

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD AT COUNTY HALL, GLENFIELD ON WEDNESDAY, 1 JULY 2026**

PRESENT

Mr. P. Harrison CC (in the Chair)

Mr. C. Abbott CC, Mr. R. Bailey CC, Dr. J. Bloxham CC, Mr. J. Boam CC, Mrs. N. Bottomley CC, Mr. S. Bradshaw CC, Mr. S. L. Bray CC, Mrs. L. Broadley CC, Miss H. Butler CC, Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC, Mr. G. Cooke CC, Mr. K. Crook CC, Mrs. L. Danks CC, Mr. M. R. England CC, Mr. H. Fowler CC, Mr. S. J. Galton CC, Mr. D. A. Gamble CC, Mr. D. J. Grimley CC, Mr. A. Hamilton-Gray CC, Mr. D. Harrison CC, Dr. S. Hill CC, Mr. N. Holt CC, Mr. A. Innes CC, Mr. P. King CC, Mrs. K. Knight CC, Mr. B. Lovegrove CC, Mr. J. McDonald CC, Mr. J. Melen CC, Mr. J. Miah CC, Mr. P. Morris CC, Mr. M. T. Mullaney CC, Dr. D. North CC, Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC, Mr. J. T. Orson CC, Mr. D. Page CC, Mrs. R. Page CC, Mr. B. Piper CC, Mr. J. Poland CC, Mr. C. Pugsley CC, Mr. V. Richichi CC, Mr. K. Robinson CC, Mr. P. Rudkin CC, Mr. C. A. Smith CC, Mr. M. Squires CC, Mrs D. Taylor CC, Mr. A. Tilbury CC and Mr. B. Walker CC

14. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

HMS Daring

On Thursday 18th June, the Chairman joined the Lord-Lieutenant, Vice Lord-Lieutenant and individuals from across our local Sea Cadet community at the HMS Daring Affiliates Day. They had travelled down to Portsmouth to visit the ship and were lucky enough to have an extensive tour and meet many members of the crew.

The Chairman commented that it was an excellent experience and provided an opportunity to build a strong working relationship with HMS Daring.

Armed Forces Week

The Chairman reported that Armed Forces Week was a great success with a number of initiatives supported by the County Council. On Monday 22nd June, the annual Flag Raising ceremony took place and the Chairman welcomed the Hall Primary School once again, and David Gibbs, a County Council employee and veteran who raised the flag.

On Saturday 27th June, the Chairman reported that there had been a parade through the centre of Leicester followed by an open air service in Jubilee Square. The salute was taken by the Executive Officer of HMS Daring and was well supported by the public.

County Service

The Chairman reminded Members that she would be holding her County Service at Rothley Parish Church on Sunday 18th October at 3.00pm and asked members to look out for an invitation in due course.

15. MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 13 MAY 2026.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mrs Broadley CC and carried:-

“That the minutes of the meeting of the extraordinary meeting of the County Council held on 13 May 2026, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed.”

16. MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 13 MAY 2026.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mrs Broadley CC and carried:

“That the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Council held on 13 May 2026, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed.”

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to make declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

Mr Crook CC declared a non-registerable interest in the Notice of Motion on Prioritising Frontline Policing and Value for Money as he had a family member who was actively applying for jobs in the Police Force.

Mr Dan Harrison CC, Mr Orson CC and Mr Mullaney CC declared an other registerable interest in the same Notice of Motion as members of the Police and Crime Panel.

Mr O'Shea CC and Mr Melen CC declared an other registerable interest in the same Notice of Motion as they were both Magistrates. Mr O'Shea CC also declared as a retired Police Officer and having children in the Police Force.

Mr King CC declared an other registerable interest in the Notice of Motion on the Community Impact of Asylum Accommodation as he was the Deputy Leader of Harborough District Council and had been involved in discussions regarding houses in multiple occupation in that area.

18. QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 7(1)(2) AND (5).

(A) Mr Poland asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

“Leicestershire County Council has recently carried out a consultation into school term dates for Leicestershire schools to be in place between August 2027 and the summer of 2032. Can the Lead Member advise, if Leicestershire decides to go for an option which is different to the school term dates of Leicester City, what happens to those schools which are currently in Leicestershire but may find themselves within the boundary of Leicester City as a consequence of local government reorganisation? Would those schools be required to change their term dates before 2032 in order to align with the City, or would they remain out of step with City schools until this matter is next reviewed?”

Mr Pugsley replied as follows:

“Following the recent consultation on school term dates for Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032, officers have met with colleagues from Leicester City Council to review the feedback received from both consultations. Work is continuing to explore the potential for a shared term date model, informed by consultation responses.

The uncertainty surrounding local government reorganisation presents an additional consideration. However, an announcement on the future structure of local government across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland is expected in July 2026, ahead of any decision being made on the future pattern of term dates.

A summary of the consultation feedback, along with a recommended model, will be reported to Cabinet in September 2026. This will support Cabinet in their decision making for Leicestershire schools and families, taking into account both the ongoing discussions with Leicester City Council and the impact of decisions on local government reorganisation.”

Mr Poland asked the following supplementary question:

“I thank the Leader Member for their reply. I’ve read the response, but I do remain concerned about the proposal to start Leicestershire terms earlier beyond the impact of just not matching up with the City. I would like to ask the Lead Member to take into account before a decision is made that starting Leicestershire schools earlier in August would actually risk starting schools at around the same time as GCSE results are published which would then impact those in year 11 and going up to post 16, and there would be an impact of children starting school who may be starting as young as three years old. August is also one of the hottest months of the year and we saw only last week the impact severe heat can have on schools. My own son’s school closed early because of the heat and summers are only getting hotter so starting earlier in August would risk increasing the amount of closures due to heat. My appeal to the Lead Member would therefore be that, unless there is strong cause for change, unless the current structure actually is a problem, then I would ask that we keep the current structure that is broadly in line with Leicester City and is broadly in line with what we’ve had historically speaking. I speak as a parent and as a councillor as I think the current timetable works well and I wouldn’t want to see any changes to that which could end up causing more problems.”

Mr Pugsley replies as follows:

“I’d like to thank Mr Poland for his comments and I will ensure that they are considered before a decision is made. Thank you.”

(B) Mrs Taylor asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

- “1. Can the administration provide the current backlog of pothole repairs across Leicestershire, and how this has changed over the past 12 months?
2. What is the average repair time for potholes, and is this meeting the Council’s own targets?
3. Why do residents continue to report repeated pothole failures on the same roads?

4. What proportion of repairs are temporary rather than permanent?
5. How much is being spent on reactive repairs compared with long-term resurfacing?"

Mr Hamilton-Gray replied as follows:

"1. As of 9 June 2026, there are 910 outstanding pothole repair jobs.

The number of outstanding jobs at the end of each month is shown on the graph below:

Number of enquiries raised in the last 32 months:

2. The average time taken to fill a Category 1 pothole (over 40mm deep) in

2025/26 is 2.51 days. The target is 3 days.

3. Under investment, the funding that has been available for highway maintenance in real terms has declined over the last decade. This inability to invest as needed has led to the road network deteriorating which has led to more defect repair work being required. Due to the limited funding, repairs need to be prioritised hence at times we will repair parts of a road but not other less severe defects in that same road. In short, we have insufficient funding to resurface the whole road.
4. In 2025/26: 23.67% of pothole repairs were temporary (winter 2025/26 was particularly challenging; in previous years less than 5% of repairs have been temporary),

The “default” is to use hot quarried material in Roadmenders for permanent reactive repairs – temporary repairs are only carried out for anything that needs to be made safe quickly (e.g. while we wait for a permit, road-space, traffic management or the road is going to be resurfaced), out of hours or emergency responses, or if demand peaks like it did over winter 2025/26.

5. Budgets for this financial year 2026/27:
 - a) Reactive repairs:
 - £3,355,313 Roadmender repairs
 - b) Proactive carriageway repairs:
 - £1,900,000 (inhouse) patching gangs
 - £9, 081,571 (external) machine lay patching
 - £6,957,931 Surface Dressing (including pre-patching)
 - £200,000 joint sealing
 - £495,275 micro asphalt and asphalt preservation
 - £4,783,519 Carriageway resurfacing schemes

Total: £23,418,296

Mrs Taylor asked the following supplementary question:

“I thank the Lead Member for their response. The response does provide a snapshot of the current performance but does not really tell us whether things have improved or worsened under the current administration. Can the Lead Member please state what the backlog of outstanding pothole repairs are, the average repair time and what the proportion of temporary repairs were in May 2025 when Reform took control, and confirm whether these measures are now better or worse?”

Mr Hamilton Gray replied as follows:

“I thank Mrs Taylor for her additional question. What I can say is this is the highest number of defect inquiries we’ve had so far to date in recorded history. Quarter 1 alone this year we’ve had 6,150, with 2,933 reports in February alone for potholes. That’s versus 2,149 the year before. It’s a huge strain on our already limited resources. We have reasons for that; very wet weather combined with a freeze/thaw action on the roads which has resulted in potholes developing.

But ultimately, this comes from 10 to 15 years of underinvestment in our roads, and we are now paying the price for that unfortunately. Traffic levels also continue to rise and there is an increase in the number of HGVs.

We have invested £2.5m since this administration came to power to repair our roads, and we have repair over 10,000 potholes per year. So, we are making our road better for our residents. It is a huge priority for us and its one that we are going to tackle head on.”

[Subsequent to the meeting the following supplementary information was provided:–

In May 2025, the Council had 25 outstanding Category 1 roadmender repair tickets, compared to 46 in May 2026. The average repair times and percentage of temporary repairs are summarised in the table below:

Measure	Apr–May 2024/25	Apr–May 2025/26
Category 1 average repair time (3-day target)	2.32 days	2.51days
Temporary ("plug") repairs as a percentage of all repairs	22.5%	21.5%

Temporary repairs remain higher than historic levels because a much larger number of potholes required attention following the exceptionally wet winter and the ongoing deterioration of the road network. Temporary repairs allow defects to be made safe quickly while permanent repairs are arranged. Although still higher than we would like, the proportion of temporary repairs has reduced slightly compared with the last year.

These figures show that Category 1 response times have increased slightly compared with the same period last year but also reflects the increased number of Category 1 repairs.

	Number by Year		
Month	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
<i>April</i>	<i>Not Provide d</i>	888	1023
<i>May</i>		754	895
<i>June</i>		854	924
<i>July</i>		941	N/A
<i>August</i>	609	589	N/A
<i>September</i>	566	612	N/A
<i>October</i>	697	617	N/A
<i>November</i>	674	594	N/A
<i>December</i>	546	669	N/A
<i>January</i>	700	883	N/A
<i>February</i>	798	1336	N/A
<i>March</i>	1044	1432	N/A

Whilst these figures provide a comparison between the two periods, it is important to recognise the wider context. The condition of the highway network has been affected by many years of underinvestment nationally and locally, resulting in a growing maintenance challenge across the country. This has been compounded by exceptionally wet weather, including what was reported by the Met Office ([rmets.org\]\)](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/news/2025/02/26/wettest-winter-on-record-in-leicestershire) as the wettest winter on record in Leicestershire in 2025/2026. Winter 2025/26 was substantially wetter than the same period in 2024/25, particularly during January and February. This significantly accelerated deterioration of road surfaces and increased the number of potholes requiring repair.

Rainfall Comparison (Leicestershire / East Midlands)

Month	2024/25 (mm)	2025/26 (mm)
<i>December</i>	77.0	96.9
<i>January</i>	68.0	124.0
<i>February</i>	43.0	121.4
<i>March</i>	18.0	45.0

Leicestershire is not unique in facing these pressures. Local highway authorities across the country have experienced similar increases in pothole formation and maintenance backlogs as a result of aging infrastructure, funding constraints and prolonged adverse weather conditions.

Despite these challenges, the County Council continues to prioritise highway maintenance and investment to improve road condition and reduce the impact of potholes on residents and road users.]

(C) Mrs Taylor asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

- “1. What measurable improvements in public health outcomes have been delivered over the past year?
2. How is the Council addressing inequalities in health outcomes across Leicestershire?
3. What proportion of the public health budget is allocated to prevention compared with crisis intervention?”

Mr Paul Harrison replied as follows:

- “1. The latest version of the national Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF) was published in May of this year. This lists the most up to data for a wide range of public health indicators. For Leicestershire, this shows improvement in performance since the last published PHOF in:
 - Children in absolute low income families
 - The rate of complaints about noise
 - Breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks
 - Smoking status at time of delivery
 - Proportion of the population meeting the recommended ‘5 a day’ on a ‘usual day’
 - Cervical cancer screening coverage (aged 25 to 49 years)
 - Bowel cancer screening coverage
 - Cumulative percentage of the eligible population aged 40 to 74 who received an NHS health check
 - New sexually transmitted infection diagnoses
 - HPV vaccination coverage for two doses (13 to 14 years old), males and females
 - Meningococcal ACWY conjugate vaccine coverage (14 to 15 years)

Across the 149 indicators in the PHOF for which comparative data is available, Leicestershire is significantly better than the England average in 72 indicators, significantly worse in 20 and comparable to the England average in 57 indicators

2. The Council applies the principle of proportionate universalism to its work on inequalities: services are available to all residents, while more intensive or tailored support is directed to those with the greatest need.

The Council delivers targeted, evidence-based prevention and health improvement programmes. These include work on healthy weight, food and nutrition, oral health, Making Every Contact Count, suicide prevention, Healthy Leicestershire communications, harmful gambling, sexual health and substance use. These programmes are informed by evidence, local intelligence and community insight, so that activity is targeted towards priority populations and neighbourhoods where it can have the greatest impact.

Public communications are also designed to improve health literacy, increase awareness of support and improve uptake among groups that may otherwise be less likely to access services.

For example, our Quit Ready stop smoking service is open to the wider population but includes targeted support for groups at higher risk of smoking or who may face greater barriers to quitting, such as routine and manual workers and pregnant women.

Reducing health inequalities cannot be achieved by one organisation acting alone. We therefore work closely with NHS partners, district councils and voluntary and community sector organisations to align activity, reduce fragmentation and ensure programmes are shaped by lived experience. Through our statutory role in providing public health advice to the Integrated Care Board, we also support wider system action to address inequalities in access, experience and outcomes.

Overall, the Council's approach is to act both upstream and locally: preventing avoidable ill health, targeting support where need is greatest, working with partners and communities to reduce gaps in outcomes across Leicestershire.

3. The whole of the public health budget is spent accordance with the Department of Health's conditions attached to the public health grant. None of the grant is spent on 'crisis resolution'. Broadly there are three main levels of prevention:
 - Primary prevention, where the objective is to prevent problems arising in the first place
 - Secondary prevention, where the aim is to identify those at risk and intervene to enable people to remain in good health as long as possible
 - Tertiary prevention, where the aim is to reduce the impact of an ongoing issue, focussing on helping individuals manage and improve their quality of life

Within public health around two thirds is spent on 'treatment services' in the secondary and tertiary prevention levels (for instance treating sexually transmitted infections where the aim would be to prevent infection being passed on to others), a quarter is spent on primary prevention and the remainder is spent on community based initiatives where the aim is to build community resilience to enable communities to support each other and build their own capacity, which can be considered as a pre-primary prevention level intervention."

Mrs Taylor asked the following supplementary question:

"I thank the Lead Member for their response. The answer describes a range of programmes and initiatives but can the Lead Member point to any specific examples where a Council intervention had demonstratively reduced a health inequality, rather than simply delivered activity or awareness campaigns?"

Mr Paul Harrison replied as follows:

The Lead member undertook to provide a written response after the meeting.

[Subsequent to the meeting the following supplementary information was provided:–

Mrs Taylor will be aware, I am sure, that population health is affected by many different factors; individual, behavioural, environmental, economic and societal factors among them.

As was pointed out in the original answer reducing health inequalities cannot be achieved by one organisation acting alone. As such public health takes action across many different sectors, working in collaboration with other agencies to achieve change. There are few areas, if any, where it is possible to simplistically say intervention 'X' achieved outcome 'Y' on its own.

The described 'activity', though, shows that the Council delivers it's 'part' of the public health jigsaw effectively. I would highlight the role of Quit Ready, our smoking cessation service in reducing smoking prevalence in adults in routine and manual occupations (aged 18 to 64) - current smokers (APS) from 16.0% in 2021-23 to 14.3% in 2022-24. Leicestershire now performs significantly better than the national average. Similarly, our targeted work with those with a long term mental health illness as succeeded in reducing smoking prevalence in adults with a long-term mental health condition (aged 18 and over) in Leicestershire to 18.5% in 2024/25, significantly better than the national average of 24.0%.]

(D) Mrs Taylor asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"I was disappointed to learn that since May 2025, this Council has withdrawn its commitment to the Elected Members East Midlands Prevent Group—an initiative I helped establish in partnership with other East Midlands councils, the Home Office, and Counter Terrorism Policing to strengthen community safety.

Given that keeping residents safe is a core priority of this Council, can the Lead Member explain why this commitment has lapsed, and will they now commit to rejoining and actively participating in this important regional partnership?"

Mr Abbott replied as follows:

"During 2025 the East Midlands Elected Members Prevent Group was Chaired by the Lead Member for Safer Communities from Nottinghamshire County Council and Co-Chaired by Leicestershire County Council. The meetings were managed and led by the Home Office.

Following the May 2025 local elections both elected members stood down, and the meeting was put on hold by the Home Office.

Leicestershire County Council has discussed re-convening the meeting with the Home Office who have confirmed that resurrecting this meeting is not a current priority for them.

The Home Office went on to say that they are reassured by the annual benchmarking conversation with East Midlands local authorities that Prevent

leads are regularly briefing their lead members, therefore, for the time being the Home Office do not have any plans to reinstate this meeting.

In my capacity as the Portfolio Lead for Communities and Community Safety I assure Mrs Taylor that should the Home Office reinstate this meeting I will be happy to support it."

Mrs Taylor asked the following supplementary question:

"I welcome the confirmation that the Council would support the group if it was reinstated. However, given that Leicestershire previously co-chaired this regional forum, does the Lead Member agree that counter-extremism and community cohesion remain important priorities for elected members? If so, rather than simply waiting for the Home Office to act, will he work proactively with neighbouring authorities to re-establish a mechanism for member engagement, scrutiny and collaboration on Prevent across the East Midlands, and what alternative arrangements has this administration put in place since May 2025 to provide that level of oversight in the meantime?

Mr Abbot replied as follows:

The Lead Member undertook to provide a written response after the meeting.

[Subsequent to the meeting the following supplementary information was provided:—

I do acknowledge the importance of the work on counter extremism and community cohesion and request regular updates from officers on this work including a briefing on the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) for both Leicestershire and the east midlands, to ensure I am aware of local threats and risks.

Officers meet regularly across the East Midlands and Leicestershire County Council is in discussion with the Home Office's East Midlands Prevent Advisor to agree timescales of when the member network will be re convened. In the meantime, the important work continues in collaboration; all members across the East Midlands are briefed on Prevent work and if any cross-border risk is identified members will meet to discuss this. Furthermore, the East Midlands Top Tier authorities are once again discussing a radicalisation fund bid to provide training in schools and to designated safeguarding leads across the east midlands.

More locally, other examples of work include the Council leading the work on the LLR Hate Crime Strategy with the Police. We are also working with the police on the recording of non-crime hate incidents, which will be logged as ASB on the new ASB case management system, ECINS.]

(E) Mrs Page asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"Our Leicestershire roundabouts used to be fine features to enhance and promoting the realm, pride of place and indeed generating some income to the County Council. Roundabouts are now looking untidy and poorly maintained. Whilst I appreciate the County Council changed contractor and there may have

been a time delay, I ask the following questions:

1. When did the changeover take place and why did this happen when the previous contractor delivered a good service?
2. Is there a Service Level Agreement with the new contractor and what is it?
3. When will a full Leicestershire wide maintenance program be scheduled, commenced and what are the timelines?
4. Will this be posted on the County Council's website?
5. On a personal division basis, when will the grass and the overgrown shrubs on the Whittle Roundabout in Lutterworth be sorted out and what is the continual schedule?"

Mr Hamilton-Gray replied as follows:

- "1. The ESPO contract for the maintenance of roundabouts was renewed on 1st December 2024 to comply with contractual procedure and was awarded to CP Media, now trading as Outdo Media. The previous contractor Keegan Ford ceased operating.
2. There is a schedule of maintenance which specifies two visits per month to each roundabout to include grass cutting, shrub maintenance and pruning, inspecting trees, applying weed treatment, cleaning signs and litter picking – all as required.
3. A full Leicestershire program has been in place from the commencement of the contract.
4. There is no intention to publish on the County Council website.
5. The Frank Whittle Roundabout is scheduled a visit on 15th June and will be visited twice monthly."

Mrs Page asked the following supplementary question:

"I thank the Lead Member for his replies. My supplementary to the reply given to question number 2 is that, if the roundabout maintenance takes place twice monthly, why did the grass and the vegetation grow out of all proportions for me to find it necessary to bring this question forward after 20 years of no complaints and why has the vegetation in the middle of the Whittle Roundabout still not been attended to?"

Regarding the reply to question 3, and noting there must be legitimate reason for not publishing details on the website, but in order to scrutinise and check that the works have been carried out in line with our contract procedures would you agree that it would be prudent for every County Councillor to know when the roundabout maintenance is due in their division?"

Mr Hamilton-Gray replied as follows:

"I thank Mrs Page for her questions. I will get back to you with a written response to your first supplementary question.

Regarding your second question, we do not publish fixed maintenance dates, as schedules need to remain flexible for operational reasons and can change throughout the growing season. We will, however, discuss further with the contractor to establish if we are able to provide local members with information for their areas. I'd find this helpful as well so thank you for bringing that to the

Chamber.”

[Subsequent to the meeting the following supplementary information was provided:–

We have experienced some issues arising from the recent county-wide contract change, which has affected performance in some locations. These concerns have been raised with the contractor. The vegetation at Whittle Roundabout has been highlighted and will be addressed as part of the actions being taken.]

(F) Mr Charlesworth asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

“In the UK, the level of antisemitism is at its highest level since the height of the war in Gaza. There was some time ago a series of incidents at County Hall that all members were alerted to. Have there been any more incidents and does the council have a robust plan to deter and deal with any such incidents?”

Mr Dan Harrison replied as follows:

“The Council takes all forms of hate-related behaviour, including antisemitism, extremely seriously. We have a clear and consistent position of zero tolerance towards such conduct, whether it occurs within our workplaces or in the communities we serve.

In terms of recent incidents, there have been no repeat incidents of the kind previously reported at County Hall. It would not be appropriate to comment on specific matters, particularly where these may involve internal processes or individuals. Where any concerns of this nature are raised, they are dealt with promptly and in accordance with our established policies and procedures. It would not be appropriate to comment on individual cases or internal processes

More broadly, the Council has in place a range of measures to help prevent and respond to hate-related incidents. These include promoting awareness and respectful behaviour, supporting staff and members, and ensuring that appropriate reporting and response mechanisms are available.

We also keep our arrangements under review, including security and safeguarding measures where necessary, to ensure that they remain effective and proportionate. Through this approach, the Council seeks both to deter such behaviour and to respond appropriately where concerns are raised.”

(G) Mr Orson asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

“Regarding the £50,000 announced for the fast response grass cutting crew, can the Lead Member please tell me:

1. Whether this funding is one-off or recurring?
2. What additional capacity, equipment or service improvements are expected to be delivered?
3. How the impact of the extra funding will be measured across the county?”

Mr Hamilton-Gray replied as follows:

“Please note that the MTFS amendments included £80,000 (rather than £50,000) for two years for the additional “reactive” grass cutting crew.

1. Funding for the additional grass cutting crew has initially been secured for two years.
2. During the grass cutting season (April – September), an additional crew of two operatives with vehicle, trailer and ride on mower will have access to additional equipment like a strimmer and hedge cutter etc to respond to priority reports of grass or vegetation blocking visibility or causing a safety concern.
3. The work completed by the additional gang will be recorded in the Council’s Highway Management System.”

Mr Orson asked the following supplementary question:

“Thank you Mr Hamilton-Gray for the replies. But could the Lead Member outline last seasons volume of priority visibility related reports, the measures for assessing the two year reactive crew funding, whether deployment data will be published and whether weed control activity will also be recorded given its growing impact on highway conditions?”

Mr Hamilton-Gray replied as follows:

“Thank you Mr Orson. I will come back to you with the full response after the meeting. I don’t have those figures off the top of my head. We do aim for complete transparency so if those numbers are made available, we will of course make those available to the public and our good selves.”

[Subsequent to the meeting the following supplementary information was provided:–

In the last season (2025), there were 243 customer reports with 18 specifically indicating that visibility was causing an issue during the 2025 season. In addition to dealing with visibility related reports the gang also deal with other safety concerns such as overgrown traffic signs and footpaths identified by customer reports and our Inspection and Enforcement Officers.

The visibility reports will continue to be monitored on the Highway Management System. The number of jobs issued and completed by the gang relating to visibility and safety issues will be monitored, recorded and published. Weed control customer reports are recorded on the Highway Management System.]

(H) Mr Page asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

“Weeds growing on our county’s roads are something many residents are concerned about. Can the Lead Member please tell me:

1. What treatment frequency and methods used for weed control on our roads and pathways?
2. What inspection and follow-up arrangements are in place for areas where weed growth is a problem?

3. What is the Council's plan to prevent further deterioration of highways and footway?"

Mr Hamilton-Gray replied as follows:

- "1. This year, roads and pathways will be treated three times throughout the growing season with a spray applied herbicide. There is a supplementary treatment for noxious and invasive weeds. Street sweeping, which is a district authority function, also contributes to the control of weed growth.
2. There is no statutory requirement for the County Council to remove perennial weeds from the highway. To arrest and control weed growth, which prevents structural damage to highway assets, the Council employs a contractor to spray perennial weeds in the road channels and footways three times a year, as above. This process is not designed to achieve weed-free roads all year round.
3. The standard for the Council is to treat weeds in the highway twice a year with a spray applied herbicide, however funding has been made available for three treatments over the next two years."

(I) Mr Page asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"Can the Lead Member please provide the following information regarding this authority's grass cutting and weed control:

1. Current resident satisfaction levels for grass cutting and weed control.
2. The number of complaints received over the past 18 months.
3. Current inspection and monitoring regimes.
4. Performance standards and how they are measured.
5. Processes for identifying and addressing underperformance.
6. Confirmation of the approach to maintaining visibility at junctions, corners and other high-risk locations.
7. Whether any changes have been made to safety-related cutting schedules or standards."

Mr Hamilton-Gray replied as follows:

- "1. The number of customer enquiries could be considered a measure of customer satisfaction; however, the enquiries can cover a range of topics that are not all related to dissatisfaction. The number of enquiries is more closely aligned to the rate of growth usually seen during peak growing season in May / June. At the week ending 20th June 2026, the Council had received approximately 150 enquiries – around 40 more than the same time in 2025, but half the amount received in 2024.

Customer enquiry levels are where we would expect them to be at this point in the season considering the weather conditions and rate of growth this year.

2. During the period 1 December 2024 to 19 June 2026, the Council received and logged 38 initial complaints under the category of 'grass and hedge cutting and weed spraying'.
3. The Council has two supervisors (based north and south) who carry out daily monitoring and supervision of our environmental works programmes.
4. Performance is measured against delivery of agreed programmes of work. There are separate programmes for urban grass cutting (up to six cuts a year), rural grass cutting (three cuts a year) and weed spraying (three treatments a year).
5. The Council supervisors will identify any quality or underperformance issues and ensure remedial action is agreed and completed.
6. Rural verges are cut three times a year. The first cut of the year is visibility locations only i.e. junctions, bends and brows of hills. The second cut is a single swathe cut of all verges, also including cutting of visibility areas. The third cut carried out this year will be a full width cut, i.e. hedge to hedge, which is carried out every third year. In years one and two, the third cut is also a single swathe and visibility cut. An additional resource is available to address any immediate safety concerns. Urban verges are cut up to six times a year, with the entirety of the verge cut on each occasion.
7. No changes have been made to the programme safety related cutting schedules or standards."

(J) Mrs Taylor asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"Can the Leader confirm whether any documentation, including contracts, correspondence, or other official materials belonging to Leicestershire County Council, has been shared with Reform UK headquarters, or with any Reform UK politicians or officials who are not part of Leicestershire County Council, either in an official capacity or privately?

If so, could the Leader please provide details of:

1. The specific information or documents that have been shared; and
2. The purpose and justification for sharing this information."

Mr Dan Harrison replied as follows:

- "1. The only information that has been shared with Reform UK (RUK) headquarters or officials who are not part of Leicestershire County Council is a quarterly request from Ben Bradley, the Head of Local Government, for a "dashboard report" of statistics, including information on the Budget, performance, number of potholes filled, number of children and adults in care, which are supplied with the assistance of the S151 officer of the Council, and is information already available in the public domain. The only other information sent to RUK was an email already sent out by the Council entitled "*Better Leicestershire- Smarter Spending, Improving Lives*" which contained information across a wide range of Council activity, including the Better Leicestershire Programme, the £131M opening of Pork Pie Way, the Council's biggest ever infrastructure project, £2.5M investment to tackle potholes, the Coalville Library refurbishment and the opening of the Ashby Banking Hub. All of which is in the public domain.

I can confirm that no documentation relating to contracts have been shared externally.

2. The information with regard to the "dashboard report" requested by RUK is disclosable and publicly available and in specific reference to the *Better Leicestershire* email, this was sent to RUK as an example of how the Reform-led administration in Leicestershire is leading by example, to showcase to other Reform-led and new Reform administrations how we are working and the positive impact achieved."

Mrs Taylor asked the following supplementary question:

"I thank the Leader for his statement. In answer to my question the Leader states that information was shared with Reform UK headquarters to showcase the achievements of the Reform-led administration. The Leader has confirmed that Council officer time and resources were used to compile and supply this information. Can he confirm what the cost to the taxpayer is, and what safeguards are in place to ensure that public resources are not used for party-political purposes?

Furthermore, would the same level of officer support and access to bespoke performance information be made available to any other political party that requested it?"

With the consent of the Chairman, the Chief Executive replied as follows:

"I will take this question because it relates to resources within the Council and officer time. To confirm, in terms of the information shared and referred to, it was already in the public domain and compiled, so there was no additional officer time used, including that of the Section 151 officer, to do that.

In response to your other questions, again, we wouldn't be using additional officer time in order to support political requests and often the information required is in the public domain already and of course, the same offer would be made to all political parties in that sense."

[Subsequent to the meeting the following supplementary information was provided:—

The costs of providing the information only relates to staff time, which is not routinely recorded and wasn't for this purpose. All the information requested was already held by the Council, so the effort involved was modest as only collation was required.

The information was provided on the basis that it was either already published or would need to be supplied if a Freedom of Information request was made. The Constitution provides guidance for officers and members on situations such as this one and when information requests are made that are not obviously linked to discharge of the functions of the Council further inquiries as to the purpose are made.

As with all information obtained through Fols and/or Council publications the recipient can use the information as they see fit. Officers already fulfil a range of information requests made by councillors from all political parties, with each request assessed on its merits. If bespoke performance information was to be requested, that was not already held, it is unlikely to be provided unless a clear benefit to the Council can be demonstrated.]

(K) Mr Bools asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:

"Following the announcement of the closure of Diseworth Church of England Primary School, many parents, staff and pupils in small village schools across Leicestershire are concerned that their school could be next.

Can the Lead Member for Children and Family Services reassure residents that there will be no further village school closures and explain what steps the Council is taking to ensure that small schools can remain viable long into the future?"

Mr Pugsley replied as follows:

"I understand the concern that the governors' decision to propose the closure of Diseworth Church of England Primary School may have caused for families, staff and pupils both at Diseworth and in other small village schools. The circumstances at the School were specific and exceptional: pupil numbers had been falling for several years, the school faced significant financial pressures, fewer than half of available places were expected to be filled in 2026/27, and by the end of May all current teaching staff had secured posts elsewhere, leaving no teaching staff for September. The immediate priority has been to support every affected child and family to secure their on-going education. A formal consultation on the governors' decision to propose the closure of Diseworth will begin in due course.

It is important to be clear that the circumstances surrounding Diseworth are

unprecedented and exceptional. The Council fully recognises the vital role that rural and village schools have in their communities. It is also important to recognise that all schools must be sustainable in terms of pupil numbers, finances, staffing, buildings and the quality of education provided.

The Council's statutory duty is to ensure there are sufficient good quality school places available in the right place at the right time. We are working with maintained schools, dioceses and academy trusts to review pupil forecasts, school finances, education quality, building capacity and community need so that any issues can be identified early and support can be targeted where it is needed.

The Council has also commissioned school finance experts to review and offer support to our maintained schools in managing deficit budgets, and has introduced additional guidance, training and advice to support schools to be financially sustainable."

19. POSITION STATEMENTS UNDER STANDING ORDER 8.

The Leader gave a position statement on the following matters:

- Growth and supporting businesses:
 - Breakfast briefings;
 - Bardon Warehousing Unit;
 - Broadnook School;
 - Beef Expo;
 - Zouch Bridge Development;
- Local Government Reorganisation Update;
- Melton Mowbray Distributor Road Successes;
- MTFS and Better Leicestershire Update;
- Celebrating Carers Week.

The Lead Member for Children and Families gave a position statement on the following matters:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:
 - Accelerated Progress Plan;
 - Education, Health and Care Plan Timeliness;
 - Leicestershire SEND Reforms;
 - Belonging in Education;
- Targeted Family Help and Children's Social Care:
 - Joint Targeted Area Inspection;
 - Children in Care;
 - Families First Partnership Programme;
 - Best Start in Life.

A copy of the position statements is filed with these minutes.

20. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION.

(a) Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.

It was moved by Mrs Taylor, seconded by Mr Mullaney and carried

unanimously:

“That the information contained in the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2025-26, appended to the report, be noted.”

21. NOTICES OF MOTION:

(a) Prioritising Frontline Policing and Value for Money.

It was moved by Mrs Taylor and seconded by Mr O'Shea that:

- “1. This Council notes that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland has proposed an 18-month, £2 million scheme to fund private security marshals to patrol town centres across Leicestershire and Rutland.
2. This Council further notes that:
 - These marshals, while visible, do not possess police powers, including the power of arrest, formal investigation, or enforcement.
 - The £2 million funding comes directly from the existing policing budget, funded by local taxpayers.
 - There is significant concern from policing professionals, including the Leicestershire Police Federation, that this approach risks diverting funding away from frontline policing.
 - Residents and businesses consistently raise concerns about crime, anti-social behaviour, and the need for a stronger visible police presence, not a substitute service.
3. This Council believes that:
 - (a) Taxpayers' money must be used efficiently, transparently, and in ways that deliver tangible outcomes.
 - (b) Public confidence in community safety depends on visible, empowered, and accountable police officers, not private contractors with limited authority.
 - (c) Investment in fully trained police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) provides better value for money, stronger legal enforcement, and long-term benefits to communities.
4. This Council is concerned that:
 - (a) The proposed scheme risks creating a two-tier system of public safety, where private security fills gaps that should be addressed by properly resourced policing.
 - (b) The effectiveness of such marshals is limited to deterrence, without the ability to follow through with enforcement action.
 - (c) At a time of financial pressure, this represents a questionable use

of limited public funds.

5. This Council therefore resolves to:

- (a) Oppose the proposed £2 million private security marshal scheme as an inefficient use of policing resources.
- (b) Call on the Police and Crime Commissioner to halt the procurement process and review the proposal.
- (c) Urge that the £2 million be reallocated to recruit, train, and retain additional frontline police officers and PCSOs, increasing visible patrols and enforcement capability.
- (d) Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the PCC to formally convey this Council's position and seek a response."

An amendment was moved by Mr Crook and seconded by Mr Hamilton-Gray that:

"1. This Council notes that:

- (a) The Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland has proposed a scheme to fund Security Industry Authority licensed contractors to patrol town centres across Leicestershire and Rutland, with indicative funding of up to £2 million from the Crime Prevention Fund reserve.
- (b) Residents and businesses consistently raise concerns about crime, anti-social behaviour, and the need for a stronger visible police presence in their communities.
- (c) The Police and Crime Panel has considered this matter and has resolved to scrutinise the proposal by requesting that, ahead of any decision being made, it be presented with evidence of research undertaken, what that research indicates, and the Temporary Chief Constable's proposals in full in a disclosable format.
- (d) No final decision has yet been made by the PCC regarding this scheme.
- (e) Leicestershire County Council has no direct jurisdiction over decisions made by the Police and Crime Commissioner, who is independently scrutinised by the Police and Crime Panel and held accountable by the electorate.
- (f) The Crime Prevention Fund is a distinct reserve within the policing budget, and any utilisation of such funds would be subject to policing budget rules and relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

2. This Council believes that:

- (a) Taxpayers money must be used efficiently, transparently, and in ways that deliver tangible outcomes for communities.
- (b) Public confidence in community safety depends on visible, empowered and accountable policing.
- (c) Any significant investment in community safety should be preceded by robust evidence of its likely effectiveness, including comparison with alternative approaches such as investment in additional policing capacity.
- (d) Proper governance and due process, including scrutiny by the Police and Crime Panel, should be respected and allowed to run its course before conclusions are drawn.

3. This Council is concerned that:

- (a) Private security contractors do not possess the constabulary powers, duties and operational responsibilities available to police officers
- (b) The evidence supporting the proposal has not yet been made available publicly to demonstrate that the proposed scheme represents the best use of available Crime Prevention Fund reserve when compared with alternative approaches.
- (c) At a time of financial pressure on public services, it is essential that all available options are rigorously assessed before committing significant funds.

4. This Council therefore resolves to:

- (a) Support the Police and Crime Panel's request that full evidence and the Temporary Chief Constable's proposals be made available in a disclosable format before any decision is taken.
- (b) Request that the Chief Executive writes to the Police and Crime Commissioner to convey this Council's expectation that any proposal involving significant expenditure should be subject to transparent, evidence-based decision making, with full consideration given to alternative approaches, including investment in additional policing capacity.
- (c) Request that the Chief Executive's letter makes clear that this Council would welcome the opportunity to understand the evidence base for any proposed scheme and its anticipated outcomes for Leicestershire communities.
- (d) Reaffirm this Council's commitment to working constructively with the Police and Crime Commissioner and other partners to improve community safety across Leicestershire."

The amended motion was put and carried with 24 members voting for the

amendment and 13 members voting against. There were 10 abstentions.

The substantive motion was then put and carried with 24 members voting for the amendment and 13 members voting against There were 10 abstentions.

(b) Community Impact of Asylum Accommodation.

It was moved by Mr England and seconded by Mr Bray that:

“1. This Council notes that:

- (a) Residents across Leicestershire have raised concerns regarding the concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and accommodation associated with national asylum dispersal arrangements.
- (b) Residents have expressed concerns regarding pressures on local services, parking, waste management, neighbourhood amenity, community cohesion and the pace of change within established communities.
- (c) Local residents and community organisations continue to seek greater transparency regarding the scale and operation of asylum accommodation arrangements within their communities.
- (d) Effective democratic governance is strengthened when members are able to bring forward matters arising from their representational responsibilities, ensuring that local experience continues to inform the deliberations of the authority.
- (e) Leicestershire County Council is responsible for a range of services which may be affected by significant population changes, including education, public health, transport, social care and community wellbeing.

2. This Council believes that:

- (a) Existing residents should be appropriately informed and consulted where significant changes are taking place within their communities.
- (b) Public confidence is strengthened when decisions affecting local communities are accompanied by transparency, accountability and meaningful engagement.
- (c) Local authorities should be provided with sufficient information to understand and plan for any impact on local services arising from national asylum accommodation policies.
- (d) Communities function best when residents feel informed, listened to and represented.

3. This Council resolves to:

- (a) Write to the Home Secretary seeking greater transparency regarding asylum accommodation arrangements affecting Leicestershire and requesting that local authorities be given meaningful engagement and advance notification where placements may have a significant impact on local communities.
- (b) Request that the Chief Executive writes to the Home Office seeking information regarding asylum accommodation provision within Leicestershire, including any available information on the use of HMOs associated with Government accommodation contracts and the potential impact on County Council services.
- (c) Request that the relevant Director prepares a report for consideration by the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee outlining any known or anticipated impacts of asylum accommodation arrangements and concentrations of HMOs on County Council services, where such information is available.
- (d) Request that the Home Office and its contractors engage openly with local authorities and communities where accommodation arrangements are proposed or expanded, recognising the importance of maintaining community confidence.
- (e) Reaffirm this Council's commitment to transparency, democratic accountability, community cohesion and ensuring that the concerns of local residents are properly considered when national policies have significant local consequences."

On the motion being put and before the vote was taken, five members rose asking that a named vote be recorded.

The vote was recorded as follows:

For the motion

Mr Abbott, Mr Bailey, Dr Bloxham, Mr Boam, Mr Bradshaw, Mr Bray, Mrs Broadley, Miss Butler, Mr Charlesworth, Mr Cooke, Mr Crook, Mrs Danks, Mr England, Mr Fowler, Mr Galton, Mr Grimley, Mr Hamilton-Gray, Mr D Harrison, Mr P Harrison, Dr Hill, Mr Holt, Mr Innes, Mr King, Mrs Knight, Mr Lovegrove, Mr McDonald, Mr Melen, Mr Morris, Mr Mulaney, Dr North, Mr O'Shea, Mr Orson, Mr Page, Mrs Page, Mr Piper, Mr Poland, Mr Pugsley, Mr Richichi, Mr Robinson, Mr Rudkin, Mr Smith, Mr Squires, Mrs Taylor, Mr Tilbury, Mr Walker.

Against the motion

Mrs Bottomley, Mr Miah.

The motion was put and carried, with 45 members voting for the motion and 2 members voting against.

(c) Maintaining Professional Standards, Workforce Sustainability, and Fair Employment Practices in Leicestershire's Specialist SEND Services.

It was moved by Mr Miah and seconded by Mr Mullaney that:

“1. This Council notes:

- (a) The vital role that specialist Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services play in supporting vulnerable children across the county.
- (b) That the Council should seek to maintain high professional standards in specialist SEND services.
- (c) That, when reviewing service delivery models, the Council should have regard to service quality, safeguarding, workforce stability, recruitment and retention, and value for money.
- (d) That significant workforce changes in critical specialist services should be considered in a way that maintains confidence among service users and residents.
- (e) That concerns have been raised regarding possible changes to staffing structures and role requirements within specialist SEND services.
- (f) That poorly managed restructuring can adversely affect workforce morale, retention and service continuity.

2. This Council resolves to request a report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on:

- (a) The proposed future model of early years SEND advisory support.
- (b) How service quality, continuity, and workforce sustainability will be maintained, including the role of professional qualifications where relevant.
- (c) What consideration has been given to maintaining appropriate professional qualifications in role requirements.
- (d) How the views of staff and recognised trade unions have been considered, including alternative models proposed by staff to secure year-round delivery.
- (e) Assurance that any workforce changes will be undertaken in accordance with applicable employment law and the Council's policies and procedures.”

The motion was put and carried with 42 members voting for the motion and no members voting against.

(d) Bus Services in Wigston.

With the consent of the Council, Mr Charlesworth moved the following altered motion, seconded by Mr Hamilton-Gray:

“1. This Council notes that:

- (a) The recent significant changes to the bus services in Wigston.
- (b) The poor level of any consultation undertaken by the operator concerning these changes.
- (c) The impact on some service users who now must catch 2 buses with the inevitable longer journey times and additional costs.
- (d) The disconnect this has caused to the local community with 2 large estates effectively cut off from each other, with the resultant family and friends having to make alternative arrangements.
- (e) It has made journeys to the local GP, the LRI and train station more difficult and for some impossible (especially the elderly) due to the removal of some routes.
- (f) That the 47/48 and 49 services have been replaced with a changed 47/48 and a 44/44a/44b and 44s service. These more complex services have caused confusion, with users unable to make much sense of the difficult timetables and unsure which stops are for which services. This is verified by the drivers taking the incorrect route on many occasions.
- (g) The Leicestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan 2025 had as one of its objectives ‘to encourage bus use to local facilities’, the recent changes could undermine this.
- (h) The limited ability of the Council to influence the decisions of commercial operators.

2. Therefore, this Council resolves to:

- (a) Continue to engage with Arriva to request a review of the recent changes taking into account the concerns and views of Wigston residents.
- (b) Work via the Enhanced Bus Partnership to seek to develop an approach to community engagement ahead of bus service changes.”

The motion was put and carried, with 40 members voting for the motion and no members voting against.