

Overview and Scrutiny

Annual Report 2021/22



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Foreword

By the Scrutiny Commissioners

We are pleased to present the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report covering the 2021-22 municipal year. The report includes a summary of the role and responsibilities of Overview and Scrutiny and how this operates in Leicestershire, the work it has undertaken over the past year and the various outcomes achieved. It is not intended to be a complete commentary of everything we have done, but a summary of the key highlights.

It has been another year of socially distanced Scrutiny, with the Covid 19 pandemic still affecting all Council services to some degree or another. Despite this, the Scrutiny Commission and the Council's five other Overview and Scrutiny Committees have continued to look at a broad range of services, monitor performance, shape Council policy and its budget and hold our Cabinet colleagues to account. We also continue to provide a voice for the public and our communities.

In Leicestershire, Scrutiny Members have always provided challenge and held robust discussions about a variety of issues. Key recent issues have been the green agenda (having now established a new Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee) and issues such as the war in Ukraine and its impact on Council services and its budget.

We would like to thank all Scrutiny Members for their commitment and contribution to the process. Special thanks going to the Chairs and Spokespersons who continue to drive each Committees work programme to address areas of concern.

We are pleased that the responsible Cabinet Members have attended our Scrutiny meetings to answer our questions. We are also thankful to our partners and stakeholders that have sent representatives to share information and their experiences.

We would also like to thank Council officers for their support and hard work in facilitating the Overview and Scrutiny process.

We hope you enjoy reading the report. You can find out more about our meetings on the Council's [website](#). All Scrutiny meetings are open to the public and if you would like to get involved, Scrutiny members and the Scrutiny teams contact details are included in this report. We encourage you to get in touch and add your voice to our work.

The four Scrutiny Commissioners are responsible for leading the Overview and Scrutiny process, deciding on priority issues for Scrutiny and areas that merit more detailed review.



Michael Mullaney CC
Chairman of the
Scrutiny Commission



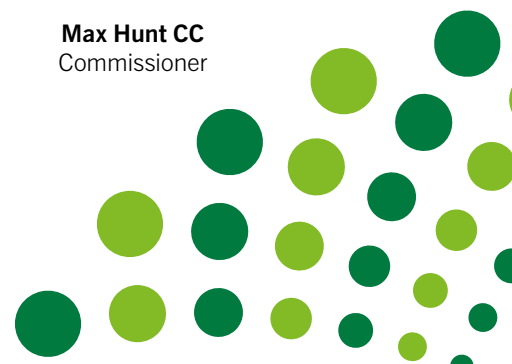
Rosita Page CC
Vice Chairman of the
Scrutiny Commission



James Poland CC
Commissioner



Max Hunt CC
Commissioner



1. What is Overview and Scrutiny?

Overview and Scrutiny (Scrutiny) plays an important part in the democratic decision making process. Scrutiny bodies do not make decisions, but instead monitor and influence those that do (i.e. the Cabinet).

The Cabinet is made up of the Leader and nine other Members elected to the Council from the majority leading political group. It takes important key decisions and implements Council policy and its budget as set by the full Council.

Scrutiny Committees are politically balanced Committees made up of non-Cabinet Members. These hold the Cabinet to account for the decisions it has taken or intends to take, and acts as a critical friend, helping to ensure the Council delivers its services efficiently and effectively. They do this by:

- Reviewing and commenting on the County Council's budget and strategic policies.
- Undertaking pre-decision scrutiny of key matters, making recommendations for improvement wherever possible.
- Monitoring and challenging the performance of services and the outcomes delivered for those living and working in Leicestershire.

As well as scrutinising the work of the County Council and the Cabinet, Scrutiny also has an important statutory role in the scrutiny of health and crime and disorder matters.

1.1 Principles of good scrutiny

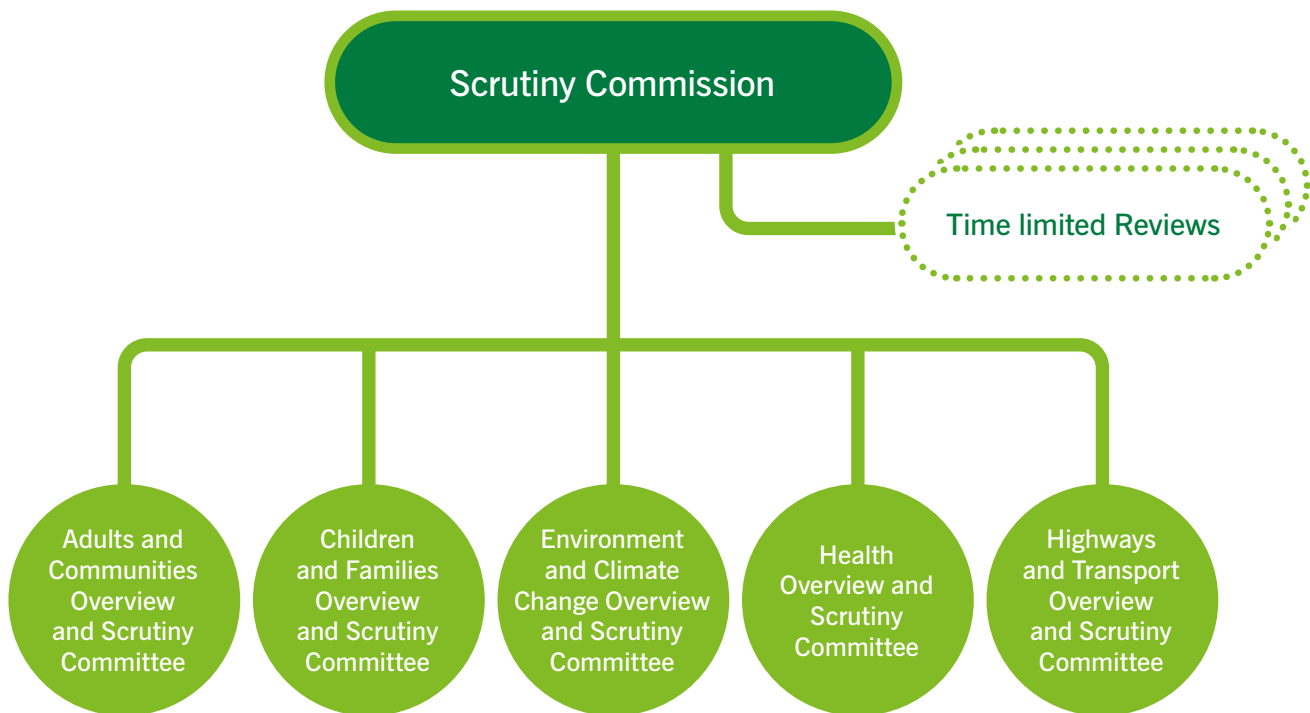
The four key principles of Scrutiny as established by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny are:



All our Scrutiny Members received training from the Centre of Governance and Scrutiny in Autumn 2021 to help ensure these principles continue to be embedded into our approach to Scrutiny.

1.2 Our structure

In Leicestershire all Scrutiny work is carried out by the Scrutiny Commission and five Overview and Scrutiny Committees which each look at a particular area of the Council's responsibilities. These are as shown in the diagram below.



In addition to the Committee-based work they carry out, Scrutiny Committees can also initiate time limited pieces of work to look at a particular issue in detail. These can be informal task and finish groups, providing for short sharp scrutiny of a complex topic. Properly focused they ensure Members can swiftly reach conclusions and make recommendations perhaps over the course of a couple of months or less that can be considered directly by officers and Cabinet Lead Members.

Alternatively, a formal Scrutiny Review Panel can be established. Whilst time limited, these can run for several months. and their recommendations, which may suggest a change in policy or service provision, are submitted to the relevant parent Scrutiny committee prior to consideration by the Cabinet.

Reports of previous Scrutiny Review Panels and Task and Finish Groups can be viewed on the Council's [website](#).



Scrutiny committee in action:

In 2021/22 a task and finish group was established to look at the Council's Ways of Working Programme. The Programme will see a significant shift in how the Council operates and Members were keen to understand the impact of this on staff, residents, service users and elected Members.

The Group provided challenge and highlighted a number of risks to the Programme. Officers provided significant reassurance on many issues. However, the Group made 18 recommendations which have now been passed to the Director of Corporate Resources and the Lead Member for Covid Recovery and Ways of Working for action. A copy of the report can be found [here](#)

1.3 Your role in our work

Our committees work to ensure the Council and its partners are delivering the right policies and services that will benefit Leicestershire residents and service users. They do this by:

- Inviting partners, stakeholder representatives and external experts to contribute evidence to broaden Members' understanding and inform their discussions.
- Having co-opted members on the Children and Family Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, representing parent governors, Catholic Dioceses and Church of England maintained schools.
- Using Scrutiny Members' local knowledge from within their communities to question decision makers (i.e. Cabinet Lead Members) and officers.
- Ensuring transparency by holding meetings in public and webcasting these live via the Council's [YouTube channel](#)

1.4 How to get involved

Overview and Scrutiny Committees provide a voice for the people of Leicestershire and allow the public to have a greater direct say in Council matters, and in areas which the Council is able to influence. Attendance and involvement of the public is actively encouraged, and this can be done by:

- Attending a meeting – Members of the public are welcome to attend any public meeting of a Scrutiny Committee, details of which are listed on the [online meeting calendar](#)
- Asking a question – all Scrutiny Committees allow for public questions at the beginning of each meeting. If you wish to ask a question, please see our [online guidance on how to submit a question](#).
- Submitting a petition – all Scrutiny Committees can receive petitions relating to an area that the council has authority over. It can be submitted by anyone who lives, works, or studies in Leicestershire and can be submitted in writing or as an e-petition. For further details, see our [online guidance on how to submit a petition](#)
- Identifying issues which a Scrutiny Committee might look at (particularly through a specific review).
- Providing evidence to inform Scrutiny (either in writing or in person).
- Contributing to consultations, surveys, workshops and/or focus groups.



Scrutiny committee in action:

A proposal by the Health Service to close a medical centre in Leicester Forest East and require patients to travel to Lubbethorpe understandably caused considerable concern to the local community. A petition containing 1284 signatures was submitted to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In response the Committee asked the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to come before it to explain the proposals and address the concerns raised by the petitioners.

As a result, the CCG has undertaken to look again at the proposal and in particular how patients could access transport if the original proposal were to go ahead. The Committee will be receiving an update on this matter and will want to ensure that any proposal recognise and mitigate the impact on patients accessing GP services particularly for those who do not have access to private transport.

1.5 How to find out more

Find out more about how Overview and Scrutiny works by accessing our Overview and Scrutiny Guide on the Council's website.

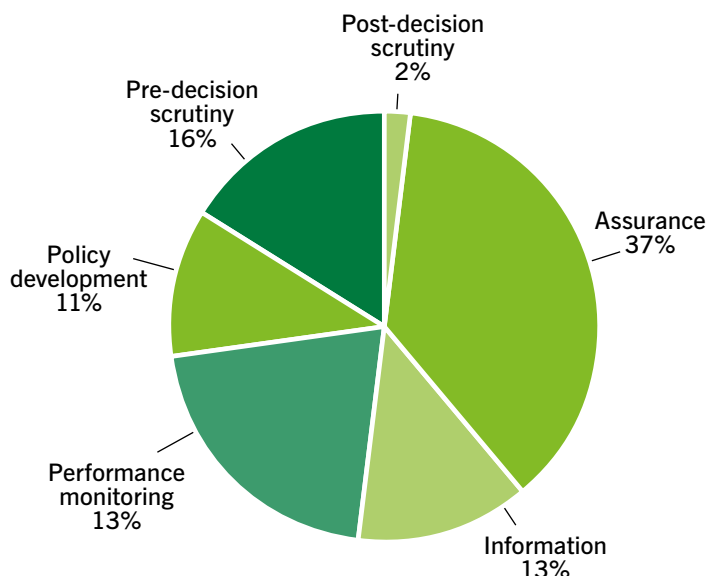
If you wish to get involved, you can contact a member of the Scrutiny Team or a Member of one of the Committees, details of which are included in this report further below.



2. Scrutiny in numbers

There are currently 55 councillors elected to Leicestershire County Council to represent the residents of Leicestershire. Of those 38 are appointed to the Scrutiny Commission and five other Overview and Scrutiny Committees, providing critical friend challenge to the Cabinet.

Figure 1 Types of Scrutiny undertaken in 2021/22



Leicestershire County Council continues to be committed to allowing residents full insight into its decision making. All our Scrutiny Committees are held in public, allowing people to attend in person to view the debate.

Meetings are also publicly broadcast live, and the recordings can be found on the Council's website where they are available to view in perpetuity. See the Council's [YouTube channel](#).

Over a quarter of the reports considered by the Council's Scrutiny Committees were on matters subsequently presented to and determined by the Cabinet, which means those decisions were taken with the benefit of input from Scrutiny.

Significant assurance was also sought throughout the year, and performance was heavily monitored. Scrutiny Committees have also continued to seek more information on key issues affecting residents.

29
Committee
meetings held

2,060
Webcast views

46
Hours of
public debate

21
Comments
submitted to
Cabinet

121
reports
considered

34
questions submitted
by members and
the public

Questions have continued to come in from our residents and from fellow elected members covering a broad range of topics as demonstrated here. We continue to welcome public engagement in our meetings and encourage residents to get involved.



Successful Scrutiny depends on good debate and challenge and asking the right questions of those who take decisions, including Lead Members as well as senior managers and council officers. The responsible Cabinet Members have attended every Scrutiny Committee meeting throughout 2021/22 to answer our questions.

Importantly, we also need to hear from external organisations and groups. In 2021/22 representations were received from a broad range of organisations and individuals. We also had many representatives of these organisations attend our meetings to provide information and answer our questions. Some of those organisations are shown here.



3.

Scrutiny Commission



The Scrutiny Commission reviews the overall strategic direction and corporate policies and priorities of the Cabinet and Council, including the budget and its four-year Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Full details of the Commission's work can be found on the Council's [website](#).

3.1 The Budget and monitoring financial performance

The central role of the Commission is to monitor the financial health of the Council. It has been another demanding year with many challenges having been presented by the pandemic and factors such as rising costs and inflation. As pressure on the Council's finances grows, the Scrutiny Commission has:

- Received a report on the Council's financial position at each of its meetings throughout 2021/22.
- Submitted its views to the Cabinet on the Council's budget proposals for the next four years.
- Questioned progress being made in the Council's campaign for fair funding.
- Raised concerns about the continued rise in SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) costs and the increasing High Needs Block deficit. This is a national problem, and the Commission has asked the Cabinet Lead Member for Resources to continue to pursue with Government and local MPs the need for a SEND funding review. Separately it has asked the Children and Family's Scrutiny Committee to consider how the issue is being managed locally (see below).
- Requested more information on:
 - the likely impact of cost and inflationary pressures on delivery of the Council's capital programme;
 - how risks arising from infrastructure projects will be managed, especially where the Council is required to match fund Government grants;
 - how it is sharing infrastructure risks with district councils and ensuring adequate section 106 developer contributions are being secured to repay any forward funding.
- Received a detailed briefing on Capital Programme delivery challenges and risks which also covered some of the concerns raised by the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee regarding infrastructure funding pressures (see below).

3.2 Corporate Asset Investment Fund (CAIF)

The Commission looked at the performance of the CAIF and was consulted on two specific Fund investment proposals. The Commission:

- Was reassured by the performance of the Fund which had generated an overall return of 6.1% despite economic pressures.

- Challenged the approach to invest into the Fund at a time of considerable financial pressure, especially on the Capital Programme.
- Heard how each investment decision was looked at to ensure long term benefits outweighed any potential short-term gain and that the approach was kept under review as market conditions changed.
- Received assurances on two planned investments in private debt and infrastructure funds that these would align with the Council's environmental and social policies.

3.3 Commercial Services

The Commission considered the performance of Leicestershire Traded Services (LTS) which had been hard hit by the pandemic and national and local lockdowns imposed during 2020 and 2021. The Commission:

- Noted that a number of staff had been furloughed during 2020/21 and that the Service has been reshaped to reduce costs and make it more resilient to changing circumstances in the future.
- Was pleased to see that the LTS School Meal Service had vastly improved since the Scrutiny Review Panel held in 2014 and despite the pandemic, had generated an income for the Council and been one of only two providers awarded gold standard by the Soil Association.
- Requested that improvements be made to provide more financial and management information in future reports, such as capital costs and forecasted returns, as well as a breakdown of income across geographical areas.

3.4 Strategic Growth

The Commission heard from the Head of the Growth Service and the Joint Strategic Planning Manager for Leicester and Leicestershire about the key strategic planning and growth related matters affecting the Council. The Commission:

- Raised several concerns about increased housing numbers to be delivered by Leicester City Council and the real impact this would have on districts that would have to meet an increased unmet need.
- Sought more information on how the Council's Growth Service was managing these risks and ensuring infrastructure demands arising from growth were in line with the Council's own financial capabilities.
- Was reassured to see the proactive approach being taken by the Council's Growth Service and in partnership with Leicester City Council and the district councils.
- Challenged how growth plans align with the Council's environment and zero carbon targets; something that it will continue to do in support of the work of the new Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.5 Economic Growth and the LLEP

The Director of the LLEP, and Chair of the LLEP Board were invited to a Commission meeting to outline the progress it was making in delivering its priorities for 2022. The Commission:

- Was pleased to hear about the support it provided to local businesses, and it's work with young people and education bodies to match provision with local job market requirements.
- Challenged and was satisfied with the LLEP's processes for funding projects and its arrangements for monitoring and measuring outputs for the benefit of the local economy.
- Provided comments on the LLEP's Economic Growth Strategy. The Commission raised a number of concerns which were subsequently accepted by the Cabinet.

3.6 Policy development

The Commission helped shape the following Council plans and strategies by submitting its views and recommendations to the Cabinet on the following:

- The Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026
- The Leicestershire Communities Approach 2022 - 2026
- The Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2022 - 2025

3.7 Next Year

The Commission will continue to monitor the Council's financial performance with particular focus on SEND and the High Needs Block deficit, adult social care, and the Capital Programme. Specifically, as the most significant part of the Capital Programme relates to Highways, the Commission will continue to monitor and challenge officers and the relevant Lead Members on this area alongside the new Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Commission has asked to hear again from Leicester City Council on its local plan proposals and has requested a further report setting out the outcome of work commissioned by the partnership Members Advisory Group so it can better understand the growth demands that lie ahead. This will be received later in 2022.

The Commission will continue to monitor LTS' performance and challenge CAIF investments.

3.8 Membership and contact details

- [Tom Barkley CC](#)
- [Hilary Fryer CC](#)
- [Simon Galton CC](#)
- [Tony Gillard CC](#)
- [Max Hunt CC](#)
- [Jonathan Morgan CC](#)
- [Michael Mullaney CC \(Chairman\)](#)
- [Rosita Page CC \(Vice Chairman\)](#)
- [Trevor Pendleton CC](#)
- [James Poland CC](#)
- [Terry Richardson CC](#)

4.

Adults and Communities



This Committee exercises the Scrutiny function in relation to services provided by the Adults and Communities Department. It also monitors the activities of the Health and Wellbeing Board aimed at improving the integration of health and social care services.

Full details of the Committee's work can be found on the Council's [website](#).

4.1 Budget and Demand Pressures

The Adults and Communities Department has faced another challenging year mostly because of the Covid-19 pandemic and rising costs, inflation, and demand for services. There has inevitably been a concerning impact on the Department's budget requiring the Department to put forward its single, largest growth request ever. The Committee has therefore:

- Considered a report specifically regarding the demand pressures on the Department's forecasted budget for 2021/22.
- Raised questions about the increased number of non-self-funded residents being admitted to care homes and the impact this might have on the Council's budget going forward.
- Expressed concerns that the Council's low funded position meant Leicestershire spent considerably less on adult social care than other comparator authorities.
- Considered the risks and challenges faced by care providers arising from inflation and sought reassurance on how the Department was working with the adult social care market to agree that fee levels set are reasonable.
- Noted a report on the Government's Health and Social Care Levy introduced in April 2022.

4.2 Care Home Quality

Given the severe impact of the pandemic on care homes the Committee requested information on sustainability and care home quality in Leicestershire and looked at the impact of mandatory Covid-19 vaccination for people working in care homes. The Committee:

- Requested future periodic updates on Care Quality Commission (CQC) ratings of adult social care providers in Leicestershire and any impact on care market sustainability.
- Received an update on how the CQC's new Strategy was expected to affect the Department's processes and practices across a range of areas, including commissioning.
- Raised concerns about the additional stress that regulations requiring everyone working in a care home to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 would put on such homes, noting, however, the support the Department had given to providers and that vaccine uptake had been good.

- Supported a recommendation to undertake a review of care home fees for implementation in April 2023, when Covid-19 related costs would be better known.

4.3 Digital Developments

The Committee has considered several reports relating to the work of the Department to develop its digital strategy. The Committee:

- Welcomed the positive work the Department had been undertaking to develop its digital approach to enhance the services it was able to offer.
- Was pleased to hear that the Department's digital offer was not intended to replace existing services but would instead be complementary.
- Highlighted the need to sustain focus on who the end user of the technology would be and the need to ensure the technology worked for the whole community, including Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities.
- Was pleased to hear that the views of those involved (such as service users and care providers) would be regarded as critical to the success of the Strategy and that engagement through existing customer and focus groups would therefore be carried out at the appropriate stages.

4.4 Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Shared Care Record

The Committee invited the LLR Care Record Programme Manager from the NHS to give a specific update on the development of a local Shared Care Record so that the Committee could better understand the scope of the project and the difficulties faced in its implementation. The Committee:

- Raised concern about the potential for information on a person's medical record to be out of date, noting that this was the responsibility of clinical and care staff.
- Requested further information to confirm the data categories that were legally restricted and would therefore not routinely be shared via the LLR Shared Care Record.
- Noted that whilst it would not be possible for a person to withdraw particular parts of their Record, objections to share certain information could be raised with the relevant local organisation and an option to 'opt out' of being registered entirely was being developed.

4.5 Care Technology Transformation

The Committee welcomed representatives from Hampshire County Council (HCC) and its strategic partner, PA Consulting Group, who are working with the Council to develop its own Care Technology Transformation project. The Committee:

- Noted that in the event a person expressed dissatisfaction with the service, there would be follow-up action with users to identify and resolve issues wherever possible.
- Noted that the process of 'lessons learnt' was continual and the service would work flexibly to adapt to individual need.
- Raised concerns that some might be resistant to having digital care technology installed in their homes but gained assurance that the approach would be person focussed and not equipment lead.
- Noted that whilst the initial focus of re-modelling the Council's service would be on providing services for elderly and frail people, but there would be potential to extend the focus to other cohorts in the future, such as those with early-stage dementia.

4.6 Performance

The Committee has continued to monitor the performance of services across the Adults and Communities Department as well as look at complaints received. The Committee:

- Was pleased to see that many performance indicators continued to be met despite the difficulties faced by the Department over the last two years due to the pandemic.
- Considered the increase in admissions to residential and nursing care.
- Requested further analysis be undertaken into e-book loan figures for adults and juniors and whether there was any indication that an increase in e-book loan activity had an impact on children's reading levels.
- Raised questions about the percentage of people with learning disabilities in employment, noting the impact of Covid 19 on the uptake of services such as day services and asked for a further report on this issue.

4.7 Policy Development and Service Changes

The Committee has helped shaped the following Council strategies and policies and departmental service changes by submitting its views and recommendations to the Cabinet on the following:

- The Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 (comments initially submitted to the Scrutiny Commission)
- Charging for Social Care and Support Policy
- Procurement of Community Life Choices Services
- Provision of Short Breaks and Supported Living Services

4.8 Next Year

We will continue to monitor the impact of demand and cost pressures on the Departments budget, as well as the implementation of the new Home Care for Leicestershire service.

Further consideration will be given to the Government's plans to reform Adult Social Care and the Committee will submit its views and recommendations to the consultation on the refreshed LLR Carers' Strategy for 2022-26.

We will also receive a report as requested on support provided to local people with learning disabilities to help them find employment.

4.9 Membership and contact details

- [Linda Broadley CC](#)
- [Barry Champion CC](#)
- [Nick Chapman CC \(Vice Chairman\)](#)
- [Ross Hills CC](#)
- [Jewel Miah CC](#)
- [Terry Richardson CC \(Chairman\)](#)
- [Amanda Wright CC](#)

5.

Children and Families



This Committee scrutinises the services provided by the Children and Family Services Department to children, young people and families as well as education, special needs and safeguarding matters.

Full details of the Committee's work can be found on the Council's [website](#).

5.1 SEND and High Needs Block Development

The Committee has continued to consider how the Service is helping children and young people with SEND and their families, against a backdrop of rising costs and demand for such services which continues to be one of the biggest financial challenges facing the Council. The Committee has therefore:

- Monitored financial performance within SEND services with a particular focus on the High Needs Block Development programme aimed at reforming services to address the financial pressures faced. Over the last three years, £20m has been invested in SEND provision but more was still required given the continued rise in demand.
- Was pleased with positive progress being made against the Written Statement of Action through the LLR SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy, Neurodevelopmental Pathway and the Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan statutory assessment process.
- Commended the success in the restructuring of the Special Educational Needs Assessment and Commissioning Service (SENA) which had already begun to have a positive impact on service users.
- Raised concerns around the need to ensure that children with SEND whose parents have chosen to home educate are properly supported and monitored.
- Requested further reports on progress in the implementation of the Neurodevelopmental Pathway and data relating to potential delays to services arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Considered and commented on the findings of the local area SEND Peer Challenge.
- Was pleased to hear that additional support had been secured to enable the Service to better audit and provide greater assurance on the quality of Education, Health and Care Plan provision, recruit more and introduce a new case system. The Committee will continue to monitor the position, but it was expected that such developments would address weaknesses in the current system.

5.2 Children's Innovation Partnership

- The Committee received an update on the work of the Children's Innovation Partnership with Barnados, focused on the residential design brief. The Committee:
- Welcomed the positive financial benefits arising from reduced placement costs and social worker time and travel to out of county placements.

- Received reassurance that the care and assessment needs of children placed for a long period in a residential home were being met, even when permanency plans were delayed.
- Reassurance was received that all children in care had a care plan in place and a trajectory plan to help them get to their permanent home.

5.3 Young Carers

The Committee requested a report on work taking place to identify, assess and support young carers across Leicestershire, given the likely impact and potential isolation of such young people during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Committee:

- Raised concerns about the effect caring for a family member can have on a young person's health, in particular their mental health.
- Was pleased to hear that schools took a proactive approach in making referrals to the service when they identified a young person as a carer though this had been difficult during the pandemic.
- Was reassured that the Service was doing all it could to support young carers and to encourage them to come forward, though it was recognised that many remained unidentified and some feared or did not wish to be identified.
- Was pleased to hear that the service openly recognised and was working to address concerns of young carers who were often anxious and sometimes scared of coming forward for fear that they will be taken into care.
- Noted plans to incentivise unidentified young carers to come forward and engage with the Service and to better promote the benefits of accessing support available.

5.4 Inclusion in Leicestershire Schools

The Committee sought further information on the functions of the Inclusion Service and the new strategic duty to promote the education of all children known to a social worker. The Committee:

- Was pleased to hear that the Inclusion Service worked with families in the early stages following the parents request to elect to home educate their child, to ensure the best decision was being made for the child and to be certain that the parents were clear in terms of their role and responsibilities for the child's education.
- Noted that checks would be conducted to ensure correct processes were in place and any safeguarding concerns or other issues raised by other agencies or within the community investigated.
- Raised concern around the number of children on roll in Leicestershire Schools who did not attend their catchment school, noting this was not uncommon due to parental choice.
- Sought reassurance that where possible the Council would work to ensure children of primary age could access their closest school or would be supported to access the next closest school.

5.5 Performance

The Committee has continued to monitor the performance of all services provided by the Children and Family Services Department throughout the year. In response, the Committee:

- Raised concerns over the percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time whilst noting that the rate was decreasing.
- Queried the impact of Covid-19 on the number of young people not in education, employment, or training.

- Questioned what actions were being taken to improve the percentage of children in care who had not had a dental check, this having fallen during the pandemic.
- Considered reports on the performance of the Council's Fostering and Adoption Services.
- Commented on the findings of the Independent Reviewing Officer on the extent to which the Council had fulfilled its responsibilities to children in its care during the year.
- Looked at the performance of Virtual School and heard from the Virtual School Head regarding its work and performance.
- Received a report on the service quality and outcomes achieved by the work of the LLR Safeguarding Children Partnership Board, including performance against the priorities set out in the Partnerships Business Plan.

5.6 Next Year

The Committee will continue to monitor performance within SEND provision against the Written Statement of Action, particularly in High Needs Block Development, as a key priority.

- Given the rise in home schooling since the Covid-19 pandemic, the Committee will further review figures for, and support to children whose parents chose to home educate.
- The Committee has requested an update on work being done to tackle sexual and criminal exploitation amongst children and will continue to monitor the position regarding Child Protection Plans.

5.7 Membership and contact details

- [Mark Frisby CC](#)
- [Hilary Fryer CC \(Chairman\)](#)
- [Leon Hadji-Nikolaou CC](#)
- [Ross Hills CC](#)
- [Betty Newton CC](#)
- [Craig Smith CC \(Vice Chairman\)](#)
- [Geoff Welsh CC](#)

Education Representatives -

- Canon Carolyn Lewis (Church of England Representative)
- Neil Lockyer (Roman Catholic Church Representative)
- Robert Martin (Parent Governor)

6.

Environment and climate change



This Committee was established in July 2021, with responsibility to scrutinise Waste Management Services and the Councils green agenda, including its pledge to become carbon neutral by 2030 and 'net zero' countywide by 2045.

Full details of the Committee's work can be found on the Council's [website](#).

6.1 Performance

A key function of this new Committee is to monitor the Council's performance in the delivery of its environmental targets. The Committee has welcomed the number of initiatives in place or planned. The Committee has recognised that the targets set are challenging and has:

- Received a report at each of its meetings on environment and waste performance.
- Looked at the Council's Greenhouse Gas emissions during 2020-2021.
- Queried Leicestershire's low performance in energy efficient ratings for existing homes and encouraged the promotion of the Government's Green Homes Grant for eligible residents on the council's website.
- Raised concerns about the low number of rivers deemed to be in good chemical status, a matter within the responsibility of the Environment Agency.
- Welcomed the reduction in electricity consumed across Council buildings which was ahead of target but raised concerns about the increase in gas and biomass consumption which was behind target.
- Monitored the plateau and slightly reduced levels in household waste reuse, recycling, and composting, commenting on the Council's new Resources and Waste Strategy which would hopefully work to address this.
- Emphasised the need to reinforce the collective message that reducing waste and eliminating our carbon impact is everyone's responsibility.

6.2 Environment Strategy and Carbon Commitments

As a new Committee we took an early look at the Council's current position in delivering its own Environment Strategy. The Committee:

- Welcomed the work done to date to reduce the Council's emissions meaning it was currently on track to reach net zero by 2030, noting, however, that the next step to deal with the Council's unmeasured emissions will be more difficult.
- Noted that the County Council's emissions were only a fraction of Leicestershire's emissions and progress would depend on wider Government policy changes and the Council's work with partners in the area.

- Supported the Councils work with UK100 to lobby Government for top-down change.
- Requested that officers overlay the Air Quality and Biodiversity maps to allow the Committee to consider any correlation between the two.
- Welcomed the Council's approach to look at alternative fuels such as electric and hydrogen for its fleet.

6.3 Net Zero Carbon 2045: A Roadmap for Leicestershire

The Committee has taken an early look at the key findings from the Net Zero Carbon 2045 Roadmap for Leicestershire -research into greenhouse gas emissions from the whole County. The Committee:

- Recognised that achievement of net zero across the County by 2045 could not be done by the Council alone and so welcomed the focus on partnership working.
- Welcomed the potential development of a Citizens Assembly, to engender awareness and action with public and local organisations.
- Agreed the need for the Council, in its place leadership role, to evidence and communicate clearly to organisations and the public that it is in their best interests financially and environmentally to address climate issues and to support smaller organisations that may not have the skills to do this wherever possible.

6.4 Resources and Waste Strategy Consultation

The Committee received a briefing on the current Strategy and provided comments to the Cabinet on the revised Strategy for 2022 - 2050. The Committee:

- Raised concerns that the Council did not put enough emphasis on reduction within its Waste Strategy compared to re-use and recycle.
- Heard about and commended the positive local initiatives taking place, such as Plastic Free Oadby, which looked to reduce the use of plastic containers and bags in their local area.
- Expressed disappointment at the decision to cut the budget for recycling education.
- Challenged the Leicestershire Waste Partnership to work collaboratively through education and enforcement to address littering and fly-tipping, noting that only two out of seven districts had a litter strategy in place.
- Was of the view that different waste collection services across the seven districts acted as a barrier for clear consistent advice to residents and contributed to performance being below the Government target of 65% for municipal waste recycled by 2035. It is hoped that Government plans for weekly food waste collections and set standards for rubbish and recycling collections will support more consistent messaging that will help improve performance in this area.
- Heard about how difficulties caused by the contamination of recycled waste and emphasised the need to educate the public on what could be recycled through improved communications.

6.5 Country Parks, Open Spaces and Tree Management

The Committee has considered actions taken to deliver the Council's Country Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, both of which were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. It has also looked at delivery of the Council's Tree Management Strategy, with the challenging target to plant 700,000 trees by 2030. The Committee:

- Welcomed grass land management schemes which would introduce wildflower coverage and help address the County's poor biodiversity levels resulting from historic farmland use.

- Noted that the Woodland Management Plans which managed biodiversity and amenity within specific sites were only ‘mostly’ in place, as some sites were small and so not captured by the Plans or were outside the Council’s control.
- Heard about partnership work with district councils and others through the regional Midlands Park Forum.
- Welcomed the review of the current tree planting policy which would look at allowing tree planting on highway verges, an issue Members had lobbied for previously.
- Welcomed the [interactive tree planting map](#) which would allow communities monitor progress and get involved where possible.

6.6 Next Year

The issue of quality of water in our rivers and waterways is of great concern and we will look to invite water companies and the Environment Agency to better understand the issues and look for ways to improve water quality.

We will continue to comment on the Net Zero Strategy development, monitor tree planting progress and progress on the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy.

6.7 Membership and contact details

- [Bill Boulter CC](#)
- [Nick Chapman CC](#)
- [Mark Frisby CC \(Vice-Chair\)](#)
- [Amanda Hack CC](#)
- [Bertie Harrison-Rushton CC](#)
- [Rosita Page CC](#)
- [Trevor Pendleton CC \(Chairman\)](#)

7.

Health



This Committee reviews and scrutinises matters relating to the planning, provision, and operation of health services in the County of Leicestershire. This includes primary, secondary, tertiary care, and public health, and may involve reviewing the work of commissioners (such as the local clinical commissioning groups), providers of health services (such as hospitals) and other organisations in the health sector.

Full details of the Committee's work can be found on the Council's [website](#).

7.1 Public Health response to the Covid-19 pandemic

At each meeting over the past year the Committee has held the Director of Public Health to account for the actions taken by the Department in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, obtaining information and reassurance on the following:

- Covid-19 infection rates in Leicestershire and the location of outbreaks.
- Latest guidance for schools and care homes and outbreak management plans.
- The vaccination programme, booster programme, the availability of clinics, and raising concerns about the slow progress of the vaccination programme for 12-15 year olds.
- Communications and social media urging people to come forward to be vaccinated and in particular reaching those who did not have access to the internet or for whom English was not their first language.

7.2 Restoration and recovery of elective/planned care in Leicestershire

The Covid-19 pandemic led to medical procedures being postponed, resulting in large backlogs and waiting lists. We looked at plans the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL) and the local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have to reduce this and:

- Noted that there had been long waiting lists prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and was therefore pleased that the plan was not to return the waiting lists to the pre-pandemic position but actually improve on that.
- Welcomed the approach to service restoration including the new pathways and the opening of two new Vanguard theatres.
- Raised concerns that the condition of patients could worsen whilst they were on a waiting list and could ultimately require more invasive treatment once they finally got an appointment. Reassurance was given that patients on waiting lists were clinically reviewed and provided with physical and emotional support whilst they were waiting.
- Raised concerns regarding the waiting lists for cancer treatment but welcomed the improvement in performance over the year, particularly for breast cancer patients which meant that by the end of March 2022 the average waiting time was expected to have reduced from 4 weeks to 2 weeks.

7.3 Integrated Care Systems

The Health and Care Bill which has been passing through Parliament proposes to create Integrated Care Systems (ICS) which are partnerships between the organisations that meet health and care needs across an area. Over the last year the Committee has sought information from the local CCGs on how it is proposed that the ICS for LLR will be structured, and it has sought reassurances that there will be strong local authority representation on the ICS. The Committee:

- Was pleased that the ICS would build on existing partnership work in the area, bringing together health, social care, and public health colleagues.
- Raised concerns regarding the configuration of neighbourhoods which were a key component of the ICS, particularly as they crossed the boundaries of district councils and questioned whether this could hinder partnership working.

7.4 Child and Adult Health

The Committee was consulted on proposals for the re-commissioning of the 0 – 19 Healthy Child Programme and the provision of services for children, young people, and adults with eating disorders. The Committee:

- Sought reassurance that conversations were being held with headteachers of schools and academies regarding mental health and wellbeing support available to children and young people.
- Requested a further report on the wider work of the Public Health Department to support children at an early age.
- Raised concerns regarding childhood obesity and questioned what was being done to ensure parents had the necessary skills to raise healthy children.
- Considered the need to prioritise tackling alcohol misuse, as well as substance misuse, in young people.
- Considered the rise in referrals for eating disorders during the Covid-19 pandemic in both children and adults; thought to be the result of a general rise in anxiety and increased use of social media during this period.
- Was pleased to hear about a pilot the First Episode Rapid Early Intervention for Eating Disorders (FREED) pathway aimed to prevent first episode cases being on a waiting list.

7.5 Mental Health and Suicide

The Committee has taken an interest in mental health issues, both generally, and specifically in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. With regards to the work on mental health and suicide the Committee:

- Sought and received assurance that high-risk groups were being supported and popular suicide locations were being monitored.
- Welcomed the survey by Healthwatch Leicester and Leicestershire in relation to the patient experience of accessing mental health services during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Reviewed the options available to a patient at a time of mental health crisis.
- Was pleased to hear that the new Central Access Point was working well but challenged the level of public awareness of the service despite the LPT having carried out a communications campaign to improve this.

- Heard about support for the Armed Forces, in particular support offered to veterans and how GP Practices and Central Access Point across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ensured patients/callers were asked if they were armed forces veterans so they could be appropriately signposted – a step beyond the current legal requirements.

7.6 Access to Primary Care Services

Patients struggling to access primary care services at GP Practices across Leicestershire was and remains a key concern and the Committee:

- Was pleased to hear that the number of face-to-face appointments available was increasing and that the CCGs were working closely with those practices that were struggling to provide a normal service after the pandemic.
- Welcomed plans to phase out the requirement for patients to call at 8.00am to make an appointment.
- Received reassurances that the quality of care provided by GP Practices was being monitored by the CCGs.

7.7 LLR Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

Members of the County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee also sit on the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee which scrutinises major health issues which relate to the whole of the LLR area. This Committee is managed by Leicester City Council. Topics the Committee has covered during 2021/22 have included:

- UHL Acute and Maternity Reconfiguration;
- Covid-19 vaccination programme;
- Step up to Great Mental Health consultation;
- Integrated Care Systems;
- Misstatement of UHL's accounts.

7.8 Next Year

The Committee will continue to monitor the recovery of health services after the Covid-19 pandemic. It will specifically look at the backlogs in cancer screening programmes and actions being taken to catch those persons missed during the pandemic.

As part of the LLR Joint Health Scrutiny Committee Members will continue to monitor progress with the UHL Acute and Maternity Reconfiguration, the work being carried out to improve the governance of UHL's finances and accuracy of their accounts, and the implementation of the ICS for Leicestershire.

7.9 Membership and contact details

- **Stuart Bray CC**
- **Fula (Kamal) Ghattoraya CC**
- **Daniel Grimley CC**
- **Amanda Hack CC**
- **Phil King CC (Vice Chairman)**
- **Jonathan Morgan CC (Chairman)**
- **Craig Smith CC**

8.

Highways and transport



This Committee scrutinises the Council's highways and transportation services.

Full details of the Committee's work can be found on the Council's [website](#).

8.1 The Budget and the Highways and Transportation Capital and Works Programme for 2022/23

The Department faces increased financial pressure with increasing demand and rising costs. The Committee therefore took a detailed look at the Department's proposed Highway and Transport budget for the next four years and specifically its capital programme which accounts for over 60% of the Council's overall capital budget. The Committee:

- Raised concerns and sought more information regarding the significant growth in spend on SEND transport which amounts to one third of the Council's transportation budget.
- Raised questions and concerns about the future viability of the public transport market given the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on passenger numbers which had fallen significantly during 2020/21.
- Raised concerns about the risk of bus operators deregistering all or part of the service currently provided and the potential impact this might have on the Council's budget.
- Raised concerns that the level of Government funding and the additional funding provided by the Council would not be sufficient to meet all the highways and transport infrastructure measures needed for a growing population and to fulfil the Council's wider growth agenda.
- Remained concerned about the low level of capital and revenue funding for future infrastructure projects across the County.

8.2 Major Road Network Corridors

The Committee has continued to monitor progress on delivery of the A511 growth corridor and looked at the study work carried out to identify the Council's next priority major road network (MRN) corridor. The Committee:

- Welcomed the submission of a planning application for the extension of the Bardon Link Road (A511 growth corridor) but raised concerns about the escalating costs of materials on the project.
- Reviewed the methodology used to prioritise works across all the MRNs.
- Considered diverse opinions regarding the route of the next priority growth corridor, receiving written representations from some local Members on the issue.

8.3 The Government's National Bus Strategy and requirements for a Bus Service Improvement Plan

The Committee looked at how the National Bus Strategy would be implemented in Leicestershire and the financial implications of a Bus Service Improvement Plan as required by that Strategy. The Committee:

- Heard how some government funding would be used to encourage behavioural changes regarding public transport.
- Discussed ways of engaging with young people to use public transport and prevent them becoming habitual car users, considering the use of mobile phone technology.
- Noting the Council's dependency on government funding to deliver the requirement of a Leicestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan, questioned what other sources of funding could be used should this not materialise or be insufficient.
- Noted that Section 106 developer contributions would be used to expand and promote Demand Responsive Transport services.

8.4 Road Casualty Reduction

The Committee considered the road casualty statistics for Leicestershire and initiatives that were being implemented to improve road safety. The Committee:

- Noted the Covid-19 pandemic had reduced the number of cars on roads and the severity of accidents.
- Raised concerns that many drivers were still failing to wear seatbelts which increased the severity of injuries in accidents.
- Raised concerns regarding the increase in casualties of vulnerable road users, in particular cyclists, noting the likely impact of increased cycling during the pandemic and speeding traffic on clearer urban roads during 2020/21.

8.5 Performance

The Committee has regularly monitored the performance of Highway and Transport Services and from this has:

- Made suggestions for improving how performance data is presented to make this easier to understand, including the provision of sample sizes when referring to key performance indicators to enable the Committee to form a more accurate picture.
- Helped publicise the National Transport Survey which is where much of the public satisfaction data and benchmarking against other councils comes from.
- Considered the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on public satisfaction with rights of way and cycle routes.
- Welcomed the securing of £1.3m Rural Mobility Funding from the Government to support a modern Demand Responsive Transport service.
- Received an update on progress made to deliver the recommendations of the Flooding Scrutiny Review Panel held in 2020/21. As flooding continues to be an issue affecting many residents, the Committee has requested that annual updates be provided on this topic.

8.6 Next Year

The Committee has requested a further report to better understand the growth pressures faced by the SEN Transport budget and how these will be managed.

The Committee will consider the business case for the North and Eastern sections of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road scheme before it is considered by Cabinet and will also look at the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.

The Committee will continue to monitor public satisfaction with the road network of Leicestershire and the key performance indicators for Highways and Transport Services.

8.7 Membership and contact details

- [Richard Allen CC](#)
- [David Bill MBE, CC](#)
- [Tony Gillard CC \(Chairman\)](#)
- [Max Hunt CC](#)
- [Bryan Lovegrove CC](#)
- [Keith Merrie MBE CC \(Vice Chairman\)](#)
- [Les Phillimore CC](#)

9. Contact the Overview and Scrutiny Team

If you would like to feed into the scrutiny process or suggest a topic for scrutiny's attention, you can get in touch with the Scrutiny Team at democracy@leics.gov.uk.

Alternatively, you can contact the officer that supports a specific Committee as detailed below.

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Democratic Services

Chief Executive's Department

Leicestershire County Council

For further details on the contents of this report please

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