



This report summarises the activities of Craig Smith as a member of the County Council during 2023/24
New Role at County Hall

This past year has undoubtedly been a year of change. I began the year as the Deputy Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a position I have held since my election in 2021. In July 2023, I was promoted to Cabinet Support Member for the department, the largest at County Hall. This new role has introduced a range of new responsibilities and afforded me the opportunity to be one of the decision-makers. Additionally, I have been assigned the Cabinet Support role for Regulatory Services, which includes Trading Standards.



Launch of the Leicestershire Family Hubs

Leicestershire County Council secured £1 million in government funding to establish new 'Family Hubs' throughout the county. These hubs will serve as comprehensive support centers where parents and caregivers can access a wide range of family services and advice. The Family Hubs include both physical locations and virtual platforms, providing convenient access to resources on social care, education, debt management, and mental and physical health. As one of twelve local authorities receiving part of a £12 million grant, Leicestershire aims to revolutionize service delivery for families with children aged 0–19, or up to 25 for those with special educational needs or disabilities.

These hubs will be housed in existing facilities such as libraries and children and family wellbeing centers. Staff at these locations will be specially trained to offer support and direct families to appropriate services. Additionally, outreach efforts and a comprehensive website will ensure that families can access information and guidance when they need it, with plans to introduce virtual support options like video calling.



Traffic Safety

During my three-year tenure as County Councillor, I have endeavoured to be highly visible and accessible to all residents of Coalville North. I maintain an active and engaging Facebook presence, where I frequently update the community on my activities and initiatives. I am committed to responding to inquiries within 48 hours, often much sooner. I rarely switch off because I am genuinely passionate about helping people, and I hope this dedication is evident to the residents I serve.

I am very pleased to inform you that the school streets trial has been trailed and approved at schools throughout Coalville. This incredibly useful initiative sees roads directly adjacent to schools being temporarily closed for 30 minutes around school opening and closing times. This ensures our children are safe and away from the dangers of traffic.

I was very pleased that I was able to recommend Belvoirdale Primary School as the trial for the successful pilot.



I have worked with Leicestershire Police and Leicestershire Fire & Rescue service to ensure the concerns of speeding and drink/drug driving in our community is heard.

I have been able to secure funding for speed reduction initiatives and attend enforcement and education days.

Working closely with NWL Police I have built up a fantastic working relationship with the senior officers which enables me direct access to report any concerns. I have been able to flag up several speeding hotspots where officers have then been able to go and intervene.

One of my bug bears is inconsiderate parking, I am inundated each week with images of vehicles blocking footpaths or even double parking and blocking access to roads entirely, blocking access to emergency vehicles.

I appreciate that people need to park their cars, and the fact that much of our town centres housing was built before cars existed adds to the problem.

I have been working with both Highways and the Police to figure out a solution. Double yellows is not always possible, so alternative measures need to be found.



Electoral Division Activities



I don't think it would be proper unless I gave a section of this report dedicated to **Highfield Street**, Over 70% of all my casework in the entire division relates to this particular street, more specifically the two developments and the associated road works, it's caused absolute carnage it has brought misery to residents lives.

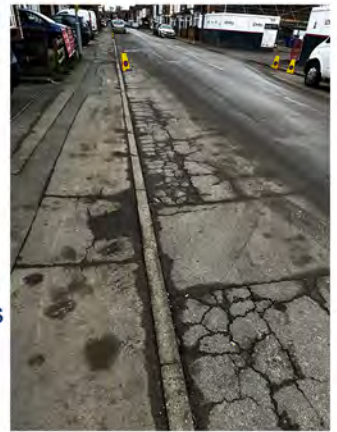
I have been inundated with complaints, literally 100s. The total lack of consideration for residents by the developer has been abhorrent.

I have conducted countless site visits and had assurances each time that they would address the issues raised.

In fairness most have now been resolved however it should never have been allowed in the first place. The state of the road and the effect that large HGVs are having on residents is not acceptable.

I have worked closely with NWLDC enforcement and planning control, I am pleased to say that they have taken action. and the developers are meeting planning conditions or they will face enforcement action.

I have literally "gone to war" for my residents on this one!



As you may know, I am out and about within the Coalville North Division most days, as I live and work here. I am always on the look out for road defects such as pot holes and road defects. I continually report them and have a great relationship with my assigned Highways inspector, who often calls me to keep me updated.

It's not just wear and tear I come across, sadly there's also a lot of wilful damage. Some people will go to extraordinary lengths, here's a fence around the Bardon estate that has been angle grind to allow access for off road motorbikes. Despite the best efforts of myself and the authorities these people keep finding new ways to get in and cause damage to property.



As a life long member of this community I have always been active, supporting local organisations and their events. This year I have been fortunate to supercharge this with the political roles that I have taken on.

This has given me the opportunity to not only get involved in events and community groups in Coalville but across North West Leicestershire as a whole.





As part of my role as a County Councillor I often meet with other authorities and agencies, as well as private companies during the execution of my duties.

I try to attend as many parish council meetings as I can along with being a regular visitor at North West Leicestershire District Council.

I sit as the chairman of the Bardon Aggregate liaison committee, where cross party we get to scrutinise the companies environmental reports.

I also try to get out to visit as many local companies and community groups as possible. There are many, but two that stick out as local champions are “The Leg Up Project” and of course “The Marlene Reid Centre”, both of which I try to sport and get involved in as much as possible.

I wil always go that extra mile for our community champions.



With my new role as Cabinet support member for the Children and Families department (the largest department at County Hall). I was required to stand down from all committees within the Council.

As Cabinet it is only proper that you should not scrutinise your own work.

The new role which also includes regulatory services has seen me take on far more responsibility and make decisions County wide.

It's been a very busy year, as you can see from the photos, from going to conferences around the county to opening dozens of Family Hub's throughout Leicestershire.



I have a simple policy that I will get back to anyone who contacts me within 48 hours. Be that email or by phone. In addition I deliver regular leaflets across the Division several times per year. I believe it is essential that elected representatives are accessible.

I am very active on Social Media, particularly Facebook as I find this is the best way to communicate with residents. I also have Twitter, (Not a fan) Linked In and more recently instagram. I can be contacted on any of these platforms.

Each month I produce a monthly report which I forward to Parish Councils along with publishing it on Social Media and my Website.



The year started off relatively slowly, however it did not stay that way for long. In addition to my own Leicestershire County Council duties, I also substituted for colleagues at Highways and Transport as well as the Combined Fire Authority.

Locally, I have been heavily involved in the Coalville Town Football Club's planning application for their 3G pitch upgrade, assisting them with LCC Highways. I have also attended the Armed Forces Breakfast Club and the Royal British Legion committee meeting, speaking with local veterans and assisting them wherever possible.

I have undertaken 2 litter picks within the Division and met with representatives of the Stribston Heritage Trust to discuss ways of improving communications with LCC. I have also met with NWLDC colleagues with whom I am working with to improve the Mantle Lane Bridge area.

Socially I have attended 2 Burns nights, the first in support of "Living Without Abuse" a local charity who provide help and support for ANYONE suffering from domestic abuse or sexual violence in Leicestershire. The second was in support of the Whitwick branch of the Royal British Legion.

I have had meetings with John Merison of the friends of Stribston, Shane Toon of Pulse Signs and graphics, trying to help with vehicle crime happening around our industrial estates. I have also had meetings with Cllr Geary in relation to CTF, Shaun Culpin discussing inclusive sport for all and Vicky Utting, our LCC Local Area Coordinator, who has an uncanny ability to extract money from me in support of her various fantastic local initiatives.

Finally, I was invited by NWL Police to attend the youth speed awareness day at Stephenson College, this is the second year running this event has been staged and yet again it was a resounding success, engaging with young drivers. It really does hammer the message home when young people see first hand the carnage that a road traffic accident can cause. LLR Fire & Rescue service have a fantastic simulator called "The Hazard Express", having attended the launch of this state of the art bit of kit, I can tell you first hand just how effective it can be at making you rethink your driving practices. There were also demonstrations of LLRFRS cutting off vehicle roofs and extracting casualties.

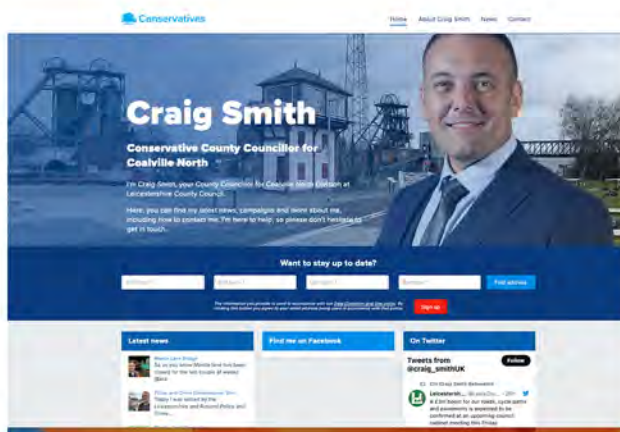
Cllr Merrie and I (LCC members for Coalville North & South) will be hosting a Division Surgery on Saturday 11th March, 10:00am – 1:00pm. To book an appointment please email either councillor using our LCC emails.

The police were asked to monitor a number of locations were identified as having a high amount of speeding cars. As promised, this request was passed this to the Road Safety Unit who deployed their monitoring equipment with the following results.

Grange Road – 56% of vehicles exceed the national threshold – The Road Safety Unit will assess the location and deploy a mobile speed camera over the next couple of months.

Central Road – Survey of the location showed that there is no requirement for further action by the road safety team.

If you need my help, please get in touch



**FINALLY: I have commissioned a Website so that residents can better get in touch
www.craig-smith.uk**