



## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 6 JULY 2011**

### **POSITION STATEMENT BY THE LEADER**

#### **Local Enterprise Partnership**

- I am delighted to report that the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership has appointed Andrew Bacon, Regional Director of British Gas, as its Chairman. At the first meeting under his Chairmanship the LLEP Board agreed to support a strong bid to the Government to establish an Enterprise Zone at the MIRA in Hinckley. If successful, which I believe it deserves to be, this bid will further strengthen MIRA's proposals to establish a globally significant Technology Park in the County. It will also generate resources for the LLEP to invest in supporting the wider sub-regional economy. The outcome of the bid is expected in August.
- I have agreed with Andrew Bacon that the LLEP needs to involve itself in the development of motor engineering in the East Midlands - skills and facilities. Not only do we have MIRA and Donington Park but Silverstone and related headquarters and enterprises are located nearby in Northamptonshire.
- I am also pleased to report that the City Mayor has confirmed his support for the LLEP and for retaining inward investment as a sub-regional function. However, the Mayor no longer wishes for the City Council to support Prospect Leicestershire and so, in the absence of financial support from both emda and the City Council, that economic development company is being wound up. The County Council could not support it on its own.
- Members will recall that the intention had been to pursue a merger of Prospect and Leicestershire Promotions. That had been put on hold by the City Council prior to the mayoral election and the City Mayor, as I noted in answering Mr Hunt's question, has stated that he wishes to review the "Leicester Promotions Partnership" from the perspective of the City. Tourism forms an important economic sector for Leicestershire on its own and I plan to review how the County Council currently supports tourism promotion. As part of this I wish to speak to representatives of relevant businesses and the District Councils. This will include whether alternatives to the focus provided by Leicestershire Promotions would provide us with better value for money and wider economic benefits.

### **Community Forum Budgets**

- I am pleased to announce that this autumn the Community Forums around the County will be making decisions on budgets provided by the County Council. This will be an opportunity for local people to decide how money is spent on local projects.
  - Members may recall the successful pilot on Participatory Budgeting which was funded through the LAA over a 3 year period (this equates to around £6,500 per forum, per year).
  - These pilots helped to deliver 150 projects, the vast majority carried out by local community groups
  - The projects ranged from new equipment for play groups and activities for young people, to environmental improvements and the refurbishment of community centres.
  - We agreed at the Budget Council in February to make County Council funding available via Community Forums to enable local communities to invest in more local improvements of their choice
  - From the £ 320k available per year, each Community Forum will have between £10,000 and £15,000 per year to allocate, depending on the population size.
  - The Cabinet will discuss implementation of this scheme at their next meeting, so that we can launch it over the summer.
  - We will communicate clearly what people need to do to get involved and put their ideas forward. We want a transparent, accessible process that is low on bureaucracy.
  - Each Community Forum will hold a workshop in the late autumn to select the projects they wish to support. We are looking for projects that can deliver results between January and June 2012.
  - Next year we will hold a new round of workshops in June and July for the 2012-13 funding.
- This represents a strong commitment from the Council to involve local people and communities in decision-making as part of the development of the Big Society in Leicestershire and I look forward to seeing the development and implementation of a wide range of creative and innovative projects by local communities across the County.

### **Multi-Agency Travellers' Unit (MATU)**

- In 2009 the County Council, City Council, District Councils, Police and NHS jointly established the Multi-Agency Travellers Unit to respond to problems with unauthorised travellers' camps. Under the leadership of the County Council, the Unit ensures that travellers groups which cause problems are dealt with as a priority.

- The outcome of this action has been very positive. Over the last year, the Unit has dealt with 88 unauthorised camps. Clean up costs have fallen from up to £80,000 per year, before the unit existed, to £15,000 per year now.
- The Unit has:
 

Reduced the average time taken to move camps that breach the Code of Conduct, to fewer than 10 days. Of the 200 camps dealt with over the last two years, 55 percent lasted less than one week and 21 percent less than one day.

Dissuaded travellers from camping on parks and car parks and urged them to keep to groups of six caravans or fewer. Around 80 percent of camps have been of six vans or less and all camps on public parks have been moved on the same day or the next day.

Built-up a database of problem camps, so they can be identified and moved on more quickly in future.

Advised travellers on acceptable behaviour outlined in the Code of Practice.
- The Unit is now being recognised nationally as an example of excellence for the way it is dealing with traveller issues across Leicestershire and Leicester.

### **Leicestershire and Rutland War Memorials Project**

- I was most pleased to lend my support to a special event hosted by the Chairman recently to thank volunteers and celebrate the success of the Leicestershire and Rutland War Memorials Project. This is an initiative which continues to develop and flourish.
- More than 200 people have been working with the County Council to help create an online archive, designed to record war memorials and shine a light on the lives of the people they commemorate.
- Featuring over 13,000 records and spanning historic and current conflicts, the database enables people for the first time ever to delve into the personal stories of their soldier ancestors at the click of a mouse.
- It paints a picture of each casualty's life by revealing what is known about medals awarded, regiment served in, place of burial, war memorial location and more.
- Since the ambitious project began two years ago, it has increased the number of recorded county war memorials from over 850 to 1,800.

### **County Hall War Memorial**

- The County Council will be aware of plans supported on a cross-party basis to provide a memorial at County Hall in honour of local servicemen and women who have lost their lives in conflicts around the world since 1945.
- Artists are now being encouraged to come forward with their ideas for this monument, the aim being that it will be unveiled next Spring, ahead of Armed Forces Day in May.
- The memorial will be located in the grassed quadrangle alongside the County Hall reception area. It will provide a place of contemplation, reflection and respect for staff, the public and visitors and hopefully become a central point for commemoration across Leicestershire.

### **SportPark, Loughborough University**

I was sorry not to be able to attend the official opening of SportPark on 23rd June by Sebastian Coe and Tom Daley, but grateful that Ernie White was able to be there.

SportPark is a unique venture that encourages partnership working, the sharing of best practice, collaboration and innovation in the development and promotion of sport and physical activity. The County Council and Charnwood Borough Council have been key partners and it is pleasing that local government's contribution was recognised at the opening by Lord Coe, Richard Lewis (Chairman of Sport England) and the Vice-Chancellor of the University. I am sure Max Hunt will remember a meeting at Charnwood when he was the Leader and I had to work hard to persuade him to commit to the project.

The County Sports Partnership is one of 13 national and local organisations based at SportPark and I understand the Partnership's Director was part of a small team interviewed as part of the opening ceremony about the advantages of working in such an environment. As we progress our partnership agenda for improving health and wellbeing, the County Sports Partnership will continue to play an important role, and I believe we already have the evidence to support our stance with Government that these partnerships are as much about physical activity for people of all ages as about sport in a competitive sense.

I would also like to take this opportunity to offer my best wishes – and I am sure from all members of the Council to the Sports Partnership for the success of the Leicestershire Youth Games and the Parallel Games to be held at Loughborough University this coming Friday and Sunday.