



### **POSITION STATEMENTS**

1. Leader of the Council.
2. Lead Member for Children and Family Services.
3. Lead Member for Health.



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**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 25<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015**  
**LEADER'S POSITION STATEMENT**

**KING RICHARD III**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank officers of the County Council who have played key roles in co-ordinating the events leading up to this reinterment week.

The Chairman has paid tribute to the Civic Team but there have been valuable contributions from across the County Council, particularly staff from highways, museums and heritage and communications, and not forgetting 200 plus staff who volunteered for duties such as acting as traffic marshals.

The event at Bosworth Battlefield on Sunday was splendidly organised and very well received. I would particularly like to thank Franne Wills from the Communities and Wellbeing Service, and Richard Knox and Richard Mackinder from the Battlefield for all that they did over many months to make the event so successful. Ian Vears in Environment & Transport did a tremendous job in co-ordinating all the traffic and transport arrangements across the road network on Sunday.

The organisation involved in the week was always going to be extensive. The City Council and ourselves decided some time ago that we would second two senior officers to lead a project team working with the church and other authorities. Our secondee has been Julian Haywood from Corporate Resources, who has evidently done a great job.

Of course, what we all have to do now in Leicester and Leicestershire is make sure that our area capitalises on the Richard III legacy. I'm confident we will do so.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Positive progress continues to be made in securing funding to support local businesses and the creation of jobs. I was delighted to sign the Growth Deal with the Cities Minister Greg Clark alongside the City Mayor and Nick Pulley, Chair of the LLEP. I was especially pleased that this deal secures much-needed funding to regenerate Melton cattle market, improve the Midland Mainline

through Market Harborough and improve workspace provision in Coalville. It was also very good news to hear that a food enterprise zone has been secured for Melton, that work is well underway to construct the Advanced Technology Innovation Centre at Loughborough University and that the MIRA Technology Enterprise Zone is to be extended.

The Council's contributions to these projects, and a wide range of other economic activity, are captured in the Enabling Growth Plan recently approved by the Cabinet. It demonstrates how the Council will deliver its economic priorities by investing over £37m into projects, leveraging a further £70m from the Government, local partners and private businesses.

The meeting with Greg Clark provided an opportunity to discuss with him how we can strengthen our partnership working and collaboration locally, including exploring the creation of a combined authority. This is a conversation I will pursue with Greg Clark or his successor after the general election. I believe we have shown locally that we are serious about supporting growth and that we can, and should, be trusted with more powers and greater control over funding so that we can do even more.

### **SUPERFAST BROADBAND**

Excellent progress is being made to increase superfast broadband coverage across Leicestershire. In partnership with BT, our initial contract is delivering on time with almost 30,000 premises (out of 62,000 planned) now able to access high-speed broadband. Last week, for example, improvements were completed in Sharnford, Donisthorpe, Dunton Bassett and Stoke Golding. In January I was pleased to attend a community event in Diseworth to celebrate the launch of its broadband cabinet and was delighted to hear about the benefits that fibre broadband will bring to small businesses and residents in the village.

A further 10,000 premises will benefit as part of the Superfast Extension Programme. Earlier this month, we signed a new £9.2m contract with BT with £1.45m of the funding provided by the County Council and £2m secured through working with the LLEP.

The challenge to deliver superfast broadband to all premises remains a real one though. The Council has set aside £500,000 to help communities identify and fund alternative solutions, and I welcome the Chancellor's Budget

announcements last week which seek to guarantee much faster speeds for households and businesses in remote rural areas and outlined an ambition to deliver 'ultrafast' broadband of 100mbps to nearly all homes. We will be ready to work with Government, the LLEP, district councils and broadband providers to turn this ambition into reality in Leicestershire.

### **RAIL STRATEGY FOR LEICESTERSHIRE**

Members will be aware that Leicestershire is set to see two significant changes in its rail network. An announcement is due this year from the Government on HS2, and the Midland Mainline is due to be electrified in the next 5 years or so.

If the Government does progress with its plans for HS2, we need to ensure that Leicestershire people and businesses are able to benefit from the new route. Improving our local rail services is going to be key, first for places like Loughborough and Melton Mowbray that are already on the network, but then also for Coalville and Ashby who have lost their train services but still have a railway line.

I have asked the Director of Environment and Transport to look at how we can improve the strategic network in Leicestershire, providing better local rail services and even re-opening lines that were closed to passenger traffic some decades ago.

The strategy will be a high level study looking at the potential for future rail investment to address issues such as:

- Freight trains having to cross the Midland Mainline at Mountsorrel and Wigston, which impacts on the efficiency of the Midland Main line;
- Improvements at Market Harborough in terms of line speed and the station, as mentioned earlier;
- The potential for introducing passenger services to the Leicester to Burton Line;
- Leicester to Coventry improvements through Warwickshire's KNUCKLE3 project.

I hope this study will support the development and prioritisation of future business cases for Government investment into rail infrastructure and services.

The work on re-appraising the viability of passenger services on the line through Coalville and Ashby, with a focus on improving connections to the national rail network, would bring significant economic benefit to North West Leicestershire. As such I have been in discussion with the Leader of the District Council and he has agreed to look at the possibility of his Council making a financial contribution to the cost of the study.

### **FAIRER FUNDING**

I wrote to Eric Pickles to raise our well documented concerns about Leicestershire County Council's low funding position. I was very pleased to receive a personal response with positive comments on our agenda for change. I have replied to this letter explaining further our funding position and pointing out that we intend to continue to campaign for fair funding and will make our case to the incoming Government.

I also explained that we would like to explore the possibility of greater devolution of business rates and possibly other responsibilities and that we will be working up proposals for discussion in the near future. We want to be self-funding and have more local control over services. As mentioned earlier, I also had the opportunity to discuss this and other combined authority possibilities with Greg Clark, the Cities Minister, when he visited Loughborough.

It is pleasing to see that the Chancellor's budget promised a review of business rates, although disappointing it will not report until early 2016. The budget also designated two pilot areas that will be able to retain 100% of the growth in business rates above existing forecasts. Although our ambition is for full devolution it does show that there is an open door to discuss these possibilities. I hope after the election in May this remains the case.

### **LEICESTERSHIRE PUBLIC SECTOR COMMISSIONING SKILLS ACADEMY**

We know that how services are commissioned is vital to our Transformation Programme and the MTFS savings more widely.

I am pleased to report that support has recently been secured from the Cabinet Office for the development of a local public sector wide commissioning academy in Leicestershire. This follows work which has been ongoing with the Government since August 2013.

Discussions will now be held with our partners across the local public sector, such as the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups and the district councils to move forward so that we can improve our collective expertise in the area of commissioning.

### **HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL SYMINGTON BUILDING**

I recently visited Harborough District Council's Symington Building where the County Council has worked with Harborough District Council to transform the Council offices that were only 60 percent used and which had a maintenance backlog of £1.8million.

Through careful design and excellent joint working, this £6million project was completed on time and on budget. From a County Council perspective, it has replaced four buildings and means that the library, museum, register office, adult learning, social care and a touchdown point are now under one roof, alongside the District Council, the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Job Centre.

This is yet another example of how the county has worked with a district council to respond to the financial challenges facing us all, whilst at the same time achieving co-location of services in a modern, fit for purpose building.

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**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 25<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2015**

**POSITION STATEMENT BY THE LEAD MEMBER**

**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

In my statement to the Council in September 2014 I referred to the need for us to be prepared for the increasing focus on safeguarding children from sexual exploitation. Sadly, that cautionary message has proved to be borne out through the national reporting of large scale cases.

The arrangements that we had already put in place, on a temporary basis, to create a multi-agency team with the police to respond to this increasingly prevalent area of child protection has now been secured through the growth in budget for Children and Family Services. That team has now been further strengthened by the involvement of health partners. The Assistant Chief Constable and our Director of Children and Family Services have established an Executive Group to oversee the work of this team.

The operational liaison which the County Council has with the Chief Constable and his officers is first class. I noted from his statement made on Monday, that the Police and Crime Commissioner wants “to facilitate greater partnership activity” and is inviting funding bids. The Commissioner has never sought to meet with me as the Lead Member with responsibilities in this area and I would be interested to know what he is proposing. If additional funding is available from his budget to deal with child sexual exploitation, it would be sensible for bids to be made on a multi-agency basis and to recognise the contributions partners are already making.

The Commissioner has sought to provide reassurances about the past. However, we need to acknowledge that there are examples of child sexual exploitation, commonly referred to as CSE, in the county and these are being swiftly responded to; perpetrators are being investigated and children and young people are being effectively supported.

A clear multi-agency Action Plan to tackle and respond to CSE is in place through the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and the County Council’s own CSE Action Plan sits alongside it. I continue to receive bi-weekly reports about children in care who go missing – children who are vulnerable to CSE, and I monitor the progress of the CSE Action Plan through my weekly Lead Member meetings with the Director.

In the autumn, new arrangements were put in place for Member oversight of children’s social care services. As part of these new arrangements an all-Member Child Protection Panel was set up to provide assurance, at elected Member level, that the County Council is discharging its duties in relation to child protection. I would strongly advise the Council that the Panel is the place to discuss these issues in more detail.

An awareness raising campaign is in place for the general public, schools, licencees and taxi firms, children, young people and their families. A few weeks ago, along with Leon Spence and Peter Lewis, I attended a high profile conference for all agencies working in our local area and listened to the experiences of families from other parts of the country that have anguished over their children's experiences of CSE.

Learning from these families first hand is an important way to understand how best to develop our own plans to prevent CSE, respond swiftly to it when we learn about it, and support the victims of it towards their recovery.

Preventing harm to children and young people from those seeking to exploit them sexually must continue to be a priority for the Council, and one which I will continue to challenge and seek re-assurance about from the department regarding its work.

The recent surge in cases prompted, I believe we all recognise, by national reporting of CSE, has placed unprecedented demands on the Children and Family Services department, but I am very pleased to be able to tell you that, nevertheless, there continues to be much to recognise and celebrate:

- As a result of the support that we provide to engaging young people in positive activities there are three things that I would like to mention:
  - firstly, on Monday, our Children in Care Choir took centre stage at Sheffield City Hall, in the Voice in a Million concert, raising awareness about the plight of millions of children worldwide, who are orphaned, abandoned or separated from their birth parents, and in need of a loving family for life. An extraordinary thing for our own children in care to promote.
  - secondly, in February, members of our Children in Care Council participated in the All Party Parliamentary Group discussion in Westminster on involving children in care planning, making sure that the voices of Leicestershire children are heard by those creating national policy;
  - and thirdly, on a similar theme, in January this year, Rina Roy, a Leicestershire member of the UK Youth Parliament, was one of only 60 young people in England invited to join with MPs to celebrate 750 years of Parliament.

These significant experiences for our young people are only possible as a result of our committed workforce and I would like to mention Sam Harris, a youth worker supporting vulnerable young people across Hinckley and Bosworth, who was recognised in the national Youth Worker Awards early in the New Year.

- Our schools have also had successes. Of note is Redmoor Academy, in Hinckley, that has become a national finalist in the 2015 Pupil Premium Award in recognition of its effective use of the pupil premium in raising the attainment

of disadvantaged pupils and improving their outcomes. I continue to work on behalf of our schools through the F40 group to achieve fairer funding. In January I met with DfE funding officials and on 4<sup>th</sup> March I met with Nick Gibb, prior to a Back Bench debate in the House on 10<sup>th</sup> March about the issues around school funding and the need for confirmation that the recently provided additional £390m will appear in future years' allocations.

- And finally, our Supporting Leicestershire Families work continues to receive high national profile. On 10<sup>th</sup> March, Eric Pickles announced our successful latest figures in the House of Commons and also mentioned the letter of support for our programme that had been sent by a Leicestershire head teacher.

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## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 25 MARCH 2014**

### **POSITION STATEMENT BY THE LEAD MEMBER FOR HEALTH**

#### **Better Care Together**

As Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board I am a member of the Better Care Together (BCT) Programme Board. BCT is a transformational health and social care programme running until 2019. The partnership is made up of all the NHS and local authority bodies in the area, including the three Healthwatch organisations and members of the voluntary and community sector.

The Better Care Together vision is for a local health and social care system that supports people through every stage of life. Seamless health and care pathways are being developed which will:-

- Support children and parents for the very best start in life;
- Help people stay well in mind and body throughout their life;
- Know patients' history and can plan their health needs;
- Care for the most vulnerable and the most frail;
- Have services available when it matters and especially in a crisis;
- Help support patients and their loved ones when life comes to an end;
- Provide faster access, shorter waits and more services out of hospital.

We are still at the beginning of our journey to transform health and social care services and the BCT team has recently undertaken an awareness raising campaign across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to test the proposals before we move to formal consultation later in the year.

All local organisations agree that major changes are needed to ensure that services are of the right quality and capable of meeting the future needs of local communities. The aim is to improve services and people's experience of them by focussing on community-based prevention and care, while at the same time addressing major financial challenges.

#### **Mental Health Services**

Members will be aware of the national focus on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Through reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board, we have been made aware that Leicestershire is experiencing similar problems and pressures to other parts of the country with access to CAMHS services, both in terms of waiting times for outpatient assessment and treatment services along with difficulties in accessing specialist beds locally, regionally and nationally.

As part of the Better Care Together five year plan to transform services across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, a working group has recently been established specifically to focus on improvements to CAMHS services, led by our Director of Children and Family Services. Progress with this work will be regularly reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board; we received our first progress report on 12 March.

On 14 March the Government announced additional funding for mental health services which has been confirmed in the Chancellor's budget. The range of funding will total £1.2bn nationally. Officers of the County Council will meet with their counterparts in the NHS to gain a better understanding of the resources being made available to Leicestershire and of any guidance and regulations attached to those resources with a view to reporting back to the Health and Wellbeing Board. I believe the Council will wish to join me in welcoming this additional resource now being made available.

### **Update on the New Congenital Heart Disease Review**

Members will recall that consultation on the national standards for the new congenital heart disease service took place at the end of last year. I'd like to thank the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for engaging with the consultation. In total, NHS England received 459 responses which have now been independently analysed. A lengthy report on the consultation responses has been produced. In summary, views on the standards are broadly positive, with concerns focused on how they will be implemented and whether all the issues have been covered. In light of this, significant changes to the standards are not expected.

The next stage is for NHS England to finalise the standards which involves a complex assurance process. The final decision on the standards is expected in the summer. NHS England will then move into the next stages of the review; commissioning and implementation. It remains the case that, if a service meets the standards, it will be commissioned.

I have been a regular attender of the East Midlands Congenital Heart Centre Stakeholder Engagement Group and through this I have been kept up-to-date with the work that UHL is doing to make sure it meets the standards. This includes discussions around the development of a clinical network with Birmingham to create a viable, two-centre, service for the Midlands. UHL is also developing an outline plan for its Children's Hospital on the LRI site, which should be ready by 2018/19. A charitable appeal will be launched and I am sure that all members will join me in supporting it so that we can demonstrate our commitment and desire to retain a children's heart service in Leicester.