

# Leading Leicestershire: Transforming Public Services

Leicestershire County Council  
Annual Performance Report 2015



## ANNUAL REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>Introduction and Overall Performance Summary</b>	
<b>1. Leadership and Transformation</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Communities Strategy</i>	
<i>Digital Delivery</i>	
<i>Customer Services</i>	
<i>Commissioning and Business Intelligence</i>	
<i>Asset Management</i>	
<i>People Strategy</i>	
<i>Equality and Diversity</i>	
<i>Scrutiny of Local Services</i>	
<i>Value for Money and Efficiency</i>	
<b>2. Enabling Economic Growth</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>EU Structural Funds and Enabling Growth Plan</i>	
<i>Investment in Place - Employment Land and Development Sites</i>	
<i>Investment in People - Employment and Skills Support</i>	
<i>Investment in Business - Business Growth and Business Support</i>	
<i>Strategic Transport Infrastructure</i>	
<i>Sustainable Travel and Bus Services</i>	
<i>Highways Maintenance, Winter Maintenance and Street Lighting</i>	
<b>3. Better Care – Health and Social Care Integration</b>	<b>16</b>
<i>Unified Prevention Services and Reducing Emergency Admissions</i>	
<i>Integrated Crisis Response and Improved Hospital Discharge</i>	
<i>Better Adult Social Care</i>	
<i>Better Public Health</i>	
<i>Better Mental Health</i>	
<i>Better Physical Health, Sport and Physical Activity</i>	
<b>4. Supporting Children and Families</b>	<b>27</b>
<i>Supporting Families. Early Help and Children Centres</i>	
<i>Ensuring Children and Young People Are Safe and Cared For</i>	
<i>Supporting Children to Achieve Their Potential</i>	
<i>Support for Vulnerable Children</i>	
<i>Improving Children’s Health and Wellbeing</i>	
<b>5. Safer Communities – A Better Environment/Place</b>	<b>35</b>
<i>Crime Minimisation, Youth Justice and Anti-Social Behaviour</i>	
<i>Community Cohesion and Hate Incidents</i>	
<i>Safer Consumer Goods and Trading</i>	
<i>Better Environment and Reducing Carbon Emissions</i>	
<i>Sustainable Waste Management</i>	
<i>Natural and Historic Environment</i>	
<i>Cultural Environment and Better Place</i>	

### Performance Data Dashboards

## **Introduction and Overall Performance Summary**

Local government continues to face critical challenges. We have been given the most difficult funding position since World War II with significant reductions already made to government funding to the Council and further significant reductions to come. There is also increasing demand on a range of services, including from our ageing population.

In Spring 2014, following widespread public consultation, the County Council agreed three major strategies in response to these challenges; a new Strategic Plan to 2018 setting out targeted priorities for service delivery and improvement; a three year Medium Term Financial Strategy to support delivery of the Strategic Plan and achieve the savings required; and a major new Transformation Plan setting out the programmes and projects necessary to reshape the Council and services.

The Strategic Plan sets out priority areas with supporting performance measures and targets across 5 key themes – leadership and transformation, enabling economic growth, better care through health and social care integration, supporting children and families and safer communities – a better environment and place.

This Annual Report summarises progress on delivering on the changes and priorities set out in our Strategic Plans as well as other improvements to services over the last 12 months. Detailed comparative performance data is set out in Part B of the report.

### **Performance Summary**

Overall analysis of the narrative shows strong examples of delivery across the theme areas. There are good plans and governance in place supporting delivery and improvement. Overall provisional analysis of the available comparative performance data shows that Leicestershire continues to be amongst the highest performing counties nationally. There has been improvement on a number of priority indicators (circa 100) during the last year and a good number are in the top quartile for performance. Particular areas of improved performance over the last year include -

**Leadership and Transformation** – improvement in the percentage of residents who think that the Council is doing a good job and providing value for money, as well as increased customer satisfaction with our Customer Service Centre, improved complaints reporting and handling and improvements in our website rating. Implementation of our transformation programme including delivery of efficiency savings and ensuring we remain an efficient and low spending authority. Increased satisfaction with the Council as an employer and that the Council is committed to equality and diversity. Maintenance of our high equalities practices with increased BME staff as a percentage of our workforce and an increased percentage of women in senior management roles.

**Economy** – positive progress with delivery of our economic priorities with strong improvement across virtually all economic indicators including economic growth, high speed broadband access, new enterprise generation, increased tourism jobs and economic impact, increased Level 2 and Level 4 qualifications in the workforce, reduced unemployment and increased employment rates, reduced NEETs and increased participation in employment, education and training at age 17, positive housing site supply, and increased delivery of additional and affordable homes. **Transport** improvements have seen positive delivery of a range of projects producing high levels of road and winter maintenance, strong satisfaction with highways, and increased numbers of bus journeys.

**Health and Care** – continued prioritisation of improvements in our health and care system and services through greater levels of service integration. Improvements during the year include reduced admissions of older people to permanent care, enhanced hospital admissions avoidance through new schemes, reducing delayed transfers of care out of hospitals, improvements to ensure more 65+ residents are still at home after reablement, increased dementia diagnosis, higher numbers of learning disabled residents supported in their own home or with their family, and higher levels of user satisfaction with their care and support. Public health is generally better than comparable areas with increased life expectancy, reduced CVD, cancer and respiratory mortality, reduced female health inequalities, reduced smoking prevalence, HIV late presentation reduced, and improved adult participation in sport and reduced inactive adults.

**Children** – this year has seen increased numbers of families supported through the Supporting Leicestershire Families programme and delivery of targets for families turned around, positive children's centre ratings, enhanced satisfaction with early help services, positive delivery of new single child care assessments, and improvements in the numbers, speed and waiting times for adoption. There have also been improvements to care leavers in EET and accommodation and improved health support to looked after children including dental, health checks and immunisations. Early years providers, schools and special schools assessed as good/outstanding have increased and secondary school absence reduced. Take up of free early education by 3/4 year olds, early years good level of development, Key Stage 1 points score and Key Stage 2 results for Level 4 in Reading, Writing and Maths have improved. In relation to child health there have been reductions in smoking at the time of delivery, improved breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks, reduced child excess weight (obesity) and reduced teenage pregnancies.

**Safer Communities - Environment/Place** – the last year has seen reductions in total crime, domestic burglary, violence with injury, first time entrants to the criminal justice system, anti-social behaviour and criminal damage as well as improved public perceptions of partners dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime and people getting on well together. In relation to the environment there has been a continued reduction in business miles claimed and in Council carbon emissions, reduced total household waste,

waste landfilled and LCC waste produced. Better place work has seen increased tourism visitor numbers.

### **Improvement Plans Delivery**

Despite the overall strong delivery reported and progress across a wide range of priorities there is a need to maintain a continued delivery focus in a number of areas including taking forward a number of agreed strategies and improvement plans. There is also some time lag in the performance data and now a higher risk that reductions in government funding, such as the recent reduction in public health grant, and forecast reductions in revenue support grant will in future make it difficult to maintain good delivery levels and target service improvements where required. It is therefore important that the Council continues with its service transformation programme and to press for fairer funding for the County, its services and schools. Other areas for continued focus include:-

Progressing plans for a Combined Authority and implementation of the Local Transport Plan to continue the strong economic and transport partnership work and to progress issues such as business survival rates, workforce skills development, road congestion, road casualties and safety, cycle routes and CO2 from transport.

Continuing the positive work through the Health Integration Executive, Health and Wellbeing Board and Health Scrutiny to support and challenge improvements in the local health and care economy including improvements in local mental health services such as CAMHS through the new mental health improvement plan, reducing emergency admissions and pressures on the hospital system through the BCF Plan, continued improvements in and satisfaction with access to care through a new Adult Care Strategy, and targeted improvements in areas of public health priority such as breastfeeding initiation and child tooth decay through the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Ensuring that the Local Educational Excellence Partnership is carrying forward analysis, sharing learning on progress and driving improvement actions, where required, to ensure the dynamic and changed local educational landscape delivers higher outcomes for students, particularly at Key Stages 4 and 5. Maintaining the focus on delivering the highest quality children's social care services, including stable child care placements and lower levels of repeat care plans.

Continued partnership working with the Police and Crime Commissioner, and Police and Crime Panel and Community Safety Partnerships to ensure lower vehicle crime levels, low domestic abuse levels and reduce youth reoffending.

Further progressing action plans to support workplace health and reductions in staff sickness absence.

# **Leadership and Transformation**

## **Transformation**

The Council's financial strategy requires savings of £86.3m between 2015/16 and 2018/19. In order to help achieve some of the savings the Council in 2014 launched a new Transformation Programme, with a range of supporting projects, targeting £40m in savings. Progress on transforming services and improving outcomes in priority areas is set out in the service theme sections of this report, while the work of our supporting 'enabler' projects to improve community capacity, digital delivery, commissioning, business intelligence, property asset management and staff capabilities is set out below. The Council has made good progress in delivering savings in 2014/15 achieving an overall underspend, including efficiency savings made early, of £4.7m, but there is a long way to go on the significant savings still required.

**Communities Strategy** - we have agreed a new strategy for working with communities and in May the Council agreed a supporting Communities Delivery Plan, including ideas generated from workshops with local people. Progress is being made on delivering the plan, which includes securing over £450,000 for voluntary projects to support vulnerable people, the launch of community bus partnerships, and support to help communities run local libraries. New contracts are also now in place with voluntary sector organisations to help build greater capacity in the community.

In January proposals were agreed to invest £2.3m in voluntary and community sector services aimed at supporting the most vulnerable children and families, whilst saving over £750k. In addition an event was held to acknowledge the many unsung heroes who volunteer within their local communities. In coordination with the closure of the Kegworth Community Centre at the end of March, replacement provision for community activities in Kegworth has been provided by an extension to Kegworth Village Hall and associated internal improvements. County Council funding has been supplemented by local fundraising to maximise the benefits of the project. The new facilities, opened at the beginning of April 2015, provide modern sustainable accommodation and have been welcomed by the local community. In October the Council supported 'Make a Difference Week' to highlight the range of volunteering which goes on in Leicestershire to help local communities.

**Digital Delivery** – following extensive user research our new customer focussed website has been launched. The first phase went live in April 2015, to coincide with the implementation of the Care Act and the site will be fully operational from autumn 2015. A number of new technologies have also been piloted during the year including unified communication and collaboration tools. These pilots have been successful and business cases are now being developed to enable implementation across the Council. The business case for implementation of a new virtual desktop infrastructure has also been approved. Work with partners has continued with a new public sector Wi-Fi solution providing shared connectivity across County Council and health

locations. Resilience and disaster recovery (DR) capability has been improved through completion of a server virtualisation programme, and implementation of a new DR testing regime. Approval has been given to replace the current County Hall data centre and work will begin shortly. A further programme of infrastructure upgrades has taken place to ensure continued Public Services Network (PSN) compliance. Further work has also been completed to develop the Council's approach to cloud technologies and a number of business systems are being run using 'software as a service'.

**Customer Services** – growing customer expectations and shifting customer behaviours mean that the Council needs to keep improving performance and delivering quality services across multi channels. During 2015, in addition to the improvements that the Digital Services Team has made to the website, we have implemented changes to ways of working within our Customer Service Centre which has significantly improved performance and customer satisfaction. During 2014/15, we have answered 84% of all calls received across the various teams within the Customer Service Centre, which is a significant improvement on the 68% answered two years ago. The overall satisfaction rating for our Customer Service Centre for 2014/15 was 81% and represents an improvement on the previous year. The Customer Relations Team continues to support customers with speedy and effective resolution of complaints. During 2014/15, the Council received 293 recorded corporate complaints, representing an 8% increase on the previous year. During the year the Council also responded to over 1,000 requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act.

**Commissioning** - understanding what residents need and making sensible decisions to meet those needs is a key element of commissioning. Good commissioning is vital if we are to get the best outcomes for local people at best value. We have agreed a new Commissioning Strategy and approach which is being implemented through our Effective Commissioning Enabler project and a new Centre of Excellence for Commissioning. In September we joined with local partner agencies to form a new Local Commissioning Academy to share best practice and achieve better outcomes. We have also established a supporting 'Commissioning Toolkit' to help integrate commissioning across the Council and with partners. Council spending on the procurement of goods and services from local suppliers was worth £142m last year and we continue to deliver efficiency savings on procurement spend. 50% of procurement spend is with small and medium-sized firms.

**Business Intelligence** – good service commissioning and delivery requires high quality intelligence about customers and communities. In order to provide this we have agreed a new Business Intelligence Strategy, appointed a new Head of Business Intelligence, and are establishing a new Business Intelligence Service, with effect from April 2016. We have also redeveloped our Leicestershire Statistics and Research online website with new content, including refreshed health and care needs assessment data sets, and are piloting the use of new data analysis tools. A new *Care and HealthTrak* system is being introduced, bringing anonymised information together across health and care organisations, showing how patients move through the health

and care system. The new information will help organisations to better plan, commission and evaluate services together.

**Asset Management** – in June we agreed an ambitious new Corporate Asset Management Plan with actions to increase property income, rationalise assets and make energy savings through a range of property projects. The plan sets out how we will use our land and buildings more effectively to generate capital receipts, save money and provide better facilities to support the delivery of public services. The plan proposes a package of measures including achieving £400k of annual energy savings by 2017/18 through measures such as solar panels and a bio-mass boiler at County Hall. Support for economic development and jobs, including the investment of £3.6m grant funding for workspaces in North West Leicestershire, more flexible working and better use of space to enable more offices at County Hall to be rented out to partner organisations and £56m of investment in the provision of new schools and school extensions. The plan will generate around £28m from the sale of council land and property over the next four years. Successes from the previous strategy include the development of joint offices with Harborough District Council, support for Loughborough University's Science and Enterprise Park and the delivery of over £18m from property and site disposals.

Leicestershire Partnership Trust staff moved into County Hall at the end of September, supporting health and social care integration as well as providing the Council with extra income. Our plans to have 8 desks for every 10 people are also well underway. The first phase of refurbishment of Anstey Frith House has been completed and the County Hall registration service has now relocated and is operational from the new premises. Further investment is planned in 2015/16 to create an out of hours facility for staff. Plans for a new Property Asset Management system are also progressing with the first phase going live in September 2015. In relation to our new Corporate Asset Investment Fund, the first scheme was completed during 2014/15 and the land is now let, generating a new income stream for the Authority. The £6m Symington building project, completed on time and on budget, replaces four buildings and means the library, museum, register office, adult learning, social care and a touchdown point are now under one roof in a modern fit for purpose building, alongside the District Council, Citizens Advice Bureau and Job Centre.

**People Strategy** - our recent staff survey showed that 91% of staff agree that the Council is a good employer and more than three quarters agree that there are opportunities to work flexibly, an increase of more than 15% since 2012. Our Black Workers group, Disabled Workers group, LGBT group and Carers group provide important forums for staff to make a difference and identify improvements in the Council's policies and practices. The Council's LGBT group was awarded the East Midlands' Network Group of the Year, at the Stonewall Top Midlands Employers Awards for the second year in a row. The Council was also highly commended for its work on LGBT issues, including anti-homophobic bullying work in schools. The Council ranks 17<sup>th</sup> of the 397 organisations who take part in the Stonewall Equality Index of LGB-friendly



employers. We have also developed 'Straight allies' who are Council staff that strive to create a workplace culture that is inclusive of everyone.

**Workplace Health** – our sickness absence levels have seen some increase and we have established new plans to tackle this including robust management of cases and additional support to staff. We have also pledged to further support staff who are carers through a new working carers group. Our HR Service in consultation with Public Health Services are leading the development of a workplace health and wellbeing strategy for the Council. A cross-departmental group has been established to self-assess the organisation against the National Workplace Wellbeing Charter standards and to devise and promote new health and wellbeing initiatives. This will be undertaken in collaboration with 60 workplace health champions that have been recruited from within the workforce.

**Equality and Diversity** – we continue work to progress equality, diversity and human rights to improve outcomes for local people. We assess the impact of new or significant changes in policy and services on the diverse population of the County through Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments (EHRIA). These have resulted in improvements across a range of services. We have also commissioned 'theBigWord' to manage and improve the quality of our interpretation and translation services to help anyone in contact with the Council who experiences a communications barrier. Consultation and engagement with diverse communities is important to us. The Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group is being further developed and we continue to host meetings of the Interfaith Forum, tackling subjects such as 'Faith and Poverty' in February 2015. The forum creates opportunities to foster good relations between different groups and builds on the area's reputation for good relations.

In March, the Council invited 70 young women aged 11 to 19 to celebrate International Women's Day and female achievements, as well as to understand the struggles many women face across the world. The event celebrated the work of suffragettes who fought for the right to vote and to end discrimination. Each year we implement an equality and diversity training plan with a range of learning and development for all staff. As part of the plan we have a range of positive action "spring" programmes for staff who are under-represented in managerial roles – 'spring into action' for LGBT, BME, carers and disabled staff, 'springboard' for women non-managers and 'spring forward' for female managers. The Council's recent staff survey found that 92% of staff agree that the Council is committed to equality and diversity and 89% agree that they were treated with fairness and respect at work.

**Scrutiny of Local Services** - our Overview and Scrutiny bodies continue to support the Council through reviewing and scrutinising decisions, considering performance issues and assisting in policy review and development. During the last year scrutiny has been involved in influencing a number of key areas including the new Communities Strategy, the impact of changes in funding to the voluntary sector, support for the delivery of economic growth projects, the enhanced role for Council traded services, infrastructure support to help

communities to run local libraries, services for the homeless and a new service model to help people to live at home. Also scrutiny work has contributed by considering school age range changes, child sexual exploitation, Hinckley area transport improvements, the North West Leicester Transport Plan, performance of the urgent care system, health and care integration and lessons to improve health care.

**Value for Money and Efficiency** – General Government grant (Revenue Support Grant) reduced by £10.4m (12.4%) in 2014/15. Latest government announcements mean that the Council will have to find significantly more savings than the £87m we had planned for over the next four years. The Council has already saved more than £100m since the previous Government announced the need for austerity measures. The Council has had to take difficult decisions such as to close Snibston Discovery Park and cut back school transport. In February the Council agreed a new budget which will result in savings of £86.3m over the next four years, including £35m in efficiency savings. Efficiency savings include reductions in senior management and administration, better commissioning and procurement and service redesign. As a result of our efforts to achieve efficiency savings the percentage of residents who think we offer value for money increased to 86% during the last year.

The Council is the lowest funded County Council and this is reflected in our efficient and low spending levels. If we were funded at the same rate as the average County Council we would be £31m better off. If we were funded at the same level as Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire we would be £69m and £60m better off respectively. The same rate as given to East Sussex would see us £113m better off. We continue to press the government through work with our local Leicestershire MPs to ensure fairer funding for the County to help address our low funding position. We also continue to work on behalf of our schools through the F40 group to achieve fairer funding for schools and in particular to confirm that recent additional funding will be available in future years allocations.

## **Enabling Economic Growth**

Ensuring that we have a thriving economy underpinned by good infrastructure that creates jobs and prosperity is one of our top priorities. A strong economy enables local businesses to grow and local people to improve their standards of living.

**Economic Delivery through a Combined Authority** - in July in collaboration with the City Mayor and district council Leaders we submitted proposals for a Combined Authority for Leicester and Leicestershire, to allow for greater government devolution of powers and to help us to improve how economic growth, skills, transport and planning is delivered. As part of our proposals we intend to prepare a long term strategic growth plan to set a framework for future local plans, prepare a joint strategic transport plan with clear investment priorities, and to coordinate the skills programme across Leicester and Leicestershire. Following public consultation in autumn 2015, detailed proposals for the Combined Authority will be published early in 2016.

**EU Structural and Investment Funds** – businesses and communities from across Leicestershire have the opportunity to receive support from the LLEP's €126m (worth £93m) European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) 2014-2020 programme. Future funding will be available in a range of areas including low carbon initiatives, research and innovation, business support, social inclusion, skills development and the rural economy, to deliver services and schemes to boost the local economy. We are working closely with potential delivery partners to support the process and ensure that high quality, relevant applications are submitted. We have worked closely with the LLEP to develop eight Sector Growth Plans for the county's identified priority sectors: food and drink manufacturing, creative industries, low carbon, textiles manufacturing, logistics and distribution, engineering and advanced manufacturing, tourism and hospitality and professional and financial services. The plans will steer future investment in skills and the economy.

**Enabling Growth Plan** - in March we agreed a new Enabling Growth Plan setting out the investments we are progressing to support local economic growth. The Council is investing £37.8m in growth projects, which will help lever £70m from other sources. As well as strategic transport improvements the plan supports investment in workspaces and units, development of the Council's own land, site and building assets, expansion of superfast broadband delivery and £1.5m to support development of Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Parks. The Royal Bank of Scotland Regional Growth Tracker reports that the Leicestershire area grew by 2.9% on the year, which compares well against the 2.7% regional growth figure.

## **Investment in Place**

### **Employment Land and Development Sites**

**MIRA Enterprise Zone** - in February the Government agreed to extend the area covered by the Enterprise Zone at MIRA Technology Park. Work is set to begin on access roads at the site, following the award of nearly £13m of Government funding. Since development began at MIRA, a total of 354 jobs have been created. The aim is to create up to 2,000 high technology jobs at MIRA, while a further 3,000 indirect jobs will be created as a consequence within the Midlands supply chain. The ongoing development work has proved to have a very positive impact on the construction sector with an ongoing total of over 170 construction workers involved in creating the infrastructure and new research and development facilities.

**New Multi-site Enterprise Zone** - the LLEP has submitted proposals to Government for the establishment of a new Enterprise Zone (EZ) to complement the one at MIRA. The proposal is a multi-site zone comprising Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Parks, the Charnwood Campus (former Astra Zeneca complex in Loughborough) and Waterside/Pioneer Park in Leicester. If designated as an EZ, firms locating in the zone will benefit from business rates relief and relaxed planning rules, with the LLEP retaining business rates which will enable reinvestment in the local economy.

**Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Parks (LUSEP)** - the first phase of construction of the new Advanced Technology Innovation Centre (ATIC) at Loughborough University began in 2014 and construction of required infrastructure started in January 2015. It is anticipated that ATIC had over half occupancy when it opened in September 2015. The centre will provide high specification office, studio and desk space for up to 50 companies, ranging from early-stage businesses to large SMEs. ATIC's development is being supported by the European Regional Development Fund and the Council contributed £450,000 that also included Government City Deal and Charnwood Borough Council funding. When fully developed, the site will provide up to 200,000 sq. m of floor space and will be home to businesses employing up to 6,000 people.

**Town Centre Development** - in November 2014 significant improvements to the Oadby and Wigston Town Centres were officially opened. The £1m project was designed to boost business in the two towns and include newly-paved areas and additional street furniture and trees. The project was funded by European funding, the County Council and District Council contributions.

**Growth Deal** - positive progress continues to be made in securing funding to support local businesses and create jobs. The Growth Deal signed in March secures funding to regenerate Melton cattle market and improve workspace provision in Coalville. Growth Deal funding plays a crucial role in delivering our strategic transport plans outlined within the Strategic Transport Infrastructure section.

**Superfast Broadband** - the Superfast Leicestershire broadband programme is providing high-speed fibre broadband to rural businesses and communities, boosting business growth and ensuring access to a range of existing digital services. An additional 35,000 premises now have access and we are on track to increase access to a further 37,000 premises. By the end of 2018, it's expected that more than 360,000 homes and businesses across Leicestershire will have access to fibre broadband thanks to the original £18.8m Superfast Leicestershire contract, a £9.2m contract extension signed in March and BT's own commercial roll-out of the technology. This includes £5m investment from the County Council. In July 2015, the Superfast Leicestershire programme secured £2m of gain-share reinvestment from BT in anticipation of the consumer take-up reaching 30%. We have worked closely with communities and stakeholders to boost consumer demand and have already achieved in excess of 20% take-up in enabled areas. This funding will be re-invested into the programme to extend coverage further.

### **Investment in People - Employment and Skills Support**

Working closely with the LLEP, Leicester City Council and other stakeholders the Council is seeking to ensure that Leicestershire residents are adequately skilled to take advantage of the opportunities of growth and that these skills match the current demands of businesses in Leicestershire and act as an attractor to businesses looking to start up or locate to the County. Our Enabling Growth Plan supports employment schemes including employability skills in schools, work clubs, enterprise hubs and the wheels to work scheme.

**Socially Excluded Groups** - the LLEP has been allocated €63m from the European Social Fund (ESF) to support people who are furthest from the labour market on their pathway to employment; to support those who are work ready to secure sustainable employment; and to upskill the existing workforce.

**The Leicestershire Work and Skills Forum** - co-chaired by the Council and Job Centre Plus this group brings together employment and skills with organisations from across Leicestershire including FE colleges, private training providers, district councils and voluntary groups. The Forum shapes the wider Leicester and Leicestershire employment and skills agenda driven by the LLEP. Activity supported by the Work and Skills Forum includes: the Get Inspired Careers Event aimed at helping school children consider their future careers; supporting the Leicester Business Festival; and appointing Enterprise Advisers across the county as part of the Careers and Enterprise Company network of advisers. The Forum is contributing to the development of a Leicestershire toolkit of employability.

**Work Clubs** – with over 5,000 visits and 95% positive feedback, work clubs and enterprise hubs held in libraries across the county have been a great success. In the last year 27% of visitors to the clubs achieved job successes and 40% were referred on to training, 230 business ideas were supported with 7 new businesses established. The clubs provide dedicated support and advice with job applications and CVs, access to training opportunities and volunteering, self-employment advice and help to develop business plans.

**Jobs Fairs** – three jobs fairs were held during 2014/15 (Hinckley, Fosse Park and Loughborough) attracting over 1,200 attendees. The job fairs enable people to access new careers by offering information and advice on the local job market and relevant training opportunities. They are organised by the Council in partnership with district councils, Job Centre Plus, further education providers and a range of private sector companies. Following earlier successes a further job fair was held in September 2015 at Fosse Park.

**Wheels to Work** - the Wheels 2 Work scheme is the largest scheme of its type in the country and aims to remove transport barriers to work and training by offering low cost hire of electric and motor scooters for up to 6 months. It is offered to residents aged 16 to 60 travelling to employment or education, who are not already benefiting from other transport bursaries. Last year, 176 clients were provided with transport, and approximately 80% have remained in employment or training.

**Adult Learning** – the Council’s Adult Learning Service continues to promote opportunities for people to improve their skills. There were 8,451 enrolments for all Adult Learning Programmes during the academic year to 31 March 2015. Over a third of participants enrolled in programmes with vocational outcomes or English and Maths provision. Activity taster days offer the chance to sample different courses including languages, creative arts and IT as well as to get advice on learning plans and education options. The Service also continues to offer a range of GoLearn courses including free English and Maths and part-time day, evening and weekend courses covering a host of topics. Many courses are free for people on low incomes or in receipt of benefits. GoLearn also has a team of trained information, advice and guidance (IAG) advisers who provide support. In January the quality of IAG was recognised by its achievement of a national ‘quality mark’ for its work. The award means learners are receiving the best-possible information, advice and guidance and that adult learning services are of the highest standard. Outcomes for our Traineeship Programme were rated ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted and we were awarded an overall service grade of ‘Good’ by inspectors.

**Apprenticeships** - over the year we supported 67 apprentices working across all departments in roles such as administration, finance and customer services. The Adult Learning Service has a further 124 apprentices enrolled on apprenticeship programmes working for other public and private sector employers in Leicestershire. As part of our Get Set Project, 77 young people also participated in bespoke work experience and training opportunities across the Council. The project supports young people aged 16-24 into 3-6 month voluntary work experience placements across a range of departments. Its aim is to tackle youth unemployment through bespoke opportunities directly tailored to the individual’s career aspirations and personal needs. Each young person is supported by a mentor whose role is to provide structured, positive work experience based on the individual needs of the young person.

**Reducing NEETs** - the Council's Adult Learning Service traineeship programme for 16-24 year olds who are not in education employment or training (NEET) has enrolled 39 candidates. The participants have been engaged through a variety of partner organisations including the Prince's Trust and Connexions, and are currently in training, on work placements or have completed the programme. The 5 year Princes Trust Talent Match Programme also continues to provide bespoke employment support for 18-24 year olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) in the Coalville area. During 2014, 27 participants gained work experience placements, exceeding the programme target of 25. Data for 2014/15 shows a Leicestershire NEET figure of 3.1%, an improvement on last year and amongst the best recorded rates in the country.

**Employment** - Leicestershire's employment rate of 76.6% in March 2015 continues to exceed our target of 75.6%. Our employment rate remains above the regional (73.5%) and national (72.5%) positions. We can also report improvements in unemployment within the County. Since March 2014, the unemployment rate has shown a downward trend to mirror the reducing JSA rate, which was 1% in March 2015. This remains lower than the regional and national positions of 1.9%.

### **Investment in Business**

Our new Enabling Growth Plan sets out a range of interventions including the business loans fund and business grants which support development and jobs growth. These investments aim to make the county more attractive to investors, help local businesses become more competitive and create more and better jobs for local people.

**Rural Business Growth and Support** – in November the Council and Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) secured nearly €2m (worth £1.5m), through the EU LEADER programme, to support rural businesses in East Leicestershire. Priorities for the programme include: increasing farming and forestry productivity; growing the food and drink sector; developing a short stay visitor destination; and thriving market towns. The programme launches in October 2015. The LRP leads on rural economic policy for the LLEP and has worked closely with local stakeholders to develop the LLEP's EAFRD programme. The first call for projects in August 2015 was for grants, between £35K and £140K for small and micro enterprises in rural areas focussing on tourism, food and drink, farm diversification and providing rural workspace.

**LLEP Business Gateway** - our partnership work with the LLEP has helped to establish the Leicester and Leicestershire Business Growth Hub, known as the 'Business Gateway'. This was launched by the LLEP in November 2014 and acts as the central online portal for business related advice. The Business Gateway provides a signposting service to local and national business support programmes, as well as having easily accessible information and guidance to help businesses start up, develop and expand. Developments such as this are important in helping to promote business growth and survival in Leicestershire.

**Business Loans** - the County Council has set up a £1m programme with Funding Circle, the UK's leading online marketplace for business loans, to support firms looking to expand and grow and help create employment opportunities in Leicestershire. In 2014/15 the council invested £283K to support £1,477K total loans for 30 businesses. In addition the council has supported 14 rural businesses with £42K grants.

**Social Enterprise** - the Council's Social Enterprise Grant Fund awarded 15 social enterprises £20,000 in grants over the year. The fund was established in 2012/13 to support existing and emerging social enterprises with grants of up to £3,000. The funds are designed to help vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, older people and people not in employment.

**Support for Businesses through Broadband** - the Superfast Leicestershire 1-2-1 Business Support project, funded through ERDF, delivers an extensive programme of broadband demand stimulation activities that educate SMEs about the benefits and opportunities that high-speed broadband and new technologies can bring. In 2014/15 approximately 200 businesses were supported through the programme. £71,700 has also been secured through ERDF to help women boost their economic well-being by taking full advantage of superfast broadband to either start a business or work from home.

**Trading Advice** - our Trading Standards Service also provided advice and guidance to 1340 businesses trading within the County, to help them comply with their legal responsibilities. 111 start-up businesses were also given free advice on how to make their enterprises grow.

**Tourism** - tourism has continued to make an important and growing contribution to the economy in Leicestershire. The economic impact value of tourism in Leicestershire was £1.57 billion in 2014. This was an increase compared to £1.48 billion in 2013 and compares favourably to the East Midlands increase of 3.1%. The Council funds Leicestershire Promotions Ltd to promote leisure and business tourism in the county. Further details of our work to make Leicestershire a better place for tourism is set out in the better place section of this report.

## **Strategic Transport Infrastructure**

An effective and safe transport network is an enabler of growth and vital to the local economy. We continue to progress delivery of our Local Transport Plan priorities and Implementation Plan to 2017, to support economic growth, reduce congestion, increase road safety and support more sustainable travel. We are also playing a lead role in helping develop a unified strategy for investment in transport infrastructure in the midlands through the Midland Connect initiative, to maximise the growth potential of the area.

**Railway System Improvements** - the electrification of the Midland Mainline is critical to the economic growth of the county. In summer 2015, the Council expressed deep concern at the government pause of the electrification and asked the Secretary of State to begin an urgent review of Network Rail



planning so that it can be resumed quickly. The electrification has now been approved, though on a later timescale than hoped for. We are looking at how the strategic rail network in Leicestershire can be improved, providing better local rail services and even re-opening lines that have been closed to passenger traffic. A high level study is being progressed, including looking at potential passenger services on the Leicester to Burton line, to inform business cases for government investment into rail infrastructure.

**Major Transport Schemes Supporting Growth** - in March 2015 we set out further plans to improve Leicestershire's transport network to support economic growth, reduce congestion and provide more sustainable travel options. We have successfully completed phase 1 of a multi-million pound scheme to improve the transport network in the Hinckley area. This scheme improves access to work opportunities, supports the regeneration of Hinckley town centre and encourages people to make shorter journeys on foot or by bike. In April work commenced on the £2m phase 2, including improving the transport network in Earl Shilton and Burbage. The scheme includes building a walking and cycling network, safety measures, traffic management, and improvements to bus facilities. The scheme should help ease congestion, improve road safety and make it easier to travel sustainably. We are continuing to develop and consult on phase 3 of the scheme, which will include measures in Burbage and which is due to start in spring 2016.

We have undertaken work to prepare proposals to significantly improve Junction 22 of the M1 which start on site in autumn 2015 and to develop proposals for improving Junction 13 of the A42. This will support significant housing and employment growth in Coalville and Ashby.

In May exhibitions were held for people to find out about a new bridge over the M1 motorway. The £10m bridge, which is now being constructed, will span the M1 from Meridian Way and will support access to the new Lubbethorpe development, which will provide 4,230 new homes in the county. The bridge will help to reduce congestion and the impact of traffic on Beggars Lane and the A47. In July, work also commenced on a multi-million pound project to improve road links between North West Leicestershire and Leicester aimed at improving journey times and reducing congestion. Roads and junctions along the A50 corridor are being improved and made safer with better pedestrian and cycle crossings and additional cycle lanes.

In October 2014 the £19.3m Loughborough Town Centre Transport scheme was officially opened by the transport secretary. This opening marked the completion of a regeneration scheme that links two halves of the town centre, previously severed by the busy A6. The scheme is boosting the town's economy, whilst at the same time improving road safety, easing congestion, and improving air quality. A pilot scheme is also being trialled in Ashby to promote the night time economy and road safety by provision of a new 19 bay taxi parking space operational on Friday and Saturday nights. In addition work was completed on the final piece of the Loughborough Town Centre Transport scheme, including improvements to the junction with Belton Road and a cycle-friendly toucan crossing.

**Schemes Supporting Housing Growth** - we are working jointly with Melton Borough Council on a study to identify measures to address traffic problems and support the delivery of potentially around 4,000 dwellings in the town as well as over 20 hectares of employment land. We are also working jointly with Harborough District Council on a transport study of Market Harborough. The study will identify transport measures that will ensure that the town's economy can continue to thrive and not be adversely impacted by housing growth, including over 1,000 new dwellings to the north west of the town. Across the County, there was a significant increase in the number of additional homes provided during 2014/15.

**Road Safety** – in 2014/15 £440k was spent on transport schemes to improve road safety. In early summer we made road improvements in Syston to improve safety at a key junction as part of a £55k scheme. The improvements make it easier to cycle and walk to the town centre. In April, work was carried out to improve road signage in Market Harborough. The work involved replacement of 58 signs with 25 new ones to reduce clutter and driver confusion. The reduced number of signs will also reduce maintenance costs. The work follows a similar initiative in Melton Mowbray. We continue to support motorcyclists to improve their riding skills, through our Enhanced Rider Scheme. Since it was set up in 2010, more than 400 riders have taken part. In addition our pre-driver days help to prepare 16 and 17 years olds for getting behind the wheel with road safety, hazard awareness and Highway Code advice as well as a practical off-road driver lesson. A drive to tackle unsafe parking also saw 1,853 motorists ticketed during August - the Council took enforcement action against people parking in contravention of the parking restrictions posing a potential road safety hazard. All monies generated are used to run the service. Despite road safety work the numbers of road casualties and those killed or seriously injured were higher last year after a number of years of reductions.

**Sustainable Travel** – we are working to encourage more sustainable modes of travel. In the Hinckley area we are introducing schemes such as commuter cycle courses, subsidised bus fares for people attending interviews, improvements at schools to encourage cycling and walking, car sharing and improvements to bus information and personalised travel advice. The work won a sustainability award in 2014. As part of sustainable travel improvements around the A50 corridor, people in the Ratby and Glenfield area can now avoid roads using a newly improved cycle path – the newly widened and sealed path runs for two miles on a former old railway line. Our free Smarter Travel for Business Toolkit and advice continues to make a difference. For example, work with major employer Next, including travel roadshows, bike MOTs and introduction of a car sharing scheme, has seen three times as many staff travelling in a more sustainable way.

**Bus Services and Park and Ride** – the Council's Park and Ride Service, with sites at Birstall, Enderby and Meynells Gorse continue to offer a quick and convenient way of getting into Leicester whilst avoiding the cost of city centre parking. During the year we have introduced a direct link to the Leicester Royal Infirmary and De Montfort University from the Enderby site,

following work with both partners. In August, we announced plans to boost park and ride services through an increase in the Enderby service from four buses an hour to five and in September we offered free return travel on the services on Thursdays in order to further promote their benefits. Working in Partnership with MIRA and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council we have also secured an enhanced local bus network for the area connecting MIRA with Hinckley, Nuneaton and Tamworth. Through funding awarded through the regional growth fund the contract provides opportunities for local residents to access employment and training opportunities now and in the future at MIRA through an innovative tendering approach.

Signs to provide real-time bus information to passengers have been installed on the A426 Better Bus Area corridor and in Loughborough (Summer 2015). The Smart element of travel passes went live in early 2015, helping to reduce fraud and identify faulty passes. The passes also provide improved information on usage, by recording pass use by ticket machines on the bus. Bus patronage overall increased during 2014/15.

**Concessionary Travel and Community Transport** – in relation to concessionary travel we have revised our timetable and fare structure to better balance customer needs with the overall costs of the service. We are using the Rural Sustainable Community Transport Initiative Fund to help support local Community Transport providers to improve their service provision.

**Walking and Cycling** – we continue to promote the benefits that cycling has on health, fitness and the environment. Free adult cycling courses were run throughout the summer for people looking to improve their confidence and skills on two wheels. Pupils' artwork was also used to encourage children and parents to walk to school. New 'Park and Stride' banners were created by pupils taking part in our design competition to encourage parents and carers to leave the car for part of the journey and travel on foot. 'Park and Stride' not only helps to reduce congestion and pollution around the school gates, but also encourages families to have a healthy start to the day.

**Highways Maintenance** – a total of £15.6m was spent on highways asset maintenance last year including £10.7m on roads, £1.8m on footways and rights of way and £1.26m on bridge maintenance and strengthening. Road maintenance locally was also improved through our success in attracting additional funding of £1.5m from the Government to repair roads damaged by flooding. We also secured an extra £2.6m from a 'pothole' fund set aside to help councils repair roads. The Council has made significant progress in tackling pothole problems. Improved maintenance techniques have reduced the number of potholes and include a shift from reactive to proactive maintenance including tackling cracked patches of road before they become potholes as well as better reactive maintenance. Due to these improvements the number of potholes has fallen from 7,276 in 2012/13 to 5,471 in the last year. The average time to tackle the most serious potholes on main roads has reduced from 7.5 days to 3.1 days. In January Leicestershire Highways was successfully reaccredited with ISO 9001, which recognises our Quality

Management System for highways work. Roads in Leicestershire continue to be amongst the best maintained in the country.

**Floods and Winter Maintenance** – last year proved to be a colder winter than usual with a higher level of salt being issued. Our gritters were out on the road network over 70 times as opposed to the usual 50 to 55. The Council has 17 gritters which spread roughly 170 tonnes of rock salt and molasses each night, covering 1,200 miles of highway, which is 45% of the road network. A 50 strong team of snow wardens is also on standby and ready to clear and grit key footpaths.

**Street Lighting** – in order to help reduce energy costs in November 2014 we agreed to invest £25m over four years to convert all our 67,000 street lamps to LED bulbs and to replace illuminated bollards. LED bulbs use less energy and have a longer life. The initiative will reduce expenditure by around £2m per year and reduce energy use from street lighting by 60%. The work on converting street lights to LED technology is progressing well and we are also implementing a new Central Management System to allow us to remotely control and monitor our street lighting stock. Full implementation will take place over the next three years.

**Traffic Intelligence** - in November 2014, we commenced a ground breaking partnership to bring together air quality and weather monitoring systems, traffic modelling and forecasting tools and traffic management systems into an integrated solution to help mitigate the effects of local traffic air pollution. The system will work with our urban traffic control system to optimise traffic signal timings, provide real-time updates for traffic, congestion and air quality and provide journey time information with links to social media and variable message sign infrastructure.

## **Better Care – Health and Social Care Integration**

Health and care integration continues to be a high local and national priority. We are working hard to support the five year transformation plan Better Care Together which is operating across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The Better Care Together programme aims to improve services and outcomes for local people and will result in more integrated care being delivered in community settings in the future, including in the home. In support of this leaders from Leicestershire Health and Wellbeing Board and Integration Executive are already making a difference by pooling our resources through the Better Care Fund to integrate health and care. Some of the progress of the work on integration projects and care improvement schemes is set out below.

**Unified Prevention** – we continue to develop a unified prevention offer for local people so that ultimately a set of core services are accessible across Leicestershire, targeted to keeping people safe and well in the community. The core services already include information and advice, the First Contact scheme, carers support, the Lightbulb housing project and Local Area Coordinators.

**Integrated Community Teams** – work has been undertaken to align our Adult Social Care teams with Community Health Services locality teams as a first stage in our journey towards integrated frontline services in the community. Pilot schemes have been operated in Melton and Harborough and were rolled out to the rest of the County from July 2015.

**First Contact** – our First Contact scheme provides a one stop referral point to a range of prevention support. The service continues to grow with more referrals, partners and GP practices involved, and helps with our shift to early intervention and prevention. First contact has also extended its role to provide signposting to community support for people in financial crises. We are also integrating First Contact with a wide range of health improvement and social support including telephone support from health and wellbeing advisers, the new *My Health My Life* service which provides holistic assessments, advice, support and signposting to self-help resources and onward referral to community and specialist provision. Opportunities are also being explored to further integrate provision with Local Area Coordination and Lightbulb Housing services. Our GP Carers Service is also delivering 8,000 hours of carers support per year. We have also designed an improved offer for Assistive Technology.

**Lightbulb Housing Support** – work is progressing on implementing a £1m Lightbulb Project to help people with housing needs to keep safe, well and warm at home. A new integrated team of housing officers, occupational therapist, assistive technology and adaptations specialists has been established to support people with housing maintenance and provide technology to help people avoid going into hospital and ensure they can stay independent. The project will provide vulnerable and older people with one

point of contact for all housing support such as aids and adaptations, energy advice and home maintenance in order to support hospital discharge, prevent falls and keep people warm.

**Local Area Coordination** – we are piloting a new Local Area Coordination scheme to support people who are vulnerable to contribute to the community and to strengthen the capacity of communities to welcome and include vulnerable people to prevent social isolation. Eight area coordinators commenced work in May and a community champion network is being established in the pilot areas. The project aims to build individual, family and community resilience and help avoid demand on other services.

**Reducing Emergency Admissions** - four major schemes have been supported through our BCF plan to help reduce emergency hospital admissions – a rapid response falls service working with East Midlands ambulance service, 7 day working in primary care, rapid assessment unit for older people at Loughborough Hospital and our integrated health and care crisis response service. Between January and July 2015 the schemes helped to avoid 1047 admissions. A study is underway in partnership with Loughborough University and Healthwatch to evaluate how admissions to hospitals are being reduced, supported by computer modelling, simulation, patient interviews and focus groups. The evaluation will assess patient journeys through community alternatives to hospital admission or accident and emergency. Despite the BCF admissions avoidance work emergency admissions to hospital during the last year have continued to grow and additional work is underway to analyse activity and tackle the root causes of the sustained pressure on acute care. This work is being led through the local multi-agency Urgent Care Board.

**Falls Service** – the BCF funded Leicestershire Falls Service is helping to reduce the risk of older people suffering death and injury from falls and joining up health and care services. Around 440 people have avoided hospital and received care and support closer to home through 134 trained paramedics assessing people who have suffered a fall. Joint working with the East Midlands Ambulance Service and a single point of access telephone number connects paramedics direct to integrated health and social care teams in localities, to ensure rapid handover for ongoing care and support.

**Rapid Assessment Unit for Frail Older People** – a rapid assessment unit for frail older people launched in October 2014 at Loughborough Hospital to help reduce hospital admissions. Since its launch the most common referrals have been chest infections, unexplained falls, urinary tract infections and heart problems. The Unit can test for and organise support for all these conditions, avoiding the need for people to go to A and E or have overnight stays at hospital. The team at the unit includes social care staff, an advanced nurse practitioner, therapy staff and a geriatrician. Each patient is given a comprehensive assessment and receives onsite diagnostic tests.

**Integrated Crisis Response Service** – the social care crisis response service had 1000+ cases referred in its first year, helping to reduce hospital admissions. The night nursing service element went live in September 2014, extending the existing service to 24/7 cover. The service provides combined health and social care support for up to 72 hours in a care crisis, such as where a carer falls ill or if there is a change in a persons' condition, to avoid admission to hospital. The service is provided to the patient in their own home within a response time of 2-4 hours.

**Improved Hospital Discharge** - action plans are in place through the local Urgent Care Board and supported through BCF fund resources and government winter pressures money to help improve hospital discharges. Housing discharge support has been established in the University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL) and the Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT) Bradgate Unit. A review of all care packages after 2 weeks duration and bridging packages of care from UHL and LPT have been implemented. Intensive social care discharge support at UHL and extra residential reablement placements have also been commissioned. As a result delayed transfers of care have shown significant improvement in Leicestershire in recent months, with the BCF target achieved in May and the lowest numbers delayed since April 2011.

**Data Integration** – to improve health and care outcomes we are looking to better target service provision through improved business intelligence. As part of the approach we have implemented Care and Health Trak which provides our local health and care system with the very first joint database which is able to track the type and location of care received across the various health organisations and local authorities across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR). The new system went live in August allowing users to see how people treated within LLR move between services provided by different agencies and how these interconnect. This means partners can plan services more effectively to deliver care when and where it is needed.

### **Better Adult Social Care**

To support Better Care we aim to have high quality local social care services for older people, vulnerable adults, carers and people with disabilities.

**Care Act Reforms** – the Care Act 2014 aims to make access to care and support clearer and fairer. Since the introduction of the Act in April 2015, we have been implementing various changes such as carer support, including personal budgets for carers, advocacy provision, updating charging policies, our deferred payments offer and safeguarding policies. We have consulted with customers on their experience of care services, worked closely with health partners to improve processes, progressed pre-paid cards as a more effective way for people to buy support, improved our Customer Service approach, and produced new guidance and training to staff regarding Care Act duties. We have also reviewed and updated our online information not only to reflect key changes, but also to make the language more accessible and to assist people to find the information that they seek. This has been

supported by the involvement of customers through our Information and Advice Reference Group.

**Carers** – a new Carer Support Service and a Carer Respite Framework Agreement were put in place following public consultation about how carers wanted to be supported. We have a countywide service providing advice, information and support to all informal carers. If the impact of caring is significant we offer a flexible approach to carer support through a one off payment or a regular personal budget which was highlighted through the consultation as the preferred model of support. The Carers Health and Wellbeing Service has been extended countywide to offer support, advice and information to carers in Primary Care settings in Leicestershire, who have not as yet identified themselves as a carer or who as a carer require support and information to remain mentally, emotionally and physically well.

**Innovation in Prevention** - we established an Innovation programme in 2011 with the overall purpose of enabling a changing offer from Health and Social Care providers and encouraging innovation in the marketplace. The programme, in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year, is a two year allocation of up to £40,000 and aims to support preventative approaches to priority groups. A total of 15 providers were awarded a grant this year including a support App for stroke survivors, outdoor pursuits for adults with mental health problems and a community 'GrowCookShare' project. By working with partners, providers, carers and customers a model of prevention was co-produced which has formed the basis of our Adult Social Care prevention offer – including maximising community assets, and targeting support towards those most at risk of needing social care support in the future.

**Personalisation** – the proportion of service users in receipt of a personal budget has increased to 91%. With regard to carers 98% of assessed carers are in receipt of a personal budget with 95% taken as cash. In 2014 Leicestershire took part in the Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool survey with 82% of service users saying their views were taken into account in planning, 80% of personal budget recipients saying their views are taken into account in their assessment and 90% reporting that they received help to plan their budget.

**Extra Care Housing** – extra care housing offers people a way to maintain independence by providing a flexible and cost effective alternative to residential care. We have been working with partners to deliver extra care housing developments to enable people to live in their own homes, with care and support available on site. There are five extra care developments across the county and demand is expected to increase due to a rise in the number of people aged 75 and over who wish to live independently. We provided £1.3m towards East Midlands Housing Group's extra care development in Blaby which opened in September 2015. It has 50 apartments and 13 bungalows. We also plan to contribute £1.5m towards the Group's extra care development in Loughborough which is currently being planned. It will have 62 units of extra care provision. Work is also continuing to identify suitable locations for extra care across the county. We are also working with partners in the NHS to



provide more health and therapy services for residents needing reablement after a hospital stay but unable to return to their own home at that point. The reablement service at Oak Court is a six month pilot commencing in October 2015.

**Reablement** services are being focused on the new 'locality hub' service footprint. All hospital discharges where there is a reablement need will go via our Home Care Assessment and Reablement Team (HART) to maximise reablement and help people stay independent at home. During 2014/15 83.5% of older people were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital to reablement, an increase on 2014 and meeting our targets.

**Help to Live At Home** – there are 100+ providers of home care in Leicestershire and together with the NHS we spend around £36m serving 4,500 vulnerable people. Over the next five years we expect shorter stays in hospital with improved support to people at home. To prepare for this we are working with the CCGs to jointly redesign and improve home care so that it is fit for the future. Following a review we are transitioning to a new jointly commissioned home care service in 2016 to focus on joint outcomes.

**Tacking Isolation** – recent data indicates that people who use services do not have as much social contact as they would like. As well as the new Local Area Coordination approach the Council currently funds 15 projects which work with older people and people with mental health issues or disabilities at risk of becoming isolated and lonely. The projects help people develop new interests and mix with people.

**Warm Homes** – disability charity the Papworth Trust and fuel poverty charity National Energy Action (NEA) have been chosen to deliver our 'warm homes, healthy homes' project. A grant from our public health team means the charities will be able to help vulnerable people in Leicestershire to stay warm and healthy in their homes by offering free advice and support, as well as ensuring people are getting the best energy deals and keeping warm.

**Dementia Support** – in May the Council supported dementia awareness week with a number of projects including advice on easier and simpler ways of managing finance in old age. The new Memory Support Service funded in partnership with the local Clinical Commissioning Groups promotes early diagnosis of dementia across all settings. The service offers information and advice throughout the dementia pathway, from the point of concern about memory issues, through diagnosis and treatment, up to the service user's death and post-bereavement support for family carers. The offer includes carers education, carers groups, and memory cafes where both carers and cared-for can participate in a variety of activities. Dementia diagnosis rates also increased to 57% during the year from 48%, progressing towards the targets set.

**Support for People with Learning Disabilities** - to support the Transforming Care agenda we led on a successful Department of Health Capital Grant application on behalf of LLR to develop accommodation, including a step up /

down provision with the aim of facilitating the discharge of people on the “Winterbourne list” back into community settings within Leicestershire. 50% of people with a learning disability who are known to ASC have had a review which is an increase of 7% on last year. Reviews have been focussed on people in supported living, out of area placements, high cost packages and people who were previously part of the health homes re-provision project. The % of adults with a learning disability who live in their own home or with family increased to 65% during the last year.

**Residential Care** - the Quality Improvement Team offers a strengthened approach to contract management through working with providers of care services to raise standards and improve care practice. The team works in partnership with Safeguarding and Compliance Teams within the Council, and continues to develop and strengthen links with health colleagues to support the NHS Pressure Ulcer Ambition and to reduce the amount of medicinal waste in residential care setting. We are currently looking at the way we support providers and are moving towards a model which aligns with local commissioners and offers providers a more streamlined monitoring process and single point of contact for contract management and support.

**Care Quality** – in April we recognised a number of care providers across the county through provision of dignity in care awards and certificates for reaching high quality standards. The awards illustrate that the providers have met 10 challenges including helping older people to stay independent. We also continue to work with Care Home leads in Clinical Commissioning Groups to improve safeguarding and quality.

**Adult Safeguarding** - the Care Act includes major reforms to the legal framework for adult social care and to the duties of local authorities including safeguarding adults at risk. During the year the Safeguarding Adults Board has carried out major revision of adult safeguarding policies and procedures to secure care act compliance and addressed frameworks for financial abuse, domestic violence and abuse, the needs of carers, self-neglect, modern slavery and forced marriage. The Board is developing outcomes focused, person centred safeguarding practice alongside partners - 'Making Safeguarding Personal'. Partner agencies compliance with safeguarding standards was tested during the year with the Council and key partners assessed as effective. Approaches to serious case reviews have also been reviewed. In December the Safeguarding Board delivered its improving Standards in Care Conference. Intervention of the Quality Improvement Team in care homes has also shown a positive impact this year in reducing substantiated incidents in those homes.

**New Adult Social Care Strategy** – in September we launched consultation on a new Adult Social Care Strategy to ensure a future sustainable model of Adult Social Care in view of continuing reduced resources. The Strategy aims to ensure cost effective care and support and target resources where they can make the greatest impact. The approach will ensure that we take a proactive, problem solving and person centred approach with customers and work with partners to help residents take more responsibility to maintain their wellbeing

and independence. By making the most of their own resources and resources on offer in Leicestershire's communities. We will also continue to integrate health and care where this allows greater efficiency in delivery and work with partners to deliver the BCT Five year plan.

## **Better Public Health**

Our public health functions play a key role in contributing to our aim of a healthy population with increased life expectancy and reduced health inequalities. A number of public health issues have been prioritised in our Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the importance of getting health right from childhood is supported through our Healthy Child Programme.

**Life Expectancy and Health Inequalities** - we are committed to addressing health inequalities, which are the health differences between people or groups due to social, geographical, biological or other factors. Tackling the causes of health inequalities is central to the work we do to improve the social, economic and cultural environment for the people of Leicestershire. A number of the initiatives below are targeted to contribute to reducing health inequalities and improving life expectancy. Life expectancy increased for both males and females during the last year and index of inequalities improved for females but not males.

**Health Checks** – public health continues to fund the NHS Health Check programme that is delivered through Primary Care services. Patients between 40-74 years are invited for a check once every 5 years. A Health Check is composed of 13 elements which identify cardio-vascular risk, diabetes, and substance misuse. Lifestyle advice is also offered where appropriate. Since 2013, 320,951 Leicestershire residents have received a Health Check, though take up dropped slightly last year to 46.6%.

**Respiratory and Cardiovascular Disease** - much of our work contributes to the prevention of respiratory and cardio-vascular disease (CVD). This includes tobacco control and stop smoking services; NHS Health Checks; weight management for adults; work to increase physical activity; and our healthy housing advice and referral service to reduce cold related deaths and illness. We also provide public health advice and support to ensure treatment and wider prevention programmes and services for respiratory disease and CVD are effective and accessed by those who need them the most. CVD mortality further improved last year to 68.5 per 100K population and respiratory disease mortality to 23.9.

**Cancer Mortality** – we are working with partners to reduce levels of premature mortality from cancer through prevention, encouraging healthy lifestyles and through facilitating early detection and intervention. Leading a healthy lifestyle is known to reduce the risk of developing certain cancers for example by eating a healthy balanced diet, maintaining a healthy weight, drinking less alcohol, stopping smoking, protecting skin from sun damage and availing of cancer screening programmes. We are also working with NHS

partners to promote earlier diagnosis and to improve pathways into timely care.

**Healthy Weight and Diet** – ensuring we maintain a healthy weight and diet is becoming an increasingly critical public health challenge. Since 2011 we have significantly increased investment in obesity related programmes and begun a process of expansion and development of our weight management programmes in order to meet growing demand. In 2015-16 we re-commissioned our child and adult weight management services from Leicestershire Nutrition and Diabetic Service (LNDS), taking the opportunity to enhance the services with new specialist programmes and expand the available tier 1 community based programmes. LEAP, our tier 2 adult weight management programme doubled in scale and became available in every district in 2014-15. In 2015-16, we are adding new targeted weight management programmes for the South Asian population (DHAL), pregnant, pre and post-natal women and men (through weight management programmes linked to sports clubs).

In 2014/5 we commissioned Weightwatchers to deliver 1500 free 12 week courses via 100 local Weightwatchers groups. We are now seeing productive collaboration between local providers, for example linking Weightwatchers users into community physical activity programmes. The master gardeners scheme, supported by the Council's Food for Life Programme, supports residents to grow their own food. Local fresh food has health benefits as well as environmental benefits in saving food 'air miles'. The Food for Life Partnership works alongside the Leicestershire Healthy schools programme, using good food as a way to improve the whole school experience and support child health.

**Reducing the Harm of Substance Misuse** – the rate of admissions to hospital for alcohol related causes continues to worsen. Our work on substance misuse covers the whole pathway from prevention, early intervention, treatment provision, and supporting recovery. As part of our early intervention work to prevent people developing alcohol related problems the alcohol brief intervention service has been extended to include pharmacies in addition to GP practices. We have also commissioned new inpatient drug and alcohol detoxification services from April 2015 with the service now provided in a dedicated unit. Supporting individuals to successfully complete treatment is important but there is also a need to ensure people sustain their recovery. We have established 4 recovery groups locally which now meet regularly across Leicestershire. September 2014 saw the first Recovery Week activity programme taking place in Leicestershire and the hosting in Leicester of the national Recovery Conference. Future plans include the re-procurement of substance misuse treatment services jointly with Leicester City Council from July 2016.

**Smoking Cessation** – smoking remains England's number one killer and is the leading behavioural cause of premature death and health inequalities in Leicestershire, contributing towards the development of many diseases and as such remains a local priority. The local tobacco control alliance, Tobacco-

free Leicestershire and Rutland (TLR), continues to coordinate a comprehensive tobacco control program with an emphasis on prevention, cessation, smoke free environments and enforcement. In April a new stop smoking service commissioned by the Council for Leicestershire and Rutland was launched. Quit 51 aims to encourage the counties' 96,000 smokers to quit in order to improve their health. The free service is easily accessible through the internet and public venues such as pharmacies, GP surgeries, dentists and hospitals and people are also able to refer themselves to Quit 51. Our Trading Standards Service works to reduce the illegal sale of tobacco products and is currently hosting a regional post to coordinate alcohol and tobacco enforcement. 2015 saw a renewed focus on illegal tobacco sales and reducing the availability of tobacco products to young people. Smoking prevalence improved last year, reducing to 18%.

**Improved Sexual Health** – the integrated sexual health service entered its second year in January 2015. There have been increased numbers accessing the service since its commencement, with over 12,600 users during the first 6 months of 2015. A range of sexual health services are also continuing to be provided through local GPs and pharmacies such as reversible and emergency hormone contraception and chlamydia screening. However sexual health commissioning is currently the responsibility of different commissioners, so work is underway to develop a new combined Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland vision for sexual health. A new local sexual health needs assessment is also being produced to identify local priorities and recommendations for action later in the year.

### **Better Mental Health**

The considerable burden of mental illness means that strengthening individual resilience and helping people with mental illness to recover and live rewarding and fulfilling lives remain key priorities for us. We are a key partner in the Better Care Together Mental Health Workstream. The supporting programme incorporates a range of interventions aimed at helping people avoid becoming mentally ill and at mitigating the impact of mental illness in those who experience mental health problems. The focus is on building wellbeing and resilience through 'Five Ways to Wellbeing', reducing mental illness stigma and in building and strengthening community based recovery networks. In March the Government announced additional funding for mental health services and work is underway to ensure this is effectively utilised locally.

**Prevention** - following a review of preventive mental health services, our Adults and Communities Department have developed a new model offering social drop-in, peer support and inreach services to address inequity of provision with reference to BME and rural communities and other hard to reach groups. The service began operating in October 2014 and has removed upper age limits as well as increased drop-in use by BME service users by 11% in the first 6 months of operation.

**Support for Children's Mental Health** - one in ten children aged 5 to 16 years has a mental health problem and many continue into adulthood. Half of those with lifetime mental health problems first experience symptoms by the age of 14. We are working closely with partners to implement the 'Future in Mind' programme, a national strategy to transform services and to promote the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. In November the Health and Wellbeing Board considered work to produce a multi-agency strategy to improve the emotional and mental health of children and young people and this area continues to be a priority for delivery. Leicestershire is experiencing similar problems and pressures as to many other places in the country with access to child and adolescent mental health services in terms of waiting times for assessment and for specialist beds. As part of Better Care Together a working group has been established to focus on improvement to CAMHS services. The Council has invested £1m this year into a series of measures to support better mental health including healthy school advisers to support pupils, mental health awareness training for frontline staff and community reading groups which aim to combat social isolation. The Leicestershire Healthy Schools Programme delivered a range of courses to help schools to respond effectively to mental health problems amongst staff and students. With 98% of Leicestershire schools now signed up pupils are being educated in an environment committed to developing their emotional wellbeing and enabling them to be resilient and mentally healthy for life.

**Effective Support for People with Mental Health Needs** - details of the new mental health services funding from the Government was published in August 2015. The financial allocations for the local CCGs amount to circa £1.26m including £344k for eating disorders. Locally authorisation has been given to the commissioning of a specialist community eating disorder service from Leicestershire Partnership Trust. Use of the remaining funding for 2015/16 and future years will be subject to approval of a new Transformation Plan. The intention is that the funding will be used to transform and strengthen the range of community based support and interventions offered to children, young people and their carers. There will be four main components of the plan including health promotion, early help, access to specialist help and Intensive/crisis support. A key opportunity to enhance our response to mental capacity issues has arisen and we have gained access to additional investment of c £470k across the subregion and Lincolnshire Mental Capacity Act to support pressures arising from an increase in deprivation of liberty referrals and Mental Capacity Act compliance. An improvement programme was launched in spring 2015.

We are also working with district councils, the City Council and Leicestershire Partnership Trust's Bradgate Unit to support patients to settle back into a safe home after treatment. By providing housing advice and support at an early stage and working closely with mental health staff and patients the scheme is reducing delayed discharges. The scheme places a housing specialist within the Bradgate Unit to identify and help to overcome housing issues, so patients can return home as soon as possible after treatment and provides ongoing support once they are home. As well as the benefits to patients themselves, the scheme is on track to save £395,000 per year through reducing the cost of

housing-related delays at the Bradgate Unit. The scheme will be extended to patients at the Royal Infirmary in the coming months. In 2014/15 changes in working practice in an Adult Social Care commissioned mental health recovery hostel were implemented to introduce maximum length of stay targets, flexible, reactive night time support and short term (2-3 week) follow up support as individuals move to independent living.

## **Better Physical Health, Sport and Physical Activity**

The role of physical activity in improving the nation's health and well-being is becoming increasingly acknowledged and contributes to reducing the major causes of premature death and illness as well as to the prevention and management of up to 20 chronic diseases. Our vision is that Leicestershire is the most sporting and physically active place in England by 2025. Blaby is now the 4<sup>th</sup> most active area in the East Midlands and 18<sup>th</sup> most active district in England, whilst Leicestershire has produced winners of the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Unsung Hero Award twice in the last three years.

Leicestershire has a well-developed strategic approach to sport and physical activity. Public Health and Leicester-Shire Rutland Sport (LRS) work closely to ensure collaborative commissioning of physical activity with partners such as district councils. This ensures the funding of a wide range of physical activity programmes. We are now focusing our commissioning on addressing areas of inactivity and low level activity prevalent in our population, in addition to targeting specific high-risk populations such as younger and older people. We have commissioned several new physical activity programmes to fill gaps in provision, particularly targeting emerging high-risk or neglected groups. We also continue the long-term programme to expand and strengthen the community based Exercise Referral programme. In 2015, we have worked to extend exercise referral to link it with Tier 3 clinical rehabilitation and support services across a range of medical conditions including mental health.

**Active Adults** - over 5,000 individuals participated in sport and physical activity taster sessions as part of our campaign weeks, supporting active families and active ageing across the area. 200 inactive adults were also referred onto the 'Get Healthy, Get into Sport' project, receiving tailored support and access to free sports. Over 750 new runners took part in sessions as part of the Beginners Running Programme and 2,068,457 attendances at sport and physical activity sessions were included in local delivery plans. The Workplace Challenge project continues to encourage physical activity with 39,500 activities logged during the eight week activity log challenge. The achievements of our oldest athletes and active participants were also recognised at our Oldest Athlete Celebration Event.

**Places to Play** - over £3.8m of developer contributions were secured for investment in new sports facilities in two local parishes. Over £750k was raised from Sport England funding to support local sports facilities and a £690k upgrade to swimming and sports facilities at Rawlins Academy now provides opportunities for a range of community fitness activities.

**Legacy and Clubs & Pathways** – 4,710 people were engaged in 32 elite athlete visits as part of the Legacy Roadshows and 40 clubs benefitted from the Leicestershire Legacy Fund. Over £2.5m was invested in sport through our Local Sport Alliances and 124 GO GOLD athletes were awarded a total of £58,900. 473 coaches and volunteers attended workshops to support the development of the local club network and coaching workforce. 74 Sports Clubs were supported to make successful funding applications, generating £509k.

## **Children and Families**

Our aim is that children and young people in Leicestershire are safe, achieve their potential and have their health, wellbeing and life chances improved. We place a particular focus on vulnerable children and families such as children in care, children with special educational needs and families with particular problems.

### **Supporting Families**

We provide high quality targeted early help and prevention for families at the earliest point possible to ensure that children and young people are safe, healthy and better prepared to achieve their potential.

**Targeted Early Help** – early help describes the type of support given to families by a range of agencies to stop problems happening and to tackle them as soon as possible. We are working to join up early help across a range of services and partners, as well as targeting support to where it is most needed. In April 2015 we combined three Services, the Youth Service, Supporting Leicestershire Families [SLF] and Family Steps, into a new expanded SLF service which offers intervention from prevention through to the cusp of care and maintains relationships with families who are involved in child protection services. The service has over 120 staff members who provide services and are based in localities. During the year the number of individuals supported by Early Help continued to rise and the number of Early Help cases needing to be ‘stepped up’ to Social Care reduced significantly. Work has also progressed to renovate three early help contact centres. The project has involved refurbishing the Hinckley, Loughborough and Coalville sites and merging them with the existing children’s centres on the sites. The centres now provide extra accommodation for the extended SLF locality teams.

**Early Help Hubs** – hubs are multi-agency meetings which take place regularly across localities to ensure families with more complex needs receive the most appropriate response from a range of agencies. There is good participation by all key partners and a pilot with health agencies has supported a more joined up approach for families with both health and social needs. 94% of the 200 cases considered by hubs each month met the target of a 28 day turn-around from point of referral to allocation.



**Supporting Leicestershire Families** – our team of workers is helping vulnerable families to tackle a range of issues including drugs, truancy, domestic violence, health issues and anti-social behaviour, reducing the need for them to deal with several different agencies. Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF) brings together the county and district councils, the police, the NHS and other agencies. In March the scheme was praised by the Government for its success in turning people's lives around. The SLF service has already met its national target to turn around 810 families and has now started to help a further 2,800 over the next five years as part of phase two of the programme.

**Children's Centres** – our Children's Centre programme seeks to improve outcomes for young children and families, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families, in order to reduce inequalities in child development and school readiness. This is supported by improving parenting aspirations, and parenting skills. The programme works with families with children between the ages of 0 and 5, with a particular focus on 0 – 2, where research tells us we can achieve the most impact on outcomes. We have reviewed the way we organise services with a move to central co-ordination and commissioning that has delivered specialist support in the areas of perinatal mental health, domestic abuse and antenatal parenting. In partnership with midwives and health visitors, the Children's Centre Family Outreach Workers provide a range of one to one, group work and brief intervention to families across the 36 children's centres. There has been a 20% increase in the number of children supported with over 5,400 receiving services during 2014/15. Survey work with around 3,000 parents suggests that 98% feel more confident in their parenting skills, while 98% state that the service has made a positive difference to their family.

### **Ensuring Children and Young People Are Safe**

We continue to work in close partnership with the local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) to implement strong interagency arrangements for the protection of children from harm and provide a range of support services for children in need.

**Safeguarding** – the County is piloting a new and innovative approach to keeping children safe and supported. We are one of just 10 authorities picked to work with child protection expert Eileen Munro on the scheme. The 18 month project is rolling out an approach called 'signs of safety' through a training programme across Leicestershire and Rutland. Signs of Safety 'Pods' are being set up in locality teams in Leicestershire bringing together colleagues from social care and early help. A new Councillor Child Protection Panel has also been established to ensure that the Council is fully discharging its duties in relation to child protection. There has also been significant work to improve outcomes around child trafficking and children going missing.

The percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time increased during 2014/15. While there will always be some repeat child protection plans, this figure is now higher than the

national average. An in-depth audit was therefore undertaken of a sample of repeat plans and areas for improvement identified. All conferences now use Signs of Safety and auditors found that as a result plans were robust and child and family views were clearly evidenced and taken into account. Action taken to address the increase in the number repeat child protection plans includes strengthening the oversight of cases by service managers.

**Child Sexual Exploitation** – identification of and responding to child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a priority for the Council and our partners. Greater awareness of incidents of exploitation nationally in recent years has been reflected in an increase in referrals locally. In response we have developed a new CSE Strategy and action plan with partners to create an environment where CSE is prevented, identified and challenged, in order to keep children and young people safe. This involves perpetrators being held accountable and brought to justice. In August 2014, in conjunction with Leicestershire Police, we set up a joint CSE team and this is now being expanded to include other partners. We have contributed £500k to extend the team and added four new staff. The team consists of 8 council officers and over 20 police officers including the missing from home team. The team's work includes early intervention and prevention for those at risk of CSE, work with partners to disrupt perpetrators, supporting the police with criminal investigations and supporting children through the recovery process. The approach has increased the number and appropriateness of referrals, provided evidence that signs of CSE are being spotted earlier, and increased the number of investigations and prosecutions. We are also further developing our support and recovery services.

**Effective Child Care Placements** – we have introduced a new approach to mitigate increased pressures on child care placements. We are implementing a new Fostering and Adoption recruitment plan to achieve an increased and diverse 'bank' of foster carers, and implementing a placement commissioning strategy ('Choices'), which establishes a deliberate approach to commissioning services for children in the care. We have also worked on a cohort of 22 cases to reduce placement costs whilst providing care that is more effective for that child. We have also focused work on providers of independent fostering services that are providing placements for children and are considering the use of an external agency to assist, possibly on a payment by results basis, as well as participating in regional commissioning of placements. The proportion of children with 3 or more placements during the year has increased, and the proportion of children in the same placement for 2+ years or placed for adoption has declined slightly this year. Analysis has been undertaken to determine reasons for placement changes, using a sample of recent cases. The analysis noted that children are safeguarded well and the service responds appropriately and moves children when necessary and in most cases as per their care plan. Children's views are taken into account when considering new placements and there is clear evidence of management oversight on cases when decisions are made to move children. Work is underway to ensure that the first placement that a child has on coming into care is more successful.

**Fostering and Adoption** – in June our foster carers were recognised for the vital role they play in bringing about positive changes for young people, as part of a fortnight of awareness-raising around their role. We have also run a range of events to boost the number of foster carers, particularly those wanting to look after parent and baby placements. In February, commercials were run during ad breaks of popular shows and on local radio, in collaboration with nine East Midlands Councils as part of a combined recruitment campaign. The Fostering and Adoption Bus was also at the King Power Stadium to spread the message about fostering. The average time to place with adopters and time children wait for adoption both improved during 2014/15.

**Looked After Children** - the Leicestershire Virtual Schools team continues to offer support to teenagers in care to achieve the best outcomes and prepare them for work. 56% of children in care achieved Level 4 at Key Stage 2. In January an event was held to mark the achievements amongst the 450 children in care and over 200 care leavers, both in their personal lives and in important achievements at school, college and university. Stories include a student who hasn't taken a day off in five years and a student representing Leicestershire children in care at Westminster alongside the Children's Commissioner. The Children in Care Council continues to champion the voice of those looked after by the Council. Beacon Voices, one of only two choirs in the UK made up solely of children in care has now played at Wembley Arena, the Southbank and Sheffield City Hall. By shining a spotlight on their talents and musical skills the choir helps boost young people's confidence and provides an opportunity for them to express themselves.

**Care Leavers** - a new Charter for care leavers was launched early in 2015 setting out our seven promises to them. Like all parents, including Corporate Parents, the Council is concerned about the suitability of accommodation of young people leaving our care. The Council keeps in contact with Care Leavers, as far as is possible, until after their 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays, and up to 25 in some cases. 73.6% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation this year, a significant improvement compared to the previous year. The proportion of care leavers in education, employment or training has also improved to 45%.

### **Supporting Children to Achieve Their Potential**

**High Quality School Places** – we are making good progress to deliver our strategy for new high quality school places, with particular emphasis on extra primary school places as a first priority. Work was completed at a number of schools during the year providing an extra 361 primary school places and 30 secondary school places. Major schemes included works at St. Bartholomews Primary school, Quorn, Greenfield Primary school, Countesthorpe, Burbage CE Infant School and Townlands Primary school, Earl Shilton. In addition, £3.3m was also spent on improving the condition of school buildings, including re-roofing, window replacements, and installation of new boiler plants, re-placement of lighting and ceilings and upgrade of fire alarms. We are also making good progress with our capital plans for next year which include building a new £4m, 210-place primary school for pupils in Braunstone

and Leicester Forest East, expected to open in September 2016. During the course of the year 20 schools were given assistance to enable them to convert to academies and a further 10 supported to change to their age range to 11-16 or 11-19. Over 95% of children starting primary school secured places at one of their top choices. In addition nine-out-of-10 young people secured places at their first-choice secondary school. The proportion of pupils in good or outstanding schools rose to 83.8% this year, above the national average.

**Good Early Learning and Child Care** - the number of eligible families taking up Free Early Education Entitlement for 3 year olds has increased slightly over the last year to 90.3%. Free provision for 2 year olds has been expanded to a wider group of families last year and had take up of 66% during the year. The percentage of childminders rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted rose significantly during 2014/15, from 71.3% to 84.2%. This contributed to a 10.2% rise in standards of all childcare providers with 85.9% now rated as good or better. The amount of Leicestershire children achieving a 'Good' level of development at the age of 5 rose for the second consecutive year and is now 63.8%.

**High Standards in Primary** - Key Stage 1 performance continues to be strong in Leicestershire with children achieving above national standards for all benchmark measures in 2015. The Key Stage 1 average point score including reading, writing and maths increased slightly. The inequality gap between the lowest performers and the rest also narrowed during the year. Key Stage 2 results for 2015 improved in Leicestershire for all the key measures of reading, writing and mathematics. The benchmark figure for children achieving Level 4 or above in all three subjects is in the top half of all local authorities, an improved position on 2014. The achievement of pupils eligible for Free School Meals for the same measure rose by 2.5% to 60.3%.

**High Standards in Secondary** - the Leicestershire secondary school system has undergone significant changes in recent years with a number of schools moving to 11-16/18 provision as well as many conversions to academies. The Council has assisted in the conversion of 149 maintained schools into academies since 2011 with 134 maintained schools. In summer 2015 a number of schools reported record levels of 5 A\* to C passes (including English and Maths) and many others have seen a good improvement in the progress made by students, especially in Maths. Overall attainment of 5 A\* to C (including English and Maths) was around 56.1% a similar level to last year and similar to national levels. 'A' level points scores are slightly down on last year at 206.8. However schools in Leicestershire continue to perform above the national average for Ofsted inspections. Currently 86.4% of Leicestershire schools are judged to be good or outstanding, well above the national average. There has also been progress in reducing the secondary school persistent absence rate. The Council continues to support the Leicestershire Educational Excellence Partnership to target further improvements in particular schools and subject areas. The Education and Adoptions Bill 2015, expected to be passed by Parliament in the autumn will give DfE new powers to intervene in 'coasting' schools. Although coasting has not been formally

defined it is expected to cover schools whose performance is static or in gradual decline.

### **Support for Vulnerable Children**

**SEN and Disability (SEND) Reforms** – we are committed to ensuring that reform of SEND joins up help across education, health and care services and improves families' lives. We've made significant progress with a number of children now having new-style support plans and we aim to have these in place for all young people by 2018. Students with learning difficulties were also involved in designing our new care and support website, developed to enhance information about SEN and disability services across the County. The new website or 'local offer' contains information about the care and support services available in Leicestershire and offers the opportunity for families to feedback on services. A new Disabled Children's Register was launched in 2014 and went live early in 2015. All families that wish to be included on the Register are now able to.

**Vulnerable Children** – in March we unveiled plans for Wigston Special School to move into a new £10m state-of-the-art building. The proposals will see Birkett House relocate to modern premises at the Wigston Secondary Schools campus. The brand new building will offer places for 125 children and feature a hydrotherapy pool and sensory interactive rooms incorporating multi-sensory technology. It is set to open by September 2017. The Council has embarked on a programme to create 'area' special schools across Leicestershire. This will be the fifth one to be built and will greatly enhance the facilities available locally for children with specialist needs. We also continue to offer support for vulnerable pupils with an increased number of children supported through autism intensive support and increased support for those not able to attend school because of medical needs. We also met increased demand for special educational needs transport due to an increase in high needs cases. A comprehensive system has been developed to identify children who are missing education and ensure that they are provided with appropriate services in order to support their educational achievement and ensure safety. Pupils with SEN achieving Level 4 at Key Stage 2 improved slightly last year.

**Young Carers** - a Young Carers Project Officer supports young carers to access support. A Young Carer ID card scheme has also been launched, recognising their role as a young carer and enabling health staff to share information with them about those that they care for. A programme for learning and development has been put in place to raise awareness and understanding about young carers and their families.

Over 130 children, young people and families shared their experiences of accessing support at a 'voice' pop up event at Conkers in Ashby. The information collected is being used to shape the services offered in the future. In April young people's achievements were recognised at an Awards Ceremony hosted by Leicestershire's Lord Lieutenant. The event highlights examples of the outstanding dedication, service to others and personal

achievements by Leicestershire's young people. Leicestershire has also been ranked the ninth best local authority for tackling homophobic bullying in schools, as ranked by Stonewall.

### **Improving Children's Health and Wellbeing**

**Breastfeeding and Maternity support** - breastfeeding has positive health benefits for both mother and baby in the short and longer term. Low breastfeeding rates are linked with inequalities in health, deprivation and reduced life expectancy. The breastfeeding targets for 6-8 weeks prevalence have been met over the last year improving to 46%. Breastfeeding peer support services are also available in 6 areas and Breastfeeding 'Champions' have been nominated in both Health Visiting and Children Centre teams. The 'Baby Buddy' App and the 'Meals on Heels' App have been embedded across the County. Local CCGs are also funding a Perinatal Maternal Mental Health project to develop a Community Outreach Service to support mothers to help establish an attachment and an early relationship with their baby.

**Early Years Health** - from October 2015 the Council took over commissioning of the 0-5 Healthy Child Programme through the Health Visiting Service in addition to the 5-19 Healthy Child Programme through the School Nursing Service that has been commissioned since April 2013. The Council in partnership with the local NHS also continues to provide effective early years support to improve health and reduce health inequalities. Interventions include a re-launch of the social marketing campaign to encourage women to book with maternity services before 12 weeks gestation. Action to reduce infant mortality rates includes the development of a Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Infant Mortality Strategy to help raise awareness of the risk factors for infant mortality. School readiness is one of the priority areas for Leicestershire. Health visitors, GPs and other health professionals are working with the Council's 0-5 Learning Service to promote the take up of free education and childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds and to implement the Integrated 2 Year Review.

**Healthy Schools** - the Leicestershire Healthy Schools Programme provides the framework to support schools to be 'Health Promoting' settings. At least 98% of schools and Academies in Leicestershire are participating in the Programme and 76% have renewed their Healthy School Status over the last 3 years. 36% have achieved Enhanced Healthy School Status by achieving meaningful outcomes on a Public Health priority.

**Childhood Smoking** - the tobacco free schools programme, The SmokeScreen, continues to change attitudes and opinions of young people to reduce smoking initiation. The programme takes a whole school, social norming approach to reinforce the realities of smoking and debunk the myths. Schools work with Cut Films, to empower young people to use their voice through short films to tell others about aspects of smoking. In 2015 5 schools' films were selected to be viewed at the annual national awards at BAFTA in London and the 2015 People's Choice winner was a Leicestershire Primary school.

**Nutrition and Healthy Weight Children** – the Family Lifestyle Club (FLIC), our children and families weight management programme was doubled in scale and offered in every area for the first time in 2015. We have undertaken work since 2014-15 to develop the referral routes into FLIC, and commissioned supporting pre-FLIC school based programmes such as “Food Routes” and “Big Cook Little Cook” and work targeting healthy eating in early years settings as well as improving referral resulting from the National Childhood Measurement Programme. Our School Food Support service has been awarded the Soil Association’s prestigious Food for Life Silver Catering Mark award; testament to its commitment to providing healthy and nutritious meals. Six Leicestershire schools have also picked up their bronze and silver Food for Life Partnership awards. More than 90 schools have engaged and are delivering the curriculum through growing, cooking and links with local working farms. From early 2015 the Food for Life Partnership will extend to early years settings to establish good eating habits at an early age.

**Active Young People** – we have been keen to establish new programmes targeting early years and primary school children, following increasing evidence of inactivity, poor physical development and obesity in these populations. The Early Years ‘Purposeful Physical Play’ programme is now in its second year of training early years settings and in 2015 is developing new resources for use by early years providers. We have also completed a one year pilot ‘Fundamental Movement Skills’ pilot programme in seven local primary schools, in order to test and develop innovative approaches to delivering a sustainable community wide school programme across Leicestershire. During 2014/15 22,465 young people participated in the Leicester-Shire & Rutland School Games. Over £153k was also invested to deliver 174 Sportivate projects attracting over £100k of partner funding and resulting in 3,908 young people participating in sport and physical activity. £60k was invested into the delivery of 58 Satellite Club projects across the area and over 50 early years settings and 70 individuals benefited from Early Years Purposeful Physical Play.

**Child Oral Health** - Leicestershire has higher numbers of children with tooth decay than the England average, though in many cases with less severe levels of decay. From April 2015 responsibility for commissioning oral health surveys and oral health promotion services transferred to the Council. A range of activity has been put in place including in May all babies were given a free dental health kit as part of their four month health visitor contact and offered advice on good tooth care habits as part of a wider programme of oral health promotion. Free toothbrush kits were also given out at Wriggly Reader sessions focused on healthy teeth. The packs include a baby toothbrush, toothpaste, leaflet and parents are being offered advice on establishing good dental care. A range of ‘Healthy Teeth Happy Smiles’ materials have also been developed to be used in oral health promotion activities and during National Smile Month a number of events and promotions were held around the county.

**Help to Children with Long Term Conditions** - the School Nursing Service supports children, their parents/carers and schools to manage health needs of children that are less complex long term conditions and disabilities. School nursing input in Special Schools is also jointly funded by Public Health and the Special Schools themselves. Health Visitors play a role regarding reducing hospital attendance and admissions and are involved in the early identification, assessment and help for children with additional needs.

**Teenage Pregnancies** – our Teenage Pregnancy Partnership launched a new Relationship and Sex Education toolkit last year and new figures show that Leicestershire's teenage pregnancies dropped for the seventh consecutive year and are now 20.9 conceptions per 1,000 15-17 females. This is significantly lower than the East Midlands and England rates. Rates have been cut by 45% since 1998.

### **Safer Communities – A Better Environment/Place**

We place high priority on keeping Leicestershire communities as some of the safest in the country by minimising crime and antisocial behaviour, reducing youth offending, supporting victims of crime, ensuring the safety of our roads and providing consumer protection services.

**Crime Minimisation** – many factors affect crime and disorder, so all our services, working alongside communities themselves, have an important role to play in keeping individuals and communities safe. We consider crime and disorder across the breadth of our services and work closely with the Police and Crime Commissioner and other partners as part of Community Safety Partnerships to ensure that effective action is taken to prevent and minimise crime and to provide support to the victims of crime. The Police and Crime Panel that holds the Police and Crime Commissioner to account has raised a number of issues during the year including regarding crime levels, the Police change programme and the Commissioner's financial strategy and commissioning plans. During the last year total crime rates, domestic burglary and violence with injury have all improved, though vehicle crime has worsened and remains an issue for improvement.

**Youth Justice** – we continue to implement our Youth Justice Plan to reduce youth offending and reoffending and to minimise custodial sentences for young people. In 2014/15 the number of First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System was 12.7% lower (27 fewer young people) than the previous year and at the lowest levels recorded. Comparative data also shows that the percentage of young people reoffending in Leicestershire is better than regional and national performance. The use of custody is 4.2%, ahead of the 5% target set by the Youth Justice Board. 73.3% of young people known to the Service were in employment, education or training, slightly higher than then 2013/14 performance but below the 80% target. In May our Youth Offending Service was given recognition for its work to encourage young people to make amends for their offending when its restorative work was awarded the Restorative Service Quality Mark for achieving six professional standards.



**Anti-Social Behaviour** – we are part of the Leicestershire Anti-Social Behaviour Delivery Group. The group ran a number of campaigns throughout the year on the theme of Respect/Tolerate and in May we encouraged residents to be respectful to neighbours as part of a national effort to tackle noisy neighbours through Noise Action Week. Sports and craft activities have also been organised by our IMPACT team, which works on the streets with young people in a bid to reduce anti-social behaviour. These activities encourage creativity and fitness, but also play an underlying role in reducing anti-social behaviour by helping young people channel their energy in a positive way. Those stating they have been a victim of ASB, satisfaction with ASB being dealt with and criminal damage rates all improved last year.

**Domestic Abuse** – during 2014/15 there has been an extensive roll out of domestic abuse stalking and harassment indicators across partner agencies and the development of multi-agency guidance to recognise risks. Work has also been undertaken to develop a single specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence service across the sub-region. Our partnership ‘How Many Times’ campaign across the County incorporated messages developed by people affected by domestic abuse or sexual violence to encourage others to take action and seek support. Specialist domestic abuse support services, many funded by the council, supported over 1,000 people and their families last year to improve safety and support and their recovery from the significant impact of domestic abuse. Front-line workers from across public and third sector agencies were also trained in using a common risk assessment approach for domestic abuse to ensure joined up effective responses to people impacted by abuse. Overall there has been an 18% reduction in the number of single assessments within which the child’s parents are the subject of domestic abuse.

**Community Cohesion and Hate Incidents** – we continue work to strengthen community cohesion, supporting communication across community groups such as through the Interfaith Forum and significant events for cohesion. Hate incidents and crimes can be damaging to individuals and their families and it is important all people are treated with dignity and respect and live without fear of hatred. In March we supported the “say no to hate” campaign to encourage people to report incidents and respect difference. The awareness raising initiative urges people who experience physical, written or verbal abuse to make a stand. Our Hate Incident Monitoring Project also continues to raise awareness of how Hate Incidents can be reported and addressed. Last year saw a slight increase in reports.

**Road Safety** - despite a variety of road safety work (see transport section) the numbers of road casualties and those killed or seriously injured were higher during 2014 after a number of years of reductions. However early indications for 2015 suggest that further reductions are now being made this year.

**Safer Consumer Goods and Trading** - during the year our Trading Standards Service brought 11 cases before the Courts, involving 17 defendants and all resulted in successful convictions. Fines and costs

awarded totalled more than £32,000. In 21 other cases we obtained formal agreements with businesses to improve their trading practices. 5 cases led to improvements in product safety, 16 supported public health and 10 supported economic growth. In January the service saw two suppliers of counterfeit goods sentenced following a successful operation to seize counterfeit goods worth £25,000. In October our presence at East Midlands Airport was increased to check the safety of imported goods. Of 47 consignments targeted for inspection 19 were found to contain unsafe goods that posed a risk to consumers. A total of 4522 items were seized to be destroyed. Fake tobacco is detrimental to local retailers and poses additional health issues as they are not manufactured in a regulated way. In June 75,000 illegal cigarettes were seized. Trading Standards officers have also continued to carry out operations to test for the sale of tobacco to under age teenagers. In November a month-long campaign focused on warning people about the dangers of loan sharks and the effects these have on communities.

### **A Better Environment**

Protecting the environment and rural character of the county is an important issue and we are implementing a range of plans to do this including our Environment Strategy, Carbon Reduction Strategy, Climate Ready Plan and Waste Management Strategy.

**Reducing Our Environmental Impact** – our commitment to a better environment is demonstrated by our work to reduce our environmental impact. The Council continues to manage its environmental impact across a wide range of issues, including reducing energy consumption, business mileage, paper use and office waste. A total of £1.54m was invested in our Property Energy Strategy to reduce energy consumption across our property estate, to reduce carbon emissions and deliver savings in line with our Environmental Strategy. The investment includes LED lighting, new heating controls, as well as renewable energy projects, solar panels across five sites, and a new biomass boiler at County Hall, which will be brought into operation in summer 2015. The new state of the art biomass boiler replaces an old gas boiler and will burn wood chips sourced locally from tree thinning's. The boiler produces very few emissions and is better for the environment, being carbon neutral. The installation of a biomass boiler and solar panels at County Hall and other sites will collectively reduce the Council's carbon emissions by an expected 520 tonnes and result in an annual financial saving of over £123k. New software has also been installed on our IT operating system to measure computer idle time and drive reduction in the energy wasted from inactive computers. The Council has been rated in the top 10% of recyclers in an independent survey. The Council's Property Services and Climate Action Team have also been certified of the international environmental management standard ISO14001.

**Reducing Carbon Emissions** - three quarters of our street lights have now been dimmed, switched off in the early hours or turned off entirely. The project has reduced Leicestershire's carbon footprint and helped to save the Council more than £818k. We also supported 14 communities to improve the energy

efficiency of community buildings through the Community Climate Change Grant. In all £22,000 was provided for projects that will reduce carbon emissions by 19 tonnes a year and reduce the energy costs for those building by £5,000 per year. Carbon emissions from Council operations, buildings, street lighting and signs and business mileage all improved last year.

**Flooding and Emergency Management** - supporting flood resilience in the community has continued with improved public information on the new LLR Prepared website, in addition to ongoing recruitment, training and support for flood wardens. A partnership approach to community resilience has resulted in the launch of the 'Aware and Prepared' programme. As it develops the programme will see greater engagement with residents, communities and businesses, encouraging them to plan for how they can help themselves and others in emergencies. A key element of the work is the recruitment of 'Prepared Citizens', volunteers from across the LLR area who will come together to help their communities in times of emergency. Further work continues with supporting community groups and parish councils to develop specific local plans, especially in areas of known risk. Within the Council there is now a process in place provide assurance that critical suppliers have robust business continuity plans in place to be able to maintain their service, even in times of disruption. The Council's partnership with Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland councils continues to deliver a high quality service with benefits including 24/7 dedicated Resilience Officer emergency response and the coordinated development and delivery of plans, training and exercises.

**Sustainable Waste Management** – our programme to improve our Recycling and Household Waste Sites and Waste Transfer Stations has continued. This work builds upon previous successes and underpins our commitment to providing a high quality service. More than 750 residents, charities and businesses responded to a consultation on how we can save £1.1m from the future cost of running the sites. We also met additional waste disposal costs as waste tonnages began to increase due to the improving economy. Leicestershire residents' ongoing reuse and recycling, along with increased use of waste treatment technologies, meant that the proportion of household waste that was sent to landfill sites continued to fall last year.

**Waste Prevention, Reuse and Recycling** – we continue to support opportunities for communities to reduce their environmental impact. We delivered over 55 classes for residents focussing on waste prevention and reuse. The partnership New Year Reuse Resolution campaign in January included events such as the 'swap and fix' day, where residents donated unwanted items and others could pick them up for free. The campaign was organised by the Leicestershire Waste Partnership, made up of the County Council and local District Councils.

**Composting** - in May a new composting demonstration site, supported by the Council in partnership with Leicester University, was opened at Leicester Botanic Garden in Oadby. The site shows easy ways to get the most from garden and food waste and aims to inspire residents to compost their waste. We also continue to offer cut price compost bins to support residents in efforts

to cut waste through greater composting. Work is also underway to understand recent changes in recycling and composting patterns in the County and to consider possible actions in response.

**Minerals and Waste Planning** - a new draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan setting out how the council will deal with minerals and waste planning applications over the next 16 years was approved during the year and is being consulted on, to ensure that residents and businesses have their say. The plan will act as a blueprint for future minerals and waste planning.

### **Natural and Historic Environment**

**Environment Grants** – the Stepping Stones project supports community action on landscape and natural environment improvements through a variety of help to parish councils and community organisations. In 2015 Stepping Stones helped 13 applicants plant 1.9km of new hedgerow alongside 475 new trees as part of our Woodland Trust partnership ‘Trees Make Hedges’ scheme. There were also 17 successful applications to our ‘Plugs for Bugs’ scheme from parish councils, community groups and farmers wanting to plant wildflower seeds, bulbs and plugs. The Project also awarded 11 applicants financial support through the suite of green infrastructure grants for works to improve green spaces and the farmed landscape.

**Countryside Walks** - more than 60 organised walks took place across Leicestershire as part of National Walking Month, to promote the health benefits of walking as well as the fantastic countryside, parks and urban areas of the County. The Council also continues to provide information on the 1,896 miles of rights of way in Leicestershire and the 75 mile National Forest Way.

**Country Parks** – our Countryside Services Team secured funding from the National Forest Company to further develop Beacon Hill County Park as a visitor hub during the year. The funding enabled new signage to be created providing information about native trees and woodland management around the trail, including 28 signs about different species of trees. The National Forest Wood Fair offered a range of opportunities for visitors to learn wood crafts, view chainsaw sculpting and try local food and drink. Additional repair and improvement works were also carried out to our county farms to ensure the estate meets the required standards.

**Ashby Canal** – the Council, supported by the Ashby Canal Association, is leading the scheme to restore an eight mile stretch of the waterway. The restoration of the Ashby Canal is a long-term project and during 2015 construction commenced on a further 500m of canal and on Bridge 62. Around 20 volunteers from the Waterway Recovery Trust, along with local residents, joined forces with the Council in August to rebuild the bridge at Snarestone as part of the project. Alongside the construction project continued maintenance and monitoring of the nature reserve adjacent to the Ashby Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest at Snarestone, and the maintenance of the isolated restored canal section at Moira also took place. In

2016 the construction project will be completed and further management and maintenance activities undertaken.

### **Cultural Environment and Better Place**

**Better Place** – we are supporting the £9.5m project to develop a new Railway Museum at the Leicester North terminus of the Great Central Railway. The Museum will hold collections of locomotives from the National Rail Collection in York. It is estimated that when completed the Railway and Museum will be worth some £39m to the local economy as well as providing education and training facilities. Work is also underway to connect the Great Central Line to the main rail network.

**Richard III and Bosworth** – the Council and its officers played key roles in co-ordinating events leading up to and during the re-interment week, including relating to highways, museums, heritage, civic affairs and communications. In March 35,000 people lined the streets of Leicester and Leicestershire to mark the final journey of King Richard III. In addition more than 100 special events and activities ran as part of the re-interment programme. 2,500 people attended the service to honour the memory of King Richard. Visitors from around the globe also flocked to our Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre during a week-long programme of events to coincide with the re-interment. Compared to the same period in 2014 there was a significant increase in the number of paying visitors travelling to the heritage site. In February Bosworth was awarded the Visit England ‘Best Story Told’ accolade, which recognises outstanding venues going the extra mile to create memorable visitor experiences.

**Symington Building and Hallaton Treasure** - the first year of the new library, museum and adult learning facility based in The Symington Building in Market Harborough has been a success, with around 200,000 visits. The building includes the Hallaton Treasure and a space for national touring exhibitions. Two new exhibitions celebrating Leicestershire’s history also opened at Harborough Museum, focusing on 19 century prints and drawings and the town’s tradition of Baking and Sewing. Two pieces of rare Anglo Saxon jewellery went on display at **Melton Museum** in August. The pendants from 500AD were found separately in Scaford and Hoby.

**Green Plaques** – since its start in summer 2014 our Green Plaque scheme has been continuing with great success commemorating key people and places of Leicestershire. People celebrated have been Charles Booth social reformer, Thringstone, Flight Lt Geoffrey Rice, Dambusters hero, Burbage, Alice Young, Missionary, Enderby, Graham Chapman of Monty Python fame, Melton, war hero Brigadier-General James Jack, Kibworth Harcourt, and William Henry Buckingham VC WW1 hero, Countesthorpe. In February a plaque for the John Taylor Bell-foundry was also unveiled in Loughborough, the birthplace of the largest bell ever cast in the UK. In July a green plaque was unveiled in Angel Yard, Loughborough at the original home of Ladybird Books. A second collection of plaques has also now been chosen and will be

installed, to continue to celebrate the people and places of Leicestershire's rich history.

**VE Day Commemorations** - events were held to mark the 70th anniversary of VE day, commemorating the end of the Second World War and the lives lost during the conflict. Veterans were invited to celebrate the anniversary at the Council's Armed Forces memorial, as well as a beacon-lighting at Beacon Hill.

**Libraries** – government funding reductions mean we have had to look at new approaches to support continued good library provision. Positive progress has been made to enable local communities to manage local libraries with a support package from the Council. In July the first community managed library opened in Barrow and this has been followed by Markfield and Glenhills in September. Work is progressing with another 32 communities to follow. Improvement works were completed at Hinckley Library in August 2014, involving the creation of two new meeting/class rooms for local groups and Leicestershire's Adult Learning Service. In January the library service showcased its digital offer with guidance and advice to library users on how to get the most out of e-books, e-audiobooks and e-magazines on smartphones and tablets. Loans of electronic books and other e-resources have increased by 50% since last year. The annual Summer Reading Challenge continued to encourage young people to read for pleasure during the summer months. This year over 9,000 young people took part in the 'Record Breakers' challenge. Overall library visits and book issues continue to decline, in line with trends nationally.

**Registration Service** – Leicestershire's newest Register Office, The Cedar Room at Anstey Frith House, Glenfield, was officially opened by the Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire in May 2015, boasting a welcoming reception area and two beautiful ceremony rooms and holding up to 80 people.