

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 26TH SEPTEMBER 2018

POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP)

The LLEP remains a highly regarded Local Enterprise Partnership and I'm sure this will continue following the excellent appointment of Kevin Harris as the new LLEP Chairman. I would like to thank Nick Pulley of Santander for his chairmanship over the last four years during which the LLEP has consolidated its reputation. Kevin is joined by three new Board members:- Chas Bishop, Chief Executive of The National Space Centre; Karen Smart, Managing Director of East Midlands Airport and Neil McGhee, Director of Sempervox, who will bring valuable business and sector experience to the LLEP Board. Last night's LLEP AGM showcased much of the LLEP's recent excellent work. The LLEP is also responding to the recently published LEP Review. Yesterday the LLEP Board agreed that it supported the retention of the existing LLEP geography and also agreed recommendations which will see the LLEP established as a company and move towards having a more diverse Board

The important role of the County Council in supporting economic growth was highlighted at the recent announcement of the Council's investment in a major office development at Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park. These offices will be occupied by Tech giant, the Access Group, and will see the creation of 500 new jobs and the generation of £1.6m per annum for the County Council to support front line services. The launch was attended by the Secretary of State for Communities the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP and Sir John Peace of the Midlands Engine, both of whom were impressed by the strong partnership in place between the Council and Loughborough University, and by the Council's innovative approach to supporting economic growth and future service delivery.

Local Industrial Strategy

The LLEP has been invited by the Government to prepare a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) as part of a second wave of LIS development. Leicester and Leicestershire is one of just nine LEP areas (out of 38) invited to develop a LIS and the only one in the East Midlands. This is excellent news for the area and I would like to congratulate the LLEP Chairman, Kevin Harris, and the LLEP team for this achievement. The County Council is already working with the LLEP to develop a strong and robust LIS which will help us set out our economic vision and identify the things we need to do to grow our economy further. This can only help in our attempts to secure key infrastructure funding from Government.

I would also like to thank Neil O'Brien MP for his support to the LLEP in securing the LIS second wave invitation, and to congratulate him on his appointment as the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Greg Clark.

Strategic Growth Plan

Many years of work have gone into preparing the excellent Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire which provides a long term strategic planning framework for future housing and economic growth, and associated infrastructure provision, looking forward to 2050. This is a pioneering and complex piece of work which will help the area build and support better communities in the future, and help us demonstrate to Government that infrastructure provision in this area will contribute to meeting Government aspirations for housing provision and economic growth. The proposed final Plan will be considered by each of the nine partner Councils, and the LLEP, this autumn and I very much hope it will be approved.

I'd like to thank Trevor Pendleton who has very ably chaired the Members Advisory Group (MAG), Byron Rhodes and Peter Osborne who have represented the Council on the MAG, and to Pat Willoughby, the jointly appointed Strategic Planning Manager who has done a very good job in developing the SGP in a sometimes challenging political context. Pat will be leaving her role at the end of this month for a new job in the West Midlands. I would like to thank her for her excellent contribution and wish her all the best for the future.

Fostering and Adoption

I would like to congratulate and thank the Council's Fostering and Adoption Service for their outstanding work over the last year.

There are increasing numbers of children who are having to come into care and in order to ensure that as many of them as possible can be placed within families the service has significantly increased its targets for recruiting foster carers and adopters. It is well on track to achieve these and since April 2018 it has recruited 16 foster carers more than in the whole of last year with a further 34 families going through the assessment process. There has also been a major increase in adoption recruitment and so far this year 13 families have been approved with a further 55 families being assessed. This is a particularly significant achievement at a time when others are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit families and is testament to the hard work of our staff. The fact that families can see the extremely attractive offer and support that the Council will be providing has even seen some transferring from other agencies.

By increasing these very important services we will be able to keep many more children inside the County and within families where they will receive top quality care and support and have the best chance of achieving their full potential.

Children and Families Partnership Plan

The Leicestershire Children and Families Partnership was officially launched, with the signing of a charter on Thursday, 20th September 2018. I am sorry that I was not able to be there to support Ivan Ould as Lead Member.

Representatives from local councils, the police, schools, NHS, the Probation Service, the voluntary sector and other agencies attended the event at County Hall.

The partnership has a vision, which is to ensure our young people are safe and living in families where they can achieve their full potential. I believe that if we all work together on shared priorities we believe that we can make the difference that is needed.

Loughborough University

I am pleased to report that Loughborough University, one of our closest partners, has been named the University of the Year by the Times and Sunday Times. It is the only University to have won this prestigious title twice.

Loughborough also received its highest ever ranking in the Guide, rising two places to fifth. It is a tremendous and well-deserved achievement by the Vice-Chancellor, staff and students, and I would suggest the Council sends our congratulations.

'Start A Conversation' – suicide prevention campaign

Finally, I was pleased to attend the 'Start A Conversation' campaign launched on World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September. This is an important initiative and Pam Posnett will say more about this in her position statement.

N. J. Rushton CC