

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 4TH DECEMBER 2019

POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Flooding.

During October and November, Leicestershire experienced prolonged rainfall across northern and western areas of the County. In October our highways team attended 246 callouts in relation to flooding. 59 roads were closed and sandbags delivered to 56 properties. In November there were 160 callouts, 27 road closures and 15 requests for sandbags.

The County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority continues to work with residents, parishes and the flood risk management authorities to investigate flooding, the priority being to investigate areas where properties have flooded. We are also working with the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Resilience Partnership ensuring adequate plans are in place to deal with sudden extreme weather events.

I would like to thank the County Council's highways and flood risk teams who have provided continued support to areas and residents affected by the recent flooding including round the clock activity on many occasions.

We will carry on engaging with members of the public to offer on-going advice and guidance and I would encourage members to have a look at the information on our [website](#) and the appendix to this position statement so they can point their local communities to the right place for advice or assistance in relation to flooding.

Green Council/Carbon Reduction Strategy

As members will be aware the Council has made a commitment to be carbon neutral in its own activities by 2030 and to work with others to achieve carbon neutrality for the county by 2050 in line with the Paris Agreement.

Work is taking place to turn these commitments into action.

- We are revising the Strategic Plan and the Strategic Outcomes to embed the climate emergency commitments at the heart of the work we do as a Council;
- We are updating the 2018 Environment Strategy and developing a detailed Action Plan setting out a roadmap of the actions needed to take the Council to carbon neutral by 2030 and this will be consulted upon early in the new year;
- We have switched to a green electricity tariff, so all our electricity is now coming from renewable sources;
- We have installed charging points at Council sites which are available for Council vehicles, staff and visitors to use. We will expand the network of EV chargers at Council sites to support the growth of Council and privately-owned electric vehicles;

- We will be progressing with the planning application to develop a 10-megawatt solar farm at Quorn which will produce enough electricity to supply around 2,500 homes

I was proud to support National Tree Week. Trees are an essential resource which provide a wide range of environmental, economic and social benefits. We are currently undertaking consultation on our updated Tree Management Strategy. We are a Green Council and are committed to the long-term conservation, sustainability and development of our precious tree stock for the people of the county, and future generations.

Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Bids

Leicestershire continues to grow and planning ahead to ensure communities have the right infrastructure to support new development in the county is essential.

The County Council has a strong track record of securing funding to deliver transport infrastructure to enable growth, supporting the delivery of its strategic outcomes to promote a strong economy and to ensure a supply of quality and affordable homes.

We previously secured £49.5m of Large Local Major funding from Department for Transport towards the northern and eastern sections of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road and have just been awarded a further £14.7m from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) towards the southern section of this road. This funding enables us to support the delivery of the Melton Local Plan with this latest award unlocking housing and employment development as part of the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood.

When the new government forms later this month, we will continue to lobby to secure vital funds to invest in homes, regeneration and infrastructure across Leicestershire.

Impower Index – Most Productive Council

I am delighted to report that for the third year running the County Council has been named the most productive council in the Impower Index.

The Impower Index measures the performance of 149 Councils 'against outcomes (per pound invested) through seven different lenses':- children's social care; children with high needs; older people; all age disability; health and social care interface; housing and homelessness and waste and recycling. Each council is scored for productivity through each lens and ranked accordingly.

We are the lowest funded Council in the country and this has meant we need to ensure we innovate to drive down costs so that we get the most out of each pound spent. This achievement is a credit to the hard work of all staff and their commitment to deliver good quality efficient services to the people of Leicestershire. If I may say so, it also recognises some tough decisions which we as members have had to take. As members we need to continue to play our part to press for fair funding so we can deliver much more.

CCN Conference

The annual County Councils Network conference was held in Guildford this year with a theme of “Unleashing the Power of Counties.”

It was good to see both Simon Galton and Betty Newton attending alongside other delegates from Leicestershire. Unfortunately, the general election campaign prevented any attendance from politicians from the main parties, but the conference continued its business nonetheless.

Central to this year’s theme was showcasing the role County Councils play in delivering infrastructure to support development, highlighting excellence in both children and adult social care, despite serious demand pressures, and arguing the CCN’s priorities for the new government: a fairer funding deal for local government, devolution and reform, and health and social care integration.

Andrew Neil, a BBC political commentator, was this year’s guest speaker and he was without doubt brilliant in his analysis of the state of British politics and the potential likely outcomes of the general election.

Remembrance Sunday

Chairman, you have referred to Armistice Day, but I would like to refer to Remembrance Sunday. It was marked on 10th November across Leicestershire with crowds gathering at services and parades both large and small, in our towns and villages.

Chairman, you joined the service and parade in Victoria Park, which sees the largest gathering of service personnel, veterans and members of the public. It has been traditional for the Chairman to lay a wreath at the memorial in Victoria Park because, whilst situated in the city, it is dedicated to all those who lost their lives in the Great War from across Leicester and Leicestershire.

I was honoured to attend the service and parade in my home town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and was able to lay a wreath on behalf of the County Council. I was expecting that the crowds might have subsided after last year’s centenary anniversary, but the public support was just as strong, which was very pleasing to see.

Having laid a wreath at Ashby, it struck me that there will be many other members attending local Remembrance services who do not have the opportunity of formally representing the County Council within the wreath laying party. And so, going forward, I would like to offer all Members a wreath which they can then lay at their local service. Those wreaths will be prepared so that they carry the County Council coat of arms and will be available on request. The Members’ Secretariat will contact all Members in advance of Remembrance Sunday next year, to take your orders.

Mr N. J. Rushton CC

The County Council's Role in Flooding and the Role of other Relevant Agencies

As the Lead Local Flood Authority, the County Council leads on co-ordinating flood risk across the county, creating and maintaining local flood risk management strategies and carrying out investigations when there is a flood. As highway authority we are responsible for highway drainage.

When internal property flooding occurs, as Lead Local Flood Authority we have a duty to investigate, with the other relevant parties, the cause of that flooding and identify which parties may have a responsibility to address any issues causing that flooding. As Lead Local Flood Authority we do not however have the duty or resources to address all instances of flooding in the county, our role is to encourage the appropriate party to take action.

The other relevant agencies or Flood Risk Management Authorities, are the Environment Agency who manage the risk of flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea, the water and sewerage companies such as Severn Trent who are responsible for managing the risks of flooding from water and foul or combined sewer systems and the district councils who will provide sandbags to offer protection against flood water and assist with the recovery phase including setting up emergency centres if required during a flooding event. The final party with a role in flood risk management are riparian owners. These are private landowners who are responsible for the watercourses in their land.

As the Lead Local Flood Authority we therefore have a role in co-ordinating these parties to address flooding, although we do not have powers to ensure another party takes action. Enabling better co-operation between these organisations means we are working to minimise the risk of flooding and repeat flooding in the county.