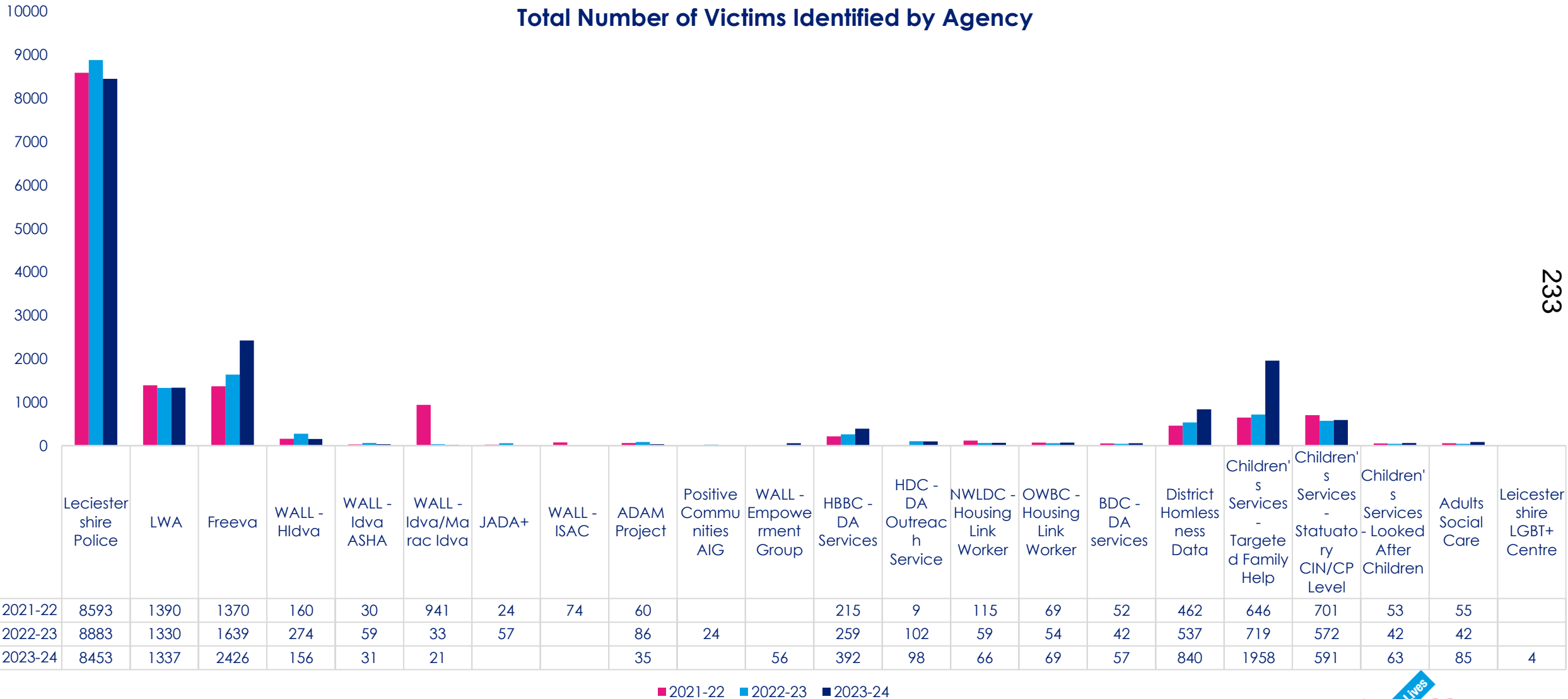
However, it should be noted that there may be an element of duplicate recording i.e. the helpline and the DALs service may both record a victim's details.

*These figures are estimates calculated with the site's prevalence data and so have been rounded down to reflect that they are approximations

Data Trends

Identification by Agency

Total Number of Victims Identified by Agency



233

■ 2021-22 ■ 2022-23 ■ 2023-24



Identification by Agency

This table on the previous page details the number of victims identified broken down by agency.

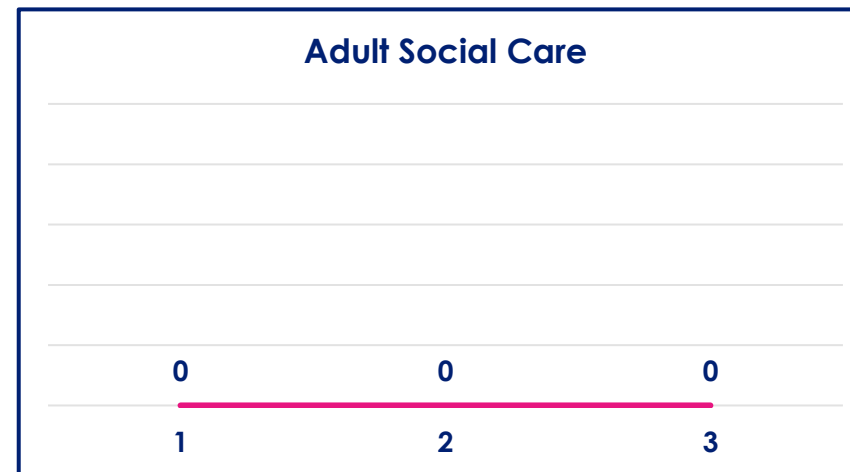
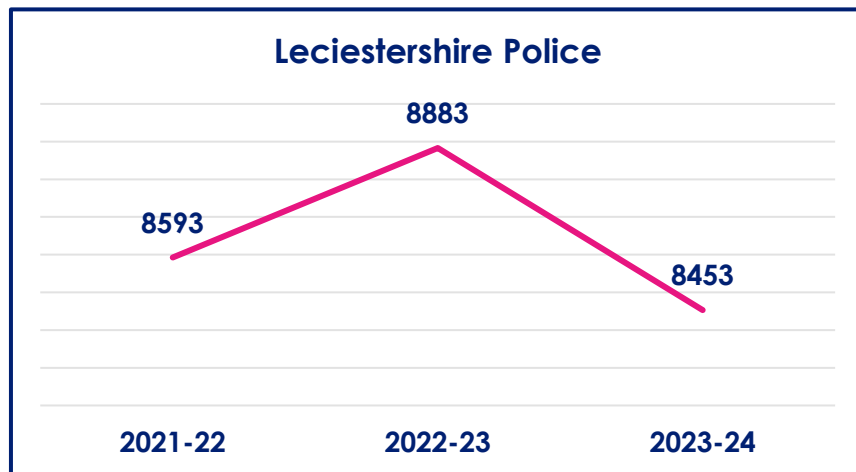
Leicestershire Police, LWA and Freeva have the highest levels of identification of victims in the first two years. Leicestershire Police, Freeva and Targeted Family Help have the highest identification for the final year.

We have been advised that a new system was implemented within Targeted Family Help in the year 2023 – 24 and therefore a new recording a collection system which may account for some of the increase.

The following section will look at the data trends for individual agencies in more detail.

Trends

Victims identified by Service



The number of victims identified by Leicestershire Police increased by **3.4%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 – 23. It then decreased by **4.8%** in 2023 – 24, which is **1.6%** fewer victims being identified than in 2021 – 22.

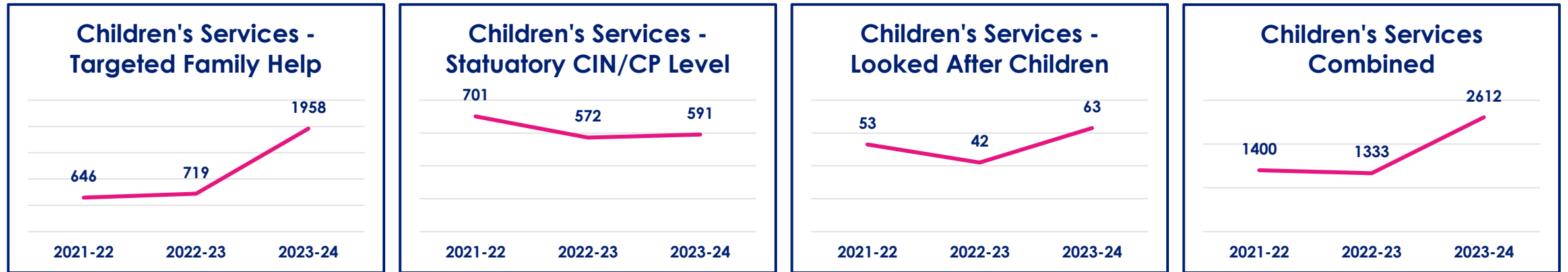
However, when we consider the previous Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment, the number of victims identified by Leicestershire Police was **6979** in 2020 – 21, meaning there has been an increase of **23.1%** from the end of the previous assessment to the first year of this assessment, and an increase **21.1%** victims being identified to the final year of this assessment.

Adult Social Care also saw a decrease in the number of victims identified by **23.6%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23. it then increased significantly by **102.4%** in 2023 – 24.

When we consider the previous Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment, the number of victims identified by Adult Social Care was **41** in 2020 – 21, meaning there has been an increase of **35.1%** from the end of the previous assessment to the first year of this assessment, before returning to a similar level in 2022 – 23, with an increase **107.3%** victims being identified to the final year of this assessment.

Trends

Victims identified by Children's Services



In the previous Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment, Children's Services provided SafeLives with their first response data (Contacts and Referrals), where the primary reason for contact is Domestic Abuse and Children's Social Care Assessments where domestic abuse is a factor. This data only provided information regarding the children identified.

Within this assessment we have been provided with data sets for victims identified by

- Targeted Family Help Service, which provides information on both the adult and child
- Statutory Child in Need and Child Protection Assessments, which provides information for only the children
- Looked after Children, which provides information for only the children

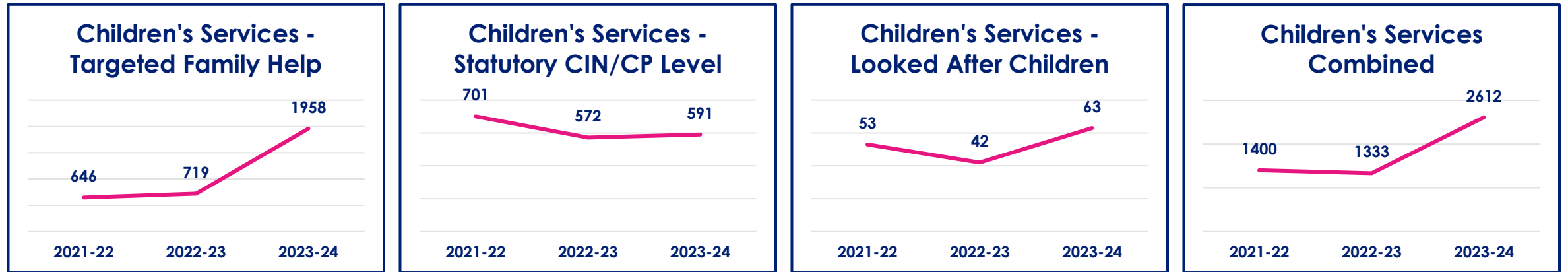
For the Targeted Family Help Service, we can see that the number of victims identified increased by **11.3%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. It increased again by **172.3%** in 2023 - 24 with the number of children identified increasing from **363** on 2021 - 22 to **393** in 2022 - 23 and **1299** in 2023 - 24.

For those children receiving statutory Child in Need and Child Protection Assessments, this figure decreased from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23 by **18.4%** before increasing slightly by **3.32%**. This provides an overall decrease of **15.7%**.

For Looked after Children, there is a decrease of **20.8%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. It then increased by **50%** in 2023 - 24.

Trends

Victims identified by Children's Services



We can see that overall there has been a significant increase of **86.6%** in the number of victims identified across the time period of this assessment, most of which can be attributed to the increase in those identified by Targeted Family Help. However, this is lower than the number identified in the previous Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment with **6754 children** identified within the first response data and **1011** Children's Social Care Assessments where domestic abuse is a factor completed in 2020 - 21. It should be noted that during that year there was a change in practice by the Children's Social Care assessment team to 'including other children in the family' as part of their case management records.

Due to the different ways of providing the data, it is difficult to fully determine how or why there is a significant difference and we would recommend exploring this further and aligning the data sets provided.

237

Trends

Victims identified by Domestic Abuse Service

Service Offer

Victim's services has undergone a period of change across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland with a new service contract starting on the 1st April 2022.

There is now a Helpline and Engagement service managed by Freeva which is the Front Door for all referrals and attend Marac, a Domestic Abuse Locality service consisting of a Complex Need service, and an Outreach service managed by LWA and the Safe Accommodation provision managed by WALL. Due to the set up and referral pathway, there may be an element of double counting.

While the traditional Idva provision ended with WALL at that time, there continues to be a small team of specialist Idvas available such as a Marac Idva, Hospital Idva and Idva (ASHA) for those from Black, Asian and Racially Minoritised communities within WALL however it should be noted that these contracts ended with WALL in September 2023. The Marac Idva and Health Idva roles transferred to Freeva and the ASHA Idva role funding ceased in 2023.

The JADA+ project provided by WALL ran during the first two years of this needs assessment however, this funding also ended in 2022 – 23.

The Adam Project is a male only support service provided by WALL.

Data Collection

LWA have provided data regarding both adult and child victims. Freeva have provided limited data regarding children (n. 6 in 2021 – 22, n. 9 in 2022 – 23 and n. 21 in 2023 – 24) and it is unclear if they relate to children who have been referred as a victim in their own relationship or as a children experiencing domestic abuse within the household. In addition, the data has not been separated by service – ie Helpline, Marac Idva, Health Idva etc where applicable.

Other than for the JADA+ project, WALL have not been able to provide data regarding children. The exception of two 16 – 17-year-olds in 2022 – 23 and six in 2023 – 24, one age 12 – 15-year-old and 5 16 – 17-year-olds. They were supported by the Health and Marac Idvas.

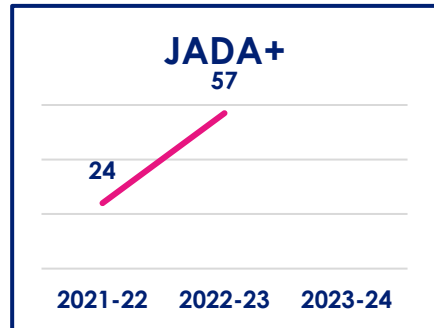
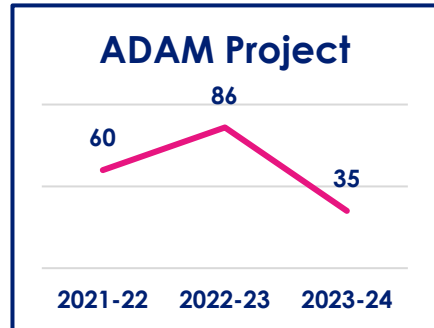
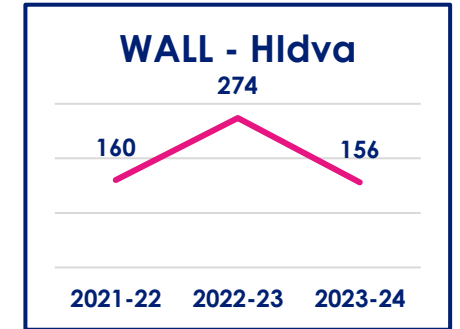
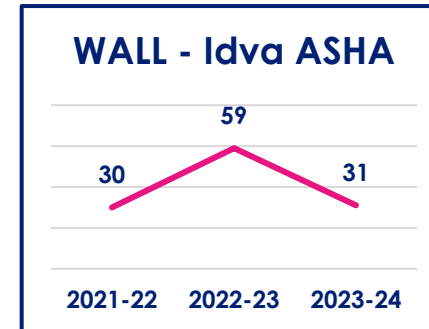
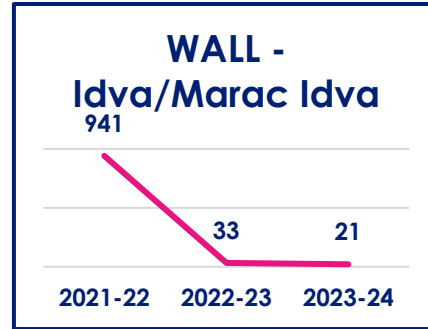
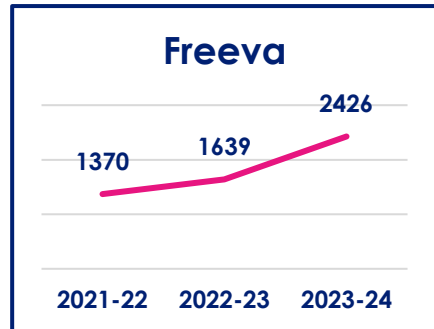
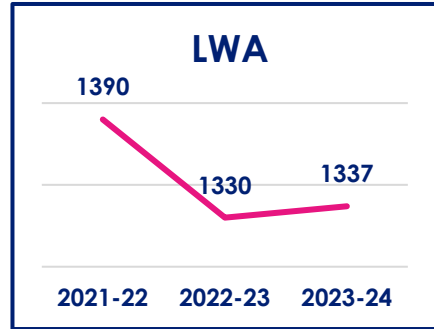
It should also be noted that all data provided by WALL **is LLR wide**, barring the District Housing Link Workers. This data is not currently broken down by locality so we cannot say, with certainty how many of the victims identified live in Leicestershire.

This is an area WALL are working to rectify and aim to be able to provide a breakdown in future years.

Due to the new service offer and ways the data is presented, again it is difficult to compare to the previous assessment.

Trends

Victims identified by Domestic Abuse Service



The number of victims identified by LWA decreased by **4.3%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. It then increased slightly by **0.5%** in 2023 - 24.

The number of victims identified by Freeva increased by **19.6%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23 and by a further **48%** in 2023 - 24. As previously mentioned, the change in service provide may account for the significant change.

For WALL's services, there has been a significant decrease in the Idva/Marac Idva figures which is a result of the change in how the services are commissioned and provided.

For the Idva ASHA service, there was an increase of **96.7%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. Whilst it shows a decrease in 2023 - 24, this contract ended part way through the year therefore is not a true reflection.

This is also the case for the Health Idva however we can see an increase of **71.3%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. We know that Health plays an essential role in addressing domestic abuse and it is positive to see a Health Idva in post supporting victims in a number of sites across the LLR.

The JADA+ Project ran across the first two years of this needs assessment. Data shows that there was an increase of **137.5%** of children identified by this service before funding ended.

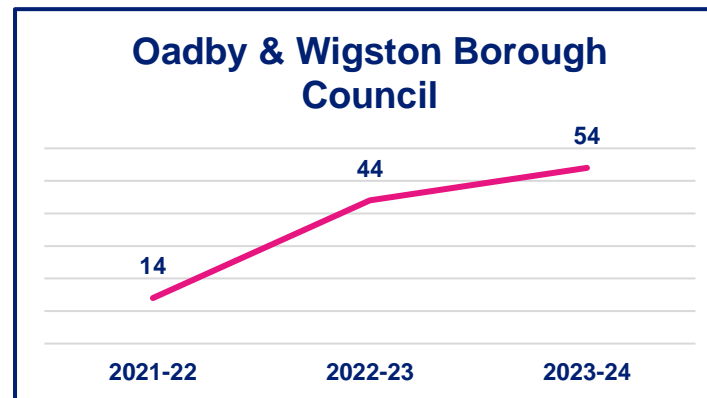
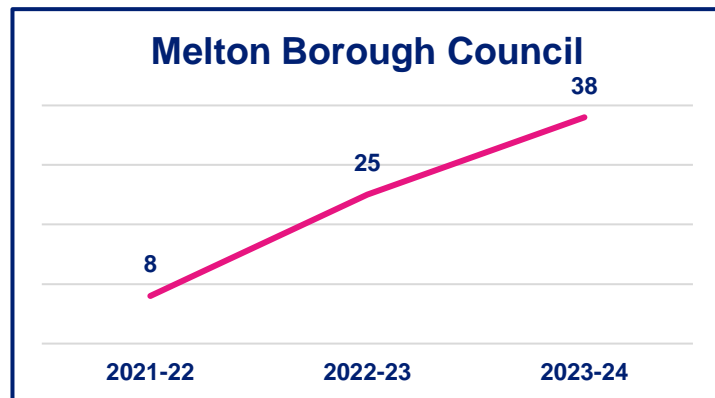
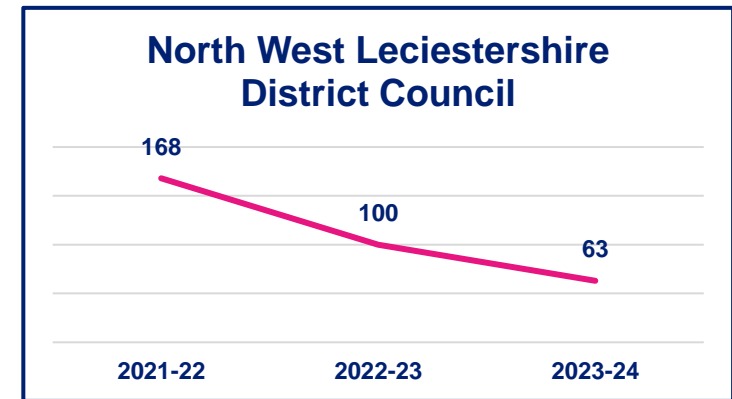
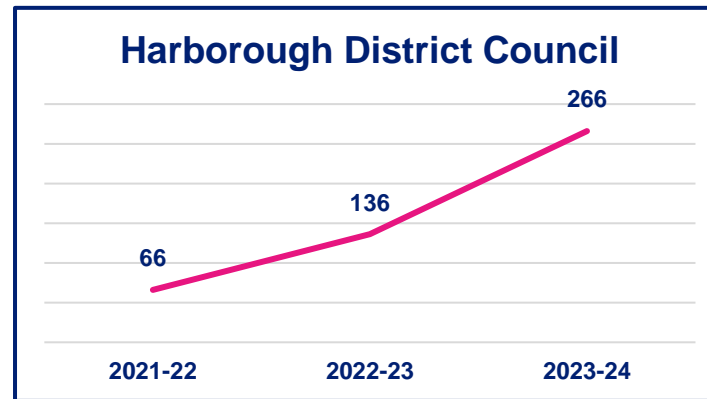
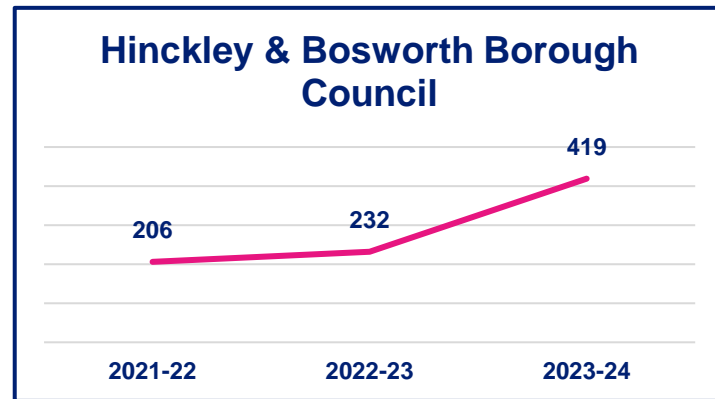
The ADAM Project saw an increase of **43.3%** of victims identified from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. It then decreased by **59.3%** in 2023 - 24.

Trends

Victims identified by District Homelessness Teams

Data was provided by five of the seven districts homelessness departments. Unfortunately, Charnwood Borough Council have been unable to provide a data set for this needs assessment. Blaby District Council provided data of their domestic abuse service and not their homelessness team which is reviewed further in the report. They have however stated during partnership board meetings that they have seen a considerable increase in the number of homelessness presentations due to domestic abuse. Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and Melton Borough Council did not provide data regarding children or other members of the household included on the housing application.

Data shows that areas have seen an increase in the number of victims identified across these needs assessment with the exception being North West Leicestershire District Council.



Trends

Victims identified by District Homelessness Teams

The number of victims identified by HBBC increased by **12.6%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 before increasing further by **80.6%** in 2023 – 23. It should be noted that the number of victims identified in the final year of the previous needs assessment was **301** therefore there has been a decrease of **31.6%** between the previous needs assessment and this one.

HDC saw an increase of **106.1%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 with a further increase of **95.6%** the following year. The number of victims identified in the final year of the previous needs assessment was **48** resulting in an overall increase of **454.2%** in the number of victims identified from the final year of the previous assessment to the final year of this assessment.

As mentioned, NWLDC is an outlier in this area. Whilst there was an initial increase from the previous needs assessment of **330.8%**, this has steadily decreased by **40.5%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 and then a further **37%** in 2023 – 24. However it should be noted that the number of victims identified in 2023 – 24 is still **61.5%** higher than the figure in the final year of the previous assessment.

In OWBC, there was an initial decrease from the previous needs assessment of **62.2%**, the number of victims identified has increased year on year by **214.3%** and **22.7%** respectively.

Due to the low figures reported by MBC in the last needs assessment, we are unable to provide a comparison. However we can see that there has been an increase of **212.5%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 and a further **52%** in 2023 – 24

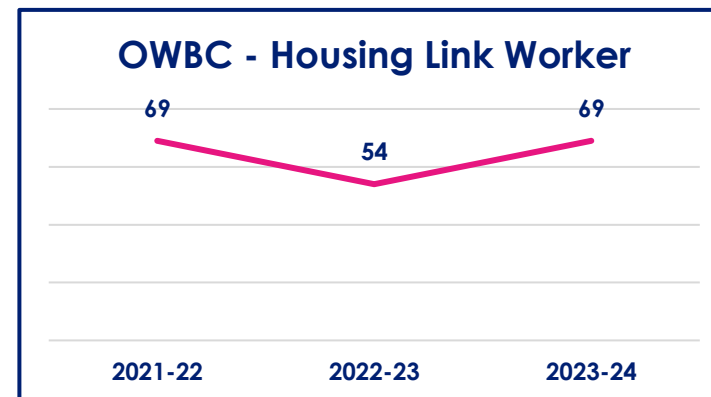
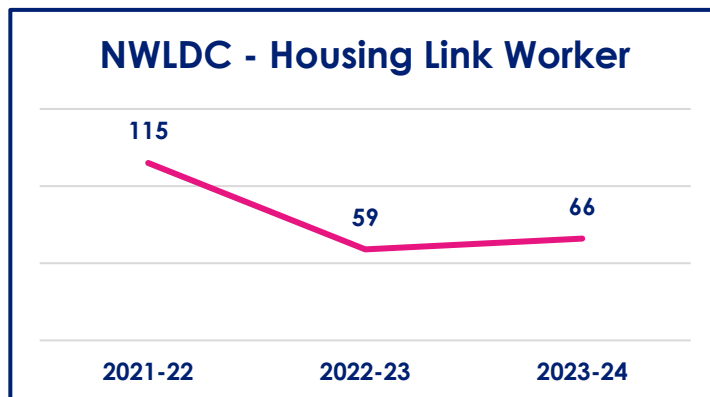
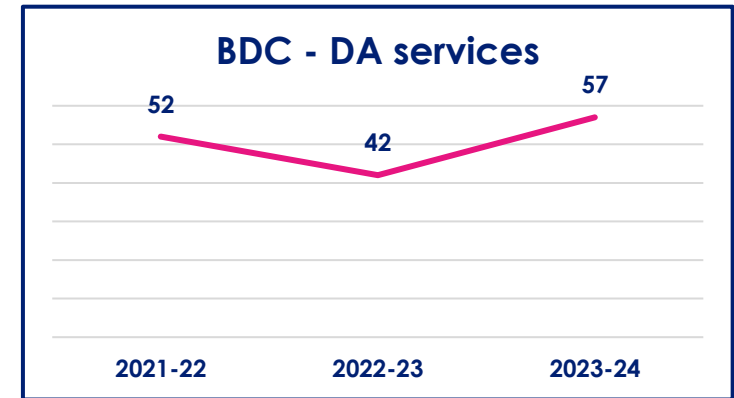
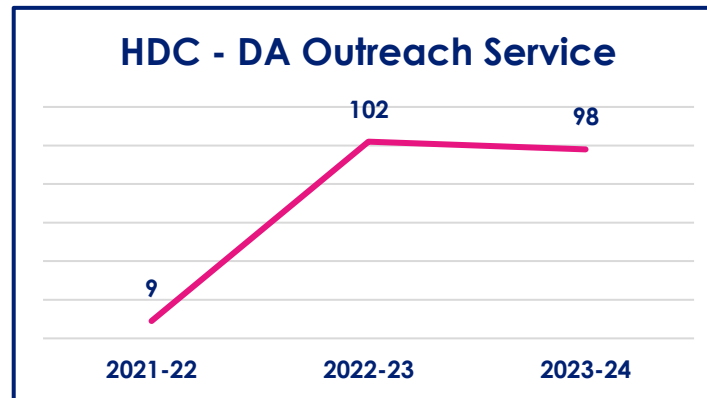
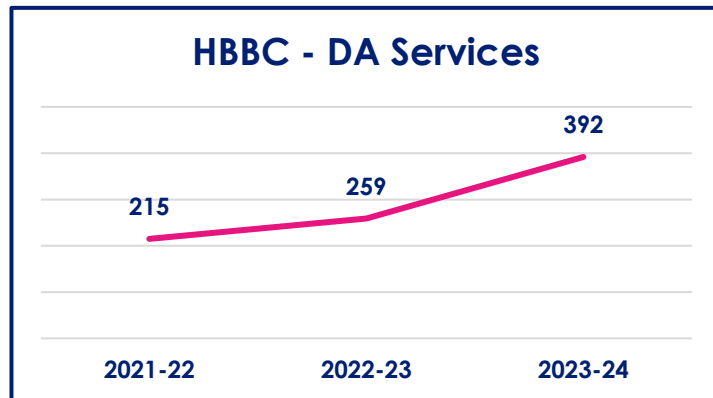
Trends

Victims identified by District Domestic Abuse Service

Hinckley and Bosworth, Harborough and Blaby District Councils provide an in house domestic abuse service.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and North West Leicestershire District Council have commissioned WALL to provide a Housing Link Worker who are based within their homelessness teams. These roles are funded via the funding received by Leicestershire CC from The Department for Levelling Up Communities and Housing, now renamed Ministry Housing, Communities and Local Government who allocated funding to each local authority for the delivery of the Safe Accommodation duty.

Only Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council provided data regarding children.



Trends

Victims identified by District Domestic Abuse Service

The number of victims identified by HBBC increased by **20.5%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 before increasing further by **51.4%** in 2023 – 23. In contrast to the HBBC Homelessness team, the Domestic Abuse Service saw an increase of **15% in** the number of victims identified in the final year of the previous needs assessment and the first year of this assessment

HDC saw an increase of **1033.3%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 with a slight decrease **3.9%** in 2023 – 24. We do not have data for this service from the previous assessment.

BDC saw a decrease of **19.2%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 before increasing in 2023 – 24 by **35.7%** however this is only **9.6%** increase from the first year of this assessment. We do not have data for this service from the previous assessment.

Again, NWLDC is an outlier in this area following a similar trend to the homelessness data. This post was created following the previous needs assessment and identified **115** victims in 2021 – 22. This decreased by **48.7%** in 2022 – 23 however did increase by **11.9%** to a number similar to the number of victims identified by the homelessness teams.

OWBC follows a similar pattern to BDC with a decrease of **21.7%**, from 2021- 22 to 2022 – 23, before increasing by the same percentage in 2023 – 24.

There are differences in the number of victims identified by the Housing Link Workers and the Homelessness teams. It would be of benefit to explore this further to understand why that may be and what steps can be taken to ensure that all victims identified by the Homelessness teams are offered the support of the Housing Link Worker and vice versa. This should be monitored on a regular basis for example at the Chief Housing Officer Group.

Marac & Police Data

Marac Cases

At Marac, the most high risk cases are discussed. SafeLives was commissioned to complete a Marac Review across Leicestershire Police and the LLR which was shared in the summer of 2022. This provided a number of recommendations including recommendations regarding referral pathways and the number of cases. We would advise that this be revisited to measure the progress of those recommendations and this data be considered in that process.

Leicestershire Police Force covers three local authority areas each with its own Marac - Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. For the purposes of this report, we will only be focusing on the Leicestershire Marac data covering April to March for years 2021 – 22, 2022 – 23 and 2023 – 24.

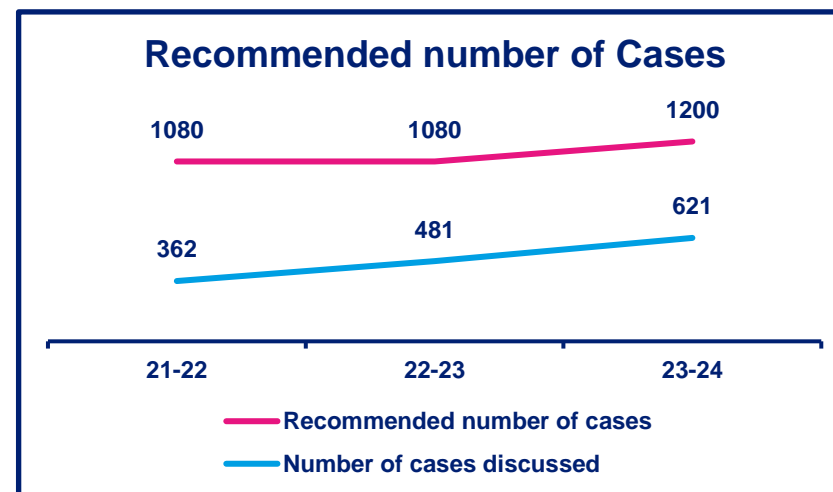
The recommended number of cases for Leicestershire is **1080** per year in **years 2021-22 and 22/23**, and **1200** in **year 23/24** based on the SafeLives recommendation of **40** cases per 10,000 adult female population.

As the adult (16+) female population recorded in the census increased between 2011 and 2021 in Leicestershire, this has resulted in an increase in the recommended number of cases for this Marac.

The table below shows the number of cases heard, inclusive of repeat cases, per year and the number of children within those households.

This will be explored further in this chapter

Year	Number of Cases	Number of Children	Recommended number of cases
2021/22	362	441	1080
2022/23	481	583	1080
2023/24	621	795	1200



Marac Data – Number of Cases

2021 - 22

	SafeLives Recommends	UK wide	MSF Group	Leicestershire Police	Leicestershire Marac
Cases per 10,000 adult female population	40	47	39	19	13
Year on Year change in number of cases		6%	4%	-13%	-7%
Repeat rate	28-40%	33%	29%	36%	36%
Police referrals	60-75%	67%	60%	68%	65%
Non police referrals	25-40%	33%	40%	32%	35%

2022 - 23

Cases per 10,000 adult female population	40	47	39	22	18
Year on Year change in number of cases		-2%	0%	20%	33%
Repeat rate	28-40%	33%	31%	33%	37%
Police referrals	60-75%	66%	60%	67%	68%
Non police referrals	25-40%	34%	40%	33%	32%

2023 - 24

Cases per 10,000 adult female population	40	46	40	27	21
Year on Year change in number of cases		-1%	9%	34%	29%
Repeat rate	28-40%	32%	30%	36%	38%
Police referrals	60-75%	64%	58%	68%	68%
Non police referrals	25-40%	36%	42%	32%	32%

Marac Data

The tables on the previous page show how the Marac in Leicestershire performs in comparison to its most similar force group and national counterparts across the time period of this assessment.

The recommended number of cases for Leicestershire is **1080** per year in **years 2021-22 and 22/23**, and **1200** in **year 23/24** based on the SafeLives recommendation of **40** cases per 10,000 adult female population.

The number of cases discussed within Leicestershire remains significantly below the recommended figure, with **13 cases** per 10,000 adult females heard in 2021 – 22, increasing slightly to **18 cases** in 2022 – 23 and increasing again to **21 cases** in 2023 – 24.

The repeat rate referrals, police referrals, and non police referrals are all in line with the recommended number of cases SafeLives recommends.

Marac Data – Equality

2021 - 22

	SafeLives Recommends	UK wide	MSF Group	Leicestershire Police	Leicestershire
Black, Asian and racially minoritised population		17.9%	14.5%	23.4%	8.6%
Black, Asian and racially minoritised cases		15.3%	10.4%	20%	8.6%
LGBT+ Cases	2.5-8.5%	1.4%	1.7%	1.9%	1.1%
Victims with disabilities	23% or above	8.5%	11.1%	14.3%	15.2%
Male Victims	5-10%	6.2%	5.5%	4.5%	4.1%

2022 - 23

Black, Asian and racially minoritised population		17.7%	14.5%	23.4%	8.6%
Black, Asian and racially minoritised cases		16%	11.3%	19.3%	9.4%
LGBT+ Cases	2.5-8.5%	1.5%	1.4%	1.8%	1.5%
Victims with disabilities	23% or above	9.1%	13.7%	32.5%	36%
Male Victims	5-10%	6.3%	5.9%	6.5%	5.6%

2023 - 24

Black, Asian and racially minoritised population		22.5%	20.9%	32.7%	13.4%
Black, Asian and racially minoritised cases		14.8%	13.2%	16%	9.7%
LGBT+ Cases	2.5-8.5%	1.7%	1.6%	1.9%	1%
Victims with disabilities	23% or above	9.4%	14%	21.8%	24.2%
Male Victims	5-10%	6.4%	6.2%	5.1%	5.6%

Marac Data – Equality

The tables on the previous page show how the Marac in Leicestershire performs in relation to marginalised groups.

We would expect referrals to Marac to be representative of the local Black, Asian and racially minoritised population. As previously stated, the updates census information has resulted in changes to, not only the recommended case figures, but also the population figures.

For the years 2021 – 22 and 2022 – 23, our research shows the Black, Asian and racially minoritised population for Leicestershire to be **8.6%**. The percentage of Marac cases heard where the victim was Black, Asian or from a racially minoritised community was **8.6% and 9.4%** respectively and in line with population data.

The population figure increased to **13.7%** in 2023 – 24 while the percentage of cases remain similar to previous years at **9.7%**. Therefore, while there the figure has been increasing, it is now below the recommended figure.

The SafeLives recommendation is that **2.5% - 5.8%** of cases heard at Marac are LGBT+ victims. The highest percentage was **1.5%** in 2022 – 2023, less than half the lowest end of the recommended levels.

The recommended level of Marac cases where the victim has a disability is **23% or above**. In the previous needs assessment period, the figures were far below that figure. Therefore, it is positive to see an increase in the identification of cases where the victim has a disability and that this is being recorded appropriately with **15.2%** of cases being heard in 2021 – 22 and **36%** and **24.2%** in subsequent years. We will discuss this further in the disability section of this report.

For male victims, the lowest number of cases was in 2021- 22 with **4.1%**, before increasing to **5.6%** in 2022 – 23 and remaining the same the following year which is within the recommended range.

Police Data

2021/22



	Leicestershire Police	East Midlands	MSF1	MSF2	England and Wales
DA Crimes & Incidents	21,641	102,251	20,781	21,402	1,500,369
Crimes & Incidents Per 1000 population	20	21	18	18	25
DA Crimes	15,481	68,702	15,397	12,829	910,980
Crimes per 1000	14	14	13	11	15
% of all crimes recorded	15%	17%	15%	17%	17%

2022/23



DA Crimes & Incidents	24,145	109,177	21,438	20,850	1,453,867
Crimes & Incidents Per 1000 population	22	22	19	17	24
DA Crimes	16,927	72,157	16,255	12,565	889,918
Crimes per 1000	15	15	14	10	15
% of all crimes recorded	16%	17%	15%	16%	16%

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Police Data

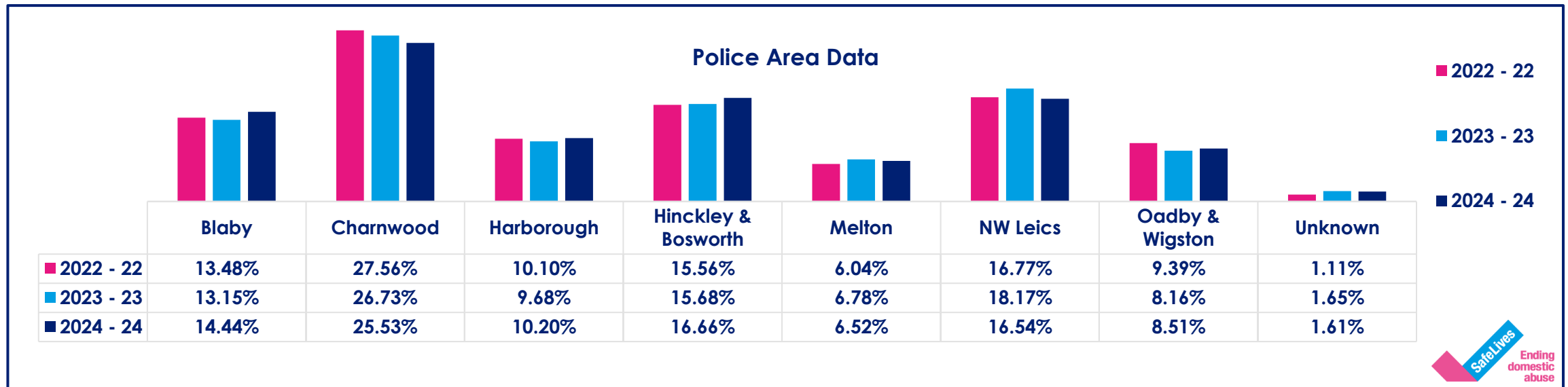
The tables above show a comparison of the number of incidents and crimes reported across Leicestershire Police force wide, two Most Similar Forces and across the East Midlands and England and Wales.

The comparison data is not currently available for the 2023 – 2024 period, however we know that across Leicestershire Police there were **8453 domestic abuse victims identified**

Leicestershire Police domestic abuse crimes and incidents is **20** per 1000 population in 2021/22 and **22** per 1000 population in 2022/23. This is higher than the two MSF areas (2021/22, **18 and 18**, 2022/23 **19 and 17**) and in line with the regional rate. However, this is lower than the national rate of domestic abuse crimes and incidences at **25** per 1000 population in 2021/22, reducing to **24** per 1000 population in 2022/23.

There has been an increase of **11.5%** in the number of domestic abuse related incidents and crimes recorded by Leicestershire Police from 2021/22 – 2022/23, and an increase of **9.3%** in domestic abuse crimes from years 2021/22 to 2022/23.

In terms of location, Charnwood has the highest number of victims identified by the police across all three years which is the same as the previous needs assessment. However, this has decreased year on year with Hinckley and Bosworth seeing the opposite and increasing year on year. The lowest number of reported victims are in Melton followed by Oadby and Wigston.



Domestic Homicides:

21/22

- North-West Leicestershire
- Hinckley & Bosworth

22/23

- Charnwood

23/24

- Melton

In the three-year period that the needs assessment covers there were four domestic homicides across Leicestershire County Council.

The DHRs that occurred in North-West Leicestershire, Charnwood, and Melton are still currently ongoing and therefore these will not be discussed in the report.

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However, the homicide that occurred in Hinckley & Bosworth was undertaken by a joint Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and falls under Blaby and Hinckley & Bosworth CSP. This is discussed on the following slide.

Domestic Homicide Reviews

Blaby and Hinckley & Bosworth 2021: The DHR concluded that there were no professional missteps or omissions identified that may have contributed to the death of the victim, and noted there was insufficient evidence to indicate that domestic abuse was a factor in the homicide.

Recommendations from the report included the following;

- To ensure the Carer's Strategy refresh that was presented at Leicestershire County Council Cabinet in 2022 is making timely and sufficient progress to ensure carers get the assessment and support they need.
- To ensure all agencies have up to date training on domestic abuse in accordance with the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and this remains effective for workforces.

SafeLives agrees with the recommendations and would ensure that relevant domestic abuse training includes information on supporting carers and making sure they are included within risk assessments, in line with our Whole Picture Strategy.

However, SafeLives would also recommend more could have been done to understand whether domestic abuse was a factor throughout this homicide. We know from previous DHRs on older people¹ that the potential for violence in relationships increases when an intimate partner/family member is acting as a carer for the other. In this instance, the victim had previously been harmed during a self-harm incident from 'Bob', and no further questioning from staff around domestic abuse, or other support occurred. Support could have been implemented to help the victim deal with the health struggles Bob was having, and create a safety plan around this.

We also know from the Safe Later Lives report² that older people have extra barriers to disclosing domestic abuse such as a generational understanding of domestic abuse, longstanding abuse occurring, and systems not being accessible for older people. Therefore, agencies need to consider this when enquiring about domestic abuse and seeing warning signs. Further training on ensuring services are accessible to older people, and recognising signs in older people would be beneficial.

We can see there is a rise in numbers of older people in the population within Leicestershire County Council and therefore a deeper understanding of the dynamics of domestic abuse in older relationships is essential.

1. <https://safelives.org.uk/news-views/what-domestic-homicide-reviews-tell-us-about-the-abuse-of-older-people/>
2. <https://safelives.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Safe-Later-Lives-Older-people-and-domestic-abuse-Spotlight.pdf>

Demographic Data

Population

During the previous needs assessment, Census Data was used from the 2011 Census. Following the 2021 Census we have used this data set within this needs assessment.

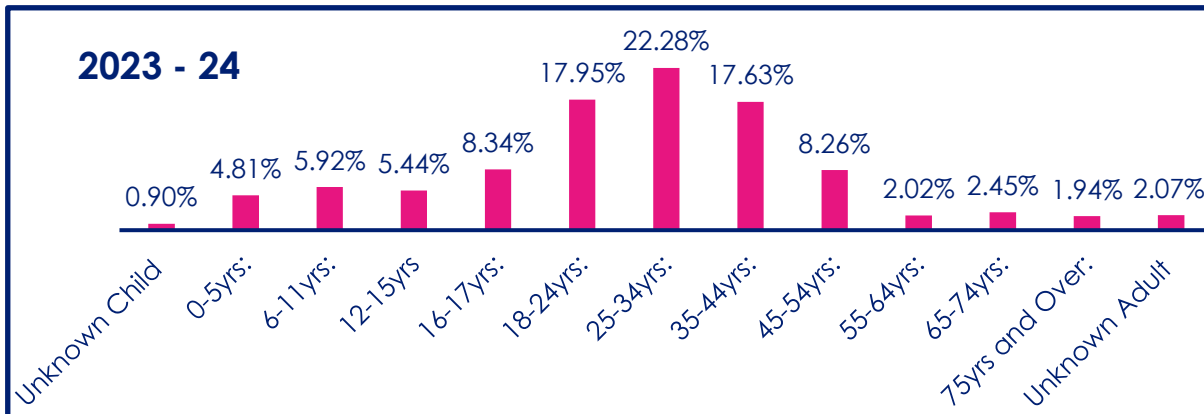
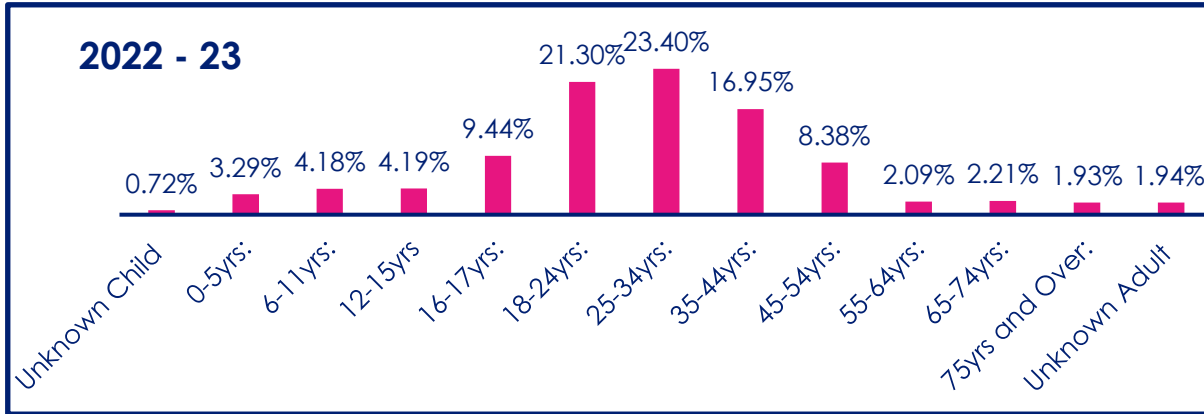
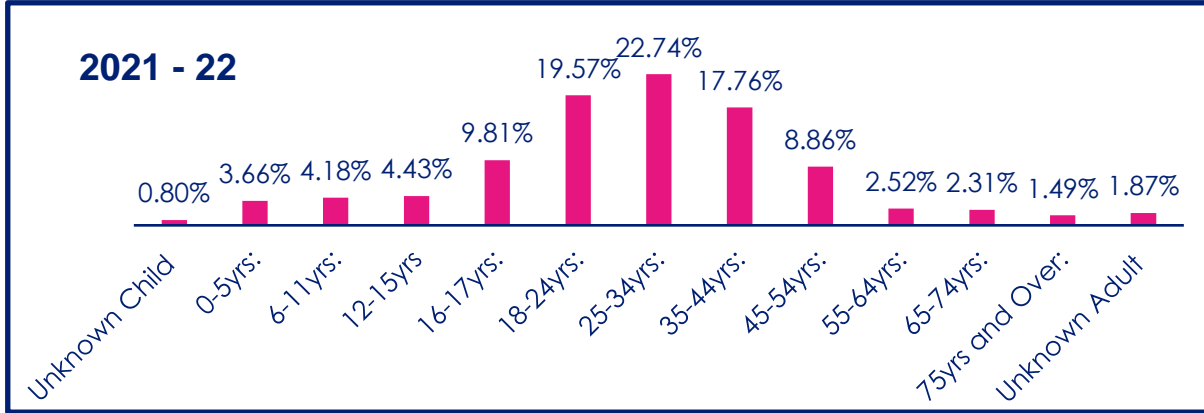
There have been significant changes within the composition of the population in all districts across Leicestershire. All have seen an increase in the overall population ranging from **2.7%** in Oadby and Wigston to **14.3%** in Harborough, which is the largest increase in the East Midlands.

In terms of age, the most significant change has been in the **over 65 age group**. Harborough has seen the second highest increase in the over 65 population in England with **38.5%**. The other districts, baring Oadby and Wigston at **13%**, have all seen an increase of between **25% and 31.4%** compared to a **20.1%** increase in England overall.

For the **under 15 age range**, Charnwood is the district with the highest increase of 10.2% with Melton having the lowest at **3.6%** compared to **5%** in England overall. For the **15 – 64 age range**, all have seen an increasing baring Oadby and Wigston who have seen a decrease of **1.7%** compare to **3.6%** in England overall. These increases range from **1.7% in** Melton to **10.1%** in Harborough.

These changes will have an impact on the range of needs and therefore services required by victims and survivors across Leicestershire.

Age



There has been an improvement with the collection of age data with the level of unknown falling from **5.6%** at the end of the previous assessment to **2.07%** at the end of this assessment.

The age profile of identified victims in Leicestershire remained broadly consistent across all three years, with **almost a quarter** of all identified victims falling within the 25–34-year-old age bracket. This is consistent with the previous needs assessment.

There have however been changes in the age of victims identified from the previous assessment.

There has been a decrease in the 35 – 44 and 45 – 56-year-old age ranges from **20.3% to 17.63%** and **14.1% to 8.26%** respectively, from the start of the last assessment to the final year of this assessment.

As per the previous slide the 2021 census shows that there has been a significant increase in the older population in Leicestershire ranging from **13%** in Oadby and Wigston to **38.5%** in Harborough¹

SafeLives' Prevalence Tool estimates there **are 6,000** victims aged over 60 who will have experienced domestic abuse in the last year in Leicestershire. However, we can see that **735** victims aged over 65 were identified in 2023 – 24, accounting for **5.89%** of adult victims and **4.39%** of all victims.

Our Spotlight on Older People and Domestic abuse shows that those over 60 experience domestic abuse for much longer, on average **12.9 years** compared to the national average of **4.5 years**, with **25%** experiencing abuse for between **20 and 50 years**.²

1. [Oadby and Wigston population change, Census 2021 – ONS](#)
 2. [Spotlight #1: Older people and domestic abuse | Safelives](#)

Age – Children and Young People

Using the prevalence tool, it is estimated that **6000** young victims aged 16 - 24 will have experienced domestic abuse in the last year within their own intimate partner relationships.

There has been a significant increase in the number of victims identified aged 16 – 24 from the previous needs assessment.

Previously between **2% and 2.8%** of all victims identified were aged 16 – 17 compared to a range of **8.34% to 9.81%**

There is a higher proportion of 18 – 24-year-olds identified during this period with a range of **17.95% to 21.30%** of all victims in that age range. This is compared to a range of **11.6% to 13.2%** previously.

The 16 – 24-year-old age group accounts for over a quarter of all victims in all three years of this assessment.

It should be noted that the data provided for the needs assessment for those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in DA Relationships and/or victims of IPV in their own relationships.

At Marac, **10** cases were heard where the victim was 16/17 in 2023 - 24 in Leicestershire. A reduction from the previous two years of **17** in 2021 - 22 and **15** in 2022 – 23 .

The prevalence tool estimates that there are 17,000 children (under 18) living in a household with partner abuse in the past year in Leicestershire.

The total number of child victims identified in the Leicestershire in each of the 3 years the needs assessment covers are:

2021 – 22



3,436

2022 – 23



3,231

2023 – 24



4,253

It should be noted that a number of agencies do not capture data regarding children.

Barring children aged 16 and 17, children aged 6 – 11 years old have the highest prevalence of identification.

Children account for around a quarter of all identified victims ranging from 22.88% in 2021 – 22 to 25.41% in 2023 – 24 compared to 19.2% at the end of the previous assessment. This highlights the importance of the commissioning and sustainability of specialist children's provision, for those living in households where abuse is taking place and for those experiencing abuse within their own relationships.

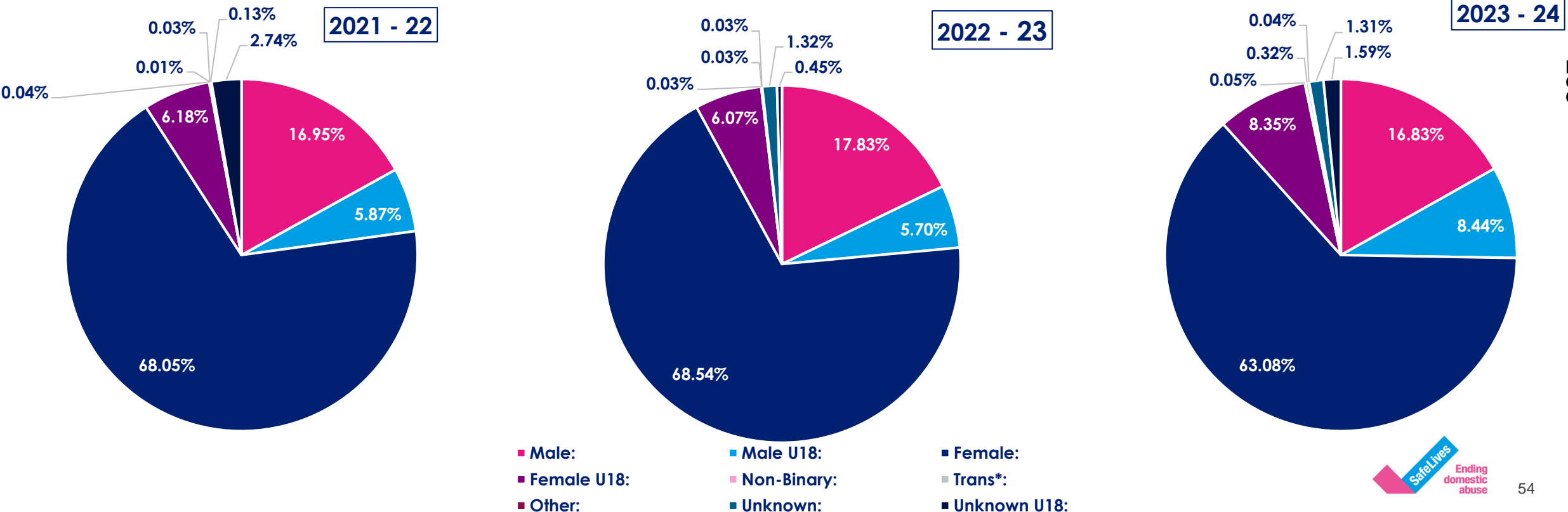
Gender Identity

The gender of victims in Leicestershire also remained fairly consistent across the three years with the highest number of identified victims recorded as being adult female. Similarly to the age data, there has been an improvement with the data capture. The number of all victims with their gender identity recorded as unknown in the final year of the previous assessment was **7.35%** and has reduced to **2.87%** in 2021 – 22, **1.77%** in 2022 – 23 and **2.9%** in 2023 – 24.

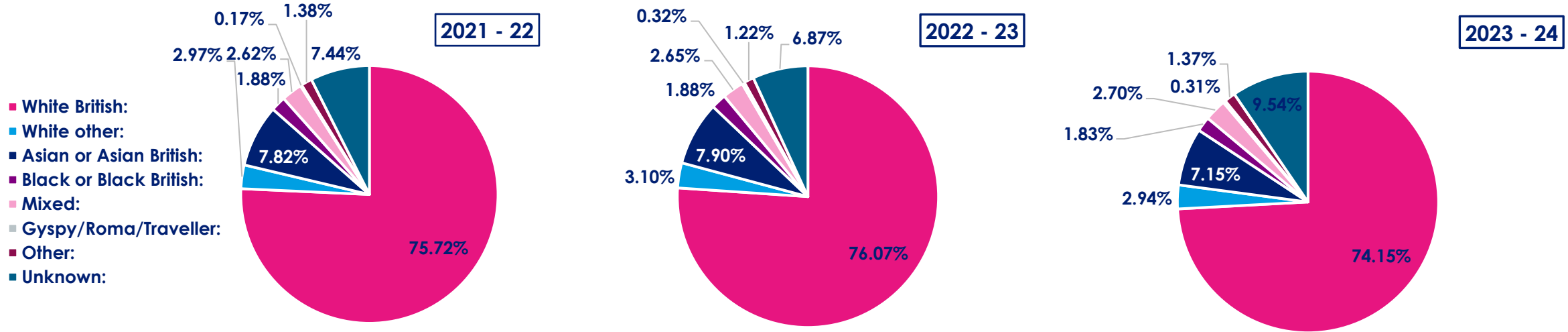
Fewer than 1% of victims were recorded as identifying as non-binary, transgender or other, combined across all three years.

Marac data shows that **4.1%** of all victims discussed in were male in 2021 - 22, increasing to **5.6%** in 2022 – 23 and 2023 - 24. All falling within the SafeLives recommended 5-10% range. It is noted that Freeva now also employ a specialist male worker role.

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Ethnicity



This is another area where there has been significant improvement with the data collection. In the previous needs assessment, the level of unknown was as high as **80.2%** with the lowest figure being **39%**.

Within this assessment, the number of victims whose ethnicity is unknown is **7.44%** in 2021 – 22, **6.87%** in 2022 – 23 and **9.54%** in 2023 – 24.

Across all three years, White British is the most prevalent group with approximately a quarter of all victims identifying as White British.

ONS data suggests that **16.36%** of individuals in Leicestershire are Black, Asian or from a racially minoritised community. The data provided by agencies is in line with this with **16.84%** of victims identified as Black, Asian or from a racially minoritised community in 2021 – 22, **17.07%** in 2022 – 23 and **16.30%** in 2023 – 24.

In 2023 - 24, **9.6%** of Marac in Leicestershire were identified as relating to those who were Black, Asian or from a racially minoritised community. In previous years, referrals had been in line and slightly over the recorded Black, Asian and racially minoritised community population data however with the updated census data, we can see that Marac cases are below the population figure.

It is positive that those from minoritised communities are being identified. Leicestershire GATE works with those from the Gypsy Roma Traveller community and is funded by the county. It is noted that dedicated specialist By & For safe accommodation provision has been commissioned also. However, further specialist support for those residing in the county from other minoritised communities needs a focus.

Ethnicity

Our research shows that for Intimate Partner Violence only, we would estimate a total of **1500 Black, Asian and Racially Minoritised** adult victims per year. This does not include child domestic abuse victims or victims who experience abuse from non-intimate partners such as parents, siblings, HBV etc.

In the 2023 - 24 year the data submitted recorded **2729 Black, Asian and Racially Minoritised** adult and child victims accessing services.

The HALT (Homicide Abuse Learning Together) group carried out research into Domestic Homicide Reviews and Black and Minoritised Victims and Perpetrators.¹

One of the key themes of this research is the Invisibility of Race and Culture. It showed that many agencies did not collect data regarding a person's ethnicity, highlighting that poor data collection has wider impact regarding accessibility of services to Black, Asian and Racially Minoritised victims.

One DHR included in the research noted -

“several agencies had no details of ethnicity, nationality or religion as these were not recorded at the point of referral. It is a core principle of good practice to ensure agencies know the background of those using their services; otherwise they have no information to consider in what they might need to adapt to improve access”

Where ethnicity is recorded, it is not always fully understood, acknowledged or recognised as a significant factor within the experience of Domestic Abuse.

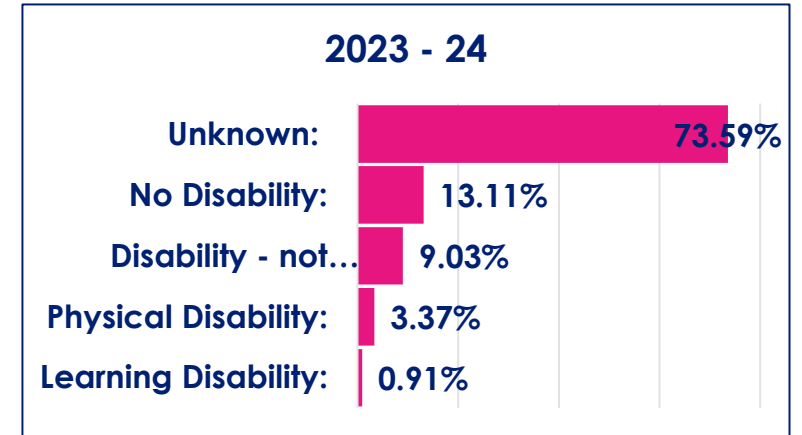
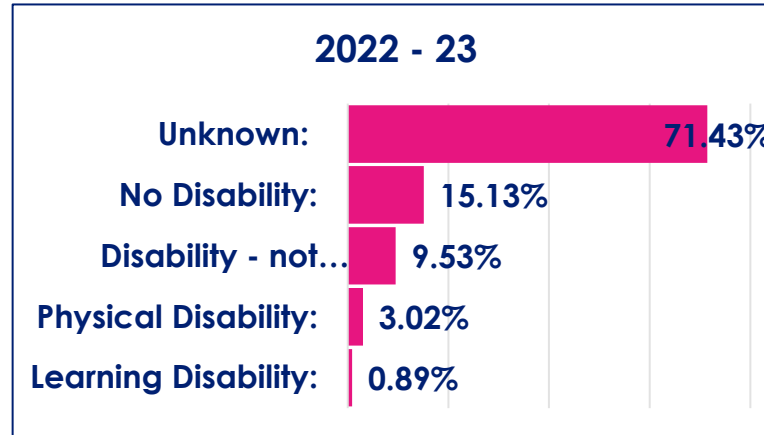
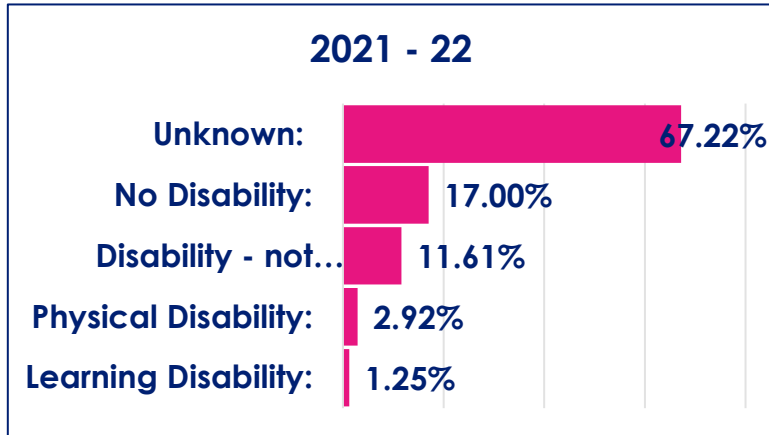
Other themes include

- Perception of Services; with the DHRs reporting that victims had received negative experiences of seeking help and that there was a lack of awareness of UK laws, culture, available support and misleading information by perpetrators influencing a victim's perception of services.
- Stereotypes and culturalisation of Domestic Abuse including the uncritical acceptance and normalisation and culturalisation of Domestic Abuse in minoritised communities.
- Interpreters and communication, with friends, children and even the perpetrator being used as an interpreter for the victim, and professional interpreters being inconsistently used meaning the victims voice and views were not heard. There is also an example of a victim having to provide an account of a serious sexual assault to a male GP, male Police Officer and male medical examiner with no interpreter support.
- DHR recommendations with around half of the DHRs including recommendations regarding ethnicity/culture such as – enhanced risk assessment predominantly focusing on HBV/Forced Marriage, raising awareness of domestic abuse, staff training and using independent interpreters

This research shows that it is imperative that a person's ethnicity and identity is fully captured, acknowledged and understood.

1. [An analysis of minoritisation in domestic homicide reviews in England and Wales - Khatidja Chantler, et al., 2022 \(sagepub.com\)](#)

Disability



Whilst there is a high level of unknown regarding disability, it should be noted that only Leicestershire Police, the Targeted Family Help service and two of the Districts did not provide and/or capture disability data. While there have been improvements with data collection regarding disability, there are areas to strengthen. This should be an area of priority for those agencies.

It should also be noted that the number of disabilities identified may be higher in some agencies than the number of victims identified as some victims identify as having more than one disability. Within the “disability not defined” category, some agencies have captured mental health condition or cognitive impairment, some have included sensory disabilities within physical disabilities and others within disability not defined. It would be of benefit to have a collective decision on the categories of disabilities so there is consistency across the board.

Using the SafeLives prevalence tool, we estimate that there were **7,500 Disabled victims** of domestic abuse in the past year, The numbers identified are significantly below this.

In 2021 – 22 **2404** victims were recorded as having a disability with **2057** in 2022 – 23 and **2299** in 2023 – 24. This is in contrast to the Marac data where we have seen an increase in the identification of cases being heard where the victim has been identified as having a disability.

If a victim's disability is not recorded and acknowledged, not all risks can be identified and therefore subsequent action plans and support cannot be specific to that person's needs and family circumstances.

Disability

People with Disabilities in Partner Relationships



SAFE have created a power and control wheel for those with disabilities in partner relationship which highlights the additional barriers and challenges a disabled person may face.¹

SafeLives Spotlight on Disabled People and Domestic Abuse² has found that disabled victims of domestic abuse also suffer more severe and frequent abuse over longer periods of time than non-disabled victims. SafeLives' data reveals that disabled victims typically endure abuse for an average of 3.3 years before accessing support, compared to 2.3 years for non-disabled victims. Even after receiving support, disabled victims were 8% more likely than non-disabled victims to continue to experience abuse. For one in five (20%) this ongoing abuse was physical and for 7% it was sexual.

This is in line with Public Health England's (2015)³ report that **disabled people**:

- experience disproportionately higher rates of domestic abuse.
- experience domestic abuse for longer periods of time, and more severe and frequent abuse than non-disabled people.
- encounter differing dynamics of domestic abuse, which may include more severe coercion, control or abuse from carers.

We also know that women with learning disabilities and/or autism are three times more likely to experience domestic abuse than their non-disabled peers.⁴

SafeLives have also undertaken research, in partnership with the Vision Foundation regarding the impact of domestic abuse on those who are visually impaired. **One in 12 visually impaired people** in the UK is believed to be a victim or survivor of domestic abuse, meaning that **188,000** of the 2.19 million blind and partially sighted people living in this country have experience of domestic abuse. The report highlighted the additional barriers and abuse faced by those who are visually impaired⁵

Adapted with permission from
DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT
202 East Superior Street, Duluth, MN 55802
218.722.2781 | theduluthmodel.org

Created by SAFE with in-depth input from
people with disabilities.
disabilityservices@safeaustin.org

1. Power and Control Wheel - Full Text - The SAFE Alliance. (safeaustin.org)

2. Spotlight #2: Disabled people and domestic abuse | Safelives

3. Outcomes for disabled people in the UK - Office for National Statistics. (ons.gov.uk)

4. Disability & Domestic Abuse

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/480942/Disability_and_domestic_abuse_to_government_w_FINAL.pdf

5. The Unseen: Blind and partially sighted people's experiences of domestic abuse | Safelives

Sexual Identity of Victims Year on Year comparison:

The data regarding sexual identity is limited with a minimum of **73.7%** victims' sexual identity unknown. This has decreased from a minimum of **89.3%** of victims in the previous assessment.

According to research more than **one in four** gay men and lesbian women and more than **one in three** bisexual people report at least one form of domestic abuse since the age of 16¹

It should be noted that sexual identity is not captured by Leicestershire Police which accounts for a significant number of the unknown figure. For other agencies, the information recorded is sporadic.

The way in which the data is captured, groups Lesbian Women and Gay Men together, with the figures showing in:

- 2021 - 22 **42** Lesbian / Gay, **94** Bisexual and **12** Other Sexual Identity victims recorded;
- 2022 - 23 **60** Lesbian / Gay, **95** Bisexual and **9** Other Sexual Identity victims recorded;
- 2023 - 24 **56** Lesbian / Gay, **110** Bisexual and **5** Other Sexual Identity victims recorded.



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Our research shows that for Intimate Partner Violence only, we would estimate a total of **5,500 LGB+** adult victims per year, significantly higher than the recorded numbers.

At Marac in 2021 - 22 **1.1%** of cases related to an individual who identified as LGBT+ in Leicestershire, this increased to **1.5% in 2022 – 23** before decreasing to **1%** in 2023 – 24.

All of these figures fall below the recommended SafeLives recommended figures of between **2.5% and 5.8%**.

National data suggests that LGBT+ victims of abuse are more likely than heterosexual individuals to experience abuse from multiple partners, are almost twice as likely to have attempted suicide, are more than twice as likely to have self-harmed and are more than twice as likely to have experienced historic abuse from a family member¹. Therefore it is vital that the sexual identity of domestic abuse victims are recorded and understood in order to provide appropriate support.

The Leicestershire LGBT Centre has been commissioned by Leicestershire County Council to provide domestic abuse counselling support. They also provide social groups, drop in sessions, and outreach services in each of the districts.

1. [Recognise and Respond](#): Strengthening advocacy for LGBT+ survivors of domestic abuse



Socio-economic Characteristics

Data regarding socio-economic characteristics is limited, other than employment status and household structure, which are recorded by some agencies. This has improved from the last needs assessment with the level of unknown reducing from 92.7% in the final year of the previous assessment for household structure/family make up to 79% in the final year of this assessment.

Although limited data is currently captured by local agencies about socio economic characteristics, these can have a significant impact on victims' ability to access appropriate services when they need them, for example:



Marital status: divorce and matrimonial rights to a home



Family make up: needs of a single person and those with children



Income: a persons income and expenditure can impact their eligibility for social housing



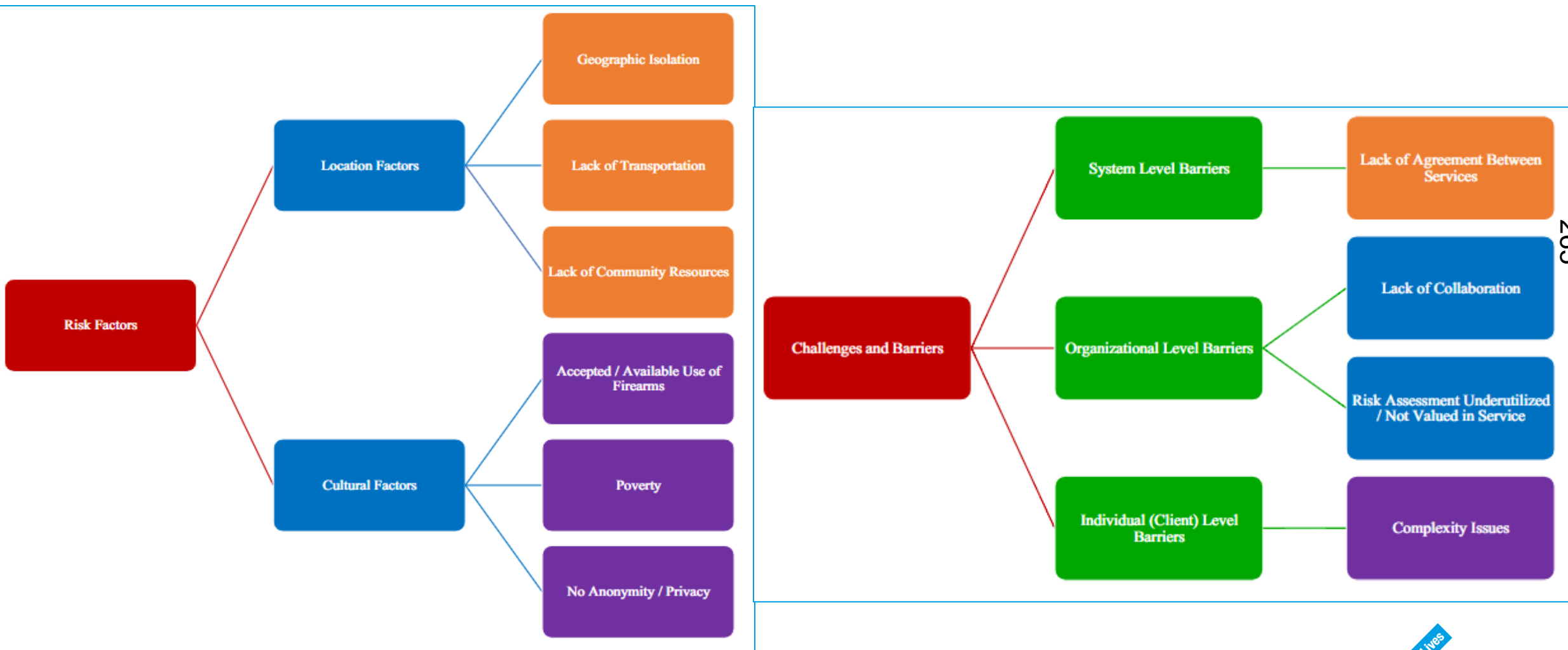
Benefits: a victim seeking safe accommodation may experience delays in claiming benefit, resulting in arrears. In addition, the impact due to the change of circumstance affecting benefits

All these characteristics represent the whole person and a whole family, it is, therefore, important to capture this information to ensure victims get the right support at the right time.

Rural Areas

There are many areas of Leicestershire which are classed as rural areas.

Challenges in Risk Assessment with Rural Domestic Violence Victims: Implications for Practice, shared in the Journal for Family Violence, Youngson et al highlights the unique risk factors and barriers of victims experiencing DA in rural locations.



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Rural v Urban

Urban

- Dense population drives numbers of DV cases + higher reporting rates
- Higher education levels = know what abuse is and is not
- More aware/more likely to question abuse
- Greater freedom to act when needed
- Some informal support network in place - friends, neighbours work colleagues
- Easier access to formal support agencies via domestic violence support agency or GP/health
- Easier to action an escape plan:
 - Transport
 - Support
 - Finance
 - Access to safe refuge



Rural

- Sparse population + lower reporting rates BUT incidence rate is the same
- Lower education levels and abuse can be normalised - less awareness of what abusive behaviour is?
- Less aware/less likely to question abuse?
- Much less freedom to enable action to be taken
- More likely to be socially isolated
- Difficult to access formal support agencies due to coverage & contact and less likely to confide in GP/Health
- Much harder to action an escape plan
 - Lack of transport/public transport
 - Support/more reliant on informal network
 - Less access to finance
 - Safe refuge likely to be out of area

Needs more UK based evidence

Barriers to acting/reporting may be the same in both areas but the scale of the barriers in rural areas is larger as the factors involved reinforce each other

Figure 3: Differences noted between Urban and Rural areas for Domestic Abuse

A consortium of OPCC areas commissioned the National Rural Crime Network to conduct research into Domestic Abuse in Rural Areas – Captive and Controlled¹.

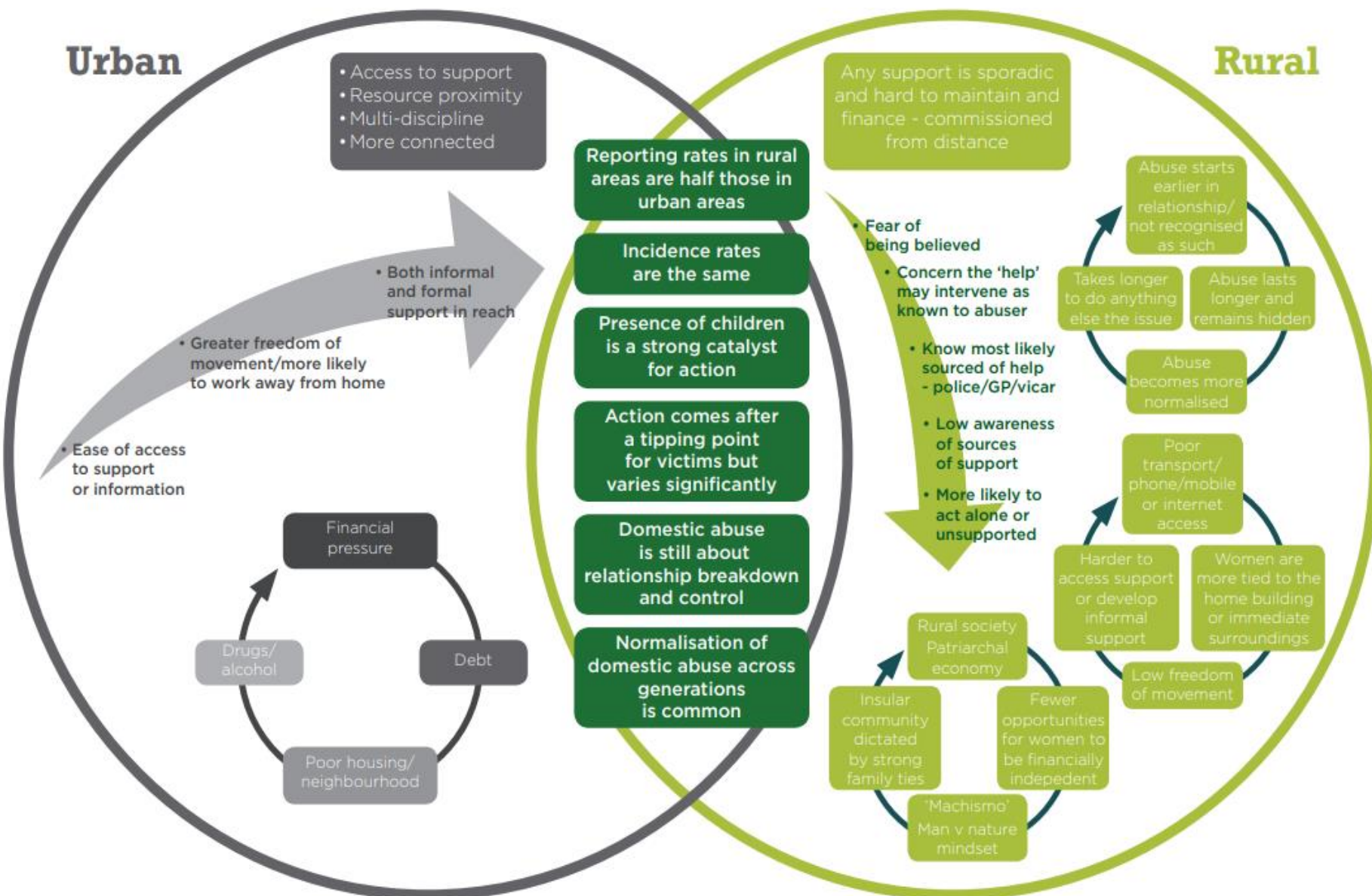
A key part of this research was to understand whether there is a difference in the nature and patterns of domestic abuse between those in rural areas compared to urban areas.

The table opposite highlights those potential differences, which have been simplified to assist with research.

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1. [Captive & Controlled - Domestic Abuse in Rural Areas - National Rural Crime Network](#)

Rural v Urban



The **dark green** section highlights the drivers of domestic abuse. Whilst there are similarities, it is shown within this research that the scale of barriers faced by rural victims is significantly greater than those in urban areas. This can be due to geographic, cultural and societal differences in addition to isolation having an impact on the ability to report abuse.

We can see within the **grey** circle the factors impacting domestic abuse rates and barriers to action for those in urban areas.

The **green** circle shows the factors impacting domestic abuse rates and barriers to action for those in rural areas. Whilst not all will be present in each case, this highlights the additional barriers to disclosure and support. Not only the practical barriers such as lack of transport and support services, but the cultural and social barriers including a lack of awareness of domestic abuse and a fear of not being believed.

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Figure 7: Composite View of Urban v rural issues based on Literature Review

Rural v Urban

Captive and Controlled Domestic Abuse in Rural Areas Key Findings - National Rural Crime Network

The **Captive and Controlled** report detailed **10 Key Findings**:

1. Abuse lasts, on average, 25% longer in the most rural areas
2. The policing response is largely inadequate
3. The more rural the setting, the higher the risk of harm
4. Rurality and isolation are deliberately used as weapons by abusers
5. Close-knit rural communities facilitate abuse
6. Traditional, patriarchal communities control and subjugate women
7. Support services are scarce – less available, less visible and less effective
8. Retreating rural resources make help and escape harder
9. The short-term, often hand-to-mouth funding model has created competing and fragmented service provision
10. An endemic data bias against rural communities leads to serious gaps in response and support

It is important to consider these findings when commissioning services within rural areas and communities to ensure appropriate access to services.



Safe Accommodation Provision

What is Safe Accommodation?

Refuge Accommodation - A refuge offers single gender or single sex accommodation and domestic abuse support which is tied to that accommodation. The address will not be publicly available. Victims, including their children, will have access to a planned programme of therapeutic and practical support from staff. Accommodation may be in shared or self-contained housing, but in both cases the service will enable peer support from other refuge residents.

Specialist safe accommodation - dedicated specialist support to victims with relevant protected characteristics and/or complex needs such as specialist refuges for Black, Asian and racially minoritised, LGBT+, and disabled victims and their children.

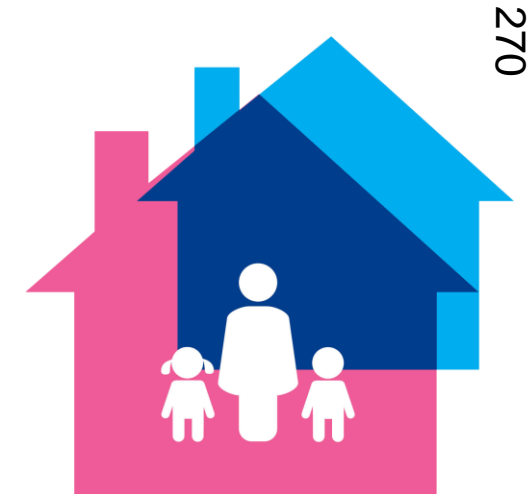
Dispersed accommodation – Safe self-contained accommodation with the same level of specialist domestic abuse support as provided within a refuge but which may be more suitable for victims who are unable to stay in a refuge.

Sanctuary Schemes – may also be called Target Hardening scheme. A survivor centred initiative which aims to enable a victim to remain in their own home by installing additional security to the property and perimeter alongside specialist domestic abuse support.

Move on and/or second stage accommodation – Accommodation temporarily housing victims, who no longer require the intensive support provided in a refuge, but still require a lower level of domestic abuse specific support before they move to fully independent and permanent accommodation. May include support accommodation schemes.

Other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation – A safe place with support given victims an opportunity to spend a temporary period of time to consider and make decisions in an environment which is self-contained and safe.

Safe accommodation is not generic temporary accommodation which is not solely dedicated to providing a safe place to stay for victims of domestic abuse. It is important to note that those experiencing Domestic Abuse may well be in standard temporary accommodation but may not have been identified as such or may have been placed in this accommodation due to Homelessness Duty.



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Safe Accommodation Provision

Service	Provider	Commissioner	No of Units	Referral Pathway
Refuge	Women's Aid Leicestershire(WALL)	Leicestershire County Council	7 units in Hinckley and Bosworth	Via the local helpline, self-referrals, national helpline, professionals, other domestic abuse support services, Women's Aid online referral route.
Dispersed Accommodation	Women's Aid Leicestershire(WALL)	Leicestershire County Council	9 units in Charnwood 2 units in Hinckley and Bosworth	Via the local helpline, self-referrals, national helpline, professionals, other domestic abuse support services, Women's Aid online referral route.
Specialist dispersed property for male victims	Women's Aid Leicestershire(WALL)	Leicestershire County Council	1 units in Hinckley and Bosworth	Via the local helpline, self-referrals, national helpline, professionals, other domestic abuse support services, Women's Aid online referral route.
Specialist refuge accommodation for Black Asian and Racially Minoritised Women	Panahghar (Commenced in July 2024)	Leicestershire County Council	6 units in Charnwood	Via Panahghar's helpline service

As of July 2024, there are currently **25** safe accommodation spaces in Leicestershire which are situated in two districts, Hinckley and Bosworth and Charnwood. It should be noted that there are a further **8** dispersed safe accommodation spaces within Rutland which are jointly funding by the partnership board.

This is an increase of **4** spaces from the previous assessment however if we include the spaces within Rutland, there is an increase of **12** spaces.

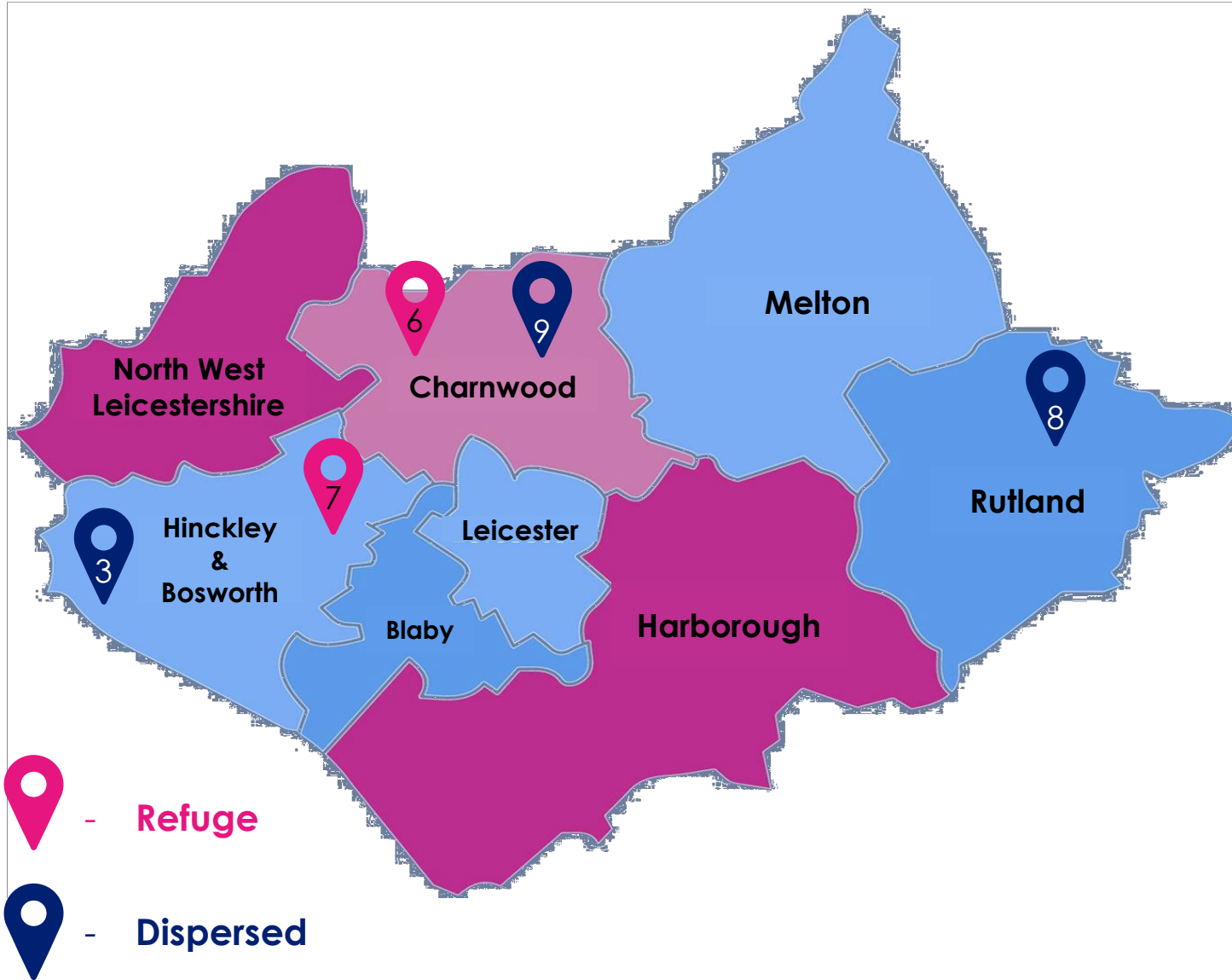
It is noted that not all districts have safe accommodation however victims can access these services regardless of their location as well of those in Rutland.

The Council of Europe¹ recommendation is 1 family place per 10,000 population. The population of Leicestershire according to the 2021 census is 712,300 therefore the recommended number is **71** spaces.

[1. Final Activity Report \(coe.int\)](#)



Safe Accommodation Provision - Map



This map illustrates where the current safe accommodation provision is located across Area.

As mentioned on the previous slide, safe accommodation is only available in two districts, three if you include the Rutland dispersed properties.

Many would have to travel a minimum of 30 minutes by car to access safe accommodation, with some being over an hour away by car. When using public transport this could take much longer.

Consideration should be given to the location of safe accommodation, how appropriate this might be for victims, thinking about their support network, culture, employment and children's school.

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Safe Accommodation Provision

Within the previous needs assessment, there was a sanctuary scheme offer available. This was funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. This funding has now ended and there is no sanctuary scheme available in Leicestershire.

The Sanctuary Scheme is a victim/survivor centred initiative which aims to enable households at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, when it is safe to do so and if they chose to, by installing additional security to the property and perimeter (Sanctuary) and support. It also forms part of the whole housing approach to domestic abuse.

Consideration should be given to reinstating the sanctuary scheme as an option of safe accommodation for victims and their families. This will provide choice for victims, allowing them to remain at home and within their support networks when it is safe to do so. It will enable more victims to be safely supported and may reduce the need for refuge or dispersed accommodation for the victim.



Safe Accommodation Referrals

Referrals to Safe Accommodation – Refuge & Dispersed Accommodation

WALL manages the majority of the refuge and dispersed accommodation across Leicestershire with Panahghar managing the specialist accommodation for Black, Asian and racially minoritised communities.

Panaghar's service contract commenced in July 2024 however due to delays with housing benefit they have been unable to take referrals until October 2024. Due to the contract commencement date, Panaghar's service is not included in the data set for this needs assessment. It is positive to see that this service has been commissioned and implemented in Leicestershire.

It must be noted that the data provided by WALL for their safe accommodation provision is **LLR wide** so covers all referrals into safe accommodation across the LLR area. This data cannot be broken down into those accessing the Leicestershire accommodation only. Referrals to the service can be made by professionals and self referrals via the helpline, website and by contacting the team directly.

Limited data is available regarding referrals to safe accommodation. WALL have identified this as an area for improvement.

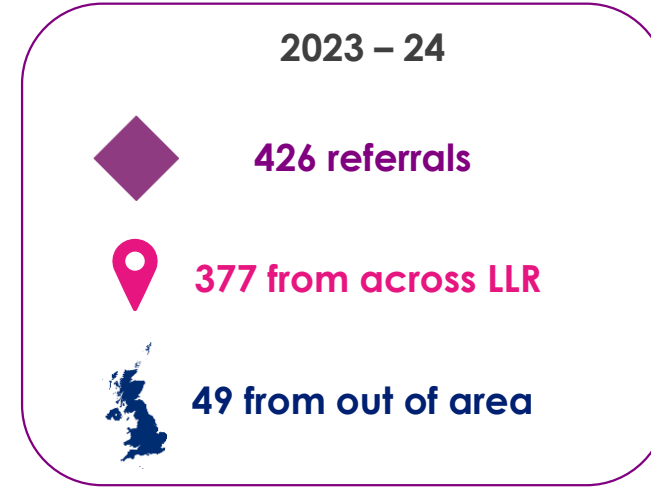
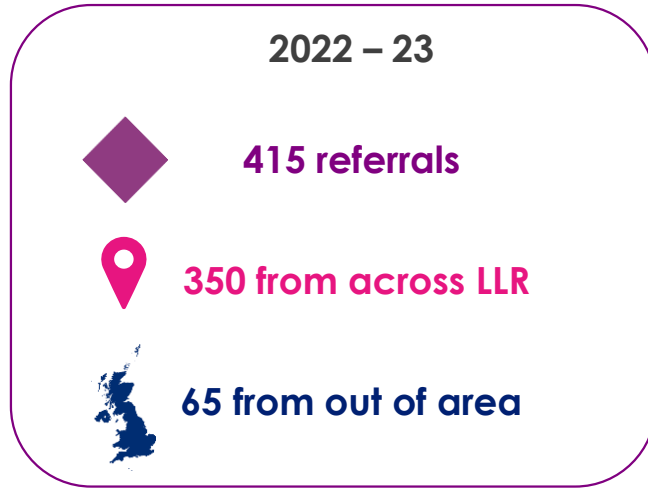
The data shows that there has been a **44.1%** decrease in referrals in to safe accommodation from 2021 – 22 before increasing slightly in 2023 – 24 by **2.65%**. WALL have advised that for 2023 – 24 175 referrals were for clients who have been referred into organisation for support before. Of these 175 referrals , 94 clients had been previously referred to refuge and assessed.

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Referrals to Safe Accommodation – Refuge & Dispersed Accommodation

We know that many victims will have to move out of area to a new local authority to access safe accommodation. WALL accepted a number of referrals over the period of this needs assessments from victims out of area. Data regarding area is not available for 2021 – 22.



WALL have advised that for the 2022 – 23 and 2023 – 24, a large proportion of referrals were for those within Leicester City. In 2023 – 24, 253 referrals were for those within Leicester.

For those who were referred from out of area, the top areas are detailed in the table below.

2021 – 22	Nottingham – 9	Chesterfield – 3		
2022 – 23	Derbyshire – 15	Birmingham – 10	Nottingham – 9	Northampton - 5
2023 - 24	Nottingham – 19	Derbyshire – 19	Birmingham – 13	Northampton - 8

Denied Access to Service

Not all victims who are referred to Safe Accommodation services will be able to access them for a number of reasons. In 2021 – 22 **82.2%** of referrals were denied access, **79.2%** in 2022 – 23 and **78.1%** in 2023 – 24.

Data is limited regarding denied access to service.

In **2022 – 23** the most common reason for being denied access is 'no space or capacity'.

For **2023 – 24** the most common reasons are

- Client does not require support/declined refuge
- No capacity/space available
- Area identified as being unsafe.

We can see that 'no space/capacity to support' is cited in both years. It has been highlighted that the number of safe accommodation spaces available in Leicestershire is below the recommended figure of 71.

Regarding the 'client does not require support/declined refuge', there may be some relevance in the location of safe accommodation as discussed earlier in this report. This was highlighted in the previous assessment as there was a high proportion of denied access due to 'client does not want support'. Consideration should be given to providing safe accommodation within all districts.

Consideration should be given to alternative forms of safe accommodation which may be more suited to those who cannot access a refuge, such as a Housing First scheme, where wraparound support for complex and additional needs can be provided or properties with adaptations for those who have a disability or care and support needs include children.

Consideration should also be given to perpetrator management as set out in the [Domestic Abuse Draft Statutory Guidance Framework](#), which could enable victims and children to remain in their homes and communities, reducing disruption and trauma already experienced

Denied Access to Service

In addition to the previous slide, there are many other barriers to accessing safe accommodation including socio economic factors.

Where a victim needs to access safe accommodation and they are claiming Universal Credit, they are able to make a claim for Housing Benefit to cover the cost of safe accommodation.

However, if their income is over a certain amount, they would not be eligible for Housing Benefit and therefore would have to cover the cost of provision themselves.

For those on certain benefits, assistance can be sought to cover the cost of both safe accommodation and their main home. Again, if your income is over a certain amount, you would not be eligible for this and would have to cover the cost of both.

As a result, many cannot afford safe accommodation costs and either remain in their home or seek alternatives such as staying with family. Sadly, this is a national issue and not specific to Leicestershire.

There are additional challenges for those with NRPF or insecure immigration status.

We know that many who are denied access to safe accommodation will access temporary accommodation. We do not have data regarding this from the districts. This is an area for further exploration to gain a greater understanding of those accessing temporary accommodation due to domestic abuse.



Safe Accommodation Data

Safe Accommodation 2021 - 22

The diagrams below illustrates the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2021 – 22



175 Victims Supported

172 - Female Victims
3 - Male Victims



Sexual Identity

162 - Heterosexual
3 - Gay/lesbian
6 - Bisexual
4 - prefer not to say

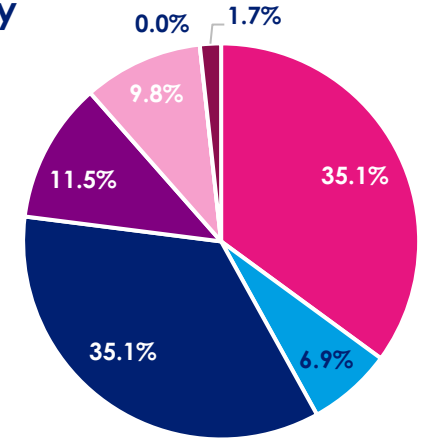


Family Composition

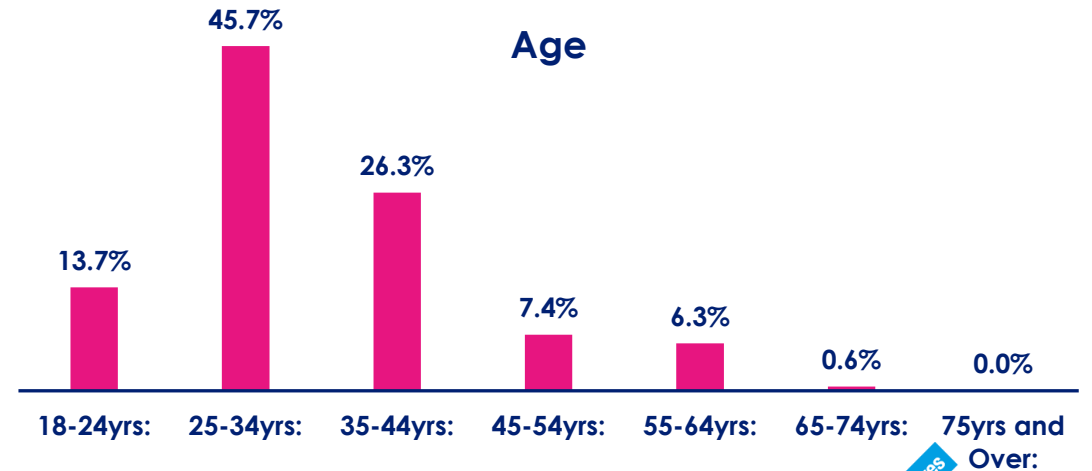
48 - single victims without children
127 - victims with children

- White British:
- White Other
- Asian or Asian British:
- Black or Black British:
- Mixed:
- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller:
- Other Isolated/Marginalised community/Prefer Not to Say:

Ethnicity



Age



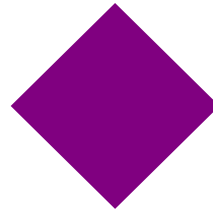
Safe Accommodation 2021 – 22

Below is the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2021 – 22



Disability

- 15 - Physical disability
- 5 - Learning disability
- 2 - Visual impairment
- 1 - Speech impairment or communication difficulties
- 53 - Mental Health issue
- 15 - Other long term health conditions



Honor Based Violence

- 9 - experienced HBV
- 1 - experienced Forced Marriage



Immigration Status

- 22 - Family Visa
- 1 - Work/Student/Visit Visa
- 4 - Indefinite leave to remain



Additional Needs

- 174 - Homeless
- 1 - Alcohol misuse
- 17 - Drug misuse
- 38 - Legal Support
- 107 - Financial support
- 22 - Translator required



Housing prior to Safe Accommodation

- 2 - Private/Owner Occupier
- 8 - Private Renter
- 34 - Social Housing
- 77 - Temporary
- 54 - Other



Employment

- 32 - Employed/Self Employed
- 90 - Unemployed
- 52 - Unknown

Safe Accommodation 2022 - 23

The diagrams below illustrates the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2022 – 23



86 Victims Supported

85 - Female Victims
1 - Male Victims



Sexual Identity

78 - Heterosexual
1 - Gay/lesbian
6 - Bisexual
1 - prefer not to say

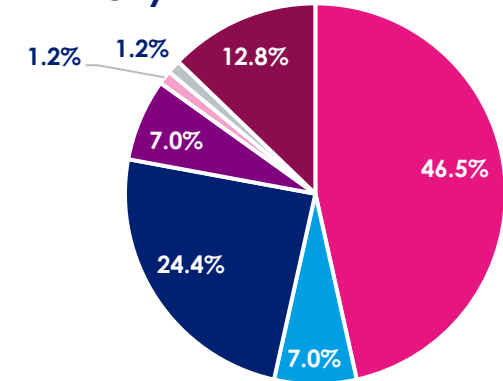


Family Composition

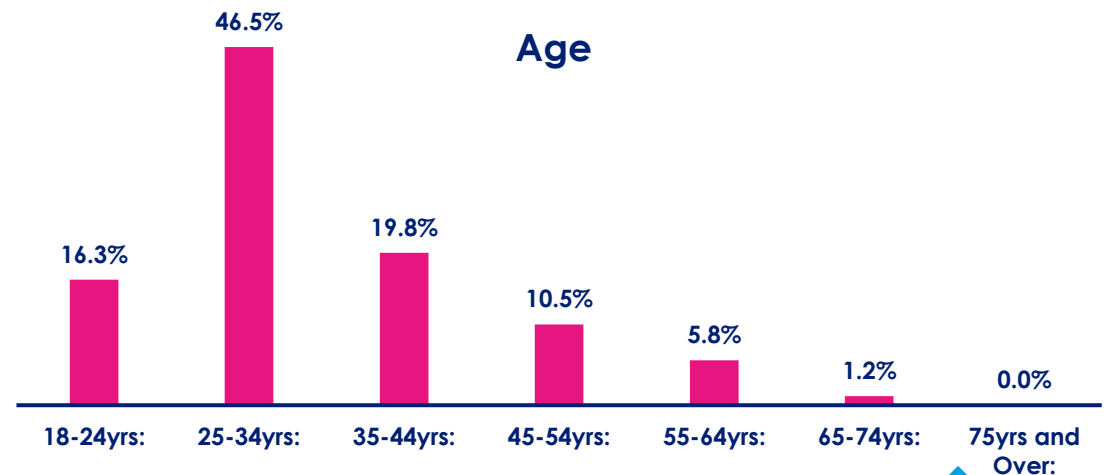
25 - single victims without children
61 - victims with children

- White British:
- White Other
- Asian or Asian British:
- Black or Black British:
- Mixed:
- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller:
- Other Isolated/Marginalised community/Prefer Not to Say:

Ethnicity



Age



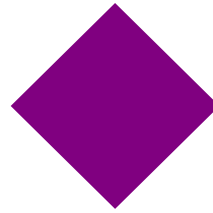
Safe Accommodation 2022 – 23

Below is the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2021 – 22



Disability

- 20- Physical disability
- 3 - Learning disability
- 1 - Deaf/hearing impairment
- 18 - Mental Health issue
- 41 - Other long term health conditions



Honor Based Violence

- 5 - experienced HBV
- 1 - experienced Forced Marriage



Immigration Status

- 1 - Work/Student/Visit Visa
- 4 - Limited leave to remain
- 15 - Other/unknown/prefer not to say



Additional Needs

- 86 - Homeless
- 2 - Alcohol misuse
- 4 - Drug misuse
- 1 - Offending history



Housing prior to Safe Accommodation

- 2 - Private/Owner Occupier
- 5 - Private Renter
- 23 - Social Housing
- 31 - Temporary
- 25 - Other supported housing



Employment

- 8 - Employed/Self Employed
- 78 - Unemployed

Safe Accommodation 2023 - 24

The diagrams below illustrates the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2023 – 24



141 Victims Supported

138 - Female Victims
3 - Male Victims



Sexual Identity

128 - Heterosexual
3 - Gay/lesbian
4 - Bisexual
6 - prefer not to say



Family Composition

40 - single victims without children
98 - victims with children
3 - victims were pregnant

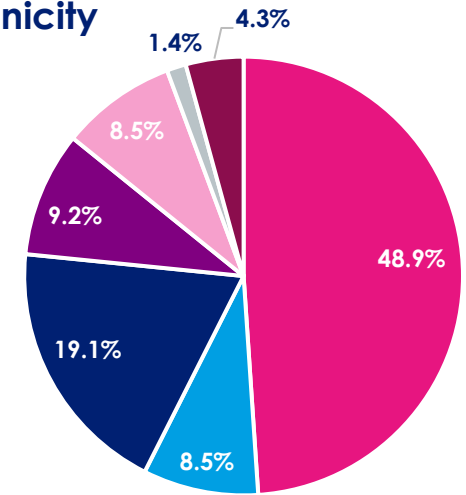


192 Children within refuge

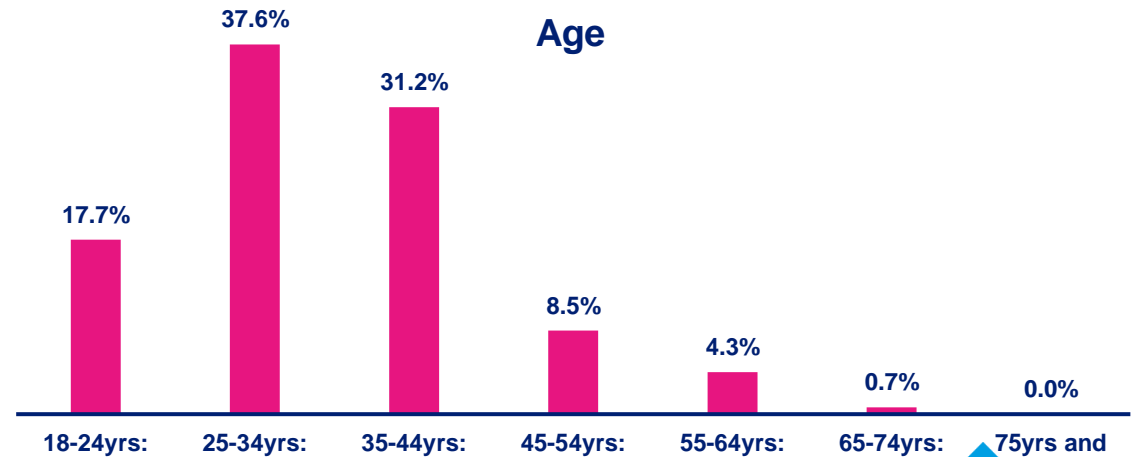
77 - 0-5 years
55 - 6-11 years
36 - 12 – 15 years
24 - 16 – 17 years

- White British:
- White Other
- Asian or Asian British:
- Black or Black British:
- Mixed:
- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller:
- Other Isolated/Marginalised community/Prefer Not to Say:

Ethnicity



Age



Safe Accommodation 2022 – 23

Below is the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2021 – 22

Disability



- 28 - Physical disability
- 6 - Learning disability
- 2 - Deaf/hearing impairment
- 8 - Sensory impairment
- 60 - Mental Health issue
- 1 - Neuro divergent
- 9 - Other long term health conditions

Additional Needs



- 141 - Homeless
- 3 - Alcohol misuse
- 2 - Drug misuse
- 82 - Legal support
- 106 - Financial Support
- 17 - Translator required

Honor Based Violence



- 4 - experienced HBV
- 3 - experienced Forced Marriage

Immigration Status



- 1 - Work/Student/Visit Visa
- 3 - Asylum seeker
- 10 - Indefinite leave to remain
- 3 - Limited leave to remain
- 15 - Other/unknown/prefer not to say

Housing prior to Safe Accommodation



- 2 - Private/Owner Occupier
- 1 - Private Renter
- 35 - Social Housing
- 86 - Temporary
- 1 - Other supported housing
- 16 - Other

Employment



- 23 - Employed/Self Employed
- 75 - Unemployed
- 43 - Unknown

Safe Accommodation

As previously stated, the data provided by WALL is LLR wide and not Leicestershire specific. Our analysis of the data cannot be fully attributed to Leicestershire due to this. WALL have advised that a significant number of referrals are from those residing in Leicester.

This is an area for improvement for future data collection and needs assessments.

The data provided shows that the most prevalent age range across all three years is the **25 – 34 years**. There is an increase in the **35 – 44 years** in 2023 – 24. This is in keeping with the overall identified victim figures.

We do not have any data regarding the ages of children except for 2023 – 24. That data shows that while there is a spread across the age ranges, the highest proportion of children are age **0 – 5 years** at **40.1%**.

Children are victims of domestic abuse in their own right. It is important that support is available in age appropriate formats. Support in accessing schools, nurseries and other provision such as play groups is also of benefit.

With regard to ethnicity, the data changes across the three years. As a caveat we know there are a significant number of referrals from Leicester which has a higher Black, Asian and racially minoritised community population (66.8%).

In 2021 – 22, **35.1%** of victims identified as White British and Asian or Asian British. In 2022 – 23 the number of victims identifying as White British increased to this decreased to **46.5%** with Asian or Asian British decreasing to **24.4%** before decreasing again to **19.1** in 2023 – 24.

There are a number of victims who accessed refuge accommodation who had a disability with physical disabilities and mental health needs being the most identified. Accessibility to safe accommodation for those with disability is key. This is a key area for all to consider especially when we consider the ageing population of the area.

The data shows that a high proportion of victims within the service required financial and legal support. The data records all victims accessing safe accommodation as homeless. We would assume that to mean, support with homelessness is required rather than a person being 'street homeless'. Clarification around this would be of benefit.

Safe Accommodation

WALL have stated that

'It has been identified that the support needs for clients has increased. With us as a service having to ensure that our team are trained to enable us to provide an effective service to anyone seeking refuge. With this in mind, this also reflects the lack of funds available to services such as ours to enable us to provide additional team members (Staff) to provide the level of support required by those accessing refuge. This being a national concern and not one expressed within just this area. Taking into account the volume of referrals received alone by ourselves, this highlights the demand and need for refuge within this area. And the increase in those needing to seek refuge and a safe environment away from harm. Looking at those that WALL have not been able to accommodate due to no spaces being available this outlines the demand for refuge.'

Supported Housing: National Statement of Expectations

The National Statement of Expectations (NSE) was developed in collaboration between the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) with input from local councils and the supported housing sector. Together, they are committed to seeing delivery of good quality supported housing which meets residents' needs and represents good value for money.

The NSE provides a mechanism for establishing the vision for accommodation standards, quality, and value for money. The NSE is not a statutory requirement, and to date there has been no definitive set of guidelines on what should reasonably be expected from the accommodation element of supported housing. However, it is hoped that organisations involved in the provision of supported housing will use, adopt, and find the principles and examples of best practice helpful.

In supported housing, accommodation is provided alongside support, supervision, or care to help people live as independently as possible in the community, including for people fleeing domestic abuse with their children.

In order to deliver the ambitions of the NSE local authorities should work alongside providers and local delivery partners to:

- Assess local demand and plan effectively
- Ensure safe and good quality supported housing
- Ensure supported housing provides good value for money

Women's Aid Annual Audit 2021

The annual audit presents information on the provision and usage of domestic abuse services (both accommodation and community support services) in England, mainly focusing on the financial year 2019/20. This year the report also includes a section on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Key findings from the audit included:

- It is estimated (based on the On Track data collection) that 10,592 women and 12,710 children were supported by a refuge in 2019 - 20.
- 3,935 refuge spaces in England, falling short of the number of spaces recommended by the Council of Europe by 1,694, which represents a 30% shortfall^[1].
- It is estimated that a total of 24,748 referrals were received by refuges. This means that 57% of all referrals received for refuge were rejected. The main reason for rejection was a lack of space or capacity with 18% of all referrals received rejected for this reason, this also equates to 32% of all rejected referrals being rejected due to lack of space or capacity.
- Only 26% of refuges commissioned by local authorities indicated that the funding covered all aspects of the support staff costs.
- 63% of women in refuge services had children and 6% were pregnant
- 88% of service users had experienced emotional abuse, 67% had experienced jealous or controlling behaviour.
- 49% of service users in a refuge had support needs around mental health
- 48% of service users in a refuge reported feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts because of the abuse.
- 26% of women at refuge services have a disability; most common were mental health disabilities, 7% had a physical disability.
- Of service users who were not British nationals, just over half (54.5%) were able to access public funds.
- Only 4% of vacancies posted on Routes to Support^[2] could consider women who had no recourse to public funds.
- Under half of refuge vacancies can accommodate a woman with two children and less than one in five for a woman with three children.

These statistics highlight that nationally there are barriers for some women to enter refuge.

This includes women who are NRPF and who are a parent and who are likely to have mental health needs requiring sufficient therapeutic support. We also know that people with a disability are more likely to experience domestic abuse. The small percentage of women in refuge with a physical disability, is likely not reflective of demand from this group and impacted by the availability of accessible accommodation.

Whole Housing Approach

SafeLives supports the DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) Whole Housing Approach which aims to improve the housing options and outcomes for all experiencing domestic abuse. It suggests a range of housing options or specialist initiatives to give victims and survivors the choice to relocate or remain in their existing property and for agencies to work together collaboratively.

This diagram shows the model and it's 12 parts. The lighter circles represent the temporary accommodation settings and tenure types with the darker circles representing the housing options and specialist initiatives to support victims to either relocate or remain in their home.

Further information available here <https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/what-we-do/whole-housing-approach-housing-toolkit/>





Survivor Voice

Survivor Voice

“We’ve walked through fire to get our voices back; we’re not going to give them up now.” Ursula,
Pioneer

SafeLives are committed to placing people with lived experience at the heart of all we do, valuing internal and external survivors’ experience as an asset.

Working together, we can aggregate and amplify survivors’ voices and interweave authenticity and independence throughout all our work. By listening and responding to views that are different to our own, professionals and survivors can critically assess and address challenges together. To do this authentically we support survivors to tell their truth and speak with an unmediated voice.

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Case Studies

The needs assessment also requires a review of case studies to understand a victim's journey, support required, received, and the outcome.

22 case studies have been provided and analysis of these is below:



1 case was an OOA referral



2 victims were pregnant

12 victims had children – 9 victims had more than one child

1 victim was transgender

2 victims had step-children



14 victims were unable to access refuge accommodation due to their circumstances

1 victim was asked to leave refuge accommodation

1 victim's case was closed as housing would not consider a different location



1 victim was already residing in refuge through WALL

2 victims were accepted into refuge

8 victims were housed in temporary accommodation

Case Studies

Of the 14 victims that were unable to access refuge, three stated they did not wish to change their children's schools, one stated they could not move away for work reasons, five stated they did not want to move out of area, or the location of the refuge was too far away, one declined due to the perpetrator being bailed away from the property, and one declined stating the refuge was not suitable for kids. One case also declined due to not being able to bring pets.



- 3 were not eligible due to pregnancy, the victim being on bail, and the victim previously assaulting staff.
- 1 victim was asked to leave refuge due to a breach in contract and no further information is provided on follow up housing.
- 1 victim declined refuge due to being in a different location and was told that housing would not consider another area. There is no further information on why this occurred.
- 1 victim was housed in supported accommodation that was not DA specific.
- 1 victim went on to live with family due to the location of refuge.

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Those who were trying to access safe accommodation but could not be placed somewhere straight away were placed in hotels, hostels and Bed & Breakfasts. Of the four who were placed in those, two then went on to access safe accommodation, whilst the other two remained on priority banding waiting housing. Time periods of being in temporary accommodation lasted up to 7 months. Eight cases accessed temporary accommodation and of these, three were still in temporary accommodation, three were rehoused into their own properties, one returned to live at the perpetrator's address, and one went on to refuge. Those that remain in temporary accommodation are on priority banding for their own accommodation. Six cases were rehoused straightaway through social housing or through CSC. Two cases were currently residing in refuge looking for onwards accommodation.

Case Studies



Of the cases where children were present and looking to flee with the victim, nine out of the 12 cases were referred for Early Help/CSC support or already had this support in place. Two cases there was no record of referring or accessing support for the children. In one case the child was residing with the perpetrator however a safeguarding referral was completed to the relevant area on behalf of the victim.



When considering support needs for victims who were seeking safe accommodation, 37% of cases had mental health needs. Of these a referral was made to counselling/therapy services in six cases and three were receiving emotional support from DA agencies already. Two cases had substance misuse needs, and one was referred for specialist support. Two cases needed support with injunctions and both cases were referred to NCDV for this. Six cases needed support with finances in which support was given around benefits.

58% of cases were referred for specialist DA support, 29% were already engaging with DA services, and 8% received no support regarding domestic abuse.

These cases demonstrate the varying needs of victims seeking safe accommodation, and that no single model of accommodation-based support will be able to meet these needs. Leicestershire County Council should review their options for safe accommodation and seek to design an offer that can cater for the complexity and variety of needs victims of domestic abuse present with.

Survivor Voice

SafeLives spoke to 2 survivors of domestic abuse to understand their experience of Safe Accommodation

Although SafeLives managed to gather the voices of two survivors, there were difficulties in collecting more voices from around the county.

Survivor voice is key to understanding victims needs and how we can improve services to best support them. Survivors are at the heart and start of everything we do at SafeLives, and we are looking to continue this in Leicestershire with Echo Project.



2 interviews with
2 women

Echo Project seeks to embed survivor voice into the design and delivery of policies and services that intend to meet their needs. The Authentic Voice Coordinators within Leicestershire will continue to gather voices and therefore support in understanding the needs of survivors for all aspects of domestic abuse including housing.

Both survivors however spoke about further training needed within the area to fully understand the complexities and dynamics of an abusive relationship. It was thought there was a lack of understanding regarding the impacts of domestic abuse on personal lives, and the housing system needs to have a more human approach alongside understanding to ensure survivor needs are met.

We can see from the case studies that accessing safe accommodation can be difficult, but having a better understanding of the dynamics of abusive relationships and being more human can have positive impacts on survivors being heard, and feel they are in control of their own lives when deciding to leave.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion and Recommendations

We have, throughout this report, using SafeLives recognised best practice guidelines, in conjunction with tools such as our prevalence tool, made recommendations regarding the expected levels of services reach and provision. We recommend that these are considered as part of Leicestershire's Domestic Abuse commissioning strategy.

Local Partnership Board

Since the previous needs assessment The Leicestershire and Rutland DA Local Partnership Board has been established which meets quarterly. There have been a number of changes to the board ensuring compliance with the statutory guidance including the inclusion of many by and for services. It is chaired by the Lead Member for Safer Communities within Leicestershire County Council.

An area for development is the child victim representative role.

The Echo Project will support the strengthening, embedding and amplifying of authentic adult and child voice within the Local Partnership Board.

This can only be done with the support of the board and its partners to work collaboratively with the Echo team and local survivors.

- All agencies and partners to engage with the Echo Project to ensure authentic voice is at the centre of Leicestershire's Domestic Abuse Strategic

Conclusion and Recommendations

Data collection

Leicestershire Partnership Board used the previous needs assessment to highlight the need for collecting appropriate data, particularly in ethnicity, sexual identity, gender identity and socio economic status.

There have been significant improvements in the level and accuracy of the data collected compared to the previous needs assessment particularly around age, gender and ethnicity.

Disability and sexual identity recording is still limited. Regarding disability, this is not captured by Leicestershire Police, the Targeted Family Help service and two of the Districts. Research shows that disabled victims of domestic abuse also suffer more severe and frequent abuse over longer periods of time than non-disabled victims.

Whilst there has been a decrease in the level of unknown for sexual identity, almost three quarter of victims' sexual identity is unknown.

Research shows that those in LGBT+ relationships face additional barriers to reporting and accessing services.

It is important to ensure that this information is asked and captured in order to fully understand the demographics and intersecting needs of victims and survivors within Leicestershire.

There were challenges in the collection and the consistency of data provided including districts being unable to provide any data.

Many of the District Homelessness Teams collect age related data on all members of the household but will only capture further demographic data on the lead applicant. This could account for some of the unknown figure. Within Children's Social Care statutory assessments, only the child's data is captured; whereas WALL and a number of the District Domestic Abuse Services only capture the adult victim data.

Many agencies do not collect information regarding socio economic characteristics.

A concern is that by not capturing the demographic data of the whole family, we cannot understand the needs of the whole family and provide appropriate support.

As stated WALL are not able to separate their data into locality at present and are working towards a solution for this.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Data collection

- There is a continued need for a consistent approach to collecting data across Leicestershire This will provide a clear understanding of victim's characteristics, areas of multiple disadvantage and complex needs, which will in turn, inform a comprehensive strategy for domestic abuse and ensure that services delivered can meet identified needs
- The recording of disability data is a priority for Leicestershire Police, Targeted Family Help, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and North West Leicestershire District Council
- Data collection regarding all members of the family to be considered in order to provide a whole family approach

Conclusion and Recommendations Review

Provision of support and capacity of commissioned services

Victim's services have undergone a period of change across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland with a new service contract starting on the 1st April 2022.

There is now a Helpline and Engagement service managed by Freeva. This is the Front Door for all referrals, and they also provide the Marac Idva. There is also a Domestic Abuse Locality service consisting of a Complex Need service; an Outreach service managed by LWA; and the Safe Accommodation provision managed by WALL.

A number of new services have been commissioned which commenced in 2024. As such their data is not captured within the timeframe of this needs assessment.

The services are

- Specialist dispersed property for male victims
- Specialist refuge accommodation for Black Asian and Racially Minoritised Women

WALL have also expanded their dispersed refuge accommodation to include refuge for those with larger families, clients with pets, and male victims.

There are currently 25 safe accommodation spaces across Leicestershire against a recommended figure of 71 and the lack of space is the one of the highest reasons for denied access. This was also a theme within the case audits.

Safe Accommodation is only available in two districts, limiting options for victims needing accommodation. Location has been cited as a reason for victims not wanting to enter refuge.

Since the previous needs assessment, Leicestershire have found it difficult to secure dispersed accommodation in other districts due to the lack of housing available.

The lack of a sanctuary scheme is a cause for concern as this limits the options available to victims. It does not enable them to stay in their own home where it is safe to do so. In turn, this can have an impact on the number of referrals to refuge and the increasing need as there is not alternative.

Conclusion and Recommendations Review

Provision of Support and capacity of commissioned services continued

- Increase the number of safe accommodation with the aim to reach the recommended figure of 71
- Consideration should be given to the location of safe accommodation and the range of safe accommodation commissioned to ensure accessibility to all victims. This may include adapted properties, provision for older people in line with the aging population, larger properties and Housing First Schemes with wrap around support for complex and additional needs
- The reintroduction of the Sanctuary Scheme to enable victims and survivors to remain in their own homes with support where safe to do so

Conclusion and Recommendations

Housing and Homelessness

Whilst we do not have data regarding temporary accommodation, we know many victims are access alternative temporary accommodation rather than safe accommodation. Within Leicestershire, alternative temporary accommodation options include a hotel or Bed and Breakfast.

These options are not safe accommodation and can be traumatic for victims and their families, especially those with children, disabilities and/or additional needs. This highlights the importance of the need for a range of safe accommodation options.

In the previous needs assessment, we highlighted the importance of considering those who are street homeless and hidden homeless. This is an area which is a focus of the District Chief Housing Officer Group.

Work had commenced during the previous needs assessment regarding a dedicated domestic abuse specialist within the Housing Options and Homelessness service in all districts. Each district received funding to employ a 'Housing Link Worker' to create links between Domestic Abuse services and housing. Most districts have recruited with an employee in post. The consistency of support offered is unclear and it would be of benefit for the districts and the link workers to come together to ensure best practice across the county.

- Review of housing and allocations policies to ensure consistency across areas
- Ensure Homelessness and Housing Options teams are fully aware of the Safe Accommodation and support options for victims

Conclusion and Recommendations

Children

There are a high proportion of child victims aged 6 - 11 in Leicestershire with children accounting for around a quarter of all identified victims ranging from 22.88% in 2021 – 22 to 25.41% in 2023 – 24 which suggests that children are experiencing trauma at a very early, crucial stage of their development and continues through their childhood. Prevention and early identification need to remain a priority as well as continuing therapeutic support for child victims

There has been a significant increase in victims identified aged 16 – 17 ranging from **8.34% to 9.81%** of all identified victims across the three years. It should be noted that the data provided for the needs assessment for those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in domestic abuse relationships and/or victims of IPV in their own relationships.

This highlights the importance of the commissioning and sustainability of specialist children's provision, for those living in households where abuse is taking place and for those experiencing abuse within their own relationships. It is currently unclear what provision and support offer is available to children in Leicestershire.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises that children in abusive households are victims. As stated previously, not all agencies are collecting data regarding children. It is imperative that all data around children is captured. This is to ensure that the needs of the child are assessed, understood and met by providing appropriate support and services for the whole family and linked in with other relevant strategies.

It is noted from the refuge demographic data that there are a significant number of children within the service but limited information regarding their needs and outcomes.

- Specialist children's provision to be commissioned for those within safe accommodation and the wider community
- Specialist children and young peoples' provision for those experiencing domestic abuse within their own relationship. This is an area for consideration for those within safe accommodation, as well as in the community
- Children's provision to be tailored to a child's needs, identity, and culture

Conclusion and Recommendations

Performance Monitoring

It was previously recommended that the Local Partnership Board complete dip sampling and case audits on those accessing safe accommodation on a quarterly basis. Whilst it is noted that individual providers are completing these, it would be of benefit for the Local Partnership Board to review these on a regular basis to quality assure.

No Recourse to Public Funds

WALL have highlighted that immigration status can be a barrier for victims accessing safe accommodation. In the previous needs assessment we recommended that staff be aware of the Destitution Domestic Violence (DDV) Concession scheme for those who have been granted leave to enter as a spouse or partner of a British person.

We do not have an update regarding this and would recommend that this be an area which is explored to ensure the intersecting needs of victims are being met.



Appendix A

Data Submissions

Data was supplied by the following agencies –

- Leicestershire Police
- LWA
- Freeva
- WALL
- Adam Project
- Hinckley & Bosworth DA service
- Harborough DA service
- Blaby DA service
- North West Leicestershire Housing Link Worker
- Oadby & Wigston Housing Link Worker
- Children's Services
- Adult Social Care
- Leicestershire LGBT+ Centre
- Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
- Oadby & Wigston Borough Council
- North West Leicestershire District Council
- Melton Borough Council
- Harborough District Council
- Blaby District Council

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**CABINET – 24 MARCH 2026****DRAFT LEICESTERSHIRE CARERS STRATEGY 2026-2030****JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's approval to consult on the draft Leicestershire Carers Strategy 2026-2030, attached as an Appendix to this report.
2. The report will also explain the development of the Strategy and the priorities for delivery.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that:
 - a) The draft Leicestershire Carers Strategy 2026-2030 be approved for consultation.
 - b) A further report be submitted to the Cabinet in September 2026 presenting the outcome of the consultation and the final Strategy for approval.

Reasons for Recommendation

4. A public consultation will enable the Council to reach more carers, people who use services, professional and other interested parties to inform the priorities and implementation of the Strategy. This will build upon the pre-consultation engagement that helped to form the draft Strategy. The public consultation will target seldom heard groups of people. The consultation findings and further developed Strategy will then be presented for endorsement by the Cabinet to ensure the public are aware of the commitment the Council has to supporting carers.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report at its meeting on 2 March 2026. The Committee's comments are set out in paragraph 44 of this report.

6. The outcome of the consultation will be reported back to the Cabinet in September 2026, with a view to the final Strategy being approved at that time.
7. Subject to the Cabinet's approval the Strategy will then be published.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. The Adults and Communities Strategy 'Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire' details the ambitions, aims and goals of the Department over the next four years (2025–2029). It reflects the ambitions of the Council's overall Strategic Plan.
9. The Joint Carers Strategy Refresh 2022-2025, Recognising, Valuing and Supporting Carers in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) outlines eight key priorities: carer identification, valuing carers, keeping carers informed, developing carer friendly communities, ensuring carers have a life alongside caring, utilising technology to support caring, accessing the right support at the right time and recognising young carers.
10. The Care Act 2014 gives unpaid adult carers in England the legal right to a support assessment, placing them on an equal footing with the people they care for. If the assessment identifies eligible needs, local authorities have a duty to meet them, such as through respite care or direct payments. Local authorities must focus on the carer's wellbeing, including their physical, mental, and emotional health, as well as their ability to work and have a life outside of caring.
11. The Children and Families Act 2014 was introduced to set out what support local authorities may offer for carers, as well as the cared for person for young people and their families.
12. The Carers Leave Act 2023 came into effect in April 2024 to support carers to balance their work with their unpaid caring responsibilities. This Act gives full time employees the right to take one week (of up to five days) of unpaid leave per year to allow carers to provide or arrange care for a dependent.
13. On 3 December 2025, a meeting of the County Council resolved to:
 - a) Formally recognise carers as a group requiring particular consideration and support, specifically:
 - To ensure carers are consulted and involved in shaping services;
 - To review service delivery to remove barriers for carers.
 - b) Assess future decisions, services and policies made and adopted by the Council to determine the impact of changes on carers.
 - c) Ensure that these commitments are incorporated into the refresh of the LLR Carers Strategy and any other relevant policies and strategies.

Resource Implications

14. In 2024/25 the Council spent £3,547,094 on direct services for adult carers.
15. The majority of this spend was delivered via direct payments enabling carers to have choice and control over their support.
16. Inclusive of the above spend is the contract with Voluntary Action South Leicestershire (VASL) which is commissioned to provide advice and support to carers at an annual cost of £181,260. The existing carers support service that is operated by VASL has been extended until 31 March 2027. Any new commissioned services will be developed to deliver the priorities in the Strategy once finalised. It is expected that some procurement will be necessary. Any future commissioning will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's procurement rules and relevant legislation, with appropriate approvals.
17. The Support at Home service commenced in October 2025 and has acted as a managed service for carers where a direct payment was not wanted or suitable. Support at Home supports people with eligible social care needs who need assistance with non-personal care tasks such as cleaning, grocery shopping and befriending. The service has proved to be very popular amongst carers. The service is a pilot and contracted for a year with an option to extend for a further year.
18. There is a specific Carers Team located within the Customer Service Centre to support carers assessments, and this team work closely alongside VASL in relation to completion of assessments.
19. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report. Delivery of the Strategy will be subject to statutory eligibility criteria, available resources and future decisions of the Council.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

20. A copy of this report will be circulated to all members of the County Council.

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PART B

Background

21. The Joint Carers Strategy Refresh 2022-2025, Recognising, Valuing and Supporting Carers in LLR was approved by the Cabinet in November 2022.
22. In the future, it is intended that each authority develop individual carers' strategies tailored to the unique needs and requirements of its respective area. Having a specific Leicestershire Carers Strategy will be reflective of Leicestershire carers and will highlight what they need and how the Council can help carers continue with their caring role. The new Strategy will be aligned with the Council's values and priorities whilst working in partnership with Health (Integrated Care Board, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust and Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust) to ensure that the overall approach to support carers in Leicestershire remains a joint arrangement.
23. The new Leicestershire Carers Strategy 2026-2030 will address the areas to improve and strengthen support to carers. This will include actions resulting from the Care Quality Commission's (CQC), Leicestershire County Council: local authority assessment, published in September 2025. The report highlighted areas of good practice and also some areas where improvements can be made.
24. The Census 2021 data indicates a total of 61,300 of Leicestershire respondents, aged five years and above, declaring that they provided unpaid care (9% of population). The highest rate of caring in the population was among those aged 45 to 64 (15%), followed by those aged 65 to 84 (11.3%), with women predominating in all but the eldest (aged 85 years and above) group of carers.
25. There is some geographical variation amongst carers in Leicestershire with the highest rate being in Oadby and Wigston (9.8%) and lowest in Harborough (8.3%), unadjusted for age. The rate of employment among carers is slightly higher in Leicestershire compared to the national average, with a slightly lower unemployment rate (2% versus 3%).
26. In 2024/25, 1,849 carers assessments were completed in Leicestershire. So far for 2025/26, 1,818 have been completed with 267 of these being joint assessments with the cared-for person.
27. There are currently 2,601 carers in receipt of a service from the Council of whom, 1,653 people have a weekly carers direct payment and 907 people have a one-off carers direct payment. In addition, around 2,500 carers are supported by the commissioned carers service per year.
28. In 2025, a total of 116 assessment referrals were received, with 69 full assessments being completed by the young carer team. In addition, 94 young carers passports were issued and a total of 341 have been issued since the

scheme was launched in 2022. The school census data recorded 289 young carers in 2025.

Key engagement activities

29. During the period October to December 2025, a number of key engagement activities have been undertaken across the county. Carers have been offered a variety of ways to get involved and have their say and help shape the new Leicestershire Carers Strategy.
30. The engagement methods have included:
 - *face to face group-based engagement* - this took place at commissioned provider carers groups, community groups and a Carers Rights Day event.
 - *online via Microsoft Teams* - from previous engagement, carers have fed back to say they prefer having an option to meet virtually as they do not have to worry about transport and getting back for their loved ones.
 - online survey.
 - one-to-one engagement with carers.
31. As of January 2026, over 300 adult carers have been involved in the development of the Strategy.
32. The County Council's Young Carers Team have also engaged with young carers via the online survey. A total of 19 young carers provided feedback on what is important to them and how they would like to be supported.
33. Feedback from upcoming scheduled engagement activities due to take place will be added to any future reports and evidence. It is not expected to significantly change the themes already identified or the new Leicestershire priorities.
34. Over 20 people have completed the professionals survey on the Carer's Strategy. Professionals who participated include County Council staff, key partners including Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, GPs and local charities who work closely with carers.

Key themes from the engagement activities

35. The following themes have been identified through analysis of the survey and verbal feedback.
 - a) Recognition of the caring role - Carers want to be recognised and feel valued and appreciated for what they do for their loved ones on a day-to-day basis. Carers are not always recognised. They want to be listened to by all professionals working with them. At times, carers feel their voices are not always heard or professionals do not always understand their caring situation and feel professionals know better than them. They do not want to keep repeating their story.

- b) Respite from caring responsibilities - When caring for someone daily, it can be overwhelming and lead to carer strain and breakdown. To reduce the impact, carers need time for themselves to take a break and take their minds away from their daily caring responsibilities. Where informal carers can access paid support for a couple of hours during the week, it has helped to allow them to have a break; but not all carers are able to get support in place to take a break. Some carers want long respite for their loved ones at a care home.
- c) Tackling loneliness and isolation of carers - Caring can be very lonely and isolating, especially when there are no family members living locally and no one to turn to. Carers would like someone to call and check in with them occasionally to make sure they are okay and have an opportunity for them to talk to somebody. Sometimes carers do not talk to anyone all day apart from their loved one they are caring for.
- d) Information and advice - Carers are not all aware of the range of support available to them or know what to look for. The information available can be overwhelming and be hard to process, especially when the content is not easy read and contains jargon and acronyms. Some carers feel they are provided with an overload of information/leaflets/booklets which they do not have time to read and understand. Sometimes carers are given information by professionals and expected to get on with caring for their loved ones. Carers want to be provided with all information and advice that is available to them. Sometimes they feel excluded especially with a digital format because not all carers can access online materials.
- e) Easier access to services outside of working hours - It would be helpful to carers to have support where they can find all information and advice in one location. Carers have expressed how difficult and how long it takes them to get through to speak to someone. Carers feel they would like a service which supports carers beyond standard working hours. Often working carers work during normal office hours and by the time they have finished work, the telephone lines are closed thus unable to follow things up.
- f) Carers support groups - Carers have found attending carers groups, both commissioned and non-commissioned support groups, have been a lifeline for them, as they allow carers to be part of a community and to be able to connect with other carers who are in similar situations to them. It has also given carers the opportunity to speak to others to provide mutual support, share information and advice on what has worked for them. This has been particularly useful for carers who do not have a good support network around them.
- g) Cost of support - The direct payment provided to carers, does not always cover the cost of all the support they require, for example, support from a cleaner or a gardener. This means carers have to provide the top up for the service/support.

- h) Access to health services - Carers have struggled at times to get through to their GPs to get an appointment for either themselves or for their cared for person. They have also experienced difficulties with getting repeat prescriptions. There also appears to be some inconsistencies with whether carers are being registered as a carer with their GP.
- i) Young carers often find it difficult balancing their education and caring for their family member. It is important young carers are supported in the right way to ensure they have a bright future ahead of them. Young carers have expressed they would like a break from their caring responsibilities and a way to connect with other carers who are in similar situations and have benefited from attending youth groups. Young carers said they would like to have support with their mental health, especially when they find times difficult.

Proposals

36. As a direct result of the engagement activities, the following priorities have been generated.

Priority	Description
Priority one	Carers are recognised, valued, listened to, and supported to continue caring
Priority two	Carers are provided with accurate, timely and relevant information and advice
Priority three	Carers are supported with their wellbeing and access services when needed

37. The actions to implement the priorities are detailed in the draft strategy.

Consultation and engagement proposals

38. The consultation is proposed to commence on the 20 April 2026 and run for eight weeks until the 22 June 2026. This will ensure the last week of the consultation coincides with 'Carers Week' which is a nationally recognised week of celebration and awareness for carers.
39. The following questions will be asked to determine the reach and impact of the proposed strategy and where it can be improved.
- a) How well, if at all, do you think the draft Leicestershire Carers Strategy accurately reflects carers issues?
- Very well
 - Fairly well
 - Not very well
 - Not at all
 - Don't know
- o Why do you say this? Is there anything you would like to add?

- b) How important, if at all, are the following priorities to you?
- Carers are recognised, valued and listened to and supported to continue caring
 - Carers are provided with accurate, timely and relevant information and advice
 - Carers are supported with their wellbeing
 - Carers can access social care and wellbeing services when needed
- c) To what extent do you agree or disagree that these are the right priorities?
- Strongly agree
 - Tend to agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Tend to disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Don't know
- d) Why do you say this? Are there any other priorities that should be included in the strategy?
- e) Is there anything you particularly like about the draft strategy?
- f) Is there anything you particularly don't like about the draft strategy?
- g) What would make the most difference to your life as a carer?
- h) Do you have any other comments?
40. The public consultation documentation will include a summary and explanation of the strategy, along with appropriate and proportionate monitoring information of protected characteristics.
41. Consultation will take place through online surveys, online meetings and face to face sessions and will comply with UK GDPR and data protection requirements.
42. As part of the consultation, it is proposed that engagement with Parent Carers is undertaken to ensure that the new strategy works to include Parent Carers' needs and roles as carers.
43. In addition to this, key engagement with Health partners will continue to establish those areas to support carers that are deliverable by Health, either solely or jointly with the Council, are integrated within the strategy and action plan.

Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

44. The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the approach to the draft Leicestershire Carers Strategy 2026-2030 at its meeting on 2 March 2026. Arising from discussion the following points were made:

- i. Members endorsed the three proposed priorities, highlighting the importance of effective carer flow and clearer information about entitlements and available support. They welcomed the extensive pre-consultation, particularly engagement with over 300 previously unheard carers, and noted ongoing concerns about funding and access to financial support, as well as the significant voluntary contribution made by carers nationally.
- ii. Questions were raised about how identified barriers would translate into practical actions, especially around accessing help at home. Members queried how carers would know what support they were entitled to, how they could access it, and whether a register existed for young carers. Officers reported that carers were often identified through GP practices, though referral processes varied. Improving access to information, advice and guidance remained a priority, particularly for rural carers. The current VASL contract supported around 7,000 carers, but approximately 50,000 more might be without support. The VASL contract aimed to address those gaps, alongside challenges linked to carers not self-identifying.
- iii. Concerns about VASL's geographical coverage were noted. Officers clarified that the Council did not hold a universal carers' register; only those identified or self-referred were recorded, while VASL maintained its own caseload. The new commissioning arrangements would consider reach, and future strategy work would review funding pathways and reshape the carers' offer.
- iv. Members stressed that carers should have a good quality of life themselves and requested that this principle be explicitly reflected in the Strategy. The Director of Adults and Communities confirmed that adult carers had statutory rights under the Care Act 2014, including assessment and support for eligible needs. Those not meeting thresholds could still access support through the independent sector contract.
- v. Clarification was sought on entitlement to respite care and how carers would access it, alongside questions about whether the £3.5m carers support budget was sufficient. The Director of Children and Family Services reported that young carers are particularly vulnerable and were identified through close work with schools and health agencies, ensuring access to assessments and support groups.
- vi. The Healthwatch representative reported that carers frequently felt unheard and highlighted issues including inconsistent home-care staff, challenges with hospital discharge, and the importance of education settings for young carers. Healthwatch commended the engagement with over 300 carers.
- vii. Members raised financial pressures on working age carers, mixed experiences with VASL, and concerns about fragmented support pathways. Variation in GP engagement was noted, and Members hoped the Strategy would strengthen links with primary care. The Director of

Adults and Communities explained that the £3.5m budget mainly covered direct payments, with around £200,000 each for the VASL contract and internal support team. Respite was funded through individual care packages, though figures were difficult to isolate due to funding structures.

- viii. Finally, Members welcomed the work with young carers but requested clearer Strategy content on transition to adult support, particularly for those entering higher education or employment. The Director of Children and Family Services confirmed this would be strengthened in the revised document.

Conclusion

- 45. In conclusion, a public consultation will be a cost efficient measure of what is important to carers and the kinds of support they require. Without this the desired outcomes may not be achieved of listening and supporting carers so they may continue to care for their loved ones as long as they want to.

Equality Implications

- 46. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted to inform the draft Carers Strategy and consultation design and will be updated if a public consultation takes place. The EIA has been approved by the Adults and Communities Departmental Equality Group and is awaiting approval by Children and Family Services and will be included within the further report to be submitted to the Cabinet in September 2026. The consultation design is intended to advance equality of opportunity and foster participation by protected groups.

Human Rights Implications

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

Health Implications

- 48. A Health Impact Assessment has been conducted on the draft Strategy and this will be updated if a public consultation takes place.
- 49. Although it is proposed that the Strategy focuses on Leicestershire a formal group will continue to have an important role in ensuring that partnership working across the geographical system is in place. The group represents both adult and young carers groups with representatives from both adults and children's services across key partners (Integrated Care Board/Council's, NHS community services). The impact on partnership working is therefore considered to be positive.
- 50. A Leicestershire focused governance group will be developed to oversee the specific deliverables of the strategy and actions with associated Key

Performance Indicators and metrics in place and informed by carers throughout the duration of the strategy. This group will include professionals and carers.

Background Papers

- Report to Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 2 March 2026 – Draft Leicestershire Carers Strategy 2026-2030 - <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=8355&Ver=4>
- Delivering Wellbeing and opportunity in Leicestershire – Adults and Communities Strategy 2025-29 – <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health/our-approach/policies-and-strategies>
- Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland (LLR) Carers Strategy 2022-2025 <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-01/Leicestershire-County-Leicester-City-and-Rutland-Carers-Strategy.pdf>
- County Council – 3 December 2025 – Support for Family Carers - <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=7861> – item 48 a)I
- Report to the Cabinet: 25 November 2022 - LLR Carers Strategy 2022-2025 - <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6751&Ver=4>
- CQC Assessment of Leicestershire’s Social Care Department - <https://www.cqc.org.uk/care-services/local-authority-assessment-reports/leicestershire-0925> -

Appendix

Draft Carers Strategy for Leicestershire 2026-2030

DRAFT Leicestershire County Council Carers Strategy 2026-2030

Recognising, valuing and supporting Leicestershire carers to make a positive difference

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Introduction

This Leicestershire Carers Strategy 2026-2030 has been informed by carers who have engaged extensively with us through surveys, online meetings and face to face carers groups and community groups across the County. Over 300 carers have participated and provided an insight to how they would like to be supported to continue caring.

Thank you to all our carers who took the time to talk to us and completed the survey. Many thanks and gratitude to our key partners and professionals who participated and engaged. All input has been valuable to us in developing the Leicestershire Carers Strategy: 2026-2030.

Carers across Leicestershire play a vital role in caring for and supporting people. Every carer and caring situation is unique and different. Some carers might care for one person, whereas others might care for more than one person, such as a sandwich carer, who might care for their child and also a parent.

This strategy is a framework for developing support for carers. It recognises the increasingly important role that carers play in Leicestershire, alongside the wide variety of caring roles and the diversity of people within these roles.

Scope

This strategy applies to adults (over 18 years of age) who care, informally for a person who is living in Leicestershire or is registered to a GP in Leicestershire. This may mean that the carer lives outside of Leicestershire but would still be entitled to an assessment from Leicestershire County Council. The strategy also applies to young carers under 18 years and the support they receive will be determined by the

Council's Children and Families Service, such as offering an assessment, young carers group and passport ID card.

Leicestershire County Council commitment to carers

On 3 December 2025 the Council resolved to:

- a. Formally recognise carers as a group requiring particular consideration and support, specifically:
 - To ensure carers are consulted and involved in shaping services;
 - To review service delivery to remove barriers for carers.
- b. Assess future decisions, services and policies made and adopted by the Council to determine the impact of changes on carers.
- c. Ensure that these commitments are incorporated into the Carers Strategy and any other relevant policies and strategies.

Who is a carer?

For the purposes of this strategy, a carer is defined as a person who provides unpaid physical, practical and/or emotional support to a family member or friend who needs help due to physical or mental ill health, a learning disability, neurodivergent needs, age-related frailty, or problems related to drug and alcohol use. Without this support, the person being cared for would find it difficult to manage their day-to-day life or to cope. Carers can be of any age, including children, young people and adults.

Types of carers: *please note this list is not exhaustive*

Adult carer

An adult who provides care for another adult (e.g. partner, family member, friend or neighbour).

You may be working or in education and caring for an adult. You do not have to be living with the person and the help you give doesn't have to be physical care. You may be providing emotional support or practical help.

Adult carer story

'S' used to work as a receptionist at the Leicester Royal Infirmary hospital on the premature baby unit - Neo Natal Unit and is now retired. S now cares for her husband and mother who both have dementia.

S's husband was diagnosed with dementia seven years ago. The dementia is maintained by medication and he is able to do most things by himself. S is there to support him if he needs her support. Both like to keep active, by going on regular walks and swims. S believes regular exercise helps keeps her husband active and occupied, which helps with his dementia.

S's mother recently had a CT scan which revealed, her having mixed dementia following a couple of falls. Prior to the diagnosis, S's mother was calling her on a regular basis during the day and at night and making complaints against her. This impacted on S's mental health. S's mother's mixed dementia is maintained by medication and S visits frequently to make sure she is okay and attends to her needs. S does have a sister who helps with online food shopping and telephone calls on a regular basis but does not live locally. S has put measures in place for her mother including a Lifeline key safe, where emergency services can use a pin to retrieve the key to gain access to the house.

S is registered with Voluntary Action South Leicestershire (VASL): Support for Carers and Alzheimer's Society, where they have provided support, information and advice. S has built up a good relationship with both organisations and know they are only a phone call away if she ever needs their support or need someone to talk to.

S has her own health conditions but has a positive outlook in life. S makes the most of her caring responsibilities and is an advocate for people living with dementia. S is a very active member of the community and attends many dementia local charity events, talking about her caring journey and providing information and advice to other carers in a similar situation. S is very passionate about helping others and feels her experience can help carers who are looking after someone living with dementia.

Working carer

A working carer balances their paid employment along with unpaid care for someone (e.g. partner, family member, friend or neighbour).

Parent carer

A parent or guardian who supports an ill or disabled child (under 18 years) including a child or young person who is misusing or abusing substances and/or alcohol, to a degree greater than would be expected in a parenting role.

Parent carer story

'K' is a parent carer who cares for her 21 year old son, 'P'. P was diagnosed with autism when he was two years old. K gave up her work to care for P.

During P's first year in college, he had autism burnout and sensory issues. K found caring for P stressful at night because he was having a sensory issue every few hours which resulted in him feeling low, annoyed, frustrated and upset. A Doctor prescribed medication however this was not working. The situation gradually worsened and his sensory issues were not initially addressed and sometimes their voices were not always heard. P lost weight and was not able to stand. K persisted with professionals and it revealed that he was suffering from side effects from the medication. Support was put into place with regular visits by the crisis team, a specialist consultant was assigned and new medications were prescribed.

P's autism is now managed well. He has the support from their social worker, occupational therapist and physio. K supports her son with keeping him calm, encouraging, reassuring and supporting him when he is frustrated and also with personal care, medication and appointments.

K gets support and meets with other carers once a month which helps with supporting one another, talking through problems and giving some advice. K is also involved with the adult social care engagement panel where she can connect with like-minded people and can work together with them to make a difference.

Sandwich carer

A sandwich carer provides care for another adult (e.g. partner, family member, friend or neighbour) as well as their own children.

Young carer

A child or young person, aged 18 years or under, who provides regular and ongoing care and emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses substances.

Becoming a Young Carer: R's story

My dad has been ill since I was three years old, with multiple cancers and strokes. And my sister has special needs meaning she experiences the world differently and requires a lot of attention. Growing up in this environment meant that, even from a young age, I took on responsibilities that shaped my childhood in ways most children don't experience.

I began to properly understand my role when I was about 11 years old, after my sisters support worker reached out to places to ensure that I had support in place. This is when I learned what a young carer was and how much my life was related to this.

Honestly, my first reaction was confusion. I knew my life was different from other people, but I wasn't sure if it was something to feel proud about or sad and frustrated.

What changed for me

Once I understood what a young carer was, my responsibilities stood out to me much more and I started wondering why I had to take on adult roles whilst my friends were out playing and having fun.

My routine would change when my dad had hospital appointments, and I would constantly have to be at my grandparents. I always had the best time with them, but I could never fully relax and enjoy myself as the hardest part was not knowing what was happening to my dad.

I have always been sporty and loved playing football. This helped me escape from my caring responsibilities at home and gave me somewhere to be a kid again. My friendships did not change, mainly because I never told my friends that I was a young carer. Perhaps if I did, they would have been supportive, but I was constantly worried that if they found out then they wouldn't understand, and I wasn't used to putting my needs first and allowing myself to express my emotions.

How it made me feel

I felt worried, anxious, and overwhelmed, and I struggled to trust people as I wasn't able to predict their responses or reactions. What if they got more people involved?

In the end I would tell them I'm fine as it was easier to keep myself to myself. Because I was so used to putting others before me, being vulnerable was not an option as it felt too uncomfortable and risky.

The hardest part was hiding my emotions at school whilst still being expected to achieve good grades. None of my friends had ever saw me cry, and it just felt safer that way. I didn't want to have to explain myself. But what I found out was that crying isn't a weakness, its possibly one of the strongest emotions to exist. I physically felt like I couldn't talk to anyone, and crying became a way to release everything I couldn't put into words.

What I learned

Being a young carer has helped me develop patience and empathy, which have supported me in my everyday life. I have also become more mature as I have had to grow up much quicker than most people my age.

Being a young carer has shaped the way I look at situations and people making me more understanding and resilient. Although it is challenging, I wouldn't be half the person that I am today.

Who or what helped me

When I think about it, I have been incredibly lucky as everyone has supported me in their own little ways. Even when I said I didn't need it, even without them realising I was a young carer, everyone has helped. My friends supported me the most (and still do!), by getting me out of the house when I'm at my lowest. I have also joined a young carers group which has helped me realise that I'm not alone.

Sports has helped me massively! It has made sure I did something for myself and helped clear my mind of any worries. Music has also become a huge coping strategy, helping me to relax and manage my feelings.

Looking back

Looking back to when I was 11, I feel immensely proud of how far I have come. If I would've known what the next 7 years would look like, I probably would have given up. I do still sometimes wonder why I got given this life, but I also strongly believe

that everything happens for a reason and that I was chosen to be a young carer to support those who need it most.

Being a young carer now means being gifted the ability to understand other people on a whole new level, and to carry strength and determination into whatever life throws at you.

I hope for a future where young carers are not recognised for what they are forced to go through, but for all the strength, love and responsibilities that they hold quietly every day. It will be a future where support reaches them before they have to ask, because asking is the hardest and scariest part, especially when you've spent your life being the strong one.

I hope for a future where young carers are supported and reminded that their lives are allowed to be just as full of endless possibilities as anyone else's.

What might a carer do?

Carers often do not recognise themselves as carers, especially when they are caring for someone close to them, like a family member; including a husband, wife, partner, mother, father, sister and brother or a child, or extended family members. If you look after or support someone who would not be able to manage everyday life without your help, it is important that you identify yourself as a carer so you may receive the help and support you are entitled to. Carers may also care for their friends or neighbours.

Here are some examples of what a carer might be supporting the cared-for person with:

- to wash and dress
- help with personal care and housework
- food shopping
- food preparation and cooking
- picking up and administering medication
- taking someone to hospital and GP appointments
- providing company and emotional support
- help with financial paperwork

- Helping with communication and caring for siblings

Carers in Leicestershire

The Census 2021 data indicates a total of 61,300 of Leicestershire respondents, aged five years and above, declared that they provide unpaid care (9% of population). The highest rate of caring population was among those aged 45 to 64 (15%), followed by those 65 to 84 (11.3%), with women predominating in all but the eldest group of carers (aged 85 years and above). There is some geographical variation amongst carers in Leicestershire with the highest rate being in Oadby and Wigston (9.8%) and lowest in Harborough (8.3%), unadjusted for age. The rate of employment among carers is slightly higher in Leicestershire at 3% compared to the national average of 2%.

These carers provide essential support to family members and friends who could not manage without their help, forming a vital part of the county's early-intervention and prevention system. As Leicestershire has a larger and faster-growing older population than the national average, the demand for unpaid care is expected to continue rising, driving increasing pressure on both carers and local services.

In 2024/25, 1,455 carers assessments were completed in Leicestershire.

In January 2026 there were over 2,300 carers in receipt of a service from the local authority in Leicestershire: including 1,581 who have a weekly carers direct payment and 716 who have a one-off carers direct payment, 632 reviews have taken place in 2025/26 for carers, with 292 (46%) being joint reviews.

In addition to this, the commissioned carers service Voluntary Action South Leicestershire known as VASL provide support to approximately 2,500 carers a year. The VASL service aims to support carers with information and advice activities such as contingency planning, finances, benefits, as well as provide help to complete carers assessments.

VASL also promote social inclusion and prevent carers from being isolated by running support groups across the County, offer one to one support and telephone befriending services. A carers' passport identifies and supports carers in workplaces, hospitals, communities and schools. The passport can also minimise repeating the carers' journey and help carers access benefits such as discounts. VASL issue and renew these passports.

Rural carers

Carers living in rural areas are at a particular disadvantage, more likely to experience social isolation, transport issues and housing challenges. They may experience limited access to respite, fewer peer support opportunities, higher financial strain (especially from transport and fuel costs), and digital exclusion where connectivity is poor. Smaller local networks intensify emotional strain, isolation, and the feeling of carrying sole responsibility. Cultural expectations to "manage independently" can further discourage carers from seeking support.

This strategy will help to ensure isolated carers have an equitable opportunity to receive support.

"In rural settings, where distances are greater and access to services is often more constrained, the issues faced by unpaid carers can be even more pronounced. It is imperative that we recognise and address these unique challenges to ensure that all carers, regardless of their geographic location, receive the support they need." *Kerry Booth, Chief Executive, Rural Services Network*

Parent Carer

Parent carers help children and young people reach their potential, supporting independence and preventing or delaying the need for formal statutory services.

Parent Carer Assessment

Parent carers have a legal right to an assessment focused on:

- The impact of caring on health and wellbeing
- Their ability to continue caring
- Support needed to manage caring safely and sustainably

Parent carers may request an assessment if they care for a child under 18 with a physical disability or mental disorder who lives with them.

You need to ask adult social care for a carers assessment if the young person you look after is over 18 years old.

You can get a young carers assessment if you're under 18 years old and you look after someone else.

Assessment Process

You may be able to get help with your caring responsibilities if you're a parent or carer of a disabled child. We'll need to talk to you to find out what help you need.

When we receive your request for an assessment we will decide which is the most appropriate service to do the assessment. This will depend on the needs and worries you are telling us about. We will decide either for a social worker or an alternatively qualified worker to do the assessment depending on your level of need.

The worker will contact you and they will ask you a series of questions. They will talk to you about a range of areas of family life and this will include looking at your wellbeing and health as well as barriers to education, employment, etc that you might be experiencing because of your caring role. This will include:

- Difficulties arising from the caring role
- Health and wellbeing
- Support required
- Impact on wider family life

If you agree, they'll ask the views of other organisations who help you, like your child's school.

After the assessment is completed. We will tell you:

- what help we think you need
- if this support is something we can provide, or signpost you to appropriate services
- If we agree you need help we will agree a support plan with you.

This could include:

- support to access services in your local community such as play schemes, leisure activities
- family support including support around routines, behaviour, etc.
- short breaks for your child to give you a break from caring or help with packages of care

Support could range from a family support worker through to a Social Worker, depending on level of assessed need

We have easily accessible information for parents and carers to help guide you through available services and resources.

National Policy Context

The Care Act (2014) The Care Act 2014 gives unpaid adult carers in England the legal right to a support assessment, placing them on an equal footing with the people they care for. If the assessment identifies eligible needs, local authorities have a duty to meet them, such as through respite care or direct payments. Local authorities must focus on the carer's wellbeing, including their physical, mental, and emotional health, as well as their ability to work and have a life outside of caring.

The **Children and Families Act (2014)** set out what support local authorities must provide for carers, as well as the cared for person for young people and families.

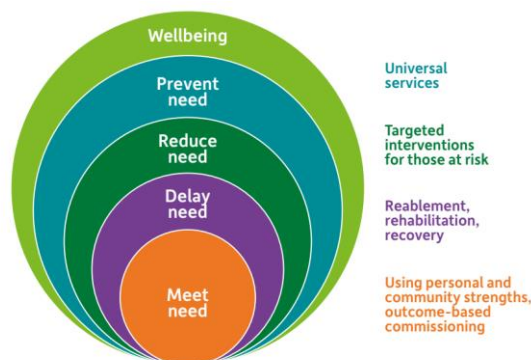
The Carers Leave Act 2023 came into effect in April 2024 and support carers to balance their work with their unpaid caring responsibilities. This Act gives full time employees the right to take one week (of up to five days) of unpaid leave per year to allow carers to provide or arrange care for a dependent. Employees can take the unpaid leave as either full days, half days or in a block.

The **Young Carers Needs Assessment Regulation 2015** enforces the Children and Families Act 2014, for local authorities in England to assess any young carer under 18 upon request or if it appears they have support needs.

Leicestershire County Council Adults and Communities Strategy 2025-2029

This Adults and Communities Strategy 'Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire' details the ambitions, aims and goals of the department over the next four years (2025–2029). It reflects the ambitions of the Council's overall Strategic Plan.

To deliver our aims and goals, we have developed a layered model that is designed to maximise a person's independence whilst promoting their wellbeing. This strategic approach has four key areas which are surrounded by a person's wellbeing. These key areas are designed to offer the right support, at the right time and will vary in the amount of intervention needed by services to promote wellbeing and independence.



Further details about the departmental strategy is available on the local authority website - <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health/our-approach/policies-and-strategies>

The Council currently spends around £3.5 million per year directly on supporting carers. The majority of this is through a weekly direct payment which carers can use to purchase support directly with providers. The Council also commissions support for carers across the County with information and advice, carers passports and support groups.

A new service called 'Support at Home' commenced in October 2025 to act as a council-managed service for carers who do not want to use a direct payment. The service offers a cost-effective alternative to traditional home care by focusing on practical, non-personal care tasks such as shopping, social inclusion, and household support.

Building on our achievements

The following are some of the achievements from the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Joint Carers Strategy Refresh 2022-2025:

- Between January 2022 and November 2025 over 4,400 carers passports were issued and over 5,000 carers' passports were renewed
- Celebrated the fifth year anniversary of the carers passport
- Successful early intervention care technology for people living with dementia

- Recommissioned the Carers' Support Service to support unpaid carers across Leicestershire with information and advice
- Launched the hospital discharge grant for carers in January 2023 and successfully supported carers following the cared-for person being discharged from hospital. To date we have provided over £198 thousand in discharge grants.
- Worked with carers to review and updated the LLLR carers information and advice
- Supported working carers with the new Carers Leave Act 2023
- Issued over 330 young carers passports
- Ibstock school and Kibworth Mead Academy have been awarded a young carers award, these are the first two schools in Leicestershire to receive this award

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Carers Information Webpage Development

The county and partners, alongside carers and local carers-support organisations, are co-producing an enhanced digital carers webpage. The purpose of this platform is to ensure carers can more easily navigate the health and social care system and access clear, reliable information. This approach aligns with local authority commitments to signposting carers to advice, assessments, emergency planning and community support. Carers who do not have access to digital platforms will still be able to access the same information and advice through leaflets and booklets.

Digitalisation of the Carers Passport

The Carers Passport—which is a recognised identification resource across LLR - is being digitalised so carers can download and print their own copies. Carers can still access a non-digital version of their carers passport by contacting their local support for carers service. Carers Passports help carers be more easily recognised and unlock access to a range of local support, as highlighted by both Rutland County Council and Support for Carers Leicestershire.

Development of a Consistent Carers Emergency Plan

A shared Carers Emergency Plan has been co-designed with carers, operational practitioners and carers-support services across the LLR footprint. This work ensures a consistent emergency-planning approach for carers and those they support, aligning with existing emergency-contingency tools available through local authorities. Implementation of the finalised LLR-wide form is planned for 2026, strengthening the safety and continuity of care when carers are unable to provide support.

Hospital-Discharge Support

Funding has been used to expand support for carers during hospital discharge, delivered through the carers-support provider Voluntary Action South Leicestershire (VASL), which already plays a significant local role in supporting carers in Leicestershire. This initiative has successfully improved the experience of carers and those they care for during transitions home.

Carer Identification and Professional Training

Recognising the need to improve carer identification across health, social care and provider services, LLR partners have commissioned a dedicated training course for professionals and providers across the County, City and Rutland. This training will strengthen workforce capability to identify and support carers earlier and more consistently.,

Vision for the Leicestershire Carers Strategy

We have worked together to determine a clear vision for the future. Carers, people who have a carer, staff and other stakeholders want the following for each carer in Leicestershire:

- To recognise they are performing a caring role
- To know where to go to ask for support
- To receive help and support to remain physically and mentally well
- To be able to carry on in the caring role if they choose to
- To have access to timely, good quality information and advice
- To receive training in the condition for the person they care for, if they want it

- To be able to work, take part in education and activities alongside their caring role
- To take a break from caring when they need it

From October 2025 to January 2026, over 300 carers took part in engagement activities across the County. This inclusive engagement used a range of communication mechanisms to support carers' participation including face to face carers' and community groups, individual based engagement, online meetings and surveys. The results were analysed and have helped to shape our priorities.

Priority one:

Carers are recognised, valued and listened to and supported to continue caring.

We will:

- Identify and recognise carers at all points in their caring journey.
- Increase the number of carers assessments and reviews ensuring they are personalised, proportionate, and timely
- Further develop respite services in partnership with carers
- Promote the use of a direct payment to ensure carers have choice and control over their support. This includes young carers who are not in education, employment or training (known as NEET)
- Work with small groups and communities to support adult carers to be part of their local communities. Develop support for carers groups to access to enable them to continue their group and increase membership
- Commission support groups for specific conditions or areas of interest e.g. sport
- Improve our approach to respite and support in a crisis
- Partner with adult learning to look at how carers can be supported with their wellbeing
- Ensure that there is a range of training available for carers such as:
 - understanding Carers Rights and Carers Assessments
 - manual handling techniques
 - first aid and emergency planning for young carers

- Lasting Power of Attorney, Wills, and Trusts
- Ensure people are informed about technology to support the Carer and cared for person
- Provide training for staff regarding carers to be embedded in new starter induction with a focus on: -
 - Carer Awareness
 - Carers Assessments
 - Recognition and Valuing Carers

Priority two:

Carers are provided with accurate, timely and relevant information and advice

We will

- Co-produce information and advice with carers and agency partners, to include:
 - digital and non-digital formats
 - easy to read information
 - use of alternatives to written word e.g. videos
 - support digital inclusion
- Ensure information and advice we provide carers is in plain English, easy to read and understand and minimise jargon and acronyms
- Ensure that systems exist to improve access to information in relation to finance and benefits, including:
 - identifying what information and organisations are available to advise on benefit claims and other financial advice
 - supporting carers to break out of the 'benefits trap' where Carers are looking for employment or training
 - providing carers and the cared for with accurate information about charging for services
 - supporting 'self-funders' to understand what support is available to them

- Ensure young carers and families understand what to expect from a transition to adult services and what is available to them. This includes working closely with adult commissioned services.
- Developing a 'no wrong door' approach for young carers

Priority three:

Carers are supported with their wellbeing and access services when needed

We will

- Work with wellbeing and social care sector organisations in Leicestershire to improve access to support
- Promote contingency and emergency planning
- Support people to access Carers Support groups and networks for specific health conditions
- Promote the different channels to contact adult social care
- Ensure equitable support is in place to enable carers to attend appointments about their own wellbeing
- Support working carers at times that suit them outside of business working hours
- Supporting young carers outside of school hours. This includes support with signposting, self-help and online services

Achieving the priorities

To achieve these priorities, Leicestershire County Council aim to:

- a. Identify and recognise more carers
- b. Increase the number and quality of carers assessments and assessment reviews completed, ensuring they are personalised, proportionate, and timely
- c. Offer information and advice about things that matter to carers e.g. benefits, contingency planning, respite
- d. Signpost and support carers to access specialist support
- e. Develop a reliable and equitable respite service in partnership with carers
- f. Promote the use of a direct payment to ensure carers have choice and control over their support

- g. Develop support for carers groups to access to enable them to continue their group and increase membership
- h. Commission the establishment of support groups for specific conditions or areas of interest e.g. sport
- f. Co-produce information and advice with carers and agency partners, to include
 - digital and non-digital formats
 - easy to read information
 - translation and interpretation approaches
 - use of alternatives to written word e.g. videos
- g. Support carers via digital inclusion
- h. Ensure families understand what to expect from a transition to adult services and what is available to them.
- k. Improve our approach to respite ensuring an equitable offer and support in a crisis
- l. Partner with adult learning to look at how carers can be supported with their wellbeing
- m. Ensure that there is a range of training available for carers such as:
 - understanding Carers Rights and Carers Assessments
 - manual handling techniques
 - health and safety
 - Lasting Power of Attorney, Wills, and Trusts
- n. Ensure people are informed about technology to support the Carer and cared for person
- o. Work with wellbeing and social care sector organisations in Leicestershire to improve access to support
- p. Promote contingency and emergency planning
- q. Support people to access Carers Support groups and networks for specific health conditions for example carers of people with learning disabilities

Measuring success

This strategy will be measured on the impact the outcomes of the priorities identified have. This will include increased numbers of carers assessments, increased number

of timely reviews, increased number of carers identified and registered) including increased number of carers passport issued, improved levels of satisfaction in services, increased completion of school census data return, improved education, health and wellbeing outcomes.

Future engagement and co-production

Following the publication of the strategy it will be essential to continue to work with carers and organisations to co-produce information and advice and to develop services.

DRAFT

Appendix

Signposting to organisations

Leicestershire County Council: Adult Social Care Customer Service Centre can be contactable on 0116 305 0004.

Voluntary Action South Leicestershire (VASL) Support for Carers is

Leicestershire County Council commissioned providers to support unpaid carers. This is a service for adult carers caring for someone who is aged 18+ and lives within Leicestershire County boundaries. Support for Carers provide a range of services including: information or advice to carers including monthly newsletter. Supporting carers with their finances, benefits, completing carers assessments, providing on-going one to one support and calling carers to check their wellbeing, issuing carers passport and support with completing and thinking about contingency/ emergency planning. VASL: Support for Carers can be contacted on: VASL: Support for Carers can be contacted on:

Tel: **01858 468543**, Email: maureen@supportforcarers.org, or

www.supportforcarers.org

Young carers team: for more information, click [here](#)

Carers can access general information and advice on caring responsibilities, carer's assessment, planning for emergencies, support on carer's health and wellbeing, carer's breaks, financial, useful helplines and also ways to connect with other carers. Below provides a useful list:

- [Leicestershire County Council](#)
- [Carers UK](#)
- [Carers Trust](#)

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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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**CABINET – 24 MARCH 2026****LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION: RESPONSE TO
CONSULTATION****EXEMPT JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND THE
DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the County Council's response to the Government consultation on local government reorganisation (LGR) in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
2. A supplementary report which will contain the consultation response is currently being prepared and this will be circulated to members and published on the County Council's website as soon as it is available.

Recommendations

3. The Cabinet is recommended to:
 - (a) Approve the consultation response for submission to the Government by the deadline of 26 March 2026;
 - (b) Authorise the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader and the Director of Corporate Resources, to make any necessary amendments to the consultation response before it is submitted to the Government provided that these do not change the underlying principles of the response as presented in this report.

Reasons for Recommendation

4. The Government is undertaking consultation on the proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland for 7 weeks between 5 February and 26 March 2026. The County Council is a statutory consultee.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. The Scrutiny Commission will receive a presentation which provides an outline of the consultation response at its meeting on 18 March. The

supplementary report will include details of the views expressed by the Scrutiny Commission at this meeting.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

6. The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has the power under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to invite proposals for a single tier of local government. In responding to an invitation, a council is required to have regard to any advice from the Secretary of State as to what a proposal should seek to achieve and the matters that should be taken into account in formulating a proposal.
7. The Government's policy on the reorganisation of local government in current two-tier areas into unitary authorities was set out in the English Devolution White Paper, published on 16 December 2024. It set out how the Government plans to deliver its manifesto pledge to transfer power out of Westminster through devolution and to fix the foundations of local government.
8. A letter was received from the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution on 5 February 2025 setting out the formal invitation to develop a proposal for LGR and with a requirement for an interim plan to be submitted to the Government before 21 March 2025. This was subject of a report to the Cabinet meeting on 7 February and that report was also submitted to the County Council for information on 19 February 2025.
9. The Cabinet on 18 March approved the outline of the Interim Plan for submission to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and authorised the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Acting Leader, the Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance, to finalise the interim plan for submission to the Government, provided that this did not change the underlying principles as presented in the report.
10. The County Council at its meeting on 2 July 2025 agreed, inter alia, that it considered that a north/south split of the County (proposed by district councils and Rutland Council) would have a significant risk to the stability of countywide services, particularly social care, would cause unnecessary disaggregation of services, and that it was unable to support that proposal. The Council's resolution also noted that there was joint agreement with the City Council that the best option for reorganisation in Leicester and Leicestershire is a two unitary model; one City, one County.
11. On 30 July, an Extraordinary Meeting of the County Council was called. A Notice of Motion was agreed, in summary, that proposals for, or agreements to Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation made on behalf of the County Council by the Leader and/or Cabinet and/or Chief Executive, would be subject to debate by and a vote of Full Council before submission to the Government; that the Leader would consult with all Group Leaders on a weekly basis to update them on progress of discussions with the other local authorities

concerned; and that the County Council did not support any expansion of the Leicester City Council area boundaries.

12. The Cabinet at its meeting on 12 September 2025 considered a report regarding the Government's policy on LGR, the local response made earlier in the year, the position locally and nationally, and the financial modelling (on different options) being undertaken to inform the Council's final proposal. The Cabinet, inter alia, acknowledged the decision of the County Council on 30 July not to support the expansion of the Leicester City boundary proposed by the Mayor of Leicester but recognised the need to provide evidence of the financial, service and other impacts of any proposed expansion on the County.
13. The County Council on 12 November endorsed the draft business case. It also agreed to oppose any expansion of the boundaries of Leicester City Council and that, should the Government be minded to implement an expansion, a referendum should take place on the matter. The costs of such a referendum should be met by the Government.
14. The Cabinet on 25 November approved the County Council's business case for submission to the Government. The business case was subsequently submitted to the Government before the deadline of 28 November 2025.

Resource Implications

15. There are no resource implications arising from the recommendation in this report. Work completed to date on LGR has been delivered using internal resources. However, LGR will be a significant undertaking that will have a significant impact on the Council's financial position in future years.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

16. This report has been circulated to all members of the Council.

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PART B

Background

17. Once the statutory consultation has concluded, the Minister will decide, subject to Parliamentary approval, which, if any, proposal is to be implemented, with or without modification. The timetable is for this decision to be made before the Parliamentary summer recess in 2026. A Structural Change Order would then be prepared and laid for Parliamentary approval. A Structural Change Order establishes the new single tier of local government and makes provision to abolish the predecessor councils. It would replace any currently planned elections with elections for the new councils with appropriate wards/divisions for these new elections, amend the terms of office of current councillors as required, and give any preparatory functions needed. This means, for example, any councillors elected in local elections in May 2025 would serve for a normal term but, if the council is abolished during that term through the reorganisation process, their terms would be reduced in this legislation. MHCLG has said that it will work with current councils during the preparation of the legislation, seeking input on specific matters which are expected to include names of the councils, transitional arrangements and electoral arrangements.
18. The Order would also specify functions and governance arrangements during the transition period and would give powers to the relevant executive or joint committee overseeing the transition. Structural Change Orders typically take six to nine months to prepare and take through Parliament. It is planned that elections to the new authorities would take place on 6 May 2027. These would be operating in shadow form during the transition year and the role of unitary councillors would be to begin preparatory work, including setting up governance structures, budgets and services arrangements. Meanwhile, existing councillors from the predecessor councils (district and county) would continue to serve until those councils are formally abolished. A councillor may be elected to a new unitary authority while still serving on an existing council.
19. The date that the new authorities go live, on the current timetable 1 April 2028, is known as vesting day. On that day, all assets, functions and staff would be transferred to the new authorities and expected to deliver safe and legal services.
20. In a written Ministerial Statement to Parliament on 3 June 2025, the Minister of State acknowledged the tightness of the Government's timetable and the risk of slippage, saying "I understand that developing proposals and preparing for Local Government Reorganisation is demanding, and that for areas with new councillors and Leaders this is a particularly busy time. I want to reiterate my commitment to working with every area to deliver on this ambitious programme.". Nevertheless, there has been speculation that the amount of work required within Government and Parliament to reorganise 21 two-tier local authority areas in the full term (to 2029) of this Parliament may mean that not all of those reorganisations are concluded. Although the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill (paragraph 20) may be regarded as a flagship

policy of the Government, there could be changes in priorities or delays in scheduling parliamentary stages in the progression of the Bill and subsequent structural change.

Equality Implications

21. Due to the complexity and scope of the proposal and possible wide scale impact of the changes proposed the Council will adopt a strategic approach to conducting Equality Impact Assessments during all programme phases and stages.

Human Rights Implications

22. There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

Background Papers

Acting Leader's Position Statement to the County Council meeting on 19 February 2025

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

Notices of Motion to the County Council meetings on 2 July and 20 July 2025 and minutes of those meetings -

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

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=8218&Ver=4>

Reports to the Cabinet and minutes of those meetings -

17 December - "English Devolution White Paper"

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7512&Ver=4>

18 March 2025 - "English Devolution White Paper: Local Government Reorganisation"

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

7 February 2025 - "English Devolution White Paper: Local Government Reorganisation - Including Urgent Action Taken"

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7873&Ver=4>

12 September 2025 - "Local Government Reorganisation"

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7879>

25 November 2025 – "Local Government Reorganisation: Draft Business Case"

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=8321&Ver=4>

Reports to the Scrutiny Commission

29 October 2025 – “Local Government Reorganisation”

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=8324&Ver=4>

10 November 2025 – “Local Government Reorganisation – Draft Business Case”

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=7836&Ver=4>