

# Annual Parish Council Liaison Event

## Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2024

# WELCOME

**Cllr Pam Posnett, CC**  
**Cllr Antony Hiron, LRALC**

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS 2024

# ABOUT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS AND LOCAL COUNCILS

- NALC is sector body for local (parish and town) councils and councillors – run by councillors, for councillors/councils. Partners with network of 43 county associations
- 10,000c councils, covering 35m people including 16m electors
- 100000c councillors, spending 14m hours supporting councils - EMPLOYERS
- 3500c parish and town clerks – EMPLOYEES – represented by Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)
- Raising £708m through precepts, plus significant other income. Investing around £2bn in communities
- 5000 under £25k; 80 over £1m
- Doing more – health and well-being, climate emergency, youth services and more
- Local councils are a force for good – voice for local communities, influencing other organisations, providing services and shaping local places.

## IMPROVING THE SECTOR - SERVICES

- Advice, guidance and resources – exclusive in member’s area of NALC website and via county association
- Legal and financial topic notes, briefings and financial briefings including standing orders, financial regulations and practitioner’s advice
- Toolkits/guides including on data protection, employment, planning, social media and finance (160k+ distributed/accessed)
- Working with Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and others on sector improvement and good governance – 5000 clerks gained Certificate in Local Council Administration, 700+ councils achieved Local Council Award Scheme. Training and development for councillors via county associations including e-learning.

## SERVICES (cont.)

- Access to legal, financial and a new HR advice service
- Wide range of networks to connect councils/councillors and share good practice – coastal communities, climate emergency, women councillors, young councillors
- Monthly online events including with national service supplier partners – attended by 1,000s of councillors each year
- NALC's model standing orders, model financial regulations and Good Councillor Guides being updated and available exclusively to member councils
- NALC/Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge exclusive to larger councils in membership of NALC
- Web resources on climate change, young people, planning, health and wellbeing and elections. New website coming soon.

# ADVOCACY

- Engagement with Government and political parties on NALC manifesto and issues online meetings, standards, councillor allowances, business rates and more
- Good link/work with the Local Government Association and others
- Policy development through Policy Committee
- NALC lobbying has achieved...
  - no council tax referendum principles (capping)
  - access to £150 million Community Ownership Fund
  - exempted from requirement for external data protection officer, saving £3m.

## ADVOCACY (cont.)

- no business rates on public toilets, saving £4m
- procurement of external audit for councils, saving £4m
- slowed withdrawal of council tax support funding
- range of pandemic funding and flexibilities for councils (remote meetings and audit timescales)
- new provisions in Levelling Up Bill inc power to provide financial assistance to church buildings
- Priorities – introduction of sanctions, allow remote meetings & direct access to government funds
- increased awareness of the first tier of local government.

## PARISHES AND PARTNERSHIPS -SOME TESTIMONIALS

“The potential of parish and town councils to contribute to vibrant and successful local and community governance has grown noticeably in the last decade.” (LGA report 2021)

“Joint-working, cooperation and collaboration between councils and between councils and other organisations provides for efficiency, effectiveness and ...public service improvement” (DCN report 2022)

## Local service delivery and place-shaping: A framework to support parish and town councils



The screenshot shows the cover of a document. On the left, there is a logo for 'Leicestershire and Rutland County Council' with the text 'Leicestershire and Rutland County Council' and 'Supporting parish and town councils'. The main title of the document is 'Local service delivery and place-shaping: A framework to support parish and town councils'. Below the title, there is a summary: 'This document presents a framework for principal councils looking to support parish and town (local) councils to play an increased role in local service delivery and place-shaping. While aimed at principal councils, the research has also been steered by interviews with representatives of the local authorities.' At the bottom right, there are icons for 'Print' and 'Share'.





## FT BIG READ. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Whitehall believes that boosting England's 10,000 parish councils could help revitalise democracy and level up the country. Critics say there is no panacea for the harms done by austerity.

By Peter Foster and Sebastian Payne



The government wants to give parish councils like Shrewsbury, above, a 'turbo boost'. Council chiefs Helen Ball, top, and Tony Hunt, below, approve

# The potential of parochial politics

In the cramped offices of Shrewsbury town council, the wheels of local government are turning. The Midlands market town, which sits in a bend of the river Severn near



that's incredibly important to the future of this country has died a quick death because of [chancellor] Rishi Sunak."

But if the right formula of investment and autonomy can be achieved, then

Plymouth, Blackpool or Leicester. There is also a democratic deficit, with more than two-thirds of local councillors elected unopposed, according to a 2019 poll by the National Council for

says, "but we're waiting to see evidence that it is going to be meaningful. And it's not just about money, it's about handing down the powers to shape existing fund-

Hunt says the council also coordinates with the local chamber of commerce and local churches and is building a "Team Arundel" network of volu-

# THE CHALLENGE – employees

- Councils are generally small businesses with few employees – clerks- and councillors acting as employers
- Council clerk role often lonely with little support, except from SLCC
- 15% reported serious issues with councillor behaviours
- High level of complaints concerned disrespectful behaviour and behaviour
- Work placed stress, sickness, staff turnover and costs.

## Jackie Weaver: Handforth Parish Council host 'surprised' by reaction

5 February 2021



Jackie Weaver tells Anita Rani what happened in 'the viral parish council meeting

# THE CHALLENGE - councillors

- BBC report – 25% of councillors say they have received severe abuse requiring a security plan involving police/security
- Local Government Association research 2023 shows 80% of councillors have received some form of public abuse, up 10% in a year.
- 68% surveyed said abuse and intimidation had influenced their decision on whether to stand again.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-68167190>

## Abuse of councillors and staff putting democracy at risk, say local government groups

Updated 5 Feb

By **Charlie Haynes**

Senior Investigative Reporter, BBC East Midlands

Abuse towards people in local government is getting so severe it is putting democracy at risk, groups representing them have warned.

# ENSURING TRUST BETWEEN EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER

- Joint recognition that there was a problem that needed to be addressed by working together
- NALC/SLCC, One Voice Wales and County Associations set up national task force with shared resources, a joint project manager and six workstreams
  1. Training
  2. Governance
  3. Intervention
  4. Legislative change
  5. Collaboration and communications
  6. Enabling and resources.

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/civility-and-respect-project>



# Civility & Respect

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IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

## **Civility in Public Life Pledge**

Please complete this form to sign up your council to the pledge. Once completed, you'll receive a certificate by email, and your council will be listed alongside others a national map, showing the councils that have signed up.

**Take the Pledge**

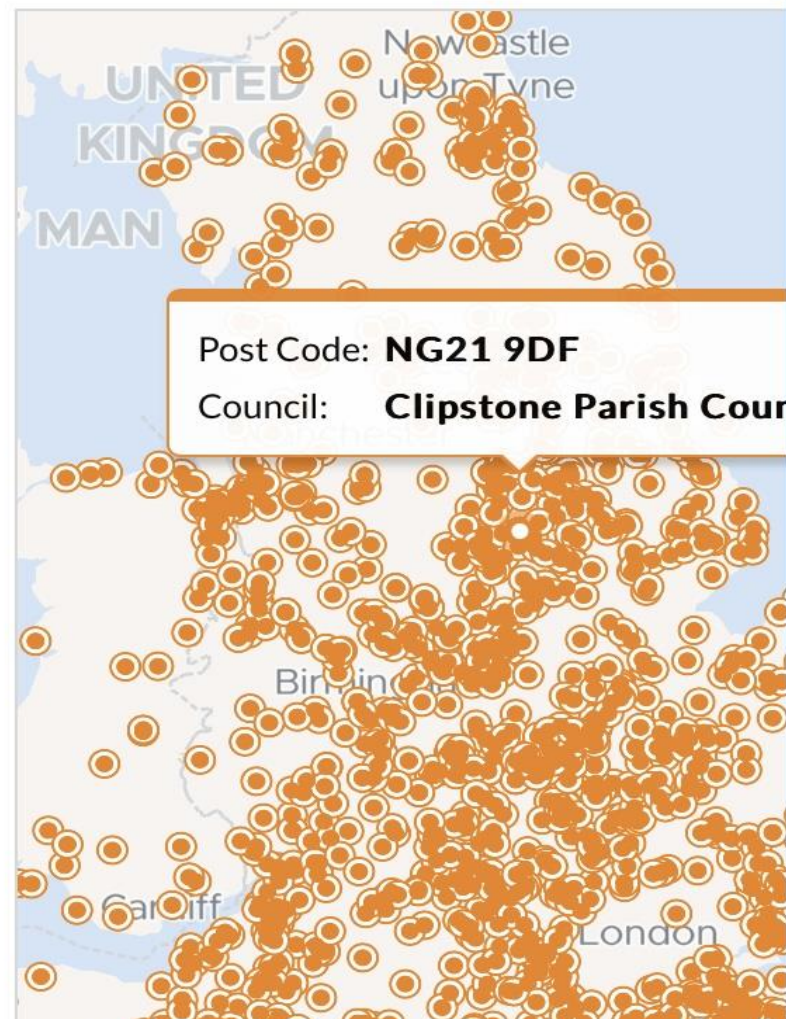
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# PROMOTING CIVILITY AND RESPECT – THE PLEDGE

- ✓ Training policy for councillors and staff in place
- ✓ Councillor code of conduct adopted
- ✓ Good governance framework including dignity at work policy
- ✓ Commitment to seek professional support when issues arise
- ✓ Call out bullying and harassment when it happens
- ✓ Learn from good practice and consider signing up to national accreditation scheme (Local Council Award Scheme)
- ✓ Support lobbying including sanctions.

Take the pledge

See who has taken the pledge



# “WORKPLACE BULLYING IS CURRENTLY A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE IN BUSINESSES OF ALL INDUSTRIES AND SIZES

Total UK costs £30bn a year. Costs of resignation, sickness etc £15bn. Cost of litigation £13bn. Costs of informal resolution £1/4bn.

So early, pre-emptive action best

- Sign and implement the pledge
- Take advantage of HALC training and support
- Seek peer accreditation through local council award scheme
- Encourage people from all backgrounds to stand for election
- Use and publicise internal audit reports and complete your annual governance return
- Communicate your councils’ good work to residents, MPs etc but use social media carefully
- Pay clerks fairly and for the hours they work
- Call out micro-aggressions and poor behaviour when it starts.

## SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU!

- How are you promoting civility and respect within your council?
- What help do you need from your county and national association?
- How do you manage any poor behaviour from residents etc?
- How are you encouraging more people to stand for election?
- Would you like to see sanctions introduced?
- Will you encourage your council to sign the pledge?



# **LCC Environment & Transport Update**

**Ann Carruthers**

**Director (Environment & Transport)**

## Challenges

- General Election 4<sup>th</sup> July
- Budget pressures
- Digital transformation
- Weather Events
- Recruitment of certain roles
  - Waste site operatives
  - Seasonal treatment operatives
  - Field operatives
  - Signs services & Traffic Management operatives

## Coming up

- Network North
- LTP4
- Leicestershire Highways Design Guide
- Zero Emission Bus Fund
- Joint working with the Parishes

## Authority wide:

- Around £6m revenue budget shortfall for 2024/25 (subject to £20m savings delivery) – the first-time reserves have been required to balance the books
- Funding gap of £33m expected for 2025/26 rising to £83m by 2027/28
- Local authorities across the county are facing huge financial challenges as reflected by media coverage of different councils' budget plans, including those who have issued Section 114 notices such as Nottingham and Birmingham
- It's important to stress that although we too face unprecedented pressures, we are not in crisis territory
- Extra financial controls were implemented in 2023/24 and these will remain in place
- Major change is already underway across the council, particularly in children's and adults' services, with specific focus on reviewing priorities and looking at how services can be delivered differently

## Environment & Transport:

- Revenue budget accounts for 21% of the authority's total service revenue budget of £509m in 2024/25
- Growth allocated in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) amounts to £6m in 2024/25, nearly doubling to £11m by 2027/28
- Current savings requirement is just under £7m by 2027/28, of which around £5m has been identified for delivery in the MTFS
- Further savings opportunities are being worked up to meet the savings target balance



In October 2023, the Government announced the cancellation of the HS2 north of Birmingham and that funds had been reallocated to the Midlands and the North under the umbrella of the Network North plan.

This funding is in addition to existing resources to ensure the benefits are realised in the North and Midlands region. This funding will be split and cover the following areas:

## ❑ **Local Transport Fund (£238m for 7 years from 2025/26)**

- ❑ In February 2024, the government published the Local Transport fund allocations 2025 to 2032. This funding has been allocated by formula, based on the population and levelling up need of each local transport authority area. The focus of this funding is to
  - ❑ Drive better connectivity within local towns, suburbs and cities
  - ❑ Drive better connectivity between local towns and cities
  - ❑ Improve everyday local journeys for people

## ❑ **Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP+) and Network North Public Transport Funding (£7.63m 2023/24 to 2024/25)**

- ❑ This funding is to improve passenger transport by delivering the best overall outcomes in growing long-term patronage, revenues, and therefore maintaining bus service levels and providing essential social and economic connectivity for local communities

## ❑ **Road Resurfacing Fund (minimum uplift of £131m over 11 years)**

- ❑ This funding is for local highways maintenance, particularly the resurfacing of carriageways, cycleways and footways to prevent potholes and other road defects from occurring. £2.258 million was received in each of 2023/24 and 24/25 and we are awaiting announcement on the remaining funding.

**Awaiting confirmation that Network North funding will continue post-Election.**

# Local Transport Plan (LTP4)

The demands placed on Leicestershire's transport infrastructure are changing rapidly and investment is needed to enable the network to adapt to climate change, promote active and health living and aid the delivery of new jobs and housing. Changes in travel behaviour are also significant. Along with choices around the demand for lower carbon forms of travel and the ageing population this all leads to it being the right time to prepare a new LTP



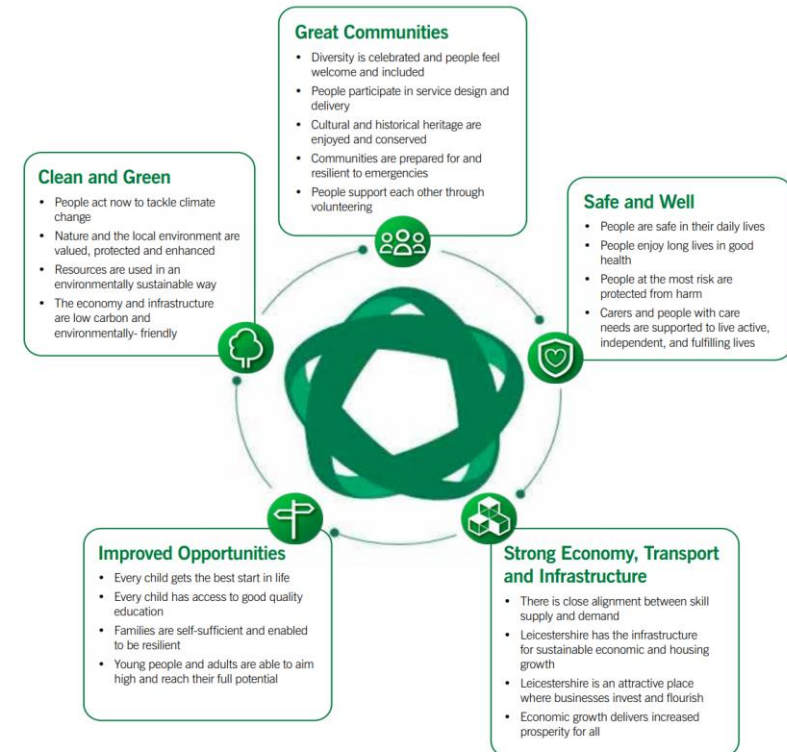
A new LTP known as LTP4 will set out how the Transport network will support delivering the Council's Strategic Plan and its five strategic priorities (see diagram below).

## Our Vision for Transport:

“Delivering a safe connected, efficient and resilient transport network to support the ambitions and health of our communities, deliver economic prosperity whilst safeguarding our environment”.

## Local Engagement

This is an important part of the process to make sure that your views are represented in the plan. Due to the General Election our public consultation has been paused but you will be informed of our new proposed timescales for consultation in due course.



Leicestershire is currently facing a number of challenges, including population growth, health and obesity issues, climate change and changes to government policies for example the planning system. These challenges must be dealt with whilst ensuring that their impact on the transport system, communities, individuals and the environment is minimised

A Highways Design Guide helps the Authority to respond to these issues, it provides clear and common guidance to developers across the county whilst allowing flexibility to meet local requirements. It assists in the delivery of housing growth, encourages sustainable development and minimises the impact of development on the highway. It also plays a vital role in the highway development management process.

## **Local Engagement**

The Highways Design Guide is due to be published in November 2024 but prior to this there will be pre-consultation with developers, local planning authorities and equality groups, together with a 6-week online public consultation commencing on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024.





- The urban grass cutting programme commenced earlier this year on 2<sup>nd</sup> April which has resulted in less complaints, the third cut is in progress.
- 33 parishes carry out their own grass cutting under a service level agreement with LCC and receive a contribution to the cost. If your parish is interested, please contact us over the summer to be signed up by 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2025.
- The second rural cut (visibility splays and a single swathe) is now complete. No complaints from Wildlife campaigners to-date, mainly due to the wildlife verge scheme and the omission of the single swathe on the first cut.



**New QR code for  
Grass Cutting**

## Weed Treatment

- The first weed treatment has now been completed. The second will be in August/September.
- Complaints are down on previous years.
- The weed treatment programme is designed to arrest and control growth rather than achieve weed free roads.
- The programme of works can be found on the Grass Cutting webpage

## Urban wildlife verges

- If you wish to develop your own wildlife verge. Expressions of interest to be received by 31 Oct 2024.



## Litter picking

- Grass cutting dates shared with Districts have enabled litter picks to be organised in advance. This has resulted in no complaints received to-date.

## Surface Dressing

- The surface dressing programme started at the end of April and will be completed by September. The work is weather dependant to ensure the process can fully take effect
- This process maintains the condition of the road by providing a new layer to the road that prevents air penetrating the tarmac preventing potholes and increase the texture of the road surface.
- Last year over 600,000m<sup>2</sup> (over 65 miles) of our roads were resurfaced, this year it is planned to surface over 700,000m<sup>2</sup> (over 75 miles and is a mixture of surface dressing and resurfacing). While this surfacing will help extend the lifespan of that stretch of road, you will appreciate that with a county network of around 2,800 miles, it unfortunately, is only a small proportion of the work we would like to carry out.
- This year's programme of works can be found on the LCC website

## Potholes

- The highest level of pothole enquiries to-date were received in February 2024.
- The highest risk potholes are prioritised as there is insufficient funding for all potholes to be put right straight away.

## Sign Cleaning

- A programme of sign cleaning commenced at the end of June and aims to cover all of the County but is focused initially on the resilient road network.





## Managing Winter

At LCC we manage winter in a number of ways.

- **Designated Gritting routes** – The network is monitored and if the temperature falls, the 23 gritters are sent out overnight as conditions dictate. Our interactive gritting map is made available showing our first and second priority gritting routes.
- **Grit/Salt bins** – New bin applications must be received via [highwayscustomerservices@leics.gov.uk](mailto:highwayscustomerservices@leics.gov.uk) prior to 31st July for installation in the following November. Requests will only be approved where the location fits our criteria, this is detailed on our website. LCC bins are then stocked with sufficient salt at the beginning of the winter season and then re-stocked when resources allow.
- **Volunteer Snow Warden Scheme** – this scheme allows for locally delivered treatment of key footways during periods of prolonged snow and ice. This will enable greater community resilience when our current budgetary position means we are not able to resource this service.
  - LCC provides; the necessary equipment, full training on safe working practices and ensures that the snow warden is indemnified against any third-party claims. LCC will also make a contribution payment towards the cost of the hours worked.
  - Snow Warden Scheme update at Parish Clerks Operational meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> July
  - A training session is being arranged for new wardens and a refresher to existing wardens. If you would like to be considered for this training or would like to volunteer, please contact [ETDSpecialProjects@leics.gov.uk](mailto:ETDSpecialProjects@leics.gov.uk)



## Calling for volunteer snow wardens

We are looking for residents who are able to give up some of their time to clear snow when the winter weather hits us.

Volunteers will receive training and advice on how to clear snow and ice safely.

They would also be provided with protective clothing, a shovel and wheelbarrow.



Leicestershire  
County Council



## What is ZEBRA 2?



Pot of funding available to English Local Transport Authorities to kick-start greener passenger transport.



Bridges the affordability gap for bus operators between diesel and electric vehicles.



Low-cost way for Leicestershire County Council to achieve lower emissions and better passenger experience etc and encourage other bus operators to consider switching.

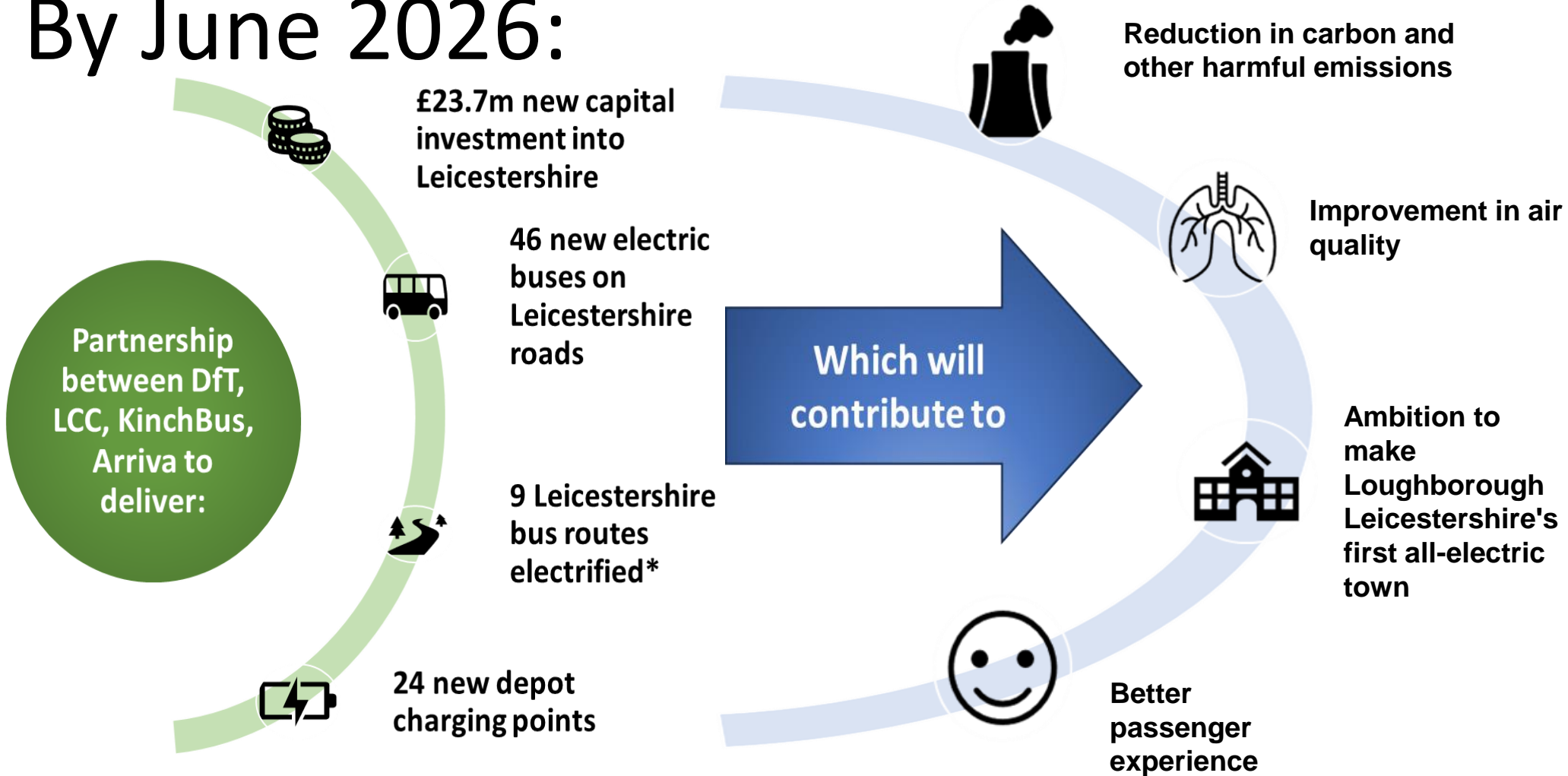


£8.7m awarded from the DfT and £15m committed by the operators (Arriva and KinchBus.)



# Zero Emission Bus fund (ZEBRA2)

## By June 2026:



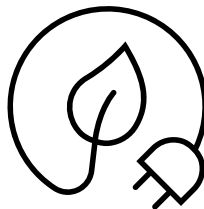
\*Routes in Loughborough area and Melton to Leicester: 2, 5, 9, 11/12, Sprint, 5/5a, 127

## Leicestershire Collaborate to Accelerate (LCAN)

- Successful funding bid of £2.6m to accelerate decarbonisation in Leicestershire - Community Energy South, Green Fox Community Energy and Leicestershire County Council are working in partnership to deliver a climate action programme called Community Energy Pathways. The programme aims to build up community energy capacity across Leicestershire, supporting a network of new community energy organisations to establish locally driven low carbon projects and take action on climate change. The programme offers communities a real opportunity to take part in Leicestershire's future energy system. The Green Fox website provided further information and advice on how to join up. <https://greenfoxcommunityenergy.coop/>

## Electric Vehicles

- Electric charge points have been installed at Park and Ride sites
- £1m secured for Government's first portion of Local electric vehicle infrastructure (LEVI) funding along with 4 other local authorities and Midlands Connect. This is expected to deliver up to 100 public charge points which are yet to be determined, this will centre on residential streets where there are high proportions of housing without access to private off-street parking.
- A countywide EV consultation survey was carried out last year providing communities to have a say on their current charging habits and potential charging concerns. The survey asked current and future EV owners to place markers on an interactive map for their ideas of where they would like to see a charge point.
- Delivery start is scheduled for autumn 2024.
- A countywide EV Charging Strategy is being developed to set out the public EV charging provision and its practical ongoing delivery.
- Government has made further funding available to expand the number of public EV charge points. The Council was provisionally allocated £3.151m of LEVI funding towards the delivery of a large full-scale EV chargepoint project. Further details to be available soon.



A report was discussed by the County Council's Cabinet which detailed the 566 responses received on the second public consultation on the amended proposals for the sites. Details below are what was agreed by Cabinet on 24 May: These changes will be made in the coming months.

- Closure of Somerby waste site (**from October 2024**)
  - Changes to part time opening for the following sites (**from October 2024**):
    - Bottesford – 3 days per week
    - Market Harborough – 3 days per week
    - Kibworth - four days per week
    - Shepshed – 2 days per weeks
  - Reduction of Summer opening hours at all sites (**from April 2025**)
    - 9am-5pm for sites that open on Saturday, Sunday or Monday
    - 9am-7pm for sites that open Tuesday to Friday
  - Christmas Eve closure at all sites (**from 24<sup>th</sup> December 2024**)
- Reminder that all sites have moved to the standard summer opening hours until 30th September 2024 - 9.00am to 7.00pm). We encourage residents to arrive at least 10 minutes prior to closing, with the last admittance no later than 6.55pm).
- It is always important to check the website before visiting a waste site due to unplanned closures due to shortage of staff, weather events or incidents.



## Parish Operational Clerks Meetings

- Regular E&T officer attendance (Special Projects)
- Proactive and timely E&T updates
- Responding to Clerk issues



**Parish Pilots/Partnerships** - these continue to be developed with a full offering due to be shared in the autumn. The current projects are still progressing however, if you are interested in being able to do more in your communities, please contact the Special Projects team.

An example of projects below:

- Huncote Parish Council – licence granted for grass cutting and painting on their village green
- Waltham on the Wolds Parish Council – licence in process for works on a set of steps.
- General sign cleaning licence
- Trusted Partner competency certificate. This is being developed and aims to enable parishes to register for trusted partner status, which will help to streamline our joint working and enquiry responses.

## Vegetation post card

- The vegetation post card scheme has been revised to remove the need for a desk top officer assessment enabling parishes to be fully enabled to post cards where they feel appropriate. If you want a stock of postcards, please contact the team on [ETDSpecialProjects@leics.gov.uk](mailto:ETDSpecialProjects@leics.gov.uk)

**Reporting Enquiries** - A reminder to use the 'Report a problem online' form wherever possible. The form has had some improvements recently include more categories. Alternatively use the [CSCParishes@leics.gov.uk](mailto:CSCParishes@leics.gov.uk) email for those enquiries that don't fit the report it online form.

## Remembrance Day Events 2024

- To apply for a road closure contact us by 13<sup>th</sup> September [eventsnetworkmanagement@leics.gov.uk](mailto:eventsnetworkmanagement@leics.gov.uk)
- Please note that Poppy decorations can be added to Street lighting columns without a licence.



## Christmas lights

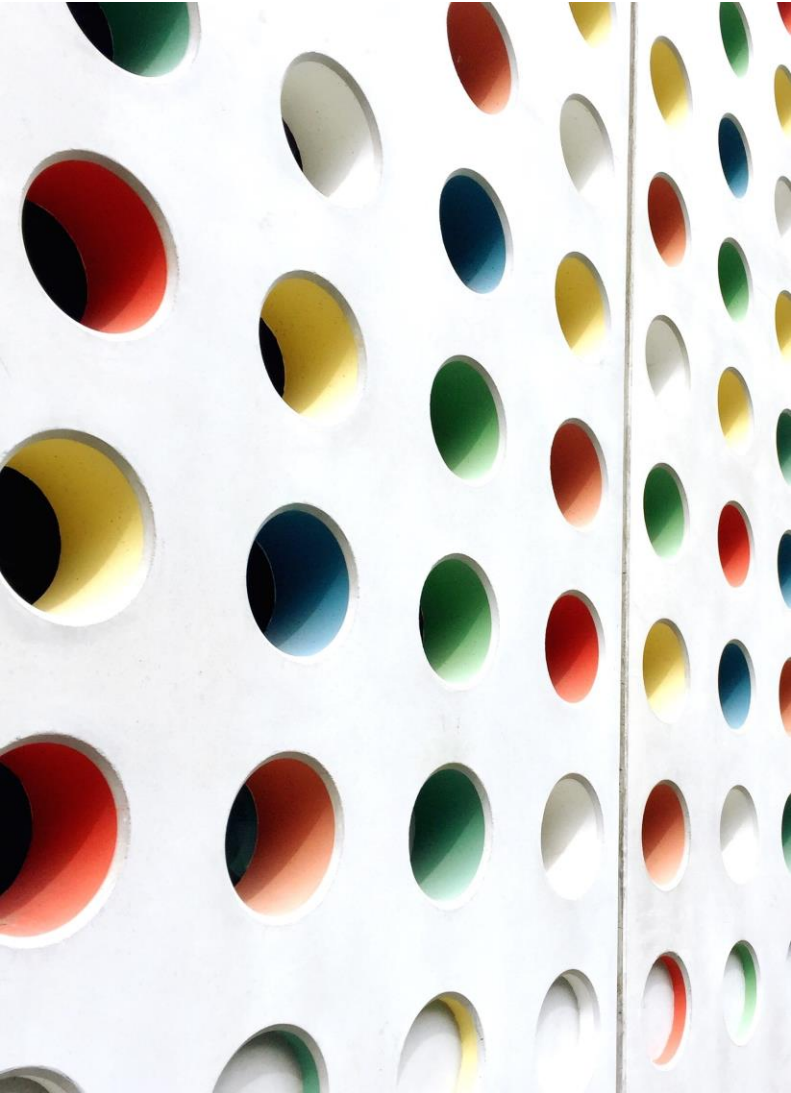
- S178 licence is required to install Christmas or Seasonal lights onto street lighting columns.
- Guidance and an online application form can be found on our website.
- Applications must be received at least 8 weeks in advance of the proposed installation date. Late applications risk not being approved in time.

<https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/parishes-and-communities/attachments-to-highway-lighting-columns>

## 6 monthly update

- Following feedback from SLCC, we have introduced a 6 monthly E&T briefing session – this will happen in Jan 2025. Further details to follow





# LCC Parish Conference

## LRALC Update

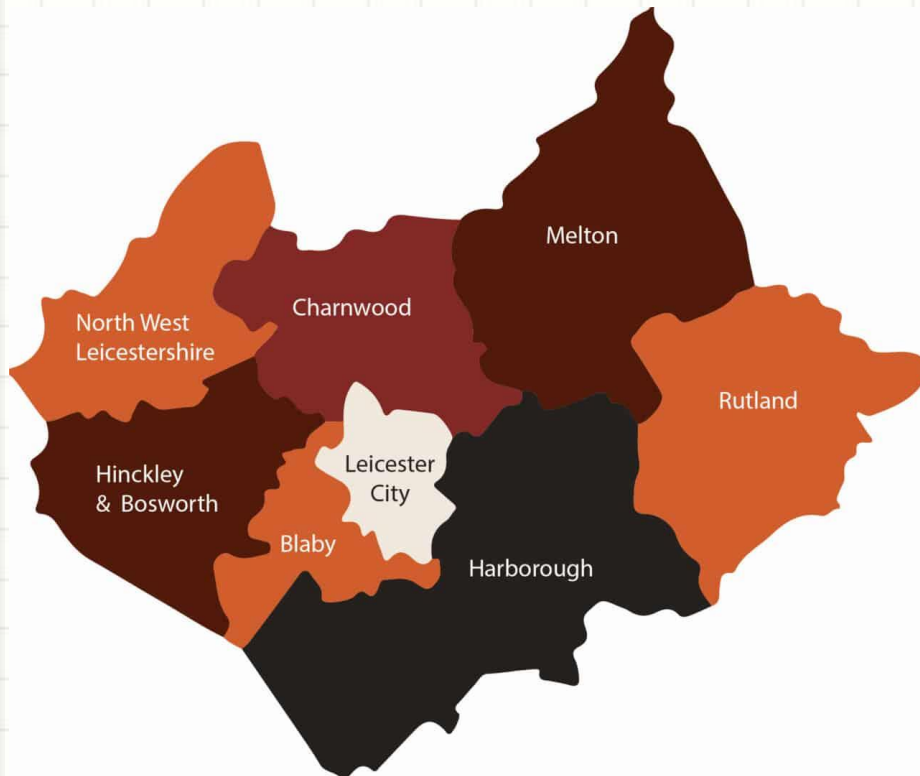
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JAKE ATKINSON

CHIEF EXECUTIVE LRALC



# Update



Training and development

Newsletter and Comms

Cost of living and precepting

Crisis support

Civility and Respect Project

Audit and governance

# Training – Essential for Everyone

## Specialist courses

### Cemeteries

Cemetery and Churchyard Management

Management of closed churchyards and memorial safety

### Employment

Addressing Conflict between Employees and Members, including Code of Conduct Issues

Being a Good Employer

Revitalising and Improving Employee Relations Through Effective Appraisals (Formerly Appraisal Skills)

### Finance

Budgeting for Clerks and Finance Staff

Finance for Councillors

Internal Controls

New Clerk's finance

Procurement Training

## Training & Events Calendar

◀		April	2024	Go	Today	▶
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2 Communicating with your community Part 1	3	4 Social media Part 1	5 Freedom of Information for local councils: obligations, procedures and exemption	6	7
8 Data Protection for councils Part 1	9 Parish Clerks 3 training Communicating with your community Part 2	10 Annual Meeting of Parish Council	11 Social media Part 2	12 Canva Part 1	13	14
15 Data Protection for councils Part 2 Data protection training for parish and town councillors	16	17	18	19 Canva Part 2	20	21
22 Data Protection for councils Part 3	23 How councils can engage effectively with	24	25 Confidential session Councillors	26	27	28

# Newsletter and Comms – Do you get them?



## CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S EDITORIAL

This editorial is going to focus on a single, but very important issue, namely ensuring that your association is sustainable and secure for the long term. The 2024-25 membership fees are planned to be based on a completely "reset" fee model, intended to hugely simplify the current system, but also to generate a core income sufficient to sustain the level of service you have come to expect from LRALC.

LRALC is not immune to the pressures that your councils have all faced. Alongside ever-increasing demand for our services, we also face the significant increases in operating costs that have been, and continue to be, a feature for the public and private sector in this country.

Many of the increased costs that you face are costs that cannot be controlled, and the same applies to LRALC. For example, we employ our staff on the same contracts that most of you do (i.e., the national NALC/SLCC contract), and just like our councils we are contractually obliged to apply the national pay award each year. This will have added £12,000 to our wage bill between 2022-24. This is before the annual contractual incremental increases for staff during their first few years in post are applied.

This is just one example of where costs have increased for us. The opportunities for cutting costs are minimal as, in reality, we are actually a very lean organisation. Non-staffing operating costs are minimal, but unfortunately these costs have seen increases too. For example, the cost of rent and utilities for our physical office have previously been only £3,300 a year, but this is due to increase to £5,800 pa in 2024.

We haven't sat idly by as costs have increased, indeed some time ago we set a priority to increase the proportion of non-membership fee-based income we generate (see graphs below).



# Example of precept increase

- Kibworth Beauchamp
  - Precept = £143,000
  - Council tax rate = £77.95
  - Increase of precept by 10%
  - Equivalent to £14,300 extra
- Swinford
  - Precept = £20,500
  - Council tax rate = £75.15
  - Increase of precept by 10%
  - Equivalent to £2,050

# Additional cost per month in council tax



**"Wonderful!! I always say that you are well worth the subscription fee!! Thanks SO much for all your timely and wise advice!! I really don't know what we would have done without your wise counsel"**

HERE FOR THE RAINY DAYS AS WELL.....



# Introduction to Biodiversity Net Gain

Annual Parish Liaison Event – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024

Vanessa Evans– Team Manager for Ecology and Biodiversity Leicestershire County Council

RSK



# AGENDA

## Basic Principles

- What is BNG
- Legal Framework and Implementation
- Exemptions and specific requirements
- The Journey through the planning system
- LPA roles and responsibilities

## Implementation

- Where are we now?
- Next steps
- Monitoring, Reporting and Enforcement
- Risks and Opportunities



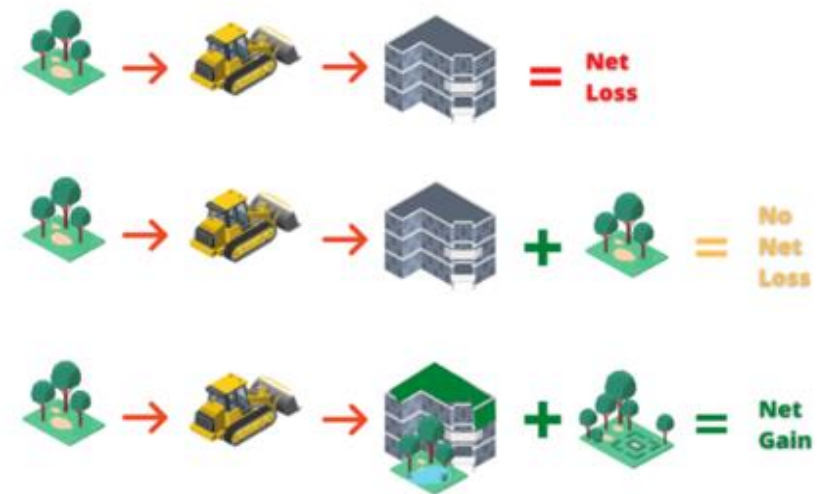




# Biodiversity Net Gain- Basic Principles

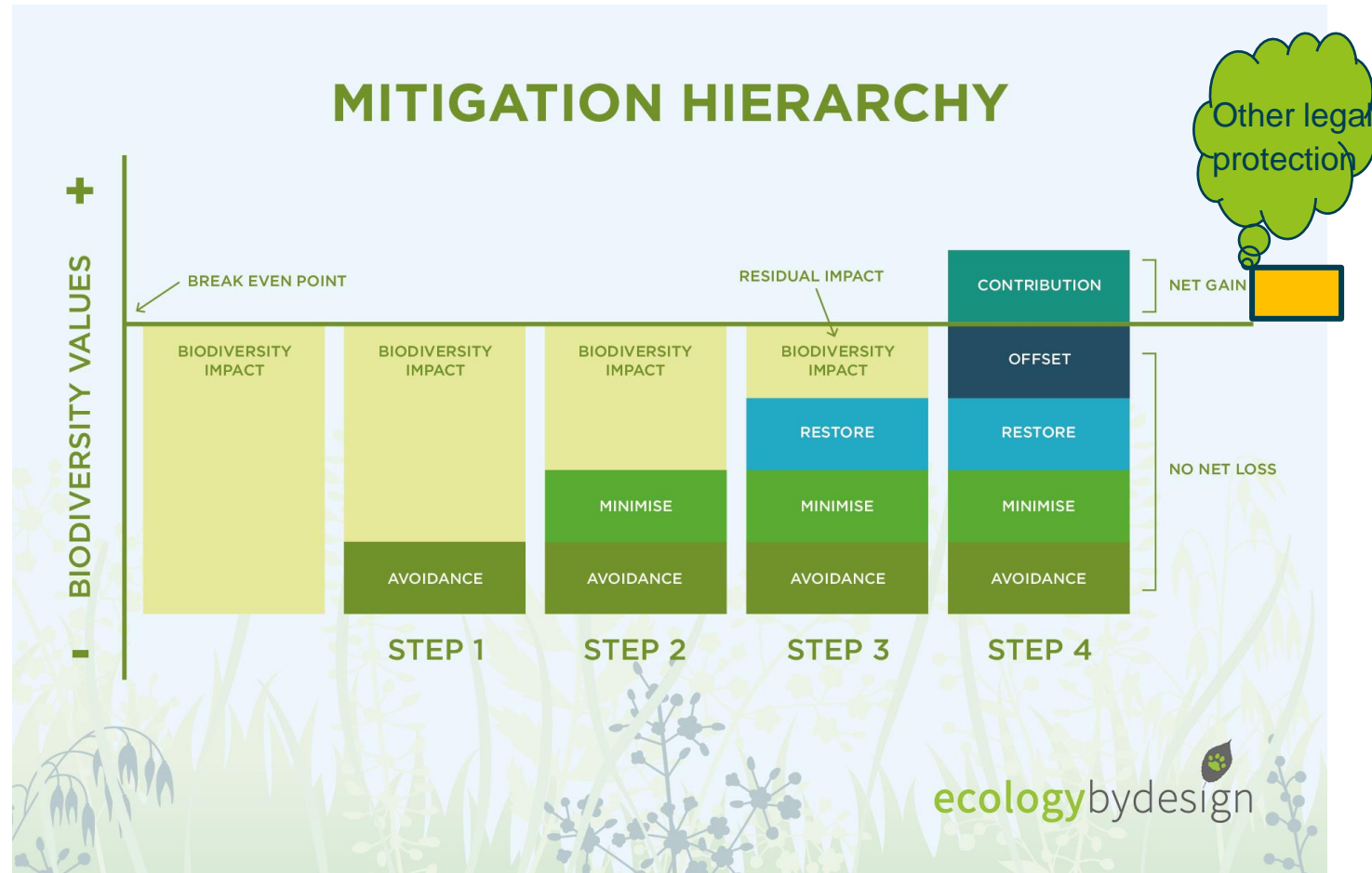
# What is Biodiversity Net Gain

“Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. Where a development has an impact on biodiversity, it places a legal requirement on developers to provide an increase in appropriate natural habitat and ecological features over and above that being affected. In such a way it is hoped that the current loss of biodiversity through development will be halted, and ecological networks can be restored.”



# Net Gain and the “Mitigation Hierarchy”

- Development must follow the **mitigation hierarchy** of:
  - avoidance
  - mitigation
  - compensation as a last resort
- **Does not change other** existing legal environmental and wildlife protections
- BNG measures must be secured for **at least 30 years**



# Biodiversity Net Gain – Legal Framework

- Mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021)
- Sets a **minimum of 10%** as the required gain
- Must be calculated using the Statutory (Defra) Biodiversity Metric (or Small Site Metric)
- This has been applied from:
  - **12 February 2024** for TCPA applications
  - **2 April 2024** for small sites
  - November 2025 for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects



# Biodiversity Net Gain – Legal Framework Cont

## SIX Statutory Instruments!

### The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2023

- Makes amendments to legislation on planning to **integrate the BNG framework**

### The Biodiversity Gain Sites Register Regulations 2023

- Allows for a biodiversity gain **site register** and set eligibility criteria for land to be registered

### The Biodiversity Gain Sites Register (Financial Penalties and Fees) Regulations 2023

- Allow for **fees** to be charged for applications to register BNG land and **financial penalties** to be issued where false or misleading information is provided

### The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2023

- Sets out categories of development which are **exempt** from BNG

### The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2023

- Sets out a list of **habitats considered irreplaceable** for BNG metric calculation purposes and ensures the regular 10% requirement is not applied to them

### The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024

- Set out how the new BNG framework sits within the development management process for **planning applications**.

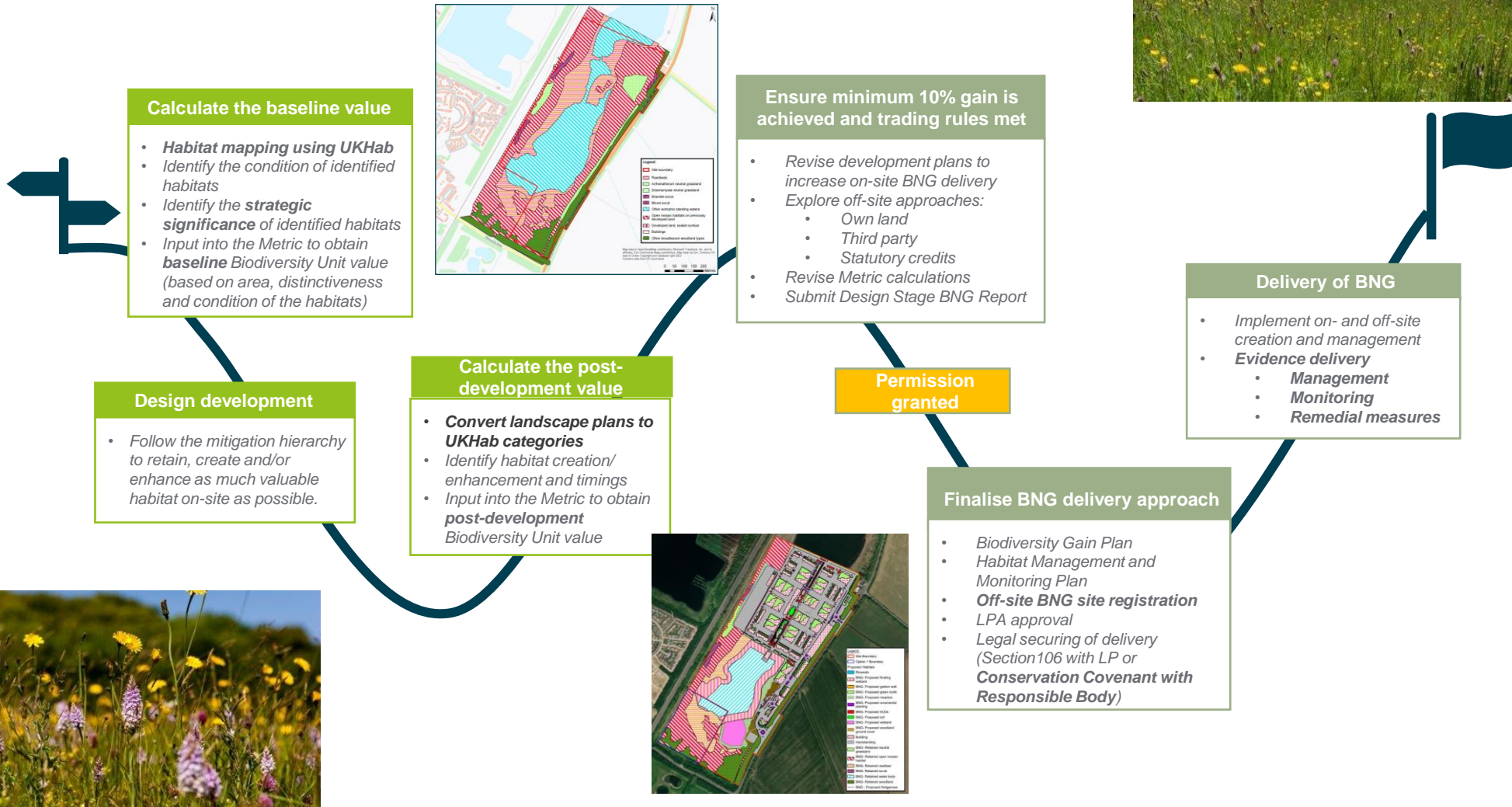
# Exemptions

## The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2023

- NSIPs (until November 2025)
- ‘De minimis exemption’: developments below the minimum threshold (<25m<sup>2</sup> of onsite habitat and <5m linear habitat) with no priority habitats
- Biodiversity gain sites
- High speed rail transport network

- Householder applications  
(as defined within article 1(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015)
- Certain self-build and custom-build applications  
(if fewer than 9 dwellings and <0.5 hectares in area)

# BNG planning application journey through the planning system



# LPA Roles and Responsibilities

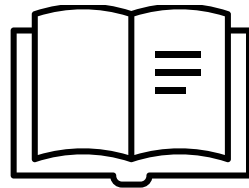
## Overview



as part of the planning process



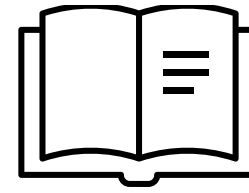
**Set** local policy to support BNG



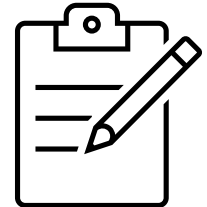
**Review** BNG proposals in a planning application



**Securing** BNG through legal agreement



**Verify** on national registers (CC's and offset)



**Monitoring** of BNG delivery







# Biodiversity Net Gain Implementation



# How does statutory BNG impact parish and town partners?

- **BNG in the planning policy process:**

- Ability to influence as statutory consultee on local plan policy on **BNG percentage above 10% and individual site prescriptions for site allocations within parish or town**
- **Neighbourhood Plans**- through LURA (Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023).
- “more and better”- quality habitat data that will be available in the future from BNG and this will be available to Parish and Town Councils through the Records Centre for a specific Neighbourhood Plan area.

- **BNG in the planning application process as statutory consultee:**

- County-level- 10% BNG on **Minerals and Waste proposals** 10% BNG on county development such as new **schools**
- All districts and boroughs- 10% BNG on other types of **planning application**

- **Opportunity for parish/town as landowners:**

- Financial **benefit for those with land ownership**- counties, districts, boroughs, town and parish councils\* \*Note: Landowners who secure their BNG through legal agreement would need to ensure ongoing management and monitoring is carried out and reported on (to either LPA or responsible body).
- Opportunity to cover the costs of **enhancing existing owned land** for the benefit of biodiversity and potentially benefits to residents as a result of this through “condition uplift”
- Creation of BNG offsetting habitat on this land to use **either:**
  - to **offset the impacts of its own development** or
  - for **commercial sale of the units on the open market for the development undertaken by others**

# Where are we now?

## Next steps for partnerships and contracted work with partners

- Building County Ecology Team- capacity, capability and resilience e.g. train ecologists in UK Hab
- Planning Officers Forum (POF)- develop a strategic area wide approach to “locally-defined” issues
- Formation of “working sub-group” from POF- to develop consistency, support and collaboration across the wider area. e.g. condition wording, decision notices, Section 106
- “Plug in” the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) areas of opportunity into the “strategic significance” part of the DEFRA metric to encourage habitat creation where we want it to be in our parishes and towns!
- We can use these LNRS areas of opportunity to steer the location and type of habitat creation in Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans
- Follow-on training with all partners in 6-12 months (officers, elected members, town and parish councillors) to understand progress of BNG. Example case studies

# Monitoring, reporting and enforcement

## Monitoring:

- Mastergov- development of internal system with BNG capability for recording, reporting and monitoring planning application information and data
- Ongoing site monitoring- of the delivery of BNG sites sits with whoever has made the legal agreement with the landowner (or land manager) to secure the delivery of the habitat\*

\*This will be the LPA for planning obligations and the responsible body for conservation covenants

## Reporting our Biodiversity Duty Actions:

- End date of first reporting period should be no later than 1 January 2026
- After this, reporting period is every 5 years

## Reports should include\*:

- Actions carried out to meet BNG obligations
- Details of net gains resulting from Biodiversity Gain Plans that have been approved
- How biodiversity net gain obligations are proposed to be met in the next reporting period

\*Further guidance on this is expected from the government



## Risks and Opportunities

### Potential risks:

- Partner withdrawal from LPA cross-county partnership arrangements
- Professional ecologist staffing shortages
- Legal challenges on planning cases and associated costs
- Lack of certainty on future burden funding for LPA's, particularly around enforcement

### Potential opportunities:

- Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)- to direct habitat creation, enhancement and restoration in parish and town areas
- Use of parish or town-owned land for the provision of BNG – either directly for own developments or commercially as units on an open market





**Thank you for listening**

# PANEL DISCUSSION

**Charlotte Eisenhart**, National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

**Ann Carruthers**, Leicestershire County Council (LCC)

**Jake Atkinson**, Leicestershire & Rutland Association of Local Councils  
(LRALC)

**Vanessa Evans**, Leicestershire County Council (LCC)

# Goodnight!

**Thank you to all of our speakers**  
**Thank you for Attending**

**Presentation Slides available on Leicestershire Communities Website**

**[www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk](http://www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk)**

Leicestershire & Rutland  
Association of Local Councils