

MINUTES of a meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on TUESDAY, 12 MAY 2026

Present: Councillor P Lees (Chair)

Councillors J G Simmons, M Ball, A Barker, C Beck, D Bigby, M Blair-Park, R Blunt, R Boam, M Burke, R Canny, D Cooper, D Everitt, T Eynon, M French, J Geary, T Gillard, K Horn, R Johnson, S Lambeth, J Legrys, K Merrie MBE, A Morley, R L Morris, P Moulton, E Parle, G Rogers, N J Rushton, R Sutton, A C Saffell, C A Sewell, S Sheahan, N Smith, A Wilson, J Windram, L Windram, A C Woodman and M B Wyatt

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mr A Barton, Mrs A Crouch, Mrs C Hammond, Ms R Tapping, Mrs A Thomas and Mrs R Wallace

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Councillor P Lees said a few words regarding his year as Chair of the Council.

Nominations were sought for the Chair of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt that Councillor P Lees be appointed as Chair of the Council for 2026/27. The motion was seconded by Councillor M B Wyatt.

It was also moved by Councillor J Legrys that Councillor T Eynon be appointed as Chair of the Council for 2026/27. The motion was seconded by Councillor A Morley.

As two nominations had been received, a vote was taken for each nominee in turn, the result of which was tied. Therefore, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Chair of the Council exercised his casting vote. It was

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor P Lees be appointed as Chair of the Council for 2026/27.

Councillor P Lees remained in the chair and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

4. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the Deputy Chair of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt that Councillor J Simmons be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Council for 2026/27. The motion was seconded by Councillor M Wyatt.

It was also moved by Councillor J Legrys that Councillor A Barker be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Council for 2026/27. The motion was seconded by Councillor A Morley.

Chair's initials

As two nominations had been received, a vote was taken for each nominee in turn, the result of which was tied. Therefore, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Chair of the Council exercised his casting vote. It was

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor J Simmons be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Council for 2026/27.

Councillor J Simmons took the Deputy Chair seat and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

5. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

All present were invited to join the Chair of the Council in observing a minute silence in memory of Frank Straw, a former district councillor who was elected when the Council was first created in 1973 and served until May 2007 representing the Snibston Ward. Frank also served as Leader of the Council from May 1995 until May 2007. Several Members shared tributes highlighting his contributions and legacy during his time in office.

The Chair of the Council announced his chosen charity for the year as Canine Partners.

6. APPOINTMENT OF LEADER

Nominations were sought for the Leader of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

It was moved by Councillor T Gillard that Councillor R Blunt be appointed as Leader of the Council for 2026/27. The motion was seconded by Councillor A Woodman.

It was also moved by Councillor A Morley that Councillor J Legrys be appointed as Leader of the Council for 2026/27. The motion was seconded by Councillor D Bigby.

As two nominations had been received, a vote was taken for each nominee in turn, the result of which was tied. Therefore, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Chair of the Council exercised his casting vote. It was

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor R Blunt be appointed as Leader of the Council for 2026/27.

Councillor R Blunt thanked Members for his appointment and said a few words regarding his plans for the forthcoming year.

7. LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council, Councillor R Blunt, announced his appointments and delegations of executive functions for the forthcoming year as follows:

Leader – Councillor R Blunt

Deputy Leader and Community, Environment and Climate Change Portfolio – Councillor M Wyatt

Infrastructure Portfolio – Councillor N Rushton

Planning Portfolio – Councillor A Saffell

Finance and Corporate Portfolio – Councillor K Merrie

Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio – Councillor A Woodman

Business and Regeneration Portfolio – Councillor T Gillard

As in previous years, the executive responsibilities were to be delegated to the Cabinet to take decisions collectively.

Councillor J Legrys, Leader of the Labour Group, announced the shadow Portfolio Holders as follows:

Leader and Planning – Councillor J Legrys
 Deputy Leader and Housing – Councillor A Morley
 Finance and Climate Change – Councillor D Bigby
 Property – Councillor S Lambeth
 Regeneration and Property – Councillors S Lambeth and G Rogers
 Freeport and Infrastructure – Councillor C Sewell
 Customer Services and Communication – Councillor C Beck
 Community Services and Waste Services – Councillor P Moulton

8. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

9. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

One question was asked which is set out below with the response. The Member was invited by the Chair of the Council to ask a supplementary question which is also set out together with the response.

Question from Councillor R Sutton

The government ran a formal public consultation from February 12th to March 26th, 2026, on proposed Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) areas covering the whole of England. The period was just short of and, coincidentally, in parallel with the quite separate public consultation on the three LGR proposals for Leicestershire.

How were elected members and residents of North West Leicestershire informed of their right to contribute to the separate and unconnected SDS area consultation on whether Leicestershire-wide continues to be the most appropriate and effective geography for spatial planning to 2050 and beyond, or whether a wider East Midlands area might better facilitate growth and development. [Note: the Council website and local media carried full details of the LGR consultation]

Response from Councillor N Rushton

With regards to the Government Consultation on “Areas for producing spatial development strategies” the government website “Consultation on SDS geographies” reads:

“Please note that this is not a formal consultation and is instead intended to inform discussions with the sector, to determine whether and how to take these proposals forward.”

As with all Government consultations, however, it is a matter for the Government to ensure that its consultations are publicised. The Council’s constitution delegates responses to government consultations, formal or otherwise, to officers in liaison with the relevant cabinet member. In this case that was the Leader of the Council.

As members will be aware, there has been a long-standing agreement that Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) is a sensible geography for a strategic authority as expressed in the LGR North, South, City submission which was considered by the Council's Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. On that understanding when Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council were invited by government to express an interest in developing a Spatial Development Strategy and a Foundation Strategic Authority (FSA) the Leicestershire district council leaders at their meeting on 18 March agreed to support Leicestershire County Council and Rutland County Council expressing an interest in establishing an FSA on the LLR footprint.

Once confirmed, strategic planning authorities will not be able to commence work formally on an SDS until the legislation is commenced, which is currently expected to be summer 2026.

Whichever final boundaries are used to prepare SDSs, there will always be some issues, development needs, infrastructure or specific projects which cross them. It will be essential that strategic planning authorities engage and cooperate effectively across those boundaries. This is required by the National Planning Policy Framework and can be expected to be tested at the examination of an SDS.

Once further information on strategic planning authorities is available, members will be updated further.

Supplementary question and response

Councillor R Sutton asked if it was agreed that the community did not have the opportunity to take part in consultation as the Council took the decision not to publicise it. Councillor N Rushton referred to his initial response in which it stated that 'it is a matter for the Government to ensure that its consultations are publicised'. It was also reaffirmed that it was not a formal consultation.

10. MOTIONS

No motions were received.

11. PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

12. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2026.

It was moved by Councillor P Lees, seconded by Councillor J Simmons and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2026 be approved and signed by the Chair of the Council as a correct record.

Chair's initials

13. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND GROUPS, ELECTION OF CHAIRS AND DEPUTY CHAIRS

Councillor T Gillard, the Business and Regeneration Portfolio Holder, presented the report and directed Members to the updated recommendation and nominations as circulated in the additional papers. The recommendations were moved by Councillor T Gillard and seconded by Councillor N Rushton.

During discussion some concerns were raised regarding governance processes, including the appointment of an independent Chair for the Audit and Governance Committee. Officers clarified that decisions taken were lawful and in accordance with the constitutional framework.

Points were raised around missing information, regarding the Staffing Committee in appendix B of the report, the Interim Monitoring Officer agreed to review and provide a response outside of the meeting.

A brief discussion was had about the actions of the new Independent Chair of Audit and Governance Committee following the recruitment process. Officers agreed to investigate the matter.

The ability to vote on each recommendation separately was questioned and the Chair used his discretion to continue to vote on all recommendations together.

A recorded vote being requested, the vote is detailed below.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The terms of reference of the committees and groups as detailed in appendix A be endorsed.
- 2) The appointments to the committees and groups as circulated in the additional papers be agreed.
- 3) The appointment of Mr Phil Helm be as the Independent Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee for a four-year term be agreed.
- 4) The Chairs and Deputy Chairs for the committees and groups as detailed in the additional papers be agreed.

Motion to approve the recommendations as set out in the report and additional papers (Motion)	
Councillor Paul Lees	For
Councillor Jenny Simmons	For
Councillor Mike Ball	For
Councillor Anthony Barker	For
Councillor Catherine Beck	For
Councillor Dave Bigby	For
Councillor Murrae Blair-Park	For
Councillor Richard Blunt	For
Councillor Russell Boam	For
Councillor Morgan Burke	For
Councillor Rachel Canny	For
Councillor Doug Cooper	For
Councillor David Everitt	For
Councillor Dr Terri Eynon	For

Chair's initials

Councillor Marie French	For
Councillor John Geary	For
Councillor Tony Gillard	For
Councillor Kenny Horn	For
Councillor Russell Johnson	Against
Councillor Simon Lambeth	For
Councillor John Legrys	For
Councillor Keith Merrie MBE	For
Councillor Alison Morley	For
Councillor Ray Morris	For
Councillor Peter Moul	For
Councillor Elizabeth Parle	For
Councillor Guy Rogers	For
Councillor Nicholas Rushton	For
Councillor Ray Sutton	Against
Councillor Tony Saffell	For
Councillor Carol Sewell	For
Councillor Sean Sheahan	For
Councillor Nigel Smith	For
Councillor Avril Wilson	For
Councillor Jake Windram	For
Councillor Lee Windram	For
Councillor Andrew Woodman	For
Councillor Michael Wyatt	For
Carried	

14. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Councillor R Blunt, Leader of the Council, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor N Rushton.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Scheme of Delegation in Part 2, Section G of the Council's Constitution be agreed.

15. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor T Gillard, the Business and Regeneration Portfolio Holder, presented the report and directed Members to the nominations as circulated in the additional papers. The recommendations were moved by Councillor T Gillard and seconded by Councillor J Legrys.

Regarding the MSV Donington Park Consultative Forum, frustrations were shared that the group was inactive even though appointments made to it each year. Officers confirmed attempts to re-establish meetings and committed to continue efforts.

Advice was sought on the process for providing feedback to Council on outside body matters. Officers agreed to provide information outside of the meeting. Some Members felt that accountability and information sharing on the bodies should be improved.

RESOLVED THAT:

The representatives be appointed to serve on the Outside Bodies as circulated in the additional papers.

Chair's initials

16. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2026 – 2027

Councillor R Blunt, Leader of the Council, presented the report and directed Members to the revised schedule as circulated in the additional papers. The recommendations were moved by Councillor R Blunt and seconded by Councillor M Wyatt.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Schedule of Meetings for 2026-2027 as circulated in the additional papers be agreed.

17. LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE AUTHORITIES STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND – HOUSING DISTRIBUTION UNDER THE NEW STANDARD METHOD

Councillor N Rushton, Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor J Simmons.

Members broadly supported the recommendations; however, some concerns were raised regarding imposed housing numbers, infrastructure capacity and community impact. The necessity of having a local plan to avoid uncontrolled development was acknowledged.

Members across the Chamber formally thanked officers for their hard work to date during this lengthy process.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities Statement of Common Ground – Housing Distribution Under the New Standard Method (December 2025) be agreed.

18. LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE AUTHORITIES STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND – STRATEGIC DISTRIBUTION

Councillor N Rushton, Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor K Merrie.

During discussion Members raised concerns about transport infrastructure, particularly congestion at junction 24 of the M1 and regional capacity. Additional concerns included lack of cross-boundary coordination and future risks to infrastructure. However, Members agreed that the document was necessary to maintain a sound local plan.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities Statement of Common Ground relating to strategic warehousing need (March 2026) be agreed.

19. URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET

Councillor R Blunt, Leader of the Council, presented the report to Members.

The report was noted.

20. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor P Lees, seconded by Councillor J Simmons and

RESOLVED THAT:

In pursuance of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the business to be transacted involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

21. CAPITAL UPDATE

Councillor K Merrie, Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor R Blunt.

RESOLVED THAT:

The recommendation within the report be approved.

The meeting commenced at 6:30pm.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:20pm.