

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 10 JULY 2019**POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER****LGA Conference**

It was good to see delegates from all parties of this Council attend the annual LGA Conference in Bournemouth between 2-4 July.

The annual gathering is an opportunity for elected members to network with their national colleagues, lobby government ministers and to meet local government professionals from other Councils in the Exhibition Centre, to share ideas of best practice.

This year's conference theme was #CouncilsCan – highlighting the unique role local government plays in shaping communities and making a positive impact for residents.

It also reinforces the message that Government needs local councils to deliver their policy agenda- and that they must be properly funded to do this work.

I have been re-elected as the County Councils Representative on the LGA Conservative Group Executive Board nationally and have good working relationships with the new LGA Chairman Cllr James Jamieson, Leader of Central Bedfordshire Council, and Cllr Izzi Seccombe, the new LGA Conservative Group Leader and Leader of Warwickshire County Council. These are important positions as they hold weekly meetings with the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government and his team.

Highlighting the importance of the LGA Conference, Boris Johnson MP and Jeremy Hunt MP, candidates to be the next Prime Minister, attended a hustings event organised by the LGA Conservative Group and gave their respective pitches to a packed audience, followed by a question and answer session.

Liberal Democrat leadership hopefuls Jo Swinson MP and Sir Ed Davey MP attended a similar hustings event for their members.

Very soon there will be a new Government and a new approach – hopefully Brexit will be sorted – and Local Government, not just in Leicestershire, must be ready to respond to the new policy agenda.

MTFS Consultation

Members should be aware that the Council has begun a major consultation exercise regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Since 2010 the Council has saved approximately £200million but rising demand and costs coupled with uncertainty over Government funding means we need to save another £75million over the next four years which will be extremely challenging.

Through the consultation we are seeking the views of the public, businesses and stakeholders on our future priorities. A questionnaire has been circulated to all residents and key events will be held over the summer involving residents' focus groups, parish councils, NHS bodies and other stakeholders. There is also an interactive online budget tool which people could use to try and balance the council's budget.

I would urge members to encourage as many people as possible to participate and make their views known so that we can have the best possible information to help shape our priorities and take the difficult decisions needed.

Regulatory Excellence Awards

I am delighted to report that our Trading Standards Team was commended at the recent Regulatory Excellence Awards hosted by the Office of Products and Safety for their work at East Midlands Airport.

As part of the National Ports and Borders Project a small enforcement team has been working with the UK Border Force preventing unsafe goods entering the marketplace and that team has achieved the highest 'hit rate' compared to other port teams in terms of identifying and intercepting unsafe and non-compliant products.

Update on the 'Start a Conversation' Suicide Prevention Campaign

The launch of the website was successful in mobilising interest and support to tackle the impact of suicide in Leicestershire.

There have been over 27,000 hits on the website, with the most popular page after the home page being the 'Advice and Support' page.

There have also been 126 pledges of support from individuals and organisations.

The programme has reached out and engaged with a number of different individuals and groups including:

- Universities;
- Primary Care: Working with six practices locally where patients had died as a result of suicide;
- Rural Community Council (RCC):
- Survivors of bereavement by suicide;
- Armed Forces/Military including Veterans.

We are also planning a suicide prevention conference at Leicester City Football Club to coincide with World Suicide Prevention Day, Tuesday 10th September 2019 and are in discussion with the football club to hold a suicide prevention awareness raising session to coincide with a forthcoming premier league.

Loughborough University

I was pleased to note that Loughborough was ranked fourth in the Guardian's University League Table for 2020 recently published, behind only Cambridge, St Andrews and Oxford. Loughborough University is ranked in the top 10 in each of the most recent national league tables; it is without doubt one of the country's leading Higher Education institutions and we are proud to celebrate its success, and work with the University as a trusted partner.

N. J. Rushton CC

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