



Minutes of a meeting of the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 4 September 2025.

PRESENT

Mr. B. Piper CC (in the Chair)

Dr. J. Bloxham CC
Mr. S. Bradshaw CC
Mr. G. Cooke CC
Mr. N. Holt CC

Mr. B. Lovegrove CC
Mr. P. Morris CC
Mr. C. A. Smith CC

In attendance

Mr. C. Whitford CC – Lead Member for Highways, Transport and Waste.
Ann Carruthers - Director of Environment and Transport
Janna Walker – Assistant Director
Pat Clarke – Assistant Director
Nicola Truslove – Service Development Business Partner, Chief Executives
Joanne Twomey - Senior Democratic Support Officer
Aqil Sarang – Democratic Support Officer

14. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2025 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

15. Question Time.

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

16. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

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

17. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

18. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.

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.

19. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

20. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 36.

21. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT PERFORMANCE REPORT TO JUNE 2025.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive and Director of Environment and Transport, the purpose of which was to provide the Committee with a six-monthly performance update to June 2025. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (i) Members welcomed the report but commented that although the content provided detailed information on performance, the inclusion of visual aids such as charts and graphs would be helpful to support Members understanding of the overall direction in performance over time, allowing for better comparison against previous data. The Director undertook to consider this for future reports.
- (ii) In response to questions about the indicator that monitors the impact of transport on carbon emissions within the County and how these were measured, it was highlighted that this was an estimate in kilo tonnes provided by central government and was not data collected locally.
- (iii) A Member queried why it was regarded as positive that the average speed of vehicles on locally managed 'A' roads was at 30mph. It was highlighted that this was an indicator to measure levels of congestion, not speed. A speed of 30mph during peak times was seen as a positive compared to the national average (23mph) as it demonstrated that traffic whilst perhaps busy continued to move at a reasonable pace, meaning less congestion than some areas of the country.
- (iv) Members commented on the cost pressures faced by the Council to address the deteriorating condition of many roads in its area. It was noted that due to national funding being reduced in real terms over many years, alongside increase in inflation, local authorities were not able to deliver the amount of work they would want and had needed to prioritise maintenance work carried out. It was noted that to address the backlog in maintenance work across England, a total budget of £17bn had been estimated..
- (v) Members queried the reasons behind road casualties and whether there was a link to the state of the infrastructure. It was highlighted that there were broad reasons for road casualties, and these were determined following a review by the police to prevent the risk happening again. It was noted that this was reported to the Committee on an annual basis as part of the Council's contribution to the work of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Road Safety Partnership.

- (vi) Members highlighted the positive impact of the digital on-demand transport service provided by Leicestershire FoxConnect particularly in rural communities. It was noted that the Bus Service Improvement Plan funding allocated by government to local authorities to help improve bus services had aided the delivery of such alternative public transport options where a commercial service had not been considered viable. It was hoped this funding would continue beyond the two years currently allocated.
- (vii) Members noted the work undertaken by the Council through the Enhanced Bus Partnership which sought to make public transport services across the County as effective as possible, identifying and filling in gaps where a commercial service could not be provided. It was highlighted that subsidised services needed patronage to grow but where traditional bus services were not considered viable the possibility to extend Digital Demand Responsive Transport would be considered as a more cost-effective alternative.
- (viii) Members commented on the deterioration of pavements and the need for some of the new funding allocated by Government to be targeted towards addressing this in future years, as well as roads. It was acknowledged that a lack of resources had meant that minimal maintenance works to pavements and cycleways had been possible. The Director highlighted that repairs to footpaths and cycleways were carried out on a risk-based approach and that subject to approval, there could now be a pro-active approach to maintenance funded through the new Local Transport Grant coordinated with the use of the Active Travel England Grant.
- (ix) It was noted that vegetation encroachment on footpaths was prioritised to ensure it was not a health and safety concern. It was suggested that rural footways were currently in a better condition and that there was a need for additional funding support to be able to deliver county wide. It was also highlighted that at times the vegetation was on private land and this was resolved through discussions with landowners and at times supported by parish councils.
- (x) Members raised concerns about the quality of work by utility companies to reinstate roads after carrying out repairs to their infrastructure running beneath. It was noted that they were required to reinstate the road to the existing standard, and this was governed by legislation. If the utility companies failed to do this, the Council could take action through enforcement. Members were reassured that inspectors visited sites once works had been completed. It was noted that, even when reinstated up to standard, any works carried out in the highway weakened and reduced the lifespan of a road which in the long term fell to the Council to manage.

RESOLVED:

That the Performance Report to June 2025 be noted.

22. Outcome of the 18 - Month Medium Term Financial Strategy Street Lighting Dimming Trial.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport, the purpose of which was to advise the Committee of the outcome of the 18-month street lighting dimming trial and to seek its views on shaping the future street lighting service, prior to presenting a report to the Cabinet on 12 September 2025. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (a) Members welcomed the work undertaken and the outcome of the pilot. Members agreed that this had been an innovative approach taken by the County Council, noting it was the first authority to trial this level of street light dimming. Members were also pleased to note the level of savings it had delivered which could now be factored into the MTFS year on year.
- (b) The Committee supported the proposal to permanently dim street lights within this trial to 30% between the hours of 8pm and 7am across the County, on the basis there would be continued monitoring of road collisions and crime. Whilst the pilot had not raised any definitive issues and it was noted the reduced lighting levels had largely gone unnoticed, Members agreed this should continue to be monitored, with the opportunity to increase lighting in specific areas if and were deemed necessary for safety or crime related reasons.
- (c) It was noted that as part of the public consultation undertaken prior to the pilot, many respondents raised concerns and these had been monitored as part of the pilot scheme.
- (d) It was highlighted that the areas across the County that were under the 'part night lighting regime' (switching off street lights from midnight to 5.30am) would stay the same and that regime would not be affected by the proposal outlined in the report. Members were informed that not all local authorities operated a Central Management System used by the Council to control street lighting which had been fundamental in being able to take this approach.

The Lead Member for Highways and Transport welcomed the report and Members comments on the success of the dimming trial. He said as a result of the outcome of the pilot he would recommend to Cabinet that this be made a permanent feature and thanked officers for the work undertaken.

RESOLVED:

That the outcome of the 18-month street lighting dimming trial be noted and welcomed and that the comments now made by the Committee be presented to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 12 September 2025.

23. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 6 November 2025 at 2.00 pm.

2.00pm – 3.20pm
04 September 2025

CHAIRMAN