

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Abbey Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on TUESDAY, 28 OCTOBER 2025

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chair)

Councillors M B Wyatt, T Gillard, K Merrie MBE, T Saffell and A C Woodman

In Attendance: Councillors D Cooper, J Legrys, P Moulton, J G Simmons and S Sheahan

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mr A Barton, Mrs A Crouch, Mr B Dooley, Mrs C Hammond, Mr G Hall, Ms K Hiller, Mr P Stone and Mrs A Thomas

58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor N Rushton.

59. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

60. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There was one public question received.

Question from Ms S Dillon

‘I see from the recently released North, City, South proposals you speak of 3 Unitary Authorities, each of which are a combination of current District Councils or a City Council.

I presume the proposals that are being submitted are to prepare for the assumed approval of the Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill that is going through Parliament at the moment.

Part 1 of the Bill describes Strategic Authorities and only talks of unitary authorities with respect to a District Council as a single Foundation Strategic Authority.

How do your proposals relate to the current Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill that is currently going through Parliament - which kind of Strategic Authority are you looking to form with your proposals?’

Response from the Leader of the Council

‘On 16 December 2024, the Government published its English Devolution White Paper (the “White Paper”). This outlined a very clear ambition for every area in England to move towards setting up a strategic authority, led by an elected mayor, formed when two or more upper-tier authorities combine.

The White Paper outlined the powers and funding which could be devolved to such authorities, including those relating to transport, strategic planning, skills and employment, business support, environment and energy, health and public safety.

The Government also set a clear expectation that in two-tier areas, such as Leicestershire, local government be reorganised with new unitary councils established to replace district, borough and county councils.

These expectations have been confirmed in the current Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill.

Chair’s initials

In line with the above legislation, the North, City, South proposal published on 20 October, envisages the creation of a Mayoral Strategic Authority covering the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland geography of 1.2 million residents, sitting above three equally sized unitary councils each serving a population of approximately 400,000 residents of:

North Leicestershire and Rutland
South Leicestershire
Leicester City.'

Supplementary question and response

'I recognise that you sent a motion or a letter to government saying that you were not overly impressed with the whole local government reorganisation. And last night I recognised also that you spoke quite highly of democracy. So, my second question, the mayoral strategic authority, will combine Leicester City, Leicester County, Rutland and all the districts. So, I presume this will be a combined authority, whichever option is adopted.

I understand that both government and some stakeholders are very keen for areas to adopt the mayoral options. Section 6 of the bill describes decision making and validity of proceedings. Decisions are made by, a majority, which must include the mayor and members or their substitutes, may have defects of appointment or qualifications, so this seems a recipe for dictatorship and corruption.

Which community is being empowered by the LGR and these proposals?'

The Leader of the Council agreed to provide a response outside of the meeting.

61. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2025.

It was moved by Councillor T Saffell, seconded by Councillor T Gillard and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record of proceedings.

Reason for decision: The Cabinet (Executive) Procedure Rules required that the minutes of the previous meeting are considered and confirmed as a correct record.

62. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY - CONSULTATION

The Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the report.

It was moved by Councillor A Woodman, seconded by Councillor K Merrie and

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The draft Customer Experience Strategy 2026 - 2028 be approved for consultation.
- 2) The timeframe for consultation as set out in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 of the report be noted.

Reason for decision: The Council should consult on strategies impacting residents and stakeholders. The consultation period must be clearly communicated, and the relevant Scrutiny Committee consulted before final approval and review of outcomes. As Cabinet will be asked to approve the final draft strategy, it is appropriate for Cabinet to review the draft prior to consultation.

63. BUDGET TIMETABLE 2026/27

The Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report.

It was moved by Councillor K Merrie, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

The Budget Timetable as set out in Appendix One be approved.

Reason for decision: Publishing a timetable for setting the budget makes the Council's financial planning clear and open. It helps Members, staff, and the public see important dates and understand when things will happen. This means everyone has enough time to look at the plans and give their views. By showing when decisions will be taken and when people can get involved, the timetable makes sure the process is straightforward, fair, and easy for everyone to follow.

64. FINAL PROPOSALS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE, AND RUTLAND

The Leader introduced the report before handing over to the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer who delivered a presentation on the proposals.

Each of the comments from Corporate Scrutiny Committee were then considered in turn.

A member declared that they would not be supporting the recommendations and commented that the proposal would not be effective in delivering the Government's intended benefits.

All other members expressed their support for the proposal but questioned whether the Government's desire to reorganise local government was the best option for local authorities in Leicestershire.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt, seconded by Councillor K Merrie and

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The comments and/or recommendations made by Corporate Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 27 October 2025 be considered.
- 2) The draft final proposal for a three unitary model for Local Government Reorganisation in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland as appended at Appendix C be approved; and
- 3) Authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make any non-material amendments to the final proposal and to submit the final proposal to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government by 28 November 2025.

Reason for decision: The decision to submit a proposal for local government reorganisation is a Cabinet function and therefore Cabinet approval is required.

Chair's initials

65. SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, VIREMENTS AND CAPITAL APPROVALS

The Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder presented the report.

It was moved by Councillor K Merrie, seconded by Councillor T Saffell and

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The Supplementary Estimates detailed in Appendix 2 which is below £10,000 and Council funded be noted.
- 2) The Supplementary Estimates detailed in Appendix 2 that are between £10,000 and £249,999 and Council funded be approved.
- 3) The new scheme in Paragraph 4.2 is added into the Capital Programme be recommended to Council.

Reason for decision: The Council's Financial Procedure Rules, Section 2, paragraphs A24 to A28 stipulate the procedures for virements and supplementary estimates, whilst the Council's Capital Strategy sets out the Governance of the Capital Programme.

66. FORMER COUNCIL OFFICES - REMOVAL OF TREES

The Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the report.

It was moved by Councillor A Woodman, seconded by Councillor T Saffell and

RESOLVED THAT:

The removal of trees shown within the area edged red on the attached plan at the Former Council Offices, Whitwick Road, Coalville, be approved.

Reason for decision: Managing and maintaining health and safety on Council-owned land.

67. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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.

Reason for decision: To enable the consideration of exempt information.

68. AWARD OF HOUSING CONTRACTS

The Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the report.

It was moved by Councillor A Woodman, seconded by Councillor T Saffell and

RESOLVED THAT:

The recommendations in the report be approved

Reason for decision: To comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules as contracts with a value of £100,000 or more require Cabinet approval.

69. 17 ASHBY ROAD, MOIRA

The Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the report, including a statement from a member of the public in support of the recommendations.

It was moved by Councillor A Woodman, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

The recommendations in the report be approved.

Reason for decision: Holding properties which are neither used for the delivery of services or the generation of income is wasteful of public resources. Disposal of the asset is likely to generate funds that could be invested in other Council services. Disposal of surplus assets also minimises property holding costs. The decision to declare property surplus is a function of Cabinet.

The meeting commenced at 5:00pm

The Chair closed the meeting at 5:42pm

Chair's signature