

## **County Councillor Annual Report 2010/11**

This report summarises the activities of the following member of the County Council during 2010/11.

Name of Councillor            Blake Pain

### **Council Activities**

#### **Committees you serve on at County Hall**

##### **The committees that I have served on during the year 2010 to 2011 are:**

- The Scrutiny commission
- Chairman of the 'Big Society' review panel
- The Budget and Performance Monitoring Panel
- Leicestershire County Council

In addition to my full engagement of the above committees, I have been raising awareness at County Hall with regards to the implications of the Harborough District Councils Core Strategy work (a strategic planning document that will affect the future growth and infrastructure of the district) particularly, the highway and education impacts.

##### **The Scrutiny Commission.**

The scrutiny commission is a panel made up of Scrutiny commissioners and deputy commissioners plus chair people of the scrutiny bodies. The commission has the power to set up smaller 'light touch' panels to look into and investigate any area of activity, particularly where the council has an interest. Apart from performing a critical friend function with regards to county council activities and policies, its purpose can be felt much further: to provide the public with a transparent and effective means of investigating and monitoring policies and issues.

A full description of all the work that has passed through the commission in 2010-2011 can be found on the [LCC website with full agendas, reports and minutes.](#)

##### **The 'Big Society' review panel**

During 2010 Leicestershire County Council embarked on determining what the Government's 'Big Society' agenda meant for Leicestershire. A review panel was formed, chaired by myself, to bring together the known strands of information that was emerging from a variety of sources and thereby identify a framework for Leicestershire. The Government have made the point that the Big Society "should not be prescriptive" and therefore has the benefit to be tailored and evolve from locally determined values, priorities and aspirations.

Leicestershire County Council, like so many other councils across the country, has

had to adjust its own expenditure and budget requirements in line with the economic times we live in, however, unlike many other councils, Leicestershire has not used this adjustment as an excuse not to embrace the Big Society agenda. Whilst much big society activity and thinking already exists, Leicestershire County Council recognises the potential benefits in embracing a concept that has the potential to innovatively reshape how local services are delivered and decisions are made in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain.

The three over arching principles of the Big Society in Leicestershire seek to (i) Empower Communities (ii) open up public services and (iii) promote social and voluntary action.

To help achieve this, the County Council has made a cumulative provision of c. £1m split between the Big Society and Community Forum Budgets. The Big Society monies shall be available to communities so that they are able to scope out and identify the sustainability of a particular project whereas the 'Community Forum Budget' monies shall be apportioned by local communities in turning such projects into a reality.

### **The Budget and Performance Monitoring Panel**

The panel has continued for a second year having originally been established in 2009. The panel continues to play a significant role in collating the observations of the other standing scrutiny committees and zoning in on specific issues that have been raised or identified. Given the level of expenditure adjustments that have been identified at LCC, it plays a hugely important role in monitoring the economic climate that the council operates within whilst also monitoring the progress against targets and priorities that have been set externally and internally.

### **Local committees – Highway Forums and Community Forums etc**

The Market Harborough and Rural West Community Forum  
The Harborough Highways Forum

#### **Community Forums.**

Through the work of the Big Society Review Panel, it was understood that the community forums across Leicestershire had begun to establish themselves as an effective engagement tool for the County Council and other key service providers. However, there was a degree of frustration from members of the public that they were overly focused on the strategic priorities of the County Council and partners rather than localized issues that directly affected residents of a given area. It has been agreed that the forums need to adapt and improve in order to play an active and effective role in the future

To implement this recommendation a countywide Community Forum Task Group Panel has been developed to act as a sounding board and advise on

1. Updating Terms of Reference of Community Forums to ensure these reflect Big Society Aspirations and provide the basis for clear communication about the roles and 'powers' of Community Forums.
2. Reviewing Structure, organisation and agendas of Forum meetings to ensure they are driven by issues of importance to the local community and maximise the opportunities for local communities and their representatives to influence local issues and service delivery.
3. Exploring the use of social media in support of Forum engagement activity.

### **The Harborough Highways Forum**

The Forum is made up of elected Leicestershire County Council and Harborough District Council representatives. It is an opportunity to formally record matters of significance in relation to highway issues and also for elected members to be kept informed of forthcoming issues and previous issues that relate to all of us.

Congestion and flow of traffic remains a key issue in Market Harborough and its neighbouring villages. As part of the evidence base for the Harborough District Councils submission of its core strategy, I was extremely persistent in ensuring that an up to date traffic study was conducted (the first of its kind in the country and certainly, within the Harborough District). This has resulted in the Leicester and Leicestershire Traffic Modelling Study (LLTMS). The conclusions of this study are concerning most notably that the Harborough area is expected to see an increase in traffic of up to 30% over the next 15 years without any consideration to development at all within the same period. A number of mitigation messages have been proposed by the District Council (with the support of the County Council) in order to try and curb the major impacts arising hereon.

### **Other bodies – School governors/community and charity organisations etc**

The Carlton Hayes Memorial Trust  
The Foxton Locks Partnership  
The Robert Monk Trust

### **Electoral Division activities**

#### **Main Activities during the past year:**

- Representing my constituents
- Developing the Big Society polices for Leicestershire
- Addressing the strategic issues affecting Market Harborough and its surrounding area arising out of strategic policy development
- Positively engaging with all panels, committees, outside bodies and community organisations.

**Learning and development:**

Completion of the Next Generation fourth leadership program  
Various course/ seminars / briefing sessions that have been organized by  
Leicestershire County Council  
Completion of the Equalities program held at the Leicestershire County Council  
Shadowing the Lead Member for Resources.

**Signed by Councillor:**

**Date:**