



Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 10 September 2025.

PRESENT

Mr. N Chapman CC(in the Chair)

Mrs. N. Bottomley CC
Mr. G. Cooke CC
Ms. B. Gray CC
Dr. S. Hill CC
Mr. J. McDonald CC

Mr. P. Morris CC
Ms. A. Pendlebury CC
Mr. B. Piper CC
Mr J. Poland CC
Mr. C. A. Smith CC

In attendance

Mr. A. Tilbury – Lead Member for Environment and Flooding

13. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2025 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

14. Question Time.

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

Question asked by Mr. Adam Stares

On 15 July, the Cabinet agreed to reallocate £2 million to flood mitigation initiatives.

How will the council decide which projects will be supported with this funding and how will it measure the success in terms of flood mitigation?

Reply by the Chairman

The County Council is currently in the process of shaping proposals for how this reallocated funding is to be spent on flood mitigation initiatives including expected outcomes, the details of which will be presented to Cabinet on 28th October for approval.

15. 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).

16. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

17. 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.

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

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

19. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 35.

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

20. Environment and Climate Change Performance Report to June 2025.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Environment and Transport and the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to provide 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 commented that whilst the current rate of tree planting to achieve the Council's commitment of 700,000 trees was to be welcomed, the later proposal of a million trees planted should continue to be the Council's long-term goal. The Lead Member supported this view and whilst he commended the current ambition, he commented that the Council should seek to beat this so far as was possible.
- (ii) Members noted that the amount of renewable energy generated by the County Council as a percentage of consumption' had increased to 21% in Quarter Four 2024/25, which indicated an improvement in performance. This had been achieved by utilising sustainable sources of energy such as solar panels installed across the Council's buildings. Members acknowledged that ultimately, all targets were subject to investment and financial viability.
- (iii) Members noted that, the Council was installing the very first EV Charging points on the public highway supported through the LEVI funding received from the Government. The funding was welcomed as this had allowed the Council to kick start the initiative on public highways. As part of the scheme, public engagement had been carried out and this had provided some indication as to where there might be demand for charging points. It was noted that the current model was to support the development of the County's EV charging infrastructure although this could potentially change in the future as new technologies came forward.
- (iv) A Member raised concerns regarding air quality levels which had exceeded World Health Organisation expectations. It was suggested that joining up walking and cycling routes across the County would be critical in helping to address this. The

Director provided assurance that a considerable amount of work was going into delivering this, utilising funding received through Active Travel England, however this had to be delivered in stages. It was highlighted that the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans supported the case when applying for funding and whenever funding became available the Council took these opportunities where appropriate.

RESOLVED:

That the Performance Update until June 2025 be noted.

21. Annual Review of Leicestershire Country Parks.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources, the purpose of which was to provide the Committee with an annual update on country parks. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (i) Significant efforts had been made in recent years to develop a commercial strategy for country parks, which had led to a notable increase in income for the service. This progress had been achieved through ongoing reviews of concession and catering arrangements, evaluating car parking options where appropriate, and determining what partners were licensed to use the parks for various activities. The service continued to explore further opportunities and the Director confirmed that the generation of a commercial revenue income stream remained a key area of focus. However, it was acknowledged that a careful balance needed to be struck between protecting biodiversity and whilst supporting public access.
- (ii) Members noted the collaborative work being undertaken with a new partner at the Beacon Hill café was to enhance visitor facilities and ensure the long-term sustainability of the park.
- (iii) A Member raised concerns regarding flooding at Watermead Country Park, which in recent years had closed access to the park by pedestrians and caused damage to infrastructure. A fellow Member suggested that flooding in county parks should not necessarily be viewed as a problem, but rather as an opportunity. It was noted that flooding in these areas might help prevent flooding in residential areas nearby, the parks acting as a natural form of defence, which should be embraced.
- (iv) In response to a Member query about the possibility of installing solar panels on the roof of buildings at Snibston Colliery Park, it was noted that this was a complicated site due to the nature and age of the buildings, some of which had listed status. Such levels of protection restricted what could be done to adapt those buildings.
- (v) A Member shared the appreciation they had received from local community groups that supported the improvements to the footpath at Broombriggs and queried whether there would be further improvements at Jubilee Woods. It was noted that there were no current plans to substantially upgrade the access into Jubilee Woods as access needed to be balanced with protecting the site which included some of the most untouched woodland within the country parks estate and so had become a space for nature to thrive.

- (vi) Members noted that grassland management took place across a number of parks and that this was something the Team would be seeking to expand on as a priority area within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The Director advised that there were some displays of wildflowers at Market Bosworth Country Park, some extensive wildflower meadows managed at Beacon Hill Country Park and a number across some sites within the heart of the National Forest.

The Lead Member for Environment and Flooding noted that if Members were interested in observing how the natural flood defences worked, there was an opportunity to witness this at Beacon Hill Country Park. It was highlighted that the Team were doing substantial work to support flood defences and as a result this was increasing biodiversity in the area and would help to minimise flooding along the Soar Valley, which was commendable.

RESOLVED:

That the annual update on the Country parks update be noted

22. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

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

2.00pm – 2.56pm
10 September 2025

CHAIRMAN