



Leicestershire  
County Council

# Annual Delivery Report

| 2017

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## **Introduction**

In 2014 the County Council agreed a number of major new plans including its Strategic Plan to 2018, Transformation Programme, Communities and Commissioning Strategies and updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Since that time the organisation and services have undergone significant transformation to focus 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, commercial income generation and efficiency savings.

The Council 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 Delivery Report summarises some of the changes and improvements that have been made over the last 12 months with the aim of delivering on our priorities. A separate and related performance compendium sets out details of the impact of our delivery and our current comparative performance using a wide range of performance measures. The document also includes information on our comparative low funding position, the service pressures and risks this creates and the associated Fair Funding Campaign.

## **New Draft Priorities**

In June 2017 we agreed a stakeholder consultation exercise on five new high-level outcomes which it is proposed will inform our future focus and the difference we aim to make to people's lives. The outcomes and supporting sub-outcomes will help to guide decisions on services, make the most of resources and ensure joined-up working with other partners. The five draft priorities are:-

**1 - A strong economy** - Leicestershire's economy is growing and resilient so that people and businesses can fulfil their potential.

**2 - Wellbeing and opportunity** - the people of Leicestershire have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing.

**3 - Keeping people safe** - people in Leicestershire are safe and protected from harm.

**4 - Great communities** - Leicestershire communities are thriving and integrated places where people help and support each other and take pride in their local area.

**5 - Affordable and quality homes** - Leicestershire has a choice of quality homes that people can afford.

## **Financial Context, Challenges and Fair Funding Campaign**

Delivering on our outcomes and ambitions for Leicestershire continues to be hampered by low funding levels. The Performance Compendium sets out our comparative low funding position and how this translates into low funding for local services. The Council also faces a very difficult financial scenario. Over the medium term the combination of an aging and growing population and static income means we need to continue to save money.

The four-year finance settlement and Treasury's launch of the £3.5 billion efficiency review, have already confirmed that financial pressures will continue over the course of the current Parliament. The deepening financial crisis in the NHS, proposed funding reforms in education and local government, and the possible transfer of new responsibilities to the County Council suggest that despite the significant progress made it will get even harder to balance the Council's budget.

Delivery of our current MTFS requires savings of £66m to be made from 2017/18 to 2020/21. Our current MTFS sets out in detail the £43m of savings planned and proposed reviews that will identify further savings to reduce the £23m funding gap in 2020/21. Strong financial control, plans and discipline will be essential in the delivery of the MTFS.

In September we published an updated financial picture that shows that a further year of austerity and rising demand could push up our budget gap towards £40m by 2021/22. The financial position is compounded by Leicestershire being the lowest funded county in the country. The £40m gap is on top of the £204m of savings the council is set to have achieved by 2021. Some of the budget pressures identified include: rising demand in children's social care - a 36% increase in children in care since 2012, plus the cost of residential care, requires growth of £5m to fulfil current service demand; ash dieback – expected to cost around £5m to avoid the danger of falling trees; and loosening of the public sector pay cap – each 1% rise equates to £1.5m

To ensure that the MTFS continues to be a credible financial plan, unavoidable cost pressures have been included as growth. This has averaged £11m p.a. recently, primarily to meet the forecast increase in demand for social care. These growth pressures are not expected to reduce, with cost growth in children's social care establishing itself as a national problem and Leicestershire's elderly population expected to grow by 4% each year.

The supporting Performance Compendium sets out how our proposed alternative funding formula would result in a fairer overall settlement for councils based on needs. We continue to press the case for this to government.

## **Leadership and Transformation**

Over recent years we have been dealing with the major funding cuts and pressures by transforming service delivery, working with partner agencies to integrate and share services, pursuing smarter commissioning and procurement, generating extra income through a more commercial focus, more and better digital and online delivery and supporting our staff to deliver more with less.

**Transformation Programme** – in August 2017 we published a report on the progress made on our transformation programme, which is seeking to deliver significant savings whilst maintaining or improving outcomes. The report highlights the progress made on projects which has enabled savings of £8.5m this year and more than £35m since 2014. 14 key transformation projects worth £10m were delivered during the year with 2111 staff now operating more flexibly through smarter working.

In January a new stop smoking service was able to deliver £1m savings on a £1.35m budget through use of technology. We have redesigned and re-procured the county substance misuse treatment service with a new provider from July 2016 realising savings of £500k. Insourcing of household waste sites from July 2017 is achieving savings of £400k p.a. A new permit scheme for highways works, revised charges and no longer providing free pre-application planning advice are all helping delivery extra income and savings. Restructurings of the environment and transport department, children and family services and adults and communities are also contributing significant savings.

However the scale of the financial and transformation challenge is increasing. The simple changes have been made and the straightforward savings long-since delivered. What remains for transformation is complex change often involving multiple partners and many risks. We have therefore refreshed our Transformation Programme to align it with the funding challenges set out in the Council's Financial Strategy, new outcomes framework and organisational priorities. £23m of savings will be delivered through the revised programme and £20m through departmental commissioning and business strategies leaving a gap of £23m savings still to be identified. The Transformation Unit is working to identify new initiatives to help meet the savings gap.

The refreshed transformation programme includes projects covering remodelling service delivery such as children's centres, fleet provision and education for children in care, helping customers stay independent such as a new approach to whole life disability, and help to live at home. It also includes revised commissioning arrangements, such as reduced cost care placements, reviewing personal budget allocations and SEN transport, reviewing service structures and operating models, and changes to maximise income.

**Invest to Save** - in October 2016 we agreed to reallocate £25m of investment to help us to further cut costs, generate more income and help meet our savings targets. The package of measures included highways schemes to property investments. An underspend, due to the early achievement of savings, was put toward a range of schemes that will help to reduce costs in the future including vehicle replacements (£1m); preventive highways maintenance (£5m); asset investments (£5m); invest to save (£3.6m) and energy schemes (£1m).

**Leicestershire Traded Services** - with reducing grant from the government, operating commercial services helps to keep more services sustainable. We provide more than 200 services to police forces, NHS organisations, local authorities, schools and academies. Services include catering, property, print, HR support, audit, ICT and other business support services. We have approximately 1200 staff with an annual turnover of £28m. We continue to embed a commercial culture and work hard to identify new commercial and income generation opportunities.

**Asset Management** – in February we agree a new capital programme worth £181m over four years, with £73m due to be spent in 2017/18. Spending includes £25.3m on property and land assets to support economic development, a £37m investment in schools, £78.5m on roads and transport and £1.4m on the Snibston development and country park strategy. Through our Corporate Asset Investment Fund during the year North Kilworth Walton Holt Farm was purchased for £3.5m and £4.6m was invested in the Harborough Accelerator Zone at Airfield Farm. We plan to develop the Airfield Farm industrial estate and have similar schemes in other parts of the county. We are also planning for the future by utilising our corporate assets and investment portfolios to best advantage. For example during the last year we agreed to invest £10m from earmarked funds into property investment funds that offer a higher rate of return. In June we agreed a new asset management strategy and policy.

**Strategic Commissioning** – in March 2017 we published a report setting out how we are saving money and making better commissioning decisions. This is the second report on how we are making the most of resources, being more commercial and continuing to place customers and communities at the heart of our work. This year we have benchmarked our performance against the National Audit Office Contract Management framework. Through this benchmarking we've identified some good practice that we have in place as well as plans for further improvements. Through our approach to commissioning we are utilising spend to leverage the total resources available to us - be that encouraging communities to help themselves or through joining up with other public sector commissioners to leverage the estimated £6bn of wider public sector spend in Leicestershire. This year we have been working on embedding evidence based decision making by investing in data analysis and visualisation software. Our investment in Tableau means that 500 managers across the organisation can access, manipulate and interrogate a wealth of data through easy to understand visualisations.

We have also been working in partnership on a national level. We are leading the Local Government Association's Strategic Supplier Management project for the ICT category of spend. The objective is to develop a national approach to managing relationships with local government's key suppliers. Through leveraging our combined spending power and coming together to act as one voice for local government we aim to secure better deals and increase added value. To identify and foster innovation we have run innovation workshops and plan to do more with our key suppliers, whereby we are inviting them in to discuss new ways of working with us to become more efficient. To ensure accurate performance reporting of our key contracts we are designing performance dashboards which will be reported on a quarterly basis. We have delivered training in commissioning for outcomes; co-production; market development; commerciality in commissioning; contract and supplier management; and de-commissioning. As a result our staff are better equipped and more confident in addressing the commissioning changes we face. The focus over the next twelve months will be targeted on embedding our vision for a Single Outcomes Framework for Leicestershire; getting better value from our contracts by developing more robust contract management procedures and improving our approach to the way in which we plan our commissioning and procurement activity to ensure timely delivery.

**Digital Strategy** - our digital transformation is gathering pace with new examples of smart technology in libraries and digital solutions for services. Increasingly people are choosing to engage with us digitally - there were 5m page views on our website this year by around 1m different people. 60% of the web traffic now comes via Google. In August, for the first time visits to our websites via mobile devices outnumbered visits from desktops. We are developing our on-line presence so that people can engage with us at a time of their choosing which in turn will also reduce our costs. The number of visits and unique visitors to the Council website are both over 50% higher than a year ago. Google analytics data also shows that page views per session and average session duration have both increased. We are working to ensure that the processes we put in place are simple and intuitive, whilst remembering there are still many vulnerable people who cannot engage with us digitally and must not be forgotten. A significant programme of customer insight has been developed this year, analysing thousands of customer journeys and interpreting video evidence of how people actually find information and complete their online tasks with the council.

**Website** - each year the Council website is reviewed by the national body for best practice in IT: SOCITM. The results for 2016/17 find that the website's rating has improved, from 2 stars to 3 stars. The rating for transport tasks has vastly improved, from 1 to 4 stars, the navigation and search rating was maintained at 4 stars, while social care information and advice achieved 3 stars. Social care forms achieved 1 star, with work underway to improve this area. The website passed mobile and accessibility tests. Work continues to identify improvements that can be made to the website and digital delivery. In April we launched a new 'report it tool' on the website to create an easier alternative than having to phone our customer service centre – both reducing calls and saving money. Since its launch more than 1,600 issues have been reported. We are now developing a 'track it' feature so that people can see the progress of issues they have raised. In May we delivered new election day results

service using Tableau software and ensuring up to date data was available across a variety of electronic devices and platforms. Nearly twice as many people accessed the election website in 2017 compared to 4 years earlier with 60% via a mobile device.

**ICT Services** – during the last 12 months we have invested £0.5m in our ICT infrastructure on customisation and roll out of our replacement intranet, which has enabled more efficient sharing of information and smarter working practices. The corporate infrastructure for Virtual Desktop Integration (VDI) has been procured, designed and built, with rollout completed throughout County Hall and begun at satellite sites across the county. VDI is a key enabler of smarter staff working. A project to roll out Skype for business has progressed with phase 2 due to be completed in 2017/18. Staff are also now using Yammer to share ideas, updates and questions, more than 50 groups allow staff to share with and gather information from colleagues. Our ICT service desk recently made the final of the IT Professional Service Awards in relation to our move to an online helpdesk - the ICT service portal. The service was placed in the top 3 projects in the awards.

**Customer Services and Communications** - our Commercial and Customer Services were recently reaccredited with the Customer Service Excellence award. The service was measured on customer insight, culture, information and accessibility, delivery and quality/timeliness of service. The report found that staff across the service had a real desire to provide the best possible customer service. To support customers a new dynamic online map is available which displays accurate information on grass cutting by the highways service. This has greatly improved the visibility of grass cutting schedules for customers and is preventing unnecessary calls.

**People Strategy** - as we continue to transform services against a backdrop of ongoing cuts our partnership working, integration with the NHS and the way we work with communities continue to be key. In order to meet these challenges we need staff to be at the heart of the change. We need employees with new skills, a digital first mind-set, new ways of working, more effective commissioning approaches and strong, capable leaders. We therefore retain our strong commitment to the development of our workforce and in 2017 we launched a new People Strategy 2017-2020 setting out our vision.

During the year we have put in place a related delivery plan which, focuses on the key areas of performance management, leadership; skilled, flexible and resilient workforce and a number of projects designed to improve the Council's performance and productivity. Of particular note is a project to reduce the level of sickness absence but we are also launching a revised set of values and behaviours, an Employment Deal and a Performance Management Framework which will assist in putting in a strong and robust performance management culture.



**Wellbeing and Absence** - the number of days lost to sickness absence during 2016/17 was 10.16 per FTE. This is similar to the previous year following changes to the method of calculation, but remains higher than our target. Work to implement an Attendance Management Action Plan has seen the number of absence management cases increase, with 163 cases ongoing. The number of referrals to the staff counselling service has also increased steadily over the past 5 years, with 1043 counselling sessions provided during 2016/17. A new Wellbeing Strategy and Delivery Plan are due to be implemented in autumn 2017.

**Equalities and Diversity** - we aim to place equality and diversity at the heart of what we do, creating a culture where people of all backgrounds feel appreciated and valued. We have continued to progress our Equalities Strategy to 2020 through a supporting Equality Action Plan. Achievements include remaining as the top local government organisation in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2017 with an overall placing of 36th out of over 400 participating organisations. There has been modification of our recruitment processes to eliminate the possibility of unconscious bias and conferences have been organised through the various staff workforce groups. Awareness raising events have been hosted and attended by the Council's Cabinet Lead Member for Equality. A new Equalities Action Plan has been agreed for 2017/18 with a variety of actions being progressed.

**Scrutiny of Local Services** – our cross-party scrutiny function continues to be active in overseeing, monitoring and challenging policy proposals and raising issues of concern to communities. Having listened to concerns raised by scrutiny members a planned £1.3m saving on subsidies for local bus services was withdrawn, meaning bus service links, particularly for those in isolated rural areas, continue unaffected for the time-being. The Scrutiny Committees have acted as a critical friend to the Cabinet on important issues affecting local residents such as the transfer of libraries to community ownership, implementation of the new Help to Live at Home service, the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection and reducing road casualties. Working with Leicester City and Rutland, the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has played a significant role in responding to the consultation on the future of the Glenfield Children's Heart Unit, enabling local service users and carers to have a voice and raising the profile of this very important issue.

## **Economy**

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 standard of living. The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership's (LLEP) Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) plays a key role in this. The Council's Enabling Growth Plan and Infrastructure Plan document our contribution to delivering the ambitions of the Strategic Economic Plan.

**Strategic Economic Plan** – during the year the LLEP have been reviewing the Strategic Economic Plan in line with emerging Government policy. It is anticipated that following the Industrial Strategy White Paper in the autumn, further work will be undertaken to develop Local Industrial Strategies. Current priorities include improving worker productivity and increasing GVA per head; improving connectivity both via the road/rail network and digital infrastructure; developing and retaining a highly skilled workforce, supporting enterprise and innovation; and attracting inward investment to the area.

**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. Two schemes submitted via the Midlands Engine for funding are the further expansion of the Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park and further phases of the Leicester North West transport scheme.

**Strategic Growth Plan** – we have worked collaboratively with other partner local authorities to develop a draft new Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) which provides spatial options for housing and economic growth up to 2050. The new SGP will determine land-use strategy for the Leicester and Leicestershire sub-region and set long-term aspirations for development and the environment. Development of the draft plan is underpinned by a comprehensive Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA).

**Enabling Growth and Infrastructure Plans** – in September we agreed a new Infrastructure Plan establishing a strategic approach to the planning of infrastructure across our service departments, by prioritising capital investment to achieve Leicestershire's spatial and economic aspirations in the short term to 2021 and medium term to 2028/31. Our Enabling Growth Board has overseen the development of the Plan. The Board also works closely with our Finance Team to explore innovative and commercial funding models to help meet future demands. This is the Council's first Infrastructure Plan which brings together information on future capital investment requirements as a result of demographic and economic growth, and will be aligned to the new SGP as a second phase of its development. The Enabling Growth Plan sits alongside the Infrastructure Plan to identify the councils approach to supporting people and business to maximise their contribution to the local economy.

**EU Structural and Investment Funds** – in 2014 the LLEP was given an indicative allocation of £108m to support the delivery of our European and Structural Investment Fund strategy to 2020. During 2016/17 £19.9m of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was offered to 12 projects to support research and innovation, enhance the use of ICT, improve the competitiveness of SMEs and support the transition to a low carbon economy. £15.1m of European Social Fund was offered to 13 projects to support people into employment and improve skills. £1.8m of European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development was offered to support rural businesses, food manufacturing and tourism infrastructure. Further details are provided as appropriate in relevant sections below.

### **Investment in Place**

**MIRA Technology Park Enterprise Zone** – designated in 2011, MIRA Technology Park is widely considered one of the top performing enterprise zones in the country. Within the last 12 months the site has added significant office and workshop floor space and opened eight new serviced office suites. A specialist automotive skills centre, MIRA Technology Institute, developed with local colleges and universities, has been approved and is due to welcome students through its doors in 2018.

**Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone** – designated on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and including two sites at Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park and Charnwood Campus - the county's second EZ will focus on hi-tech manufacturing, including advanced engineering, energy and low carbon and offer specialist research and development facilities and opportunities in the life sciences, pharmaceutical and bio-medical sectors.

**Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park** - June saw the 'turf-cutting' for the new National Centre in Combustion and Aerothermal Technology at the Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park (LUSEP). The National Centre, which has Rolls Royce as a lead partner, will put Loughborough and Leicestershire at the heart of aerospace engineering and technology development in the UK. It is the latest development at LUSEP which is already home to 2,000 jobs and has ambitious plans to expand further. We actively supported the development and expansion of LUSEP, including by investing £450k which facilitated the building of an Advanced Technology Innovation Centre, now fully occupied; by committing a further £1m to support future developments, and by supporting the designation of the Science and Enterprise Park as part of the new Loughborough and Leicester Enterprise Zone.

**Superfast Broadband** – broadband is an essential driver for further growth, innovation and job creation. In June we agreed £5.6m plans to extend superfast broadband across Leicestershire with a Phase 3 of the Council's Superfast Leicestershire programme. Many homes and businesses in the final 3% of the county without high speed broadband access are set to benefit. We wish to extend fibre optic networks and focus on reaching the most difficult to reach rural areas. Since July 2014, we have worked with BT to make superfast broadband available to more than 73,000 premises. By September 2018, it is expected that a further 11,000

will benefit - taking the total to 97%. In July it was announced that people living in some of the most rural parts of Leicestershire would be the latest to benefit from a £4.4m extension of the council's Phase 2 broadband rollout. Areas benefiting include Brooksby, Elmesthorpe, Scalford, Sheepy Magna, Shenton and many other rural villages across the county. The extension has been made possible by a £4.4m reinvestment of earlier funding by the Council and BT due to high levels of take up of broadband services by local homes and businesses.

**Industrial Properties** – in January we bought land to develop industrial units in Market Harborough, to help boost the local economy. The Council bought 18 acres of commercial development land at the Airfield Farm site. The site has outline planning permission and we intend to seek detailed permission to develop industrial units and offices to rent out to businesses. The investment supports economic development and will secure ongoing rental income.

**Market Towns** - a Leicestershire Market Towns Group has been established to help maximise the economic contribution of towns. To date a joint bid to the LLEP has been successful in securing £90k, which together with Council funding will be used to install free Wi-Fi into Melton Mowbray, Coalville, Loughborough Phase 2, Ashby, Market Bosworth, Earl Shilton, Barwell, Wigston and Blaby. The funds will also be used for training retailers in digital skills to enhance footfall and increase turnover. The success of the project will be measured by a Digital High Street Index project which assesses the digital capabilities of retailers and the digital infrastructure within each town.

**Melton Mowbray** - town centre streets saw essential work worth £180k delivered from October. We delivered a number of new road surfaces, pavements and revamped pedestrian crossings as part of a significant investment in the town centre. This will benefit both road users and pedestrians.

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

Working closely with the LLEP and other stakeholders we aim to ensure that Leicestershire residents are adequately skilled to take advantage of growth opportunities, that their skills match the requirements of local businesses and attract businesses looking to locate to the County. Our Enabling Growth Plan supports a number of schemes to help people access work including employability skills in schools, work clubs in libraries, supported work experience opportunities and a Wheels to Work scheme.

**Employment Hub** - European Social Funds (ESF) support was given to Leicester City Council in their successful bid to secure funding for an Employment Hub which will establish an employment gateway for businesses in Leicester and Leicestershire. The project will drive up demand for, and the supply of, apprenticeships, traineeships, work placements and internships. Account Managers will work with businesses looking to recruit talent within their workforce and the Hub will also provide a single point of contact for job seekers looking for employment opportunities. The project will run to June 2020. It will support 220 SMEs, of which

75% will increase the number of people progressing into or within skills provision. 330 individuals will be supported into apprenticeships, traineeships or work placements.

**Moneywise Plus** - supports participants in Leicester and Leicestershire to develop their financial and digital skills, using a three-stage model of engagement, assessment and support. It is led by Reaching People, a Leicester-based voluntary and community sector consortium of organisations working with people experiencing a range of barriers to social inclusion. Over three years the project will engage a minimum of 1420 people. Participants will reflect LLEP priority groups, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, parents and carers, and vulnerable young people; and the project will target the most deprived communities in Leicester and Leicestershire.

**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 skilling up the existing workforce. Recent areas of focus include the impact of the Apprenticeship Levy, a response to the *'Improving Lives: Work, Health and Disability'* Green Paper, opportunities presented by Magna Park and the Leicestershire Adult Learning Strategy.

**Adult Learning and Digital Skills** – there were 8,147 enrolments for all Adult Learning Programmes during the academic year to July 2017, down slightly on the previous year. 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. In the autumn our Adult Learning Service launched the choice of hundreds of part-time day, evening and weekend courses for people interested in expanding their horizons, learning a new skill, and improving job prospects. The courses available are designed to help people get back into the job market, improve their maths and English, support their children's learning and benefit their health and wellbeing. Courses on offer include employability and skills for jobs courses; courses for learners whose first language is not English (ESOL); learning for confidence and better mental health; courses for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; free English and maths courses for adults and computer courses from beginners to advanced.

**Apprenticeships** – the government is committed to increasing the number of apprenticeships nationally; from 500,000 now to 3 million by 2020. The Apprenticeships Levy and Public Sector Apprenticeship target introduced in April 2017 provides the framework for the Council's expansion of the existing apprenticeship programme. We currently have 70 apprentices in roles such as administration and customer services. The Adult Learning Service has a further 288 apprentices enrolled on apprenticeship programmes who work for other public and private sector employers in Leicestershire. With the introduction of the levy, apprenticeship numbers are forecast to increase within the council and maintained schools and a greater number of higher apprenticeship places will be offered to meet

the needs of the sector. Our LALs Traineeship Programme will continue to provide opportunities for young adults to progress into apprenticeship with private and public sector employers.

**Supporting People into Work** – activities have continued, successfully focussing on the needs of local communities. These include work clubs that currently operate from 6 libraries county-wide and are run by staff supported by 17 volunteers. Work clubs offer a holistic approach centered on the needs of the individual. 974 individuals accessed the service in 2016-17, many hidden from unemployment statistics such as the newly unemployed, workers on short term contracts, and people in the process of being made redundant.

**Wheels to Work** - scheme assists individuals to overcome transport barriers in accessing employment or training by providing scooters and bikes. Since 2011, 700 individuals have been supported and the initiative has now successfully secured funding within the targeted area (M1 Junction 21, A50 Leicester to Groby and A6 Leicester to Birstall) up to March 2020.

**Get Set** - helps 16-25 year olds (up to 30 years with additional support needs) with employability advice and support, and facilitates 3–6 month voluntary work experience placements across a range of Council departments. The project specialises in supporting those furthest away from the labour market. By September 2017, 180 young people had been supported through placements, with positive feedback received from participants and mentors.

**NEETs** - working closely with partner organisations the Leicestershire Adult Learning Service (LALS) delivers a Traineeship programme specifically for NEETs engaging with 18 learners who progressed to work placements with local businesses during 2016/17.

## **Investment in Business**

**Collaborate for Growth** – is a £3.2m project led by the City Council in which we are a delivery partner together with the Food and Drink Forum and East Midlands Chamber of Commerce. The project provides grants, a series of workshops/ seminars and one-to-one business support to the LLEP's 8 key growth sectors; with a specific focus on creative industries, food and drink manufacturing, textiles, and tourism and hospitality. The Council specifically supports the creative industries and tourism elements of the programme. The programme also supports inward investment opportunities with countries outside of the European Union including China, North America and India.

**Digital Growth Programme** – we are a funding partner in a £3m project being delivered by the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce which provides one-to-one business support, seminars and grants to help businesses improve their digital capabilities including developing new processes and e-commerce.

**Tourism** – is a hugely important sector in terms of attracting visitors, businesses and providing a great place to live. Tourism is a major employer in Leicester and Leicestershire providing over 17,000 full time equivalent jobs, with a further 4,700 supported by indirect tourism revenue. In the last six years, the value of the sector has grown by 33% to £1.76bn. Businesses working in the industry have been encouraged to sign up for free specialist support to help them diversify and expand. Small and medium sized attractions, accommodation and hospitality firms can take advantage of the one-to-one advice and workshops designed to help them harness growth in the sector. The project funded by the County Council, City Council and ERDF will launch in autumn 2017.

**New Place Marketing Organisation** – in November 2016 the County and City Councils joined forces to boost tourism further by finalising plans for a new place marketing organisation, which will promote the area to national and international visitors and investors. This new approach comes after local stakeholders called for a greater strategic focus on tourism and place marketing, linking to wider economic development activity. By bringing together specialists in tourism, place marketing and inward investment in a single place marketing organisation, we will be able to co-ordinate activity better.

**Rural Economy** - Leicestershire Rural Partnership went through a review in late 2016 of its strategic priorities in order to prioritise activities. There was recognition that interdependencies exist between economic development, environmental sustainability and community resilience, but the focus should be on economic priorities around the Strategic Economic Plan refresh, tourism, market towns, affordable rural housing, broadband and EAFRD/LEADER.

**European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)** - in autumn 2015 a call for grant applications to support rural business growth and development resulted in over £620K being allocated to six projects. Two further calls to the value of £1.8m were opened up to rural businesses in January 2017, for 12 months, focused on 'tourism infrastructure' and 'food processing'. To date 10 projects, totalling £0.94m have been invited to submit full applications.

**East Leicestershire LEADER** - LEADER was launched locally in 2015 to support rural businesses and tourism across Melton and Harborough, as well as parts of Charnwood and Blaby. Grants of up to £35,000 are available and in some cases £75,000 could be awarded. Since opening for applications we have supported 13 projects distributing £300K of funding. £1m of funding is still available for projects up to March 2019. In June 2017 rural businesses were invited to submit bids for the latest round of applications including tourism businesses, small food and drink businesses, small and micro businesses, forestry businesses and community projects that increase access to rural services.

## **Economy – Housing**

**Planning for Housing Need** - in January evidence about the future need for housing and employment land in Leicester and Leicestershire was published. The Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) looked at evidence, including population, household and economic growth projections, to assess the need for housing and employment land over the next 20 years. The assessment finds there is a need for 117,900 homes in Leicester and Leicestershire between 2011 and 2036 to meet demand, equating to 4,716 homes per year. It also identifies a need for up to 215 hectares of land for office development, 165 hectares for manufacturing, and 117 hectares for warehouse and distribution floor space. The study is an important part of the evidence base for Local Plans and the Strategic Growth Plan. Local authorities and the LLEP are committed to working together to plan a sustainable future for Leicester and Leicestershire. The needs evidence in the HEDNA will be brought together with wider evidence, including land availability and infrastructure, environmental, and other considerations through the plan-making process to identify where new housing can be delivered and to set future housing and employment land targets.

**Strategic Growth Plan for Housing** - the Strategic Growth Plan is being prepared jointly by councils together with the LLEP. This will provide a framework for the future growth of Leicester and Leicestershire up to 2050. The preparation of the Strategic Growth Plan is being overseen by senior councillors from each local authority. An initial consultation on the Strategic Growth Plan was held in 2016 and a second stage is due to be held early in 2018.

**Rural Affordable Housing** – the ‘Rural Housing Enabler’ project funds a contract with Midlands Rural Housing. The arrangement focuses on Housing Needs Surveys, training, surgeries, consultation events and identification of suitable and viable sites for development. 26 housing need surveys have been completed in 2016/17 against a target of 21 and have contributed alongside previous surveys to the delivery of 60 S106 homes with a further 100+ in the pipeline, 9 affordable homes and 6 homes on exception sites and assisted planning for a 32 home exception site. In addition, many housing need surveys have taken place alongside Neighbourhood Development Plans that are helping establish appropriate housing solutions aligned with local need.

**Accommodation Strategy for Older People** – in November 2016 we considered the results of consultation on our approach to developing accommodation options for older people, including extra care housing. The strategy pinpoints the different types of accommodation support available, such as home adaptations and assistive technology, as well as extra care and specialist retirement accommodation. Work on the strategy includes developing the role of communities and neighbourhoods to provide emotional and practical support to its older population; working closely with district councils to identify potential locations and funding options for retirement accommodation; reviewing and developing our approach to 24-hour on-site care and support for extra care housing; and working closely with the NHS to develop more preventative and rehabilitation services.



**Extra Care Housing** - in June we confirmed our commitment to investing in more extra care housing for older people by announcing an expansion to a housing scheme enabling older people to remain independent. Following the success of the Oak Court development in Blaby, work has progressed on a new 62-flat scheme in Loughborough. The council is investing £1.56m in the joint scheme with East Midlands Housing. Waterside Court, in Derby Road, is due to open later this year. We propose to set out detailed plans for more extra care provision when we have a clearer indication of Government funding reform around supported accommodation.

**Accommodation Strategy for Working Age Adults** – our new accommodation strategy for working age adults will help ensure that younger adults who are eligible for social care support as a result of a long-term disability are supported to be able to live in their own homes. We are also developing the Shared Lives scheme which involves a vulnerable adult moving in or regularly visiting a carer in their own home.

**Lightbulb Housing Support** - the Lightbulb programme is a collaboration between the county council, district councils and other partners to help older and vulnerable people stay safe and well in their own home for as long as possible. Lightbulb brings together, through one point of contact, a range of support such as aids and adaptations, energy advice, home safety and home maintenance. One of the key components of Lightbulb is a housing 'MoT' which identifies immediate concerns in the home. These can include ways to reduce the risk of falling, such as ramps or room alterations, and tackle problems such as poor heating and hoarding. Identifying housing problems earlier can prevent or reduce hospital admissions and a move into residential care.

**Warm and Healthy Homes** - in January 2017 we confirmed that our Warm Homes, Healthy Homes scheme had offered advice to more than 800 people across the County over the last 12 months. The Papworth Trust, which delivers the service, advised people around managing fuel debt, repairs, energy bills, how to read a meter and switching suppliers. The scheme also helped 114 people with heating and insulation improvements to their home, including 60 people who were supported through a £325K fund provided by National Energy Action. The funding was matched by the NHS and enabled their properties to have boiler repairs, new boilers and, in some cases, the installation of central heating systems.

## **Economy – Strategic Transport**

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 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.

**Midlands Connect** – in March Midlands Connect launched its transport strategy to drive the Midlands Engine. The proposals have the potential to unlock £5 billion in untapped economic benefits and contribute to the wider Midlands Engine target of creating 300,000 new jobs over the next two decades. Working with other East Midlands highway authorities 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 A42, A5, M1, M69, A46 road corridor and in rail projects. They include a proposed M1 junction 20a which together will form part of a new national strategic road link (A46 Express Way) between North East England and the South West of the country; a direct rail link between the Midland Mainline and High Speed Rail 2 at Toton to give us “classic compatibility” services; and improved rail services to the West Midlands, including restoration of a Leicester to Coventry direct rail link. Over the next three years Midlands Connect will use £17m of Government funding to undertake development work on early priorities, including the A46 Express Way and improved rail links.

**Transport East Midlands** – in June 2017 the first meeting of TfEM took place bringing together senior leaders from the region’s local transport authorities. TfEM’s role is to provide regional leadership on strategic transport issues for the East Midlands such as influencing the future of the Midland Main Line, the A46 and HS2, developing and agreeing transport investment priorities, and providing collective input into the Midlands Connect initiative, the Department for Transport and its delivery bodies.

**Rail Strategy** – in February 2017 we approved an ambitious 25 year strategy to shape Leicester and Leicestershire’s future rail services. The strategy calls for the Midland Main Line to be connected to the Government’s HS2 High Speed route. Along with other initiatives, this would improve the county’s links to northern cities and boost the local economy by at least £70m per year. Drawn up by the council, City Council and the LLEP, the report outlines rail priorities up to 2043, to persuade the Government and rail companies to fund further improvements to Leicestershire’s rail network and services. The strategy aims to achieve significant improvements to rail travel to and from Leicester and Leicestershire stations, including cutting Midland Main Line journey times from Leicester to London to under an hour, using “classic compatible” trains through Leicester and Leicestershire on the Midland Main Line and then onto HS2 at Toton to radically improve links to and from the north and Scotland.

**Midland Mainline** – the speed and reliability of the Midland Main Line service between Leicester and London is critical to our economic growth. It is crucial that we achieve a typical sub-60 minutes journey time. In October 2016 we urged the Government to order new trains to ensure the quality and frequency of Leicestershire to London services are not worsened by electrification delays. Despite an announcement to cancel the Midland Main Line electrification north of Kettering, we continue to press Government to reverse this decision as without this, it is unlikely Leicestershire will benefit from HS2 even if a classic compatible link is constructed. In July 2017 we welcomed the government’s investment in track improvements in Harborough which would reduce journey times to London. We were also pleased to see plans for improved parking and platforms which will greatly improve the experience for passengers and commuters.

## Major Transport Schemes Supporting Growth

In November 2016 we outlined a list of transport projects totalling in excess of £360m and with the potential to generate at least £0.5bn GVA for the local economy. A total of nearly £40m has been spent on projects to support growth, funded through various sources including the LLEP, during 2016/17. Schemes include:

**New Lubbethorpe** – in July 2017 motorists could access the new £15m bridge across the M1, which was officially opened to the public. The bridge provides easier access to the New Lubbethorpe development as well as helping ease traffic congestion in the area. It links Thorpe Astley and Leicester Forest East over the M1, and provides access to the new 4,250 home Lubbethorpe development. It will also help reduce the impact of traffic on Beggars Lane and the A47. Work to complete a £4m scheme to provide access to the employment site facilitating around 2,500 jobs and improve the B4114/B582 junction was completed in the spring 2017.

**Leicester North West, £10m** – works to improve the A50 corridor entering Leicester were completed in summer 2016, with traffic flows being much improved. The next phase of the programme is being developed.

**Hinckley Phase 3, £1.7m** – phase 3 of the works to improve walking, cycling and public transport provision was completed in autumn 2016 with the development of phase 4 schemes for delivery in 2017/18 progressing well, although unfortunately a bid for Local Growth Funding for this next phase was unsuccessful.

**M1 J22** – the first part of a £9m project to improve traffic conditions on the A50/A511 corridor was completed in summer 2017. Improvements were made to the junction to enable the delivery of housing growth along the corridor and in particular at Coalville. The works include widening on the A511/A50 and M1 slip roads, along with the introduction of permanent traffic signals.

**A42 (Flagstaff) Junction 13** – the second part of the £9m project, which is to reduce congestion at the Flagstaff junction of the A42 near Ashby, finished in early autumn 2017. Improvements were made to the A511 and A512 ahead of expected higher traffic levels from new housing developments in the area. The project, partly funded by the LLEPs Local Growth Deal, includes permanent traffic lights to manage traffic flow, widening of the carriageway to increase the number of lanes to major

routes, improved shared use cycle and pedestrian links, replacing existing safety barriers at various locations and resurfacing part of the slip road from the A42. The improvements being made should greatly ease congestion around the Ashby de la Zouch and Coalville areas.

**Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy (including Melton Mowbray Distributor Road)** – in partnership with Melton Borough Council work has been taken forward to develop a transport strategy for the town. In November 2016 we welcomed the Government's decision to fund £2.8m for a business case for the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road. As part of the overall strategy, a road for the town would support up to 5,000 new homes and help to boost its economy by over £100m per year. The money will enable us to work closely with Melton Borough Council to develop proposals for the relief road in more detail. In March 2017 the proposed £80m plus distributor road moved further forward with a timetable to work up plans for the road and consult the public on a preferred route. The proposed eastern link would form part of a larger proposed Melton Mowbray outer distributor road scheme, which would connect the A606 Nottingham Road to the A607 Leicester Road. It is expected that the road would be funded by a combination of Government funding and contributions from developers and would be built over the next two decades. In August 2017 we launched a major public consultation on this scheme.

**Harborough Transport Plans** – in January 2017 we consulted on proposals to improve the transport network in and around Market Harborough. The consultation launched on a range of proposals to help the town cope with increased traffic as it continues to grow. Potential improvements include junction and traffic signal improvements, considering the upgrade of Welland Park Road into the A4304, extending and enhancing walking and cycling facilities, localised public transport infrastructure improvement, lorry weight restrictions and a possible relief road. Market Harborough is a growing town and it's clear we need to make highways improvements to help meet future local housing and employment needs. The final strategy will be a key document to sit alongside the Local Plan and guide how developer funding is used, as well as support future bids for transport projects.

## **Future Schemes**

**National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF)** – in January 2017 we welcomed a £2.67m boost for road improvements in Leicestershire. The Government awarded a share of its £185m National Productivity Investment Fund to the Council to help reduce congestion, improve roads and support economic development and housing. Schemes to be delivered include tackling congestion at the A511/Discovery Way and A511/Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch junctions; improving the Ratby Lane/Wembley Road junction, Leicester Forest East; and further improving cycle facilities in Coalville through construction of the Snibston redevelopment cycle link. In June 2017 we submitted two further NPIF bids, a £3.8m bid for Desford crossroads and a bid worth £5m for further measures in Hinckley.

**Growth and Housing Fund** – work took place to develop two schemes to reduce congestion, support growth and boost connectivity to secure funding under Highways England's Growth and Housing Fund. These bids were successful and will fund the

projects listed below. They were given the green light after receiving £10m in total from Highways England.

**A46/A5630 Anstey Lane, Anstey/Leicester City** – a contribution of £5m was bid for as part of a scheme between the A46 and the A563 outer ring road. It will see improvements made to the A46, A5630 Anstey Lane junction ahead of expected higher traffic levels from the Ashton Green housing development. The scheme will reduce congestion on an important route into Leicester, create new jobs, and support more than 2,000 new homes. Work is expected to begin in April 2018 and complete in March 2019.

**M1 Junction 23/A512 west of Loughborough** – a contribution of £5m was bid for towards a £28m package of works on the A512 between the Charnwood Road junction on the west of the M1 through to Snell's Nook Lane, Loughborough. The capacity improvement works include improvements to M1 junction 23 to support future development and traffic growth, turning parts of the A512 stretch into a dual carriageway and the construction of a new roundabout for two large housing and employment sites. The scheme will support 2,600 houses that are dependent on infrastructure improvements and 5,700 jobs. The work is expected to begin in April 2019 and be completed in September 2020. In March 2017 we were awarded £12m of Growth Deal monies providing a further contribution towards the M1 Junction 23/A512 project. Significant developer contributions will also fund the scheme.

**Hinckley Area Project** – the scheme forms part of the wider phase four of the Hinckley Area Project. In September 2017 we agreed to move forward with works worth £800k to improve the transport network around Hinckley including pedestrian crossing, junction improvements, cycle routes and cycle parking. Aiming to reduce congestion and boost Hinckley's economy.

**Desford Crossroads** – we are looking to progress improvements to the Desford Crossroads. The work aims to reduce queue lengths and improve journey time on the A47 and B582, support approximately 2,000 jobs at New Lubbesthorpe and Neovia Logistics and delivery of 4,000 homes at Barwell and Earl Shilton and 1,000 houses at the New Lubbesthorpe development.

## Ongoing Highways and Transport Services

**Facilitating new development** – in 2016/17 we facilitated the implementation of over £30m of new highway infrastructure, serving new housing developments, shops and businesses. This was a record level of delivery in recent times. The 2017/18 financial year is on track for a similar level of new infrastructure delivery.

**Data collection and intelligence** - in spring 2016 we launched a comprehensive update of the Leicester and Leicestershire Integrated Transport Model (LLITM). One of the most sophisticated models of its kind in the country, LLITM is a key tool used to assess the impact of future growth on the County's transport system. The evidence that it provides has proved crucial in helping to secure funding for the major transport schemes set out in this report and will be used to develop the future pipeline of schemes.

**Road Safety** - we produce an annual list of sites on County roads where recorded injury accidents 'cluster' in one location. From the initial raw data the sites undergo a number of assessment and filter processes that result in a list of priority sites for investigation. These sites will then be investigated in detail and if a scheme can be justified it will be taken forward for implementation. From the 2016 data five safety schemes at cluster sites have been developed at - Shoby Crossroads; Wistow Crossroads; Broughton Hill (A606) Crossroads; One Ash Roundabout; and the B676 route study. The traffic and signals team provide a timely response to customer enquiries (approximately 3000 of these received in the last 12 months) on a range of issues ranging from parking, signing and lining, signals, weight restrictions to speeding and safety concerns. It also undertakes a number of minor improvements (36 in the current year) to address safety concerns and traffic management issues. All enquiries are ranked and schemes developed using data led criteria.

**Speeding and Speed Cameras** – in February 2017 we launched a campaign to seek to enable speed cameras as a means of addressing community speeding concerns and to ask the Government for more flexibility on where cameras are sited and how they are funded. We are keen to allow cameras to be installed where there is an existing speeding problem, plus community support for a camera in areas where there are concerns, but not necessarily accidents and subsequent casualties. In March we agreed proposals to trial speed cameras in seven locations across the county with the introduction of cameras in four villages and on three key main and rural routes which have various issues and concerns around speeding and safety. The areas chosen for the trials are Sharnford, Woodhouse Eaves, Measham and Walcote, which have long-standing community concerns over speeding, the B676 Melton to its county boundary with Lincolnshire, which has a higher accident rate than the national average for this type of road, the A6 Harborough Road at Oadby and the A50 Field Head to its boundary with the city of Leicester. The trials will start early in 2018.

**LED Street-lighting** – in July 2017 we reported that work to upgrade the County's 68,000 street lights to energy saving LEDs was ahead of schedule. Around 50,000 low and high level lights had been upgraded as part of a £25m investment involving replacing existing street lights and removing unnecessary highway sign lighting. The new lights are controlled centrally by a central management system, enabling flexibility on switching lights on/off or dimming. Once completed the new lights are expected to save around £1.5m per year through a combination of reduced energy bills and lower maintenance costs, as the reliability of LED bulbs is better than traditional street lights. The project is expected to complete by the end of 2017.

## **Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity**

**Cyclist Training** – the bikeability training scheme has been delivered again in 2016/17 in line with grant funding allocated by the Department for Transport. Training on balance bikes has also been delivered as part of our successful application for Bikeability Plus funding. In relation to Junior Road Safety, an interactive role play resource 'Street Feet' has been made available as part of our pre-school and Key Stage 1 provision. Our popular Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) Scheme continues to be offered. This encourages two children in the last year of primary school to become JRSOs for their school. We encourage the JRSOs

to run a school notice board, consider running road safety clubs or competitions and promote safety messages through a school assembly.

**Driver Support** – pre-driver days have operated once more at Mallory Park. These days are aimed at 16/17 year olds and give a taster driving session in a dual controlled car combined with classroom safety sessions. We also ran our older driver scheme ‘SAGE’. This provides individual driving assessments with driving instructors. The scheme aims to encourage safe mobility for longer and offers drivers and their families’ reassurance that driving skills are still up to scratch. In relation to motorcycle safety, a scheme has included the placing of Think Bike signs at collision sites. We have also offered discounted Enhanced Rider Training, practical on road training for experienced riders or those returning to biking. The scheme has been promoted through our links with the East Midlands safety group the ‘Shiny Side Up’ Partnership.

**Community Speed Watch and Road Safety Publicity** – this scheme continues to prove popular. It trains volunteers to use speed guns and, with assistance from police colleagues, the registered keepers of speeding vehicles are sent an education letter. Much of our road safety publicity work is undertaken with our partners in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Road Safety Partnership. This work links to national road safety campaigns and publicity.

**School Crossing Patrol Service** - the School Crossing Patrol Service has helped thousands of children and parents on the journey to school again in 2016/17. Our patrols provide an important link in encouraging sustainable travel and in many cases walking to school helps to reduce school gate congestion and associated parking issues.

**Sustainable Travel** - in January 2017 efforts to promote sustainable transport were helped by an extra £3m of Government money. The county and city councils successfully bid for a share of the £60m Sustainable Transport Access Fund, designed to encourage more people to walk or cycle to work, schools and colleges. The £3.2m joint award will support a three year programme of sustainable transport schemes focussing on the west of the city and neighbouring areas of the county. Work in the county will cover Anstey, Glenfield and Groby, and include Meridian Business Park, Fosse Park and the proposed Lubbesthorpe housing development. Businesses in the targeted areas will be offered support to help staff travel more sustainably. This will include grants of up to £5,000 of match-funding to support local employers’ own walking and cycling schemes, along with a programme of travel planning advice and support for staff which aims to reach over 140,000 people per year.

**Walking and Cycling** – under the Sustainable Travel scheme a feasibility study into the potential for a future cycle share scheme is to be carried out. Schools will also benefit from further investment in schemes to promote walking and cycling to school, with a programme of activity aiming to reach 23,000 pupils over the next three years. This will complement the ongoing programme of Bikeability cycle training and Living Streets’ popular Walk to School scheme. Local residents in targeted areas will also be offered personalised travel planning advice designed to raise awareness of improvements to local cycling and walking routes and encourage more sustainable

transport choices. In October 2016 the Leicestershire company Next was crowned Britain's most cycle friendly workplace after working with the County Council to get employees on their bikes. The Enderby based company secured first place in the Most Cycle Friendly Workplace category at the Cycle Planning Awards ceremony in London.

**Local Bus Services** – we are required to secure the provision of public passenger transport services in order to meet public transport requirements within the county including those that would not be met unless the Council intervened. This duty is predominantly fulfilled by the commercial bus service market, but where access to essential services has not been covered commercially we look to provide an alternative in the form of a contracted bus service or Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) solution. In 2016/17 we provided a subsidy towards circa 20 contracted local bus services and operated a number of DRT's. In January 2017 the County Council and Rutland County Council agreed to provide short term subsidy until January 2018 to continue the 747 bus service, following a registration from the bus operator Centrebus to withdraw a service.

In April 2017, new transport services were put in place for communities affected by changes to commercial bus services. The Council provided bookable taxi services for residents in Littlethorpe, Cosby, Carlton, Barton in the Beans, Nailstone and Cotesbach, and subsidised a local bus service for people living in Thurnby. This follows changes made by bus operators due to the low usage in some areas. To help mitigate the impact on communities affected, the council has contracted replacement services. The bookable taxi service is a 'demand responsive transport (DRT) service' which is like a bus service but runs when booked and picks up and drops off at a convenient location. Normal concessionary bus passes can be used on DRT services. In July 2017 we agreed to provide an additional short term subsidy to continue the current bus service 8, between Melton and Loughborough, until 31 March 2018. This will allow us to undertake more detailed surveys of current usage and determine how longer term financial support for key journeys can be delivered. The action was also taken following Centrebus announcement to reduce its bus services after August.

**Minimising Roadworks** – we are looking at implementing a permit scheme to manage roadworks to minimise disruption for motorists. The scheme aims to achieve more control over the timing, duration and how works are carried out to minimise adverse impact. The initiative requires that anyone carrying out road and street works need to apply for a permit in advance, a fee will be charged for each permit approved.

**New Highway Maintenance Strategy** – work is underway on developing an asset management approach to our highway maintenance function with the development of a highways asset management policy and strategy. Our roads are among the best in the country and we want to ensure they are maintained to the best standard they can be, whilst working with increasingly limited resources. In 2015/16 we spent £26m looking after roads, pavements and verges but by 2020 we need to reduce this to £16.5m. Proposals in the new highways infrastructure asset management plan include prioritising high risk repairs when responding to highway defects. This may mean lower risk repairs take longer than before. New processes to enable us to



forecast the condition of the highways in the future, and preventative work being carried out on a 'risk-based' approach and determined on how roads are 'categorised' in a new classification of highways.

**Highways Maintenance** – in April 2016 we announced that more than a million square metres of roads across Leicestershire would be treated during the summer to help reduce the chance of potholes. We carried out the preventative maintenance, known as surface dressing. By tackling problems early, the need for reactive maintenance is reduced and more money is saved. During 2016/17 a total £12.8m was spent on Highways Asset Maintenance, including £10.2m on carriageways, £0.9m on footways and rights of way, £1.0m on bridge maintenance and strengthening, £0.4m on flood alleviation, £0.2m on traffic signal renewal and £0.1m on other activity including joint sealing. By focussing on proactive repairs, we have reduced the number of potholes from 8,478 in 2012 to 5,220 in 2015, a 38% decrease.

**Gritting and Winter Maintenance** – in November our teams were out treating a number of roads in the county as the temperature fell. With the forecast of a cold snap a total of 21 gritters and more than 80 staff were on standby to treat key routes across the county and ensure that residents could still get around. The council's grit barns were stocked with 18,100 tonnes of grit. During 2016/17 11,684 tonnes of salt was used during 59 outings. We monitor the weather constantly and, if freezing temperatures are forecast, our fleet of gritters will treat major roads and key routes, which equate to almost half of the county's road network. In addition to the gritters there are also a number of snow wardens based in communities across the county who will grit paths, as well as farmers with snow ploughs.

**Grass Cutting** – in May 2017 a new interactive grass cutting map was launched, helping people wanting to find out if grass in their community is due to be cut and up-to-date information on grass cutting operations. In October 2017 we had received 629 grass cutting enquiries. We cut the equivalent of 28 football pitches each day in towns and villages. During the last grass cutting season we undertook 6 urban cuts. The grass verges and banks are cut for safety reasons to ensure visibility is not restricted for motorists and cyclists at junctions, and to make sure the width of pavements is not reduced. We aim to cut the grass within five working days of the scheduled date.

## **Health and Care Integration**

The Comprehensive Spending Review 2015 set out the government's intention that by 2021 health and social care would be integrated to provide better coordination of care around the individual, and support health and care systems to become more sustainable, in the context of rising demands and ongoing financial constraints. Since 2015 national Better Care Fund Policy has provided for a joint planning approach, along with a pooled budget, between Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and local authorities to support this ambition.

In order to transform and integrate health and care we are working intensively in partnership across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR). We are making a difference by committing to joint plans, delivering change using blended teams from across our organisations, and pooling funds across NHS and local authority partners. We are increasingly providing care and support in a more consistent way, modernising how care is delivered, providing care which is easier to access and navigate for citizens, communities, and professionals, and moving more integrated care into community settings.

**Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP)** - during 2016 partners across LLR developed a five year plan, the LLR Sustainability and Transformation Partnership Plan with the vision to create a high quality, integrated, health and care system, which is affordable and meets the needs of local people in the medium term. Each of the three Better Care Fund plans and pooled budgets in the area underpin the delivery of the five year plan. The central principle for the STP is "Home First" so that people can be cared for at home, in their own community, whenever possible, and for as long as possible. This involves; helping people to help themselves; easy navigation to the appropriate level of care and support on a 24/7 basis; and tackling the over-reliance on acute hospital care. Also implementing community based services that are responsive, integrated, consistent, and reliable; care coordinated effectively across organisational boundaries, care pathways and professions and electronic shared records with integrated data.

**Leicestershire Better Care Fund Plan** - 2016/17 saw the end of the second year of Leicestershire's health and care integration programme. This is supported by the Better Care Fund (BCF) plan and pooled budget that operates between the Council and two County CCGs. This fund increased from £40m in 2016/17 to £52m in 2017/18. The BCF plan is fully aligned with the STP five year plan. The aims of the Better Care Fund Plan include developing and implementing new models of care and new approaches to commissioning which maximise the opportunities and outcomes for integration. Delivering measurable, evidence based improvements to the way our citizens and communities experience integrated care and support. Increasing the capacity, capability and sustainability of integrated services, so that professionals and the public have confidence that more can be delivered in the community in the future and supporting the reconfiguration of services from acute to community settings in line with the LLR STP and new integrated models of health and care.

**Interdependency of the BCF for Adult Social Care** - £22m of the pooled budget is targeted to sustaining adult social care services including the critical and core services that provide 7 day hospital discharge support and social care crisis support 24/7. Our medium term financial plan places reliance on this contribution from the BCF, without which adult social care would be even more challenged in sustaining key services, given rising demand and the ageing population.

**Overall Progress** - over the past two years we have made some good progress, providing much more integrated care and support, with more details provided in the following sections of this chapter. Some of the key developments include:-

- Local Area Coordinators and First Contact Plus were implemented in 2016/17 as part of Leicestershire's new prevention offer, helping people make the most of what is available locally to improve or maintain their health and wellbeing.
- Hospital discharge was redesigned and streamlined into five core pathways, with new domiciliary care services in 2016 and new integrated discharge teams in 2017.
- New urgent care services were tested in 2016, and commissioned with effect from April 2017, including new approaches to clinical navigation via 111, home visiting for urgent care, new ways of working for urgent care centres, and a new Emergency Department.
- Integrated locality teams are being piloted in 2017, with primary care, social care and community nursing working hand in hand to coordinate care plans and support people to remain at home.
- Our new integrated housing support service (Lightbulb) was designed and tested in 2016 and has been rolled out across Leicestershire in 2017.
- A new integrated single point of access, for coordinating all community services 24/7, is being considered
- Phase one of the electronic summary care record has been completed and phase two is well underway.

**Unified Prevention Offer** – the Leicestershire BCF has, since its inception, placed priority on developing a Unified Prevention Offer for local communities, making the best use of community assets and building community capacity. It is recognised that many of these interventions should be non-medical and can be provided from a range of partners and sources, including the voluntary sector and other community based support. The menu of prevention interventions includes public health lifestyle services such as smoking cessation and weight management, Local Area Coordinators who provide vulnerable people with low level support in their community, and a range of wellbeing services such as support for carers, home safety and falls prevention. The unified prevention offer has also focused on falls prevention and working with all blue light services who are a key part of the community response.

**Falls Prevention** - the LLR Falls Programme is now underway across Leicestershire and Rutland, with postural stability training, chair based exercises, and exercises for use in care homes and the home environment. The East Midlands Academic Health

Science Network announced LLR as the demonstrator site for their falls project in August 2017, which will run in tandem with the local programme.

**Lightbulb Housing Service** - this year has seen the development and implementation of the Lightbulb Housing Service, an integrated housing support service which brings together, through one point of contact, a range of support such as aids and adaptations, energy advice, home safety and home maintenance, to help people stay safe and independent at home. The service also includes the hospital housing discharge service based at Leicester Royal Infirmary and the Bradgate Mental Health Unit, working closely with the integrated discharge team to support patients with a range of housing solutions so they can return home from hospital. Lightbulb is also now an award winning service, having won the Best Collaborative Working Initiative at the Association for Public Service Excellence Annual Service Awards in September 2017.

**Integrated Locality Teams** - the implementation of Integrated Locality Teams whereby community nurses, GP practice and social care staff work hand in hand to support the same cohort of people in their locality is being designed and tested in Leicestershire during 2017. This delivers multiagency care planning and improved care coordination in the community, keeping people at home for as long as possible.

**Integrated Urgent Response** – during 2016/17 LLR partners have been working towards a new model of integrated urgent care in line with the NHS England Five Year Forward View, through our participation in the national Urgent Care Vanguard programme. The work culminated in a procurement for a new model of service commencing from April 2017, with the following key design principles - responsive, accessible person-centred services as close to home as possible; services wrap care around the individual, promoting self-care and independence, enhancing recovery and reablement, through integrated health and social care services that are innovative and promote care in the right setting at the right time. Also that urgent care services will be consistently available 24 hours per day, seven days a week in community and hospital settings and that clinical triage and navigation is a central part of the integrated urgent care offer, reducing demand on ambulances and acute emergency services.

**Hospital Discharges - Home First** - in line with the national trend there has been an increase during 2016/17 in the number of people who experienced delays in being discharged from hospital. However this position has improved during 2017 and the County Council remains in the top quartile for performance for social care attributable delays, with very low levels of such delays at University Hospitals of Leicester. However taking into account all delays and all causes of delays across the health and care system we are not yet performing as a system at the levels required nationally. A stretch target was applied to the whole country in July 2017 by NHS England requiring all areas to achieve no more than 3.5% of delayed bed days by November 2017. The achievement of this target remains a significant risk for the LLR area. An LLR wide action plan is in place which has been based on analysing LLR's position against the high impact changes framework for hospital discharge. A major local development within the action plan is the new Integrated Discharge Team, which started in July 2017 at University Hospitals Leicester.

**Help to Live At Home (Home Care)** - since November 2016 home care in the county has been delivered through the Help To Live At Home service. The service was commissioned jointly by the council and two county CCGs and has resulted in 11 providers being appointed to lead the delivery of home care across 18 geographical areas of the county.

**Integrated Points of Access** – we are currently assessing if some of the health and social care call centres across LLR could work more collectively, to one set of standards, or even become integrated in one place, in the future. This will not only achieve a more consistent and efficient service; bringing joined up care services to citizens, it will also support professionals delivering care in Home First and Integrated Locality Teams to coordinate care and support in each local area.

**Integrated Data** – Leicestershire is seen as a national exemplar in data sharing due to the early adoption of the NHS number onto social care records, the adoption of a tool in primary care for risk stratification and the adoption of the PI Care and Healthtrak tool to support integrated analysis, and measuring the impact of change across health and care. In recognition of our progress and innovation Leicestershire has been awarded a grant and will be participating in the LGA's Prevention at Scale initiative where we will be testing new methods of data analysis to demonstrate the impact of prevention interventions on the health and care system. Through the LLR Digital Roadmap we are also developing a summary care record that will be linked, viewed and edited by both the NHS and Council staff, helping all professionals involved in patient care to have access to the most up-to-date information.

**Glenfield Heart Unit Campaign** - in February we pledged £50,000 towards a fund to help the campaign to save the children's heart unit at Glenfield Hospital in the event of a judicial review. Around 128,000 people have signed online and paper petitions to the Government, appealing for the heart unit to be saved, which is valued by families across Leicestershire and the wider region. The Care Quality Commission has rated this service as outstanding for effectiveness.

## **Adult Social Care**

We aim to have good quality social care services for older people, carers, people affected by mental health issues and people with disabilities. Meeting the needs of vulnerable people remains a key priority for us and adult social care is our largest item of spending, representing more than half of council tax.

**Adult Social Care Strategy** – we commission and provide a wide range of services to support people to maintain their independence, enable them to be part of society, protect them in vulnerable situations and meet a variety of care needs. Ensuring that eligible support needs are met and people can exercise choice and control over their lives. Our strategy focuses on preventing, reducing, delaying and meeting need to make the best use of people's resources to keep them independent, safe and well.

**Responding to Requests for Support and Advice** – in July a community drop-in event in Coalville helped people gain easy access to information and advice about their health and care needs. The 'Community Hub' event gave residents the opportunity to find out about healthy lifestyles, paying for care, support for carers and staying safe around the home. The event gives people the opportunity to have a face-to-face conversation about solutions to their care needs. In addition to social care workers, representatives from services such as First Contact Plus, local area co-ordinators, and housing were present.

**Enabling Choice and Control** – respondents to our annual survey stating that they have control over their daily life increased to 78% in 2017. The proportion of people in receipt of a personal budget was 96% similar to last year. The proportion of service users who were in receipt of a direct payment has increased significantly from 38% to 55%. Direct payment cards were introduced in November 2015 and have been rolled out to new clients in the last 12 months with a total of 2414 people having a card issued to them. We have increased staffing within the Personal Budgets team to meet increased demand for Personal Assistance support. The team offer advice and guidance to direct payments recipients in terms of being an employer and managing their budgets.

**Assistive Technology** - the county-wide community alarm telecare service is available to anyone living in Leicestershire to maintain independence at home. The service has been refocused to provide assessment provision for reablement. The Assistive Technology Service supports 2000 people each year, including carers, with standalone equipment. The service provided 2896 items in 2016/17. Our Adaptations Team carried out 8906 minor adaptations in 2016/17 an increase of 5%. We continue to work to strengthen our equipment and adaptations offer.

**Supporting Carers** – our latest carers' survey found that quality of life and social contact remains low and satisfaction has also fallen. Various follow up steps have been commissioned as a result. In April a carers lead was appointed to develop a new strategy alongside work on improvements to the carers offer including supporting carers in employment, housing issues, information and advice and social contact. The Carers Delivery Group has focussed on increasing awareness and early identification of carers within GP practices. The adult social care grant and new Carers Strategy will enable us to strengthen the carers support offer.

**Peer Review** – adult social care was subject to peer challenge during April 2016. A peer review panel comprising of senior members from Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Nottingham visited and scrutinised evidence and documentation relating to the work of the Council. Whilst the Peer Review Team had a number of recommendations that the service have taken on board, the feedback was very positive and indicates that Adult Social Care has responded to the challenges of limited resources and integration by ensuring "all the ingredients are in place".

**Demand and Workforce Pressures** - in order to deliver our Adult Social Care Strategy there needs to be a sustainable labour market with the appropriate skills and competencies. Best Interest Assessors, Mental Health Practitioners, social workers and community support workers are in short supply. We have developed a new Workforce Strategy focusing on both the wider adult social care workforce within Leicestershire where we have a duty to facilitate and shape the market and on our internal social care workforce. We are also implementing a recruitment and media campaign to increase workforce capacity. In July we began a drive to attract people into the care sector. Events were organised in a bid to attract around 70 people, including newly-qualified workers. The posts include workers to work with specific groups of people, including residents with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health needs, or older adults. Filling the posts will also help meet the increased demand for council services due to more people living longer, and with more complex needs, and the extra responsibilities placed on the authority due to the Care Act.

**Ensuring People have a positive experience** - social care quality of life rose from 18.5 to 18.9 last year. Satisfaction levels rose to 65% from 58%. During the year significant work has been carried out to improve how we use complaints for service improvement. We now issue a response to each quarterly complaints report addressing themes highlighted. There have been significant reductions in mental health wait lists, a review of financial assessment and invoice processing and refresher training on safeguarding, all prompted by complaints intelligence. The commissioning and quality and compliance sections have been reorganised to focus on strategic relationships with fewer providers.

**Care Quality** - quality standards for contracted services form part of the core agreement and providers are monitored against these standards. We have embargoed or restricted placements at 8 residential care locations, 3 domiciliary care providers and 1 supported living provider. CQC took action in relation to 5 home care providers and 20 residential/nursing care providers in Leicestershire. Whilst 85% local providers are rated good or outstanding, better than the national average, 14% require improvement.

**Safeguarding Adults** – the Safeguarding Adults Board has challenged those who work directly with adults with care and support needs to listen to what they are saying and respond appropriately including a workshop with care providers. It has also conducted a series of formal audits of safeguarding arrangements including a safeguarding adults audit framework process. Case reviews of frontline practice have included considering safeguarding thresholds and making safeguarding personal. The Board has also carried out safeguarding adult reviews, other reviews of cases and disseminated learning from these across the partnership. Financial abuse and domestic abuse are emerging areas of abuse of adults.

The Care Act 2014 required changes to the way in which services keep people safe. We have been embedding Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) across Leicestershire, and being assured of its positive impact on service quality and outcomes for service users is a priority. Increasing understanding and competence in the use of MSP is carried out by the multi-agency Leicestershire Safeguarding Adults Board. There have been 20 training sessions in implementing making safeguarding

personal. A multiagency audit around MSP by the SAB Audit Group found that people were being kept involved and informed. In relation to the Vulnerable Adults Risk Management Process training has been undertaken with service managers and feedback suggests it is positive in better supporting operational practice for work with those at risk of self-neglect.

There were 1200 safeguarding enquiries investigated in 2016/17, a third higher than the previous year. We have worked with Residential Care Providers to reduce risk in recent years and enquiries related to care homes have dropped from 61.6% to 38.9%. Work continues with a focus on work with domiciliary and supported living providers. There has been a small improvement in the number of people stating services help them to feel safe to over 90%. The Safeguarding Effectiveness Group oversees that the desired outcomes for safeguarding are achieved – which was achieved or partly achieved in 95% of enquiries.

**Deprivation of Liberty** – our DOLs service undertakes assessments by qualified health and social care professionals. We have invested in additional capacity to address people waiting assessment. The increase has enabled the service to manage demand more effectively. There has been a good reduction in the number of cases not yet actioned down from 1699 to 615 cases by March 2017.

## **Helping People Stay Well and Independent - 18-64**

**Learning Disabilities – Transforming Care** - the Transforming Care Partnership has continued to ensure there is the right support for people with learning disabilities and/or autism to be discharged from inpatient hospital care and also to help people in the community at risk of being admitted. The partnership had a bid for £4.2m agreed to provide bespoke accommodation, the development of a four bed step down provision and a crisis service to support those at risk of admission. A reduction from 29 to 12 inpatients by April 2019 is expected from LLR. The roll out of an admission avoidance tool has also continued with more teams using the tool to identify people at risk of being admitted and to ensure they get the support they need.

**Settled Accommodation and Supported Living** – the proportion of people aged 18-64 with a learning disability in settled accommodation continues to improve, to 79% in 2016/17. For people aged 18-64, there are lower numbers of permanent admissions to care and fewer numbers in permanent care placements; shown as a rate per 100,000 of the wider population, the number of people in permanent placements is down from 124 in March 2016 to 116 in March 2017. We have procured a new Supported Living Framework to 2021 which streamlines services, provides a greater volume of business for suppliers and achieves economies of scale. There are now five lead providers responsible for delivering all supported living services in their area. Our pathway to housing project supporting access to settled accommodation continues to be successful.

**Supporting People with Learning Disabilities into Employment** – there is a greater focus on providers supporting individuals to access employment and training opportunities to enable a reduction in accessing long term formal adult social care. The proportion of people with a learning disability known to the local authority in paid



employment increased to 11% in 2016/17. The improvement has been achieved by supporting an additional 111 people through our Community Life Choices re-commissioning. We identified a provider who had supported a number of people into paid employment and worked with a further group of individuals to support them to form their own community interest company which offers a range of services within their local community. We commission a range of employment related services which are focused on preparing people for work through to work trials and then securing open employment.

**Learning for Living and Work** – the programme helps adults with learning difficulties gain valuable skills in areas including communication, health, personal safety and wellbeing, skills for employment and volunteering, sensory learning, independent living, creative skills and leisure. The programme is run by the Council's Adult Learning Service. In December the achievements of adult learners with learning difficulties and disabilities were celebrated. Around 100 learners and carers attended an event to celebrate their achievements.

**Community Life Choices** - a new framework for Community Life Choices day services was implemented in 2017. The model supports providers to deliver support for people to find non-social care funded activities in the community and to support people to gain employment and volunteering opportunities and improve their life skills.

**Shared Lives** - Shared Lives is a scheme that matches adults who need support with carefully selected carers who provide them with respite or long term care in the carer's home. It focuses on the local community, with households sharing their experiences and skills with the person who comes to live with them. In June we ran an event promoting our service to people who could benefit from it and also seeking to recruit more Shared Lives carers. We have seen some extremely positive stories come from Shared Lives placements. The service focuses on service user's individual needs, meaning we can tailor their care requirements to allow them to live their own lives, and fulfil their ambitions.

**Working Age Adults Accommodation Strategy to 2022** - our new accommodation strategy was approved during the year to help shape the housing and other provider markets to ensure that a range of accommodation and support options are available. Through collaboration it is hoped during the next five years there will be more suitable accommodation to meet the needs of working age adults with disabilities. That more individuals are residing in supported accommodation and fewer in residential care and that accommodation options support hospital discharge, reablement and recovery.

## Helping Older People to Stay Well and Independent - 65+

The number of older people admitted to permanent care during 2016/17 was higher than the previous year. Despite this the increase in the older population means that the rate per 100k has fallen. The overall number of people accessing services has also reduced, from 3617 per 100k to 3112 per 100K. Just short of 4000 people accessed reablement services during 2016/17, a 12% increase on the previous year. Only two in 10 went on to need ongoing services.

**Older Persons Support** - activity during the year included production of a new older persons accommodation strategy, a review of extra care housing provision, the lightbulb project and implementation of the new help to live at home service and a project with residential care homes to use assistive technology, reducing the number of falls in those homes. Following the success of the project, supporting care homes in the management of falls is no longer a pilot and is incorporated into our Team's day to day business including maximising the use of assistive technology.

**Tackling Social Isolation** – in December people were urged to make a pledge to help fight the hidden epidemic of loneliness. The 'post it, pledge it, mean it' social media campaign has been set up to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of social isolation. 1 in 10 people over the aged of 65 in the UK report feelings of loneliness and research shows that lacking social connections is as damaging as smoking. The campaign is focusing partnership work to improve the lives of people that feel alone in Leicestershire. The recent survey shows there has been some improvement in the proportion of service users stating that they have as much social contact as they would like - an increase to 46%.

**Dementia Support** – there are predicted to be over 9,000 people in the county living with dementia. Along with partners in health we fund and provide a range of information, advice and services to support people affected by dementia. In May we urged people to become Dementia Friends. Dementia Friends is an initiative which involves people finding out more about how dementia affects a person and then providing small, everyday things to help. In October a programme delivered by our museum service earned a nomination for best training initiative in the National Dementia Care awards. Memory Plus which guides professionals as they deliver a range of activities has helped to support around 1,500 people living with dementia. Joint commissioning and procurement arrangements for a single community and hospital in-reach dementia support service for Leicester and Leicestershire is providing a more joined-up service for the area, replacing three separately commissioned services. These support easier transition between hospital and community settings and co-ordinate care and integrate services around the person in order to improve outcomes,

## **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. In April 2017 we implemented a Public Health Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework to continue to improve the delivery of outcomes within public health and ensure a co-ordinated approach to quality management.

**Online Health and Support Information Hub** – we want people to get support as quickly as possible when they need it. Our new online information hub helps Leicestershire residents to stay fit, healthy and independent, and provides an access point for immediate support. First Contact Plus enables people to search from their own home through a broad range of wellbeing information which is all in one place. The service includes information and links to organisations which provide support around topics such as health, falls, feeling safe, living independently, debts and benefits, work, learning and volunteering, and families and relationships. First Contact Plus also signposts people to community groups, national charities and public health services. Residents in need of extra help can use the 'self-referral' button to arrange for an adviser to call them to discuss their specific needs and put them in touch with the right people for support. In 2016/17 there were 4,500 referrals and 26,467 website visits.

**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. We commissioned an independent review of early help services and have produced an Early Help and Prevention Strategy and implementation plan. We are working toward having a comprehensive offer for community based prevention by bringing together all the resources available. This will include a core menu of prevention services which will wrap around individuals and communities as an essential component of the model of integrated care. The review proposals also aim to save £3m. In 2017 we developed a new programme delivery team to bring together services including Healthy Schools and Healthy Tots to ensure a coherent settings based health improvement approach.

**Local Area Coordinators** – the Local Area Coordination scheme was introduced in 2015, in eight localities across Leicestershire. The aim of the scheme is to support vulnerable people through the development of networks of community based support, utilising existing community assets. The 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. During 2016-17, due to demand for the service, the number of Local Area Coordinators has been increased from 8 to 20 covering a total of 26 locations across the County.

**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 to prevent them happening. In Leicestershire health checks continue to be provided by all GP practices and 16,824 were delivered in 2016/17.

**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 the risk of chronic disease and promote overall health. To help combat overweight and obesity we commission a range of services including weight watchers and the LPT Nutrition and Dietetic Service. We are also working with the CCGs to develop a more comprehensive multidisciplinary tier 3 service for people with more severe complex conditions. The Food for Life programme works with schools across Leicestershire and the Master Gardeners programme helps people to learn to grow nutritious food.

**Reducing the Harm of Substance Misuse** – improving drug treatment completions remains a priority. Turning Point became our provider of substance misuse services in 2016 and provides integrated support for people with drug and alcohol problems. The service is delivered through ‘recovery hubs’ in Loughborough, Coalville and Leicester. Dear Albert, a local social enterprise, continues to deliver group work programmes to increase engagement in mutual aid support for people recovering from substance misuse.

**Smoking Cessation** – quitting smoking is often the single, most effective way of improving health and preventing illness. In January our new stop smoking service started work. The new Quit Ready Leicestershire service offers free and confidential text, phone and web chat advice. Advisors offer support on a weekly basis during the 12-week programme to ensure people have the best possible chance of staying smoke-free. The new service also acknowledges the significant increase in the use of e-cigarettes, and behavioural support is on offer to people who use e-cigarettes. People can also self-refer using the online contact form found on the website and the service is particularly keen to support women who are pregnant, or people who have other health problems. In May the Quit-Ready stop smoking service had helped more than 400 people give up the habit.

**Sexual Health** – sexual ill health can affect all parts of society, often when it is least expected. In April 2016 we approved a new Leicestershire Sexual Health Strategy to 2019 which is streamlining commissioning, improving patient pathways, efficiency and quality of care. The strategy included new approaches to screening for sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancy and community based services. There is continued focus on supporting schools in their work around relationships and sex education and access to services through use of new technology.

## Child Health

**0-19 Healthy Child Programme** - in May 2016 we agreed a new service model for the Healthy Child Programme combining the health visitor and school nursing services. The service prioritises the health of looked after children, children with SEND, traveller families and those at risk of exploitation. The programme commenced in April 2017.

**Breastfeeding and Maternity Support** – 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.

**Early Years Health** – the Healthy Tots Programme provides a framework to support early years settings to be health promoting organisations. The programme includes emotional health, wellbeing, physical activity and healthy eating. Over 127 settings are participating and 49 have achieved healthy tots’ status.

**Healthy Schools** – the Leicestershire Healthy Schools Programme provides the framework to support schools to be health promoting settings. 46% of Leicestershire schools have achieved ‘Enhanced Healthy School’ Status by achieving meaningful outcomes on a public health priority.

**Child Oral Health** - in May a mass tooth-brushing event kicked off National Smile Month in Leicestershire. Nurseries, schools and children’s centres across the county took part in synchronised tooth-brushing to mark the start of the awareness-raising oral health campaign aiming to help children and families get into good oral health habits. Further events held throughout the county include ‘lift the lip’ sessions, being held at children’s centres, toddler groups and libraries. At ‘lift the lip’ sessions, dentists attend to work with parents and carers to assess the risk of decay for children, give them personalised advice and information, and provide free toothbrushes and toothpaste.

**Teenage Pregnancy** – teenage pregnancy is a key aspect of our sexual health strategy. Work over the past year has included evaluating how we support schools to deliver relationships and sex education. The partnership is also supporting teenage parents through the issuing of ‘baby boxes’, which provide young mums-to-be with useful items, as well as information and support on how to access local services. In March figures showed that Leicestershire’s teenage pregnancies had reduced for the ninth consecutive year, significantly lower than the East Midlands and England rates.

## **Mental Health**

The considerable burden of mental illness means that strengthening individual resilience and helping people with mental illness to recover remain key priorities for us. We are a key partner in the Better Care Together Mental Health work-stream. The supporting programme incorporates a range of interventions aimed at helping people avoid becoming mentally ill and at mitigating the impact of mental illness in those who experience 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** – we have developed the RU OK? Website to provide information about sources of support. As part of the local Mental Health Partnership group we have also developed supporting policies and practices. The group offers Mental Health First Aid training to front line staff on a multi-partnership basis. Our adult learning service has designed a number of new opportunities for adult social care users including one for those who are anxious, depressed or low in confidence. Healthier in Mind aims to engage as many local people as possible to find out what they think should be the local priorities to improve mental health support. This will form the basis of a mental health strategy for LLR owned with local communities and businesses.

**Children's Mental Health** – a blueprint for transforming mental health and emotional wellbeing support for children and young people across the area launched in April 2016. The Future in Mind Plan aims to improve support across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. During the year NHS England announced extra investment into the county for improved support. £8m has been allocated for children and adolescent services which will help to support measures including mental health awareness training for frontline staff and healthy school advisors to support pupils.

**Adult Recovery and Resilience Services** - partnership commissioning and procurement arrangements have been agreed for preventative mental health recovery and resilience services with the CCGs and Leicester City and Rutland Councils. The new model provides a much more co-ordinated approach to supporting people with mental health issues and a number of 'hubs' in Leicestershire, with new services in place from autumn 2017.

## 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. Leicester-Shire and Rutland Sports Partnership (LRS) play a key role in sport and physical activity support and delivery. During the last year £545k of public health and £105K of 'moving at scale' funding was invested into county Locality Sport and Physical Activity Plans. £1.8m was invested through Local Sport and Physical Activity Alliances.

**Active Adults** – the 2017 Workplace Challenge saw over 19,300 activities logged from over 40 workplaces. Over 9,400 attendances were also recorded at sport and physical activity campaign weeks across the area. 310,773 attendances were recorded at sport and physical activity sessions included in Locality Sport and Physical Activity Commissioning Plans. 4,868 participants attended sessions delivered as part of the Sport England funded Inclusive Sport and Physical Activity Community Project.

**Active Young People** – over 16,000 young people participated in Team Leicestershire competitions across 9 sports, including 46 county finals. This has offered over 85,000 individual playing opportunities to secondary school pupils across LLR. 2,949 participants, including 433 disabled participants, from 158 schools competed at the Level 3 School Games Super Series Finals/Championships, which consisted of 45 competitions across 21 sports. Over £100K was invested into delivery of 28 new and 15 sustained Satellite Club projects. This resulted in over 780 participants aged 11-25 engaging in sport and physical activity linked to local community clubs. £174K was invested into Sportivate projects in the sixth and final year of the programme.

**Places to Play, Clubs and Pathways** - following the release of the Sport England Community Asset Fund in January 2017, LRS organised a funding workshop attended by 42 people from 31 clubs and organisations. £208K has been secured for 12 clubs and organisations towards capital projects through various funding programmes. 4 Local Authority Sports Facility Frameworks have been completed for Blaby, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth and North West Leicestershire, with Oadby and Wigston nearing completion. LRS is supporting a number of school sites with capital projects, helping with business cases and funding applications for new sports facilities. These include South Wigston High School, South Charnwood High School, Charnwood College, Newbridge High School and Ashby Ivanhoe College. £570K was also secured for 28 local clubs and organisations resulting from LRS Funding Officer support.

**Legacy** - £35,500 was invested from the GO GOLD Funding Programme to support 75 talented young athletes across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. LRS supported the Level 4 National School Games Finals at Loughborough University in September 2016, through local school engagement and marketing and communication around the event. LRS also supported with the recruitment of over 500 volunteers and young leaders to assist with the smooth running of the Games and almost 100 young people attended the Talent Inspiration Camp at the event.

## **Safeguarding, Vulnerable 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. We place a particular focus on vulnerable children and their families such as children in need of protection, children in care, children in need, children with special educational needs and disabilities and families with particular problems. The service has adopted a clear practice framework which underpins work with children and families. At the heart of this is the 'Signs of Safety' methodology which places children and their wider network of support at the centre of practice.

### **Safeguarding**

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

**Safeguarding Children** – the Safeguarding Children's Board publishes an annual report on its work. During the year the Board conducted a series of formal audits of organisational safeguarding approaches and case reviews of frontline practice including themes such as repeat child protection plans, neglect and child sexual exploitation. The Board has also carried out Serious Case Reviews and other reviews of cases and disseminated learning widely. Supported a campaign initiated by the Child Death Overview Panel to raise awareness of the danger of ingesting button batteries. Developed procedures in relation to bruising to pre-mobile babies and provided training including on the Safeguarding Children Competency Framework and Neglect Toolkit. The Board is continuing to challenge and drive improvement in safeguarding including developing its approach to engagement and quality assurance and continuing to embed the signs of safety approach across the partnership, particularly in schools. The safeguarding in education service continues to provide advice and support to schools and colleges on their safeguarding responsibilities and has provided training to 1000 safeguarding leads. An e-learning safety online survey continues to be popular with year 6 and year 9 pupils with recent surveys completed by over 5,000 pupils.

**Safeguarding Board Ofsted Inspection** - Ofsted visited us in November 2016 and inspected the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The Board's Ofsted report rated it as 'good'. Ofsted identified a number of strengths in the work and judged the Board to be effective and well run.

**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.

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** – our CSE Team continues to work hand-in-hand with the police and NHS staff as part of one, joint team. It focuses on raising awareness about CSE and providing quicker, more effective support to victims. By disrupting offenders and helping victims feel more confident about disclosing abuse and exploitation the team is helping to secure convictions.



**Cyber Safety** – in February we unveiled an interactive play which helps primary school children stay safe online. ‘In The Net’ is designed to get seven-to-nine-year-olds thinking about the serious issues of keeping personal information safe, chatting to people online and the effects of cyber bullying. Over 70 teachers from 52 schools across Leicestershire watched the performance at a conference to coincide with Safer Internet Day. Online grooming is often a factor in CSE cases and ‘In The Net’ plays a key part in our work to tackle this.

**Ofsted Inspection** – in autumn 2016 our children’s services were inspected by Ofsted. The inspection found that we keep the most vulnerable young people safe from harm but that improvements were needed in some areas. In February 2017 we announced improvements in children’s services following the inspection. Actions taken to address the issues include more consistent management oversight and more prompt support to families. Ofsted inspectors praised a number of areas such as our steps to tackle child sexual exploitation and prevention work to stop families’ problems growing. Ofsted also found that foster carers provide good quality of care, social workers know their children well, the council is improving the health of children in care and their education outcomes and that children’s and young people’s views are taken seriously and help to shape services.

**Improving Children’s Services** – the Ofsted inspection found that children’s services ‘require improvement’ overall, with half of all councils inspected having this rating. We initially invested an extra half-a-million pounds to recruit social workers to reduce caseloads and drive quality across our work. Support to families is now provided more promptly, after enhancing our processes. We have updated standards for managers to ensure more consistent oversight and make smarter use of data. We have more ‘children’s officers’, are re-designing post-adoption support and boosting resource to ensure consistent high levels of support. In September 2017 we agreed an Improvement Plan to invest an extra £2.5m into children’s services to create 37 new social care posts to help reduce caseloads, improve services, address the Ofsted requirements and manage a rise in the number of children in care. The service also continues to implement its Continuous Improvement Plan 2017-20 developed to take into account the Ofsted improvements.

## **Effective Child Care Placements**

There were 546 young people in our care in October 2017, with 64 in residential care. In December 2016 we agreed a policy with the aim that children who are looked after are best placed with families as opposed to institutions.

**Fostering** – we continue to promote fostering as a key activity that makes a real difference to a child’s life chances. We are encouraging a new generation of foster carers who can step into a hugely-rewarding role and offer loving homes to vulnerable children and young people. We hold monthly information evenings providing an opportunity for people to talk to carers, as well as our fostering team. We support carers from the beginning and encourage ongoing training throughout the process. In May we came together with 12 other councils to produce a film to encourage more people to come forward and foster brothers and sisters. We work to keep brothers and sisters together wherever possible. In July the film was shortlisted

in the 2017 UK Public Sector Communications Awards for partnership engagement initiative of the year.

**Adoptions** – in August we undertook a drive to encourage more people to become adopters. 34 children in care were in need of adoption. Our team continues to run adoption events and provide training and a wealth of information to potential and actual adopters. The average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family is 517 days against the England average of 558. The average time to find a match is 195 days against the England average of 226.

**Looked After Children** – our Children in Care Service was created from three locality children in care teams in autumn 2016 to deliver more positive outcomes for children in care and care leavers. In April awards were presented at a special event to celebrate children in care's achievements. Over 350 children, young people and care leavers were presented with accolades which recognised their triumphs and achievements. The events reflect academic success, personal attainment, sporting successes and community involvement. Our virtual school which promotes the education of children in care was noted by Ofsted as being highly effective and that many make good progress socially, emotionally and educationally considering their starting points. 2016/17 has seen one to one tuition for over one hundred children in care and care leavers, enabling accelerated progress in english and maths.

**Placement Commissioning** - during the year we have strengthened our commissioning approach with the inclusion of placements commissioning for children in care in our commissioning team. A full review of the processes for sourcing external fostering, residential and 16+ supported accommodation has been undertaken. In December 2016 the sourcing and contract management of independent and residential school commissioning for children with SEND was also transferred to the commissioning function. The Commissioning Service has so far supported the commissioning of 41 contracts with a value of £10m.

**Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking (UAS) Children and Syrian Refugees** – based within the Children in Care Service the UAS team is responsible for unaccompanied children who arrive within the County, often in lorries at motorway service stations, and those who 'transfer' through the national scheme. The team currently work with 58 children, an increase of 16 since March 2016. Over the last year there were 50 new arrivals. Seven children were transferred under the voluntary National Transfer Scheme. The scheme, launched in July 2017, aims to ensure that all councils support unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people, regardless of where they come into the country. When an asylum-seeking young person comes to Leicestershire, the council must ensure they have a safe home to live in, allocate a social worker and provide educational support through a 'virtual' school. In October we launched a new campaign to find foster carers who could offer safe and loving homes to young unaccompanied asylum-seekers. We are committed to playing our part in accommodating refugees from Syria and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children but have repeatedly called on the Government to fully fund the costs of our participation.

## Support for Vulnerable Children

**SEN and Disability (SEND) Reforms** – we have developed a draft new SEND Strategy to 2020 setting out our vision and priorities for developing support and provision for children and young people with SEND. The Strategy is overseen by a new Strategic SEND Board. Priorities include supporting schools to develop their provision and developing local specialist services to ensure sufficient places across a variety of needs. A project has also been established to improve the sufficiency of SEN education provision and help reduce current overspends.

**Local Offer** – our local offer, managed by our local offer co-ordinator, brings together in one place details about local health, education and social care services for children and young people aged 0-25. A number of improvements have been made and a new post has also been created to help gather the views of children and young people with SEND and their families. The SEND Information Advice and Support Service provides free, confidential advice and support on matters relating to SEND, including education, health and social care issues. Our Family Information Directory also provides information on useful local organisations and activities. In January 2017 we encouraged organisations involved in supporting children and young people with SEND to register for the Local Offer Live event. Local Offer Live helps to put children and young people with SEND, as well as parents and carers, in touch with local and regional services.

**New Special School** - in September 2017 a new £10m state-of-the-art special school in Wigston opened its doors for the first time. We built the brand-new building at the Wigston Academy campus in partnership with Birkett House School. The school provides places for up to 125 children and young people, aged 4 to 19, and includes a hydrotherapy pool and sensory interactive rooms, with virtual reality technology. The scheme is part of a masterplan for the campus which is undergoing significant transformation as part of a £4m redevelopment. We have also made funding available to install new enhanced Changing Places toilets across Leicestershire. So far 10 facilities have been installed across the county.

**Disabled Children's Service** - the service offers social work and occupational therapy support to children with a range of complex, significant or severe disabilities. Social Work support is provided where the child is in need, on a child protection plan or looked after. We are working to review the range of services and support available through the Local Offer so that families can get the help they need in good time. This includes short breaks, respite care and support to families in their own home. The service is also finalising revised eligibility criteria so that families and professionals can be clear about when the service can offer support.

**Learning Support Service** – our Learning Support Service continues to work with Leicestershire schools to support children who experience specific literacy differences such as dyslexia. The service delivered training to 185 schools last year. The ICT assessment service and the physical disabilities service have made a successful transition into the Learning Support Service which now provides a more holistic approach to meeting needs.

**Early Years SEN Inclusion Service and Portage** - the service works with children from birth to school entry with significant and complex SEN, and is currently working with 236 babies and children. This year the Portage Service was registered as a 5 star service with the National Portage Association. Teachers in the service contribute educational advice to assessments and provide advice, training and support to 372 early years SENCOs and 586 childminders.

**Pupils Missing Education (PME)** – we continue to achieve a 100% return rate from schools in relation to PME and have a good analysis system to understand pupils missing education. The PME operating framework was launched in autumn 2016 and is now well embedded across all Leicestershire schools. Ofsted reported that we had a good grasp of PME. The court team for school non-attendance continues to drive initiatives through regular meetings with school welfare officers in order to raise awareness of the detriment of missing school. This has seen a drop in the number of penalty notices issued.

**Young Carers** – there are around 2,500 young carers in Leicestershire, although that doesn't take into account people who don't identify themselves as carers. In June 2017 we staged an event to provide an opportunity for them to share experiences, ask for advice, and enjoy themselves. The work they do is very important, so we wanted to hear if they were getting the support they need. We urged young carers to get in touch so we can ensure that they are receiving the benefits and support they are entitled to and need.

**Bullying** – our Anti-Bullying Team provides anti-bullying advice, guidance, support and training. In November 2016 we joined forces with Leicester City Football Club to help prevent and tackle bullying. The conference focused on homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. Teachers, support staff and students from year six upwards took part in interactive workshops aiming to encourage them to share good practice. In June 2017 more than 30 Leicestershire schools were recognised for their commitment to tackling bullying. Also in June a national charity named the Council as one of the top local authorities in the country for tackling anti-LGBT bullying in schools. The council was ranked fifth in Stonewall's Education Equality Index for its work dealing with homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying, and celebrating difference in classrooms. It's the fourth year we have been ranked in the top ten, and our highest ranking to date.

## **Supporting Families and Early Help**

We seek to intervene early and provide a range of early help and preventative services to support children and families and ensure that problems don't escalate. Doing this helps save the cost of more expensive interventions for a range of agencies.

**Good Early Learning and Child Care** – in January 2017 our Early Learning and Childcare Service was invited to become an early implementer of the extended offer of 30 hours of free childcare for eligible working parents introduced from September 2017. Over a two month period the service dealt with 4649 parents who received a

unique number which they used at their chosen provider. The majority of local providers worked closely with the team to offer the best range of options for parents. Our promotional materials have been praised by DfE and shared as examples of good practice. By July 3871 children had accessed more than the standard 15 hours a week. The proposals implement an additional 15 hours a week of free child care for 3 and 4 year olds on top of the current universal entitlement of 15 hours. 80% of eligible disadvantaged 2 year olds accessed their FEEE.

Continued good progress has been made to secure sufficient high quality childcare provision across the county with currently 94% of providers judged by Ofsted to be good or better. More 3 and 4 year olds are also now accessing their entitlement to Early Years Pupil Premium, which can help accelerate progress. The percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception year has risen to 70.2%, closer to the national average. Outcomes have improved in each early learning goal and by 2.2% in writing.

**Children's Centres** – our Children's Centre's Programme focuses on supporting families needing extra help, especially in the first 1001 days from pregnancy until the child's second birthday. The Programme supported 10,842 children and families in 2016/17. 1423 were supported on the intensive pathway with a total of 45 active pathways. In 2016/17 93% of eligible families were registered to the programme, an increase of 2%. 38% live in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the county. 1080 children received one to one support from Family Outreach work. The programme also worked with 1296 families known to social care. 98% of parents reported that the service made a positive difference to their lives.

**Supporting Leicestershire Families** – our Supporting Leicestershire Families service helps people to tackle a range of issues including drugs, truancy, unemployment, domestic violence, health problems and anti-social behaviour. During the year the service worked with 885 vulnerable families and 498 young people on a one to one basis or in groups. Following the successful completion of phase one of the programme, where Leicestershire was consistently one of the highest performing authorities, we entered phase two six months early. The expanded programme requires the service to support families to achieve sustained and significant change across 6 outcome areas. To date we have achieved 25.4% of the target, with a further three years of the current phase remaining until 2020. 386 families had achieved significant and sustained progress across all identified outcome areas and a further 319 are now in continuous employment. This places Leicestershire in the top 5% of the country with only 6 other Local Authorities scoring above 25% of their 2020 target. Local assessment shows that in 9 out of the 10 assessed criteria, over 60% of families worked with have made positive progress.

## **Schools and Academies – Organisation and Attainment**

**School Organisation and Allocations** - during the course of the last 12 months our School Organisation Service has worked to deliver an additional 1311 school places in primary schools through our £30m capital programme. Highlights include the completion of the Fossebrook Primary School in August 2016 and the refurbishment of the former Mount Grace High School to provide extended accommodation for Hinckley Parks Primary School. In August a new £4.5m state of the art 210 place primary school, Hallam Fields, opened its doors to serve the Birstall area. We

worked closely with contractors to develop the school which is now part of the Lionheart Academies Trust. The project also includes a recreation centre for the local community. The service has also negotiated education contributions totalling £16.7m to be used to extend and improve existing schools and build new schools on larger housing developments. Overall last year 97% of all children secured one of their three school preferences in reception or year 7.

We have also supported the removal of the remaining 10+ system in Leicestershire schools in Castle Donnington, Shepshed and Oadby from September 2017, so that all schools are operating a consistent pattern. The School Accommodation Programme 10+ works has been completed earlier than anticipated and include schemes at Long Whatton Primary School, Oadby Brookside Primary School, Oadby Brockshill Primary School and Shepshed St. Botolph's School. We have also assisted the conversion of a number of schools to Academy status, where they have expressed a wish to do so, and helped others to consider their options such as developing Multi Academy Trusts. Of the 284 Leicestershire Schools 160 are now academies many operating within one of the 27 MATs (5 national and 22 local).

## **Educational Quality**

We continue to champion excellence in our schools and high academic achievement. We support the work of the Leicestershire Education Excellence Partnership and school heads in securing good standards, improvement advice and sharing good practice. In relation to high quality school places, 89.5% of local schools were rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted last year, slightly higher than the average.

**High Standards in Primary** – the number of children achieving the expected level in reading, writing and maths improved last year, rising to 61.4% compared to 52.4% in 2016. National levels are expected to improve by a similar amount meaning local and national levels will be similar. This is an area of focus for the Leicestershire Education Excellence Partnership.

**High Standards in Secondary** - the main metric for assessing Key Stage 4 delivery is now 'Progress 8', which measures the progress made by all pupils, rather than concentrating mainly on the higher achieving pupils. Progress in Mathematics was particularly good with boys and girls making better than expected progress overall. Progress in English was similar to national levels although girls performed better than boys within this group.

**Education of Vulnerable Groups** – the number of children eligible for free school meals achieving a good level of development rose by 2% to 46%. More Leicestershire children who are eligible for FSM reached the expected standard for reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2. 37.9% compared to 29% in 2016. The number of children with a statement of SEN or an EHCP reaching the same threshold was 6.8% compared to 5% last year. At Key Stage 4 the performance of pupils in receipt of SEN support has been lower in Leicestershire than the same group nationally in recent years. Although progress of the group did improve in 2017, achievement was still below national levels and the group remains a focus for improvement.

## **Safer Communities**

We place high priority on keeping Leicestershire communities safe by helping minimise crime and anti-social behaviour, reducing youth offending, supporting victims of crime, providing consumer protection services and supporting emergency management.

**Community Safety and Crime Minimisation** - in July the Police and Crime Panel noted that HMIC had conducted an inspection of Leicestershire Police and in some areas the Force was rated 'Good' and in other areas rated as 'Requires Improvement'. Nationally reported crime increased in 40 out of 43 forces last year compared to 2015/16. In Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland there was a rise of 8068 crimes over the previous year. Overall there was a worsening of performance in relation to total crime, domestic burglary, vehicle crime, violence with injury, criminal damage and people feeling safe after dark. Vehicle crime and domestic burglary are in the bottom quartile for performance. On 3 October the Police and Crime Panel also received a report from the Police and Crime Commissioner in response to a HMIC report on crime data integrity. HMI reported that insufficient progress had been made in implementing various changes, which were undermining the effectiveness of crime-recording arrangements. HMI estimate the force failed to record over 21,200 reported crimes, including violent crimes, rape and sexual offences. Partners are working with the Police in order to look at how these issues might be resolved.

**Community Cohesion and Hate Incidents** - in October 2016 we urged communities to "Stand together" and report hate. The Council and partners spread the message and supported a series of events during National Hate Crime Awareness Week. The aim was to raise awareness of hate crime and incidents and how to report them. Often hate incidents go unreported. In January 2017 we hosted an event to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

**Domestic Abuse** - a total of 5719 domestic violence crimes and incidents were recorded in Leicestershire during 2016/17. Domestic Violence consistently represents 40% of all violent crime recorded in Leicestershire. Through the Specialist Domestic Abuse Contract, Leicestershire residents have access to a comprehensive offer for primary victims of domestic abuse, including young people aged 13+ who are at risk from intimate partner violence. Based on sampling over the last 3 years, Leicestershire's YOS estimate that 40-50% of cases are linked to child on parent domestic abuse. A sample completed in July showed that as much as 2/3rds of YOS workers' caseloads can include child on parent domestic abuse or parental intimate partner violence. In recognition of the growing scale of child on parent domestic abuse across Early Help, a pilot resource has been grant funded for 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018, to provide intensive 12 week whole family work with a local specialist provider. Leicestershire has access to a 0.5 FTE specialist worker, as well as training and management input. A new Domestic Abuse Executive Board is aiming to prevent incidents of domestic abuse and promote the wellbeing of victims and families through better oversight across services.

## Consumer Protection

Our Trading Standards Service continues to play a key role in ensuring a good level of consumer protection, fair business trading environment and safe consumer goods.

**Intelligence Led Enforcement** - the Trading Standards Service adopts an intelligence led approach in supporting local businesses by identifying and proactively engaging with businesses that produce or supply high risk products. Complaint levels are also monitored to ensure that the Trading Standards Service, with other enforcement partners, can intervene as early as possible to reduce the risk of non-compliance. Surveys undertaken this year indicate an overall business satisfaction rate of 92% with regard to the support provided by the Service.

**Safer Consumer Goods** – the National Trading Standards Safety at Ports and Borders Project aims to reduce the risk of unsafe products from entering the UK. Last year over 700 consignments entering the UK via East Midlands Airport were examined by County Council trading standards officers and 200,000 unsafe or non-compliant goods were prevented from entering the marketplace. Cheap small electrical items such as chargers, hair straighteners, TV boxes and LED lights that could cause an electrocution and fire risk were among the items. The operation was run in partnership with the UK Border Force Agency.

**Social Media Enforcement** - this year counterfeit goods with a retail value of £650K were seized from sellers supplying goods via social media sites, market stalls and other online platforms. Social media is currently the most challenging forum from an enforcement perspective and our trading standards officers continue to collaborate with other agencies and adopt new enforcement techniques to detect and deter this criminal activity as a means to reduce the detrimental impact on the local legitimate economy.

**Illicit Tobacco** - the high street supply of illicit tobacco in Leicestershire damages the legitimate local economy and undermines smoking cessation initiatives with the availability of a cheaper option for those who might otherwise see price as a reason to stop smoking. Illicit tobacco also makes cigarettes more accessible to children. The service has executed warrants at premises across the county and seized over 6000 counterfeit and illicit tobacco products. Those that choose to engage in this form of criminal activity often reoffend and this year the Council have instituted criminal proceedings against a number of defendants.

**Money Scams and Vulnerable People** - around 40% of older people that trading standards discover are being scammed are known to adult social care. As part of a pilot project our trading standards officers supported 357 victims of mass marketing scam mail. Some of these Leicestershire residents require more intensive support having lost between them £478K to scams. This intervention project involved collaboration between Trading Standards, Adult Social Care and Public Health with the aim of reducing the immediate risk of financial loss and to ensure, moving forward, the victim remains confident in managing their financial affairs without again falling prey to scams. We have also located a member of trading standards staff



within our customer service centre in order to respond to scams where the person involved requires support.

**Business Advice** - the integrity of the food chain is vital to the sustainability of the Leicestershire rural economy and 75 new Leicestershire food businesses were supported by the Council's Trading Standards Service last year. Technical and complex compliance was provided by specialist officers which included issues around allergens and traceability of ingredients. Council animal health officers continue to maintain a presence at livestock markets and undertake inspections on farms across the county. Where an unacceptable level of compliance was not met through the advisory process the Council instituted proceedings where animal welfare or the risk of spreading disease was compromised.

## Emergency Management

LLR Prepared, the local resilience forum, brings together local councils, the emergency services and other partners to ensure that effective emergency plans are in place for a range of circumstances.

**County Emergency Plans** - an ongoing comprehensive programme of plan reviews and training and exercising events is in place within the council to ensure that it is well prepared to respond to emergencies whatever the cause.

**Local Community Plans** - in December 2016 a new scheme was launched which helps villages to prepare for emergency events such as flooding, storms and other incidents. Residents in Measham were the first in the county to receive equipment, worth £600, under the scheme, which encourages people and communities to come together and produce written plans. Being prepared should be one of a communities top priorities and having a proper plan in place is a keen aim. LLR Prepared launched the scheme. LLR Prepared also helps communities with specialist advice, tools and templates. At the time of writing approximately 50 community plans were in development.

**Awareness Raising** - in October 2017 a campaign took place to highlight how everyone should plan for emergencies. Leicester, Leicester and Rutland Prepared Week provided advice and information on how communities can react quickly in the face of flooding and other emergencies such as power cuts and flu epidemics. The event was organised by the Local Resilience Forum. Additionally, in March the Council supported a multi-agency LLR Prepared campaign to promote business continuity preparedness to local businesses with a focus on cyber resilience. Well prepared business communities help local areas to recover more quickly from emergencies.

## **Great Communities**

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.

**Communities Strategy** – in March 2017 we considered progress on our work to support communities. The Strategy has four priorities helping communities to support themselves, individuals and families; supporting communities to work with public services and deliver better outcomes; helping the voluntary and community sector to be an effective provider; and being outward focussed, transparent and open to new ways of working. Examples of successes include supporting 30 smaller libraries to be run by community groups, launching Local Area Co-ordinators, which signpost vulnerable people to advice and support, SHIRE grants providing funding for communities and voluntary groups, a campaign to highlight what communities can do to support vulnerable people and families and grants to start and grow social enterprises. In June we launched engagement on a refreshed Communities Strategy setting out our continued commitment to work with communities to make a difference to people's lives. The Strategy provides direction for the next five years, with the ambition that communities can thrive, take pride in their local area and are able to help themselves.

**SHIRE Community Grants** – the SHIRE Community Grants programme makes grants of up to £10,000 available for projects that make a difference to local people in the county. In 2016-17 over £440K was awarded to 93 community-based projects to support vulnerable and disadvantaged people. Of these projects, 37 were for projects to support disadvantaged young people, while a further 30 grants supported projects for older people, adults and people with mental health issues. SHIRE Community Grants are an important mechanism for delivering elements of the Communities Strategy, particularly around empowering communities to take responsibility for local issues, and also in terms of developing and strengthening the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. The grants are also a key component of Early Help and Prevention, as they contribute to reducing demand on public services. The outcomes achieved by SHIRE Grant funded projects include: improving health, wellbeing and quality of life; enabling positive lifestyle choices; improving confidence and independence; and enabling vulnerable groups to participate more fully in society.

**Community Capacity Building** – a range of community capacity building initiatives have 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 and providing a Local Area Co-ordination service to support people to access community resources and build capacity.

**Social Enterprises** – the Cooperative and Social Enterprise Development Agency (CASE) provide a social enterprise support service across Leicestershire. In 2017, CASE supported over 100 existing and emerging social enterprises to develop their businesses, including: strategic planning, developing robust income streams and accessing other sources of funding. As a result of CASE's input, 28 jobs were created or saved in the social enterprise sector. CASE have also contributed to our approach to Social Value and to wider issues by sitting on the Business Board of the LLEP; providing expert advice around mutualism and alternative service delivery options; offering support to projects supporting business growth such as the Loughborough Generator and offering guidance on alternative finance, such as social investment and community shares.

**Countywide Infrastructure Services** – support for the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Leicestershire is provided by an infrastructure services contract. The contract was recommissioned in 2016/17 following review and was won by Voluntary Action Leicestershire. The new service has been jointly commissioned with West Leicestershire CCG and East Leicestershire and Rutland CCG. The service is aligned to the shared objectives of the Council and CCGs, specifically around managing demand through early/community level intervention and prevention, increasing community resilience and more effective delivery of services by community groups. Support for VCS groups is focused on policy and voice - influencing and enabling input and responses to policy and strategy; group support - capacity building by supporting the development of new and existing groups; and volunteering - promoting, developing and supporting volunteering.

**Volunteering** – we continue to encourage and support people to volunteer, to help their communities, meet new people and learn new skills. In May we supported 'Volunteer 4 Good' which aims to get people aged 50+ more involved with local environmental projects. Activities across Leicestershire included a litter pick for grandparents and grandchildren at Bradgate Park, a dry stone walling taster session in Charnwood, work at Glen Parva Local Nature Reserve and 'Love Food Hate Waste' taster sessions in Anstey. Around 800 people from all backgrounds also took part in a range of volunteering opportunities organised by our Communities and Wellbeing Service last year, including maintaining the garden of a 17 century house to running interactive storybook sessions with under-fives. Although a large number of volunteers were retired (33%) and aged over 60 (35%), a fifth were aged under 25, and a quarter were in employment or studying, highlighting the value placed on volunteering by people of all ages. A study by the Royal Voluntary Service found that volunteering helps to reduce depression and social isolation in older people. It was also found to boost quality of life and life satisfaction.

## Great Communities – Heritage and Culture

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.

**Smart Libraries** – we have trialled the installation of smart technology at Syston Library to enable people to access the library outside of the usual opening hours. The smart technology enabled people to access the library, making it more convenient for people who work during the day. Users were able to use their library card to access the building in order to borrow, return and renew items or use the public computers, Wi-Fi and printing and copying facilities. During the trial opening hours increased by 30 hours a week with extra requests for using the venue for community activities. In September, following the successful trial, the self-access technology was approved to roll out to 15 libraries across Leicestershire, as part of wider plans to save £1.3m.

**Digital Library Services** – the needs of our library customers are evolving rapidly, and we're continually adapting our services to make them as convenient and flexible as possible. In April the Council's library service went on the road to promote its digital services. The service offers access to more than 13,500 e-books, magazines and newspapers, and, over the past 12 months, there's been a surge of interest with 70,000 digital titles borrowed in 2016-17, compared to 30,000 over the previous 12 months. The e-books and e-audiobooks are automatically returned after 21 days, meaning no late fees. In addition, they can be renewed, or returned once read, at any time.

**Community Libraries** – we have so far transferred control of 30 libraries to community groups, as part of the service's £800K savings. Ongoing contact with the libraries has highlighted the wide range of activities that local communities have established in their library, making them the hub of their local community. A number have increased opening hours and activities have included cinema screenings, author and other local talks and reading activities with children.

**Summer Reading Challenge** – in July thousands of children turned amateur detective as they participated in the Summer Reading Challenge run by Leicestershire libraries. On the opening weekend more than 600 children signed up to the Animal Agents theme involving a detective agency needing the help of young readers to solve their tricky cases. The Summer Reading Challenge helps youngsters across the county to keep up their reading skills. Children taking part in the challenge have to finish reading or listening to six books during the summer holidays.

**1620s House and Garden** – opened for its second full season following its relaunch in May 2016 and is showing continued growth in visitors. We've introduced discounted family tickets and updated our room information and interactives to make sure younger visitors have plenty to occupy themselves with games, dressing up and a picture trail, as well as the hands-on exploration of the house and gardens. The

gardens themselves have had a make-over, with heritage vegetables being grown and an improved maze.

**Melton Museum** – the museum secured grant funding from Arts Council England to look at how it creates stronger relationships with local communities. The early results of this work are encouraging with a range of new partnerships being established and an 8% growth in visitors to the museum after 5 months.

**Bosworth Battlefield** – in December the Council's Bosworth Battlefield won a top tourism award for the second year running. The heritage centre shared top billing with the King Richard III visitor centre in Leicester in the 'Great Day Out' small visitor attraction category at the Leicester and Leicestershire tourism awards. In August the site held its first 'Medieval Festival', which built on the successful and established annual re-enactment. The broader appeal of the festival seems to have been successful with an increase in visitor numbers and income.

**Snibston Improvements** – in December we announced a £1.4m investment to help people enjoy Snibston's heritage and country park and to provide extra housing. The investment will enable people to learn about the historic colliery buildings and make more of the country park, with BMX trails and a visitor centre and café. It will be funded by £1m from selling part of the site for up to 133 houses, plus a Council contribution of £400K. The annual running costs of the country park and visitor centre will be covered by income from the car park and centre. The plans include an improved public space near the Scheduled Ancient Monument and an intention to reopen the original gates on Ashby Road and new cycle route connecting the site to the town centre along the disused railway line to Oliver's crossing - providing improved access to the site and better links to the town centre.

**Museum Development Programme** – the service has again secured 3 years of grant funding from Arts Council England to deliver the Museum Development Programme for the East Midlands, for 2018 - 2021. The programme was commended for the quality of its outcomes against Arts Council England's 5 goals.

**Record Office** - the Record Office has had a number of notable events this year. In February it launched a new resource created in partnership with 'Find My Past', which provides access to 1.8m high quality digital records covering 5 centuries. In August the office submitted its accreditation application and in September it celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

**Registration Service** – in 2016/17 our Registration Service carried out 14,400 registrations with 2,300 weddings and civil partnerships conducted, 5,000 births, and 600 people officially welcomed into Leicestershire as British citizens. 60,000 people visited the Celebrate in Leicestershire website.

**World War 1 Commemorations** – in November Century of Stories, a Heritage Lottery funded project exploring social history relating to the individual and shared legacy of war, won two national awards in the 'Community Research and History' and 'Children and Young People' categories at the Remember WW1 awards. The heritage-based project, which runs until 2018, is supported by volunteers who empower people across Leicestershire to research and share their WW1 related

stories. They recognise how collectively the people of Leicestershire have contributed to the national commemoration of WW1. So far over 200 volunteers have been involved with the project, 1000 school pupils have used the project's unique Leicestershire based schools pack and 450 local people have attended a history café or a drop in session.

**Green Plaques** – in December we unveiled a green plaque to mark the site of a meteorite that broke up over the village of Barwell in 1965. It remains one of the largest meteorite falls recorded in Britain, and the green plaque marks its arrival from the skies 51 years ago. In June pioneering inventor Sir Frank Whittle was honoured with a green plaque at the Leicestershire site where he developed the jet engine. The plaque was installed at the Ladywood Works in Leicester Road, Lutterworth where Sir Frank's workshops and test sites were located. In August the names of the latest six winners to be honoured with a green plaque were announced following 6,000 public votes being cast. A nurse in the Crimean War, Drill Hall in Melton, Heathcote and Boden's Lace Factory, John Kenney, Tommy Brown and William Pearson will all be subject to the awards.

**HM The Queen** - the Council's School Food Service held a competition to design a card to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. It also organised street parties for schools which were attended by over 37,000 pupils in Leicestershire. Leicester and Leicestershire were honoured by the presence of The Queen at Leicester Cathedral for the Royal Maundy Service. The Council's Civics Team played a major role in supporting Leicester Cathedral in planning and preparation for the event.

**Armed Forces** - in June a decorated war veteran, John Cassie, 91, from Leicester, who swept the seas for mines during the Second World War helped fly the flag for our armed forces and their families during armed forces week. John raised the Armed Forces Day flag at the Council's Stand Easy memorial on 19 June. Leicestershire also marked the day with a service at Leicester Cathedral, followed by a parade of more than 400 service personnel, veterans and cadets. The event recognises the sacrifice and contribution made by veterans, serving members of the armed forces, reservist troops and their families.

**Future for Communities and Wellbeing Services** – in September we considered proposals necessary for further savings in community services including a business case for bringing together archive and museum collections into one hub replacing five current venues; exploring alternative management arrangements for the Century Theatre including community management; reviewing the green plaques scheme and the mobile library service to find ways of reducing costs, talking to partners about future options for support service Care Online; and exploring a new model for hosting of the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Budget pressures which require further savings of £1.3m by 2020/21 are ramping up, leaving us with tough choices and it's essential to look at future options for a number of services. We are having positive discussions with volunteers about developing the Century Theatre, and are keen to see how it can grow as a community arts venue.

## Great Communities – Environment and Waste

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 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.

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions** – during 2016/17 we reduced the amount of greenhouse gas emissions for the Council by over 20% compared to the previous year, with total emissions of 21,178 tonnes. The reduction has been 37.3% compared to 2008/09. This means that the emissions target has exceeded the target projection for the first time. The significant contributors to this were the installation of the biomass boiler at County Hall and the street light replacement programme which is replacing sodium lights with LED lights. The government has released the latest carbon emissions data for Leicestershire and the rest of the country based on 2015 figures. The figures for those factors under the Council's influence show a steady decrease since 2005 where emissions per head decreased from 7.7 to 5.4 tonnes per person over the last ten years.

**Community Energy Schemes** – we invite applications for projects in the county to receive Shire climate change grants of up to £5,000. The initiative is designed to help improve the energy efficiency of community buildings, reduce carbon emissions and contribute towards minimising the effects of climate change. Eligible projects can include energy audits, installation of heating systems, roof or cavity wall insulation and renewable energy systems. The grants have already benefitted a number of organisations including parish councils, community and faith groups, charities and village hall management facilities. For example in 2016/17 Saint Michael's Parish Church in Stoney Stanton received a Shire grant of over £2,300 for an LED lighting project.

**Electric Cars** – we are piloting use of an electric pool car. By replacing some of the miles travelled in staff private cars it will provide a cleaner and greener mode of travel and is also expected to bring cost savings. Electric cars are cheaper to run and produce zero exhaust emissions, helping tackle poor air quality. We are also exploring the business case for installing additional charging points in anticipation of the growing popularity of electric cars.

**Water and Energy Strategy** - following the approval of our Energy Strategy in 2014 we have invested significant capital in energy saving technologies, including a biomass boiler at County Hall, solar panels on Council buildings and the conversion of street lights to LED. As a result of the investment we have reduced building running costs by nearly £420K per annum. Renewable technologies now provide nearly 11% of our energy usage and earn us about £130K p.a. The upgrading of street lights is reducing energy use and generating savings of £680,000. We are also engaging with schools to help them to upgrade their assets to make them more energy efficient. In relation to our corporate Energy Strategy £0.4m has been spent

on upgrading lighting, boilers and heating controls at Council premises. The Energy Score+ Programme has seen £0.2m spent completing works at the Bosworth Academy on solar panels and LED lighting. This will deliver on-going revenue savings for the school.

**Energy Efficiency Project** – in June we unveiled plans to help cut costs and carbon emissions across the public sector by setting up a new energy efficiency project supporting councils, NHS, police, fire and other public organisations across the Midlands. The scheme will provide support on a range of measures including solar panels, LED lighting and biomass boilers.

## **Waste Prevention, Reuse and Recycling**

**Recycling and Household Waste Sites** – in July 2017 management of 13 of the 14 recycling and household waste sites across Leicestershire was brought in-house, saving £400K a year. The change gives us more control over the service and more flexibility to respond to changes and manage demand. The 13 waste sites continue to operate at current levels with no changes to site opening days or hours. A range of items can be recycled at the sites, including electrical items, cooking oil, tetra pak cartons, household batteries, and garden waste. A programme of small improvements and works to ensure environmental compliance at the waste sites and transfer stations also continues.

**Waste Prevention, Reuse and Recycling** - during 2016/17 we delivered over 30 talks and activities and over 35 classes on waste prevention and recycling across the County. We also engaged with over 5,300 residents at engagement events. We became a supporter of the Sustainable Clothing Action Plan which is a collaborative framework and voluntary commitment to deliver industry-led targets for reducing the use of resources in the clothing industry.

**Reducing Food Waste** – statistics show that one in five bags that leave a supermarket will be thrown away uneaten, which costs individual households more than £700 a year. In Leicestershire, alone, more than 120,000 tonnes of food is thrown out every year. In the past we have run food waste challenges and our 'Love Food, Hate Waste' volunteers offer free advice and cooking classes. In August 2017 it was announced that an award of £20,000 from Sainsbury's 'Waste less, Save more' campaign will help us tackle the amount of food waste across the county. We are launching three community kitchens as part of a scheme to get people thinking about what food they throw away at home. The kitchens will open in Earl Shilton, Barwell and Wykin. We are also encouraging volunteers to keep the community kitchens running after the initial 10 week course.

**Composting** - we continue to offer residents the chance to purchase cut-price compost bins in a bid to reduce the amount of organic waste sent to landfill. Each year Leicestershire residents throw away over 300,000 tonnes of rubbish into their bins. Over 22% of that is uncooked fruit, vegetables and garden waste that could have been composted rather than binned. Home composting is relatively easy and can help to improve the quality of soil in gardens whilst reducing the council's costs.



**Waste Treatment** – in 2016 we considered our commissioning options for the treatment/disposal of residual waste post 2020, and decided to enter into medium term (up to 2026-2031) merchanting arrangements to utilise available waste treatment and disposal capacity within the marketplace.

## **Natural Environment**

**Green Spaces** – we are committed to growing Leicestershire's green spaces through a sustained programme of hedge and tree planting. In July we announced that we were continuing to work with the Woodland Trust to support schemes to increase the county's trees and hedges. There are a number of council schemes available for landowners and farmers, across Blaby, Charnwood, and Hinckley and Bosworth, aimed at increasing tree and woodland cover along with hedgerows for improving habitat connectivity. The schemes include a Targeting Tree Disease pack, a MOREhedges pack and a MOREwoods pack. During 2016/17 1.9km of new hedgerow was planted along with 475 hedgerow trees.

**Rural Environment** – during 2016/17 a series of workshops was held designed to improve greenspaces and habitats. People wishing to hone their rural skills signed up for a wide range of courses. The sessions were supported by the Council in partnership with local district councils. Courses on offer included pond management, woodland management and hedge laying.

**Countryside Show** - following the success of last year's show the Countryside Show returned in August 2017. Beacon Hill Country Park hosted the show balancing the very best of countryside life and a food marketplace. More than 6,000 visitors entered the gates of the show in 2017.

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