



CABINET – 3 JULY 2025

PROTOCOL FOR FLYING FLAGS AT COUNTY HALL

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PART A

Purpose of the Report

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

Recommendations

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

(Decision has previously been called in)

Reasons for Recommendation

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

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

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

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

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 It was revoked by the Cabinet on 12 June and replaced with the following:

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

REASONS FOR DECISION:

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

consistency.

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

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

Resource Implications

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

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

9. None.

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PART B

Background

10. The protocol appended to this report was in place from January 2025 until the Cabinet meeting on 12 June 2025. Prior to that, all flags (all Pride Flags, the Commonwealth Flag, Emergency Services Flag, Ukrainian Flag, Armed Forces Flag and Red Ensign) were flown from the three flagpoles at the front of County Hall and the flagpole in the quadrangle was only used for flag raising ceremonies relating to the Armed Forces and Armistice Day.
11. The Cabinet decision taken on 12 June to revoke the protocol and replace it with the protocol set out in paragraphs 5 and 6 of this report was a key decision and therefore could not be enacted until 5 working days had passed. During that time the decision was called in by the Scrutiny Commission, who considered the matter on 24 June and referred it back to the Cabinet. The decision taken on 12 June is therefore still to be enacted.
12. There is no further opportunity for call-in once the Cabinet has reached a decision at this meeting. The decision will therefore be enacted immediately.
13. The minutes of the Scrutiny Commission meeting will be appended to the supplementary report.

Proposals/Options

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

Consultation

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

Equality Implications

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

Human Rights Implications

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

Background Papers

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

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

Appendices

Appendix A – Protocol for Flying Flags at County Hall, revoked on 12 June but decision not yet enacted
Appendix B – Call-in Notice
Appendix C – Scrutiny decision
Appendix D – Representations received by the Cabinet for its meeting on 12 June
Appendix E – Comments received on the Cabinet decision on 12 June, previously considered by the Scrutiny Commission

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