

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 18TH MAY 2016**POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****Sporting Achievements**Leicester City Football Club

I am sure that all members will wish to join me in congratulating Leicester City Football Club on winning the Premier League against all odds.

As I said in my letter to the Club this is a tremendous achievement and their success has enhanced the already high reputation of the City and County enjoys following the re-interment of King Richard III.

It is important that we build on this success and reap the benefits of this achievement. For my part I have spoken to the City Mayor and others about how we take full advantage of the tremendous publicity that has been generated worldwide to promote the City and County as a good place to live, work and play!

Mark Selby

Congratulations are also due to Mark Selby following his sensational victory at the World Snooker Championship. As this happened on the day when Leicester won the Premier League, Mark did not get the recognition and publicity he richly deserves.

Leicester Riders

It would be remiss not to recognise the achievements of the Leicester Riders Basketball Team who recently moved to their new purpose built facility.

Leicester Riders won the BBL Trophy and BBL Championship but narrowly lost in the play off for the Molten BBL Trophy.

To cap that success the Riders Coach, Rob Paternostro, was named Molten Ed Percival Coach of the Year.

Leicester City Women

Leicester City Women Football team have won the Premier League Midlands Division One title. What is remarkable about this is that they had a 100% record – winning 22 games, scoring 93 goals and conceding just 19!

Leicester Tigers

For the 12th successive season, Leicester Tigers have finished in the top four of the League. They are now in the play offs and in the hunt for an 11th English Title.

Leicestershire County Cricket

The cricket team has struggled in recent years. However with new management in place it is pleasing to note that they have made an excellent start to the season. I am sure that our cricketers will take inspiration from the sporting achievements I have highlighted and we will soon be seeing Leicestershire playing First Division cricket.

Police and Crime Commissioner

May I take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to Lord Willy Bach on his election as the new Police and Crime Commissioner.

Lord Bach brings with him a wealth of experience both from local and national government perspectives which can only benefit the people of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Fighting crime and antisocial behaviour is not only a matter for the Police but all public authorities and I have met with Lord Bach along with the City Mayor and the Leader of Rutland, to start to discuss how we can, together, address the challenges facing communities in Leicestershire.

Pam Posnett

I was delighted to learn that Pam Posnett had been elected Leader of Melton Borough Council to succeed Byron Rhodes.

Pam Posnett has been a member of my Cabinet since 2012 and has excelled in the various portfolios she has held. Melton is fortunate to have such a capable person taking over the helm.

I am looking forward to working with Pam in her new role to address issues of mutual interest and in particular seek to deliver the Melton bypass. On the Melton bypass, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sir Alan Duncan for his support in helping to get the funding packages together for the scheme.

Adult Social Care Peer Review

The Adults & Communities Department has been subject to a Peer Review process, as part of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) Sector Led Improvement programme. The process allows local authorities to be open to challenge from their peers and to get support from them in order to inform improvement and drive change.

During the review the team met with and heard from lead members, key partners and a range of county council officers together with service users, carers and providers.

The initial feedback was very positive citing a number of key strengths such as

- Committed and energetic leadership and workforce
- strong integrated working led through the Chief Executive's Office
- Having 'all the ingredients in place' for integrated services
- Staff with the right values
- Robust financial management with improvement in performance

A formal letter will be received by the Council in the next few days following which the department will draft a plan to take forward any actions which in due course will be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Can I thank Mr Houseman, the Cabinet Lead Member, and the excellent team of officers who work so hard to ensure that the services we deliver are of the highest quality and that health and social care services which are so vital to the most vulnerable in our society are delivered in a joined-up manner.

Low-funded County Councils - Funding update

I have reported previously on the low level of funding this Council receives compared to similar authorities. We are continuing to pull together a strong case for improved funding for Leicestershire. I recently met with the Leaders of Staffordshire, Lincolnshire and Worcestershire County Councils who all agreed to join our group of similarly financially disadvantaged councils which will ensure we have a much louder voice when it comes to influencing future funding decisions. I am also pleased that Albert Costa MP has agreed to lead the campaign to press the Government for change to benefit Leicestershire.

The Secretary of State has already said he thinks we have a particularly strong case for a review of the match between needs and resources. So the next stage is to come up with a new Local Government Finance system. Officers have started work in what is a notoriously difficult area. We aim to come up with a much simpler system that is transparent, fair and incentives effective service delivery over the summer. We will share this with our MPs and continue to lobby Government for much overdue change. The successful F40 campaign on schools funding shows what is possible.

Academies Agenda

The Schools White Paper, and particularly the future arrangements for schools to move to academy status, has received high profile recently.

I have met with Nicky Morgan twice in the last month to outline our concerns about requiring all schools including good schools to become academies. I am pleased that the Department for Education (DfE) has now confirmed that this will not be the future approach. It is also good to know that small rural schools and their sustainability will receive special attention.

The Government's overall ambition has not changed and it is still expected that all schools will become academies and will enter into Multi-Academy Trust arrangements, I would hope at a time that suits them, with the right partners.

The County Council will continue to work closely with all Leicestershire schools and the two Dioceses, and also directly with the DfE, to make sure that our schools are able to make the right choices at the right time.

Combined Authority and Devolution Update

Good progress continues to be made on developing an ambitious, deliverable devolution deal proposal for negotiation with Government. Last week the Economic Growth Board, now acting as the Shadow Combined Authority, approved the development of detailed business cases for a suite of devolved powers and funds. I have worked very closely with the City Mayor, district council Leaders and the Chairman of the LLEP to keep our partnership strong, to ensure our governance is robust and to maintain a focus on developing a deal which will strengthen our economy and public services. I have also kept our MPs up to speed on local developments and secured their support for the approach we are taking. As a result of this we are in a strong position compared with other areas where differences about geography and governance have proved to be major distractions. We plan to start discussing the detail of our proposed Deal with Government in the early summer.

One of our strengths is the strong working relationship we have with business, especially with the LLEP. Ministers have emphasised the importance of proposals being business-led and I will continue to give this a high priority, including by securing a vote for the LLEP on the Combined Authority, making Leicester and Leicestershire one of the few areas where this is the case.

You will recall that our Combined Authority proposal was submitted to Government at the beginning of this year. I understand it is being considered by Ministers this month and that we remain on track to have a Combined Authority established by the autumn. This will be a major step forward for our area and provide a strong platform for future work to grow our economy and secure devolved powers and funding from Whitehall.