

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 28TH SEPTEMBER 2016
POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Glenfield Hospital – Heart Unit

Members will be aware that, in July of this year, NHS England announced its intention to cease commissioning children's heart surgery from the Glenfield Hospital. The clinical outcomes achieved by this service are amongst the best in the country and the patient and family satisfaction rates are outstanding. It is difficult to understand why NHS England would threaten its future and place patients from across the East Midlands in the position of having to travel as far as Birmingham or London to access a similar service.

We're united with the UHL Trust and City Council in our view that this proposal is simply wrong and Ernie White has become the first county councillor to attend the city council's health and wellbeing board, to hear what NHS England had to say about the matter. The issue has also been discussed, of course, at the County's Board. I'm pleased that NHS England have recognised the need to consult patients and the public before it takes a final decision on the future of this service.

The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be meeting tomorrow to consider how it should respond to this consultation.

We need defeat this proposal as it will affect not just the Heart Unit but paediatric health services across the board.

Olympics and Paralympics

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Great Britain's Olympic and Paralympic teams on their outstanding performances in Rio. The contribution made by Loughborough University to this success has been quite exceptional.

It is also important to recognise the role that Loughborough plays in producing what is a pipeline of elite athletes. In that context, and with support from the County and City Councils in the bidding process, I am pleased to report that the UK School Games held at Loughborough University earlier this month were an outstanding success. Since the University holds the contract to stage the Games in both of the next two years, I am sure that success will grow.

Gold medal athletes from Rio were there to open the School Games, to talk about their own experiences of those Games a few years ago, and how school sport is vital to the continuing success of our athletes at an international level. I have seen some statistics in regard to the School Games and was amazed to see that there was a twitter reach of 47.9 million people.

Coming back to the Olympics and Paralympics, it is interesting to measure Loughborough's success against nations. In the Olympics, the University would have come 17th (5 gold medals, 2 silver and 4 bronze) and therefore ahead of New Zealand and Canada.

In the Paralympics, the University would have come 10th (10 gold medals, 8 silver and 4 bronze), ahead of not only New Zealand and Canada, but also France, Spain and Poland.

In addition, Loughborough graduates were responsible for coaching individual and team gold medal performances, including Adam Peaty in swimming, the GB Women's Hockey Team and the Fiji Rugby Seven Team.

A number of members have spoken to me about how the County Council might play its part in recognising local successes. The availability of athletes within their training programmes can make arrangements difficult but I am talking to the officers about what might be possible either on or own or working with others. I am in touch with the Vice-Chancellor of the Loughborough University on possibilities and I will also be offering the Council's congratulations to him and his colleagues, students and graduates, on their extraordinary successes, which now deservedly include being named University of the Year for Sport in the Good University Guide.

Combined Authority

On the issue of the Combined Authority for Leicester and Leicestershire I am pleased to say that we remain on track for the Statutory Order to be laid before Parliament in early November, paving the way to holding the first meeting of the Combined Authority in January 2017.

I am particularly pleased that all Leaders remain committed to the Combined Authority and are working closely together to ensure that we deliver on economic growth, skills, strategic planning and transport to the benefit of the area. This is in sharp contrast to other parts of the country.

Member Advisory Panel – Refugees and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Following a discussion with Simon Galton and Robert Sharp, and after consulting with Cabinet colleagues, it is my intention to set up a Panel involving members of the Administration and the principal opposition groups to consider how the Council discharges its obligations to Syrian Refugees and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

The Administration will be represented on the Panel by Ivan Ould, Dave Houseman and Ernie White.

I have asked Ivan Ould, who is already a member of the East Midlands Migration Board, to chair the Panel and he has kindly agreed to do so.

As I have said previously we are committed to playing our part in accommodating refugees from Syria and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children but have repeatedly called on the Government to fully fund the costs of our participation.

Local Government Association

I would advise the Council that I have been appointed to the LGA Executive Committee as the East Midlands regional representative. The LGA Executive plays a coordinating role, providing strategic direction to the Association's work. I will seek to use my position to ensure the needs of our region are at the forefront of discussions at the LGA and with Government.

Fair Funding Campaign

Byron Rhodes will be making a position statement on this but I wanted to take this opportunity to place on record my appreciation for the hard work that he, Chris Tambini and Jo Miller from the Chief Executive's Department have put in in presenting the Leicestershire case to Government.

The Queen's 90th Birthday Celebrations

The County Council's School Food Service held a competition to design a card to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. It also organised street parties for schools which were attended by over 37,000 pupils in Leicestershire.

On behalf of the children and young people I was invited to sign the card featuring the winning design which was sent to Her Majesty, the Queen.

I am delighted to report that I have now received a letter from the Palace in which Her Majesty extends her warm and good wishes to all concerned.

This page is intentionally left blank