MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Abbey Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on TUESDAY, 24 MARCH 2026

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chair)

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

In Attendance: Councillors J Legrys and P Moult

Officers: Mrs A Thomas, Mr J Arnold, Mr A Barton, Ms B Leonard, Ms K Hiller, Mr P Stone, Mrs C Hammond and Mr P Wheatley

133. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor N Rushton.

134. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

135. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

136. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 17 and 24 February 2026.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 and 24 February be approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record of proceedings.

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

137. SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, VIREMENTS AND CAPITAL APPROVALS

The report was presented by the Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The supplementary estimates detailed in appendix 2, that were above £10k and below £250k and Council funded were approved.

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.

138. FORMER TENANT RENT ARREARS, CURRENT TENANT RENT ARREARS, COUNCIL TAX, NON-DOMESTIC RATES AND SUNDRY DEBTS WRITE OFFS

The report was presented by the Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet approved to write off:

1) Property debt of £19,377.40; and

2) Trade waste debt of £97,503.34

Reason for decision: To comply with proper accounting practices.

139. LEGACY FUND GRANT

The report was presented by the Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder.

Comments from Corporate Scrutiny Committee on the report were considered and acknowledged in turn. Comments 1, and 6 -8 were noted by the Committee. For Comment 2 (C2), the Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder confirmed that a funding cap was to ensure fair distribution of funding across the district and there would be renewal and funding enhancements in the future. He also emphasised, in response to C3, that funding decisions would be fair and the scheme had been benchmarked against other Councils'. In response to C4, the Strategic Director of Resources explained to Cabinet that it is unusual for the publication of detailed scoring to occur due to confidentiality and data protection considerations and that the approach to C4 would be looked at in more detail. In response to C5, the Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder assured that the scoring criteria framework had been reviewed to remove any possible biases or unintentional advantages towards larger, established organisations.

Members commented in favour of the scheme. The Strategic Director of Resources, the Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder and opposition group were thanked for working 'so assiduously' through a quite challenging agenda. The Strategic Director of Resources and Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder were commended for their robust defence of the scheme and reassurance that the process was honest, open and transparent.

A member expressed that the scheme was a 'golden opportunity' to support and champion projects that could have a lasting, positive impact on the district. They urged community groups and service providers with potential, difference-making projects to apply once the scheme was available.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1) The details of the Legacy Grant process for applications as shown at appendix one was approved and any comments made by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19 March 2026 were considered.

2. The details of the closed Churchyards/Cemeteries grant scheme shown at appendix four was approved and any comments made by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19 March 2026 were considered.

Reason for decision: To ensure that the grant scheme has the appropriate governance and transparency arrangements.

140. STENSON SQUARE GARDENS - PRESENTATION OF DESIGNS POST PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND APPROVAL TO FUND AND SUBMIT PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Leader of the Council presented the report.

Comments from Community Scrutiny Committee on the report were considered and acknowledged in turn. Comments 1 – 3 were noted.
Recommendation 1 from Community Scrutiny Committee received no motion or further recommendations. Recommendation 2 received a carried motion, with a member expressing the importance of maximising communication with residents to include them on the development journey.

A member, in full support of the project, commented that the project would help to ‘lift and improve the area’. They added that regenerating this area would help deliver the promise to improve the town centre. This was echoed by another member who added that they were pleased that Community Scrutiny Committee supported the ‘mixed use’ housing scheme.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt, seconded by Councillor M Wyatt and

RESOLVED THAT:

1) The feedback from the community engagement session held on8 October 2025 was noted.

2) The comments and recommendations of the Community Scrutiny Committee on 25 February 2026 were noted.

3) A sum of £276,258 is moved from the development pool to the active programme in the capital programme as outlined in section 4.0 of the report was approved.

4) The appointment of ARUP to provide design services for RIBA stage 4 of the Stenson Gardens public realm project to a point where tenders for construction have been obtained within the agreed budget of £276,258 was agreed.

5) Authority was delegated to the Strategic Director of Place (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder) to appoint consultants to prepare an outline planning application for the former council offices site within the agreed budget of £276,258.

6) Authority was delegated to the Strategic Director of Place (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder) to submit an outline planning application for planning consent for residential use on the former council offices site.

7) It was agreed that Cabinet would undertake more marketing to showcase the design visuals and promote the project with the aim to gain more community involvement.

Reason for decision: Cabinet approval required to enable progress with the next stages of the Stenson Gardens project in compliance with the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules and procurement legislation.

141. GOOD DESIGN GUIDE FOR NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE

The report was presented by the Planning Portfolio Holder.

A member spoke in support of the report.

It was moved by Councillor T Saffell, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

1) The Good Design Guide for North West Leicestershire Supplementary Planning Document was recommended for adoption to the Local Plan Committee.

2) Authority was delegated to the Strategic Director of Place to agree any minor modifications to the final draft Supplementary Planning Document prior to adoption at Local Plan Committee.

Reason for decision: The Council's Constitution (Part 2, Section D5, paragraph 2.2.1) requires the Local Plan Committee to receive reports from Cabinet on proposed SPDs.

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

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

The report was noted.

Reason for decision: To consider the draft Leicester and Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground for strategic warehousing (January 2026) at Appendix A to this report so that the view of Cabinet can be forwarded to Council when it considers the Statement of Common Ground at its meeting on 12 May 2026.

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

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

The report was noted.

Reason for decision: To determine Cabinet's views on the proposed Statement of Common Ground for forwarding to Council.

144. BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT

The Community and Climate Change Portfolio Holder presented the report.

Comments from Community Scrutiny Committee on the report were considered and acknowledged in turn. C1 was supported by the Community and Climate Change Portfolio Holder. C2 and C4 were noted. In response to C3, Officers suggested an additional recommendation to provide clarity around the next reporting period for the Biodiversity Duty report which was supported by members.

In line with the Constitution, the Chair of the Council agreed that the right of call-in be waivered due to call in prejudicing the ability of the Council to publish its Biodiversity Duty Report by the statutory deadline of 25 March 2026. The Chair of the Council had considered the timetable for confirmation and agreed that the matter before Cabinet was urgent for that reason*.*

It was moved by Councillor M Wyatt, seconded by Councillor T Gillard and

RECOMMENDED THAT:

1) Comments and recommendations made by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19 March 2026 were considered.

2) The Biodiversity Duty report was approved.

3) Authority was delegated to the Strategic Director of Housing and Communities to make any minor amendments to the report prior to final submission.

4) The next reporting period for the next Biodiversity Duty report to be from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2030 was agreed.

Reason for decision: To approve the Council's Biodiversity Duty Report as required by the Constitution.

145. FREEPORT – CHANGE OF ACCOUNTABLE BODY

The report was presented by the Planning Portfolio Holder.

The Chief Executive was commended for her hard work by the Planning Portfolio Holder.

In line with the Constitution, the Chair of the Council agreed that the right of call-in be waivered due to the call-in prejudicing the ability of the Council to confirm the provisional direction on or before the 1 April 2026.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1) The transfer of accountable body status for the East Midlands Freeport (EMF) from Leicestershire County Council (LCC) to the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) was approved.

2) The EMCCA was agreed to become a founder member of the East Midlands Freeport.

3) Any changes to the governance documents that may be necessary to enable this transfer to take place in accordance with the principles set out in this report was agreed.

4) The recommendation be approved.

Reason for decision: The Chief Executive is the designated member representative of the EMF and has delegated authority to make decisions on the day-to-day activities of the organisation, considering the interests of North West Leicestershire.
This proposal, however, changes the principles on which EMF was founded when it agreed to join the company. It is, therefore, appropriate for Cabinet to consider any changes to those arrangements.

146. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

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

147. FUTURE OF ROUGH SLEEPING PROVISION

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

In line with the Constitution, the Chair of the Council agreed that the right of call-in be waivered due to the call-in prejudicing the ability of the Council to implement the decision to bring the outreach service in house in time for 1 April.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The recommendations in the report be approved.

Reason for decision: to comply with the constitution of the Council.

148. RENEWAL OF CONTRACTS FOR PLANNED MAINTENANCE AND ESTATE UPGRADES

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:

The recommendations in the report be approved.

Reason for decision: to comply with the Constitution of the Council.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

The Chair closed the meeting at 5.41 pm