

Community testing rolls out across Leicestershire

Rapid testing is underway in key hotspots as we continue to lead the fight against coronavirus

Pop-up testing is being used to tackle the virus in areas with persistently high rates – with the first ‘lateral flow tests’ deployed in Wigston earlier in January.

One in three people who have coronavirus do not show symptoms and could be spreading it without realising it. Voluntary community testing helps identify people who have no symptoms.

When someone tests positive, we can trace those they’ve been in close contact with, provide support to help people self-isolate and stop the spread of infection. The more people without symptoms who come forward to take a lateral flow test, the greater the impact in reducing the spread.

Council leader, Nick Rushton, said: “We remain at the forefront of the battle against coronavirus.

“As one of the first in the country to localise test and trace, and with the successful drop in rates in Oadby and Wigston last summer, we have the expertise to make this work. When and where we need the community testing most, we’re ready to roll.”

As the vaccine rolls out, it remains vital that we do everything we can to drive down rates.

To be eligible for the test, you must live in the ward where we are currently

testing, have no symptoms of coronavirus and not be self-isolating. You’ll need to book a test in advance – by visiting leicestershire.gov.uk/covidtest.

You can leave the test site straight after you’ve taken your swab and results are sent to you by text or email by the end of the day.

Look out for social media, updates on our council website and local newspapers to find out when we’re coming to your area.



Council leader, Nick Rushton with a delivery of coronavirus testing kits

Covid Health Champion

We want people to help share correct and up to date information in their community via WhatsApp and other channels. Find out more on the back page.



The Covid-19 vaccine roll-out is starting

▶ See back page



Leicestershire Matters is sent to all residents in the county of Leicestershire.

It costs under 10p to print and deliver each copy. To help save money on the distribution, we work closely with Royal Mail. We're sorry if you receive Leicestershire Matters just over the border in a neighbouring county – but by using standard postal routes we actually save £750 per issue.

Contact us

leicestershire.gov.uk

Our website focuses on the most popular things that people want to do online. So next time you need to find or do something with the council, go online at leicestershire.gov.uk

Email

leics-matters@leics.gov.uk

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General enquiries

Mon - Thur: 8.30am - 5pm
Fri: 8.30am - 4.30pm
Telephone: 0116 232 3232

Post

Communications Team,
Room 400, County Hall,
Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 8RA

Welcome to Leicestershire Matters

Council leader, **Nick Rushton**, introduces our winter edition



Last year will go down in the history books as one of the toughest we've faced outside wartime – and our residents have shown resilience, creativity and kindness.

Local government is taking the leading role in the battle against this deadly virus. And with another lockdown upon us, bringing school closures, we're continuing to live in extraordinary times and I want to thank you for playing your part. From keeping vulnerable people safe to providing vital support to businesses, we're rising to the challenge.

We've invested almost £3m into supporting community groups and small businesses – including offering a helping hand to struggling rural pubs. You can read more about this on the next page.

Although we're back in a national lockdown, the vaccine is rolling out. There is light at the end of the tunnel and much to look forward to in 2021. Our fight against coronavirus remains strong and by deploying rapid testing in hotspots, we're also helping to break the chain of infection.

It's increasingly important to get outdoors when you can. A new urban park in the

centre of Coalville is now open at Snibston, reconnecting the local community with the site's mining heritage.

One of the commitments I'm most proud of is our support for free school meals. No child should be hungry and we're investing up to £1m to extend support until April. Quite simply, this is a case of doing the right thing.

Eliminating our carbon impact is everyone's responsibility – and one we take very seriously. By planting more trees and teaming up with the most ambitious local leaders in the UK, we're becoming cleaner and greener.

And on pages four and five, you can read more about our budget plans. As a large local authority, we have a yearly budget of around £400m. Times are tough and uncertainty about Government funding means there is a growing gap in future years. But our proposals set out investment in services we know our residents depend on.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition.

Nick Rushton

NICK RUSHTON

Day in day out, we deliver a wealth of services that transform lives and keep the county moving.

From boosting businesses to keeping children safe and from gritting roads to tackling scammers, we're delivering for you.

YOUR
COUNCIL
DELIVERING
YOUR
SERVICES



We're looking after
695 children in care



7,500
adults receive
care and support

We maintain
2,575
miles
of road



and we'll fill
more than
7,000
pot holes
before the end
of the year



Creating
2,037
new school
places



Planting
700,000
trees



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Leading
the
**economic
recovery**

Christmas present for rural pubs

Rural pubs are at the heart of many Leicestershire communities – and we've offered a helping hand to those struggling during the pandemic.

We've given a one-off payment of £1,000 to support small village pubs which were unable to open their doors over the festive period.

The innovative initiative is designed to keep people in jobs, maintain the role of the pub as a community hub and help them to diversify by providing extra services for residents.



Blake Pain

Councillor Blake Pain, deputy council leader, said: "Pubs are often the beating heart of a small, rural community – and hospitality has taken a big hit during the pandemic.

"We've invested almost £3m into supporting community groups and small businesses – and want to go further. That's why we're doubling the money

provided by the Government and offering £1,000 to help struggling rural pubs.

"We recognise their plight – and want to do all we can to support them through these tough times."

The scheme is backed by major trade body, the British Beer and Pub Association, which represents around 20,000 of the country's pubs.

Emma McClarkin, Chief Executive, said: "We welcome Leicestershire County Council's innovative approach to providing additional financial support for the county's small rural wet-led pubs which are unable to open. Hats off to them for responding in our pubs' hour of need.

"We have been calling on the Government to increase the £1,000 one off payment for pubs impacted by the tighter restrictions, highlighting that it

is not enough to cover local pubs' fixed costs, let alone compensate for the loss of the business over the crucial Christmas and New Year trading period.

"I am pleased that Leicestershire County Council understands the vital social and economic role that local pubs play in their local communities and is willing to offer more support to help their rural pubs survive this bleakest of times and continue to warmly serve their communities in the future. I would encourage other county councils to follow suit and Government to take note."

Find out about Government support for businesses by visiting: www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support

**YOUR
COUNCIL
DELIVERING
YOUR
SERVICES**



Deputy leader, Blake Pain, with Michael Cosgrove, owner of the Bluebell Inn in Desford, one of the first pubs to receive £1,000, and Peter Bedford, county councillor for Desford, in December



Uncertainty over national funding drives budget proposals

Our latest four-year plan sets out investment and challenges, including the impact of coronavirus.

Balancing the books is becoming increasingly challenging without funding reform – and a growing financial gap is looming.



Published last month, our proposals show the difference between income and expenditure will reach £92m in 2025 meaning that significant savings will be required.

Investment in services including children and family services, adult social care and environment and transport is proposed, as well as a £450m capital pot to spend on infrastructure and a 1.99 per cent rise in Council Tax.

Another key factor is that new homes are needed across Leicestershire, and building the roads and schools required

will cost many hundreds of millions of pounds over the next 15 years. This means the council must seek Government funding before securing the money back from developers – and in some instances, forward-fund the projects.

Between 16 December and 17 January, residents, businesses and partner organisations were encouraged to send in their views during a consultation – and this feedback will help to shape our final proposals which will be published soon.

Our final budget will be agreed by the county council at its meeting on 17 February. Find out more: Leicestershire.gov.uk/budget

Last summer, more than 4,300 people had their say in a major consultation on our priorities. This showed that residents felt support for vulnerable people should be protected. Residential and community support for older people and mental health – plus special educational needs and disabilities, child protection

and children in care – were in the top 10 services people didn't want to see reduced.

Despite the challenging financial position, next year's proposals continue to prioritise those areas that survey respondents felt to be important.

Read the results in full: leicestershire.gov.uk/priorities





Budget at a glance:

► Council Tax

- A proposed **Council Tax** increase of 1.99 per cent is included and equates to £2.25 a month for a band D house.
- **Government** has also confirmed the option of an additional three per cent precept for adult social care that can be deferred over two years, though no decisions have yet been made to accept this.

► Coronavirus

- **Coronavirus** has generated around £85m in extra costs and lost income in the current year alone and is likely to impact services, including public transport and adult social care, for years to come.

► Growing demand for services is expected to increase costs by £60m, including:

- **Children and Family Services (£23m)** – this is mainly due to pressures on the budget for social care places, which are rising by over 10 per cent a year, and growing social worker caseloads.
- **Adult Social Care (£13m)** – this is largely the result of an ageing population with increasing care needs and a growing number of people with learning disabilities.
- **Environment and Transport (£4.3m)** – this primarily relates to more pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) requiring transport.

► The £92m savings are made up of:

- **£30m of detailed savings:**
 - reducing children and family care costs by re-shaping how services are delivered
 - reducing adult social care costs by simplifying processes and speeding up support
 - bringing together early help and prevention services – and delivering some in-house
 - reducing disposal costs by recycling and reusing more waste.
- A 'high needs development plan' which will **reduce SEND costs by £26m.**
- A **£36m** gap.

► The £450m capital pot sets out plans for sustainable investment across the county including:

- **£70m** to improve and maintain existing roads and bridges.
- **£120m** for improving transport infrastructure.
- **£72m** for extra school places, including specialist provision for SEND students.
- **£25m** to boost adult social care accommodation that supports people to live independently.
- **£23m** for recycling and household waste initiatives and specific carbon and energy reduction projects.
- **£71m** to invest in property to generate ongoing money for frontline services.

The combination of lack of reform, coronavirus and rising demand for services is pushing us very close to the edge.

Growing pressure on services totals £60m alone – including £14m next year – and a lack of reform in key long-standing issues such as special educational needs and disabilities compounds the financial challenge. The lack of clarity on whether the Government's fair funding review will happen is very disappointing given that we remain in the unenviable position as the lowest funded county in the country.

And although extra funding may be made available to reduce the £92m gap, it's clear that significant savings will still be required.

For the first time in many years, the budget is only balanced for one year. This results from uncertainty surrounding Government funding.

Taking tough decisions early has put us in a relatively sound position compared to other councils who are effectively about to run out of money.

And that's why we're able to set out a budget that delivers the services residents depend on. Building on what residents told us last year in our priorities consultation, it focuses on protecting support for vulnerable children and adults, investment in green and environmental projects to take effective action on climate change and carbon reduction, as well as investment in roads and schools to support new homes.

For every one per cent increase in Council Tax, an extra £3.1m is generated to reduce the impact on services.

Keeping our roads safe

Two all-electric cars will be further aiding the council's commitment to keeping children safe at the school gates.



Councillor Trevor Pendleton with the electric camera cars in December

The cars, purchased as part of a scheme to reduce the council's carbon footprint, will be used to monitor traffic outside schools which have signed up to the 'Keep Clear Zones' scheme initially launched across more than 30 schools in 2018.

Yellow road markings around the school gates denote the area where no stopping is in force.

Using automatic number plate recognition technology, the camera cars are being used by council officers to collect the necessary evidence to enable £70 fines to be issued to drivers who park illegally on these zig-zag markings.

The all-electric vehicles will replace the first camera car – a petrol version – which covered more than 16,000 miles during the first two years of the scheme.

Councillor Trevor Pendleton, county council cabinet member for highways and transport, said: "The scheme has been a great success and, to date, we've worked with nearly 170 schools to help improve the safety around schools.

"Another aim of the scheme is to encourage pupils, where possible, to walk, cycle or scoot to school. It's a great way to start the day and is proven to improve mental and physical wellbeing, and that's vital in what has been an extremely difficult time for all with the current pandemic."

The council is also supporting schools to encourage parents to park away from school and walk the last part of their journey – another way of reducing traffic and local air pollution.

Red routes prevent dangerous parking

The first double red-lined routes in Leicestershire came into force last year on the A453 Ashby Road, around East Midlands Airport, and the Castle Donington relief road.

The 'red routes' prohibit any stopping, loading or unloading, as well as boarding or alighting from a vehicle. Routes are only assigned as 'red routes' after meeting strict safety criteria

Councillor Trevor Pendleton, cabinet member for highways and transport said: "Parking on these roads is dangerous. These routes are very busy and overtaking stationary cars can cause a number of hazardous situations, alongside causing a huge inconvenience, congestion and delays.

"Parking and drop-off areas are available elsewhere off these routes, including a free hour of parking at the airport, which is a safer alternative to receiving a penalty fine. I urge road users to remain considerate of people who live near these routes."

The routes are being enforced by automatic number plate recognition technology using a camera car from the school 'Keep Clear Zones' scheme with penalty fines of £70 issued to road users found to have stopped or parked along the routes.

The no-stopping rules will operate 24/7 and are applicable to all vehicles on the road and verges.



**RED
ROUTE**

**No stopping
at any time**

For more info, visit choosehowyoumove.co.uk

We're ready for *winter*

Our highways teams are prepared to keep the county moving through the winter.

With winter now well underway, Leicestershire's motorists can be assured that our gritters are ready to roll during the frost, ice and snow.

This year, our grit barns are stocked up with 18,000 tonnes of rock salt, while three new state-of-the-art gritters have joined the fleet.



Highways manager, Tom Vesty, said: "We normally get a weather forecast at lunchtime, but gritting is usually done in the evenings and overnight. It is very rare that we go out gritting during the day, but we do if it is snowing.

"We have 17 regular gritting routes and we grit all A and B roads. We also try to ensure that we grit one route into most villages where possible."

We have 17 front line gritting lorries and six reserves – a total of 23 gritters making up our winter fleet. There are 20 drivers working a rota system to make sure that resource is available overnight to deal with the winter weather. This is supported with over 50 members of staff who are trained to drive gritters, so that

operations can be stepped up if demand is high due to severe weather conditions.

Tom added: "A full gritting run covers 47 per cent of the county's road network. Each of our 17 routes takes around four-and-a-half hours to cover. Our teams are on call to go out straight away at any time.

"We are out gritting a lot more often than most people think. We will also do ad hoc gritting at the request of the police."

In addition, there are 782 grit bins across the county which can be used by members of the public to treat public roads or footpaths in their communities.

Gritting depots are based in Market Harborough, Nailstone, Melton Mowbray, Misterton and Mountsorrel.

In addition to the gritters, there are also a number of snow wardens based in communities across the county who grit paths, as well as farmers who during deep snow, fit ploughs to their tractors and assist the council in clearing roads.

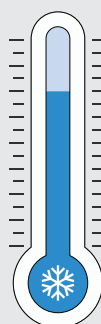
For more information on winter maintenance, and advice about winter driving and snow clearance of the paths outside your property, visit leicestershire.gov.uk/gritting

**YOUR
COUNCIL
DELIVERING
YOUR
SERVICES**



Keep up to date with gritting and winter updates on Twitter
[@LeicsCountyHall](https://twitter.com/LeicsCountyHall)

THE COUNCIL HAS
23 
GRITTERS



WE RECEIVE
SPECIALIST
FORECASTS AND
CONSTANTLY
MONITOR ROAD
TEMPERATURES

1,300
miles of roads
gritted each night

HUNDREDS OF SALT BINS
ACROSS LEICESTERSHIRE
TO HELP RESIDENTS
CLEAR SLOPES AND PATHS

REGENERATION



Council leader, Nick Rushton (r), with Stuart Warburton, Secretary of Snibston Heritage Trust, Louise Morris, Framework Manager at Fortem Solutions), Councillor Terri Eynon and Councillor Richard Blunt, Leader of North West Leicestershire District Council in December

Snibston

COLLIERY PARK

What's at Snibston Colliery Park?



Grange Nature Reserve
Includes

walking routes, a Victorian arboretum and fishing lakes.

Play area

Brand-new outdoor play equipment for children.



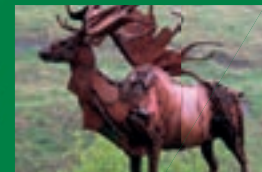
Century Theatre

Britain's oldest surviving travelling theatre.



Mountain bike trail

A challenging 4km blue grade route, with options for less experienced cyclists.



Sculptures

Including pieces by local artist Sally Matthews representing elks which roamed the area before the Ice Age.

Snibston Colliery Park in Coalville has officially reopened, following our ambitious £3m regeneration scheme.

Our new urban park not only celebrates Coalville's rich mining heritage, but also boasts a host of new features including the Colliery Café, Snibston Heritage Trail, a play area and Grange Nature Reserve. Visitors can also learn more about the story of Coalville as they take a stroll around the former colliery buildings.

Working closely with Snibston Heritage Trust and North West Leicestershire District Council, care has been taken at every stage to respect the site's rich ecology and mining history. Important artefacts have been preserved and a new home has been found for the old railway track, which is now being cared for by Great Central Railway.

The redevelopment of the site, which includes a cycleway connecting it to the town centre, makes it a great venue for families, dog walkers and cyclists to explore.

Council Leader, Nick Rushton, said: "This has been an ambitious but carefully considered regeneration project. Not only

does the site honour its mining heritage roots, but it's also a commitment to the future, securing long-term benefits for the local area."

Leader of North West Leicestershire District Council, Councillor Richard Blunt, said: "For the first time in 40 years, the front gates of the former Snibston pit are open and people can use the new cycle tracks, play equipment and café. Adding the new pedestrian and cycleway link to the town centre is also a big plus for residents."

For more information about the park and to keep up to date with coronavirus restrictions visit: leicscountryparks.org.uk/snibston-country-park/



New Year...
New things
to do

GoLearn!
Leicestershire Adult Learning Service

Improve your skills with a GoLearn adult learning course

GoLearn, has hundreds of part-time day, evening and weekend courses running across the county. All learners will receive expert help and support, with tutors on hand to give you all the guidance you need.

Lots of courses are live for enrolment on our website now at leicestershire.gov.uk/golearn or you can call free on 0800 988 0308 to talk to one of our team, or book a free telephone appointment with one of our Learning and Work Advisors (lines open Monday to Friday 8am-7pm).

The courses on offer include modern languages, British Sign

Language, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), digital skills, astronomy, seated yoga, fabric reuse, Aboriginal art, cartooning, drawing and painting, learning for confidence and much more.

If you're receiving certain benefits, or are on a low income, you can get a discount of up to 70% or may be entitled to attend for free.

FREE Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) sessions are available for those looking to find learning and work opportunities.

So why not take a look now, and make 2021 the year you learn something new?



**Gain
NEW
skills**

**Free
courses
include:**

Essential Digital Skills

A course for complete IT beginners get to grips with digital technology.

Employability

If you're looking for work or want to gain basic skills in job searches, CV writing and interview skills.



Refreshing outdoors

While restrictions may limit how far we can go to explore, it's a good time to check out the outdoor opportunities nearby. If you've got a country park on your doorstep, why not warm up with food and drink from our cafes:



Lower car park,
Breakback Road,
Woodhouse, LE12 8SP



Bosworth Battlefield,
Ambion Lane, Sutton
Cheney, CV13 0AD



Snibston Colliery Park,
Ashby Road, Coalville,
LE67 3LN

For information on opening,
visit our Facebook pages.



/beaconhillcafe
/1485TitheBarn
/collierycafe

Help fund the Watermead Memorial Walk

We are working with Leicester City Council on proposals for a space for reflection and remembrance for those whose lives have been affected by the coronavirus.

The planned tree-lined memorial walk, which would link the city side of Watermead Park with the county side, is being

supported by volunteers, park rangers and tree wardens.

Funding is being sought to plant 58 new trees including hornbeam, elm, oak, aspen and birch. The walk would include interpretation boards and plenty of benches to encourage people to use the space to relax and reflect.

The new trees would be planted in February and March 2021, with the interpretation boards expected to be installed in the spring.

People are invited to help create the memorial walk by supporting the project and helping to raise the £61,078 target. More information can be found on the fundraising

page at spacehive.com/watermead-memorial-walk

People are being asked to pledge their donations now, with a minimum amount of £2. Money pledged will only be taken if the campaign reaches its target by 31 January 2021.

The latest information on coronavirus restrictions can be found by visiting www.gov.uk/coronavirus

WE ARE FAMILY



Since April, the fostering team have received more than 420 enquiries from residents answering the call for more foster carers.

There are currently 695 children in care across Leicestershire, which has increased due to the impact of the pandemic. Now, more than ever, we are looking for kind-hearted people to join our fostering family and provide warmth and safety to the county's most vulnerable children.



Deborah Taylor

Councillor Deborah Taylor, cabinet member for children and families, said: "We know that living through this situation has encouraged people to re-evaluate their lives and do something to help others. For many, fostering is something they've been

thinking about for a long time.

"I want to thank people for responding to our adverts, contacting us for more information and asking, 'how can I help?'"

There are many ways to foster and make a difference. Short-term fostering involves caring for a child for a few weeks or months, while a long-term placement would mean that a child would remain permanently with you.

Supported Lodgings providers offer a room and support to a young person over the age of 16, and those without a spare room can foster children under two or volunteer as independent visitors, giving a few hours of their time each month.

Specialist foster carer roles are also available, for those with experience in professional caring backgrounds working with young people with complex needs.

We are also leading the Place to Call Home project, a partnership between East Midlands councils to recruit foster carers across the region for young refugees, who have arrived alone and without family or support.

For more information about the roles, training and support available, visit fosteringleicestershire.com or call 0116 305 05 05 and find out how you could change lives, including your own.

Free school meals support extended



We have committed to supporting those in need of free school meal vouchers over the next few months.

A total of £360,000 ensured that the 12,000 eligible children received vouchers in December. And we've invested up to £1m until April to support those in need into the half-term and Easter breaks.

Council leader, Nick Rushton, said: "Children should not go hungry. And I'm pleased we stepped up to the plate quickly.

"I welcome the announcement from Government that they will support local authorities, such as ourselves, with the new grant

scheme. We've had to make a lot of tough choices recently and this helps to ease the pressure a little bit.

"Unemployment is rising and the pandemic is making life extremely hard for many people. This is a case of doing the right thing and we're committed to supporting the county through these trying times."

Our share of the Government's £170 million Covid Winter Grant Scheme will help support families facing financial difficulties at this crucial time.

Keep warm and well

Help us support our more vulnerable residents to stay warm and well this winter. Visit leicestershire.gov.uk/winter-weather for advice and information and to download our keep warm and well booklet or winter contact card.



We have been working closely with Leicestershire Support for Carers to develop a new passport for carers in response to the difficulties and challenges carers are facing. The identity card is designed to help people who are looking after someone who could not manage without their support. It provides information and advice, as well as giving them important recognition, particularly during the current pandemic.

If you are a carer living in Leicestershire and you don't have a carer's passport, please contact Leicestershire Support for Carers on 01858 468543 for a discussion about your caring role or visit supportforcarers.org to find out more about the support they can offer.

JOBS

Inspired to care

Jon's change of career could be an inspiration to others.



A support worker at a residential care home in Leicestershire hopes his story will encourage more people to consider a role in social care.

Jon, who formerly worked in a theatre, has been working at Apple House care home in Wigston since June.

Jon said: "Since I started in June, I have found it really easy to fit into Apple House, every day I am learning new skills and new things about the residents."

"At Apple House we work to do our best for every one of our residents. My more experienced colleagues are so keen

to help me develop and support me in giving the best possible care."

Jon was recruited by our Inspired to Care team which has a mission to recruit people to a variety of adult social care roles.

He added: "I encourage those thinking about a role in adult social care to speak to Inspired to Care."



Richard Blunt

Councillor Richard Blunt, cabinet member for adult social care, said:

"I am so pleased to hear Jon has settled into Apple House and I am sure his work is invaluable to the residents."

"We are always after caring, passionate people to join us in adult social care. The roles on offer will give Leicestershire residents the opportunity to make a difference in their local communities, support

the most vulnerable to stay safe and well at home, and earn money while carrying out a rewarding role."

There are long-term, temporary, full time and part-time positions available.

For more information and to apply visit: Inspiredtocare.co.uk/jobs or call 0116 305 5186.

We are also recruiting permanent home care assistants to help people return home from hospital or prevent them from being admitted.

Through our 'crisis response' and 'home first' services, we provide short-term support (up to a maximum of six weeks) which helps residents to regain independence, by giving them the opportunity, motivation and confidence to relearn or regain daily living skills that have been lost as a result of illness, accident or disability.

For more information visit jobs.emss.org.uk

Making healthy choices

Advice and support are available to help

**Weight
Management**
Leicestershire



Help to reach a healthy weight

The beginning of the year is a great time to make changes - and our public health team offers a free, friendly and confidential service helping people who want to lose weight.

Keeping residents healthy not only helps people to stay independent and reduce the chances of developing other conditions, but also reduces the impact on the NHS and other public sector services.

Vikki, a retail worker and mum, had struggled with her weight since having children. During lockdown in the spring she gained extra weight, which



Vikki

began to affect her mental health.

Vikki said: "I started to feel restricted

when I did things like bending down to put on my shoes. My mental health wasn't great as a result of how I felt physically - I just wanted to feel better."

Vikki came across the Weight Management Service in a local magazine. She phoned the service and within a few days began her 12-week programme of telephone support sessions with her personal adviser, Uzma.

"Uzma was absolutely amazing - she was my rock throughout the programme, and she felt like a friend by the end of it. It was great to have that regular support," Vikki added.

Councillor Lee Breckon, cabinet member for health, said: "Leading a healthy and active lifestyle is a priority at any time, but it holds particular

importance during the current pandemic. A balanced diet



Lee Breckon

can go a long way towards helping us to stay physically, mentally and emotionally well during these challenging times."

After finishing the programme, Vikki was still losing weight and was encouraged by colleagues who had commented positively on her weight loss.

Vikki said: "It's an amazing service all round. I'm looking forward to our three-month follow-up call - it helps to know that support is still available after the 12-week programme has finished, and at intervals in the future."



Ready to stop smoking?

Looking to find a healthier you in 2021? Our public health team provides a free, friendly and confidential stop smoking service that includes:

- A 12-week programme of weekly telephone calls with a dedicated stop smoking adviser, providing information, advice and support
- A support package with free stop smoking medication, including e-cigs and liquids

To find out more, call 0345 646 66 66 (Monday to Friday: 9am - 7pm, Saturday: 10am - 2pm) or text 'ready' to 66777.

You can also get in touch via web chat, read more about what we offer, and find success stories from Leicestershire residents who've used our service, on our website: quitready.co.uk

For more information about the weight management service visit leicestershirowms.co.uk or call 0116 305 1510

Be on your guard against scams!

Our Trading Standards officers are warning people to be on their guard against a growing number of scams linked to the coronavirus pandemic.

One of the newest scams involves criminals using the vaccine roll-out to steal people's personal and financial details. The text contains a link that leads to a convincing-looking fake NHS website with an application form which asks for bank and credit card details.

A similar scam involves a link to a fake HMRC website which promises a tax refund or a grant.

We're warning people to watch out for these scams and never click on the links or provide financial information.

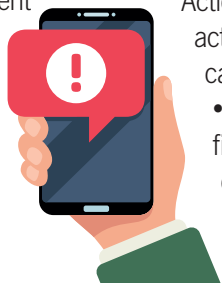
Always remember:

- Genuine organisations will never contact you out of the blue to ask for personal or financial details, such as your PIN or full banking password.
- Never click on a link sent by email or text message, even if it appears to come from a genuine source. Look up an organisation online and contact them through their own website or phone number

- Forward suspicious text messages to 7726 (spells SPAM on your telephone keypad)
- Suspicious texts, phone calls or emails can also be reported to

Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040

- If you have given financial information, contact your bank immediately



Avoiding rogue builders



We have been dealing with complaints from residents about employing builders who claim to be qualified or experienced, but all too quickly it becomes evident that this is not the case.

Complaints vary from smaller home improvements to large scale renovations and extensions – with some contracts worth £250k or more. These rogue builders don't care that they are leaving homes in an uninhabitable state, and taking money for shoddy, dangerous and unfinished work.

Steps to help prevent you becoming a victim:

- Obtain three quotes – don't always go for the cheapest.
- Avoid paying in cash.
- Contact people the builder provides as references and ask if you can look at their work.

To report a rogue builder or for further free advice and guidance on this and other areas of Trading Standards work, please visit leicestershire.gov.uk/business-and-consumers/trading-standards or call free on 0808 223 1133.

We're taking enforcement action against businesses where there is a serious and imminent risk to public health – find out more: leicestershire.gov.uk/business-and-consumers/trading-standards



Make the most of your library during lockdown

Access thousands of FREE e-books and e-audiobooks via our digital library or use the click and collect service to let us know what you like to read and we'll handpick a selection for you to collect.

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/libraries 0116 305 2695

CLICK AND COLLECT

• E-BOOKS

• AUDIOBOOKS



Making Leicestershire cleaner and greener

Target to be a 'net zero' county by 2045

Leicestershire is leading the way – with the county council set to become carbon neutral ahead of national targets.

Having joined the UK100 coalition of the most ambitious local leaders in the UK, we hope to become a carbon neutral council by 2030 and have pledged to achieve 'net zero' across the county by 2045 – five years sooner than the Government target.

The pledge reflects our commitment to tackling climate change, both now and in the years ahead, and stretches current ambitions to drastically cut emissions in order to see a lasting environmental impact.

Council leader, Nick Rushton, said: "I was delighted to sign Leicestershire up to the original UK100 pledge in 2018. Since that time, the council has declared a climate emergency and agreed a £16 million package of measures over the next four

years to take action on reducing carbon, such as generating clean renewable energy on the council's estate and increasing the efficiency of our buildings and streetlighting.



"Our ultimate ambition is to become a carbon neutral council by 2030, and net zero countywide by 2045.

Local government can play a vital role in achieving these targets and being a part of the UK100 family, reinforcing the collective message that reducing and eventually eliminating our carbon impact is everyone's responsibility. Quite simply we cannot do this individually. But together, our future is in our hands."

For more details on our current Environment Strategy, go to leicestershire.gov.uk/environmentstrategy

A tree for every resident

Trees are vital in so many ways - and that's why we have ambitious plans to plant one for every citizen over the next 25 years.

That equates to 700,000 trees across Leicestershire as part of our work to boost trees, woodlands and hedgerows across the county.

This winter, we marked the start of the planting season - and National Tree Week - by planting a maple tree at County Hall.

We also offer free trees to landowners and farmers, to help keep the countryside flourishing. For more information visit leicestershire.gov.uk/apply-for-trees

Deputy council leader, Blake Pain, said: "We're proud to be a green council and we are committed to laying down the roots to protect local wildlife habitats.

"Trees are an essential resource providing a wide range of environmental, economic and social benefits. And we will continue to build upon our ever-growing green infrastructure, to ensure a tree-filled future for Leicestershire."





Recycling rules: what goes where?

Recycling can be confusing, and it can often be difficult to know what goes in which bin, so we're here to help dispel any recycling myths and let you know which items from around the home can be recycled at the kerbside.

When it comes to paper – newspapers, magazines, empty cardboard boxes and envelopes – these can all be disposed of in your recycling bin. Tissues, kitchen roll and wallpaper, however, are a big no-no.

Empty plastic bottles (including detergent, shampoo, shower gel, cleaning products and drinks bottles), pots, tubs, containers and trays are all recyclable, unless they are black! But please make sure they've been thoroughly rinsed and left to drain before recycling.

Hard plastic – which can be anything from large plastic storage tubs to children's toys – and black plastic cannot be recycled at the kerbside and will need to be disposed of in your general waste bin or taken to your nearest Recycling and Household Waste Site.

Glass bottles and jars? We want them! Just make sure to give them a good scrub first.

Did you also know that empty aerosols, drinks cans and clean foil are all accepted as part of your kerbside recycling? Crisp packets, cat or dog food pouches and miscellaneous metals (such as pots and pans or nuts and bolts), however, belong in your general waste bin. (Check with your district council if you are unsure of what goes in which bin).

Don't let your
Recycling
go to **WASTE**

Here's our **TOP TIPS**
to help you make
the most of your
recycling:

- **Make sure all items are clean and dry before recycling**
- **Pop lids back on bottles and jars before putting in your recycling bin**
- **Put your recycling in the bin loose and not inside a plastic bag**

Most common **Wrongly** recycled items

We regularly come across items in Leicestershire's recycling that shouldn't be there. Here's a list of the most common incorrect items residents put in their recycling bins.



Nappies

While nappies are made from both paper products and plastic, they cannot be recycled as part of your kerbside recycling (even if they are unused). Please dispose of them in your general waste bin.



Textiles

Though clothes and soft furnishings can be reused, your recycling bin isn't the place for them. We recommend selling them, donating them or taking them to a charity shop, clothing bank or a Recycling and Household Waste Site.



Food waste

Food containers are usually perfect for recycling, but not if they contain food residue. If trays, pots and tubs can't be cleaned, they should be disposed of with your general waste.

Liquid-filled bottles

Plastic bottles filled with liquid commonly crop up in Leicestershire's recycling bins. While the bottles can certainly be recycled, they must be empty. So, don't let your recycling go to waste.



Dispose of batteries responsibly – find out more at www.recyclenow.com/local-recycling

Covid Health Champion

Volunteer as a Covid 19 Health Champion and help to keep Leicestershire safe.

Coronavirus continues to have an impact in Leicestershire, and we must protect those we love. We also need to make sure our hospital staff can continue to do their vital work.

We're looking for residents to become Covid 19 health champions and be a voice in their community to help keep people informed and aware, and help to make a difference.



Louise Richardson

Councillor Louise Richardson, cabinet member for communities, said: "Communities play a key role in tackling the pandemic and we've given over £2m to

support voluntary groups.

"And by working together, we will overcome covid. We'll keep our health champions up to date with the latest advice and guidance via WhatsApp – or another way if you'd prefer - so that you can help your family, friends and neighbours to make sense of the latest facts about the virus."

If you think this sounds like something you'd like to do, then register your interest at leicestershire.gov.uk/covid-champion



The Covid-19 vaccine roll-out is starting

NHS

Coronavirus vaccinations are being rolled out across Leicestershire to reduce the chance of you suffering from the virus.

Getting a coronavirus jab is a simple step you can take to help protect yourself and reduce the impact on the NHS and social care.

People most at risk from the complications of coronavirus are being offered the vaccine first.

You will be contacted by the NHS when it is your turn to be invited for a vaccination. Due

to the scale of the vaccination programme it will take some time, and people should not be concerned if they are eligible but not invited immediately. You do not need to contact the hospital or your GP practice, and it is important you do not attend any NHS location in the hope of being vaccinated without an appointment.

Find out about the roll-out at nhs.uk/CovidVaccine

It's down to us to control the virus
Play your part to stop the spread



Hands



Face



Space