



Conservatives Manifesto 2021

Building a **Greener Future** for Leicestershire

Leicestershire County Council
Conservative Group





Building a Greener Future for Leicestershire

Introduction from Nick Rushton, Leader of the County Council

The last 4 years have seen tremendous change in Leicestershire. Despite being the lowest funded county council in the country, our record is impressive. We have protected some of the most vulnerable children and adults in Leicestershire through our social care services, invested for the future providing 30 new special schools and a new operating model providing extra care facilities for older people.

We have invested and looked after your money wisely, providing £7.1M extra income to support services whilst reducing debt. We've cut our carbon emissions by 73%, upgraded our waste and recycling centres, secured the future of our library services through working with community groups, rolled out 97% superfast broadband coverage to residents and businesses, enhanced our highways network fixing over 9000 potholes, cleaning gullies and tidying verges.

This manifesto will commit the County Council to investing extra resources in prioritising the environment, protecting our Highways and transportation networks and taking effective action tackling climate change and reducing our carbon footprint.

We renew our pledge to continue protecting vulnerable children and adults and will fight for a better funding deal from Government to fund their social care.

The immediate future will be guided by our response to and recovery from the Covid pandemic. I want to thank all those in the NHS, Health and social care workers for everything they have done keeping people safe. The County Council that I lead will continue to work with the NHS and our partners getting people tested and vaccinated- the route to defeating this vile disease.

Conservatives will always be on your side and this is my pledge to you all.

Nicholas Rushton

Nick Rushton - Leader of Leicestershire County Council

Our ongoing response to the coronavirus pandemic



Working to keep people safe and well

Recruiting **2,000** volunteers and numbers are growing



Delivering over 200 emergency food supplies



Lighting up County Hall in **GREEN** and **BLUE** to thank our social care and NHS staff

Running a telephone death registration service



90%

of our office staff are working from home

Moving staff in to other roles so we can continue to deliver vital support

Supporting over **5,000** people through home care and other social care services

Keeping children safe through visits and assessments



Working with emergency services, councils and **NHS** to tackle outbreak

Ensuring the **25,000** 'shielded' people have support and care in place, if required

Creating a **£4 million** fund to support communities

Launched a new campaign to help keep children safe

SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOLS

Already recruited **OVER 100** NEW social care staff

700 NEW BOOKS ADDED TO OUR DIGITAL LIBRARY EACH MONTH

Fixing urgent repairs on the county's **2,789** miles of road



Creating digital tours of museums

Delivering over **300** prescriptions to residents

Working to keep people safe and well



✓ Our achievements over the last four years

- ✓ A Climate emergency was declared in 2019, and our membership of UK100 shows we are committed to carbon reduction and pledged for the council to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- ✓ We replaced 68,000 streetlights with LEDs reducing energy bills, cutting our carbon emissions by 73% and saving £1.7M per year.
- ✓ Leicestershire was rated the most productive and efficient council in the UK by IMPOWER survey for 3 years.
- ✓ We protected the most vulnerable children and adults during the coronavirus pandemic, while keeping all major services open and running.
- ✓ We installed Average Speed Cameras to improve driver behaviour and reduce the speeding traffic blighting many of our communities.
- ✓ We invested in mobile camera cars to reduce illegal parking on verges and encourage social distancing outside schools.
- ✓ We ensured our county-wide network of 14 Recycling and Household Waste Sites (RHWS) remained open with appointments able to be booked during coronavirus lockdowns.
- ✓ We supported work by our Public Health staff to monitor and control the Covid-19 pandemic locally within government guidelines.
- ✓ We have made £220M savings, altering the size and scale of the organisation, whilst protecting and maintaining front line services.
- ✓ We have enabled 97% rollout of Superfast broadband.
- ✓ We spearheaded the fair funding campaign for a better deal for local government and a better allocation of resources to the East Midlands.

- ✓ £7.1M income generated by the Asset Investment Fund has been used to support frontline services.
- ✓ £450M capital pot to provide 6,400 extra mainstream and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) school places, new roads, expanding social care accommodation and Superfast Broadband rollout.
- ✓ We have repaid £68.5M of debt.
- ✓ We transformed 14 libraries into SMART libraries.
- ✓ £30M was invested into new specialist schools across the county supporting children with SEND.
- ✓ £500k to support children and families in receipt of free school meals to ensure no child went hungry during the Covid pandemic.
- ✓ We invested in the Development Corporation and Midlands Engine to help boost jobs and investment.
- ✓ Highways improvements to main junctions and growth corridors were made easing congestion, boosting connectivity and improving air quality.
- ✓ We are re-opening Snibston Discovery Park to support regeneration, boost jobs and support for housing locally.
- ✓ Our “Keep Clear” campaign helped to remove antisocial parking around schools and promoted child safety.
- ✓ We have been supporting the re-opening of the Ivanhoe line.
- ✓ We provided almost £4M to support our communities, including £1.5M supporting voluntary and third sector groups, a £750k Leicestershire Business Recovery fund and £130k supporting 130 rural pubs.
- ✓ Brexit.
- ✓ Delivering Covid-19 vaccines and testing by supporting the fantastic NHS.

What about the next four years?

Despite the ongoing cost of providing excellent services during the coronavirus pandemic and the massive effect on staffing and ongoing restrictions, the county council has plans to further improve the way we work, the way we communicate with residents and the way we deliver services. We will still continue to have demands on our budgets - mainly through growth in children's and adults social care and waste services, and it is now how the organisation works and how we deliver or commission our services to Leicestershire, that we will be judged on.

We will build a new greener, resilient and inclusive future for Leicestershire families - the Leicestershire Green Recovery

Having declared a climate emergency in 2019, we aim to be a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, use natural resources wisely and contribute to the recovery of nature. We are a green council and as a key place leader we will work with our partners to deliver our ambitious environmental goals. We will build a greener, resilient and inclusive future for Leicestershire families.

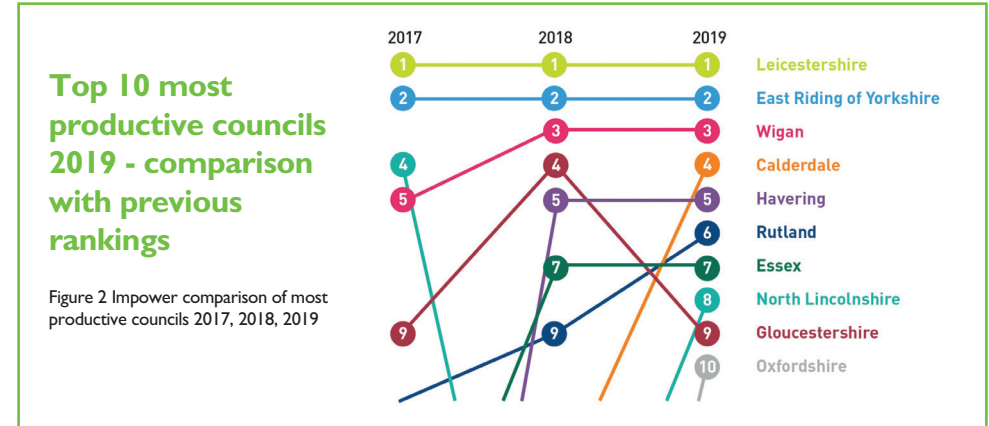
We have an ambitious project to plant 700,000 trees in the county, one for every resident. A further investment of £16M will go towards a long list of projects to further reduce our wider greenhouse gas emissions, including a solar farm and wildflower planting on verges and planting trees on county council owned land. This means we are determined to reach our 2030 target and continue working with partners to achieve carbon neutrality for Leicestershire by 2045.

We are working with partner authorities to provide additional, practical support for volunteer litter pickers (Wombles) with road verge warning signs and longer litter pickers.



We will continue to be a productive council and support economic recovery

Council tax payers want to see value being given to ensure their money is spent delivering quality services. To that end, we are pleased that the county council has been rated the most productive and efficient council in the UK by IMPOWER surveys for the last 3 years running. We will continue to provide outstanding outcomes for people whilst also spending your money wisely and carefully.



<https://www.impower.co.uk/reports/which-councils-are-best-2>

The delivery on priority outcomes and ambitions for Leicestershire continues to be hampered by low funding levels, and the coronavirus pandemic has added significantly to the financial challenges we face.

However, the Council has already saved £220M since 2010 and a further £23M savings will have to be achieved by 2024; these savings are reinvested in front line services. Inevitably, some service reductions may be needed to ensure the Council can operate within the increasingly tight budgetary envelope.

A partnership response is key to recovery and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP), working closely with the County and City Councils and business community, has led on the development of an Economic Recovery Strategy for the area, using the foundations in the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). The Council will continue to work with the LLEP to develop a strong and robust LIS which will help set out our economic vision and identify things we need to do to grow our economy further, such as life sciences and technology, advanced logistics and advanced manufacturing.

We will continue to protect the vulnerable

The global coronavirus pandemic, which took off in 2020, further highlighted the vital role that we play in keeping people safe, particularly vulnerable people, supporting public health and wellbeing and working closely with communities and partner agencies to support all our communities. The vital importance of effective local public health services was made abundantly clear by our first-class response to the Covid-19 pandemic.



The Better Care Fund (BCF) joins together NHS and local government care services to ensure people can live as independently as they wish while integrating services that are delivered effectively in partnership.

The financial situation also requires that we continue to press our local MPs and the Government to deal with the structural national issues such as funding for social care and the relentless growth of demand for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services.

We will prioritise Highways improvements and work with partners to further improve Air Quality

Transport infrastructure is a key enabler providing access to opportunity and opening up sites for growth. We will continue to progress delivery of our local transport priorities in partnership with districts and the city to help business recovery and growth, reduce congestion, improve air quality, allow safe travel and support more sustainable travel options.

Our ambition is to further encourage use of the commercial bus network, of electric vehicles and to increase the number of bus lanes and cycleways/pedestrian routes. We will invest in more electric charging points on council owned properties.

In March 2020, we agreed a new highways capital and works programme. The highways and transport elements of the programme comprise £267M of capital works until 2024.

In January 2020 we began consulting on a new 30-year transport blueprint for Leicester and Leicestershire. The Strategic Transport Priorities (STP) set out where the city and county will work together, particularly around tackling poor air quality and the effects of climate change, alongside continued support for the local economy and jobs.

Government advice to walk or cycle, where you can, is important to our health and wellbeing, so we will continue to work on projects, across Leicestershire where needed, to make walking and cycling safer and easier.

We have applied a new 'risk-based' approach to gully cleaning that includes increasing the number of roadside drains treated from 64,000 per year to 92,000 without costs rising- the county has some 130,000 gullies in total.

We will invest in more average speed cameras

There are many communities across the county who feel speeding motorists are having a negative effect on life in their local area, especially on unclassified rural roads. In 2018, we invested £500k in seven average speed camera locations - one in each of the seven districts - and to date tens of thousands of tickets have been issued. The cameras have also been shown to lower speeds in the seven locations by changing driver behaviour and crucially, reducing speed.

Despite the Treasury still not agreeing to provide us with the funding from the fines collected, we intend to install more average speed cameras, but these will be moveable, so once average speeds have been shown to be reduced, we can move them to other hotspots in the county, to lower speeds there too.



We will work with relevant authorities to ensure flood mitigation measures are progressed

In order to address the impact of severe weather events an additional £550k was allocated to the highways budget this last year. Government has identified £4BN for a new flood defence programme over five years and we will continue to press the government to maximise funding to help us progress the substantial flood related issues across the county.



We will continue to invest in superfast broadband (SFBB)

The county now has 97% coverage of business and premises using superfast broadband. Following successful tendering, there will be further roll out of superfast and ultrafast broadband in west Leicestershire. We will seek solutions to provide much better coverage to the remaining areas that are without, particularly in east Leicestershire, which will be a priority.





Conservatives

**A final message from Nick Rushton,
Leader of Leicestershire County Council**

**Voting Conservative on
Thursday 6th May means:**

- A cleaner, greener Leicestershire
- Healthier and safer communities
- Extra investment in our environment and transport services
- A zero tolerance of Covid 19
- Protecting vulnerable children and adults
- Prudent use of your money and future investment
- Fighting for a fairer funding deal from Government.

**Building a Greener Future
for Leicestershire Vote
Conservative on
6th May 2021**



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Leicestershire County Council Conservative Group



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