

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 6TH DECEMBER 2017

POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

County Councils Network Annual Conference 2017

Marlow in Buckinghamshire was this year's location for the CCN's annual conference.

I chaired a plenary session in my capacity as the CCN's Spokesman on Finance. The panel including the Chief Executive of CIPFA, Rob Whiteman and the President of the Association of Local Authority Treasurers, who gave their thoughts on local government funding and its future sustainability.

I asked Byron Rhodes to update the CCN on progress of *The Leicestershire Funding Model* one year on. This was well received by CCN members who broadly accepted our model is workable, achievable and most importantly, deliverable. I am also grateful to Neil O'Brien MP for all his help and support working with Government ministers, Special Advisors, DCLG and Treasury officials.

Simon Galton CC and Jewel Miah CC were also in attendance and I'm grateful for their support during our plenary session on Finance.

Finally, Leicestershire walked away with a coveted title at this year's CCN Conference - that of CCN Quiz Champions of 2017!

Industrial Strategy

The publication of the Industrial Strategy last week marks a step change in the Government's approach to supporting economic growth. I welcome the overall objective to create an economy that boosts productivity and earning power throughout the UK, and the five foundations or pillars of the strategy which cover innovation, people, infrastructure, the business environment, and places.

Under my leadership the Council will continue to work closely with the Leicestershire and Leicester Economic Partnership (LLEP), Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect, local businesses, the City Mayor, districts, nearby counties and cities, Loughborough University, our FE colleges and others to support the growth of our local economy. As is set out in the Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium we already do a very substantial amount to support local economic growth, and our new Strategic Plan in front of you today has a strong economy as its first priority outcome. A strong economy is essential to the health and wellbeing of our residents and also provides the financial foundations for excellent public services, but we must be mindful of the need to strengthen the economy in ways which help strengthen our communities and protect key environmental assets.

One key proposal in the Industrial Strategy is the development of Local Industrial Strategies. I will press for the LLEP and local partners to move quickly to agree a Local industrial Strategy (LIS) which will set out how Leicester and Leicestershire can help deliver the national strategy, but also how we can take advantage of the funding and other opportunities the Industrial Strategy presents to us. We are in a strong position to do this as the LLEP has already drafted a Strategic Economic Plan which I believe provides a solid basis for the new LIS, and we have fantastic sites and initiatives to promote, including at our two Enterprise Zones. We are also making progress in developing a long term strategy for economic and housing growth, through the emerging Strategic Growth Plan.

I do believe, however, that the Government could do more to devolve powers to local areas which will strengthen our ability to deliver economic growth. I welcome the recent comments of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid, which indicated that the Government is developing a devolution framework which may open the way for non-mayoral combined authorities in areas like ours. When that is published it will be timely to revisit our combined authority submission, which has not progressed.

Children's Heart Unit

I was delighted that for once in their recent considerations of our area, NHS England have done the right thing and retained the invaluable service at Glenfield Hospital and the LRI. Our local NHS colleagues will still need to satisfy national standards but last week's announcement was what the splendid campaign to keep the service here deserved.

Preventing Suicide

Suicide is a devastating and tragic event which, though comparatively rare, affects a large number of people each time it occurs, sending ripples through families and communities.

Around three quarters of all suicides occur in men, but rates are rising in women. It remains the biggest killer of men under 50 and the leading cause of death in people aged 15–24. Roughly 60 people per year across Leicestershire die from suicide.

I have recently seen what organisations working together in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire have achieved with their STOP Suicide Campaign. By pledging their organisation to raise awareness of suicide in staff and customers, supporting them in recognising signs in themselves and others and encouraging them to seek support and be honest when discussing their feelings, they have put together a successful, highly visible programme.

Whilst recognising the good work that goes on locally through the Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT), Public Health and others, I think there is scope to follow the lead of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. I have asked the Director of Public Health to see what can be done to replicate the approach there and report back/develop it here.

Visit to Leicester by His Grace, the Archbishop of Canterbury

I was privileged to be invited to attend an audience with Dr Justin Welby on his recent visit to the Guildhall in Leicester.

In attendance were the Vice-Lord Lieutenant (Col. Murray Colville), Sir Peter Soulsby, the City Mayor, as well as civic dignitaries from across the County.

The service in Leicester Cathedral was very moving. It was great to see City and County coming together in this way demonstrating that there is more which unites us than divides us.

I would also like to repeat our congratulations to the Lord-Lieutenant, Lady Gretton, who was receiving her DCVO at Buckingham Palace on the day of the Cathedral service.

BBC Radio Leicester and new Leicester Mercury Editor

I would like to extend my congratulations to Jonathan Lampon, who has recently been appointed BBC Radio Leicester's News Editor.

I have invited him and his team to County Hall in the New Year for a business meeting to discuss County Council public relations and communications.

Likewise, I was very pleased to meet Mr George Oliver, the Editor of the Leicester Mercury, who has been in post for a few months now but diaries prevented us meeting.

I met Mr Oliver at County Hall with the Chief Executive to listen to his plans to make the Leicester Mercury a leading player in the digital age.

Digital and social media is revolutionising how people consume their news and the County Council, the BBC and local media are not immune and must respond to this changing environment. Having good working relationships where possible, can only be a good thing.

Carillion Radio/Hermitage FM

I have been very pleased to work closely with Councillor Terri Eynon on the expansion of community radio services for Coalville and surrounding communities. Carillion Wellbeing Radio plays an important role in supporting communities to improve their wellbeing and health so I'm very keen to work with Terri to maximise the impacts of this excellent communication channel. I have been able to visit the station myself and am impressed by what has been achieved by the volunteers and staff that work passionately both at the studios and the café. The recent award by OFCOM of an area-wide broadcasting licence to the station, one of only five community stations awarded such a licence in that round, was fantastic news. The Council's Communities Team has been helping Terri and the station to make connections with key partners, for example the CCGs, GPs and others in the health sector, and to access funding. The Communications Team will be providing advice on programming

in the near future. This is a good example of the Council's Communities Strategy in action and I hope it acts as inspiration for other communities across the county.