

County Councillor Annual Report

This report summarises the activities of the following member of the County Council during 2020/21

Name of Councillor – Deborah Taylor

1) Electoral Division activities

Main Activities and the impact during the past year:

Below are some examples of the projects I have been working on this year.

Covid-19

During the past year I have been supporting my residents throughout the pandemic. This has included getting help and support for vulnerable residents, including the essentials of shopping and medicine. I have been signposting residents and business owners to other support networks, helping residents and businesses to claim grants and government support. I have also used my social media/written reports on a regular basis to share the government guidance/information. This has also continued with encouraging residents to take up the vaccination when called.

Previously, I had set up a WhatsApp group for the local businesses in one of my villages. This has connected all the businesses together and we have addressed a serious shoplifting problem, by sharing information in real time. This group has also proved invaluable during the pandemic, to enable the businesses to support each other and for me to share information to them all very quickly.

I also supported another of my villages to start a WhatsApp group a couple of years ago, as they were suffering from burglaries in their area. This helped residents to share suspicious activity quickly and helped to reduce incidents. This group has again, helped residents support each other during the pandemic and I am able to share information with the group quickly.

Many scams have been in circulation during this difficult time. I have used my social media platforms and written reports to try and raise awareness for residents of the scams that are happening in their local area.

These included information on:

- *Doorstep crime*
- *Online scams*
- *Refund scams*
- *Counterfeit goods*
- *Telephone scams*

➤ *Loan sharks.*

Impact – Residents and businesses were aware of who to turn to for support and signposting.

Free School Meals (FSM)

I worked with the Council, who pledged £500,000 to support FSM until the end of this financial year, to ensure we could provide for vulnerable families during the pandemic. This money supported over 12,000 children to ensure that they did not go hungry over the school holidays. Following this decision, the Government announced a £170 million Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme. This included:

- £170m Covid Winter Grant Scheme to support children, families and the most vulnerable over winter
- Holiday Activities and Food programme to be expanded, covering Easter, Summer and Christmas in 2021
- Healthy Start payments set to rise from £3.10 to £4.25 a week from April 2021.

The council's share of this fund is approx. £1.5 million and will be used to support our most vulnerable children and families over the winter. The funding will be ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to support with food and bills.

Impact – children and families were supported during the winter to ensure they were able to keep warm and be well fed.

Nationwide Building Society

I was informed in late December 2020 that the Nationwide Building Society Branch in Anstey was going to be closed in February 2021. This is our last financial service provider in the village and the surrounding villages within my division. I immediately asked for a virtual meeting with the Regional Director to understand the reasoning for this closure. We had several email exchanges and we finally managed to push the closure back to 31st March 2021. This enabled residents to remain local during the national lockdowns to deal with their financial affairs. With the support of my fellow councillors, we started an online campaign to try and stop the closure. We gained over 650 signatures and submitted this formally to the Nationwide Building Society. There was a real community spirit during the campaign, and we brought the community together over a difficult issue.

Impact – Supported residents to get advice over the closure, brought the community together and fought against a decision by a national banking organisation.

Parking Issues in Newtown Linford

Over the Easter weekend in 2019, mobile cameras were in place around Newtown Linford. The data collection, undertaken in various locations, was carried out to help inform the Bradgate Park Trust Parking Review. I am also a Trustee for Bradgate Park Trust. The data collected also helped inform Newtown Linford Parish Council when they considered the village parking issues.

The data showed that many visitors stay for 1-3 hours per visit and many cars drive in and out of the Bradgate Park car parks within 15 minutes, even when the car parks are not busy. On street parking was also part of the survey. A further report was produced in September 2019 to fully understand the parking habits of people visiting Bradgate Park and the effect that this has had on Newtown Linford residents.

Some improvements have been realised by the elongated H's put down in Grey Crescent which residents have reported to me, has made some improvements in parking nuisances. In December 2020 a full public consultation was launched to seek residents' views on further restrictions on on-street parking. This covered areas within Newtown Linford, Anstey and Cropston. 300 responses were received, which included over 900 comments.

All the comments have been worked through and with some slight changes the on-street parking restrictions are now implemented. I have also worked with the partners to ensure that the funding was in place for these further restrictions.

Impact – This issue has been causing problems for residents for many years before I became the local member for this area. With great partnership working, we now have additional parking restrictions around Bradgate Park and within the villages of Newtown Linford and Anstey. This will not only stop all the dangerous and obstructive parking within the village but enable pedestrians to walk safely to Bradgate Park and around Newtown Linford.

[Neighbourhood Link](#)

I have been promoting the Police's Neighbourhood Link to all my residents via all my media channels and website. Neighbourhood Link is a community messaging service from Leicestershire Police that provides news and information about policing activity or initiatives, crime prevention advice as well as major incidents affecting their area.

Through this service you can receive messages from your local Neighbourhood Policing Team, local police or, in the event of a major incident or event affecting the whole of Leicestershire, from a partnership of agencies known as the Local Resilience Forum (LRF).

Impact – By promoting this service, it not only helps residents understand the issues within their area, but it promotes awareness of scams and crime related information. This in turn helps to prevent crime in the area and also helps to share information that can identify suspects.

[Ofsted Report](#)

Leicestershire County Council (LCC) underwent an Ofsted Inspection in September/October 2019. The report stated that LCC has made improvements in many areas of its children's social care services. As Cabinet Support Member for this service for two years, and Lead Member from July 2020, I have personally seen the improvements that have been made. In the most recent report, the regulator set out where considerable progress has been made by the authority since 2017 and outlined what improvements are still needed in some areas. I am now supporting the department to take forward the actions identified to address the issues, which includes more consistent oversight of care plans and tackling the timeliness of assessments for children, who are not identified as being in immediate risk of significant harm.

Impact – Working through the actions required, enables the department to focus on their service

areas and this in turn makes improvements to the service provided to our children and families.

The Local Area Send Inspection

Early in February 2020 the department underwent a Send Inspection on our Local Offer. I was involved in the feedback meeting and I am supporting the department and health colleagues to ensure that action is taken to address the two main concerns identified. The Local Area SEND inspection highlighted two areas of significant weakness to be addressed in the Written Statement of Action (WSOA). The WSOA sets out what actions are to be taken and the evidence to demonstrate progress and impact made on the two identified areas:

- To develop a Joint Commissioning Strategy
- To improve the quality and decision-making for Education Health and Care plans.

Impact – working through the actions required, enables the department to focus on their service areas and this in turn makes improvements to the service provided to our children and families.

As Cabinet Support Member for Children and Families Department (Lead Member from July 2020) I have been involved with many aspects of the department. I have also supported the Lead Member (when Cabinet Support Member) and substituted where needed. I have listed some examples below.

- East Midlands Lead Member Meetings – attended regional meetings with colleagues
- Panel for Social Care Awards – sat on the panel to select the winners
- KIT – attended many ‘Keeping in Touch’ meetings within various sections of the department. This enables me to meet the staff and find out what is working well and what areas need further work
- Adoption Panel –observed an Adoption Panel to understand further the work they are doing and to identify any issues
- Corporate Parenting Board – co-chaired with a young person on occasions and attended meetings
- Senior Management Group – attended meetings with senior leadership team
- Star Chamber – attended meetings to look at the forward finances for the department
- Schools’ Forum – attended this meeting to support our schools
- Children’s Innovation Partnership Board Meetings – attended meetings with our partners Barnardo’s and took part in the year one evaluation process
- DfE meetings at LCC – attended various meetings during the year with Department of Education representatives
- Senior Co-ordination Group – attended many meetings during the year when items relating to the Children and Families Department were discussed
- Children’s and Families Partnership meetings – attended all meetings
- Defining Children Services for the Future – attended meetings to have oversight of the

work.

Community Leadership Role

I have dealt with many issues raised by residents that have affected them personally and affected the wider community. I take on challenges daily and try to be fair with all parties concerned. I am not always able to find the perfect answers, but I always work to achieve a satisfactory compromise for all parties. I have highlighted some of the large projects below that I have been working on over the past year.

Bus Stop, Anstey

I have reported to many residents in the past about the relocation of the bus stop on Leicester Road, Anstey. The S106 money has been transferred to Anstey Parish Council from the developers and the Parish Council agreed to ask Leicestershire County Council to go ahead with the public consultation to establish if the relocation of the bus stop to Staddon Road is supported by residents. The public consultations have been completed and the relocation has been agreed to go ahead. Due to Covid-19 the implementation has been delayed but is on the program of works. I am hopeful that this work will be completed during 2021.

Impact – Help to reduce the traffic congestion in and around The Nook.

Highway Safety Issues, Anstey

I have been working with the Police Commander for Charnwood to address some highway safety issues. We needed to stop some dangerous parking in front of shops, as vehicles were reversing directly onto a pedestrian crossing. After working with the Parish Council, they agreed to fund the measures, a consultation was undertaken, and the bollards have now been installed. One car was small enough to squeeze through a gap in the bollards but after sending a letter of advice, this has now ceased.

Impact - We now have a safe pedestrian crossing with no vehicles reversing onto the crossing.

I have been working with Leicestershire Highways Department, Anstey Parish Council, Police and Nomads Football Club to address parking issues on Cropston Road. We have now reached an agreement on the best way forward. We are now waiting for Anstey Parish Council and Nomads Football Club to implement the plan.

Impact – Reduce parked cars blocking the highway and pavements. Improve pedestrian safety.

Flooding

Following the severe flooding experienced by many residents in my Division in 2020, I have worked with partners to address these issues.

The discussion with the experts explained to me what work could be done in the area and provided me with further information for residents on how to protect their properties from further

floods.

The flooding that was experienced in my division was because the ground was saturated prior to the severe rain we experienced, and surface water run-off had nowhere to go but into the village and properties.

The advice they were able to give and which I passed onto the Parish Council and residents, was to ensure that all the drains and culverts were running clear (this work has been completed) and that residents look at property protection. I had followed this up several times since the floods to support residents and ensure any work needed is carried out by riparian owners.

There have also been site meetings held with residents, landowners, Council Officers to further understand the reasons for so many homes being flooded. Further work has been agreed going forward for some additional work to be carried out later in 2021.

Impact – Supporting residents and reducing the flood risks to homes.

Engagement with the Council, other statutory bodies and public utility companies (Water, Gas etc) about services in the area

- Contact with various departments and officers at LCC for assistance with my case work. This has been via email, telephone calls and virtual meetings. I also deal with various departments at Charnwood Borough Council and Parish Councils within my Division for case work. I also work with fellow councillors to solve issues
- Attended various information and catch up meetings with officers from the Children and Families Service to gain information and advice and to move projects forward
- Dealt with developers regarding maintaining their estates whilst awaiting handovers to the relevant councils. This included rubbish, ground maintenance, vandalism and dog bins not being emptied
- Part of the Interview panel for new Academies to open new Special schools
- Contact with various utility companies to deal with local issues
- Contact with schools and businesses in my division
- Contact with the Charnwood Police to deal with issues and prevent crime, deal with highway issues and ASB
- BBC Radio Leicester interviews
- BBC Politics Show interview.

Priorities for the immediate future are:

- Implement of the new bus stop in Anstey
- Continued support for residents and businesses due to Covid-19
- Supporting the Council as we move into the recovery phase from Covid-19
- Supporting local communities as they come out of lockdown
- Rural Crime, anti-social behaviour, and the future of neighbourhood policing
- Supporting all the Parish Councils and Parish Meetings within my Division
- Have Community Speed Watch Schemes in all my villages.

2) Council Activities

Committees you serve on at County Hall

County Council: I have attended all meetings of the County Council during the year and I have spoken on several issues.

Cabinet – Lead Member for Children and Families, Community Safety: I attend a variety of meetings with partners and officers at LCC within my role. I attend a weekly Lead member meeting with the Children and Families Director, Assistant Directors, and support cabinet Lead Member. Other Heads of Service also attend some of these meetings to provide updates. I attend a two – weekly Cabinet briefing and the weekly Senior Co-ordination Group (SCG) – when items relating to the Children and Families Department were discussed.

As part of my Lead Member role I attend:

Children Innovation Partnership Board (CIP) meeting; attended meetings with our partners Barnardo's. We have now progressed the partnership to form the ART Team.

Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership; Also work along side Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board. We also work together with both of the above and Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Adults Partnership and Leicester Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board.

Police and Crime Panel (PCC); I am the representative on the PCC for the council, as lead for community safety.

F40; A group who campaign for fairer funding for LA's and schools.

Prevent Executive; I am the representative on the Prevent Executive for the council. This is to ensure the council meets their prevent duty.

Senior Management Group (SMG); A meeting of the senior leadership in the Children and

Families Department. High level issues are shared and discussed.

Star Chamber: High level budget meeting, I attend as lead member for Children and Families.

East Midlands Council Lead Members; I attend the regional meeting of lead member for children and families. Discussions are held to discuss regional issues affecting all the LA's.

LEEP; Leicestershire Education Excellence Partnership; Partnership for ongoing education excellence.

School Forum; A termly meeting with partners from the education sector to discuss budgets and improvements needed.

Head Teachers catch ups; A regular catch up with head teachers, once a term. During the Covid - 19 pandemic, we had weekly calls with the head teachers to support them while they were open during the lockdown and restrictions.

Send and Inclusion Board.

Health and Wellbeing Board.

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Children in Care Council.

Supporting Young People After Care (SYPAC).

Defining Children Services for the Future.

[As Lead Member I Chair:](#)

Social Care Panel.

Children and Families Partnership.

Virtual School Strategy Meeting.

Leicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board (LSCSB).

Corporate Parenting Board (Co-Chair with a young person).

Local committees/Outside Bodies

- Bradgate Park and Swithland Woods Committee of Management
- Bradgate Quarries Liaison Committee
- Groby Quarry Liaison Committee.

Other bodies – School governors/community and charity organisations etc

Group Secretary for the Conservative Group at Leicestershire County Council

3) Learning and Development

- Mental Health Workshop
- Trauma Informed Training
- Various online courses and briefings
- Various updates and briefings around Covid-19 and vaccinations.

4) Other Matters:

This year has been a very tough year for us all, but local authorities, staff and councillors have been at the fore front of supporting residents at a very local level. I volunteered as a driver during the summer 2020 to deliver prescriptions to residents who were isolating or unable to get out. I registered by the GoodSam App and Glenfield pharmacy contacted me for support. I then became a regular driver for them and made deliveries as often as I could.

I took over as Lead Member for Children and Families and Community Safety on 8th July 2020. I was following in the footsteps of a Lead Member that had held the role for over 20 years. I also took over during the middle of the pandemic and whilst working from home. I didn't meet physically with my Director until March 2021, some eight months after starting this role. I have worked extremely hard in trying to have contact with my department, the senior leadership team and most importantly, the staff working in the department.

Ensuring the wellbeing of staff and the safeguarding of children has been my main priorities since taking on the role. I have already made changes and I am working on ensuring that the excellent work of the department is shared with the whole council and trying to reach wider into our communities that we serve. I have spent the last few months, ensuring the day job is done to the best of my ability whilst also devoting time to my campaign to be re-elected as the County Councillor for Bradgate Division.

I volunteered for a new Covid-19 Vaccine Trial. The trial is sponsored by the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson and run by staff through the new National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Patient Recruitment Centre (PRC) at Leicester General Hospital.

Up to 400 people were asked to enrol in Leicester as part of 6,000 people across the UK. The Phase 3 vaccine trial is the third potential vaccine to enter clinical trials in the UK. This trial is

testing the safety and effectiveness of a two-dose regimen of a new COVID-19 vaccine.

I attended my first appointment on Tuesday 8th December 2020 and was at the trial centre for 4 hours. I received multiple health checks and screening before being accepted, I then received the first injection. I have several health monitoring checks to complete every week online and the results are sent into the study doctor and I will have several clinical check appointments to attend. I received my second injection on February 5th 2021, and I remain part of the study trial for up to two years. I have now been unblinded on the trial so I could receive the national vaccine, as I was called. I had received the placebo injection, but I will continue to be part of this trial to ensure the full results for the clinical trial are achieved.

Communications

I write and publish a monthly report in 'Your Local' magazine that is delivered to all villages within my division: <https://issuu.com/norwoodpress> I usually attend various coffee mornings and events within my division on a regular basis but due to the pandemic, these events have been put on hold for the past year.

I have attended my parish council meetings via the virtual networks and kept in touch by email and telephone calls with the Clerks.

I have held virtual video calls with residents that needed to speak to me in person to discuss issues.

I have been available on the telephone to discuss issues with residents, where a more in-depth conversation is required to fully understand their issue.

During the pandemic I have been very active through all my social media platforms. I have shared important information and guidance for residents. This has also included promoting the uptake of the vaccine.

I have also produced a website (link below). This also includes my fellow borough councillors who are within my Bradgate Division. I am promoting the website through my social media, by regular newsletters sent to subscribers and in my monthly articles in 'Your Local' magazine. This is to ensure I am as visible as I can be for residents and they can obtain the up to date information that they need.

Social Media

Twitter: [@CllrDTaylor](https://twitter.com/CllrDTaylor)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CllrDTaylor

Instagram: [cllr_deborah_taylor](https://www.instagram.com/cllr_deborah_taylor)

Website: www.bradgateconservatives.org.uk

Signed by Councillor: D.Taylor
Date: 28/06/2021

