

## **County Council Elections May 1<sup>ST</sup> 2025.**

I am proud to have been your County Councillor for the past 12 years. It has been an honour and a privilege to represent you on the County Council and have your support. As I have been re-selected to stand again in the forthcoming elections on May 1<sup>st</sup>. I may not be able to write my monthly article in April due to purdah regulations. If you continue to give me your support and lend me your vote again, I promise to continue to help and improve our local community to which I also live within. Helping people is always pleasure. People who know me know that I always make myself available to help and assist residents even when on Holiday. I take pride in getting straight back to residents when contacted. Again thank you for your support over the past 12 years.

## **One Council for Leicestershire.**

The Labour Government are instructing all two-tier councils across the country that during this parliament **they must all become one tier** ie a unitary council. It's no use councils putting their heads in the sand because it's going to happen under this government. Leicestershire County Council has decided it's best working with Government to get the best deal for Leicestershire. If we don't, they will just force it on us. We have to submit our interim proposals for the 21st March with a final deadline for November 2025.

Leicestershire County Council is starting the process of moving to a **Unitary Authority, as instructed by the government**. Bringing all local services that all our residents rely on together into one organisation, this creates opportunities for improving delivery, reducing waste, and bureaucracy, it becomes a one-stop-shop to eliminate confusion in who does what, and crucially frees up extra money to invest in local services.

A Unitary Council will be **more accountable to you**, by making it easier to understand who is responsible for your public services and who's responsible for local decisions. It would **create vast savings by cuts to the cost of senior management** associated with running 7 districts and borough councils, and a county council.

The number of **elected councillors across Leicestershire would be reduced** down from 303 to 110, **creating vast savings that could go direct to local services. planning children's and adults social services, which would inevitably drive up costs.**

**Ofsted rated LCC's Children's and Family Services as outstanding 'Building strong & lasting relationships'** with families leading to positive changes. **'Outward looking and dynamic'** in transforming help and support for vulnerable children. Why would the districts want to break up a system that clearly works?

**In the cold light of day, it makes more sense to have One Council for Leicestershire- and local services would stay local with area committees built upon the existing district boundaries doing the same work as districts do now, such as planning and housing, under one authority,**

A Unitary Council will be **more accountable to you**, by making it easier to understand who is responsible for your public services and local decisions. It would **create vast savings by cuts to the cost of senior management** associated with running 7 districts and borough councils, and a county council.

In short, One Council for Leicestershire would create a system of local government fit for the 21st Century. Please do look out for the opportunities to have your say by visiting [www.leicestershire.gov.uk/OneCouncil](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/OneCouncil) by 18 March or fill in the handy freepost cut out version in Leicestershire Matters, delivered from early March.

### **Leicestershire County Council Budget and Council Tax Rise.**

Multi-million-pound investment in supporting vulnerable people, tackling flooding and fixing potholes have been given the green light, as Leicestershire County Council finalises its budget.

A 4.99 per cent Council Tax rise from April – equating to £1.54 more a week for a band D house - is also part of the four-year plan given the thumbs-up at a meeting this afternoon (Wednesday).

Budget papers show that rapidly rising demand for services, and inflation, is driving up costs by £214m, compared to expected extra income and savings of £123m.

Around £95m more will now be spent supporting vulnerable children and adults, the current programme for fixing potholes and roads will increase by £28m and another £1.5m will be invested in helping communities clean up and become flood-ready, bringing the total to £18.4m by 2029.

Reserves will be used to manage a small budget gap next year – by 2027, this gap is forecast to increase to £38m and rise to £91m by 2029.

Pressure on councils' budgets continues to mount. And simply put, the cost of extra demand by far outweighs any increased income.

We're doing the best we can with the funding we have - and investing money to provide vital support, keep our roads moving and get communities back on their feet after the terrible New Year floods.

The 'extra' money for councils that Government has announced so far doesn't cover the impact of National Insurance and Living Wage rises, let alone shift the dial. It's clear Government needs to tackle the big issues driving our costs head.

The council's yearly budget totals £615m – the authority is one of the biggest organisations in the county, spending around £10m every week on crucial services for Leicestershire residents.

Taking tough decisions has stood us in good stead and means we're not at crisis point.

We're lean, high-performing and low funded, but need change to enable us to keep on delivering the services we know our residents value.

No one wants to increase Council Tax but without it, we'd have to make £20m more savings next year, and consultation feedback showed good support for our proposals.

The budget at a glance:

- The books balance for next year by using reserves to manage a small gap – with a budget gap of £38m in 2027, rising to £91m by 2029
- £1m extra to support flood-hit communities - following the devastating flooding in the New Year, plus £500k until April
- £95m more to support vulnerable people – in response to huge increase in demand
- An increase on the current four-year capital programme of £28m to help fix potholes and repair roads - taking the total spend on roads and related infrastructure, major schemes and tackling flooding to £156m
- **A Council Tax rise of 4.99% from April – generating an extra £20m, which covers only the National Living Wage and National Insurance rises before any increased service demand is taken into account**
- £33m of savings – including redesigning services, reducing the cost of back-office support services by maximising digital technology and smarter procurement, plus £52m to bring spend on SEND more in line with Government funding
- A £439m four-year capital pot – to fund one-costs of building roads, social care accommodation, new school places needed to support new housing, and more

**Save Groby and Ratby Post Offices.**



**Ram Ratby postmaster and Ila Groby Post Mistress.**

Royal mail and the Post Office have given notice to both Ratby and Groby post offices that they will be moving their sorting offices to their Meridian sorting centre. Both post masters say that this will leave their businesses unviable. Post offices are a very important part of our community and many elderly residents depend on them after our local banks and building societies have closed down. I also have concern for our post men and women who work at the branches.

Working with both Ratby and Groby Parish Councils I call on Royal Mail to change their minds in order to protect this vital community service for both communities. I have the support of our local MP Peter Bedford, who has written to the Post Office at my request.

The Petition is going well. Unfortunately, someone accidentally, removed 9 pages of signatures from Groby Post the other week. I would please ask them to return them. I will be sending the petition in at the end of this month.

Last Month I brought a none political motion to the Borough Council urging Royal mail to change their minds it had cross party support and was unanimously passed and supported and I kindly asked Cllr Cartwright to Second my motion. The Chief Executive of Hinckley and Bosworth Council will now be writing to Royal mail also as a result of my motion to ask them to reconsider this move.

**Please sign this petition Paper copies in the Groby Library the Deli Wilsons and Groby Post office**

**Ratby Library, Ratby Co-op Ratby Post Office and Moores Convience Store. Or**

**Click the link below to sign the on line petition**

**<https://www.change.org/save-our-post-offices>**

**County Councillor Ozzy O'shea.**

**Or**

**Scan the QR code to sign the petition.**



### **Beware of Cold Callers.**

I was contacted by a concerned elderly resident who had been visited by a cold caller in Groby. I attended and spoke with the residents. A male had visited elderly residents informing them that there were problems with the occupant's roof. However, in one case a resident did have a genuine problem with his roof that he was already aware of. However, they did not let the caller do any work. The elderly resident I visited had a perfectly sound roof and he had been told he the needed his roof repairing. If some cold calls you telling you have a problem with you roof, please do not allow them to carry out work. Contact a relative first or arrange for a local trades person to check it. I managed to get the details of this cold caller and pass the details onto trading standards who are investigating. I will always make myself available and visit if necessary to give advice to residents.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank residents and councillors for your continued support. I am available at Parish Council meetings, or I can visit you if you need help or advice. Remember I am only an Email or a phone call away.

***Ozzy O'shea.***

***Always Working for you Locally. Was a p***

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