



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

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Chief Digital and Information Officer (CDIO)



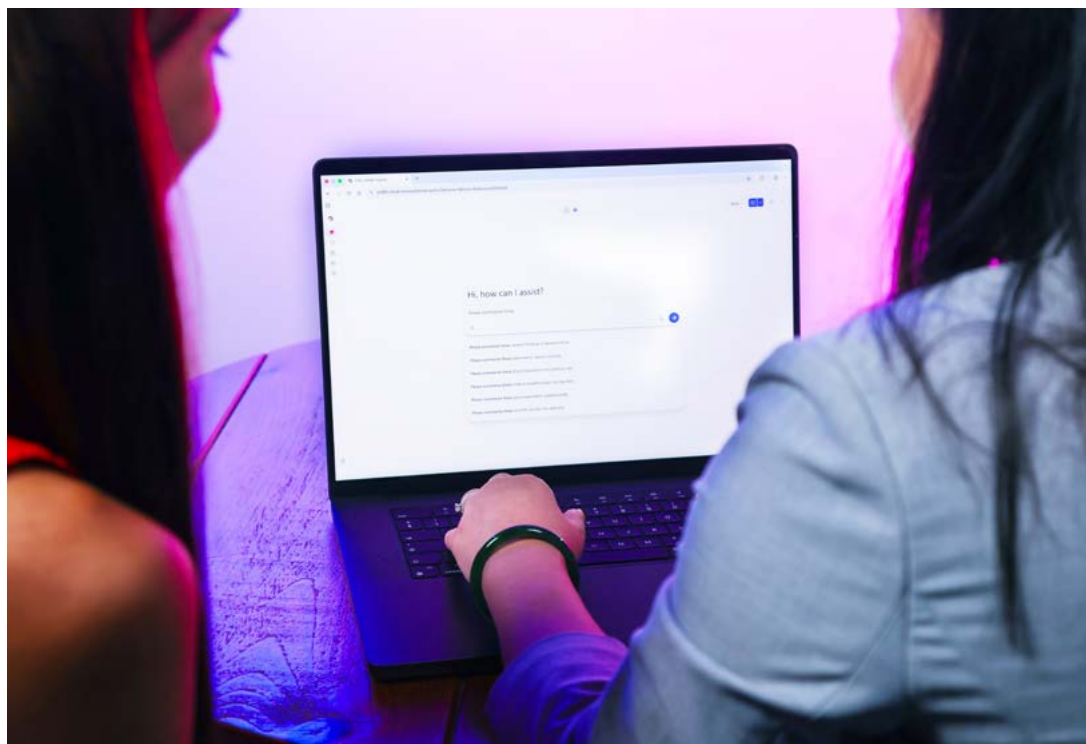
We are Citizens of Change



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Welcome from the President and Vice-Chancellor

Diverse in our makeup and united in ambition –
we pursue excellence in knowledge and learning to
transform our community, our world and beyond.
We are Citizens of Change.

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in this exciting opportunity to help shape the future of one of the UK's most ambitious and forward-thinking universities.

The University's Citizens of Change strategy continues to guide our direction, with its commitment to research inspired education, world changing research, and a strong focus on people, partnerships and impact. As we look ahead, we are actively refreshing our strategy to build on our progress and ensure we remain responsive to a rapidly evolving higher education landscape.

At the heart of our approach are three enduring values, inclusive, inspiring and impactful, which define who we are and the University we aspire to be.



PROFESSOR SIR NISHAN CANAGARAJAH
PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

We believe equity, diversity and inclusion are fundamental to creating a thriving environment for work and study. With staff and students from over 100 countries, we benefit from a rich diversity of perspectives that strengthen both our University community and our city.

Our recent achievements reflect this strong foundation. Leicester has been named Daily Mail University of the Year 2025 and shortlisted for Times Higher Education University of the Year 2024 and The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2025. We now rank 28th in The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2026 and have risen to 33rd in the Complete University Guide. We are also proud to be in the top 15 for student satisfaction in the 2025 National Student Survey, and to have been ranked 26th globally for Research Quality in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2026.

Our academic excellence is further reflected in a Gold rating in the Teaching Excellence Framework and a top 30 performance in the Research Excellence Framework, with REF 2021 marking our strongest ever result and a significant rise in national rankings.

We are also responding decisively to the financial challenges facing the higher education sector, including constrained funding, rising costs and global uncertainty.

We continue to deliver impact at scale. Over the past three years, we have secured more than £100 million in research funding on multiple occasions, including a landmark £10 million award from the Leverhulme Trust to establish the Leverhulme Centre for Humanity and Space. We are also advancing major international partnerships, including our collaboration with Apollo Hospitals in India through the Centre for Digital Health and Precision Medicine, and expanding our global footprint across Asia through strategic partnerships and recruitment initiatives.

Against this backdrop, Leicester continues to strengthen its position, with sustained improvement in league tables, strong National Student Survey outcomes and excellent performance in the Knowledge Exchange Framework, reflecting the commitment and talent of our staff and students.

The Chief Digital and Information Officer (CDIO) will lead a newly formed portfolio that brings together Digital Services and Library and Learning Services, supporting the University's ambition to become a sector-leading, AI-enabled institution. This role represents a significant opportunity for you to embed digital-first thinking across education, research and operations, ensuring that

technology and innovation are central to the University's future success. As the inaugural post holder, you will be responsible for establishing the credibility and influence of the role within governance and leadership structures, while enhancing the University's external profile and reputation in the digital domain.

As one of the UK's first Microsoft Frontier Universities, we are investing in AI, digital innovation and the talented people who will help shape our future.

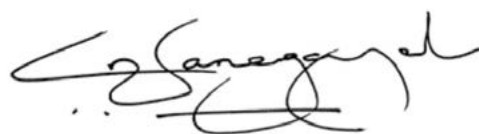
This is an exciting opportunity to join a forward-thinking institution where technology drives better education, research and services, and where your work can have a lasting impact.

As a member of the University's senior leadership community, you will shape and deliver an ambitious digital and AI strategy that drives meaningful organisational change and unlocks tangible value. This includes strengthening digital capability through investment in people, skills and future-ready infrastructure, and fostering a culture that embraces innovation, agility and continuous improvement. Working collaboratively across the institution, you will champion a digital-first mindset, ensuring that colleagues are empowered to adapt and thrive in a rapidly evolving and resource-constrained higher education environment.

You will also unite the strengths of the existing divisions to create a seamless, integrated, digitally enabled experience for students and staff. This will involve ensuring close collaboration with academic schools and colleges to support innovation in teaching, learning and operations, while aligning services to strategic priorities. By driving effective planning, prioritisation and delivery, you will ensure that activity is executed consistently, on time and within budget, supporting the University's broader mission and long-term strategic goals.

This is a significant and challenging role for a candidate of the highest calibre – someone with vision, drive, and the ability to leave a lasting legacy of achievement.

If Leicester sounds like the place for you, and you have the skills, experience, and ambition to make a difference, we look forward to hearing from you.



PROFESSOR SIR NISHAN CANAGARAJAH
PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR



We are ensuring that Leicester staff are well placed to adapt, lead and thrive in an evolving AI-landscape, and that our students are ready to meet the demands of any future workplace.

About the University of Leicester



The University of Leicester is a dynamic and inclusive institution, celebrated for our inspiring academic programmes, ground-breaking research, and supportive community.

Founded over 100 years ago as a symbol of hope for the future, we are the only university in Europe established by its community as a living legacy to those who made sacrifices during the First World War. This is reflected in our motto, *Ut vitam habeant* – ‘so that they may have life.’

Based in one of the UK’s and Europe’s most culturally diverse cities, our identity and mission have been shaped by this rich tapestry. Students and staff from around the globe come together to engage here, contributing an incredible array of perspectives, beliefs, and approaches that enhance both our university and the vibrant city of Leicester.

We play a vital role in the regional economy, serving as a leading employer and an active supporter of music, arts, sports, and culture. Each year, we contribute over £360 million to Leicester’s economy, underscoring our commitment to the community.

Our commitment to excellence is evident in our recent investment of over £500 million, which has transformed our campus into a world-class environment with state-of-the-art facilities designed for the future.

As Citizens of Change, our researchers are dedicated to tackling some of today’s most pressing challenges, from combating viruses and diseases to improving air quality, protecting our natural environment and promoting social justice. The diversity of our research reflects the rich variety of our community, creating a broad impact on society.

Our reputation speaks for itself, with global recognition for our discoveries and contributions to advancing knowledge. Our standing in the league tables positions us among the leading universities in the UK.

While we take pride in our heritage and accomplishments, the University of Leicester is resolutely focused on the future. Our spirit of discovery inspires innovative thinking, empowering us to seize new opportunities as we embark on our second century.

We have committed over £20m in our current capital programme to support our digital ambitions with several major projects underway, including: ERP replacement, CRM implementation for the whole student lifecycle, and a network infrastructure upgrade.

16,860
undergraduate
students



£340 million
research portfolio (live grants)
from over 250 funders



4,638
postgraduate
students



4,215
staff



30%
international
students



£396 million
turnover



2025 Statistics



Digital Services and Library & Learning Services

Digital Services

Operates an annual pay budget of £7.5m, a staff headcount of 125, and a non-pay budget of £7.1m. Like all professional services divisions, staff operate to our Worksmart principles, splitting their time between campus- and home-based working. The division is organised into three over-arching functions:

- Strategy & Architecture (Strategic Alignment, Business Analysis, Architecture & Assurance)
- Delivery Management (Portfolio Management, Development Operations, Data Operations)
- Service Management (Customer Excellence, Technical Operations, Talent Management, Financial Management, Service Performance, Security & Risk)

The University operates on-premise data centres for its own activities, and also hosts a number of data services for other users, with an infrastructure strategy to increase cloud services. The University also operates a range of research computing services, including the national DIRAC high performance computing service.

Library & Learning Services

Operates an annual pay budget of £2.7m, a staff headcount of 106, and a non-pay budget of £4.4. The Library, our collections and our services can be found at the heart of the campus. Underpinning learning and research and providing information and support to our students, staff and communities. The Library offers a range of services, including:

- Information Hub – for help with library and student lifecycle enquiries
- Centre for Academic Achievement – one-to-one help, advice and online resources for students
- Digital Learning Innovation team – supporting academic schools and colleges to embed digital learning into the curriculum and education experience
- Library services – providing access to information, journals, books, and training
- Archives and special collections – our collection of rare books, manuscripts, historical photographs, and personal archives



Citizens of Change Strategy

The University's Citizens of Change strategy has been successful over the last five years in growing the student population to over 26,000 students, achieving over £100m per annum in research awards, being top 30 nationally in the REF, and TEF Gold in 2023. Our values of inclusive, impact, and inspiring underpin everything we do in the University. Underpinning the Education, Research and Citizens themes in the Citizens of Change strategy, our Digital Masterplan has four aims:

- We will become a data driven university enabling innovation, making decisions based on evidence, focused on value and outcomes
- Using Automation and AI we will combine a deep understanding of customer behaviour and needs, freeing up time to focus on the customer experience
- Using hyper-personalisation we will delivery more personal and tailored products, services and information through omnichannel journeys in real time
- Agile and adaptive in approach we will move from rigid to resilient, transforming how we work and sparking innovation and growth in the digital age

As we enter the sixth year of our strategy, we are embarking on a Strategy Refresh during 2026-27, to review our achievements and set out our ambition for the next 5-10 years.

The successful candidate for the CDIO role will be expected to play a visible and pivotal role in finalising the Refresh and then executing focused and impactful delivery.



The role

Job Title:

Chief Digital and Information Officer (CDIO)

Grade:

10

Salary:

Commensurate with skills and experience

Department:

Registrar and Secretary's Office

Hours/Contract

Full time, permanent

Job Family:

Management and Administration

Role purpose

As the University's first Chief Digital and Information Officer (CDIO), you will be expected to establish the role in the organisation's leadership and management structures. You will lead the transformation of our digital and information landscape, driving business value and technological excellence across the University. We are investing in human-centred digital success and you will join at an exciting time, following the University's very recent announcement to put artificial intelligence at the heart of our future strategy as a frontier university leading the sector. You will ensure that digital is embedded in our Education, Research and Citizen strategies, and enables operational excellence across all aspects of the University's activities. You will be accountable for £40m expenditure split across revenue and capital. As an Associate Member of the University Executive Board you will influence the direction of all aspects of the University's life and culture, advocating a digital-first mindset at all times, and operate as a strategic digital ambassador for the University nationally.

Resources managed

Division of Digital Services, £7.5m pay (123FTE), £7m non-pay.

Division of Library & Learning Services, £2.5m pay (87FTE), £4.5m non-pay.

Main duties and responsibilities

Strategic leadership

- Setting the institutional ambition to put digital at the heart of the student and staff experience by 2030
- Driving change through empowering and inspiring others, always staying focused on the future, underpinned by robust organisational change mechanisms
- Accountable for leading the development and impactful delivery of the University's Digital Transformation Strategy, including AI, strategically planning the associated capital and revenue resources, and creating executive alignment on transformation and technology evolutions
- Work in partnership internally to ensure the Education, Research and Our Citizen strategies have digital thinking, AI and technology embedded, so that business value and return on investment is fully realised
- Influence the strategic direction of the University through associate membership of the Executive Board and membership of the Senior Leadership Team and Professional Services Executive
- Operate as a visible and accessible thought leader, to co-facilitate cultural change across the University, embedding a digital first mindset, working in partnership with HR to spearhead campaigns to ensure digital skills and AI literacy are developed and embedded
- Establish strategic partnerships with other senior leaders, co-leading initiatives in respect of information, digital and technology, connecting business needs with digitalisation potential

Service delivery

- Provide strategic direction to the Divisions within the portfolio area, ensuring alignment to the University's strategy, driving impactful change
- Lead cultural and organisational change within the portfolio as required to ensure the capabilities exist to meet the University's AI and transformation ambitions, in which IT business partnering with other business areas will be increasingly critical to success
- Lead planning and budgeting processes within the portfolio, ensuring allocation of resources to strategic priorities, with a strong focus on business benefits
- Ensure operationally excellent service delivery across all aspects of the portfolio area, with measurable impact of

deliverables, driving a 'best in class' approach to ensure the highest standards are delivered on projects to time, budget and quality

- Establish a communications and engagement approach to ensure information and digital opportunities, risks, and successes are communicated widely across the University
- Ensure AI enablement across the University as it transitions from experimentation to enterprise-wide integration, building organisational capability and demonstrating measurable returns
- Lead the continued modernisation of the University's IT infrastructure, addressing technical debt whilst ensuring system stability and scalability, ensuring agile governance practices, cloud migrations, and application modernisation

Student experience

- Work collaboratively with other senior leaders to drive the digitalisation of the Leicester student experience in the UK and globally, so that our students graduate with best-in-class digital and AI skills
- Lead plans and initiatives to ensure that the students' customer experience is seamless, digitally-enabled, and meets their expectations
- Co-create innovative initiatives with students which support professional development opportunities

External reputation

- Act as a strategic ambassador for the University nationally, contributing to the national higher education conversation on sector-wide developments
- Develop the University's reputation as a frontier university, leading the sector in its use of artificial intelligence to transform business outcomes
- Own and develop strategic external partnerships which facilitate the development of the University's information and digital ambitions
- Ensure the University has strong mechanisms for vendor management and the performance of associated contracts

Compliance

- Accountable for cyber security, risk management, and leadership/oversight of associated mitigation plans where required
- Accountable for ensuring the University is compliant with relevant external standards and expectations

- Accountable for ensuring high levels of stability and resilience within all services and systems provided by the portfolio area
- Lead a strategic shift in corporate infrastructure from ‘on premise’ to ‘cloud’, minimising technical debt and ensuring regular audit cycles for the University’s digital assets and ecosystems

Internal and external relationships

– Memberships

- Associate Member of University Executive Board
- Member of Senior Leadership Team
- Member of Professional Services Executive

– Internal

- Professional Services Directors
- Members of Council and Senate
- Students’ Union executive team
- Divisional leadership teams

– External

- Strategic partners such as JISC, Microsoft
- Sector associations such as UCISA

Planning and organising

- Develops and communicates institutional strategy
- Develops and monitors institution-wide plans in portfolio area
- Ensures overall delivery of digital project portfolio, both transformational and operational excellence elements
- Leads and manages planning processes for £24.5m annual revenue expenditure
- Plans and organises £25m capital expenditure as part of transformation strategy

Qualifications, knowledge and experience

Essential

*Criteria to be used in shortlisting candidates for interview.

- Experience of senior strategic digital leadership in a large complex organisation, planning and executing organisation-wide strategy*
- Proven track record of shaping and delivering large-scale digital transformation programmes, on time, on budget, and with measurable high quality impact*

- Experience of operating routinely at Board level, advocating for digital and information as part of organisational strategy*
- Outstanding technical knowledge and experience necessary to provide professional leadership to c.200 information and digital professionals*
- Experience of leading pan-organisational cultural change to deliver technology-led business value to provide a return on investment and achieve organisational goals*
- Extensive knowledge of how AI, digital and information enablement can support inclusive education, research and operational services*
- Experience of balancing strategic and operational imperatives, with a focus on continuous improvements and outcomes*
- Experience of being data informed and analytical in decision-making and leadership*
- Strong understanding of the role AI and digital skills development can play in successful student outcomes and future careers*

Desirable

- Experience of working in and/or a deep understanding of the higher education sector in the UK

Skills, abilities and competencies

Essential

- Inspirational leadership skill set with the vision, creativity and innovation to shape and drive ambitious pan-organisation transformational change, enabled by AI and technology*
- Strategy development and strategic planning skills, including programme and project planning, monitoring and review*
- Ability to lead beyond technical execution, leading multi-disciplinary teams across the organisation, as well lead and manage large numbers of senior direct reports*
- Budgeting and resource optimisation skills, to ensure agility and a product-based approach which is focused on outcomes and benefits*
- Ability to see things from the customer perspective, with skills in lean-based operational improvement approaches*
- Ability to communicate effectively to a wide of audiences at strategic Board level and below, including

the ability to explain technical complexity to non-expert audiences, and the ability to communicate the business value of IT effectively*

- A strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion*
- Commercial nous and strong negotiation and influencing skills, to ensure best value from the University's partners and suppliers*
- An aptitude for collaboration and working with others to achieve strategic goals*

Criminal declaration

If you become an employee, you must inform your manager immediately, in writing, if you are the subject of any current or future police investigations/legal proceedings, which could result in a criminal offence, conviction, caution, bind-over or charges, or warnings.

Supporting university activities

As a University of Leicester citizen, you are encouraged to support key university activities such as clearing, graduation ceremonies, student registration and recruitment open days. We encourage all staff as citizens to work flexibly across the University if required. If supporting these activities is likely to affect your workload, please speak to your line manager in the first instance.

University values

Inclusive – We are diverse in our makeup and united in ambition. Our diversity is our strength and makes our community stronger.

Inspiring – We are passionate about inspiring individuals to succeed and realise their ambitions. We challenge our community to think differently, to get involved, and to constantly embrace new ideas.

Impactful – As Citizens of Change we will generate new ideas which deliver impact and empower our community.

Freedom of speech

The University is committed to upholding freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law throughout our recruitment processes. We ensure that all candidates are considered based on merit and suitability for the role, without regard to their lawful viewpoints or the expression of challenging or controversial ideas. Our recruitment policies and practices are designed to protect applicants from discrimination or adverse treatment on the basis of their opinions, and to foster an environment where open debate and diverse perspectives are valued as essential to our academic mission.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

We believe that equity, diversity and inclusion is integral to a successful modern workplace. By developing and implementing policies and systems that challenge stereotypes across all aspects of our work, we have a culture that recognises and values the diverse contributions of our staff which benefits everyone.

Our strong values of inclusivity and equality support our efforts to attract a diverse range of high quality staff and students, and identify our University as a progressive and innovative workplace that mainstreams equality, diversity and inclusion.

How to apply

For further information and details of how to apply, please contact **Alan Walter** at alan@dixonwalter.co.uk or on **07876 766972**. Further details can be found at: <https://www.dixonwalter.co.uk/opportunities/chief-digital-information-officer/>

Applications should be made via email to alan@dixonwalter.co.uk by **Sunday 23 August 2026** and must include on separate documents:

- A letter of application setting out your interest in the role and details of how you match the person specification
- A comprehensive curriculum vitae (CV)
- Details of three referees (including current or most recent manager and notice period, referees will not be contacted without your permission)
- A completed Personal details form (available from the email above)

The closing date for applications is **Sunday 23 August 2026**. Initial discussions and preliminary interviews with Dixon Walter will take place the weeks commencing 7 and 14 September 2026 and final stage interviews with the University from week commencing 5 October 2026.

In making an application for this role we ask you also to view our Privacy Notice which outlines our compliance to General Data Protection Regulations and the use and storage of your data. Personal Data is held and processed on the lawful basis that such action is in the Legitimate Interest of the company in pursuing the purposes described and has been considered through the use of a Legitimate Interest Assessment utilising the Balance Test to not be outweighed by risks to the rights, freedoms and interests of the Data Subject.

Please visit the following link in order to find more information about the use of personal information provided by candidates to the University of Leicester. le.ac.uk/ias/data-protection.



Living in Leicester

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are rich in culture, heritage, and leisure activities, from our vibrant multicultural city, to the beautiful market towns and rural villages.

Often described as the heart of rural England, the area features beautiful country villages, the National Forest, great rivers and castles and a cosmopolitan city centre, making it an exciting and diverse place to live and work.

Leicester is one of the UK's ten largest cities and represents the largest economy in the East Midlands region. It has a bustling and diverse atmosphere and recent regeneration (to the tune of £3 billion) has made this cosmopolitan city even more exciting. Leicester is home to the state-of-the-art Curve theatre, as well as large and multicultural festivals. It is famous for its diversity and offers an amazing chance to dive into many different cultural

celebrations. Leicester celebrates Diwali (the Festival of Light) with spectacular lights, stunning street parades and dazzling fireworks. This is attended by 35,000 people and is the largest celebration of the festival outside of India. The city also hosts an annual Pride Parade (Leicester Pride), a Caribbean Carnival and the largest comedy festival in the UK.

The University, working in close partnership with the city, has been the inspiration behind two of Leicester's most famous tourist attractions. The award-winning National Space Centre – the UK's largest attraction dedicated to space exploration – and the King Richard III Visitor Centre which retells the dramatic story of the University's discovery of England's most infamous King. Leicester is well-known as a sporting capital – hosting the country's best-supported rugby team the Leicester Tigers as well as Leicester City Football Club and Leicestershire County Cricket Club.

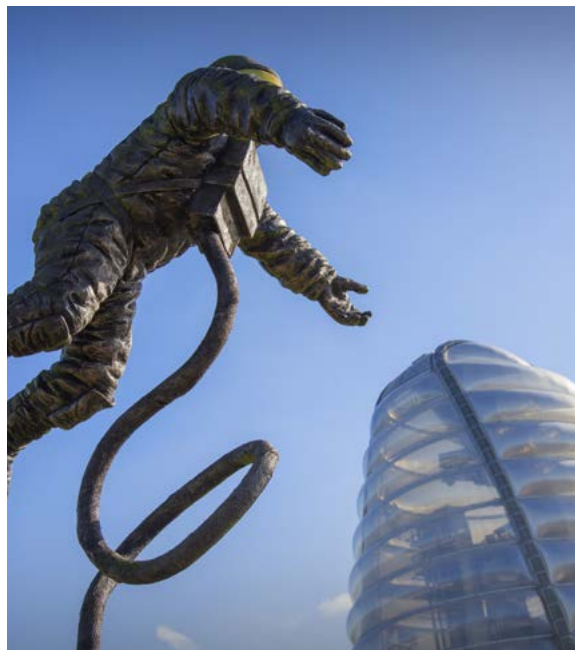
The city benefits from a large number of public parks including Abbey Park and also Victoria Park which is adjacent to the University. Leicester is steeped in history, dating back to the original Iron Age settlement which was to become an important Roman trading centre with a commanding position on one of Britain's



Leicester represents the largest economy in the East Midlands region.

most important routes – the Fosse Way. Leicester's manufacturing industry reached its height in the 20th century, driven by world-renowned hosiery, textile, and footwear enterprises that shaped the city's identity and powered its economic growth.

On Leicester's doorstep is the National Forest, offering cycling, riding and walkways, adventure activities and some of the most impressive landscapes in the region, including Charnwood Forest and Swithland Reservoir. To the east is Rutland Water, one of the largest man-made reservoirs in Europe, which supports a wide range of water sports. Leicester and the surrounding region offer a wide choice of property to buy or rent. In the city itself, there is a diverse mix of housing and apartments. Both new and older properties, including substantial homes, can be found in leafy parts of Leicester within easy reach of the University. Alternatively, there is property available in the attractive villages and market towns in Leicestershire and Rutland such as Market Harborough and Oakham.





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