

**MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****WEDNESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2020 AT 2.00 PM****ORDER PAPER****MEETING PROTOCOL**

Before we begin could I remind members of the rules for this on-line meeting. These are set out on the Order Paper.

- Switch off or keep your mobiles on silent.
- During the meeting keep your microphone muted until called to speak. If your microphone is left on please note that an officer will mute it remotely.
- I have a list of members who wish to speak on each item. I will read these out after the motion has been moved and seconded. If any member not on the list wishes to speak please use the raise hand function. Before finishing each item, I will check that all members who wish to speak have been able to do so.
- When called to speak unmute your microphone and please mute again when you finished speaking.
- If at any point the webcast fails we will have a short adjournment, please stay on line while the problem is resolved.
- At the end of the debate to avoid a lengthy roll-call every time I will ask if you all agree with the recommendations. Please say if you DISAGREE. If no-one disagrees then I will declare that the motion is carried.
- If a vote is required you will be asked to indicate if you are FOR or AGAINST – Keep your microphone muted until your name is called. Please speak clearly when asked.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman will make her announcements.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 – MINUTES**  
**(Pages 5 to 30)**

MRS POSNETT will move and MR KAUFMAN will second:

“That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 30 September 2020, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed.”

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman will invite members who wish to do so to make declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 4**  
**QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 7(1) (2) & (5)**

**(A) Question by MR SHEAHAN**

“It has been recognised that many Early Years providers have had significant reductions of children attending preschool. How many early years places have been lost in Leicestershire, expressed both numerically and as a percentage?”

**Reply by MRS TAYLOR**

“Since March 2020, 9 pre-schools and day nurseries and 33 childminders have closed resulting in a loss of 436 places.

However, over the same period 6 pre-school and day nurseries and 20 childminders have opened offering a total of 333 places.

Therefore, in total there has been a loss of 103 places (0.88%) in Leicestershire since March 2020.”

**(B) Question by MR SHEAHAN**

“There have been concerns from Head Teachers, reported nationally, that some students have fallen behind after the closure of schools. What assessment has been made of this trend in Leicestershire? Is it known how much further disadvantaged pupils have fallen behind in comparison with their peers due to school closures and what arrangements have been made to ensure there is appropriate and targeted catch-up support?”

**Reply by MRS TAYLOR**

“Most students across Leicestershire were out of school from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 until the beginning of the Autumn Term 2020. Over this period schools remained open for children of key workers and those children who were deemed to be vulnerable. Children who were not in school over this period were provided with education through their school, predominantly through online methods.

As children have returned to school in the Autumn Term all schools have undertaken an assessment of all children in order to fully understand the impact of the period of time out of school and learning at home. It appears that the impact of pupils’ time out of education in Leicestershire, mirrors the gap reported nationally which is that the curriculum learning gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has increased by 46 per cent compared with July 2019.

In the summer (2020) the Government announced £1 billion of funding to support children and young people to catch up lost time after school closure. The funding is especially important for the most vulnerable children and those children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This funding includes:

- a one-off universal £650 million catch up premium for the 2020 to 2021 academic year to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time
- a £350 million [National Tutoring Programme](#) to provide additional, targeted support for those children and young people who need the most help, which includes:
  - a schools programme for 5 to 16-year-olds – for more information, see the [National Tutoring Programme FAQs](#)
  - a [16 to 19 tuition fund](#)
  - an oral language intervention programme for [reception-aged children](#)

Individual schools are responsible for planning their programmes of work to support children to catch up.

Through the County Council’s Education Effectiveness Team, school leaders have accessed training on recovery curriculum, provided jointly by the Local Authority and school leaders on what this means and how it could be structured and implemented. Training sessions on planning for effective remote learning in schools and another on the most effective use of the catch-up funding allocated to schools by the Department for Education have also been well attended by school leaders.”

**(C) Question by MR SHEAHAN**

“Early on, it was anticipated that schools would require access to computer equipment for those children who needed that support. How many pieces of equipment were delivered to schools in Leicestershire?”

In preparation for further periods of home-based learning, how will the County Council work with schools to survey pupils and parents to better understand the need for digital equipment and resources?”

**Reply by MRS TAYLOR**

“IT equipment has been delivered in different phases. 893 laptops were issued directly to Leicestershire County Council which have been allocated and distributed to children known to social care or who are looked after, as well as those who are now in their GCSE year in the local authority maintained schools. In the same scheme, all academies preparing children for GCSEs also received an allocation directly for them to allocate to pupils.

A further allocation of laptops has been made for schools directly by the Department for Education, enabling schools to apply for laptops once ‘bubbles’ of students have been sent home to isolate. We only have access to details for the allocation to local authority maintained schools, which currently totals 267 for 89 schools.

Schools are responsible for the allocation of IT equipment and are best placed to understand the needs of pupils attending their schools.

The County Council's Education Effectiveness Team is actively engaging with schools through the Leicestershire Education Excellence Partnership to establish needs and co-ordinate support.

This has included training on the use of remote learning in partnership with the Edutech Demonstrator schools, as well as communicating and facilitating schemes to enhance provision, such as the rural broadband roll out for schools and communities, and the Vodafone offer of free data SIMS for disadvantaged pupils."

**(D) Question by MR SHEAHAN**

"How has the County Council been monitoring the impact on support for vulnerable learners due to the temporary relaxation of the 2014 SEND Regulations and has the Council prioritised restoring support to these learners?"

**Reply by MRS TAYLOR**

"Temporary relaxations were introduced by the Secretary of State for Education for a limited period of time. The relaxations affected timescales for undertaking initial Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessments and the ability to exercise some flexibility in terms of the provision to be made available through an EHC Plan.

**Relaxation of timescales for undertaking EHCPs.** This relaxation enabled Local Authorities to identify where any delay in producing an initial EHCP within the expected 20 week timescale was due to reasons attributable to Covid-19. This 'temporary relaxation' applied between 1<sup>st</sup> May and 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020. In Leicestershire we did not record any such delays as being due to Covid-19.

**The ability to exercise some flexibility in terms of the provision to be made available through an EHC Plan.** The temporary relaxations removed the legal requirement to provide the exact provision stated in the EHC Plan and instead placed an expectation that the local authority/or the NHS can make 'Reasonable Endeavours' to provide the support. This 'temporary relaxation' applied only between 1<sup>st</sup> May and 31<sup>st</sup> July.

The County Council has worked with schools so that every child with an EHC Plan was assessed in terms of the schools' ability to provide the support as detailed in the EHCP. Children were assessed as 'green' where they were able to attend school as normal, 'amber' where they were educated at home but the school were able to work with the parents to provide as much continuity of education as possible, and 'red' where the school had specific concerns.

Where there were any concerns these were followed up on an individual basis between the SEN Officer, school and parent. The County Council wrote to all parents/carers of a child with an EHC Plan and advised them about what to do if they have any concerns. In a small handful of cases parents did contact the Local Authority and in each case officers worked with the school to identify a workable solution.

Since September all schools have been open for all children, with the exception of those few children who are clinically extremely vulnerable, or where it has been necessary for schools to ask certain year groups to work from home following a positive test in a particular bubble for a short period of time. Where children with an EHCP cannot attend school, e.g. because a year group have been asked to self-isolate, then there is an expectation that the school make suitable arrangements to provide continuity of education.

Schools have been working extremely hard to provide continuity of education during this demanding period. County Council officers, such as SEN Officers, Specialist Teachers, Educational Psychologists and Education Effectiveness Partners, continue to work with schools to offer support and advice regarding children on a case by case basis, including for example attendance at Annual Reviews.”

**(E) Question by DR EYNON**

“Parents who are clinically extremely vulnerable to SARS-Covid-2 and who refuse to send their child to school risk being prosecuted under section 444 of the Education Act (1996).

1. How many children attending Leicestershire schools have family members at home who are clinically extremely vulnerable to SARS-Covid-2?
2. How is this authority addressing these families’ concerns regarding school-related viral transmission?
3. How flexible is this authority regarding the prosecution of school non-attendance in these circumstances?
4. How does this authority ensure that children who are not attending school due to family concerns re Covid-19 receive an adequate education?”

**Reply by MRS TAYLOR**

“1. The County Council does not hold this information, however the Department for Education guidance sets out that children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend education.

2. There is no available data to show the breakdown of whether viral transmission is through schools or in the community.

The education team is working closely with schools and the public health team in the County Council to mitigate any risks identified and to reduce the risk of transmission in schools.

3. The Department for Education required all local authorities to re-commence non-attendance measures from the start of the autumn term, as part of their proposals for a return to education for all schools following the earlier lockdown restrictions.

The County Council's approach to non-attendance is predicated on supporting pupils/families to achieve an early return to regular schooling and in this respect penalty notices and prosecutions are always seen as a last resort when other support measures, for example working with the Inclusion Service, have been unsuccessful.

Our approach throughout the autumn term has been to keep in close contact with schools, and to ensure that families who may lack the confidence and seek further assurance about a child's safe return to school are not penalised; where there are persistent cases of non-attendance which pre-date lockdown restrictions, it is expected that these will be processed in the normal manner and in accordance with the duties of the County Council.

Whilst each case will be assessed individually, parents who are clinically extremely vulnerable to SARS-Covid-2 and who refuse to send their children to school are unlikely to risk prosecution.

4. Where children of statutory school age are identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) and are unable to attend school, they are considered as a child with medical needs and as such schools will refer these pupils to the County Council in line with the statutory guidance. The County Council will jointly work with the school to ensure that effective education is in place and will arrange education on behalf of the school if required.

Where children are missing education (CME) due to family concerns relating to Covid-19 (including parents who are clinically extremely vulnerable as set out above) the school will notify the Inclusion Service in line with the CME guidance. The Inclusion Service will be engaged to ensure that the school is enabling the young person to access education through virtual or other means, whilst considering risk assessments for the child to be able to return to full-time school based education."

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 – TO RECEIVE POSITION STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE CABINET**

(Note: Standing Order 8 provides as follows:-

- (a) A position statement may give rise to an informal discussion by the Council.
- (b) At the conclusion of the discussion a formal motion may be moved to the effect that a particular issue relevant to the statement be referred to the Cabinet, the Commission, a Board or a Committee for consideration. This shall be moved and seconded formally and put without discussion. No other motion or amendment may be moved.
- (c) The discussion of any position statement shall not exceed 20 minutes but the Chairman may permit an extension to this period.)

**LEADER**

The Leader will make his statement

**LEAD MEMBER FOR ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES**

The Lead Member will make his statement.

**CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission will make his statement.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 6**  
**REPORT OF THE CABINET**

Principal Speakers:-  
Mover of motion (as appropriate)  
Leader of the Opposition (Mr S J Galton)

- (A) Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium  
(Pages 21 to 190)

MR RHODES will move and MR SHEPHERD will second:

“That the Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium 2020 be approved.”

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 7**  
**REPORT OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**

Principal Speakers:-  
Chairman (Mr J B Rhodes)  
Liberal Democrat Spokesman (Mrs L Broadley)  
Labour Spokesperson (Ms B Newton)

- (A) Pay Policy Statement  
(Pages 191 to 206)

MR RHODES will move and MR SHEPHERD will second:

“That the County Council’s Pay Policy Statement 2021/22, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Employment Committee, be approved.”

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 8 – NOTICES OF MOTION**

**(A) Increasing new tree planting across Leicestershire –  
Mr M J Hunt CC**

MR HUNT, with the consent of the seconder of the motion, will seek the approval of the Council to move the following altered motion:-

MR HUNT will move and MR PAIN will second:

“a) This Council notes that

- i. The historic human and natural development of the County has had an impact on the landscape character with consequential loss of woodland cover;
- ii. The woodland cover over the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland currently approximates to 4% which is significantly lower than most rural counties like ours;
- iii. As well as acting as carbon sequestration, it is well evidenced that trees can remove air pollutants from the atmosphere. (Leicestershire 2018-21 JSNA);
- iv. The statutory Committee for Climate Change advocates the planting of around 30,000 hectares (90 – 120 million trees) of broadleaf and conifer woodland each year to 2050, which has lately been supported by Central Government;
- v. The new England Tree Strategy which is expected to be produced by DEFRA before the end of the year will:-
  - set out policy priorities to support and deliver an ambitious tree planting programme throughout the country focussed on expanding, protecting and improving woodlands, and how trees and woodlands can connect people to nature, support the economy, combat climate change and recover biodiversity;
  - help bring together potential funding streams and wider policies to increase tree planting, including the forthcoming Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) and other private and publicly funded schemes thereby supporting the Government’s “Green Future”, 25-year Environmental plan and aspiration to increase woodland cover in England to 12% by 2060.

b) That it be noted that this Council has:-

- i) a long history of encouraging tree planting through initiatives such as the ‘MOREhedges’, ‘MOREwoods’, Tree Disease Pack and Free Tree



Replacement schemes which has resulted in over 26,500 trees and 14,000 metres of hedges being planted since 2010;

- ii) in its updated Tree Management Strategy 2020- 2025 set a target for new woodland planting across the county, in addition to its existing programme of arboreal disease management and replacement;
  - iii) developed an overarching management plan for 340ha of woodland across the County Park Estate and submitted the plan for approval by the Forestry Commission which will set out a programme of sustainable woodland management works across the estate and provides opportunities to apply for funding to deliver works under the countryside stewardship scheme.
- c) That recognising the role tree planting can play in reducing carbon and improving the quality of the environment this Council commits to:-
- i) Working in partnership with the National Forest Company on a Woodland Charter for Leicestershire which will: -
    - set out a ‘vision’ for trees and woodlands in Leicestershire and form the basis for engaging partners to deliver wider ambitions for increasing tree planting;
    - establish an up to date baseline for woodland and canopy cover for the County and will work with partners to set new SMART targets needed to increase canopy cover to ensure our communities are safe and economy is sustainable for the long-term.
  - ii) Consulting with Local Planning Authorities notably through Local Plans, developer contributions; Planning conditions/obligations to increase woodland cover;
  - iii) Using its best endeavours to seek new funding through future government funding offers, the county’s great landowners and other private concerns, including personal endowments.”

**(B) Care Homes –  
Mr M Mullaney CC**

MR MULLANEY will move and MRS BROADLEY will second:

“(a) That this Council notes: -

- i) the immense challenges faced by care workers in providing essential support to some of Leicestershire’s most vulnerable residents during the Coronavirus Pandemic and thanks them for their hard work, bravery and compassion;

- ii) notes how workers at some of the Leicestershire County Care Limited (LCCL) homes were forced to accept cuts to pay and conditions on threat of losing their jobs during the pandemic;
  - iii) further notes the recent closure of the LCCL home 'The Limes' as a consequence the poor CQC reports the home had received.
- (b) That this Council believes it is vital that care workers are properly rewarded for the work they do and resolves to request the Cabinet to require all providers to declare as a condition for inclusion on the Council's framework of approved providers: -
- i) whether they pay the Real Living Wage to their staff;
  - ii) their policy on pay for travel time;
  - iii) their policy on pay for over-night care.
- (c) That the information provided in (c) above be published to allow those purchasing care to take it into account when deciding which providers to commission.
- (d) That this Council further requests that officers be asked present a paper setting out a path towards signing up to Unison's Ethical Care Charter and the costs involved noting that should the cost involved in doing so exceed the Council's ability to fund the commitment, this Council pledges to campaign actively for the Government for the increased funding needed, thereby creating a level playing field and the highest standards possible for Adult Social Care."

**An Amendment will be moved by MRS RADFORD and seconded by DR EYNON:**

- "a) That this Council: -
- i) notes that Leicestershire's care workers (internal and external social care staff) have demonstrated enormous dedication, professionalism and tireless energies in supporting people during the Coronavirus pandemic since March;
  - ii) notes that employers and providers of adult social care, have navigated their way through this unprecedented time with support from the County Council;
  - iii) extends its enormous appreciation and thanks to hard working adult social care staff and providers for all that they have done, and continue to do, to support Leicestershire citizens during this period of ongoing challenge.
- b) That this Council notes that: -
- i) all providers of social care are required by law to pay their staff the National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage (NLW and NMW), depending on their age and that the regulations also require employers to

pay for all working time and for their travel time between care calls, excluding commuting time;

- ii) the County Council's contracts and tenders stipulate that employers are responsible for ensuring that they are legally compliant and that its care rates enable providers to pay their staff the NLW and NMW.
- c) That this Council notes that: -
- i) officers are looking at the implications of signing up to the Unison's Ethical Care and Residential Care Charters which will include: -
    - engagement with providers and other stakeholders;
    - identifying if and how elements of the charter can be included in any future publicly available service delivery processes and contract conditions; and
    - a report to members setting out the viability of signing up to the Charters."

**(C) St Mary's Birth Centre –  
Mr A Pearson CC**

Mr PEARSON, with the consent of his seconder of the motion, will seek the approval of the Council to move the following altered motion: -

MR PEARSON will move and MRS HACK will second: -

- "a) That this Council recognises that improvements to Leicestershire Hospitals are needed, welcomes the £450m NHS investment to Build Better Hospitals for the Future and notes that these proposals include reconfiguration of both Acute and Maternity services.
- b) That this County Council also:-
  - i. recognises the strong local concern regarding the proposed relocation of the Midwife-led Birthing Unit and closure of the postnatal ward currently based in Melton Mowbray;
  - ii. recognises the value of stand-alone midwife-led services;
  - iii. notes concerns regarding the temporary nature of the proposed relocated service at the Leicester General Hospital;
  - iv. supports the right of local people to campaign for local services.
- c) That this Council notes the response to the consultation is being led by the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14th December and encourages all Members to:
  - i. read the 'Build Better Hospitals for the Future' consultation documents;
  - ii. examine how the proposed changes will affect residents in their division;
  - iii. give their individual responses to the consultation directly to the NHS or via the Joint Committee."

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**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2020**

**POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**Covid-19**

Members will be aware that the whole of Leicestershire has been placed in tier 3 today, following the end of the national lockdown.

It is disappointing that Leicestershire has been placed in the highest tier but, given that the rate in Leicestershire remained comfortably above the national average including that for over 60s and test positivity rates, I'm afraid it was inevitable that would happen, as we discussed in our Tuesday briefings.

The first two weeks of lockdown didn't have the effect we would have wanted. I would like to thank all the leaders (Sir Peter, Andy Williams from the NHS, the Chief Constable and the Directors of Public Health) for the united front to show people how serious the situation was, and the local media for the coverage they gave to the message. I'd also like to thank the Lord Lieutenant for his message to the public.

Leicestershire's rate has fallen by 42% in the last seven days, which is very welcome, and has been decreasing at a faster rate than the fall in the national average. However, that has not happened everywhere, and we need to be constantly on our guard if we want to get out of tier 3.

Everyone has to continue to play their part and practice that basic message of hands, face, space. Today's news about a vaccine is great to hear but that must not allow any complacency while we wait for the roll out.

Covid-19 has also had a significant impact on local businesses and on the voluntary and community sector. As a Council we have sought to support both sectors and I thought it would be useful to set details of the support provided.

**Support for the Business Sector** - We see and hear every day the devastating effect the pandemic has had on the County's business and communities. But we've moved quickly. We established a Business Recovery Grant with £750,000 being available to small businesses impacted by the pandemic. Through this scheme we've already provided £600,000 funding to over 100 individual businesses, who without that support could well have gone under and with the loss of countless numbers of jobs. And we want to do more. We are putting County funding into extending the Government's Kickstart programme to help address youth unemployment in the County and will be rolling out new a Work+ programme that online and through our Libraries will give advice to anyone in the County looking for work, training or support.

**Support for the local voluntary and community sector** – We recognise and pay tribute to the fantastic and invaluable work that volunteers, charities and communities have been doing during the pandemic. We established the Leicestershire Community Fund to support local community and voluntary groups to maintain their work in supporting the most vulnerable across the county. The Fund has helped over 220 projects across the county with more than £1.5million of funding that has assisted communities to provide food, befriending, mental health and wellbeing support during the crisis.

Yesterday we agreed to continue to provide support for voluntary groups, charities and communities through the launch of Round 3 of the Leicestershire Community Fund with £600,000 of further funding to help the most vulnerable people locally.

**Support for vulnerable children and families** - We have been awarded £1.46m through the Covid Winter Grant Scheme to provide support to families with children with the costs of food, fuel and utilities over the winter. We will be providing food vouchers in school holidays for families of over 12,000 pupils that are eligible for Free School Meals. In addition, we will be providing support to vulnerable families with children under 5, support with fuel bills for vulnerable adults and additional support to our traveller community.

### **UK100's new Net Zero Pledge**

Later on this agenda is an important notice of motion regarding the need to increase tree planting in the County as one means of reducing our carbon footprint.

I am pleased to inform the Council that I intend to sign up to the UK 100's new Zero Pledge. UK 100 is a coalition of the most ambitious local leaders in the UK committed to achieving Net Zero ahead of national targets, and I am sure all members will wish to be part of it.

The new pledge reaches Net Zero faster than the national government goal of 2050, and has an emphasis on strong action over the next ten years. The target is to achieve net zero council emissions by 2030, and net zero area-wide emissions by 2045 (5 years earlier than originally planned). I have asked that when we next review our Environment Strategy we look at the actions needed to ensure we meet the revised targets.

It is recognised that local authorities do not have all necessary powers yet to reach these ambitious targets. This pledge and working with UK 100 will feed into ongoing dialogue with national government for policy changes that will enable us to meet our Net Zero targets.

**N. J. Rushton CC**

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER****POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEAD MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE, AND HERITAGE, LEISURE AND ARTS**

- 1 Even without a pandemic, Adult Social Care services were under pressure, due to the failure of successive Governments to come up with a long term funding solution, together with increasing demand for social care.
- 2 In response to the pandemic, and in line with Government guidance, Adult Social Care services have been reviewed, and reorganised to enable continued service delivery over the last nine months.
- 3 New ways of working have been established to respond to short term pressures brought about by the emergency period, but also to address the longer term impact; learning from our experiences to date.
- 4 There are very few, if any, areas of the Adults and Communities Department that has been unaffected by the pandemic, but I would like to focus on a few areas which have been impacted greatly and which have in turn impacted on our residents across the county.

**Care Homes**

- 5 There are 180 registered care homes within Leicestershire. Of these, 121 (66%) have experienced a Covid outbreak since March of this year. Of course, some care homes have experienced more than one outbreak. There are currently 29 care homes with an ongoing outbreak (which is to say at least two people testing positive within the last 28 days). This is much lower than at the height of the first wave, however numbers have been steadily increasing over the last few weeks.
- 6 Alongside dealing with the virus, preventing and containing infection in both residents and staff, and the sad loss of many residents, care homes have also been managing the increased costs of care and the increased numbers of vacancies across the sector.
- 7 Work is continuing to identify designated Covid-19 positive capacity as required across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. These 'Designated Settings' where Covid-19 positive admissions will be accepted, are few in number as most care providers in the County (and across the country are unable and unwilling to undertake this role due to infection risks to existing residents, insurance conditions, inability to attract adequate staffing, and perceived reputational risk.

**Community**

- 8 Despite a high level of workforce fragility across the county, home care services have proved to be extremely resilient throughout the pandemic. Working with

providers the Council ensured that essential services could continue throughout the pandemic and it is to their credit that providers have increased capacity over the last nine months to meet increasing demand for care at home.

Throughout the first wave, Covid-19 positive people were managed effectively and the impact of the virus on staffing was contained. However, the Department now faces a difficult and potentially high risk scenario of dealing with a rising level of infection, managing winter pressures, maintaining care over the holiday period and dealing with any issues from the EU exit. The next couple of months could be the most challenging period.

- 9 Many community and day services, and short breaks services, were closed or significantly reduced during the earlier months of the pandemic because of social distancing and infection control measures. Recovery plans and individual risk assessments are underway to allow safe access for people to services to ensure people have support and to reduce stress on carers. To date over 60% of people have returned to day services.
- 10 Continued enhanced support for care homes, community and home care providers is in place, providing advice and information, financial and practical support. Fortnightly provider forums are held, and over 55 information bulletins have been issued to keep communication live and up to date, and to ensure the authority is sighted on issues of key concern to providers.

### **Integrated health and care services**

- 11 Hospital discharge continues to be a significant area of focus, and particularly so in the face of the second wave of the pandemic.
- 12 Leicestershire is one of eight areas nationally working with Professor John Bolton of the Institute for Personal Care, Oxford Brooks University, to understand demand and capacity, and identify and develop ideal discharge pathways.
- 13 People who have received post-discharge support in the emergency period (19 March-31 August 2020) remain NHS funded. Reviews are underway to ensure that people have the most appropriate care for their recovery. Those that are not eligible for continued health funding following review will transfer to the local authority or become self-funding by 31 March 2021.
- 14 There are approximately 1,500 Covid-19 reviews to complete. These reviews will be carefully managed, recognising people will have been in receipt of free services for an extended period including those who would normally pay the full cost of their services.

### **Workforce**

- 15 Most County Council office based staff continue to work from home, with limited office-based activity based on individual risk assessments and service priorities. Face to face visits have resumed where essential with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as needed.



- 16 Many staff have and continue to work outside of their normal working environments doing jobs they have not previously done and working flexibly to meet the needs of the service. I am sure Council will join me in thanking staff across the Adults and Communities Department for their ongoing dedication and commitment to the people of Leicestershire.
- 17 In addition to County Council staff, there are 15,000 people employed in the care sector across Leicestershire in care homes, in home care and in other settings. These care workers often paid on minimum wage are on the frontline of our response to the pandemic and deserve our respect and our support.
- 18 The Council has ensured as far as possible that all appropriate PPE can be accessed and is in place and that everyone is aware of and is implementing proper infection control. However, it should be recognised, that care workers are working in difficult times, and in circumstances which none of us foresaw.

### **Finance**

- 19 There has, however, been a significant financial impact on adult social care which could be potentially in the region of £13.5m. The Adults and Communities Department is, as a result, forecasting an overspend against budget in 2020/21. The continued Covid-19 demands look likely to extend beyond this financial year particularly now that infections rates increase, and restrictions are reinstated.
- 20 During the first wave of the pandemic care providers were supported with around £3m for additional costs being incurred and £11m in an advance payment to support business cashflow.
- 21 In September, the Adult Social Care Winter Plan was published which included a second tranche of Infection Control Fund. This fund will support social care providers up until 31 March 2021, by which time £13m will have been paid to providers in Leicestershire. This together with access to free PPE provides the care sector with additional resources for the remainder of this financial year.
- 22 There remains a level of uncertainty in financial forecasting due to changes in national guidance, changes to national funding allocations and changes in the level of demand for services.
- 23 Further data is required to understand the full impact of the NHS funding contribution; however, it is estimated that in Leicestershire £15m may be required in 2021. In addition, loss of income is estimated to be in the region of £8m and PPE costs could be £0.5m.

**Richard Blunt CC**

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**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2020****POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

As we began the 2020/21 financial year unprecedented changes were being made across the country to tackle the coronavirus outbreak. As a country we are still going through a very difficult time and everyone has been affected in some way. The County Council has been doing all it can to support the most vulnerable in our society and staff have adapted their working practices, working tirelessly to support and protect the residents of the County. At the outset of my statement I, and I am sure my fellow scrutiny colleagues, wish to thank all staff involved in the delivery of direct services, and those behind the scenes providing support, for all their hard work.

The Scrutiny Commission and Committees have had to adapt their ways of working. The County Council has quickly adjusted and made use of the technology available to hold public meetings virtually, enabling critical decisions to be taken on the delivery of services for Leicestershire residents in a way that is both transparent and accessible to the public. The Scrutiny Commission successfully held the Council's first fully remote meeting on 8th April 2020 and that meeting was webcast live allowing the public to engage in the process whilst still following government advice to stay at home. This was at a time when many authorities had to cancel meetings and had to essentially pause their scrutiny processes. Nine months on, we continue to operate remote meetings and are likely to continue to do so for some time to come. Could I thank our IT, Committee and Member services staff for their continued efforts in supporting members. Looking ahead we hope to use the technology to undertake our first scrutiny member workshop to look at work undertaken across the Council to support communities and the role this has played during the Covid-19 crisis, as well as look at the proposed approach for reviewing the Communities Strategy.

The work of Overview and Scrutiny remains critical in ensuring that the Council's budget and performance is closely monitored, that services are delivered effectively and efficiently and that they meet the needs of local people. Recovering from COVID-19 may take considerable time, years rather than months, to address the enduring social, emotional, physical and economic consequences of the pandemic; acknowledging that some things may have changed forever.

Scrutiny has always played a critical role in the Council's budget process and will in the New Year be looking at the Council's refreshed MTFs proposals. I would like to record my disappointment that the Government has failed to meet the full costs of the pandemic having urged Council's to do what it takes. This has had a severe impact on the Council's finances. The additional resources announced in the spending review are welcomed but falls short of what is required and no doubt result in further cuts in services.

One key area of focus for scrutiny will be to ensure that the recovery from Covid has at its heart environmental considerations. Whilst I do not think they go far enough I welcome the announcements from the Government for a Green Recovery. To that end both the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Committee and the Commission will play a key role, beginning of course with an examination of the MTFS.

As I have said earlier this pandemic has had a significant effect on peoples emotional and mental health and I would call on the County Council and the NHS to recognise this in their future investment plans. I recognise the considerable financial pressures on this Council and the NHS, but I believe it is imperative that we address these issues or we risk storing considerable problems going forward. I am sure I speak for all Scrutiny members in supporting our Cabinet in the efforts to push the Government for additional resources.

Can I conclude by expressing my thanks to my fellow scrutiny members who have stepped up to the plate, embraced the new ways of working and for their hard work in ensuring that the business of the Council continued despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

**Mr S. J. Galton CC**  
**Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission**