

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

PRESENT

Mr. K. Robinson CC (in the Chair)	
Mrs. N. Bottomley CC	Dr. S. Hill CC
Mr. N. Chapman CC	Mr. J. McDonald CC
Mr. G. Cooke CC	Mr. P. Morris CC
Mr. M. R. England CC	Mr. C. A. Smith CC
Ms. B. Gray CC	Mrs D. Taylor CC

In attendance.

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

1. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2025 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

2. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 34.

3. 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).

4. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

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

8. Action for Nature - A Strategic Approach to Biodiversity, Habitat and the Local Environment (Document and Action Plan).

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport, the purpose of which was to seek the views of the Committee on the refreshed draft Action for Nature – A Strategic Approach to Biodiversity, Habitat and the Local Environment, and on the supporting draft Action Plan. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- i) It was acknowledged that measuring biodiversity was challenging and costly and although figures were not included in the report, data was available and progress monitored. Members were assured that the Committee would receive the annual Environment Performance Report in 2026 which would cover these additional Key Performance Indicators. It was highlighted that 97% of suitable Council-owned land was managed for nature and 540,000 trees had been planted under the Tree for Every Person scheme. It was noted that the County Council worked with local groups who were a beneficial resource to gather data and encouraged public participation.
- ii) A Member queried the use of chemicals by the Authority on land it owned and managed. It was noted that public data on chemical usage was not published, but the information could be accessed through contractors. The Director reported that the Council used Glyphosate for weed control on its land, spraying twice a year in June and September. This was necessary to prevent infrastructure damage and higher repair costs. It was highlighted that the use of Glyphosate was within European Union regulations. Trials by other authorities had shown there was currently no effective alternative on the market.
- iii) It was noted that the Council actively worked with parish council biodiversity groups through a Nature Network, that met regularly to share best practices and resources. It was highlighted that the Council had a wild verge scheme, supported by parish councils, which allowed for reduced cutting to support biodiversity where it was safe and feasible. It was suggested that although there was a set cutting regime in place, opinions differed, and some communities preferred less cutting for biodiversity, while others preferred tidier areas.

The Lead Member for Environment and Flooding commented that there were encouraging signs of biodiversity recovery across many parts of Leicestershire, supported by initiatives like the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and efforts made by district councils. The initiatives demonstrated promising progress toward biodiversity restoration with several areas now showing signs of improvement through local initiatives. Actions such as delaying lawn cutting during the spring months to help pollinators and implementing natural flood defences that benefited insects and amphibians were highlighted as positive steps.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

9. Tree Management Strategy.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources, the purpose of which was to present the refreshed draft Tree Management Strategy which set the approach for the management of the County Council's trees and woodlands. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- i) It was noted that the County Council continued to develop its tree nursery, and the first batch of trees from the nursery would be ready for planting later this year. These would be used for replanting areas affected by Ash Dieback and for highway schemes.
- ii) In response to a member query on tree values, it was noted that the Council used a tree inventory system to track the ecological and amenity value of individual trees. It was highlighted that figures were updated regularly and full Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees assessments had been done for trial or development cases.
- iii) It was highlighted that a previous project funded by DEFRA supported orchards in schools, but a lack of funding had slowed the progress made. It was suggested that plans were in place to restart the scheme using nursery tree stock for schools and new developments were being made to encourage the link for children with food production.
- iv) A Member raised concerns about the inspection of trees on disused railway paths like Bampton Valley Way suggesting some areas needed additional attention. It was noted that this fell under the Country Park portfolio and would be inspected in due course.

The Lead Member for Environment and Flooding commented that as the tree planting season approached the County Council would be giving away free trees and encouraged everyone to take up this opportunity to plant a tree as this supported biodiversity and helped with flood prevention.

RESOLVED:

That the update report be noted.

10. Dates of Future Meetings.

RESOLVED:

That meetings of the Committee in 2026 would take place at 14:00 on the following days:

Monday 26 January 2026
 Monday 9 March 2026
 Monday 8 June 2026
 Wednesday 2 September 2026
 Monday 9 November 2026

2.00pm – 2.28pm
 11 November 2025

CHAIRMAN

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