

The Leader, Lead Member for Health and  
Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission  
Position Statements 17.02.2021 Full Council

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**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021**  
**POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

### **‘Litter Wombles’**

Local ‘litter wombles’ do a fantastic job keeping our county clean and tidy – and a new scheme is providing practical help to support them.

Across Leicestershire, there are hundreds of groups of volunteers who collect litter from our streets, parks, verges and other public spaces.

Getting the right equipment is one of the challenges they face – and that’s why the County Council will be offering groups light-weight fold-up road signs and hi-vis jackets to help keep them safe, and extra-long litter pickers to reach under bushes and hedgerows.

This initiative will not only help to keep Leicestershire grot-free and boost our environment but also help increase recycling rates and raise money for important charities.

To find out how to get this equipment visit [www.leicestershire.gov.uk/litter-picking](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/litter-picking) or email [Community.Litter@leics.gov.uk](mailto:Community.Litter@leics.gov.uk)

### **LGBT+ history month**

February is LGBT+ history month. This month is a chance to increase the visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people, their history, lives and their experiences. These stories are often the ‘hidden histories’ that we have not heard before, and the month helps us to remember the milestones that have been fought for by LGBT+ people in Leicestershire and beyond in our recent past.

Along with our partners – including Leicester City Council and Leicestershire Police - we’ll be proudly flying the rainbow flag every day in February to remind us how far we have come, and to celebrate the LGBT+ people of today.

### **Covid Memorial Walk – Watermead Park**

In a couple of weeks, we will have been fighting COVID, in Leicestershire, for over a year. The first case in Leicestershire was detected on 6 March 2020 and the battle has been long and unforgiving. As the Chairman referred to earlier, the loss has been felt across the world, as well as here in our communities, hospitals, and care homes. We have sadly lost our own members of staff at the County Council.

Next month, along with the City Mayor, I will open the memorial walk at Watermead Park, which goes across the City and County boundary. Funded partly through memorial pledges from city and county residents, it will be a place of remembrance. It will also be a place where we say thank you to all the people of Leicestershire who have simply kept going through this terrible year. While noting it is not over yet, the memorial walk will also be a place of hope – for the future.

## **Supporting residents, community groups and businesses during Covid**

The Council has continued to support the local voluntary and community sector in recognition of the fantastic work the sector continues to do in helping vulnerable people and providing vital services.

We have awarded a further £1million to 170 groups through Round 3 of the Leicestershire Community Fund, making a total of £2.6million to aid 390 groups since the start of the pandemic in March last year. We have also distributed £250,000 to help 26 foodbanks and have made available £1.2m to assist vulnerable children and families with food and fuel costs. Additionally, to increase capacity for debt and money problems we will be providing an extra £250,000 for Leicestershire and Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureaux.

We have also supported our rural pubs; 138 pubs have been assisted with £1,000. The scheme aims to keep people in jobs, maintain the role of the pub as a community hub and help them to diversify by providing extra services for residents. The scheme has been welcomed by the British Beer & Pub Association.

The impact of the pandemic on Leicestershire's economy is unprecedented. The damage is immediate and long lasting with evidence demonstrating that the hardest hit sectors are hospitality and tourism with the youngest most affected through job losses. This council has done what it can, and will continue to do so.

We have distributed £750,000 to over 100 businesses, helping to secure their futures and dozens of jobs in the County. And we are putting in place services to support those now looking for work as well as providing much needed employment opportunities for 16 to 24 year olds through an extended form of the Government's Kickstart programme

**Mr N. J. Rushton CC**  
**Leader of the Council**

## COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021

### POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEAD MEMBER FOR HEALTH

As we start to look towards the anniversary of the first national lockdown announced by the Prime Minister on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, it is only right that we remember the 1200 people who have died from Coronavirus in Leicestershire. This Council will not meet again now before the anniversary of the first Leicestershire case that occurred on March 6<sup>th</sup> last year.

The continual decrease in infection rates during the current national lockdown is welcomed, with rates in Leicestershire now below 200 per 100,000, which is half the rate it was at its peak in mid-January.

However, it does remain a concern that rates of infection are still very high compared with the position before October last year. Rates are not falling as fast as the national average, with the East and West Midlands currently the two regions with the highest rates in the country. It therefore still remains imperative to follow lockdown rules and advice as much as possible to drive down the rates to more manageable numbers.

The Council, working with other partner organisations, continues to lead the local fight against Coronavirus. Through the almost weekly all Member briefings, Members have been appraised of the significant workload made in communications and engagement, testing, enforcement and compliance, as well as supporting the clinically extremely vulnerable. The other work reported on has included the local contact tracing services and the detailed outbreak investigation and control.

The rolling out of testing for those without symptoms who are unable to work from home has been a key focus of the work of the Public Health Department so far this year. Seven sites are now fully operational across the County with over 3000 tests carried out so far. To put in place a service operating across the County with over 200 newly appointed staff is a real testament to the continued hard work of this County Council.

The vaccination programme goes from strength to strength with our NHS partners achieving high coverage in the most vulnerable cohorts of the population. While it is important that we all carry on practicing the key message of HANDS, FACE and SPACE, Members will recognise that vaccination offers the country the best chance of getting through this crisis. I would therefore echo our Director of Public Health's clear message that we continue to urge the public to take up the offer of vaccination as it is offered to them.

I am sure that we will all have been profoundly affected by the pandemic in so many ways and I would like to give my continued thanks to not only our Director of Public Health, Mike Sandys and his incredibly hard-working team, but to all of the officers of the County Council for their continued efforts above and beyond the call of duty.

I would also like to say thank you to all of you as the Members of Leicestershire County Council, for all of your continued work on behalf of the residents of Leicestershire and continuing with all we do, in these difficult and challenging times.

For me as Lead Member for Health, the above Position Statement covers what we have done in dealing with this Pandemic as a County.

We have all felt and seen every day the effects of this pandemic. To overcome these impacts and effects, we have needed inspiring people and no one inspired us all more than Captain Sir Tom Moore. He inspired so many of us to make a difference and lifted our spirits at those much-needed times.

It is sad that he will not see life begin to return to normal. But he remains an inspirational figure to all of us, and we should all salute him for all he did for us as we all look forward to the future.

**Mr L. Breckon CC**

**Cabinet Lead Member for Health**

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021**

### **POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

The Scrutiny Commission and Committees are continuing to adapt to new ways of working making the best use of technology to ensure scrutiny continues its work despite current restrictions. By example, later this month we will be holding our first fully remote scrutiny member workshop to look at the work undertaken across the Council to support and engage with our communities and the role this has played during the Covid-19 crisis.

The workshop will provide a valuable opportunity for members to share their experiences and to identify what has worked well or not so well during this difficult time. The usual routes to contact and reach out to residents have had to be adapted over the last 12 months and whilst we have embraced the use of technology to continue in our work, it is recognised that this is not always appropriate or possible for all our residents and we must therefore work to ensure the Council's approach is as inclusive as possible despite current circumstances.

With this in mind, scrutiny members will consider the barriers to good community engagement, especially in light of restrictions necessary to battle the pandemic which may continue for some time to come, what lessons can be learnt and what positive experiences can be developed and captured as part of the planned review of the Council's Communities Strategy later this year. All Scrutiny members have been invited and are encouraged to take part in what we, the Commissioners, hope will be a valuable exercise.

Over the coming year scrutiny will continue to play a critical role in looking at growth and the implications of this on the County Council as a key infrastructure provider when it considers the Council's Infrastructure Policy. The financial consequences certainly need to be understood. The Commission had a useful and constructive discussion last year on the implications of the Leicester City Local Plan and will be keen to see how growth proposals are affected in the light of increased housing numbers now allocated by the government to Leicester City which will unfortunately have repercussions for the County as a whole.

A key area of focus for scrutiny throughout this year will continue to be the environment and how the Council will drive forward its commitment to become carbon neutral in its operations by 2030. The Environment and Transport Scrutiny Committee and the Commission will have a role to play and both will therefore be looking at the Council's Strategic Energy Property Strategy next month, which is a key delivery mechanism for the Environment Strategy in respect of the Council's own property assets. The Environment Scrutiny

Committee will also be looking at the new strategic approach to biodiversity issues.

The budget process has highlighted the significant cost pressures on the Council of SEND and in particular transport cost. A workshop is planned for later in March for members of the Children and Families and Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider the statementing process and how decisions are made regarding the provision of transport for these vulnerable young people. Invites will also go to the relevant Cabinet Lead Members and to the Lead Member for Resources so that we can have a full and informed discussion on this matter.

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