

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 11 June 2025.

PRESENT

Mr. K. Robinson CC (in the Chair)

Dr. J. Bloxham CC
Mrs. N. Bottomley CC
Mr. N. Chapman CC
Mr. G. Cooke CC
Mrs. L. Danks CC
Ms. B. Gray CC

Dr. S. Hill CC
Mr. P. Morris CC
Ms. A. Pendlebury CC
Mr. C. A. Smith CC
Mrs. D. Taylor CC

In attendance

Mr. C. Whitford CC – Cabinet Lead Member for Highways, Transport and Waste
Mr. A. Tilbury CC – Cabinet Lead Member for Environment and Flooding
Ann Carruthers – Director of Environment and Transport
Jo Gyll – Assistant Director
Joanne Twomey – Senior Democratic Services Officer
Aqil Sarang – Democratic Services Officer

1. Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED:

That Mr. K. Robinson CC be appointed Chairman for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2026.

Mr. K. Robinson CC in the Chair

2. Appointment of Deputy Chairman.

It was moved by Mr. G. Cooke CC and seconded by Mr. L. Danks CC:

“That Dr. J. Bloxham CC be appointed Deputy Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.”

It was moved by Mr. C. Smith CC and seconded by Mrs. D. Taylor CC:

“That Mr. N. Chapman CC be appointed Deputy Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.”

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

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

Five Member votes for Dr. J. Bloxham, seven votes for Mr. N. Chapman CC and zero abstentions. The motion that “Mr. N. Chapman CC be appointed Deputy Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council” was therefore carried.

3. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2025 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

4. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that one question had been received under Standing Order 34.

Question asked by Mr. Adam Stares:

“What is the projected net cost to Leicestershire County Council in the current financial year (2025/26) to pursue its Net Zero Strategy as set out in 2023-2027 Action Plan? What is this as a proportion of the Council’s total net spending?”

Reply by the Chairman:

The Net Zero Leicestershire Action Plan 2023-27 has been superseded by the 2050 Net Zero Action Plan (Updated).

In most cases, delivery of the Net Zero Strategy is a co-benefit of other service and savings delivery initiatives. For 2025/26, net revenue costs (where the primary reason is net zero delivery) are expected to amount to £0.38m and equates to 0.06% of the Council’s total revenue net spending. It should be noted that the £0.38m includes specific costs that are not entirely attributable to delivering carbon reduction initiatives, e.g. the Energy Team in Property Services (which accounts for £0.06m net), works across the estate to procure the most cost-effective energy contracts and optimise external funding streams, reducing energy costs for the Council.

In terms of capital, the net budget provision is £0.67m, equates to 0.43% of the Council’s total Capital Programme for 2025/26 and relates to the installation of electric vehicle charge points, air source heat pumps for end-of-life gas boilers and solar panels.

5. Questions asked by Members.

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

6. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

7. Declarations of Interest.

The Chairman invited Members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

8. Declarations of the Party Whip.

There were no declarations of the party whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

9. Presentation of Petitions.

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

10. Final Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport the purpose of which was to seek the Committee's views and comments on the final Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) before this was presented to the Cabinet for approval at its meeting on 17 June 2025. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) The Committee welcomed the final draft LNRS and commented that this identified meaningful priorities that could be progressed to make a significant difference to the local environment.
- ii) It was noted that the Strategy had been subject to public consultation and that the feedback received had been meaningful and demonstrated a high level of engagement. However, it was suggested that consideration should be given to other types of engagement in future to improve response rates, in particular, to encourage a wider range of different communities to get involved. It was acknowledged that all public consultation exercises undertaken by the Authority were constrained by the resources it had available.
- iii) It was highlighted that a prudent use of grants would be required to deliver the Strategy and its priorities and that over the coming year(s) a pipeline of projects would be identified and funding sourced to deliver these.
- iv) It was noted that the County Council had led on the development of the Strategy as the Responsible Authority for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Alongside this, a Delivery Plan would next be developed with partners and this would provide a shared platform setting out the agreed areas of focus to invest in and which could be maintained in the long-term. The Delivery Plan would be a live document adapted to circumstances and funding.
- v) Members were pleased with and supported the innovative approaches highlighted in the Strategy to address flooding concerns across the County and requested that the Committee be kept updated on any progress made in this area.
- vi) A Member commented that there were many people passionate about the natural environment locally who would support the delivery of this Strategy and that this would be delivered over the coming decades to support an environment which was better for all. However, it was a concern that this was reliant on funding to ensure delivery of projects.
- vii) It was highlighted that although there were no commitments to funding for 2025/26, discussions would be held with partners as the Delivery Plan was developed to determine if, in addition to Government funding, local resources

could be made available to support the delivery of specific projects. It was recognised, however, that all local authorities and partners were under significant financial pressure at the current time.

RESOLVED:

That the comments made by the Committee be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 17 June 2025 for consideration.

11. Incorporation of Energy from Waste and Waste Incineration Facilities into the UK Emissions Trading Scheme - Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport the purpose of which was to update the Committee and highlight any potential implications emerging in respect of the Government's plans for the Incorporation of Energy from Waste and Waste Incineration Facilities into the UK Emissions Trading Scheme from 2028. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) It was highlighted that the County Council in its role as the waste disposal authority continued in its communications with district councils who were responsible for waste collection in their areas, particularly, regarding all new legislation when this arose to support future planning and to address potential impacts as part of the waste partnership.
- ii) Although it was suggested there was scope for more to be done, it was noted that active promotions were undertaken across the district councils to inform residents regarding collections and the importance of disposing of waste correctly and it was highlighted that there was a potential risk of additional costs in future years if this waste was not disposed correctly as the waste would then have to be directed towards more costly disposal routes.
- iii) The proposed changes if introduced would form some of the biggest changes in the sector in decades. The extent of the reforms would become clearer as developments progressed. A Member suggested that although past attempts to integrate waste collections across the County had been unsuccessful, the proposed changes and the risk of increased cost burdens on the County Council to dispose of the waste from 2028 highlighted the importance of having one collection service across the County.
- iv) It was suggested that the direction of waste towards incinerators was becoming clearer and as the County Council was a shareholder of the Coventry & Solihull Waste Incinerator,, the Authority along with other contracts had the capacity to cover any increased waste required to be dealt with in this way.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided to the Committee be noted.

12. Date of Next Meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 12 September 2025 at 2.00pm.

2.00pm – 3.06pm
11 June 2025

CHAIRMAN

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