

APPENDIX A

Leading Leicestershire: Transforming Public Services

Leicestershire County Council
Annual Performance Report 2016



Annual Report Contents

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Introduction and Overall Performance Summary

It is approaching 3 years since the Council launched major new plans including its Strategic Plan to 2018, Transformation Programme, Communities and Commissioning Strategies and updated Medium Term Financial Strategy. Since that time the organisation and services have undergone significant transformation to focus services on delivering priority outcomes, target support towards vulnerable groups, enable more community delivery, move forward digital enablement and respond to austerity by delivering significant financial cuts and efficiency savings. There has also been significant partnership working to help achieve this.

The organisation has also been taking forward major plans and strategies to support business and economic growth including transport network improvements, enable the integration of health and social care and improve public health, support children and families with a particular focus on vulnerable children and ensure communities are safe with Leicestershire having a good environment and being a good place to live.

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 and progress against our targets is set out in Part B of the report.

Performance Summary

Overall analysis of the narrative shows strong examples of delivery and transformation across all the theme areas. There are good plans and governance in place supporting delivery and improvement. There has been improvement on a number of priority indicators (96) during the last year. Since the Strategic Plan and priorities were agreed there has so far been improvement in 86 of 120 indicators, 72% of those possible to report on. 73 of 115 have either currently met or on course to meet the targets set.

Some notable improvements during the year include:-

An increase in the number of people saying that the Council is doing a good job, from 55% to 59%, and delivery of £35m of efficiency savings. Continued strong economic performance, including 92% access to high speed broadband, increased value from tourism activity and lower levels of young people not in employment, education or training at just 3%. Continued good highways maintenance (98%) and delivery of significant major strategic highways network improvements.

In relation to social care and health supporting more people independently outside of residential and nursing care and through self-directed support from 91% to 97%, meeting targets relating to reablement, delayed transfers of care and falls prevention. Supporting more people with learning disabilities, from 65% to 77%, to live in their own home or with family. Reducing mortality from

common causes and late HIV presentation and reducing teenage pregnancies (18.5 per 1,000).

Increasing the number of families supported through the Supporting Leicestershire Families service and good outcomes for families. Reducing the length of time to place children for adoption. Improved GCSE 5 A*-C with English and Maths (57.2%), more good school places (87%) and more children getting their first choice school.

Reducing first time entrants to the criminal justice system to the lowest rate recorded at 124 from 190 and increased satisfaction that anti-social behaviour is being dealt with (92.7%), people feeling safer after dark (90%) and that people get on well together (97%).

Reducing CO2 emissions from Council operations, buildings and street lighting/signs and reducing staff business miles. Reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill (from 29% to 27.6%) and less waste produced from Council buildings.

Fair Funding and Service Reductions

Despite the strong overall delivery there is a need to maintain a continued delivery focus in a number of areas and take forward a number of agreed strategies and improvement plans. There are a number of areas where performance has not improved or has reduced. There is also some time lag in the performance data and now a high risk that reductions in government funding will in future make it difficult to maintain good delivery levels and target service improvements where required. Preliminary analysis shows a good correlation between those higher funded counties and higher overall service standards and performance levels. It is therefore important that the Council continues to press its strong case for fairer funding to ensure a more level performance playing field and mitigate the impact of further service cuts.

In light of the unfair funding situation and continuing funding reductions, as well as progress on delivering a range of areas within the existing Strategic Plan, the Council is now commencing work on reviewing and further targeting and reducing its priorities. A new Outcomes Framework has been commenced to guide future commissioning and service activity.

Areas for continued focus include:-

- Implementing an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy, Transformation Programme and Commissioning Plans. A stronger commercial focus and more digital delivery through a new digital strategy and IT service.
- Continuing to enhance our business intelligence, performance focus, contract monitoring and management and feedback processes so that service quality issues are detected and can be addressed.

- Analysis shows that Leicestershire, due to unfair funding, is now the lowest spending county in a number of service areas with enhanced risks to service delivery and improvement as a result. In addition there is a time lag in some of the service performance data, so continued close monitoring of performance is required.
- Taking forward a range of new plans to support economic growth including skills delivery, strategic planning and enhancements to the transport network. Continuing the focus on road accident reduction, tackling congestion and sustainable travel.
- Further work to support health and care integration and health Sustainability and Transformation Plans, including effective mental health and CAHMS services. Continuing to focus on key public health priorities including drug treatment and reducing child obesity.
- Improving satisfaction with the quality of adult social care services, social contact and quality of life and mitigating pressures on adult social care and health as a result of the ageing population.
- A continued strong focus on good children's social care services and safeguarding. Further analytical advice and support to schools to target improvements in educational attainment.
- Continuing effective partnership working with the Police and Crime Commissioner to pursue improvements in crime reduction, vehicle crime and burglary. Seeking to improve reporting of hate incidents and domestic violence.
- Partnership work with communities to support more volunteering and community work such as work on maintaining library provision and usage as well as other areas of community support for public services.
- Further progressing action plans to support workforce equalities, health and wellbeing and reductions in staff sickness absence.

Part A – Theme Progress

Leadership and Transformation

Over recent years we have been dealing with major funding cuts by transforming our services, targeting what we have got to support communities and vulnerable people and driving growth.

Lowest Funded County and Further Cuts

Leicestershire is the worst funded county in England. We have already saved £135m over the last seven years. The latest national financial position with austerity extended into the 2020s will lead to further spending cuts. The Government has not protected council spending and government grant reduces to zero in 2019/20. We also continue to face a range of funding pressures including projected growth in the over-65 population by 40%, 53,000 over the next 15 years. Even if only 3.5% require major adult social care, that could add £50m to our spending. Social care costs for disabled people and other service users will cost an additional £50m on top over the same period. The living wage will increase the cost of social care provision and growth in the 0-19 population of 11,100 will require more school places. We will have to find extra savings of £30-£40m in addition to the £59m already identified. We face a serious and extremely challenging situation and radical thinking will be required.

In spring 2016 we agreed a Medium Term Financial Strategy and budget including £27m in efficiencies and £32m in service reductions as well as annual Council Tax rises of 3.99% (including a 2% rise to help support adult social care) over the next four years to balance the budget. This left a £19m gap where we have yet to identify options for reductions. We are already taking tough decisions including cuts to early help services, waste sites, public health services and rural bus subsidies. £34.96m of efficiencies and other savings were achieved in 2015/16. As a result of the tax increase and changes 73.8% of residents feel the council offers value for money, a comparatively good position but down slightly on the previous year. 59% of residents think the Council is doing a good job, up from 55.3% last year.

Fair Funding Campaign – as a result of the scale of our unfair funding we have joined forces with other councils in a fair funding campaign. We could reduce the cuts to services if the Government adopts a fairer funding formula. The current funding system is unfair and there is no logic in how funding is distributed, with a postcode lottery that will get worse. Under the Government's estimate of council spending power in 2016/17 Leicestershire is £14m per year worse off than Northamptonshire, £47m worse off than Oxfordshire and £385m worse off than Islington. Our model shows that Leicestershire could be more than £50m per year better off if funding was distributed in a fairer way. We have proposed a much simpler system that is transparent, fair and incentivises effective service delivery.

Transformation - due to the severe financial pressures, we have maintained a strong focus on delivering the projects within our Transformation Programme as well as designing new projects and plans. Our Transformation Unit has helped drive forward projects whilst ensuring a pipeline of emerging projects is converted into realistic business cases. Of the £44m savings in the four-year programme we have delivered £23m against a target of £20m to 2015/16. In April we agreed a new Transformation Programme approach linked to new commissioning intentions with the aim of saving a further £35m over the next four years through transformation activity. As well as ensuring delivery of a range of departmental projects, the programme is developing two major cross-cutting areas of work to deliver organisation wide change – a new digital council programme and commercialising our services.

Leicestershire Traded Services – our Commercial Services project aims to generate £2m by 2020 from traded services. We will do this by reviewing all services and products, understanding our markets, targeting new customers and developing relationships with existing clients. We have created Leicestershire Traded Services (LTS) and established a new sales group to develop a more coordinated approach to sales and account management. We are also raising the profile of LTS including developing our branding and introducing a new portal for our customers and developing our capability to tender for additional contracts.

Strategic Commissioning – transformation and savings needs required a new approach to commissioning services. In 2015 we approved a Commissioning and Procurement strategy setting out our commissioning approach. Our aim is to make the most use of all resources available, not just our own resources but those of our partners, suppliers and communities so that we can make the biggest impact. In doing so, promoting independence and community resilience whilst still being there when needed the most. We have delivered two government funded Commissioning Academies for senior public leaders and senior managers to ensure best practice commissioning approaches are adopted. We have also developed an authority wide training programme and commissioning toolkit to support all staff involved in the commissioning process. We have restructured our Commissioning Support Unit to develop effective commissioning strategies, sourcing in-house and externally and to improve our approach to provider and contract management. We are also reviewing business continuity plans for our business critical suppliers and simplifying our approaches to help small and medium size enterprises do business with us. £3.54m of procurement savings were achieved in 2015/16.

We have rolled-out e-tendering software to help us electronically manage our procurement activity. In the first few months of this year our Commissioning Support Unit secured £660k worth of previously unidentified savings. We have benchmarked ourselves against the National Procurement Strategy for local government and our performance is in line with and in many cases better than comparator authorities. For areas with scope for improvement we are setting out action plans to address these such as looking to exploit Dynamic Purchasing Systems. In April 2016 our first council-wide plan of

commissioning intentions was put in place. This set out proposals for future service change using four guiding principles: preventative measures; measures to reduce need; delaying the development of need; and meeting need. Over the next 12 months we will implement action plans to embed the commissioning approach, better supplier and contract management and a more commercially focused culture. In 2015 we held a number of workshops with public sector commissioners across Leicestershire to review how we could jointly commission services and will be taking a number of these areas forward with partners.

Business Intelligence – during the year a new Data and Business Intelligence Strategy was developed which will help the Council to improve its use of data and business intelligence to support decision making, strategic planning, commissioning and service delivery. The strategy builds on a strong culture of performance reporting and insight collection. The Business Intelligence Service was re-structured during the year to support the delivery of the strategy and provide efficiency savings. This new service went live on 1st April 2016. Over the next 12 months the BI Service will focus on implementing the strategy and working with services across the Council to meet their data and insight requirements. A key element of the strategy is to provide managers with a 'self-service' offer which will give them greater access to a wider range of information and analysis combined with an ability to explore their own data in an interactive and timely manner. This will be underpinned by new technical reporting arrangements and skills development across the organisation.

Communities Strategy – our Leicestershire Communities Strategy sets out our commitment to develop inclusive and resilient communities that are more self-sufficient, mutually supportive and make a positive difference for local residents. During 2015/16 good progress has been made such as supporting community managed libraries and empowering local volunteers to provide more flexible and responsive services in association with complementary activities such as community meeting space. Support for voluntary and community groups is commissioned by us from Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL). During the last year VAL have supported the sector through networking, collaboration and information sharing events, helping influence policy, leading the development of tendering partnerships, helping groups secure income and supporting people to volunteer. A range of community capacity building initiatives have also progressed including funding for the development of good neighbour schemes facilitated by the Rural Community Council, contracting with VAL to support communities to develop new initiatives that bring people together and develop resilience and resourcefulness, particularly in areas of economic disadvantage and providing a Local Area Co-ordination service to support people to access community resources and build capacity. In June 2016 a review of the Communities Strategy was initiated and implementation of a new Delivery Plan will commence this year.

SHIRE Grants – our SHIRE Community Grants help to deliver the Communities Strategy through providing funding for community projects. During 2015/16, 25 ‘large grants’ of up to £10,000 were awarded, along with 83 ‘small grants’ up to £2,500. The grants helped a range of voluntary organisations to deliver support for vulnerable and disadvantaged people, including vulnerable young people, adults with disabilities, and communities facing a range of challenges such as unemployment and mental health issues.

Volunteering – in June we promoted ways for people to get involved in public service delivery as part of Volunteers’ Week. As well as helping others, volunteering can address issues of loneliness and depression leading to better physical and mental health. Opportunities available include being a ‘meet and greet’ volunteer at work clubs in libraries, driving older people to the shops and helping young people into work through our ‘Get Set’ scheme. Also being a mentor with the youth offending service, supporting adult learners, becoming a conservation volunteer or helping at a local community project. During 2015/16 work commenced to create a more co-ordinated strategic approach to volunteering. A review of volunteering related policies and procedures took place, a cross-authority volunteer managers network established and stronger links developed with Voluntary Action Leicestershire. Work to embed volunteering across departments including those not traditionally associated with volunteering has also begun and new volunteering opportunities created for example mentee placements with the Registrars service.

Digital Strategy – the internet has changed our lives and placed citizens more in control, as customers choose where and how they wish to access information and services. The potential of digital technologies is great and we have developed a new draft Digital Strategy to 2020 to harness the transformational benefits for Leicestershire. Digital will be at the centre of delivering our overall strategic priorities and ensuring residents can access information and support online when and where they choose. Our Digital Council Programme will introduce easy to use customer self-help tools to increase customer self-service and reduce the need for more expensive face to face and telephone contact. It will also help staff to adopt new technologies and move to simpler and cheaper technology components and services. The programme aims to save £2m by 2019/20. We are also promoting the development of digital skills so that the more excluded and isolated can benefit from the improvements. Our adult learning and library programmes are enhancing skills and opportunities for children, young people and adults. A network of volunteer digital champions has been created drawing from the private sector to help improve skills.

Last year we launched a new website focused on the needs of customers with 250 tasks online. The new site is built for mobiles and tablets and much smaller and easier to search meaning that more people are finding what they need 24/7. Since launching, 54% of the visitors have used their mobile or tablet to access the site. Our digital offer is also growing with increased use of e-books, magazines and e-learning. Additionally we are using digital tools

to enable improvements within the council to support better ways of working and allow the council to be more effective. A number of smarter working initiatives have been piloted during 2015 for example Virtual Desktop Integration (VDI) was procured, designed and built and rollout began and will continue through 2016. VDI supports the delivery of smarter working approaches and enhances opportunities for flexible working. Skype for business is also being piloted allowing instant messaging, internet telephone calls, conferencing and virtual meeting spaces.

ICT Services - our IT service manages 430+ software applications, 50Tb of data and 7000 devices with 5500 active users. Increasing demands include a changed technology landscape and emerging priorities include digital delivery, cloud usage, mobile services and analytics. Investment in our ICT infrastructure has replaced equipment that links the Council's two data centres enabling better balancing of ICT operational workload and enhanced resilience. There has also been a replacement of our corporate firewall hardware as part of improvements in information security provision. Our new fit for the future data centre will ensure data and systems are even more secure. We are also aiming to reduce cost and simplify our IT landscape. We are investing £4.1m over the next 4 years to support a more digital and agile organisation. In the autumn our new IT customer portal will provide staff with more control over finding IT solutions and support. A new intranet is also progressing to ensure that staff are better supported with key information and common tasks. Software will integrate with new staff collaboration tools. 94% of staff using the ICT Service Desk are satisfied.

Customer Services - our Customer Service Centre (CSC) handles around 350,000 customer contacts across a range of channels per year and over 300,000 outbound calls are made to resolve enquiries. 50,000 passes, badges and permits are issued to members of the public each year. We continue to explore ways to increase the number of customers accessing online digital services. In addition our CSC is playing a central role in supporting greater integration with the NHS and safeguarding vulnerable older people. The CSC continues to hold the Customer Excellence Award and is working with the Institute of Customer Service to explore accreditation. During October we marked National Customer Service week by revisiting our customer service standards and recognising excellent service by staff. Training led by the Local Government Ombudsman also took place on effective complaints handling. 81.2% of customers contacting the Customer Service Centre are satisfied.

Communications - our Communications Unit supports the Council with key challenges and campaigns. Our Central Print and Design service won first place for the Best Full Colour Digital Award with 'A children's guide to adoption.' at the Association of Print and Communications Managers conference. The Print Service was also runner up for the Best Environmental Award. The percentage of residents who feel informed increased again this year peaking at 70%. This has had a direct impact on how satisfied people are feeling which reached 62%. 83% said they trust the council. We continue

to use social media to improve the way that we work with customers, communities and partners.

Asset Management – we are implementing our Asset Management Strategy and have so far saved c£800k as well as achieving closer partnership working through locating staff into County Hall. The delivery of the County Hall Masterplan has included letting surplus space to around 450 staff from health partners. We are also reducing the ratio of desks to 8 desks for 10 people and reducing energy use outside of regular office hours through a new out-of-hours facility to support flexible working. Other projects include 4 academy transfers, delivery of new school places, new area special school, transfer of 17 libraries to community groups, property rationalisation and support with economic development and growth bids. The 2015/16 schools capital programme of £36m was one of the largest annual construction programmes ever set for the Council. A total of £30.9m was delivered compared with £13.3m the previous year with an anticipated spend of £29m in 2016/17. A revised Corporate Asset Management Plan was agreed in June and an Asset Management Delivery Plan has been agreed for 2016/17 setting out an ambitious set of property projects and tasks. £27.45m is estimated to be achieved from property sales during 2016-2020 supported by the release of development sites identified through proactive management and asset challenge processes.

People Strategy - our Human Resources and Organisational Development services aim to create a skilled and flexible workforce equipped to take the council beyond 2020. To support this we have developed smarter ways of working policies for flexible working, resulting in Timewise accreditation. We also promote the Council as an employer of choice and have improved the employment deal. We are updating our current set of values and behaviours to ensure that we have the right set which is reflective of customer and resident needs and the environment within which we operate. A corporate action plan has been developed and is being implemented in response to our 2015 Staff Survey. Over 100 ideas were also put forward through staff roadshows and focus groups. In June we launched a new learning management system, a one stop shop for staff to access training courses, e-learning and other resources. We also aim to create an increased number of apprenticeships and work placement opportunities. 91% of staff are satisfied with the Council as an employer.

Absence Management and Wellbeing – the number of days lost to sickness absence during 2015/16 was 9.32 per FTE, an improvement on 2014/15 but still higher than our target. Work to implement an Attendance Management Action Plan has seen the number of absence management cases increase steadily over the last 2 years with 243 cases ongoing. The number of referrals to the staff counselling service increased significantly towards the end of the year and was at the highest over the last 4 years. The number of counselling sessions provided was 266 also the highest of the past 4 years. We have now recruited 6 workplace wellbeing co-ordinators and 56 champions. Our health champions have been working hard to support people to improve their health and wellbeing. Work is also being carried out to achieve the Health and

Wellbeing Charter. Our relaunched cycle to work scheme has had a positive response from staff with over 50 signed up in the first few months. In winter 2015 our health, safety and wellbeing service was re-accredited following a detailed assessment of our approach.

Equality and Diversity - in June we agreed a new Equality Strategy to 2020. The strategy outlines how we aim to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in the delivery of services, support communities and develop our workforce. We deploy resources where the risk to equalities is highest and the extent of disadvantage the greatest. We also agreed an Equality Action Plan 2016/17 to target work where it is most needed. We aim to improve our workforce representation, improve self-declaration rates for protected characteristics, tackle transgender inequalities, focus on disability, maintain a commitment to the equality and human rights impacts of our policies, foster good relations with the community and engage with communities such as travellers and the deaf community. In January it was revealed that we were the top council in equality charity Stonewall's list of the most gay-friendly places to work. The Council has climbed from 166th in 2009 to 7th place. The accolade recognises how we value diverse employees and deliver services which recognise the needs of all residents and staff. In February an initiative recognising those who have made a difference to the lives of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in Leicestershire was launched. Role models, nominated by the public, were chosen by a panel of judges.

Scrutiny of Local Services - a total of 113 reports were considered by our Scrutiny Function in 2015/16. Key achievements include a major piece of work to scrutinise the Fire Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan. Proposed cuts would have led to the closure of Kibworth and Central stations but were withdrawn following receipt of £2m from central government. Other corporate issues considered include support for tourism services, the combined authority and the budget. Regarding adult social care, consideration was given to a more user friendly way for people to manage personal budgets through use of direct payment cards. Scrutiny was also proactive in shaping changes to the way library services are delivered and in developing the support package offered to communities taking on libraries. In relation to children we were reassured by the positive work undertaken by the Virtual School in relation to better attendance and better educational outcomes for children in care. We also focussed on ensuring the Council was dealing with the issue of child sexual exploitation and improving our foster care service.

In the area of highways we received representations from the community concerning changes to Hugglescote Crossroads, which were put on hold following review. We also looked at road safety and people killed or seriously injured in road accidents and were reassured that actions were being taken including community speed watch teams and speed awareness courses. A review panel looked into Network Rail's proposals to straighten the tracks and improve the station at Market Harborough with longer platforms and improved disabled access. The review heard evidence from Network Rail and East

Midlands Trains. The findings were used to find a way forward for financing the Scheme. The Flood Risk Management Strategy was also scrutinised.

In relation to health we have looked closely at ambulance handovers and urgent care performance which have been an area of concern. We also looked at the improvement plan put in place by Leicestershire Partnership Trust following a Care Quality Commission inspection which considered that the Trust 'required improvement'. We have also been engaging with health leaders as they develop proposals for fundamental changes to health provision in the County.

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. The Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Partnership (LLEP) Strategic Economic Plan to 2020 plays a key role in this and is being reviewed and updated in 2016/17 to reflect recent changes in the economy and the availability of updated evidence. Priorities continue to be improving low GVA per head, retaining the highly skilled, tackling road congestion and problem junctions, improving connectivity on the rail network and a better coordinated bus network.

Economic Delivery, Combined Authority and Devolution – in December 2015 formal proposals were submitted to the Government requesting creation of a combined authority for Leicester and Leicestershire. The move comes after we, together with the city and district councils, all endorsed proposals for creation of the authority. If Parliament approves the proposal, the Leicester/Leicestershire Combined Authority could be established by the end of the year. A combined authority will enable us to work more closely together and guide decisions on transport, planning, skills and other issues affecting the area. We also continue to work closely to develop a Devolution Deal for negotiation with the Government and good progress continues to be made on developing an ambitious and deliverable deal. Our Economic Growth Board (also acting as the Shadow Combined Authority) has approved the development of detailed business cases for a suite of devolved powers and funds to develop the local economy and related public services.

Midlands Engine – we are continuing to engage fully with the development of the Midlands Engine, raising the profile of the Midlands both nationally and internationally and securing increased government funding to boost economic growth. We have lobbied to support the Midlands Engine office being hosted at Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park. Two schemes in the county have been submitted via the Midlands Engine for funding – the further expansion of Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park, and further phases of the Leicester North West transport scheme. We are a member of the Midlands Connect Board which is the transport arm of Midlands Engine. Midlands Connect is developing a comprehensive long-term strategy for road and rail by March 2017 and the Government has provided £5m for development of the strategy.

Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) – we have committed to developing a new Strategic Growth Plan that will determine land-use strategy for the Leicester and Leicestershire sub-region and set out long term aspirations for development and the environment. In June 2016 we agreed a Strategic Growth Statement for consultation as the first part of the process to prepare the new Plan. Development of the draft plan, underpinned by a comprehensive Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA), will be consulted on in summer 2017 with a final plan aimed to be completed in early 2018.

Enabling Growth Plan and Infrastructure Plan – we have produced our own Enabling Growth Plan which sets out how we will contribute towards the overarching economic vision and priorities for Leicester and Leicestershire. The plan sets out what we will do and what we will invest in to improve the economic prosperity of the county. In June 2016 the plan was reviewed by the Enabling Growth Board and updated. Our newly approved Infrastructure Plan sets out a more strategic approach to planning infrastructure across our departments by prioritising capital investment to achieve Leicestershire’s spatial and economic aspirations in the short to medium term. Infrastructure investment is a key element of the Government’s economic plan and fundamental to fulfilling local sustainable growth ambitions. The Infrastructure Plan sets out how we will invest in and secure investment for infrastructure critical to the economy, housing and communities. The Plan will be updated to align with growth requirements identified through the Strategic Growth Plan.

Section 106 Contributions – we are committed to supporting sustainable and coordinated growth across the county ensuring future development continues to enable a strong economy, quality environment and well supported communities. We play a key role in the planning process as a highway authority and service provider and work with local planning authorities to ensure that Section 106 developer contributions mitigate the consequences of planned developments; including helping to meet demands on services and associated infrastructure costs.

EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) – approximately £103m of European Structural and Investment Funds were allocated to the Leicester and Leicestershire area in 2014 and we have been working closely with the LLEP and stakeholders to support prioritisation and allocation of the funding, Further details are provided under the relevant headings below.

Investment in Place

Employment Land and Development Sites

Horiba MIRA Technology Park Enterprise Zone – approved in the first round of Enterprise Zones, Horiba MIRA Enterprise Zone is the largest transport technology park in Europe and a National Centre for Automotive Excellence which aims to create 2,000 direct jobs, with a further 3,000 indirect jobs by 2020. In 2015 the Government approved a 90-acre extension to the Enterprise Zone which came into effect from April 2016, and working closely with the LLEP, Horiba MIRA has developed an Investment Plan for the further development and expansion of the site. Work has recently commenced on Phase Two of the development with the construction of a third multi-use building to accommodate 140 staff. Plans are also underway to develop an on-site Skills Training Centre via a partnership between North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, MIRA Academy, the University of Leicester, Loughborough University and Coventry University. Construction of the Skills Training Centre is expected to commence on site next year.

Loughborough and Leicester Enterprise Zone - the creation of the Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone, subject to business case approval, was announced in March 2016. It is anticipated that the new £180m Enterprise Zone will create nearly 25,000 jobs and welcome 300 new businesses to the area over the next 25 years. The EZ includes Charnwood Campus and the Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park developments and will help to position Leicestershire as the capital of science research, product development and innovation within the Midlands Engine. A final submission was made in July 2016 and it is anticipated that approval will be confirmed in the autumn statement in November 2016.

Charnwood Campus – the site of the former Astra Zeneca life sciences facility in Loughborough, now known as Charnwood Campus, is fast becoming a major economic development focus. A substantial new occupier of part of the campus, the pharmaceutical company Almac, announced a £16m investment in the site which is expected to create 180 new jobs over the next 5 years. The LLEP brought together a partnership of business, universities and local government to develop a proposal to become the UK's first Life Science Opportunity Zone which will provide the infrastructure and environment to encourage collaboration and accelerate business growth for the Med-Tech and Biopharma community.

Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park – the Advanced Technology Innovation Centre located at the Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park opened in September 2015 and has now achieved over 95% occupancy. The centre provides 54 office, studio and laboratory units, designed to meet the evolving needs of early-stage to larger SME development. The County Council contributed £0.45m to the scheme. Further plans to progress a business investment opportunity with Loughborough University, involving the provision of business grow-on space, are in development.

Town Centre Development - a report has been completed on the economic value of Leicestershire's Market Towns. The combined value of the 11 towns is £1.1bn, compared to Leicester City at £168m and Fosse Park at £102m. Collectively the towns employ more than 25,000 people with a spending power of £2 billion. The study will inform the refresh of the LLEP's Strategic Economic Plan and provide an evidence base for future project development. The study identified four common themes to support market town economies: digital market towns, townscape improvement, business friendly market towns and market towns as tourism destinations. A number of related county-wide projects are being developed.

Growth Deals – the Leicester and Leicestershire Growth Deal aims to drive growth by securing additional government funding from the Local Growth Fund and leveraging investment for new homes, employment space, skills and training facilities and to deliver key transport improvements across the area. Growth Deals 1 and 2 were allocated over £100m for the operating period 2015-2021, and have supported a number of transport improvements including the A50 corridor, improvements in Hinckley, Coalville Growth

Corridor, Lubbethorpe Sustainable Urban Extension and the Leicestershire Workspace Programme development of managed workspace, office and incubator facilities.

A further phase of funding, Growth Deal 3 (GD3), was announced in March 2016. Leicester and Leicestershire's GD3 submission to government totalling £144.2m has a focus on the following three themes - unlocking strategic growth sites that are linked through the proposed second Enterprise Zone and have a major focus on Space Technology, Science and Engineering (£56.4m); supporting skills development through the development of skills infrastructure which will support specific growth sectors (£15.3m); and strategic transport projects to unlock employment and housing growth and boost business connectivity with other growth hubs (£72.5m). Included in the bid are a number of county schemes where the Council is either the lead agency or a key partner such as: M1/J23 and A512 Improvements (£17.0m); A47/B582 Desford Crossroads (£6.1m); A47/B582 Desford Crossroads (£11.9m) and Loughborough Science & Enterprise Park (£14.8m). It is expected that an announcement on the GD3 submission will form part of the November Autumn Statement.

Superfast Broadband – the Superfast Leicestershire programme is supporting communities across the county to access high-speed fibre broadband. More than 68,000 homes and businesses throughout Leicestershire have already been reached and by 2018 this will increase by another 17,000. It is a huge civil engineering project with almost 400 new roadside fibre cabinets now installed and over 250 miles of fibre cable deployed. By July over 30% of homes and businesses who had gained access had signed up to a fibre broadband service. This compares to only 10% just 12 months ago, showing a strong increase in demand and use. The Council manages the project on behalf of a range of partners with funding provided from Government, County, District and City councils, European Regional Development Fund, LLEP Local Growth Fund and BT. 92% of the local population now have access to high speed broadband, up from 87% last year.

Asset Investment Strategy - our Corporate Asset Investment Fund saw a purchase completed during 2016 and provisionally let to businesses to generate income. Two further purchases are planned including the Airfield Farm employment site at Market Harborough in 2016/17. Opportunities for further acquisitions will be considered including a potential investment in the Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park. The programme of investments in new workspaces at Coalville and Lutterworth and other Council owned sites across the County is being progressed with on-site construction due to commence in early 2017. The investment portfolio continues to make a positive impact on the wider economy whilst delivering substantial financial benefits for the Council, with rental income in excess of £2.3m in 2016, a return of 6%. There have also been high levels of property development activity and the bringing forward of a number of large-scale housing development sites in the North West and North East of the county.

Investment in People – Employment and Skills Support

Working closely with the LLEP and other stakeholders we are seeking to ensure that Leicestershire residents are adequately skilled to take advantage of growth opportunities and that skills match the demands of businesses in Leicestershire and attract businesses looking to 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.

Employment – the Leicestershire unemployment rate has followed a downward trend over the past 2 years and the latest result of 2.5% remains lower than the regional and national positions. The Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimant rate shows a downward trend since spring 2013 and at 0.7% also remains lower than the regional and national positions.

NEET - data for 2015/16 shows a Leicestershire figure of 3% for young people 'Not in Education, Employment, or Training' (NEET), which is the lowest recorded NEET level for the County, an improvement on last year and amongst the best recorded rates in the country.

European Social Funds (ESF) – the LLEP has released 12 project calls offering over £33.5m for the delivery of skills and employment activity across Leicester and Leicestershire. We have supported a number of bids for these funds and are successful delivery partners for *Financial and Digital Inclusion* via our Work Clubs within libraries and *Family Inclusion* via our Supporting Leicestershire Families team. A partnership bid to support *Rural Social Inclusion* is under appraisal.

Leicestershire Work and Skills Forum - the forum is a network of providers that are delivering initiatives aimed at getting people back into employment, including those furthest from the labour market and includes upskilling the existing workforce. The Council administers and jointly chairs the forum with Jobcentre Plus. A number of workshops have been held including barriers to employment for people with disabilities and health conditions. This is then translated into actions which relevant partners collectively take forward. The bids for ESIF funding involve many partners of the Work and Skills Forum. 77.5% of the population now have at least a Level 2 qualification, up from 75.8% last year.

Careers and Enterprise Company – is an employer-led organisation that has been set up to inspire and prepare young people for the world of work. Its role is to take an umbrella view of the landscape of careers and enterprise, supporting the programme coverage nationally. The Council provided funding to the programme locally and a Careers and Enterprise Coordinator was appointed in November 2015 to recruit, match and direct a team of 20 Enterprise Advisers (volunteers from the business community) to work with local schools and colleges on a one-to-one basis to help schools and colleges to improve their careers and enterprise activities and engage with the world of work. Also to make it easier for employers and the self-employed to engage with schools and colleges and focus efforts on programmes and activities that

are most effective in motivating young people, supporting independent choice and supporting positive outcomes for young people. A second Careers and Enterprise Coordinator was appointed in August 2016 to recruit a further 20 Enterprise Advisers.

Further Education (FE) Review - in the post-16 education sector a national programme of sub-regional reviews has been established as a result of a report which identified a lack of financial sustainability in current arrangements. Leicestershire has 5 FE colleges and 18 sixth forms, 16 of which are academies, which will be impacted by the review. We are working closely with the providers and City Council to ensure that changes that result from the review are to the benefit of the Leicestershire economy, workforce and learners as well as addressing the financial sustainability of FE institutions.

Adult Learning and Digital Skills – there were 9,435 enrolments for all Adult Learning Programmes during the academic year to July 2016, down slightly on the previous year's figure. In February free drop-in sessions to help people understand and make the most of digital technology were held in libraries. The events were supported by volunteer digital champions who share their technology know-how and support people to get online. Adult learning and library staff were also on hand to explain the digital services provided by the Council, including basic computing courses and access to e-books. More digital skills sessions are planned as part of the Moneywise Plus project which is being funded through the European Social Fund.

Apprenticeships - our Leicestershire Adult Learning Service (LALS) apprenticeship programme delivers apprenticeship training to a number of employers including the Council. The Council currently has 54 apprentices in roles such as administration, finance and customer services. The Adult Learning Service has a further 228 apprentices enrolled on apprenticeship programmes working for other public and private sector employers in Leicestershire. LALS also deliver a strong Traineeship Programme as a means of supporting pre-apprenticeships who often go onto mainstream Apprenticeship programmes. The government is aiming to increase the number of apprenticeships nationally from 500k to 3m per year by 2020. An apprenticeships levy and public sector apprenticeships target are to be introduced to help achieve this. We are considering a new approach to respond to the national requirements.

Work Clubs - have attracted 5448 visits from 780 individuals, averaging 105 visits per week from when the project began in November 2013 up to April 2016 and attendance at Work Clubs continues to increase. 28% of people who have engaged with the work clubs have achieved employment success with 46% referred into training. Business support remains popular with 179 business ideas given one-to-one support, leading to 9 new start-ups.

Get Set - supports young people aged 16-25 into 3-6 month voluntary work experience placements across a range of departments within the County Council. The aim is to tackle youth unemployment through bespoke

opportunities directly tailored to the individual's career aspirations and personal needs. To date the project has worked with and supported 149 young people, 100% of which have received 1:1 or group training around employability skills development (CV/application writing, interviews, confidence building etc.). 107 young people have successfully completed placements; of these 68% have successfully entered employment or apprenticeships, 22% have gone onto re-engage with further or higher education and 10% have progressed into other employability or training opportunities.

Wheels to Work - since its inception in 2011 the scheme has supported over 750 clients in accessing work or training. There are currently 205 scooters (including electric bikes and small motorbikes) in operation. Access to employment is by far the biggest factor for clients joining the scheme at 70%, with apprenticeships accounting for 15% and higher education also 15%. From April to August 2016 58 participants have benefited from the project across all districts.

Investment in Business

Our Enabling Growth Plan sets out a range of actions including business grants which support development and jobs growth. This and other 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.

European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) – we have worked closely with the LLEP to help ensure that European funding meets local economic need. We are funding and delivery partners for the following ERDF projects which are currently being appraised: *Collaborate for Business Growth*, led by the City Council, which aims to support the LLEP 8 priority sectors, inward investment support and provide a business grant programme; and *Digital Business Growth Programme*, led by the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce, which aims to stimulate the use of ICT and Broadband in business. We are currently awaiting approval of these projects from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, but it is anticipated they will commence in autumn 2016.

Tourism – Leicester and Leicestershire tourism is now worth £1.67bn, up 6.6% from £1.57bn last year, and is one of the LLEP's eight priority sectors, supporting growth in the sub-region's economy. Recent high profile events including the discovery of King Richard III and the success of Leicester City F.C. have opened up the city and county to a global audience and we are committed to making the most of the opportunities this gives us. We estimate there are 30,000 tourism-based jobs in the city and county and 25m visitors per year. The LLEP's Tourism and Hospitality Sector Growth Plan sets a target for another 10,000 jobs to be created and to boost visits to 35m per year. To help achieve this we commenced a review in November 2015 to consider new approaches for delivering tourism strategy, destination management and marketing. Through local consultation with businesses and

partners it is clear that we need to enhance local place marketing, connect better with other economic functions and develop a long-term strategic approach to destination management. We have proposed that the Combined Authority, when established, should govern tourism strategy supported by a private sector-led tourism advisory board. Proposals are currently being developed on future arrangements for the delivery of tourism and wider place marketing activity.

Business Loans – the Leicestershire Local Enterprise Fund provided loans to businesses between January 2014 and July 2016. Overall we invested £0.52m, supporting 51 businesses with a total loan value of £3.28m. Due to reducing demand these loans are no longer available. Latest data for 3 year business survival rates shows these increased from 57.6% to 63.1% between 2013 and 2014.

Business Trading Standards Advice – our Trading Standards Service provided advice and guidance to 980 businesses trading within the County to help them comply with their legal responsibilities. 85 start-up businesses requested and were given advice on how to make their enterprises grow. The service is represented on the 'Better Business for All' group which brings together businesses and regulators to consider and change how local regulation is delivered and received. Supporting businesses includes the rural economy, where animal health officers undertake inspections and other prevention work to minimise the risk of a major disease outbreak in the County.

Social Enterprise – we are keen to support the development of a thriving Social Enterprise sector across the county and have funded a Social Enterprise Support Service delivered by the Co-operative and Social Enterprise Development Agency (CASE) since 2011. In 2015/16 CASE provided direct advice and support to 94 different social enterprises as well as establishing 10 new social enterprises. Along with the support provided by CASE we also invested £20,000 in a Social Enterprise Grant Fund in 2015/16. The grant fund was delivered by the Leicestershire and Rutland Community Foundation and 13 different social enterprises were supported with small grants to a maximum of £3,000.

Rural Economy - east Leicestershire LEADER launched in 2015 is funded via the EU Rural Development Programme to support business and tourism in rural areas. LEADER aims to support more than 60 projects and create more than 60 jobs in East Leicestershire by 2020. The programme has so far issued 3 project calls addressing priorities including support for land-based businesses, small food and drink businesses and community projects which increase access to rural services. To date a total of 19 applications have been received and 6 approved totalling c£150,000 and a further 8 applications are being appraised. The Leicestershire Rural Partnership works closely with the LLEP to ensure that the county's European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) allocation is prioritised to meet local rural economic needs. In November 2015 micro and small businesses were invited to apply for grants to support projects in the tourism and food and drink sectors, the

development of rural workspace and farm diversification. 9 projects totalling £975K of grant were invited to full application and 6 projects have been approved with a further application still in progress.

Creative Leicestershire - supports creative enterprises in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and is funded through a local authority partnership hosted and managed by the County Council. Creative Leicestershire works to develop new and existing small creative businesses, principally in arts, media and design. In addition to providing 1-1 advice for 115 small businesses, over the past year the service has worked with Loughborough University to deliver 28 workshops aiming to increase student and graduate enterprise in the creative sector and delivered talks to De Montfort University Arts Management Students. Creative Leicestershire uses a range of successful methods to enable creative businesses to access their support including a new blog, e-bulletins, social media and resources showcasing creative businesses through videos, interviews and case studies. The Creative Leicestershire partnership has agreed a new business plan to 2019 which will ensure we continue to support creative enterprises and artists to develop, grow and be sustainable.

Strategic Transport Infrastructure

An effective and safe transport network is an enabler of growth and vital to the economy. We continue to progress delivery of our local transport priorities 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 Midlands Connect initiative to maximise the growth potential of the area by promoting regionally and nationally significant schemes. We are also being proactive with national government to communicate key messages on vital investment without which Leicestershire's and the region's economies will suffer and indeed where similar investment will benefit not just the East Midlands but other regions such as the Northern Powerhouse.

Midlands Connect – working with Leicester City Council and authorities in Coventry and Warwickshire we have identified and are seeking to promote through *Midlands Connect* a number of strategic rail and road projects. The projects include investment in the A5, M1, M69, A46 corridor and proposed M1 junction 20a which together will form part of a new national strategic link between North East England and the South West of the country; a direct link between the Midland Mainline and proposed HS2 at Toton to give us “classic compatibility” and restoration of a Leicester to Coventry direct rail link. These are estimated to generate £4bn+ to the economy and dramatically improve strategic transport connectivity.

Strategic Transport Plan – together with Leicester City Council we are working to develop a Strategic Transport Plan for the sub-region. Looking towards 2050 the Plan will set out priorities for transportation and the

investment necessary to ensure our transport system is capable of supporting future growth.

Rail Improvements Supporting Growth

Leicester and Leicestershire Rail Strategy - in February in partnership with the City Council and the LLEP we unveiled a 25-year draft strategy which outlines rail priorities up to 2043. Proposals include seeking a connection onto the proposed High Speed 2 (HS2) route to improve links across the country and boost the local economy by £40m per year. The Midland Main Line is due to be electrified by 2023 and the HS2 high speed route is due to open by 2033. The strategy would lead to a range of improved and new direct rail services to and from Leicester including cutting journey times to London to under an hour and improved links to the north including Leeds, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh and Glasgow. It also opens up the potential for links to the Thames Valley and a new direct link to Coventry, and reducing journey times to Birmingham and Manchester.

Current Transport Projects

A significant number of transport projects across the county have been constructed in the last year or are under construction. These projects have been designed to unlock housing and employment growth in support of Local Plans as well as address some key network and congestion issues. They have been funded from a number of sources including Council capital funding, the Government's Single Local Growth Fund, developers and other agencies such as the Homes and Communities Agency. A number of the transport projects outlined below form a major part of the Council's Infrastructure Plan.

Major Transport Schemes Supporting Growth

New M1 Bridge and Enderby - along with our partners Balfour Beatty and Highways England we have progressed a new bridge that will link Thorpe Astley to the major New Lubbesthorpe development. The bridge has been funded with £5m from the Department for Transport and funds from the New Lubbesthorpe developers. The bridge forms part of a new link from the outer ring road to the A47 and supports the provision of extra homes for Leicestershire. The bridge is expected to be completed by December 2016. In September a new £2m road junction was commenced in Enderby to help access to over a thousand jobs as part of the New Lubbesthorpe Development while mitigating the impact of this growth. We have been awarded £3.25m from the Government's Local Growth Fund by the LLEP to deliver the project.

Hinckley - £3.3m was spent on the Hinckley Area Project Zones 2 and 3. The works have addressed many traffic related concerns including delivering speed limit reductions, parking restrictions in traffic hotspots and on street parking to support business. In April work progressed to reopen Regent Street to cars. The scheme allows cars to join buses and bikes on the road after 12

years of part-pedestrianisation. The £75k project helps boost the economy and attract greater investment into the area. Passengers are also now able to use the town's new bus station. In September we set out £15.5m plans to further improve Hinckley's transport network through the proposed Hinckley Zone 4 scheme. We have submitted a bid for £11.9m from the local growth fund via the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership. Zone 4 would include capacity improvements to help support development sites in Hinckley, parking and traffic management improvements, improved signage and further walking and cycling routes and crossings across Hinckley town centre. Proposals for a further £6m phase of work will also be developed.

Wigston – a trial to stop traffic using Wigston's Bell Street started in December 2015. The pedestrian scheme which is being trialled for up to 18 months sees all vehicles excluded from the area to enhance the visitor experience in the town. The pedestrianisation enables shoppers to move about safe in the knowledge there are no vehicles in the street.

M1 Junction 22 - in support of the delivery of houses and employment in and around Coalville, along with our partners Galliford Try we have recently completed an improvement scheme at M1 J22. The works including road widening and the introduction of traffic signal control have been part funded from a Local Growth Fund contribution of £4.6m and significantly improves the capacity of this key junction.

A42 Junction 13 - proposals are well advanced to begin this scheme on site in early 2017. Through the provision of road widening and additional traffic signal control the project forms part of a package of measures to support growth not just in Coalville but also unlocking the delivery of houses in Ashby de la Zouch.

Leicester North West project - phase 1 of a £19m scheme to improve highways between the A50 and the A6 has been progressed. Work on the roundabout at Station Road and Gynsill Lane was completed in February 2016 delivering pedestrian and cycle improvements along with improved vehicle flow. Improvements to the junction at New Parks Way and Aikman Avenue were completed in May with improvements for pedestrians and cyclists incorporated. Connectivity for cyclists to the junction was significantly improved with the cycle facilities along the A50 from Blackbird Road to New Parks Way completed in summer 2016.

Future Transport Projects

Average vehicle speeds at peak time reduced slightly last year and we continue to develop schemes to tackle congestion. In November 2015 the LLEP began to capture projects to create a pipeline of future transport schemes and funding opportunities. We have submitted expressions of interest for £350m worth of transport investment which would generate over £0.5 billion gross value added (GVA) for the local economy. We will continue with development work on these priority projects while funding will be sought from a number of sources including the Government's Single Local Growth

Fund, DfT funding mechanisms, developers and other agencies. This pipeline includes the following initiatives.

M1 Junction 20a - a new M1 J20a will operate to relieve congestion at J21, allow the motorway services to be relocated enabling Highways England to deliver Smart Motorways on this stretch, as well as opening up potential for significant development. A new junction is forecast to cost in the region of £86m, and a bid to the LLEP has been submitted for £8.6m to enable further development of the proposal, including the preparation of a full business case. While a new junction in itself will have major benefits for Leicestershire, it could also be the catalyst to the delivery of a new national strategic route stretching from the M5/A46 in the southwest to the A5 and then M1 and then around the south and east of Leicester connecting to the A46 and A1. This will provide a new national route potentially connecting the Southwest with the Northeast while also potentially providing relief to the Birmingham Box and M1, with the potential to generate a further £1.5bn GVA in addition to the J20a economic benefits.

Melton Transport Strategy and Relief Road – we backed proposals for an £83m eastern relief road for Melton Mowbray to help ease congestion which is constraining the town's growth and to benefit Melton's economy. Traffic already faces rush hour delays of up to three minutes per mile. Approved plans for 500+ houses off Leicester Road would contribute £4.5m to the strategic transport scheme, which also requires approval of a bid to the Government's Local Major Schemes Fund made by the LLEP. In July the bid for £2.7m was submitted to the Government to help develop plans that would boost the economy by £102m per year. The proposed eastern relief road would form part of a proposed Melton Mowbray outer relief road which would link the A606 Nottingham Road to the A607 Leicester Road and is part of a wider £100m transport strategy for the town.

Market Harborough - initial recommendations on helping Market Harborough's road network cope with future housing growth were considered in July and we are consulting on the proposals. The transport study was commissioned jointly with Harborough District Council. Once finalised it will set out transport improvements to help the town continue to thrive as it expands. Initial recommendations include considering the principle of a relief road, south east of the town, junction improvements to tackle congestion, prohibiting HGVs from some routes and improvements to encourage walking and cycling.

M1 Junction 23 and A512 improvements - this scheme would upgrade the M1 junction 23 and includes improvements to the A512, including changing 2.5km of single carriageway to dual carriageway and remodelling five junctions. The scheme supports 4,000 homes and over 5,700 jobs in the Loughborough area. This includes the Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park (LSEP) proposed Enterprise Zone and is one of the LLEP's Transformational Priorities. The scheme bid was for £12m. and the annual GVA benefit is estimated at £24m.

A47/B582 Desford Crossroads (South West Leicestershire) - this scheme delivers a signalised roundabout to improve capacity at the A47/B582 Desford Crossroads, a junction identified in the Strategic Economic Plan as a key pinch-point affecting a number of strategic housing and employment growth proposals in south-west Leicestershire. The scheme bid was for £5.2m and the annual GVA benefit is estimated at £60m.

Coalville Growth Strategy (Transport Infrastructure) - the Strategic Economic Plan identifies the Coalville growth corridor as an important east-west link that with sufficient transport investment could unlock significant housing and employment growth. 5,000 homes are planned around the Coalville corridor. In addition the logistics sector, heavily represented in the area, relies on high quality links to the A42 and motorway network. We are working in partnership with North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) to develop and deliver a transport strategy that enables the town's successful future growth. Some elements of the transport strategy have already been completed, such as the major improvements to M1 Junction 22, or are planned to commence shortly, such as the improvements to A42 Junction 13. Other elements of the strategy are likely to involve unlocking key junctions on the A511 Stephenson's Way.

Leicester to Coventry Rail Service Development – this project proposes an ambitious step-change in rail's contribution to the Leicester-Coventry Corridor economy, including providing direct, faster Leicester-Coventry services, without changes at Nuneaton, sustainably supporting employment and housing growth in the M69-M1-M6 Leicester-Coventry 'Golden Triangle', enhancing labour market access for business and residents in a corridor forecast to see a population increase of 189,000 people by 2035, transforming business connectivity to other UK economies and facilitating 1 Nottingham-Leicester-Coventry train/hour (tph) from 2021, with 2-tph potential (Phase 3.2) and direct services to Reading and Leeds (Phase 3.3).

The project provides a connection at Nuneaton reinstating the direct Leicester-Coventry route severed in 2004. The proposition could successfully engage the rail industry in funding an enhanced scheme more swiftly offering Leicester-Reading connectivity. More locally it should enable significantly enhanced rail services to stations at South Wigston, Narborough and Hinckley. The scheme bid was for £51.3m in total with a bid of £15m through LLEP and £15m being sought by Coventry and Warwickshire LEP and the remainder being funded by Network Rail. The annual GVA benefit is estimated at £25.9m.

Leicester North West Growth Corridor Improvements – this scheme will build upon the objectives of Phase 1 of the Leicester North West Major Transport Project. It will provide improved distributor operation of the Outer Ring Road and improved radial connectivity between the A46 and the city centre, with associated improvements for sustainable transport. The core of the project consists of capacity improvements at three interlinked junctions on Anstey Lane and the A46, with a short section of dualling to reduce

congestion on the southern approach and associated improvements for sustainable transport.

Loughborough Town Centre - building on the £19.2m investment already made in the area (Loughborough Major Transport Scheme) this project represents an additional package of measures to support the regeneration of Loughborough Town Centre. Progress to date has seen the removal of traffic related problems from the centre of Loughborough, helping the town retain its competitive economic position. Specific measures are to be developed.

Ongoing Highways and Transport services

Road Safety – the Council is committed to improving road safety. A review of the current and future approach to road safety and casualty reduction is taking place including reviewing the approach to the identification of cluster sites for possible road safety measures, exploring new ways of working with the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Road Safety Partnership (LLRRSP), reviewing casualty reduction targets for 2020 to take account of demographic changes and a ‘digital by default’ approach to publications. Early discussions between the partnership members have been held with a view to creating a new delivery model for the LLRRSP.

Our road safety performance when benchmarked against statistical neighbours and national figures is good with the County achieving top quartile performance. Roads in Leicestershire are also significantly safer than they were in 2000, despite increases in traffic. Key points include a significant decrease for total and slight casualties in 2015 and total casualties reducing by 17% since 2010. In September we agreed to reduce the speed limit from 50mph to 40mph on the A50 Bradgate Hill and between the A46 and Glenfield Hospital following public concern after two recent accidents on Bradgate Hill. During Easter pre-driver courses were provided by the Council for 16 and 17-year olds thinking of learning to drive. The courses cover road safety issues, hazard awareness and the Highway Code and offer a practical off-road driving session with a qualified instructor. They play an important role in preparing and educating young people about safer driving. Road safety schemes were also completed at Roecliffe Crossroads, Queniborough, Oadby and Welford Road, Blaby.

Park and Ride – our park and ride service with 3 sites at Birstall, Enderby and Meynells Gorse continues to offer a quick and convenient way of getting into Leicester whilst avoiding parking charges. Changes were made to these services in February for users travelling from Enderby and Meynell’s Gorse. All three park and ride services continue to run from 7am to 7pm however the three-minute reduction to the Enderby service frequency (from 12 to 15 minute frequency) will help save £120k. Leicestershire’s park and ride service was highly praised by passengers taking part in the Leicester City FC victory parade in May with over 6,000 people using the service on the day.

Concessionary Travel and Community Transport - community transport remains an integral part of providing travel support to vulnerable members of the community. In December we agreed proposals for a fairer way of funding community transport which will also save £50,000. Groups are funded by c£0.5m to provide transport for mobility impaired passengers through community minibus services and volunteer drivers using their own cars. The new approach shares funding equitably between 13 transport providers, taking into account the areas covered and number of journeys provided. A phased introduction of the changes is helping reduce the impact on providers and passengers and offering time for groups to look at new ways to deliver their service and support communities.

Sustainable Travel – the £3.3m spent on the Hinckley Area Project has created a walking and cycling network in Hinckley as well as improving bus stop infrastructure to encourage a wider choice of travel modes. In June we agreed proposals for the phase 3 Walking and Cycling Link. The scheme provides physical infrastructure complemented by softer measures including “Wheels to Work”, personalised travelling planning and adult cycle training. The measures provide residents with support and encouragement to choose more sustainable and healthy travel choices. Across Leicestershire there are numerous ways to get to and from places that don’t involve a car or rush hour stress, and can be less expensive. With dedicated bus lanes, an expanding cycle network, and the Choose How You Move journey planner for walking and public transport routes.

In September the Council and Leicester City Council submitted a joint bid for £3.2m to the Government’s Access Fund to encourage sustainable travel during 2017 to 2020. The work will support the LLEP’s Growth Deal 3 strategic growth sites, along with 3 of the strategic transport programmes. It will link the planned business, housing and transport growth around Pioneer Park, Waterside, the City Centre and Grove Park to the employment need areas in central Leicester, New Parks, Braunstone and Belgrave. The type of projects the funding will support include Wheels 2 Work, personal travel planning, business engagement activities, car sharing promotion and a package of initiatives targeted at schools. Successful bids will be announced in the Autumn Statement.

Walking and Cycling – Leicestershire offers great opportunities for walking and cycling. We have a strong track record in supporting walking and cycling most notably in securing over £5m since 2011 through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund to promote sustainable travel. We are playing an active role in responding to the Government’s Cycling and Walking Strategy. In March free health checks for bikes and travel advice were held at Hinckley train station. Two-wheeled commuters were also able to use the new tool station installed at the station and find out about more local details thanks to a cyclist information board. Residents needing confidence to get back on two wheels can sign up for one of our courses. The latest adult cycle training courses began in September. Qualified instructors teach cycle skills, how to safely cycle on the road with confidence and how to do basic bike checks. The courses are part of our ‘Choose how you Move Initiative’. We launched our

own new employee ride to work scheme in August 2015 to encourage staff to cycle to work, keep fit and save money. We are the second highest rated county for satisfaction with cycle routes and facilities.

Highways Maintenance - £14.1m was spent on Highways Capital Maintenance during the year including £10.9m on roads, £1.2m on footways and rights of way and £1.6m on bridge maintenance and strengthening. We were successful in attracting an extra £717k for 2016/17 to support highway maintenance from the £250m national Pothole Action Fund and will also be receiving £789k of Incentive Fund money. The money is being used to support a range of activities including patching and surface dressing. Preventative maintenance has ensured that Leicestershire's roads are some of the best in the country, with just 2% of the road network considered as potentially requiring some maintenance work. Thanks to preventative maintenance the number of potholes has fallen from 8,478 in 2013 to 5,200 in 2015. The annual National Highways and Transport survey shows Leicestershire has the highest satisfaction rating for the condition of roads at 40%. More than a million square metres of local roads were treated this summer to help to prolong their life by 10 years and increase skid resistance. In April we launched consultation on the future approach to maintenance following changes to national guidance. Our new strategy will be introduced during 2017 and will potentially involve more partnership working with organisations.

Midlands Highways Alliance - in July over 100 construction and engineering professionals attended the Midlands Highway Alliance (MHA)'s event to address future challenges facing the highways and transport industry. The event was supported by the Midlands Service Improvement Group (MSIG) and showcased the work of the MHA. The MHA continues to overcome industry challenges and promote efficient working through collaboration. Members are provided with access to frameworks for both construction and professional services which allow them to make significant savings while being innovative with their solutions. We estimate an average saving from the frameworks of around £4million a year across all the authorities.

Winter Readiness – we confirmed plans for the arrival of winter with 17 gritters and 18,000 tonnes of grit to treat 1,200 miles of road and a 50-strong team of volunteer snow wardens on standby. There are also 700 salt bins across the county. The first snowfall of winter 2015 was in November and the last time gritters were out was 28 April 2016. Across the winter 8,076 tonnes of salt helped to keep roads moving and gritter drivers worked round-the-clock to keep the network up and running. Snow wardens also helped out to clear paths and farmers were on standby in case snow drifts needed to be cleared. When ice is forecast 45% of the county's road network is treated including most A roads, some B and C class roads, major commuter and bus routes and as far as is possible at least one route through all county villages. We also encouraged residents to prepare by familiarising themselves with gritting routes.

LED Street Lighting – following a major procurement exercise we are investing £20m+ to upgrade the entire street lighting network in Leicestershire with energy efficient LEDs and to help reduce our carbon footprint. The new lights will be controlled by a central computer management system and will reduce maintenance and inspection costs. By upgrading the 68,000 street lights by 2018/19 over £2m annual savings will be achieved and carbon emissions cut by 5,000 tonnes. In March the technology was installed in street lights across Shepshed and Loughborough in the first phase. In May the second phase of the project began with streets in North West Leicestershire benefitting.

Vehicle Fleet – a total of £1.2m was spent on renewal of our vehicle fleet last year which will enable long term efficiency savings to be made through reduced operating costs and fewer vehicles retained on hire.

Grass Cutting – in October 2015 we approved a revised approach to grass cutting which increases the number of cuts to 6 per year and introduces a variable frequency to deal with the peak growing season. The changes respond to a number of comments we have had about the previous approach and resulted in an improved service as demonstrated by the number of customer contacts being at its lowest since our records started in 2013.

New Commissioning Strategy – our Local Transport Plan sets out a long-term transport strategy with a vision to 2026. In April we agreed a new environment and transport interim commissioning strategy and action plan which replace the LTP3 implementation plan. Work is ongoing to develop the commissioning strategy which will include a new focus such as working more closely with communities on alternative delivery options. We have also restructured our highways operation to strengthen our commissioning approach and to achieve significant efficiency savings.

Better Care - Health and Social Care Integration

Health and care integration continues to be a high local and national priority. We are working in partnership to transform health and care across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and making a difference by pooling funding across NHS and local authority partners to integrate health and care.

Better Care Fund - in May we submitted a new Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan, which was approved by NHS England, and represents £39.4m of pooled resources. The purpose of the Plan is to improve the integration of local health and care services and achieve better outcomes for citizens. Each local BCF plan must evidence achievement against a range of requirements including reducing dependence on hospital services in favour of more sustainable integrated community services, improving hospital discharge, developing more seven day working, promoting person centred care planning, improving care coordination and implementing new ways of working across organisational boundaries including for data sharing and accessing electronic care records. The plan is structured around a unified prevention offer, integrated proactive care for long term conditions, integrated urgent response, hospital discharge and reablement and a range of supporting enablers.

Unified Prevention Offer - our Unified Prevention Board recognises that information and advice is a critical element of an effective prevention offer and is developing an approach based on a model of social prescribing. The model is based around First Contact Plus which aims to maximise the impact of a service user or carers contact with us. Work to ensure an effective prevention offer also includes Local Area Coordination, the Lightbulb Housing Support service, assistive technology, and the Carers Support service.

Local Area Coordinators - we have launched Local Area Coordinators in eight localities to support vulnerable people and extend the availability and take up of community assets. The LAC project supports people who are vulnerable through age, frailty, disability or mental health issues to achieve their vision for a good life through early support. It operates in local neighbourhoods, closely linked to housing and community health services and to recreational and social opportunities.

Lightbulb Housing Offer - has been implemented with pilots operating across three localities targeted to improving health and wellbeing. This includes redesigning aids and adaptation processes with district council partners and designing a new "housing MOT" focused on health and wellbeing outcomes. The ambition is to maximise the contribution that housing support can play in keeping vulnerable people independent in their homes, helping to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions or GP visits and facilitating timely hospital discharge. Lightbulb works with people who may be vulnerable because of age, disability, lack of life skills or risk of abuse or neglect and who are in need of practical housing support regardless of tenure.

Assistive Technology – in September we launched consultation on a new equipment, adaptations and assistive technology strategy to 2020 to streamline and improve the offer, provide practical solutions which prevent future dependency and improve peoples' outcomes toward greater independence.

Carers - carers are hugely important for society, helping out family members and friends. However they can often neglect their own health to put the person they are caring for first. Our Joint Carers Strategy was refreshed in 2015 and an interim plan developed to outline our continued support for carers in Leicestershire. The strategy ensures that the Care Act requirements are adhered to whilst the next longer term strategy is developed to reflect the new National Carer's Strategy to be released in late 2016. The Carers GP Health and Wellbeing Service rolled out countywide in 2015 continues to focus on preventing carers needing greater levels of social care support by early identification and targeted carer support within Primary Care settings. The service supports a whole system approach with carers receiving advice, information and support in their local community. This has recently been identified as a national exemplar by NHS England. We are also helping carers to look after themselves by signposting a range of free support and information including details on how to apply for an assessment. Support includes help from a community-based organisation 'Support for Carers Leicestershire' funded by the Council and available to anyone who provides full-time or part-time care.

Falls Prevention - in 2014/15, 2,354 people aged 65+ in Leicestershire were admitted to hospital due to a fall and apart from the pain and inconvenience the after effects for older people can be life changing. The cost to the NHS of treating patients following a fall is £28K per person. Joint working between health and social care funded by the Leicestershire Better Care Fund is working to reduce and prevent falls. Falls assessment clinics as well as a six week falls prevention programme are provided to those at risk of a fall. These focus on improving strength, balance and confidence to reduce the risk of falling and avoiding hospital admissions. Since the falls programme started the co-ordinators have successfully helped many patients from reaching crisis point giving them advice on how they can prevent themselves from tripping and falling.

Integrated Proactive Care for Long Term Conditions - work to ensure integrated care for those with long term conditions includes risk stratification, integrated case management/care plans, virtual wards and shared records. We have rolled out integrated locality working between community nursing and social workers for joint management of caseloads using shared operational practices and procedures. We have also implemented the Care and Health-trak data integration tool for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) and adopted the NHS number for adult social care records so that 96% now have a validated NHS number. 63.6% of patients were satisfied with support to manage long term health conditions, meeting the BCF target of 62.2%.

Integrated Urgent Response - work has progressed to ensure an integrated urgent response in the community including a 24/7 Crisis Response Service, a falls non conveyance pathway working with East Midlands Ambulance Service, so that people who fall at home who do not need to go to hospital are cared for in the community instead, GP 7 day services schemes, an admissions avoidance scheme for cardiac and respiratory patients at Glenfield Hospital and a Rapid Assessment Unit for Frail Older People at Loughborough Hospital. Details of these schemes are given below.

Integrated Crisis Response Service – the Crisis Response Service has been developed funded by the BCF. It is a countywide service providing short-term support to help maintain people in their own homes when they are experiencing a health or social care crisis. The service is open to referrals from both health and social care settings and has built good relationships with health teams including staff in A&E, out of hours GP teams and EMAS. The teams deal with an average of 20-25 cases per week, focusing on facilitating earlier discharge from hospital or preventing admission to hospital. Work is being carried out to explore opportunities of integrating the CRS with Community Health's 'Rapid Response' provision.

Night Nursing Service - we have also implemented a night nursing service so that the existing integrated Crisis Response Service can operate 24/7, with 592 referrals and 559 avoided admissions achieved in the night nursing service during January 2015 to March 2016.

GP 7 day services - schemes in primary care were piloted across both CCGs during 2015/16. Evaluation of both pilots informed the new models which were launched in December 2015 and February 2016.

Rapid Assessment Unit for Older People - in order to avoid inappropriate admissions to UHL we have implemented the frail older people's Rapid Assessment Unit at Loughborough Hospital with 717 people referred and 469 avoided admissions between January 2015 and March 2016. We have also trained 81% of paramedics in the falls risk assessment tool so that an average of 46 people per month are now not conveyed to hospital but receive care and support at home instead. The unit provides an opportunity to undertake diagnostic assessment, care plan development and treatment closer to home. Through clinical audit it has been shown to reduce unnecessary admissions and improve quality of care for older people.

Impact on Emergency Admissions - whilst overall numbers continue to be higher than we want we have achieved 1,581 avoided admissions from BCF schemes from 1st January to 31st December 2015 against the target of 2,041. A further admissions avoidance scheme is being piloted in 2016/17 targeted to adults with cardio/respiratory conditions who attend at the Glenfield Hospital site, which will deliver a consistent ambulatory pathway to prevent a large number of short stay admissions. A rapid assessment clinic test cycle week took place in March 2016 to inform the design of the scheme. The 2016/17 plan also includes further improvements to the models of care and

pathway redesign for the four existing schemes implemented in 2015/16 based on evaluation findings.

Improvements to Hospital Discharge/Delayed Discharges – in relation to improving hospital discharge and reablement our work includes housing discharge enablers, residential reablement, a care packages review team and the new Help to Live at Home service. We have also introduced the safe minimum transfer data set for hospital discharge. In 2015/16 we achieved a significant reduction in DTOCs to 314.98 per 100k and met the BCF target of 350.48. A whole system hospital discharge summit was held in May for partner agencies. Five major work-streams have been identified, which should enable faster and more efficient discharge and a higher quality experience for patients. These are realigning internal hospital discharge processes within UHL; single assessment process; shared risk; workforce training and development and a single point of access. We are also progressing a number of shorter projects to improve discharge planning. Over the past 12 months, a number of actions have been implemented to change working practices and reduce the number of delays in transferring patients from acute and community hospitals back into the community. These have been funded from BCF budgets and from winter pressures allocations.

Actions taken include a “home first” philosophy, consistent definition of “medically fit for discharge” and “ready for discharge” between agencies and simplified discharge pathways. Other actions include review of home care packages two weeks post discharge to ensure service users are receiving the right level of support to promote independence, daily conference calls involving operational managers from health and social care to progress transfer of patients in UHL and Community Hospitals and ‘transfer home to assess’ pilot – health and social care assessors working together in UHL to support patients who previously were transferred to a nursing home for a Continuing Health Care (CHC) assessment. Sustaining good performance achieved in 2015/16 relies on existing interventions continuing to maintain their impact and any additional actions. The National Audit Office in May 2016 highlighted that compared to similar authorities Leicestershire was the fourth best out of 22 for reducing delays attributable to adult social care in 2015/16.

Reablement - care in place through the council's Reablement Service is helping reduce hospital readmissions. The Reablement Service helps people to regain their confidence and skills following a hospital stay so they can continue to live independently in their own home. Care is put in place to meet the individual's needs so they become less reliant on social services and this prevents re-admittance to hospital or a care home. The proportion of people who received reablement during the year and had no need for ongoing services once reablement ended was 76%, comparable to the previous year and above the 2014/15 national average. 87.5% of people aged 65+ were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital via reablement services, beating the BCF target of 82%.

Help to Live At Home (Domiciliary Care Services) – in February procurement commenced to transform home care services across the County to better meet the needs of residents, improve hospital discharges and make best use of resources. The new Help to Live at Home service will support people to remain independent for as long as possible through assistance with personal care as well as providing help when they are discharged from hospital. The council oversees the service along with the East and West Leicestershire CCGs. The aim is to deliver improved outcomes for people who need care at home with a focus on helping people to regain skills to live as independently as possible at home. New providers will deliver home care across the areas where GP services, community nursing and adult social care teams already operate. It will meet the needs of around 3,500 people. Introducing Help to Live at Home will also save us around £1m over the next four years. At present the Council and CCGs have separate contracts with around 150 different organisations. The new arrangements are planned to start in November 2016.

Integrated Points of Access - during 2015/16 partners across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland have developed a business case which identifies opportunities to rationalise the numerous health and care call centres across the area so a more integrated response can be given and call handling targeted to ensure local people and professionals are directed to the most appropriate community based service(s) with good coordination across health and social care. During 2016 we are implementing the first phase of this work which involves setting core standards across existing call centres and then considering any early integration that can be achieved.

Adult Social Care

We aim to have good quality social care services for older people, vulnerable adults, carers and people with disabilities. Meeting the needs of vulnerable people remains a key priority for us. Adult social care continues to be our largest item of spending with £127m set aside for 2016/17, representing more than half of council tax.

Adult Social Care Strategy - demand for services is rising and budgets need to grow by £23m, much of that down to the ageing population with an 11% increase in over 65s predicted by 2020. In February we approved a new Adult Social Care Strategy setting out plans to address rising demand for support. In adult social care rising demand for care from older people and people with disabilities means we have to invest £5.5m. The strategy focuses services to promote, maintain and enhance people's independence so they are healthier, more resilient and less reliant on care services. This includes putting the person at the centre of their care with the right support at the right time in the right place. Our new strategy focuses services on the most vulnerable and ways to help others to help themselves. The strategy focuses on early diagnosis of care needs, enabling them where possible to manage their own care and pull in the support of families and communities. The strategy also sets out how we will work more closely with the NHS to provide services.

People will be better signposted to services and resources which improve their wellbeing. In March we approved new commissioning intentions to support the strategy.

Personalisation - means a choice of help which is suitable for people's needs through a personal budget which people can use to buy services. The procurement of Direct Payment Cards has been identified as a mechanism for making Direct Payments more attractive and accessible to service users whilst providing a more cost effective business solution. Figures show that 1720 direct payment cards have been issued. There was a good improvement in the proportion of people receiving self-directed support from 91% in 2014/15 to 97% in 2015/16. In addition there was an increase in service users receiving direct payments up to 37.6%. A full review of the personal assistant support pathway is underway aimed at promoting self-service and independence as well as streamlining the process in order to make employing personal assistants more attractive.

Integrated Community Teams - a new model of locality team design was implemented throughout 2015 in Adult Social Care to facilitate alignment with co-ordinated Community Health Services and to deliver care centred on the individual. Locality teams have been re-aligned into teams with planned care and urgent care distinct pathways. Discussions are beginning to take place with CCGs, primary care and community health services to consider the development of new models of care including multi-speciality care teams based on GP federation areas.

Older People - Draft Accommodation Strategy to 2026 – our aim is to help people live in their own home for as long as possible and provide specialist accommodation for those who can no longer manage. In June we agreed to consult on a new accommodation strategy to meet the supported housing needs of older people. The strategy sets out the challenges from an estimated rise of c40% in 75+year-olds in the county over the next 15 years. Different types of accommodation available include extra care housing, assisted living schemes, houses which can be adapted to meet future needs and residential care. Proposals include that current extra-care housing contracts be extended or renewed so each scheme can be developed on a case-by-case basis and close work with the NHS to provide developments offering more preventative and rehabilitation services. We have identified further work to develop preventative interventions and raise awareness about maintaining independence and planning for the future.

Extra Care Housing – the Council currently commissions care and support services and has nomination rights for five extra care schemes in Melton, Lutterworth, Glen Parva, Loughborough and Blaby. The first new build scheme delivered as part of our Extra Care Strategy was Oak Court in Blaby, opened in October 2015 following a £1.2 m Council contribution. During the year agreement was also made to contribute £0.5m in 2015/16 towards the Loughborough Extra Care Scheme which is managed by East Midlands Housing Group. Further Council contributions totalling £0.4m are due to be paid. The contribution is for the provision of 60 units and is expected to be

completed in 2017/18. The scheme will bring the number of units available to the Council to 257 by 2017. We are working with partners to identify possible locations and funding options for future developments.

Tackling Social Isolation – working together we want to combat loneliness. Nationally 1 in 10 people aged over 65 report loneliness and 12% feel isolated. Local surveys show that only 41% of service users have as much social contact as they would like. To help combat loneliness we asked people to take part in a new social media campaign raising awareness of the issues and are signposting people to new resources through the NHS Loneliness in Older People webpage. Leicestershire libraries have also been working with public health staff to develop shared reading groups which improve wellbeing and provide company for residents. They run in the main town libraries and are weekly, free and open to all.

Dementia Support - the Memory Support Service aims to provide a single countywide service to support people with concerns about memory loss, an indicative or confirmed diagnosis of dementia or a diagnosis of mild cognitive impairment. The service provides help to access information and guidance from organisations that can offer support, through a variety of media including face to face visits, telephone, written information and web based support. The support group also includes the provision of memory cafes, carers and peer support groups where people can access information and advice on coping strategies and share their experiences and learn from each other. We are also working with CCG colleagues to increase diagnosis of dementia by General Practitioners (GPs) and on improving pathways for dementia sufferers and their carers.

Learning Disabilities Support - over the last 12 months we have co-located Community Life Choices and Short Breaks services in both Melton and Hinckley. Refurbishment works and an extension at The Trees, Hinckley costing £300K were completed in order to accommodate the Millfield Community Life Choices scheme. Similar works were completed at the Melton Learning Disabilities Respite Service costing £100K to accommodate the Mount CLC. Previously the same service users would need to go to different locations and different staff teams. By combining resources savings of approximately £105k have been generated. Community Life Choices are currently being retendered. The framework once complete will have fewer providers but will support the development of a more progressive approach to working with individuals, maximising independence and minimising reliance on local authority funded support. There was a marked improvement in the number of people aged 18-64 admitted to permanent care at 7.4 per 100K pop, in line with the national top quartile. Support to younger adults with a learning disability has improved both in terms of the proportion in settled accommodation increasing to 1108 out of 1430 (77.5%). The number of people aged 18-64 accessing long-term support at the end of March increased from 607 per 100k to 680 per 100k.

Visual Impairment - Vista's mobile support service for adults with a visual impairment aims to ensure that older people living in rural areas are able to access information about how to prevent sight loss in old age. This is one of 15 projects funded through the Council's Innovation Fund.

Care Quality - the latest inspection ratings show that 60% of Leicestershire homes are outstanding compared with 55% nationally. Less than 1% locally are rated inadequate compared with 8% nationally. However there are still a fair proportion of homes that require some improvement. The situation is monitored on a regular basis and support to drive up quality is in place locally through our Quality Improvement Team. Homecare service delivery has been difficult in rural areas and this is being addressed through the new service model. Issues relating to workforce recruitment, retention and skills to support our strategy and ambitions relating to integration are being addressed through the approach and wider workforce strategy. Overall satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support is 58% and remains an improvement priority.

Adult Safeguarding – there were 915 safeguarding enquiries investigated during 2015/16, 3% higher than the previous year. There has been an improvement in outcomes with 54% substantiated or partially substantiated compared to 49% the previous year. Our Adult Safeguarding Boards priority is that adults are safe. The majority (64%) of referrals continue to relate to adults in care homes. The most common type of risk was neglect and omission – accounting for 43% of all cases. The Board commissioned an independent review of referral patterns to understand year on year changes. Proposals progressing to address the review findings include improving staff understanding of risk categories, improving engagement with supported living and domiciliary care services and increasing safeguarding awareness in the community and within ethnic minority groups. In March we agreed a new Business Plan in relation to safeguarding adults including a variety of supporting actions and priorities. Responses to the recent adult social care survey show two-thirds of service users feel safe whilst nine out of ten (89.2%) say that the services they receive help them to feel safe - both similar to previous years.

Peer Review – our Adults and Communities Department was subject to a Peer Review as part of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) Sector Led Improvement Programme. The process allows local authorities to receive challenge from their peers and to get support order to inform improvement and change. The initial feedback was very positive citing a number of key strengths such as committed and energetic leadership and workforce, having 'all the ingredients in place' for integrated services, staff with the right values and robust financial management with improvement in performance. The department has drafted a plan to take forward actions in response. The review team also saw evidence of a raft of strategies put in place in the last year for Adult Social Care which they feel will stand the service in good stead.

Public Health

Our public health function plays 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. During the year we have refreshed our JSNA and a new Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being developed to ensure we continue to focus on key local public health challenges, taking account of government funding reductions for public health services.

Early Help and Prevention – a focus on early help and prevention is fundamental to tackling the root causes of problems as soon as they arise and improving people’s quality of life. We spend £48m per year on early help and prevention services to tackle people’s problems before they get serious. Services include First Contact, Local Area Co-ordinators, assisted living technology, 36 children’s centres and Supporting Leicestershire Families. We commissioned an independent review of these services and have produced a draft Early Help and Prevention Strategy and an outline implementation plan. Our vision is that by 2018 we will have a comprehensive offer for community based prevention for Leicestershire by bringing together all the resources available to local councils and partners. This will include a core menu of preventative services which will wrap around individuals and communities as an essential component of the model of integrated care. The review proposals will also save around £3m and better support outcomes through modern ways of providing early help and prevention.

Health Checks - as people age the risk of developing conditions like high blood pressure, heart disease or type 2 diabetes increases. The Health Check programme is designed to spot early signs of conditions and help prevent them happening. In Leicestershire health checks continue to be provided by all GP practices and 170,788 were delivered. In 2015/16 42.2% took up the offer of a health check compared to 48.6% nationally. Further work is underway to install a new software system in GP practices to assist improvement.

Healthy Weight and Diet - good nutrition is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. Diet combined with physical activity can help people reach and maintain a healthy weight, reduce their risk of chronic diseases like heart disease and cancer and promote overall health. Unhealthy eating habits have contributed to the obesity epidemic in the United Kingdom. In 1993 53% of adults in the UK were overweight or obese and this increased to 64.7% in 2016. In Leicestershire in 2014/15 20.3% of 4-5 year olds and 30% of 10-11 year olds were overweight or obese. Whilst these figures are not necessarily worse than the England average, they are still too high. To help combat overweight and obesity we commission a range of services including Weight Watchers and Leicester Partnership Trust Nutrition and Dietetic Service. We are also working with CCGs to develop a more comprehensive multidisciplinary tier 3 service for people with more severe complex

conditions. We commission the Food for Life programme to work with schools across Leicestershire and the Master Gardeners programme to help people learn to grow nutritious food. There are also cookery programmes to help people acquire the skills they need to cook healthy food that is lower in salt, fat and sugar.

Reducing the Harm of Substance Misuse – improving drug treatment completions remains a priority. In July 2016 Turning Point, a national social enterprise, became the new provider of substance misuse treatment services. The new service is an integrated service providing support for people with drug and alcohol problems across Leicestershire and Leicester. The service is commissioned jointly with Leicester City Council and will be delivered from ‘recovery hubs’ in Loughborough, Coalville, Leicester city centre and many other satellite locations across the county. Dear Albert, a local social enterprise, continue to work closely with Turning Point delivering peer-led group-work programmes that increase engagement and involvement in mutual aid support for people recovering from substance misuse. In addition we supported the Recovery Week activities which included a variety of activities and open days for service users, their families, and professionals.

Smoking Cessation - in Leicestershire 17.4% of people smoke, similar to the England average. It is important people are encouraged to quit smoking as more people die every year from smoking related disease than the next 6 causes of premature death combined. Each year in Leicestershire smoking is estimated to cost c£162m including to the NHS, lost productivity and costs for smokers who require care as a result of smoking related illness. The way smokers want to access stop smoking support is changing. Data shows an overall reduction in the numbers of smokers accessing services nationally, including Leicestershire. The use of electronic cigarettes has significantly increased in popularity and evidence suggests the majority of smokers quit successfully without face to face support. Users of the current service have expressed interest in more technological support. In July we approved changes to our stop smoking service and are implementing a telephone based service providing more flexibility for people wanting to quit. Advisors will be trained to the same standard, nicotine replacement therapy will still be available but support will be via the telephone, internet and text messaging. The approach starting at the beginning of 2017 will help save £1m.

Improved Sexual Health – sexual ill health can affect all parts of society, often when it is least expected. The sexual health needs of the population are evolving. Over the past few decades there have been significant changes in relationships and how people live their lives. A comprehensive Leicestershire Sexual Health Needs Assessment was completed in autumn 2015 and confirmed that good progress has been made on key sexual health indicators and outcomes across Leicestershire. However, Leicestershire has an ageing and increasing population and sexual health services must respond. Sexual health services and commissioning have also become fragmented. In April 2016 we approved a new Leicestershire Sexual Health Strategy 2016/19 that sets an agreed direction for sexual health commissioning across Leicestershire which will streamline commissioning intentions, improve patient

pathways, efficiency and quality of care. The strategy includes better ways of co-ordinating the service across our public health team, NHS England and CCGs and new approaches to screening for sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia, teenage pregnancy, and community-based services. There is a continued focus on supporting schools in their work around relationships and sex education as well as increasing access to local services through the use of new technology.

Warm Homes - the 'Warm Homes, Healthy Homes' project was commissioned to tackle cold related deaths and ill health for vulnerable households across Leicestershire. It is delivered by the Papworth Trust in partnership with NEA, the national fuel poverty charity. The project provides telephone advice, as well as home visits to assess the energy efficiency of the property and the way the householder uses their energy. They also look at energy suppliers and tariffs to make sure people are getting the best deals. Advice on how people can live a healthier lifestyle and keep warm is also a key part of the service. Each home receives a personalised action plan with recommendations for improvements, advice about grants or benefits people might be entitled to, and support to get any work carried out. In addition the project trains front-line health and social care staff as well as community organisations to both recognise when someone might be at risk of cold related ill health and how to refer them to the project. During 2016/17 the service will focus on people with mental health problems as well as younger families with children with asthma. Public Health were also successful in applying for £325k matched by £175k from Lightbulb, to install a comprehensive package of heating and insulation measures into approximately 155 of the most vulnerable households across the county.

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 (BCT) Mental Health Workstream. The supporting programme for BCT 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.

Mental ill Health Prevention - in May we joined agencies across Leicestershire to reach out and talk to people about their mental health through our RU OK? event. RU OK? has sought to raise awareness of how a kind word or quick conversation can help lift someone's mood and we have developed the RU OK? Website to provide information about sources of support. As part of the Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland Mental Health Partnership group we have developed policies and practices. The group is now offering Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training to front line staff on a

multi-partnership basis. The MHFA programme is jointly funded with the Police and Crime Commissioner. During spring/summer, 2016 we supported 'Films to Make You Feel Good' a programme delivering screenings of feel good movies for people facing social isolation or mental health issues supported by advice staff. Our adult learning service has designed a number of new opportunities for adult social care users including ones for adults who are anxious, depressed or low in confidence. There are also courses for adults with learning difficulties or disabilities including advice about independent living and a course on Growing Older Creatively designed for people with early stage dementia.

Children's Mental Health – one in ten children aged 5 to 16 years has a mental health problem and many of these carry over into adulthood. Indeed half of adults with mental health problems first experience symptoms by the age of 14. A new blueprint for transforming mental health and emotional wellbeing support for children and young people across the area was launched in April, 2016. The 'Future in Mind' Plan aims to improve support across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. It comes after the NHS, councils and voluntary sector secured an extra £1.9m for children's mental health last December. The funding is helping young people facing difficulties such as autism, self-harm, eating disorders and common mental health problems using a range of services from resilience training and prevention through to enhanced support for severe mental health problems. We have jointly commissioned a new service which offers advice, support and access to online counselling for young people aged 11-18. The service, 'Kooth', offers easily available professional support to young people who are experiencing a wide range of emotional and mental health issues. The number of 15-16 year olds frequently feeling anxious or depressed has doubled over the last 30 years, increasing the need for mental health information to be available. All our 16 major libraries have started to stock a range of books that GPs believe can help them manage common mental health conditions. Improving Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) remains a priority.

Adult Recovery and Resilience Services - mental illness is the largest cause of disability in the UK and each year about 1 in 4 people suffer from a mental health problem. Physical and mental health are closely linked. Mental health contacts in Leicestershire are lower than the England average and the prevalence of depression higher than average. Mental health prevalence in older people is expected to increase in line with the increase in the older population. We have reviewed our mental health support services and identified that change is required to achieve future outcomes. We intend a new model of integrated preventative mental health services in line with the principles in our Adult Social Care Strategy. In July we commenced consultation on integrated commissioning of mental health recovery and resilience services. Our aim being to develop locality based mental health recovery and resilience hubs across the county to help people manage and maintain their mental health and to aid recovery. A proposed service model will come forward in November.

Deprivation of Liberty (DOL) - our DOL service is dependent on skilled administrators and with DOLS assessments only undertaken by appropriately qualified health or social care professionals. In 2013-14 there were 695 referrals rising to 2,030 in 2014-15 and 3191 in 2015-16. The local trend of increased referral rates is echoed nationally. At the end of March 2016 Leicestershire had 1699 DOLS cases that were not yet actioned and an additional 198 renewals in their wait list. We have developed a business case looking at options for meeting demand and recruiting more trained Best Interest Assessors.

Physical Health, Sport and Physical Activity

The role of physical activity in improving our health and wellbeing is increasingly acknowledged, helping to reduce the major causes of premature death and illness as well as the prevention and management of up to 20 chronic diseases.

Active Adults - we have a well-developed strategic approach to sport and physical activity. Public Health and Leicester-Shire and Rutland Sport (LRS) work collaboratively to commission physical activity with partners such as district councils. This ensures the funding of a wide range of physical activity programmes. We are now focusing commissioning on addressing areas of inactivity and low level activity prevalent in the population in addition to targeting specific high risk populations such as younger and older adults. We have commissioned several new physical activity programmes to fill gaps in provision particularly targeting emerging high-risk or neglected groups. We also continue to expand and strengthen the community based Exercise Referral Programme. During 2015/16 there was public health investment of £923K into county Locality Sport and Physical Activity Commissioning Plans generating over 350,000 attendances.

The Workplace Challenge continues to encourage physical activity with 26k activities recorded during the 8-week activity log. Also over 8,200 individuals participated in sport and physical activity taster sessions as part of campaign weeks across the county. Over 4400 user visits were recorded at programmes delivered as part of the Sport England funded Inclusive Community Project, designed to increase access to inclusive sport and physical activity sessions across the county. Specialist coaches have been delivering sessions as well as mentoring and supporting other coaches and volunteers to enable them to deliver sessions to enable inclusive activities. The programme has delivered a diverse range of programmes, from boccia clubs in Charnwood for adults with learning disabilities to Motor Activity Training Programmes for those with severe physical disabilities. A total of 2,039 user visits have been recorded through the Activator programme in six months. Through the Better Care Together programme we are reviewing current obesity and physical activity preventative programmes. Work with the East Midlands Academic Science Network identified gaps in the obesity pathway, particularly around specialist care, that are now being addressed through partnership working with the local CCGs. Latest survey results suggest that 24.8% of adults are inactive in

Leicestershire, an improvement on the previous year and in the top quartile nationally.

Active Young People – we commission School Sports and Physical Activity Networks to deliver physical activity programmes to young people most at risk of being inactive. In addition we work with professionals in a range of settings to provide environments that are conducive to physical activity. £150k was invested to deliver 132 Sportivate projects attracting £105K worth of partner funding and resulting in 2,643 11-25 year olds participating in sport and physical activity. 5,327 young people participated in the Level 3 School Games Programme of whom 575 were disabled young athletes. £2.5m was also invested through Local Sport Alliances. All secondary schools across the County and City affiliated to competing in the new Team Leicestershire Competition Programme made up of 8 Leicestershire School Sport Associations across 50 competitions. 32 School Sport Apprentices were also supported and deployed into schools as part of the Loughborough College Apprenticeship Programme.

Places to Play, Clubs and Pathways – LRS is working with partners to ensure that every locality has a Sports Facility Framework in place to provide an evidence base to raise capital funds for new and improved sports facilities across the County. Last year over £527k was secured for 9 local clubs and organisations from the Sport England Inspired Facilities Fund. The Sport England Improvement Fund Project for a new sports facility at Rawlins Academy has been successfully completed and LRS is supporting a number of schools with improving community access and business cases for new sports facilities including at Wigston Academy, South Wigston High, the Cedars Academy and South Charnwood High. £49k has also been invested into local clubs and organisations from the Leicestershire Legacy Fund. In addition £61k was invested into the development of 32 LRS funded Satellite Clubs. 513 coaches and volunteers attended workshops organised by LRS and 20 talented young leaders received training and development opportunities through the ELITE Sports Leadership Academy.

GO Gold - rugby players Emily Scarratt and Megan Jones, rower Jonny Walton, archer Lizzie Warner and gymnast Andrew Stamp were all backed in their early days by Leicester-Shire and Rutland Sport's Go Gold programme. The programme, funded by the council along with the City and Rutland councils and all districts, provides financial support for talented county sportsmen and women who have the potential to compete at a higher level. This year 109 athletes from 25 different sports were successful in receiving grants worth £47k ranging from £100 - £1,000 to support their development. 14 individuals were supported by the GO GOLD Talented Coach Programme to achieve Level 3 coaching qualifications.

Rugby World Cup – England and Wales hosted the most successful Rugby World Cup to date and Leicester and Leicestershire played their part in this success. The King Power stadium hosted 3 games and attendance at each was approximately 30,000. Such international tournaments enhance the reputation of the City and the County. The County played an important role

with Leicester Grammar School in Great Glen hosting the Canadian team and Loughborough University hosting teams from Namibia, Tonga and Uruguay.

Children and Families

Our aim is that children and young people in Leicestershire are safe and living in families where they can achieve their potential and have their health, wellbeing and life chances improved within thriving communities. We place a particular focus on vulnerable children and their 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 to ensure that children are safe, healthy and better prepared to achieve their potential. 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 as well as targeting support to where it is most needed.

Early Help Hubs - multi-agency meetings 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 care needs. 94% of the cases considered by hubs each month met the target of a 28-day turn-around from point of referral to allocation.

Contact Centres - a board was set up to refurbish three contact centres in Coalville, Loughborough and Hinckley and to create three integrated service hubs to provide high quality space to work with children and families. The buildings have been fully refurbished and were in use by December 2015. The use of the buildings has changed how services are delivered to a more seamless and integrated way with teams co-located. Parents report a better overall service and that the support is excellent.

Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF) – our team of workers is working with 797 vulnerable families made up of 3460 individuals 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. SLF brings together the county and district councils, police, NHS and other agencies. 63% of the families worked with have made significant progress. The service is making a difference to families in Leicestershire and on track to support 3,000 families over five years. Feedback from families shows the scheme is having a real impact.

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 in order to reduce inequalities in child development and school readiness. This is supported by improving parental 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. More families are using Coalville's centre after it re-opened in November 2015 with larger and improved facilities. We are remodelling our overall Early Help offer to achieve savings and deliver better outcomes including reviewing the services provided at children's centres. The remodelled offer will see a particular focus on those needing extra help especially in the first 1000 days, those experiencing anxiety and depression during pregnancy and the first year and domestic abuse. The work being done around the centres will help to identify existing and future savings to be made. We are working with partners to ensure the services offered are appropriately targeted and to develop support.

Remodelled Youth Offer – our youth offer is part of the Early Help Service and a core part of keeping children safe and supported. During the year we have remodelled the offer to further embed youth work into multi-disciplinary teams throughout the county where they are needed. Using data on service usage and demand we have been able to achieve around £500k in efficiency savings.

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. In March we agreed a new Safeguarding Children Plan for 2016/17. In September 2015 we hosted a visit from Ofsted to help pilot a new inspection process. The new Joint Targeted Area Inspection process examines how local authorities and partners work together to deliver child protection services. The inspectors were impressed with the work they saw as well as outlining opportunities for improvement.

National Child Sexual Abuse Inquiry – in June we pledged full support for the national inquiry into child sex abuse. We outlined how we were preparing for the Inquiry and made provision for spend of up to £2m to support the process as well as manage historic abuse cases. We remain fully committed to co-operating with the inquiry to ensure that events are fully investigated and any lessons learned. Steps taken include gathering a significant amount of potentially relevant material following a request from the inquiry. The wider inquiry is expected to last until at least 2020.

Child Protection – our First Response Children's Duty Team operates 24 hours a day and is the front door to accessing children's services. The team deals with around 25,000 calls and 30,000 emails a year and includes urgent responses to those at imminent risk and an early response to stop concerns escalating. The team ensure families receive a quick and proportionate service and that fewer children have their lives intervened in by social care unless required. The team has reduced the numbers of cases to social care by appropriately identifying the correct outcome. In March our child protection

staff offered a glimpse into their work. The team behind our helpline highlighted a typical day ranging from a report about illegal drug use at a house where a child lives to concerns about the welfare of a baby.

Child Sexual Exploitation – awareness of child sexual exploitation (CSE) has never been greater due to high profile national cases. In 2014 we joined forces with Leicestershire Police to set up a joint CSE team and this is now being expanded to include other partners. We have contributed £500K to bolster the team and recently added 4 new recruits, which now consists of 8 staff and over 20 police officers, including the force’s Missing from Home Team. It works closely with partners to help and protect children at risk of CSE and victims. In the past 12 months the team have received 303 referrals, a 64% increase. The CSE Team is making an impact - a recent case, Operation Quartz saw partnership working and a man who had groomed girls with drugs receive an eight-year prison sentence. In January we urged people to get behind a new initiative designed to tackle CSE. CEASE encourages people to pledge to combat child abuse and sexual exploitation and runs alongside the local awareness-raising drive ‘spot the signs’ launched in 2013. Since it began the number of reported concerns has more than doubled. CEASE builds on the progress already made to tackle CSE and is one of 12 separate multi-agency projects to protect vulnerable people. Over the past few years we’ve worked closely with partners to help people recognise CSE and hone the specialist support provided to victims. A thought provoking and powerful play toured more than 50 schools in the autumn encouraging young people to speak out about child sexual exploitation. More than 10,000 pupils watched the hard hitting performance which signs a light on CSE and where to go for help.

Effective Child Care Placements - there were 459 young people in our care in June 2016. In December 2013 we agreed a policy with the ambition that children who are ‘looked after’ are best placed with families as opposed to institutions. As part of this approach in February we agreed to close Greengate Children’s Home to ensure more children are looked after in a family setting and to make £400k savings to help reinvest in family based services. The money saved has been used to develop a new dedicated support team within the Fostering, Adoption and Placements Service.

Fostering and Adoption – increasing the number of carers helps us place more children with families, develop the fostering service and reduce the amount spent with private fostering agencies. In January there was a recruitment drive for more foster carers as our fostering team visited Leicester City FC. The fostering and adoption bus was at the ground offering advice and information to potential carers. Also in January a new advert inspired by the classic board game ‘Guess Who’ was launched to encourage people to see themselves as potential foster carers. In May to support The Fostering Network’s ‘Time to Foster, Time to Care’ campaign we asked people to find out how to make a difference to Leicestershire’s children in care. Our team provide 24-hour support to the whole fostering family, offer bespoke training and encourage carers’ development. In May we also sought to recruit people to help unite young people and their families and prevent them going into care

through a new foster carer role to take older children aged 11 to 17 into their homes for 8 to 12 weeks. The specialist carers work with a young person and their family to rebuild relationships so they can find a path forward and stay together and are supported by a dedicated team. Average time to place children with adopters has improved to 517 days in 2015/16 from 546 days the previous year.

Looked After Children – more looked after children are staying in the same placement for 2 years or more, increasing to 67.7% from 62% the previous year. We support 459 children in our care and care leavers in a wide range of ways including specialist social work support, accommodation, offering work experience, apprenticeships, access to computers, one-to-one tuition, mentoring and youth work activities such as Beacon Voices or the Beacon FC football team, which encourage children to raise aspirations, be more confident and strive to achieve. In January young people in care were honoured for their achievements. We hold the event to mark the wealth of achievement amongst children in care and care leavers. Every year our young people overcome obstacles to achieve and gain well-deserved awards.

Supporting Children to Achieve Their Potential

High Quality School Places - our School Organisation Service has had a successful year in meeting demand for new school places as a consequence of increased births and new houses. A total of £23m was invested in our School Accommodation programme during 2015/16. Work was completed at a number of schools providing an extra 922 primary school places. Work has also supported the removal of the 10+ system in Wigston by developing additional classroom space in local Primary Schools. Further work is underway relating to the removal of the 10+ system in the remaining areas including Castle Donnington, Shepshed and Oadby in September 2017. We have supported four secondary schools to manage age range change to give all through status. We have also assisted the conversion of a number of schools to academy status where they wish to do so and help others consider options such as Multi Academy Trusts (MAT). Of the 283 Leicestershire Schools 146 are now academies many of these operating within one of 14 established MATs. Our Admissions Service has dealt with in excess of 7,400 first time admissions. A record number of Leicestershire pupils achieved their first choice of primary and secondary school place in 2015/16. 95.7% of pupils attained their first preference for secondary and 91.8% for primary, compared to 94.3% and 88.7% the previous year. More pupils are achieving a place at their preferred school because of our focus on providing more school places in areas of higher demand, and simplifying the application process online. Last year around 97% of all applications were made online.

School Accommodation – major schemes included work on a replacement for Wigston Birkett House Academy and conversion of Hinckley Mount Grace High School to create 210 additional primary school places. Other major school accommodation works included Hinckley Westfield Junior School, Coalville All Saint's C of E Primary School, Bottesford C of E Primary School, Ashby Willesley Primary School, Ibstock St. Denys Infant School,

Loughborough Robert Bakewell Primary School, Groby Martinshaw Primary School, and Glenfield Primary School. We also made contributions to support secondary academies to develop additional classrooms or specialist provision where there was need in the areas concerned. £3.2m was spent on works such as re-roofing, window replacements, replacement of boiler plants, lighting and ceilings and upgrades of fire alarms. The £4m state of the art Fossebrook School was built by the Council and in July officially handed over to the Discovery Schools Academy Trust which will run it. The state-of-the-art facility offers 210 places for pupils in Leicester Forest East and Braunstone Town and took its first pupils at the end of August. In June we noted expressions of interest from Academy Trusts to operate a new 210 place primary school to serve the Hallam Fields area in Birstall. We have also seen the development of a new 630 place primary school in Hinckley – Hinckley Parks Primary School.

Changes to School Funding - we are considering the implications of a national schools funding formula which is intending to implement significant changes over a period of years. There are pressures on the SEN budget as a result of growth in the number of children with additional needs and we are already reviewing these pressures as part of our transformation programme. There will also be significant financial pressures on many of our secondary academies where there is currently surplus capacity whilst waiting for the population bulge to work through the system. We are working with the academies to facilitate discussions between the Education Funding Agency and the Regional Schools Commissioner to find short term solutions.

Education of Children in Care - we hosted an event about the education of our children in care, led by the HMI Ofsted lead. She was extremely complimentary about our local work as well as the regional and national leadership that we are providing in this important area. The Council continues to have a high profile for the work that we do with children and their families.

Good Early Learning and Child Care - take up of the Early Years '2 year olds' offer was greater than envisaged and there was an increase in children accessing the free entitlement to early education for 3 and 4 year olds to 98%. The percentage of childcare providers in Leicestershire rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted was 85.3%. This maintained the improvement of the previous year. The percentage of children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) in reception year in Leicestershire was 67.5%. This is a rise of 3.8% from 2015 but behind the provisional national figure of 69.2%. There are 17 early learning goals (ELG) that teachers and practitioners observe children achieve. Children need to have 'expected' in 12 ELG's to achieve a GLD. Leicestershire is exceeding the national percentage for all children in 13 of the 17 ELG's, but there is a gap of 15.7 percentage points between girls and boys.

High Standards in Primary - end of Key Stage 1 assessments were changed significantly for 2016 and are therefore not comparable with 2015. Provisional results show Leicestershire to be lower than national levels for each individual subject of reading, writing and mathematics. The percentage

of children in Leicestershire meeting the expected threshold for all three subjects was 58.4% compared to 60.3% nationally. Key Stage 2 assessments also changed significantly in 2016 and are not comparable with previous year's data. The end of primary school measure is now the percentage of pupils meeting expected standards in each subject. The expected standard is far higher than the Level 4 used in previous years. The provisional headline benchmark is meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics (RWM). The percentage of children in Leicestershire achieving this was 52.5%, against a national figure of 53%. Leicestershire was below national levels for Reading and Maths but the same for Writing. The percentage of pupils eligible for Free School Meals achieving expected standards in RWM was 28.9%.

High Standards in Secondary – headline Key Stage 4 measurements have changed for 2016. Using the previous headline measure of 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths shows improvement in Leicestershire in 2016. 57.2% of pupils achieved this benchmark compared to 56.8% nationally. Attainment in the key areas of English and Mathematics was also better in Leicestershire than nationally. A number of new and changed schools produced good results. However, achieving higher overall pupil progress continues to be a local school improvement priority. Leicestershire performance at Key Stage 5 was slightly below last year with pupils achieving an average Grade C at 'A' Level, with the average points score at 208.5 below the national average of 213.8.

Support for Vulnerable Children

SEN and Disability Reforms – support for children with special educational needs and disability in Leicestershire has been transformed since the introduction of the SEND reforms in September 2014. During the year we have created a local SEND offer providing information about services available across agencies from birth to 25. We are developing systems to allow us to offer personal budgets to parents/carers and young people in the future. We have also introduced new Education, Health and Care plans and are reviewing how these can be improved. Three new education, health and care facilitators have been appointed to support the changes to SEND with the aim of ensuring that children sit at the centre of plans and that the multi-agency approach runs smoothly. A new club was launched for young people with Autism within the Hinckley and Bosworth area. The club is a new addition to the previously established specialist youth groups for children with SEND aged 11+ running in various locations. The groups support around 20/25 young people per session.

Vulnerable Children - in May work began on building a new £10m state-of-the-art special school in Wigston. The school's main Wigston site is being relocated to a brand-new building at the Wigston Academy campus and in September 2017 will provide places for up to 125 children aged 4-19, extending the number of pupils who benefit from this school which is rated by OFSTED as outstanding. Features within the new school include a hydrotherapy pool and sensory interactive rooms incorporating multi-sensory

technology. The scheme is part of a larger masterplan for the campus which is undergoing significant transformation as part of a £4m redevelopment to create the Wigston Academy.

Primary Behaviour - a Forum is helping schools gain advice and support about pupil behaviour. The forum is led by specialist practitioners' currently teaching and supporting pupils with very challenging behaviours in a pupil referral unit. Improved outcomes from the approach include a reduction in the need for fixed term and permanent exclusions and increased knowledge about SEND support and care plan writing.

Bullying - Stonewall has ranked our anti-bullying team in its top 10 for the third year running, praising its work to tackle bullying in schools. The Leicestershire team was ranked sixth – three places higher than last year. The new task force set up to tackle anti-homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying has been recognised as an example of good practice for its cross-border work. In addition we have redesigned our online anti-bullying hub making it easier for young people to use the site.

Pupils Missing Education (PME) – we have established an electronic process for the collection of PME data with a 100% response rate. A new PME operational framework has been developed and we are working with the Midlands Children Missing Education Consortium to share good practice and drive improvement linked with the East Midlands School Improvement Group.

Children with Disabilities Service – every year our service works with hundreds of young people to give them and their families the support they need. In April Leicestershire families were asked for views to help improve support for young people with disabilities. Current arrangements for the short break, domiciliary care, specialist summer schemes and early support and inclusions services come to an end in March 2017. Before re-commissioning services we invited comments on what is important to users and where improvements could be made.

Young Carers – in May we re-affirmed our support for young carers by signing a new pledge. The pledge takes the form of a 'No Wrong Doors' memorandum of understanding that young carers will be identified assessed and their families supported regardless of which council service is contacted in the first place. We currently support young carers by funding one-to-one support from Barnardo's and signposting sources of help from other agencies. All education providers in the county have also been encouraged to appoint a 'champion' to support young carers and their families.

Improving Childrens Health and Wellbeing

0-19 Healthy Child Programme – following a health needs assessment in May we agreed a new service model for the Healthy Child Programme combining the existing health visitor and school nursing services. The service will prioritise the health of looked after children, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, traveller families and children at risk of

exploitation. The new programme will come into effect in April 2017. The model will also contribute towards savings targets of £500k per annum. The new service will have better integration with other relevant services, clearer pathways and effectively targeted and accessible services and will include a 'digital' offer. All the universal contacts for health visiting will remain unchanged. A new Here4U project is helping improve the accessibility of health services. It is currently being considered by school nurses across 13 schools in the area with 5 other school services interested.

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. Breastfeeding peer support services are available in 6 areas and Breastfeeding Champions have been nominated in both health visiting and children centre teams. The 'Baby Buddy' App and '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. The percentage of mothers initiating breastfeeding increased to 74.4% in 2015 from 68.7% the previous year.

Early Years Health - the Leicestershire Healthy Tots Programme provides a framework, based on the Healthy Schools framework, to support early year settings to be health promoting organisations. The core themes of the programme include emotional health and wellbeing, physical activity and healthy eating. Over a 100 settings in Leicestershire are participating in the programme and 60+ settings have achieved healthy tots status.

Healthy Schools – the Leicestershire Healthy Schools Programme provides the framework to support schools to be health promoting settings. At least 99% of schools and academies in Leicestershire are participating in the programme. 40% have achieved Enhanced Healthy School Status by achieving meaningful outcomes on a public health priority.

Nutrition and Healthy Weight - in January figures showed that county obesity for reception and year six children were below the national average. Around a third 33.2% of the children in year six across the country were obese compared with 30% in Leicestershire. For reception classes the figures were 21.9% and 20.3% respectively. Work is commissioned to encourage children to be more active and to eat healthily such as the Family Lifestyle Clubs. See public health chapter.

Child Oral Health - surveys assessing tooth decay in children are undertaken on a regular basis. From these we know that whilst levels of tooth decay in Leicestershire children have fallen recently the number of children experiencing tooth decay in most areas is still above the national average. Tooth decay is largely related to the consumption of sugary products. Insight work was commissioned to understand more fully the reasons for particularly higher levels of decay in some local areas. A key issue was found to be grazing on sugary products throughout the day. We are

using the results to shape our programme including 'Healthy Teeth, Happy Smiles' materials being used with parents to promote good oral health. Every child receives a free toothbrush and paste pack from their health visitor and supervised tooth brushing programmes are being established in pre-school settings. Training in oral health is available for staff working with families and a resource library to support them in promoting healthy teeth.

Teenage Sexual Health and Pregnancies - Leicestershire's teenage pregnancy rate continues to fall for the seventh successive year. The rate of conceptions stood at 18.5 per 1,000, significantly lower than the national average of 22.8 per 1,000. Work done by the Leicestershire Teenage Pregnancy Partnership includes a film 'Becoming Dad' which tells the stories of three young men and how they faced the realities of fatherhood. There was also a campaign raising awareness of the issue of consent.

VOICE – during September 2015 we ran our first voice festival to highlight the importance of listening to the views of children and families. During the week we launched the voice network to bring practitioners together to ensure child views are at the centre of our work. Three teenagers have also been elected to be UK Youth Parliament representatives, a demanding two-year role to champion young people's views and get involved in local decision making.

Commissioning Intentions - in April we agreed a new Commissioning Strategy and commissioning intentions for children and family services including a work programme over the next four years from April 2016 to March 2020. Priorities include that children are safe and living in families, achieving potential, have good health and wellbeing and living in safe and thriving communities.

Safer Communities – A Better Environment/Place

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

Community Safety and Crime Minimisation - overall there were more reported crimes in Leicestershire in 2015/16 than the previous year - 929 additional crimes, which is a 3% increase. Total crime overall was 1.4% higher. There were more reported vehicle crimes and more burglaries in dwellings in 2015/16. The number of reported sexual offences has continued to increase compared to last year with 31 more offences reported - an increase of 7%. The number of reported rapes was 9% higher than in 2014/15 - 19 more. The Police and Crime Panel is continuing to oversee and scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioners Police and Crime Plan and has looked at a number of issues during the year including visible policing within the community and vulnerable victims of crime. In July we supported Leicestershire Police with the Safer Summer campaign which aims to ensure that people stay safe during the summer. The campaign focused on five key areas - online safety, burglary, anti-social and nuisance behaviour, personal safety and vehicle crime. The campaign was supported by our local Anti-Social Behaviour Delivery Group. The proportion of residents reporting they feel the police and local authorities are addressing antisocial behaviour and local crime and disorder has increased further to 92.7% this year.

Youth Offending and Youth Justice - in June we agreed a new Youth Justice Strategic Plan to 2019. The plan aims to prevent offending, reduce reoffending, increase victim and public confidence and ensure the safe and effective use of custody. Our Youth Offending Service is a multi-agency team that coordinates the provision of youth justice services. First time entrants to the criminal justice system reduced to 124 in 2015/16 compared to 190 in 2014/15. Reoffending by young people is showing reductions for the first time in several years. In relation to the proportion of young people receiving custody numbers remain consistently low. Performance in Leicestershire compares favourably to both regional and national figures. In terms of first time offenders and reoffending the YOS is in the top 10% of services and in the top 20% of services in relation to custody rates.

During the year we have been one of the first adopters nationally of a new case assessment and management system which will improve assessment and case planning. We have also been involved in the Young Adults Project which has introduced a new local transitions protocol between the YOS and national probation service and introduced the Y2A portal to enable electronic sharing of information with the National Probation Service. A pilot joint area inspection by Ofsted highlighted that YOS had made positive progress in the identification of child sexual exploitation. YOS has also worked closely with the local CAMHs service and as a result CAMHs support has been extended to prevention and out of court disposal cases.

Anti-social Behaviour – in June the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Delivery Group made up of councils across the County, City and Rutland and the police asked football fans to avoid anti-social behaviour by recognising the effects that excessive drinking and anti-social behaviour have within the community. The Council's IMPACT team also met with young people to highlight how ASB can affect communities. Sessions included discussions on knife crime and drugs and alcohol. Community survey data shows that the proportion of people reporting they have been affected by ASB in the past year remains low at just over 5%. In the last 12 months the IMPACT team has worked in 31 areas with 943 young people. The team has also delivered assemblies to 28 schools. Reports of ASB have dropped in every area they have been deployed and partner agencies have given positive feedback from across the County. 78% of the young people with whom the IMPACT project has worked reported that the work was excellent.

A successful scheme aimed at encouraging more young people into sport and physical activity whilst teaching them about the impact of ASB launched again this summer. Aimed at young people aged 11 – 25, the scheme offered free weekly sports sessions run by qualified coaches to encourage young people to stay healthy and fit, meet new people and participate in positive activities in their community. Young people had the opportunity to play football, basketball, dodgeball, volleyball, tennis and football tennis. Funded through the Sportivate programme by Leicester-Shire and Rutland Sport and run by the Council's IMPACT Project which focuses on helping prevent youth related ASB across Leicestershire. Between June 2015 to March 2016 IMPACT delivered ten projects in Leicestershire in which over 200 young people participated. 92.7% of people feel the police and councils are successfully dealing with ASB and crime, up from 86.1% in 2014/15.

Prevent – over 130 workshops to raise awareness of 'prevent' have now been delivered across Leicestershire and Rutland with approximately 2650 people trained since the Prevent Officer took up post in October 2015. Many of these have been delivered in schools. The Schools Annual Safeguarding Survey shows that compliance with the new Prevent Duty is high across Leicestershire. Further plans are underway for the delivery of WRAP sessions to foster carers and parents and carers of people with learning disabilities. Work is ongoing with District and Borough Councils in order to support them in their local prevent duty with advice, guidance, updates and best practice.

Community Cohesion and Hate Incidents - reports of hate incidents have reduced further during 2015/16 although there was an increase in reports following the Brexit vote. An action plan has been devised by partner agencies to ensure an effective response to the hate incidents that occur across the area. It will also seek to raise awareness of hate and build increased reassurance and confidence in communities. It is acknowledged that hate crime is underreported. Current recording practices are being examined and a campaign is being undertaken to raise awareness of the importance of reporting. A year-long awareness raising campaign will be launched during National Hate Awareness week in October 2016.

Domestic Abuse – multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) share information on high risk domestic abuse cases between key agencies. The number of cases to MARACs has continued to increase, however the percentage of repeat referrals has remained level at 27%. Figures for domestic abuse support services for 2015/16 are not yet available but it is estimated that referrals were approximately 1400 based upon incomplete data. 87.5% of service users experienced a reduction. The waiting list for support in the County is down to 9 people compared to over 100 the previous year.

Our Leicestershire County and Rutland Domestic Homicide Review procedures are working well. We now have a common approach to learning lessons from tragic circumstances so that we can do as much as we can to prevent future homicides. We have developed guidance and delivered training with our partners to support any organisation to identify and respond appropriately to domestic abuse. Operation Encompass has been trialled in schools across Leicestershire over the last year. The aim of the project is that schools are made aware of any domestic abuse related call outs to the child's address in order for the school to provide appropriate support the following day. Initial feedback is that the project is operating successfully and the sharing of information is of benefit to both the school and the child.

Safer Consumer Goods and Trading – during the course of the year 367 samples of food were obtained either following complaints from Leicestershire residents or as part of the service's sampling programme to check that products were safe and what they were supposed to be, from their descriptions or labelling. 402 businesses selling takeaway food received advice about the requirements and importance of being able to supply accurate information about allergens contained in the food they supply. This year we are focusing our food business advice/enforcement around allergens following a recent tragic case in North Yorkshire. Our animal health and welfare team has carried out 143 visits to local farms to ensure compliance with legislation relating to feed hygiene and the health, welfare and traceability of farmed animals entering the food chain. As part of a nationally funded ports and borders project 430 imported consignments of consumer goods were examined at East Midlands Airport, many of these destined for sale on the internet. Over 17,000 dangerous items were destroyed worth over £500k, these included electrical goods such as chargers and hair straighteners that posed a fire and electrocution risk and cosmetic skin creams containing harmful chemicals.

Tobacco Enforcement - a team of sniffer dogs play an important role in helping Trading Standards Officers find illegal tobacco which is hidden in shops and cars in Leicestershire. With their help 25280 sticks of illegal cigarettes and 5100g of illegal tobacco has been found across the county. This work helps to protect legitimate businesses and young people by reducing the availability of illegal tobacco products which are sold substantially cheaper than legal tobacco.

Age Restricted Products - a new focus has been on preventing young people from acquiring a dependency on e-cigarettes, now an age restricted product. A recent project showed low rates of compliance across the region when 54% of the businesses sold to under 18s. Reducing availability of alcohol and cigarettes to young people continues to be a priority and advice and guidance has been provided on age restricted products to 116 businesses so far this year.

Rogue Traders - as part of Rogue Trader Week nearly 100 vehicles were stopped during three days of enforcement to crackdown on illegal traders. Two residents were able to provide trading standards with evidence of possible rogue traders operating in the area and were investigated further. The success of the operation reinforced close working with Leicestershire police to ensure that rogue traders are prevented from preying on the most vulnerable. We continue to build on this success through partnership working so that rogue traders know Leicestershire is a no-go area for their activities.

Money Scams – we have a service level agreement with the National Trading Standards Scams Team. This national team proactively through a range of enforcement activities identifies victims that are being targeted with scam mail. They hold details of 1300 potential victims who have appeared on lists used for mass marketing mail scams in Leicestershire. Trading Standards Officers are visiting these on a priority basis to establish the scale of how they are being targeted and supporting them to help prevent them from falling for further scams. National data shows that the average scam victim loses £1,121.66, so far the figures for Leicestershire victims are in line with these.

Emergency Management - we have a unique and strong multi-agency arrangement in place for emergency management services covering all the major public sector services hosted by the council. Our Resilience Partnership and LLR Prepared aim for more resilient communities and businesses that are able to help themselves in the event of an emergency. We are working to make sure that all communities in the area are prepared to cope in emergencies. Prepared Citizens are at the heart of our plans for community preparedness and resilience. Prepared Citizens participate in a Community Response Team when needed in their area, checking on neighbours, assisting families that have to be evacuated and providing practical assistance.

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. Our commitment to a better environment is demonstrated by our work to reduce our environmental impact. We continue to manage our environmental impact across a wide range of issues, including reducing energy consumption, business miles, paper use and office waste.

Carbon Emissions - the government has released the latest performance data on carbon emissions per person in each local authority area in the UK based on 2014 data. The East Midlands as a whole is average at 7.1 tonnes per person. Greater London leads the way at 4.2 t/p. Overall there has been a 29% reduction since 2005. Carbon emissions for the whole of Leicestershire have been monitored including those from industry, commerce, transport and households. DECC also provide carbon data based on those factors under the Council's influence. These show a steady decrease since 2005. The emissions per person have decreased from 8.5 tonnes per person (t/p) to 5.7 t/p over the ten years that we have data for. 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 save more than £818k. Carbon emissions from Council operations, buildings, street lighting and signs and business miles decreased by 15% from 2014-15. 2015-16 saw a significant fall in energy consumption in council buildings compared to the previous year. Both electricity and gas use were notably reduced. We are now 23% ahead of the current carbon reduction target for energy use in council buildings.

Renewable Energy Strategy - £1.6m has been invested in our energy projects to reduce energy consumption across our property estate, to reduce carbon emissions and deliver savings. The investment includes upgrading lighting, boilers and new heating controls as well as implementing renewable energy initiatives such as installing 400Kw Solar Photovoltaics (PV) in December 2015. We completed phase 1 of RE:FIT including a biomass boiler and solar panels at County Hall, LED lighting, boiler and heating control upgrades at 5 other corporate sites and solar PV at 4 corporate sites including Coalville Area Office, Coalville Resources Centre and Roman Way. Completed Phase 2 of RE:FIT installing Solar PV at further 5 libraries, Oakfield School, Vulcan Court industrial units and Loughborough and Whetstone Civic Amenity sites. Assessments of other council properties are underway to identify up to 25 more installations during the year. We have also invested £3m into invest to save projects to deliver savings including boiler replacements and lighting upgrades to LED. Heating upgrades at Beaumanor Hall have recently been committed to. Our commitment to increasing renewable energy sources for our schools was demonstrated by investing £400k into Score+. The scheme is being piloted with Bosworth Academy who have successfully had solar PV installed and works will be completed in 2016/17. Furthermore, a biomass boiler and solar PV have been installed at the former Mount Grace School and there are a number of other schemes in the pipeline. Our investment in biomass and solar PV schemes has resulted in a rise in the amount of energy generated from renewable sources to 4.8%, above the target of 1% year on year.

Community Energy Savings - in January we agreed a new energy supply service available to residents. Cheaper power bills are available through our work with an existing energy supplier to offer cheaper tariffs to residents and businesses throughout Leicestershire. We operate the service as 'not-for-profit' and any funds gained are reinvested into energy efficiency measures or used to discount the price paid for energy by residents and businesses. There

is a strong emphasis on customer service, helping vulnerable customers and a green tariff for consumers.

Climate Change - Grants – in May Shire climate change grants of up to £5,000 were made available. 14 projects were funded a total of £33k to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions from community buildings. Schemes include energy audits, installation of heating systems, roof and cavity wall insulation and renewable systems. Groups supported include Fleckney Silver Band, the Glenmore Centre in Shepshed, and Cotesbach Village Hall.

Climate Change - Flooding - heavy rainfall in June caused flash flooding in several parts of the County. The Council played a key role in response including 2500 filled sandbags issued and 2000 unfilled bags sourced. We also provided support for affected primary schools, community centre and youth centre. Flood wardens provided invaluable information about local risks. The Council's highways teams responded by supplying 1,000 sandbags to North West Leicestershire District Council and dealt with problems caused by a number of flooded roads. This prompt intervention helped to alleviate the disruption and damage that severe weather events such as these can cause. In August flood victims from three North West Leicestershire villages were encouraged to share their experiences with flood agencies. Residents who were affected by flooding in June, or who are worried about future impacts, attended specialist flood recovery surgeries to discuss their concerns. The two partnership events were run by the Council alongside partners and LLR Prepared. In September 2015 we agreed a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Leicestershire to ensure the effective management and minimisation of flood risk across the County.

Minerals and Waste Planning – in June we began consultation on proposals to guide mineral extraction and waste developments in Leicestershire over the next 15 years through a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan to 2031. The plan balances protection of the environment and local communities with the need for a supply of minerals. It is proposed that priority will be given to the extension of existing sand and gravel operations, such as Brooksby, Cadeby, Husbands Bosworth and Shawell quarries. For other minerals a continuation of the temporary clay stocking and blending facility is proposed at Donington Island in Ashby Woulds and an extension proposed to the Marblaegis gypsum mine near Wymeswold. It is predicted that by 2031 the county will be producing 3.5m tonnes of waste per year. This will require up to three facilities for recycling commercial and industrial waste, up to three waste recovery facilities, one facility for landfilling construction and demolition waste and one small hazardous waste treatment facility.

Sustainable Waste Management

Recycling and Household Waste sites – we have continued to maintain and review our operations at Recycling and Household Waste Sites (RHWSs) and Waste Transfer Stations. In 2015/16 we received over 1.5 million customer visits at the RHWS and diverted over 70% of waste from landfill. Solar panels were installed on the roofs of two Waste Transfer Stations, which should reduce electricity costs and provide green energy. We also consulted on different options for making savings from the RHWSs and secured approval for service changes that aim to save over half a million pounds each year. Following approval of the service changes we undertook detailed planning for revised opening hours for the sites, a refresh of the permit scheme and the introduction of charges for construction and demolition waste at the RHWSs. These changes were implemented in April 2016.

Waste Prevention, Reuse and Recycling – our progress against our waste reduction and recycling priority reached an important milestone this year. We reached agreement with five of the district councils and have moved away from providing credits that used to pay districts for green waste. We have also delivered over 55 classes and 35 talks on waste prevention and recycling across the county. We have also partnered with a group of national food retailers, manufacturers and local authorities to sign the Courtauld 2025 agreement which commits all signatories to help reduce food waste by one fifth by 2025. Wasting food currently costs household up to £60 a month, working out at over £700 a year. Total waste per household and the amount sent for reuse, recycling and composting saw a small reduction in performance last year, but the latter remains better than the national average. The amount of waste sent to landfill improved from 29% to 27.6%.

Composting – we supported our sustainable waste priorities by continuing to offer cut price compost bins. These were made available to help reduce the amount of organic waste that goes to landfill every year in the county. Composting at home can help to improve the quality of soil in gardens whilst reducing the Councils costs.

Natural and Historic Environment

Environment Grants – our Stepping Stone grants and the Stepping Stones project support community action on landscape and natural environment improvements through help to parish councils and community organisations. In the Stepping Stones Project area funding of up to £500 for schemes was available for environmental improvements with community benefit. In addition the Stepping Stones connecting people and wildlife grant offered funding of up to £2,500 for larger schemes that have significant community involvement and benefit for wildlife. In 2015 Steeping Stones helped 12 applicants plant 1.5km of new hedgerow alongside 375 new trees as part of the Woodland Trust partnership 'Trees Make Hedges' Scheme. The Project also awarded 15 applicants financial support through green infrastructure grants for works to improve green spaces and the farmed landscape.

Countryside Walks - more than 100 walks to suit all ages and abilities took place across Leicestershire as part of National Walking Month in May. This initiative promotes 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 country parks are an asset to Leicestershire. The council manages 6 country parks alongside 5 woodlands, 2 trails, 1 nature reserve and 2 picnic sites. Our parks offer vital access to green spaces for people to explore and enjoy. Work to improve and enhance the arboretum at Market Bosworth Country Park is now in its 2nd phase. New specimen trees and shrubs have been planted to enhance the botanical and visual qualities of the arboretum. The work has been undertaken by country park rangers with support from our regular volunteer team. In addition a new natural children's play area has been opened adjacent to the upper car park at Beacon Hill Country Park. The new equipment offers play facilities for all ages of children and includes chainsaw carvings of local wildlife characters which double up as children's seats. Seating for adults has also been installed so whilst the children play, parents can sit and enjoy the magnificent views across the Charnwood Forest landscape. There are a number of fine walks of varying distances around and from our country parks which can be enjoyed by visitors.

Forestry - our Forestry Group manage all trees in our ownership and carry out a program of inspections to ensure that our highways, schools and parks remain safe for users and visitors. The Forestry Group also manages woodlands on Council sites and have developed a number of new woodland sites as part of the Council's contribution to the National Forest. The Forestry Group also administer the Council's tree planting initiative which last year supplied over 800 specimen trees for planting in Leicestershire's rural landscape. A formal assessment for the Arboricultural Association took place in February 2016. The assessor confirmed we have full approval and the Forestry Operatives on site were classed as 'excellent' in their approach.

Cultural Environment and Better Place

We continue to seek external income and funding and maximise commercial activity to ensure that Leicestershire has a good cultural offer. In addition tourism is a priority sector for the LLEP and our better place work aims to underpin this approach. Our Communities and Wellbeing Service delivers a range of services including libraries, museums, heritage and archives and are valued by communities.

Libraries – the continued financial challenges mean we have had to look at innovative new approaches to continue good library provision. In 2014 we asked people for their views on whether communities could run their own libraries. Based on the feedback a new library model was agreed based on 16 County Council funded libraries, an online service, a mobile library service

and a support package that enables local communities to manage 36 local community libraries. The project has seen a very positive response from communities. Plans are in place or scheduled to be in place for 35 of the 36 community libraries. In June Hinckley library closed for refurbishment while three new rooms for learning and community use were created. Adding the extra classrooms means more space for our adult education classes and for community use and will increase income through room hire.

Mobile Provision - a revised mobile library service was rolled out in 2016 with two new mobiles replacing worn fleet vehicles. From January the new timetable runs monthly, bringing books and other library services to all Leicestershire communities. Books can now be borrowed for a month and can also be returned to town and village libraries as well as the local mobile service.

Online Resources - in June for the first time users of Leicestershire libraries had access to over 5,000 UK and worldwide digital newspapers and magazines. Available via the new PressReader service, readers have free access to digital copies of worldwide publications. The publications join thousands of titles already available digitally to all Leicestershire library members and online usage of the service continues to grow. Since January 2015 the number of e-Audiobooks borrowed through libraries has risen by 172% and there's been a 24% increase in e-Magazine downloads. With new and improved access to these digital services we continue to provide access to a wide range of digital titles available anytime from anywhere.

Vulnerable People - libraries continue to support more vulnerable people in accessing and gaining confidence with IT. Free drop in sessions were held in Melton, Loughborough and Coalville libraries in February to help people make sense of the web and the most of digital technology. In addition young people have been introduced to elementary coding through a successful programme across targeted libraries. As part of the national Reading Well 'Books on Prescription' library health offer, 16 libraries in Leicestershire rolled out the third instalment of self-help health resources. "Shelf Help" targets young people who may be dealing with mental health issues such as bullying. 16 major libraries across the county now stock a range of books that can be "prescribed" free of charge by health professionals as an alternative to costly medical prescriptions.

Young Readers - the annual summer reading challenge continues to engage thousands of young people in reading for pleasure during the summer break. Evidence has shown that taking part in the challenge improves reading skills and achievement at school.

Museums - in May Leicestershire's museums were nationally recognised. Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, Donington Le Heath Manor House, Harborough, Melton Carnegie and Charnwood museums were accredited by Arts Council England. The accreditation is a national quality standard and looks at all aspects of running a museum from the quality of the visitor experience to how the collections are cared for. In August it was announced

that Melton Carnegie Museum will benefit from an £87,300 grant from the Arts Council England Resilience Fund. The investment will help us to continue to offer a celebration of local history and heritage and to enhance our visitor experience and reach a much wider audience. The investment aims to help museums become more sustainable businesses so their rich collections can be used for years to come. A plan, including working with other East Midlands museums, is currently being worked on.

1620s House and Gardens at Donington Le Heath – in May one of Leicestershire’s oldest manor houses reopened after a major refurbishment to celebrate its connection to the gunpowder plot. The changes aim to boost its appeal, attract repeat visitors and reduce its overall funding subsidy and make the hall self-sufficient. Visitors can now explore the former home of Sir Everard Digby who was executed as a gunpowder plotter in 1606, and walk through the gardens as they would have been while the Digby family lived there. The restored period rooms offer the chance to see how people lived in the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean times, while the garden features a maze and 17th century-style plants and herb garden.

Better Place - heritage railways make a significant contribution to tourism. In June we agreed plans to support the extension of the Great Central Railway (GCR) to help boost the local economy. We agreed to support the GCR’s major expansion plans by buying shares for £250,000 funded from reserves. The GCR attracts 130K visitors a year, delivering economic benefits of £6m. The GCR is now working on an £8m project to rebuild an embankment and bridge over the Midland Main Line at Loughborough and an £18m project to develop a railway museum, featuring exhibits from the national collection. Once the developments are complete the economic benefits could be up to £65m per year and 966 jobs through additional local spending and opportunities to regenerate east Loughborough as a heritage quarter.

The County Record Office was recently placed second in the Archives and Record Association’s record keeping service of the year award. We are delighted to have won the silver medal despite stiff competition from elsewhere. The award is testament to the hard work staff put in as custodians and promoters of the County’s history. In relation to the Registration Service, a new wooden gazebo has been added to the facilities available at Anstey Frith House Registration Office, Glenfield. We have also had a renewed focus on opening Beaumanor Hall to the public on Sundays and running events and improving residential bookings. This helped achieve a surplus of £120k in 2015/16. A newly established charity - the Leicester-shire Music and Cultural Trust - is aiming to inspire thousands of young people to sing and play musical instruments by accessing funding not available to the Council. The trust works alongside the Leicester-shire Music Education Hub and Leicestershire School Music Service supported by the Council. Events as part of last year’s re-interment of King Richard III won a national tourism award this year. The King Richard III Partnership won a bronze medal in the tourism experience category of Visit England’s awards for excellence.

Green Plaques - in December one of Britain's most famous engineers and inventors, George Stephenson, was honoured with a green plaque. The plaque was unveiled at the Ravenstone home he lived in from 1832 – 1838. In March a Grand National winner beat competition to secure a green plaque in Loughborough. The plaque installed on Gainsborough House, Loughborough honours the horse, Sunloch, who won the 1914 Grand National. In June Physics Nobel Prize winner Sir William Henry Bragg was honoured with a plaque in his home town of Market Harborough. In April voting opened for the next people and places to be recognised with a green plaque.

HM The Queen – in September 2015 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II became the longest serving Monarch in our history. The day was celebrated with more than 70 local churches ringing their bells and a special service of Evensong at Leicester Cathedral. On 21st April 2016 The Queen celebrated her 90th Birthday, which we marked with a special party at County Hall for representatives of organisations who have special links to The Queen. The evening culminated with the lighting of a beacon, as part of a national chain, on the roof of County Hall. On 12th June the country came together to mark The Queen's birthday and in Leicester the City and County Council's jointly organised a party in Jubilee Square, which was followed by a service of celebration at Leicester Cathedral. We offered free road closure applications for street parties being held to mark the occasion and helped support villages and communities to organise celebration events.

Armed Forces - a wreath to commemorate the three Leicestershire servicemen who died during the Malta Air crash in 1956 was laid at County Hall in February. The Council Chairman laid the wreath on the 60th anniversary of the incident that claimed the lives of 45 servicemen and five crew members. Two nonagenarians were recognised in April for the role they played in the D-Day landings. In a medal ceremony at County Hall, RAF veterans Jeffrey Bird and Dennis Cayless were recognized for their bravery and involvement in the liberation of France during the Second World War. The pair were presented with the highest French award, the Legion d'Honneur, by the French Consul in front of distinguished guests. Armed Forces Day was again supported in Leicester with the City and County Councils working together to organise displays and a parade of more than 400 service personnel, veterans and cadets in the city centre, following a special service at Leicester Cathedral for 650 guests. Through our World War One Reference Group we have been instrumental in arranging a number of initiatives to mark the Centenary of the Battle of the Somme. The Council's Heritage Lottery funded 'Century of Stories' project continues to support individuals and communities to make new personal connections to World War One.

Future Communities and Wellbeing Service – with the continued financial challenges we've been considering how these services will be delivered in the future. In spring 2016 we consulted on a proposed new strategy for the service called "Providing Less, Supporting More". The service currently spends £5.7m per year and needs to reduce costs by £1.8m. Ideas consulted on include developing more online and digital services, using self-service technology to allow access to venues such as libraries and continuing to support local residents in playing a greater role in managing the resources. Results of the strategy consultation show that 96% of respondents value the libraries, museums and heritage services provided. Following feedback received the strategy has been amended to put a greater focus on enabling and supporting communities to access services and initiatives that prevent and reduce need. Key priorities include closer partnership working, building skills, and supporting children, families and older people.

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