

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17TH MAY 2017**POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****Elections**

Could I echo the Chairman's comments and congratulate members on their election or re-election to the Council. I've also received a personal letter of congratulation from the DCLG Secretary of State, Sajid Javid and a personal call from Marcus Jones.

Can I now take this opportunity to thank all the staff involved in the election results service which took place on Friday, 5 May. The service provided was professional and welcoming, and was a credit to the County Council.

Honorary Aldermen

Following discussions with Group Leaders, it is proposed to appoint the following retiring members as Honorary Aldermen, as a means of recognising the contribution they have made and the service they rendered to the people of Leicestershire

- Dave Houseman
- Peter Lewis
- David Snartt
- Graham Hart

The appointment of Honorary Aldermen will take place at the next Council meeting in June.

New Council

I am grateful to the people of Leicestershire who, having recognised our excellent stewardship of the Council, have returned us for a fifth term of office with an increased majority.

As I said in our manifesto, the future remains uncertain, but the one thing we can be sure of is that austerity has not gone away and money will be tight. We will continue to build on our work to date on challenging how the Council works and operates so that we can continue to deliver services which are excellent but provide value for money. The Transformation Board, under the Chairmanship of Byron Rhodes, will play a key role in doing this, and I would like to take this opportunity to invite both Opposition parties to re-join the Board.

Whilst it is important that we focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our service delivery, my Administration will not lose sight of the need to address issues of concern facing local communities where we are able to do so. One such initiative begun in

the last Council and which we will be moving forward with is the introduction of cameras to reduce speeding on key rural roads and within some villages. It is only through careful control of expenditure that we are able to set aside monies for such investments.

We face significant ongoing challenges regarding our revenue funding and we will continue with our campaign of fairer funding, which I believe is gaining traction. We have however managed to secure significant capital resources and over the next few years, we will be investing over £172 million in infrastructure schemes to support jobs growth and the regeneration of our local economy.

Meeting with Regional Leaders

I have already spoken with all the new leaders with the new administrations in Warwickshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. I am looking to set up meetings with them all, as all these counties share strategic interests with us, and I am keen to develop good working relationships with them and also with Councils in the West Midlands so that together, through Midlands Engine and Connect, we can unlock the region's potential and create an environment in which businesses can flourish and thereby enhance the opportunities for our citizens and communities.

General Election

On 8 June, the country will vote in what I believe will be the most important election in a generation. Whilst the opposition parties – or one in particular - may not like it, the people voted for Brexit and we need to respect that vote and ensure it is delivered.

Whilst the Brexit negotiations will be difficult and complex, I will seek to ensure that in any Brexit deal the interests of the county and the Midlands area are taken into account. Again, through the Midlands Engine, we will monitor developments and seek to position the Midlands to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves.

Once the dust settles after the General Election, I intend to set up the regular rounds of meetings with our MPs, which have been very successful in lobbying Government.

Her Majesty The Queen's visit to Leicester

Leicester and Leicestershire were honoured by the presence of The Queen at Leicester Cathedral for the Royal Maundy Service.

Could I pay particular tribute to the Tim Webster and his Civics Team who played a huge role in supporting the Cathedral in the planning and preparation for the event. This is not the first time that our Civics Team has risen to the challenge having previously worked with the Cathedral on the re-interment of King Richard III.