

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 3RD DECEMBER 2025
POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY
COMMISSION

Since assuming the position of Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission in May 2025, I have sought to ensure that the Council's commitment to scrutiny continues. It has always been considered here in Leicestershire to be an essential function within the Council's operations, including holding the Cabinet to account, shaping policy, and promoting transparency.

Whilst it was disappointing that shortly after taking on the role of Chairman, I and some of my scrutiny colleagues had to seek to review a Cabinet decision regarding amendments to the Council's Flag Flying Policy, the decision having been made without adequate consultation or engagement including with scrutiny, I have since been encouraged by the Cabinet's cooperation and engagement with scrutiny, in particular the Leader's regular attendance at the Commission, and I am optimistic that we can all work together to best support our residents which remains our shared objective.

Over the past 6 to 7 months scrutiny has continued to be busy. I am particularly pleased with the input the Commission was able to provide to the Council's local government reorganisation proposals and thank officers for their hard work in preparing the business case for us to review.

The Commission held a dedicated session to examine the business case. Discussions ensured robust challenge and resulted in a number of areas for improvement being identified. I am pleased to see that these have all been taken on board by the Cabinet and I would say, this is a good example of how effective scrutiny can be and how it should be used to drive improvement.

The Commission continues to assess the Council's financial performance, and all scrutiny committees are set to rigorously review the Cabinet's budget proposals and the status of the efficiency review in the coming year. The Leader has consistently stated that frontline services will be protected with minimal cost to taxpayers. While I appreciate the commitment, it remains evident that ongoing demand pressures will continue to influence future outcomes.

A key budgetary concern for many authorities remains the High Needs Block deficit. The Commission maintains oversight of this issue, while the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitors the implementation of the Council's 'Building Education Services Together' programme, which is designed to alleviate existing pressures. In response to members' concerns about the trajectory of growth this year, a joint scrutiny workshop was held in October by both scrutiny bodies to examine this in greater detail. This session provided valuable insight into the

challenges facing the Council. Scrutiny will continue to monitor the position closely and make recommendations where it can.