

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD AT COUNTY HALL, GLENFIELD ON WEDNESDAY, 6 JULY 2011**

PRESENT

Mrs. J. A. Dickinson CC (in the Chair)

Mr. A. D. Bailey CC, Mr. D. C. Bill CC, Mr. R. Blunt CC, Mr. G. A. Boulter CC,
Mr. S. L. Bray CC, Mrs. R. Camamile CC, Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC,
Mr. J. G. Coxon CC, Dr. R. K. A Feltham CC, Mr. R. Fraser CC, Mr. S. J. Galton CC,
Mr. D. A. Gamble CC, Mr. B. Garner CC, Mr. T. Gillard CC, Mr. M. Griffiths CC,
Mr. P. S. Harley CC, Mr. G. A. Hart CC, Dr. S. Hill CC,
Mr. D. W. Houseman MBE, CC, Mr. Max Hunt CC, Mr. D. Jennings CC,
Mr. G. Jones CC, Mr. A. M. Kershaw CC, Mr. P. G. Lewis CC, Mrs. H. E. Loydall CC,
Mr. J. Miah CC, Ms. Betty Newton CC, Mr. J. T. Orson JP CC, Mr. P. C. Osborne CC,
Mr. I. D. Ould CC, Mr. M. B. Page CC, Mrs. R. Page CC, Mr. B. L. Pain CC,
Mr. D. R. Parsons CBE CC, Mr. G. Partner CC, Mrs. L. A. S. Pendleton CC,
Mrs. P. Posnett CC, Mrs. C. M. Radford CC, Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC,
Mrs. J. Richards CC, Mr. P. A. Roffey CC, Mr. N. J. Rushton CC,
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC, Mr. D. Slater CC, Mr. E. D. Snartt CC, Mr. D. A. Sprason CC,
Mr. E. F. White CC, Mr. R. M. Wilson CC, Mr. D. O. Wright CC and
Mr. M. B. Wyatt CC

108. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Major RoSPA Health and Safety Award

The Chairman reported that the County Council's Adults and Communities Department had won the President's Award from the Royal British Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA's) health and safety contest, for 10 years of achieving Gold Awards. This was a prestigious national award meaning that the Council joined the ranks of Rolls Royce, Shell and Coca Cola, as organisations to have won this particular award.

The Chairman indicated that she was delighted that the Council had been so successful. Members joined her in congratulating the Team who had worked hard for many years to achieve this remarkable success.

Visitors

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting all visitors and guests of members.

109. MINUTES.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice-Chairman and carried:-

“That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 18 May 2011, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed.”

110. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to make declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No such declarations were made.

111. QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 7(1)(2) AND (5).

(A) MR BILL CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

- "1. What is the future of the dementia day care centre in The Limes, Hinckley?
2. In view of the recent problems experienced by Southern Cross, what lessons are there to be learnt in relation to the present sale of elderly persons' homes?
3. Can the Leader please outline the current position with regard to the transfer of the 9 elderly persons' homes to the private sector?"

Mr Sprason replied as follows:-

- "1. The day centre at The Limes is not specifically for dementia. Due to the demand for day services for older people in this area, the Council are currently negotiating terms with Southend Care Ltd for the Council to continue to provide the day centre from its existing location at The Limes for a period of up to 12 months, whilst the Council pursues options to relocate the service to other premises in the local area.

In relation to dementia, respite beds are provided at the Limes and the Council has recently agreed with Southend Care Ltd to block purchase the 8 beds in the dementia respite unit for a period of 12 months whilst the Council undertakes a full review of demand and usage of this service.

2. The financial strength of the successful organisation is of paramount importance. The tender process to transfer nine Council Elderly Persons Homes has followed a full and comprehensive procurement process that included a thorough financial evaluation of Southend Care Ltd. These tests included the strength of the balance sheet and the trading performance, both of which were sufficiently robust to satisfy the Council that any risks involved were manageable.
3. The Council is currently agreeing final terms and conditions with Southend Care Ltd with the transfer of the Elderly Persons Homes due to be completed in the autumn of 2011."

Mr Bill asked the following supplementary question on the reply to question 1:-

"Could I ask whether Mr Sprason can give a commitment that there will continue to be facilities for those suffering from dementia in Hinckley, or indeed, southern Leicestershire, at the end of the 12 months and will he undertake to keep local members and the community informed of progress on this matter?"

Mr Sprason replied as follows:-

"As my answer states, dementia respite beds will be commissioned from The Limes. The Day Centre will follow the modernisation of the rest of our day centres as Mr Bill will know. A first is Loughborough Library, where we are delivering all services. That includes a day centre. We would look for innovative projects in Hinckley as well and would welcome the support of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council in us finding a sensible solution within the Town Centre."

Mr Bill asked the following supplementary question on the reply to question 2:-

"How does Mr Sprason respond to the various claims from Tony Donovan and Peter Van-Herrewege that Southend Care could well go the same way as Southern Cross?"

Mr Sprason replied as follows:-

"Well, of course, they were both bidders for our homes that were unsuccessful."

Mr Bill asked the following supplementary question on the reply to questions 3:-

"I have a number of questions here which I would not expect an answer to today but if I could have an answer at some point I would appreciate it. This refers to the 9 homes. I wish to know:-

The date of the transfer?

The exact terms on which the transfer is taking place?

The length of time before any of the homes can be closed?

How much is being paid in each case?

How much is to be invested in each case?

The discrepancy in the income expenditure?"

Mr Sprason replied as follows:-

"Can I just refer Mr Bill to both the Cabinet report and the Scrutiny report to a meeting which he attended. That would answer all of those questions."

(B) MR GALTON CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

- "1. Will the Leader join me in welcoming the recent announcement by the Health Minister, Paul Burstow MP, regarding the Government's intention to give legal protection to adults in care homes?
2. Does he agree that this will enable the County Council and its partners to build on the work done by the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board to ensure that the rights of vulnerable adults with care needs are strengthened?"

Mr Sprason replied as follows:-

- "1. I believe that this is a reference to the Minister's response to the Gloucestershire abuse scandal and the financial difficulties faced by Southern Cross. I do welcome this announcement to improve legal protection to adults in care homes, although the Minister has not made clear how he proposes to achieve this as yet.
2. In Leicestershire and Rutland, we have a good foundation with an established Safeguarding Adults Board. It is vital that social care services, NHS organisations, including the new Clinical Commissioning Groups, Police, care providers and the Care Quality Commission work together to co-ordinate a robust approach to protecting vulnerable people. Whilst each individual organisation is accountable for undertaking their responsibilities, together as a Safeguarding Adults Board, we can achieve a greater impact by co-ordinating our actions and ensuring that safeguarding is everybody's business, including Elected Members.

We can also demonstrate strategic leadership to keep vulnerable people safe through our community safety partnership work. We have a zero tolerance approach to abuse in all its forms."

(C) DR HILL CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

"Will the Leader give assurances to the residents of Leicestershire that the Cabinet's recent decision to transfer 9 elderly persons' homes to the private sector will not allow Southend Care Ltd to operate the discredited 'lease back model' used by Southern Cross?"

Mr Sprason replied as follows:-

"The selection process of Southend Care Ltd as the successful organisation followed a full and comprehensive procurement process that included an assessment of their financial viability, their financial competence and their business model post transfer. The financial tests carried out by the Council provided satisfactory evidence that it is transferring the care homes to a financially sound organisation, and to one which does not operate the

discredited 'lease back model' used by Southern Cross.

The Council is not able to amend substantially the terms of the tender or place more onerous covenants on the transfer as to do so at this stage could not only have a significant impact on the success of the transfer, but also may breach the procurement rules that govern it. The Council will, however, be recruiting to a fixed term post to oversee the commencement and management of the contract post transfer, which will ensure that Southend Care Ltd continues to operate the services in line with their commitments as set out in their tender submission."

(D) MRS RADFORD CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

"Will the Leader please indicate what level of interest is being shown by voluntary organisations and by community groups in the Council's new Big Society Fund?"

Mr Rushton replied as follows:-

"There has been a significant amount of interest in the Big Society Fund from groups across the County. By the end of June 2011, there were more than 80 enquiries/expressions of interest.

The first grant panel, which will be chaired by Blake Pain and include representatives from local community and voluntary groups, will meet in mid July to consider the first batch of funding applications.

I am delighted that the Fund has captured the imagination of local voluntary organisations and community groups, and am optimistic that we will have funded a number of high quality and innovative projects that epitomise the spirit of "Big Society" in Leicestershire by the end of the year."

Mrs Radford asked the following supplementary question:-

"Would the Lead Member agree that local members in all divisions of this Council can play their part in ensuring that we succeed at the Big Society in Leicestershire?"

Mr Rushton replied as follows:-

"I am happy to say "yes" is the answer to the question. We actively encourage members to get involved in the Big Society. Can I say as an Administration we are exceedingly proud of our initiative in putting money forward to the Big Society in Leicestershire. We have had 114 enquiries so far about the Big Society Fund and I would please ask all members to get the pack and give it to your parish councils. Give it to your local bodies who want to apply for money. We are keen to support you."

(E) MR SLATER CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

"Does the Leader believe plans for "HS2" will benefit or blight the East Midlands case for electrification of the Midland Main Line railway?"

Mr Parsons replied as follows:-

"In all the meetings that officers have held with either Department for Transport officials or HS2 Ltd staff, they have consistently been told that proposals for HS2 will have no bearing either way on the case for electrification and improvement of the Midland Main Line. The case being made is that HS2 is a long term investment in new capacity and that Midland Main Line improvements are a short to medium-term investment in boosting capacity and reliability of existing routes.

Whilst these are welcome statements, further reassurance is needed and I shall continue to campaign vigorously for a quick and positive decision on Midland Main Line improvements."

Mr Slater asked the following supplementary question:-

"I am especially interested in the regeneration aspect of this, since Loughborough has just become a business improvement district with £1.2m to be invested in the Town's economic development. Does the Leader not think that the £500m cost of the Midland Main Line electrification offers better value for money, and a quicker win for the redevelopment and regeneration of the East Midlands as a whole, than the £32 billion cost of HS2?"

Mr Parsons replied as follows:-

"The simple answer is yes. On the first part I would like to congratulate the Town Centre Partnership in Loughborough for the business improvement district which appears as being successful. The County Council helped enormously in this respect and we were pleased to do so. £500m as opposed to £32 billion seems to me to be pretty good economic common sense. I was contacted today by people who are proposing or consulting on electrifying the Midland Main Line and I told them to come here and we would have a chat about it. £500m on that will certainly help with the regeneration of the whole of the Leicestershire economy and indeed Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, rather than this £32 billion which is being talked about on this new HS2 link."

(F) MR JENNINGS CC asked the following questions of the Leader or his nominee:-

"Will the Leader please comment on the academic achievements of pupils at the Blaby Centre, particularly at Key Stage 4?"

Mr Ould replied as follows:-

"Students are admitted to the Blaby Centre at different stages throughout the year with a background of underachievement, challenging behaviour and poor attendance. Based on their starting points, the majority of students make satisfactory progress.

Children at key stages 1 and 2 (5 to 11 year olds), make good progress, and some make outstanding progress. Good progress is defined as making double the expected progress; ie in 6 months, they make 12 months progress. A small number of students at key stage 1 and 2 have made 2 years progress in 9 months. In key stage 3 (12 to 14 year olds), children make satisfactory progress academically alongside improvements in behaviour which allows the majority of children to return to main stream schools within two terms.

At Key stage 4 (14 to 16 year olds), provision is delivered in locality areas through the Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships managed by groups of Secondary Headteachers. Young people are supported on personalised programmes with Alternative Providers in offsite settings, or they are supported by a key worker in a main stream school. Working closely with the County upper schools has had a positive impact on lowering the number of pupil exclusions from 49 in 2009 to 21 in June 2011.

This summer the predicted point score per student at GCSE is expected to be double that achieved 2 years ago; in 2009 the point score per student was 53.5, whereas this summer it is expected to be 97.6.

There has been a significant increase in the number and quality of alternative education providers, resulting in a steady improvement in the level of vocational qualifications gained by key stage 4 students. For the second year running, destinations for post 16 students are looking good; in July 2010, 40 out of 42 students had an offer in education, employment or training, in December 2010, 40 of the 42 had retained their places. We are still awaiting destination information for this year's cohort, and we have reason to believe that this positive trend will continue."

Mr Jennings asked the following supplementary question:-

"Would Mr Ould agree with me that these outstanding results from the so-called 'problem pupils' at the PRU, demonstrate that this Administration is still committed to raising academic standards and attainment at every level?"

Mr Ould replied as follows:-

"Yes, I would agree. It has always been the point of principle for us that all children should be developed in their natural potential. That is what we try to do and I would particularly like to pay tribute to my Cabinet Support Member, Graham Hart, who has this as part of his special brief, and I think it is to his credit that we are where we are with the Blaby PRU."

(G) MRS RICHARD CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

"Will the Leader please outline how this Council is supporting Apprenticeships and work placements for people within the County?"

Mr Rushton replied as follows:-

"In accordance with the Council's People Strategy 2010–13, the Authority is committed to providing Apprenticeships to give its workforce and young people opportunities to learn, gain valuable work experience and meaningful employment.

At present the Council has 35 Apprentices, however this is being increased to 100 commencing from September, 2011. The Council is currently working with the Apprenticeship Service to achieve this objective."

Mrs Richards asked the following supplementary question:-

"Can I just be clear that the Administration believes the apprenticeships they are offering provide proper experience and development for young people and offer better value for money than the Future Jobs Fund?"

Mr Rushton replied as follows:-

"The apprenticeships offer absolutely excellent value for money and compared to the Future Jobs Fund, which was a complete and utter Labour flop, we are very proud in Leicestershire that we have been making excellent progress on the ground with apprenticeships."

(H) MR ROFFEY CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

"Can the Leader please outline how Members and staff of this Council showed their support for Armed Forces Day on 25th June 2011?"

Mr Parsons replied as follows:-

"In order to raise the profile of Armed Forces Day and to show our support to our soldiers and veterans, the County Council flew the Armed Forces Day Flag from Monday 20 June until Armed Forces Day on 25 June. I was pleased to lend my support to a flag-raising ceremony held at the front of County Hall, which was hosted by the Chairman and attended by the Lord-Lieutenant, the High Sheriff and over 75 guests representing the Royal British Legion, Veterans Associations and serving Armed Forces Personnel. We were delighted that Mr John Sheppard DCM – a Second World War hero - was able to hoist the flag on our behalf. With television, radio and press coverage we achieved our aim of raising the profile of Armed Forces Day.

The County Council worked with Leicester City Council and the Royal British Legion and other partners over a period of months in readiness for our joint celebration on Saturday 25 June. The Chairman and I, and a number of members of the County Council joined with other civic leaders and representatives from the Armed Forces Community, veterans, and cadets at a special service at Leicester Cathedral, which was extremely well attended (about 650 people filled the Cathedral to capacity). Following the service a parade of some 350 service personnel, veterans and cadets paraded behind the pipes and drums of the Seaforth Highlanders through the City to the saluting dais where the Lord-Lieutenant took the salute. There was tremendous support along the route with hundreds of local people applauding as the parade passed by.

Members will be aware that the County Council is working with the Royal British Legion to record its 90 years of service in the County. As part of a wider project by the Records Office to record this important history, staff at the Record Office have produced a series of exhibition panels telling the story of the Royal British Legion over the past 90 years. This display was on public view in the Cathedral on Armed Forces Day.

This demonstrates just what support there is for our local service personnel, whether serving or veteran, past and present, and I was delighted that the County Council took a leading role in the planning and organisation of these events.

Armed Forces Day in 2012 will fall on Saturday 30 June and I can assure you that the County Council will again be playing an active role to ensure that there is a fitting tribute to our Armed Forces past and present. By then we hope to have the new war memorial in situ at County Hall and this will form a backdrop to our Flag Raising Ceremony."

Mr Roffey asked the following supplementary question:-

"I am delighted by the Leader's response and as most members in this Chamber know, this is a subject very dear to my heart. Would the Leader agree with me that it really is critical that this County Council continues to show respect to those who serve, those who have served and particularly those who have given their lives in the service of this Country and can he give me assurance that this Administration will continue to do so?"

Mr Parsons replied as follows:-

"Certainly respect and I think that is shared by everyone in this Chamber. I also think that we should give our Armed Forces practical help and I know that local councils around the Country are doing so and I am more than happy to look at that as well."

(I) MR BRAY CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

- "1. At a recent meeting of Burbage Parish Council, Parish Councillors expressed concern about the lack of cycle racks/rails to secure cycles to in the village at places such as Burbage Library. Would the Leader please consider installing such facilities in suitable locations across the village near to local amenities?
2. In the recent District elections, the issue about the need to re-open Hinckley's Regent Street to through traffic and increase the on-street parking along there was raised by Conservative candidates. As this is the responsibility of the County Council, when will work start on doing this, and will the Leader commit the funds to pay for the necessary Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) works and any physical changes needed to the layout of the roads, pavements, street furniture etc?
3. Is the Leader aware that residents' frustrations about the problem of on street parking in the Priesthills Road area of Hinckley have got so bad in recent months that residents have engaged solicitors to take action against people blocking access to their properties, the police have become involved over people putting out their own cones to preserve spaces and heated arguments regularly take place between neighbours. Does the Leader agree with me that this is a very unsatisfactory situation and could he tell me what he intends to do about it?"

Mrs Pendleton replied as follows:-

- "1. We would be very pleased to discuss with Burbage Parish Council its suggestions for sites which would benefit from additional cycle parking. Many people from the area are currently attending our adult cycle training course. As part of the course feedback, we ask where in their area they will want to park their bike to help people keep cycling. Several years ago over 40 libraries in Leicestershire had cycle parking installed following cyclist identifying such a need. The cycle parking at the Burbage Library will be reviewed as part of this process.
2. We are actively engaged with both Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and the Hinckley Town Centre Partnership regarding the proposals to reintroduce motor traffic back in to Regent Street. The Town Centre Partnership has commissioned consultants to produce several potential design options. The suitability of these proposals in relation to road safety and traffic management will be considered by the County Council in due course, and the County Council would support a suitable proposal. We are still waiting a formal request from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and Hinckley Town Centre Partnership to assess the designs. The indication at present is that Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will fund the work and the County Council would support any suitable option by undertaking the necessary traffic orders.

3. County Council staff are aware of the parking issues in the Priesthills Road area; it is close to the town centre and offers unrestricted free parking to shoppers and commuters.

A high percentage of properties in the area have advisory H-bar road markings on the property accesses, which restrict the availability of on-street parking. The option is available for other residents in the area to pay for the installation of an H-bar marking. It also appears that some of the residents have been painting their own H-bar marking outside properties with no dropped kerbs; action is being taken to remove such markings.

Enforcement action could be taken and Penalty Charge Notices issued for parking over dropped kerbs. This would, however, be a time consuming exercise, requiring Civil Enforcement Officers to gain permission from each householder before taking enforcement action and potentially draws CEOs into refereeing neighbour disputes.

In the medium term the management of parking in the area will have to be reassessed, as part of a Hinckley wide study. At present this has not been placed into any programme, as the programme of traffic regulation and management is being reassessed to ensure that it meets the policies set out in the Local Transport Plan."

(J) MR CHARLESWORTH CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

"In the light of proposed changes to services provided by Connexions, will the Leader please indicate:-

1. What steps the County Council will be taking to discharge its duties in relation to commissioning career guidance in schools until September 2012 when I understand that schools will be taking over these duties?
2. What, if any, action will the Council be taking to identify and address any gaps in support for 16 to 18 year olds?
3. How does the County Council intend to ensure that vulnerable young people receive appropriate support after April 2012?
4. In this context, what is the definition of a vulnerable young person?"

Mr Ould replied as follows:-

- "1. Career guidance in schools has been commissioned from Connexions Leicester Shire up to 31 March 2012. Currently no national funding has been identified by the Government for careers guidance from 1 April up to the implementation of the Education Bill when statutory responsibility will move from local authorities to schools or academies for securing access to independent and impartial careers guidance for every pupil in years 9-11. From 2012/13 the role of the CYPS commissioning hub will be to ensure that schools and academies fulfil

their statutory responsibilities.

2. Connexions will continue to deliver support to 16 to 18 year olds until the new national policy is published. As part of the Education Bill's passage through Parliament there will be further consultation on whether careers guidance should cover Years 8-13. Depending on the outcome, the responsibility for these age groups will become clearer. There will be national, regional and local support and clear communication channels for 16 to 18 year olds.
3. Supporting vulnerable young people below the age of 19 (and up to 25 for people with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities) to engage in education and training, and intervening early with those at risk of disengagement, is expected to remain the County Council's responsibility after April 2012. The County Council has briefed school head teachers, FE Principals and Special School Heads about the need to offer appropriate provision for vulnerable young people including learners with learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities, offender learners, teenage parents, children in care and learners on free school meals. We expect to receive further guidance on this aspect of our work after April 2012 in due course. The role of the County Council will be to ensure all young people understand where to obtain advice and guidance in order to progress and maintain their participation in education and training. Further discussion will take place with Connexions before final proposals are considered.
4. Vulnerable groups are defined as those who are likely to have additional needs and experience poorer outcomes if these needs are not met. An ongoing needs assessment process is in place that enables us to develop the depth of our understanding about which groups are vulnerable and the nature of their needs."

(K) MR CHARLESWORTH CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

- "1. When are the disciplinary proceedings in the Baby B case expected to be concluded?
2. Will the findings be made public?"

Mr Ould replied as follows:-

- "1. The internal disciplinary proceedings will be concluded within the next couple of weeks, however the procedure allows for appeals against the findings.
2. The details of individual disciplinary proceedings, by necessity, will always remain confidential. At this stage it would not be appropriate for me to comment further."

(L) MR CHARLESWORTH CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

- "1. Now that the current Director of Environment and Transport is undertaking a part-time secondment to the Department of Transport, can the Leader confirm that all of the costs involved, including salary costs, will be met by the Department of Transport?
2. As this secondment follows that of the Director of Children and Young People's Service, is it not the case that some Directors' roles are not full-time?"

Mr Rushton replied as follows:-

- "1. Absolutely. Time spent on Department of Transport work will be paid for by the Department of Transport.
2. No. All Director roles are full-time. The Director of Children and Young People's Service was requested to assist the Department for Education to stabilize and begin transforming Doncaster Children Services. The Director of Environment and Transport has been requested to assist the Department of Transport. On both occasions the Council will put in place robust backfill arrangements. It is important that the Council does assist other areas of Local and National Government to influence and shape the future, but also to raise standards across public services. It is also important to recognise that Government makes these requests because of the County Council's high reputation."

Mr Charlesworth asked the following supplementary question on the reply to question 2:-

"Could I ask while the Director is on this secondment will he still receive his full County Council salary?"

Mr Rushton replied as follows:-

"I refer Mr Charlesworth to the answer to question 1 but what I can say is we are proud here to be an excellent Administration. We are proud of our excellent policies and this helps our excellent officers to be asked to go and work for national Government. I can say to Mr Charlesworth that if he was in charge nobody would be asked to go anywhere, ever."

(M) MR HUNT CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

- "1. Does the Leader welcome the Dilnot Report and will he urge Government to ensure its recommendations receive urgent attention so that we may develop a care system rivalling the NHS in the way that is cherished and respected up and down the land?

2. Will he ensure that members are fully briefed on its recommendations and their effects on Leicestershire people?"

Mr Sprason replied as follows:-

- "1. I do welcome the Dilnot report. It is widely recognised that the adult social care system is in need of reform and the proposals put forward by the Dilnot Commission merit urgent attention. The options put forward for future funding of care and support give a real chance to meaningfully reshape the system for the future - a system that is fit for the 21st century.

Adult social care has never achieved the recognition it deserves and the positive outcomes it achieves for many thousands of people everyday are ignored, or at least diminished by the greater attention given to failures in the system. The NHS could not function in the way it does without the support of adult social care. Now is the time to recognise the importance adult social care plays in the lives of older and disabled people, it really does change lives, and develop a truly integrated health and social care system.

2. I will ensure that Members are fully briefed and will be happy to engage in discussions about how we can achieve this positively."

Mr Hunt asked the following supplementary question:-

"I do also welcome the Dilnot Report on Social Care and would like to ask Mr Sprason to accept that the Labour Group will offer our bi-partisan support to the investigation and hopefully fulfillment of a solution to social care."

Mr Sprason replied as follows:-

"I am glad to see that Mr Hunt is following his Leader nationally in supporting this Administration on this subject as well. It is good to have his support. I will be meeting with Dilnot next week, so I will say that Mr Hunt is supporting us as well."

(N) MR HUNT CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

- "1. How will the Government's new industry-led National Tourist Strategy affect our partnership with Leicestershire Promotions?
2. Given the emphasis placed upon private sector leadership of tourist boards, what safeguards does the Leader think are needed to protect the public investment in our top visitor attractions including our Country Parks, Snibston Discovery Park, Bosworth Battlefield, the Space Centre as well as the smaller, yet just as valuable, gems such as Donington-le-Heath, which also depend on visitor numbers?

3. Would he not agree that the attraction of visitors to counties, like Leicestershire, lies more obviously in natural features enhanced by public investment and that without these the hospitality sector would struggle?"

Mr Parsons replied as follows:-

- "1. I want to review the County Council's investment in tourism promotion to assess whether alternatives to the Leicester and Leicestershire focus provided by Leicestershire Promotions would provide us with better value for money and wider economic benefits. This review will be undertaken with the full involvement of industry representatives and with District Councils. My initial soundings indicate that some of these representatives think we should do things differently.

It should also be noted that the Leicester City Mayor has stated that he wishes to review the "Leicester Promotions Partnership" from the perspective of the City.

2. The review will consider all the attractions that Leicestershire offers and how they can best be promoted, and will take account of a range of views including from the private and public sectors.
3. Tourism plays an important part in Leicestershire's economic success which is a high priority for its people and this Council. Clearly a wide range of factors affect our attractiveness to visitors including our countryside, our market towns and key attractions. A private/public partnership is essential and the review will examine how this partnership can be improved."

Mr Hunt asked the following supplementary question:-

"On the tourist strategy, I would ask the Leader if he could ensure that there is time within the programme of reviewing the Leicester Promotions delivery and so forth, for the Scrutiny Commission to have a good hard look at this because it does deserve it? We can talk about it later and perhaps the report will lead to some quite interesting things."

Mr Parsons replied as follows:-

"That really is up to the Scrutiny Commission. I am more than happy for them to look at anything and the more requests they make, actually the better. I shall be pleased. I will probably regret that now, but nevertheless, as a general rule I think that that is the case."

(O) MR HUNT CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

- "1. Is the Leader aware that plans to give Ministers hundreds of new powers to tell councils how to deliver local services will increase council administration costs by at least £68 million a year?

2. Given that the LGA estimated that measures within the Localism Bill would cost local authorities on average more than £250,000 each per year, enough to pay the salary of 16 care workers, is he not concerned that, if the Bill is adopted without amendment, to quote that highly respected organisation, 'thousands of hours of council staff time will be lost jumping through Whitehall's bureaucratic hoops'?"

Mr Parsons replied as follows:-

- "1. I am aware of work by the LGA that indicates that new powers for Ministers could increase council administration costs.
2. I have always been a strong supporter of the devolution of power from Whitehall to local authorities and local communities. The Localism Bill contains many good proposals that will allow this to happen including the power of general competence. It is right to point out that there are some proposals that could entrench greater authority in Whitehall and as a result pass extra costs onto councils. The LGA needs to press the point firmly on Government."

Mr Hunt asked the following supplementary question:-

"This is on the statement from the LGA that thousands of hours of council staff time will be lost through the new Localism Bill. Something that came to me as something of a surprise. I would like to ask the Leader if he also recognises that a large number of members are perplexed at the lack of localism within this expensive agenda and are surprised by the fact that neighbourhood groups do not have the power over planning, particularly core strategies, as they expected and that housing targets are being re-invented through the market in the process, so it is all quite a surprise to everybody on those scores?"

Mr Parsons replied as follows:-

"I understand what Mr Hunt is saying. I am of course using my huge influence within the LGA to try and alter things in our favour but I am a believer in localism. Actually I think Ministers in this Government, both Liberal Democrats and Conservative to be fair, are believers in localism. I am not sure some of the Civil Service are. I was at a meeting in London this week where their belief in localism, I think, for some of them anyway, was wafer thin, and frankly I think as politicians, both local and national, we have a role to play in actually explaining to the Civil Service what it needs and how it could work and not having these top-down targets imposed on us. So, therefore, I have some sympathy with the tenor of the question from Mr Hunt."

(P) MR ROFFEY CC asked the following question of the Leader or his nominee:-

"What progress has been made in the consultation on the proposed reductions in the opening hours of the Record Office, Melton Carnegie Museum, Donington-le-Heath Manor House, and Libraries?"

Mr Sprason replied as follows:-

"The consultation on the proposals to reduce opening hours at the Record Office, Melton Carnegie Museum and Donington le Heath Manor House ended on 31 May 2011 and for Libraries on the 24 June 2011. There has been a positive response to the consultation supporting the Council in reducing opening times when services are least used and avoiding closures. The findings of the consultation and revised proposals based on public responses will be considered by Adults, Communities and Health Overview Scrutiny Committee on 12 July 2011 and by Cabinet on 26 July 2011.

The proposed reductions will contribute towards £435,000 as savings in a full year, which is part of the overall budget reduction identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for Libraries, Heritage and Arts of £4.1m by 2014. The revised proposals reflect the willingness of the Council to listen to the people of Leicestershire and will assist in developing community partnership approaches and greater volunteer engagement in the future."

Mr Roffey asked the following supplementary question:-

"I think there was a lot of misunderstanding in Melton Mowbray about what this consultation was and I would ask whether Mr Sprason would agree with me that his early intervention, by meeting with the staff and volunteers of Melton Carnegie Museum, has actually helped us to come to what I believe is a reasonable compromise solution?"

Mr Sprason replied as follows:-

"We do have a role in showing leadership as Lead Members and I was pleased to be asked to meet with the Friends of Melton Museum and also Donington Le Heath and it was very positive and we took some of their fantastic ideas back. You will all be aware that the report is out now, it was published through the Members' Information Service. I have also got the Museums' Journal and if you will oblige me, I will just read a quote from there. They say that "when so many local authority funded museums find themselves under threat from budget cuts, it is good to be able to praise a re-vamped museum that could be used as an exemplar to any local or national politicians who are dubious about the value of such institutions". I am pleased to see that we have been recognised, that we are going to keep our libraries and museums open and that the solution that we have come up with in Leicestershire has been well supported."

112. POSITION STATEMENTS UNDER STANDING ORDER 8.

The Leader presented a position statement on the following matters:-

Local Enterprise Partnership
Community Forum Budgets
Multi-Agency Traveller's Unit (MATU)
Leicestershire and Rutland War Memorials Project
County Hall War Memorial
SportPark, Loughborough University

The Lead Member for Health presented a position statement on the following matters:-

National Announcements: Health and Social Care Bill
Assessing Local Implications
Implications for HealthWatch
Priorities for the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board

Copies of the position statements are filed with these minutes.

113. REPORT OF THE CABINET:

(A) YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2011/12.

It was moved by Mr Orson, seconded by Mr Ould and carried:-

"That the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2011/12, as referred to in the report of the Cabinet, be approved."

114. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION:

(A) ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION.

It was moved by Mr Galton, seconded by Dr Feltham and carried:-

"That the information contained in the report of the Scrutiny Commission, on the activities of Scrutiny, be noted."

115. REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE:

(A) ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE.

It was moved by Mr Jennings, seconded by Mr Garner and carried:-

"That the information contained in the Annual Report of the Standards Committee, on the activities of the Committee, be noted."

**116. ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNOR REPRESENTATIVE TO
SERVE ON LOCAL AUTHORITY COMMITTEES DEALING WITH
EDUCATION - REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER.**

It was moved by Mr Gillard, seconded by Mr Charlesworth and carried:-

"That Mr John Perry be appointed as co-opted member of the Children and Young People's Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or other appropriate scrutiny committee dealing with Education) for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the County Council in May 2013."

2.30 pm – 4.25 pm
06 July 2011

CHAIRMAN