

LEICESTERSHIRE
TOGETHER AND
LEICESTERSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE
REPORT

2013

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Introduction and Overall Performance Summary

During the last few months we have been consulting widely on the implications of the significant reductions which are being made by the Government to the County Council's funding, as a result of the austerity drive to help reduce the national debt.

As a result of the funding reductions we are looking hard at all aspects of our operations, and at all services, to ensure that we can target our reducing resources on the key issues facing the county and its population.

Following the County Council elections in May, in collaboration with our public, private and voluntary sector partners, we have agreed a new set of 'priority outcomes' to guide the targeting of resources across agencies. The outcomes are set out under our 12 overarching priorities of:-

1. Protecting, supporting and valuing the most vulnerable in communities;
2. Helping older people to live independently for longer;
3. A healthier population and reducing health inequalities;
4. Ensuring communities are resilient and can take charge;
5. Increasing economic growth;
6. Ensuring Leicestershire's workforce is diverse, capable, flexible and mobile;
7. Managing resources and waste effectively;
8. Ensuring our transport system is efficient, effective and safe;
9. Children and Young People achieve and enjoy high morale and self esteem;
10. Safer communities with reduced offending and re-offending;
11. A high quality, accessible environment and resilience to climate change; and
12. High quality, affordable housing and reduced homelessness.

Despite the funding reductions, we have so far been able to prioritise a range of activities to help meet these aims, as well as provide a range of other related public services. This annual report sets out some of our key progress areas and achievements over the last year.

Performance Summary

Overall the report shows strong examples of delivery across the theme areas. A separate section of the report sets out our comparative performance against a number of key performance indicators relating to the priorities in the report. Overall analysis of the available comparative performance data shows that Leicestershire continues to be a high performing county – remaining in the top two counties for aggregate performance.

Leicestershire has a range of areas of top quartile performance including young people not in education, employment and training (NEETs); child protection plans; road accidents, maintenance and satisfaction; waste recycling and composting; many aspects of public health; many aspects of crime and reoffending; satisfaction with care and care safety; and library visits and issues and museum visits. Other areas of strong relative performance include low unemployment, child obesity, school place choices, teenage pregnancies and equality and diversity.

Performance has improved across a range of council services over the past year. In many cases this can be demonstrated through key performance measures, many of which are nationally validated. Particular improvements include the following:

The unemployment rate fell from 2.5% to 2% over the year to June 2013. The proportion of working age population with at least NVQ level 2 and 4 qualifications improved over the past year, both of which are critical to the future of the local economy. The economic impact value of tourism increased over the past year, and tourism is now the second fastest growing industry in the county.

With regard to our roads, the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents, as well as total casualties, show year-on-year reductions over recent years. At the same time, carbon emissions related to transport have fallen.

The proportion of the adult population participating in one or more sports a week for 30 minutes or more has improved very significantly over the past year, reaching a new peak. Life expectancy has improved, and death rates from the main killers (cardiovascular disease and cancer) have reduced. The teenage pregnancy rate has shown a sustained reduction over recent years including a significant fall over the past year.

There have been substantial improvements in the timeliness of children's social care assessments. For the first time in 3 years, 100% of child protection cases were reviewed within required timescales, marking a significant improvement. Regarding looked after children, key indicators for the stability of placements have all improved.

The proportion of schools assessed as good or outstanding by OfSTED improved from 74% to 83% over the year. Also, two of the most important educational attainment measures showed marked improvements: achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths; and the achievement of 'A' levels at A-C.

Adult social care services are judged partly on the satisfaction of those receiving the services. Overall satisfaction of people with their care and support improved from 58.4% to 67.9% over the past year. Significant improvements were also noted with the proportion of service users feeling that they have control over their daily life and the proportion of people who say that services have made them feel safe and secure. In terms of the delivery of adult social care services, the percentage of people who receive self-directed support also improved significantly.

Most types of crime, including violent crime and acquisitive crime have reduced during 2012/13. In addition, the proportion of people stating that they have been a victim of antisocial behaviour reduced during the year.

In terms of climate change, the total CO₂ emissions in the county area reduced over the most recent measurement period, as did the NO_x emissions from County Council operations. Further evidence of the authority's reduced impact on the environment include a reduction in business miles driven by the council workforce, less waste being produced from council sites and a greater percentage of waste from council sites being recycled.

Timeliness of complaints handling improved markedly with the introduction of a new complaints management system. Also, the number of complaints handled by the Local Government Ombudsman relating to the County Council dropped markedly over the year.

As a result of the funding reductions, we are also looking hard at all aspects of our performance, and improvement targets, to ensure that they are focused on the key issues and the limited funding now available.

Economy

In response to challenging economic conditions the Council agreed Economic Growth Priorities in November 2012 which set out how the Council will use its resources, knowledge and expertise to support delivery of the Economic Growth Plan 2012-20 of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP). The Council's priorities focus on supporting enterprise growth, enhancing capital availability, increasing the availability of employment land and buildings and improving infrastructure (especially for the distribution and logistics sector), and tackling worklessness through matching skills demand with supply.

The Council is also working closely with partners, including the business community, district councils and the City Council, to respond to opportunities provided nationally and to changes to economic development arrangements introduced by the Government in response to Lord Heseltine's review of economic growth. Of particular significance are:

- The establishment nationally of a £2bn per annum Single Local Growth Fund (SLGF) from 2015, which will be allocated to Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas on a part formula; part competitive basis;
- The need for LEPs to put in place new Strategic Economic Plans (SEP) by early 2014. The SEP will form the basis for the negotiation of a Growth Deal with Government which will determine the overall amount of the SLGF that the area is able to access;
- The separate but related requirement for LEPs to agree a EU Structural and Investment Funds (SIF) Strategy to allocated EU funds notionally allocated to Leicester and Leicestershire for the period 2014-20 (126m euros);
- In the immediate term the need to negotiate a City Deal with Government;
- The need for new governance arrangements to oversee these new arrangements. An Economic Growth Board made up of the County Council Leader, City Mayor and seven district council leaders. Has been established to work alongside the LLEP Board and oversee development of the SEP, EU SIF Strategy and City/ Growth Deals.

Economic interventions are increasingly being grouped into three main thematic areas; private sector growth (including business support and capital availability), labour market (including skills and worklessness), and infrastructure provision.

Private sector growth

Capital Availability - Last year the Leicestershire Business Survey showed that a third of companies were concerned about cash flow and access to finance. In Spring 2013 the Cabinet agreed to invest £1m of reserves to launch a Leicestershire Local Enterprise Fund to help support small businesses struggling to obtain capital by making loans available. At the time of writing a process to procure an external agency to manage and deliver the Fund was nearing completion and it is anticipated that it will be launched in November or December 2013.

A Rural Capital Programme, totalling £300,000 over a three year period, to support small rural businesses was launched by the County Council led Rural Partnership in

2012. In its first year seven businesses have been supported with grants totalling £76,000. A scheme has also been run to help village shops and Post Offices survive the downturn and compete more effectively with larger retailers. Specialist advice is provided as well as grants of up to £3,000. 40 advice visits were undertaken and £10,000 of grants approved.

County Council investments complement initiatives being led by the LLEP for the wider sub-region. The LLEP secured £7.8m through a successful bid to the third round of the Regional Growth Fund (RGF3) to establish a grants fund targeted at SME manufacturing businesses. The fund provides 25% capital investment grants of between £25,000 and £150,000 and has generated over 150 expressions of interest worth a combined value of over £11m. The total number of new jobs associated with these applications is over 1,830.

Business support - Leicestershire has a high level of self-employment (10.4%), suggesting good early stages of enterprise activity. There has also been an increase in the business creation rate. Three year business survival rates are better in Leicestershire than nationally. Businesses do report, however, that they find it difficult to identify and access advice and support which will help them expand more quickly. In order to further promote strong enterprise growth and investment, the LLEP and local partners are giving priority to improving business support and advice arrangements. Both the City Deal and draft EU SIF Strategy include ambitious proposals to establish a single, co-ordinated business support hub covering Leicester and Leicestershire. This hub will provide a single portal which will enable effective signposting to the full range of support, advice and funding available, and will also commission tailored interventions to meet specific local business needs.

Tourism - Following a review of tourism the Council has contracted Leicester Shire Promotions Limited for a three year period to deliver tourism support services and to ensure that the sector continues to expand and provide a high quality experience for visitors. A new Leicestershire Tourism Partnership has been established to oversee the contract which focuses on delivering economic benefits to the county. In 2012 the value of tourism to the county's economy was £911m and the aim is to increase this by 8% to £983m by 2016, accompanied by a 10% increase in employment, and improvements to visitor satisfaction levels. There will be a particular focus on increasing leisure and business tourism visitor numbers, especially overnight stay, and improving the quality of the county's tourism offer.

The discovery of the remains of Richard III has the potential to have a long term positive impact on the visitor economy. The replica head of the King took pride of place at Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre last summer and contributed to substantial increases in visitor numbers. 4,500 people attending the battle re-enactment event in August, significantly higher than in 2012.

Food and drink businesses have been supported through the Leicester and Leicestershire Food Fortnight 2013, providing an opportunity for local businesses to showcase local produce. Fifty-three businesses took part, holding 75 events across the county.

Labour market – skills and worklessness

Leicestershire continues to have a high employment rate (74.4%) compared to national results. The unemployment rate of 2% (JSA) is the lowest it has been for four years (June 2013), with performance better than national figures (3.4%). The county has a relatively well qualified workforce in terms of entry level skills, with 72.7% of the working age population qualified to NVQ2 level, better than the England average of 71.8%. Intermediate level skills, with an estimated 54.7% of the working age population qualified to NVQ3 level (equivalent to 2 A levels) is close to the national figure of 55%. In terms of higher level skills, 30.4% of Leicestershire's workforce is qualified to at least NVQ4 level (equivalent to a first degree), which is below the national figure of 34.2%.

In addition to having a well-qualified workforce, it is vitally important that people have the right skills to meet the needs of local businesses, in other words that there is a good match between skills supply and demand. The LLEP has carried out a Skills Needs Assessment which will influence future education and training provision in the area and was used to inform the development of a skills plan for the LLEP's Enterprise Zone at the MIRA Technology Park. This focuses on developing and maintaining the supply of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics skills that will be required at the Technology Park.

The LLEP and local partners also supported new labour market entrants by running a 'Have a Go' Campaign, linked to the Skills Show held at the NEC, Birmingham, providing opportunities for local young people to try a new vocational skill and see what careers and types of jobs are available in the area. Local businesses pledged their support to the campaign by opening their doors for visits by schools and holding talks and demonstrations. Around 500 young people were able to try a new skill or take part in an event.

The County Council has recognised the importance of supporting young people in gaining employment experience and skills by providing 80 work placements. The Council also runs a Highways Trainee Technician Scheme and a Graduate Trainee Transport Planner Scheme.

A County Council-led Work and Skills Board has been set up to bring together key partners, including training providers, FE colleges and Job Centre Plus, to deliver practical solutions to help people find appropriate employment and training. The Board's consideration of barriers to employment and possible solutions has led to the development and scaling up of a number of interventions. These have included the expansion of the Wheels to Work project and supporting enhanced work readiness and awareness of job and training opportunities through the provision of volunteering, jobs fairs and Work Clubs.

The Wheels to Work programme, designed to help people access employment and training, now has over 60 bikes and has supported over 100 clients in the last year. The scheme is being expanded through the provision of an additional £175,000 from the County Council with the additional funding enabling a specific focus on people furthest from the labour market, including those who are part of the Supporting Leicestershire families programme.

Four jobs fairs were staged by the County Council to help people access new careers and training. The events were aimed at the 8,400 county residents who are currently unemployed – half of them jobless for more than a year. The events gave people an opportunity to meet employers, training providers and agencies such as Job Centre Plus, district councils and further education colleges. They also featured business seminars, offering employers support and guidance on issues such as recruitment and taking on apprentices.

The Council has also contributed to the development of ambitious proposals to put in place a single, coordinated sub-regional employment and skills gateway which will improve the services provided to those out of work and needing support. The gateway is being proposed initially through the City Deal and will have a preliminary focus on the young unemployed and adults furthest from the labour market. This will, for example, build on work which has improved the provision of employment support and advice as part of the supporting Leicestershire Families initiative.

Infrastructure

Key strategic development opportunities in the county include the Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park and the Enterprise Zone at MIRA near Hinckley.

The Council agreed to invest £1.5m in the expansion of the Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park (with Charnwood BC agreeing to invest £500,000). Initial opportunities include the development of an Advanced Technology Innovation Centre and expansion space for existing science park occupiers. Discussions about how the investment can best be deployed are ongoing. When fully developed, the Park will provide up to 200,000m² of floor space and house businesses employing as many as 6,000 people (approximately 4,000 of them new jobs) as well as securing Loughborough's future as a centre for knowledge-based high growth industry.

Progress has been made with the expansion of MIRA Technology Park Enterprise Zone, with six businesses investing in and locating to the site. The businesses operate in the aerospace, automotive and advanced engineering sectors, with 188 jobs being created at the site since 2010. A further 145 will be created by end of 2013. The Zone is benefiting from allocations from the Regional Growth Fund to improve the A5 and from the Local Infrastructure Fund to improve on-site infrastructure.

A loan of £3.2m has been made by the County Council to North West Leicestershire District Council to enable highway improvements and to facilitate housing and commercial property development in North West Leicestershire. It is expected that the required infrastructure improvement will be fully paid for by Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, but due to the current economic climate it is necessary for the work to be carried out in advance.

A substantial proportion of the LLEP's £13.6m Growing Places Fund (GPF) has been allocated to unlock stalled development sites and stimulate economic growth. Five

schemes across the sub-region were approved as part of the Growing Places Fund Round 1, with a value of £4.4m, expected to generate 3,200 jobs. A further six schemes were approved in April 2013 as part of Round 2, with a combined value of £8.8m. Improvements to junctions on the A46 are being funded by GPF and will facilitate development of the Glenfield Park development.

The provision of superfast broadband is expected to bring £92m of economic benefit in Leicestershire over seven years. It will also improve access to services and help transform public service delivery. The Council is working with a range of partners to reduce the Digital Divide. Suppliers are investing in next generation fibre broadband to deliver to 75% of Leicestershire premises over the next few years. It is expected that investment from the Council and districts of £8.6m will enable this to be extended to over 90%. Connections will go live from summer 2014, with the full build expected to take two years.

Housing - Helping people to buy their first home is crucial in achieving and maintaining a sustainable housing market. With this in mind, in September 2012, the Council launched a scheme to support first time house buyers to access the property market. The Council agreed to lend Lloyds TSB £10m to offer low-cost mortgages to up to 400 first-time buyers. Under the scheme, buyers have to find a deposit of just five per cent. The scheme helps first time buyers struggling to get on the property ladder, boosts the economy and enables the council to get its money back, with interest, from the bank. By August 2013, more than 180 homes had been bought thanks to this support. The Council has been able to support 242 low-cost mortgages, totalling £26.9m.

The Council is also committed to increasing the stock of affordable and extra care housing. In January 2013 the Cabinet agreed to allocate a further £1 million to provide homes for the elderly and affordable homes in rural communities. The funding aims to boost the number of affordable homes available to buy, rent, or for shared ownership schemes in villages. A further £495,000 was committed in June 2013. The Council's investment since 2011 has enabled the provision of homes at Sapcote, Somerby, Husbands Bosworth, Tilton, Breedon, Bitteswell, Elmesthorpe, Carlton, Market Harborough, Sharnford, North Kilworth, Asfordby, and Melton Mowbray.

Highways and Transportation

Our priority is to ensure that our transport system is efficient, effective, safe and that it prioritises economic growth. Our third Local Transport Plan was refreshed during the year and a new Implementation Plan (2011-2014) developed. It sets out the work we intend to carry out to help achieve this.

Congestion – We continue to make improvements aimed at reducing congestion in hot spot areas. This year we secured £4.5m from the Government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund to deliver sustainable transport improvement programmes for Loughborough and Coalville. Work to reduce congestion in Loughborough has involved the construction of a new inner relief road, work to pedestrianise the A6 section in the town centre and improve the Epinal way/Forest road junction. The programmes are designed to support economic growth and reduce carbon emissions from local transport, and will complement similar work being delivered with the City Council in central Leicester.

We are implementing a £1.6m scheme to reduce congestion at a busy junction - the A50/A46 roundabout (Glenfield/Groby) to improve traffic flow and safety. A new road layout was also trialed at the Hinckley Fields industrial estate in a bid to reduce congestion.

Major Road improvements - Work on our major transport scheme in Loughborough Town Centre is progressing well and we have already started some preparatory work ready for formal start of works in 2013/14. The scheme, which includes completion of an Inner Relief Road for the town, will provide a number of benefits including supporting the economic regeneration of Loughborough, delivering improvements to public transport, and reducing pollution and accidents. Also in Loughborough, we have implemented two new residents parking zones and an extension to one of the existing zones.

Around £2m is also being invested to improve safety and traffic flow at the Fosse Park/Asda roundabout. The junction is one of the busiest in the county and has seen 42 people injured in accidents over a three year period. The scheme involves a number of measures including the construction of additional traffic lanes, new cycle links and improved pedestrian/cycle crossing facilities.

In addition to our major network improvements we have improved our existing road network. This year we carried out a £170,000 road improvement scheme on a major route through the centre of Market Harborough. We also adopted a Strategy for the A5 for 2011-2026. This Strategy will inform the development of Local Plans and Local Transport Plans and also inform negotiations with developers and potential bids for infrastructure funding.

Bus Use - Working with Leicester City Council and bus operator, Arriva, we attracted £2.5m from the Government's Better Bus Area Fund to help deliver improvements to the A426 corridor between Glen Parva and Leicester City centre. The scheme will improve bus journey times and reduce congestion on this major route into and out of Leicester. It includes a number of measures designed to promote and encourage greater bus use and construction will be completed by the end of the year.

A new scheme has boosted bus reliability and frequency by construction of a “bus gate” at the junction of The Brantings (Groby Road) and the A50 to reduce journey times towards Leicester. This will enable Arriva to increase services to the area from four buses an hour to a bus every 10 minutes. Access for pedestrians and cyclists is also improved thanks to the construction of a controlled crossing on the A50, as part of the new traffic signal junction.

Park and Ride - We have changed Park and Ride bus services to cut out the need for buses to cross the city centre, improving service reliability. Shoppers, commuters, residents and visitors have also been able to save up to 15 per cent on park and ride journeys through a voucher scheme to encourage greater use. We also issued vouchers covering 12 routes servicing places such as Loughborough, Melton, Coalville, Market Harborough and Hinckley – enabling passengers to travel on any single journey for just 50p.

Sustainable travel - We continue to invest in more sustainable travel options. Schemes and initiatives include expanding our current Advanced Wheels to Work scheme which now includes an additional 60 vehicles (such as petrol powered scooters and electric bicycles) to serve our targeted areas of Loughborough and Coalville. The Wheels to Work scheme aims to overcome transport barriers that limit people’s ability to access work or training. As part of our programme, we have provided significantly enhanced levels of information provision and marketing support to bus companies and transport providers in our target areas, and have implemented an additional personalised travel planning scheme in Loughborough.

This year we improved our existing Sustainable Travel Grant schemes to provide £5,000 grants for businesses for specific travel solutions. So far 10 grants have been awarded worth a total of £40,000 plus match funding of £45,000. Projects included an area travel plan, enhanced provision for cycling to work and the installation of electric vehicle charging points.

Car sharing – We re-launched a free car sharing website to help users save fuel costs, reduce their carbon emissions and ease congestion. Run by the County Council and City Council, the website allows people to search for other potential car share partners across the county and beyond. Depending on the commute or journey, car sharing potentially can help participants save hundreds of pounds a year on both fuel and the cost of vehicle wear-and-tear.

Cycling - Our £2m cycle network in Coalville is nearing completion. Once finalised, the new network will span a total of nine miles, connecting existing tracks in the town and improving access for cyclists, including to key employment areas. Combined with other investment in the town, this ambitious scheme is intended to help ease congestion by encouraging more people to leave their cars at home.

We supported a range of other initiatives to encourage people to cycle more, for example, more than 350 people used our free adult cycling courses. We have also completed a new cycle route between Syston’s Hobby Horse estate and Wreake Valley Community College. Our Connect 2 project was completed during 2012/13 and now provides a sustainable walking and cycling transport corridor from

Cossington to Leicester. The new on-road and off-road cycle facilities link Syston with Watermead boosting access for walkers and cyclists between Cossington, Birstall, Thurmaston and Leicester. The £67,000 scheme was delivered and funded by the council in partnership with Sustrans. This year also saw the approval of the A511 Coalville, Bardon Road cycleway scheme.

The Council supported a series of led-rides from Glenfield for cyclists taking part in Leicester's Sky Ride event. A 'welcome hub' involved trained ride leaders to escort cyclists towards the centre on 'show me the way' rides. Sky Ride high visibility vests, cycling maps, festival programmes and draw string bags for children were also available as well as staff providing information about local cycling initiatives. A free Big Family Bike Ride was also held in Loughborough in the summer.

Road Safety - Through the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Road Safety Partnership, we work with partners to plan and coordinate road safety programmes. As well as safety camera enforcement, the partnership runs a comprehensive programme of publicity and training. During 2012/13 this included safer driving advice to avoid speeding, drink driving, using a mobile phone while driving, and changing driving style in winter weather and other key valuable safety tips for drivers. We continue to identify road improvements that could cut the number of crashes by studying accident records.

Our priority to ensure our roads are as safe as possible has also resulted in a wide range of road safety initiatives being completed in the last year. These included a £97,000 scheme of improvements to the junction of the B4114 and Croft Road, Narborough, which included the installation of traffic lights and the installation of a speed camera on the A6 approaching Loughborough from Quorn. The new speed camera has been responsible for a significant reduction in traffic speeds which should, over time, lead to a substantial reduction in accident numbers.

In 2012, 13,000 drivers opted to attend speed awareness courses in Leicestershire as an alternative to receiving points on their licence. The education courses provide drivers with clear information and advice on speed and speed limits and help change attitudes and encourage safer behaviour. Nearly 400 young people took part in pre-driver days at Mallory Park, where they learned about safe driving and were able to take part in driving sessions with instructors. In addition we run Enhanced Rider and Bike safe motorcycle training schemes, and made road safety improvements outside Brocks Hill Primary, Gartree High and Beauchamp College benefitting pedestrians and cyclists. 5,000 school children participated in cyclist training to the nationally recognised Bikeability Standard and 350 teenagers took part in special pre-driver days. The Junior Road Safety Officer scheme celebrated its 25th birthday this year, and since inception has recruited more than 10,000 primary school pupils to teach their peers about road safety.

In August "lollipop" men and women took part in a special event to celebrate 60 years of the School Crossing Patrol Service. Patrols from across Leicestershire were presented with a commemorative badge and certificate at the diamond jubilee event. 114 Patrollers are currently employed by the County Council to help thousands of children cross the roads safely every school day. Two youngsters were named as Junior Road Safety Officers of the year to acknowledge their work to educate

schoolmates about the importance of road safety. Each year, two Leicestershire primary school pupils are selected to take up the role of Junior Road Safety Officers on behalf of their school.

Road Accidents - Last year the number of people killed or injured on Leicestershire's roads reached a record low. In 2012, 27 people lost their lives – the lowest since records began in 1979. This is less than the previous low total of 36 fatalities in 2009 and considerably less than a high figure of 67 fatalities in 2002 and the previous highest total of 91 in 1981. 196 people were killed or seriously injured in accidents – a drop from 237 in 2011 and considerably less than the 878 recorded in 1979. There has also been a reduction in the number of slight injuries.

Winter Conditions - We are committed to ensuring Leicestershire's road network is open during icy weather and roads are as safe as possible. During the year we replenished our grit barns to 16,000 tonnes and treated 45% of the road network including most A roads, some B and C class roads, major commuter and bus routes and as far as is possible at least one route through all Leicestershire villages. We deployed 17 gritters, 80 drivers and a network of snow wardens, farmers and 4x4 drivers. In heavy snow we deploy a team of 40 volunteer 4x4 drivers to deliver hot meals and shopping to the elderly, and help carers and health visitors to reach their patients.

This year difficult weather conditions saw highways officers working around the clock to manage conditions including responding to fallen trees, 50 blocked roadside drains and nearly 200 flooding situations. This heavy rainfall meant that rivers and other watercourses were either running at full capacity or overflowing. As a result there were 20 flood warnings and 14 flood alerts issued by the Environment Agency. With many surface water sewers unable to discharge into those watercourses, rainwater was unable to enter the drainage system at road gullies and, for a while, at least 40 roads had to close to traffic. Through its duty officers and working with the Local Resilience Forum, Leicestershire Highways Operations deployed its supervisors, out-of-hours emergency gangs, gritter crews and gully emptiers to provide as comprehensive a response as possible across the entire County.

Road Maintenance and Pot Holes - Leicestershire's roads and transport fared well in the last national satisfaction survey – with Leicestershire ranked as the best County Council for the third year running. The survey covered various aspects of provision, including the condition of roads and pavements and the quality of local bus services. Leicestershire was the top performing County Council for highway maintenance and the condition of our highways, pavements and footways, securing top ten rankings nationally.

Street Lights - Our scheme to save money and energy was extended to the Hinckley area during the year. We will save nearly £800,000 per year in energy bills once the scheme to reduce Leicestershire's carbon footprint by dimming, switching off in the early hours and, in some cases, turning street lights off is fully implemented. It is anticipated that by 2014, three quarters of the county's 68,000 street lights will have been altered in a bid to save money and around 3,000 tonnes of carbon. So far, around 26,000 lamps in 131 towns and villages across

Leicestershire have been switched off between midnight and 5.30am. A further 1,000 have been dimmed between 7pm and 7am and 831 switched off permanently.

Trains - HS2 - The Council has expressed concerns about the potential short and long-term impact on Leicestershire of the Government's published proposals for a high speed rail link through the East Midlands. In particular, the Council has concerns over the potential loss of jobs, road investment, including the Kegworth bypass, and business rates uplift if the proposed line precludes the development of the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange next to East Midlands Airport. The blight over a long period of time on homes, business and any other potential developments along the published line of route and the difficulties presented to designing an effective long-term solution to traffic problems at Junction 13 of the A42 have also been raised. The Council also felt that the parkway station at Toton is the wrong option for the East Midlands station and that a city centre station in Derby would offer far greater regeneration benefits, whilst retaining good connectivity for Leicestershire to the north. We have set up a web page to direct people to the right information, a dedicated e-mail enquiry line, an on-line survey and facilitated public discussions at the Ashby, Measham and Moira Community Forum as well as arranged for HS2 Ltd to give a factual presentation and continue to press the Department for Transport and HS2 Ltd to consider alternative routes.

Health and Wellbeing

The health system in England changed significantly on 1st April 2013, with the formal creation of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), the establishment of Health and Wellbeing Boards and the transfer of public health to the County Council. The Health and Wellbeing Board published our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy in December 2012, based on evidence and analysis from our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Our key aim is to “add quality and years to life” by improving health throughout people’s lives, reducing health inequalities and focusing on the needs of the local population. To implement the strategy we are focusing efforts on improving outcomes related to 4 priorities - childhood health, early intervention and prevention, the ageing population, and mental health and wellbeing.

Our **Health and Wellbeing Board** has addressed a number of important topics during the year including: Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) commissioning strategies and authorisation; the vision for local Healthwatch; cancer mortality rates in Leicestershire and the Better Care Together changes in healthcare services across the sub-region and the introduction of the NHS 111 telephone number.

Health and Social Care Integration - The Board recognises the benefits of greater integration of health and social care provision. The LGA and NHS England published a vision for how the pooling of £3.8 billion of funding will ensure a transformation in integrated health and social care from 2015/16. Our local plans for integration and our Better Care Together Programme have been looking at experiences in Christchurch, New Zealand, where demand on acute care has been reduced by 13% over a ten year period. The Integrated Commissioning Board has instigated a range of service improvements aimed at greater integration and helping relieve pressures on Health Services (see separate section on vulnerable adults). The Board has also held a development session on plans for greater integration between health and social care and has established an Integration Executive to take this forward.

Francis Report and Acute Health Service – The Board has been fully appraising lessons learned from the Francis Report into failings at the Mid-Staffordshire Hospital Trust and the arrangements being established locally to ensure similar problems are avoided in our health system. The Board, in consultation with partners, has established new arrangements to oversee health quality and performance locally and a number of action plans have been established to improve various aspects of acute health care. In January, the Council appointed Voluntary Action LeicesterShire (VAL) as the new consumer champion for health and social care issues in Leicestershire. **Healthwatch Leicestershire** which started in April 2013 helps ensure that the voice of health and social care service users and carers in the county has a real impact on the services they receive.

Public Health - Contracts for a range of public health services successfully transferred to the Council including contracts for clinical services such as sexual health and substance misuse treatment, through to a wide range of services commissioned from GP practices and community pharmacies to small contracts with voluntary sector organisations. The new public health grant has enabled additional investment into public health services, to tackle obesity, promote positive mental health and to tackle health inequalities through empowering communities.

Early Intervention - NHS Health Checks - The Health Check prevention programme aims to identify people at risk of developing vascular diseases: heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease or vascular dementia. Everyone between 40 to 74 years will be invited for a NHS Health Check once every five years, if they do not already have a diagnosis of vascular disease. The checks will assess the patient's risk of developing these health problems and give personalised advice on how to reduce it. There are over 230,000 residents of Leicestershire and Rutland who are eligible to be invited for a NHS Healthcheck once in the next five years. In 2012/13, 56,000 people were invited and approximately half of these people actually had an NHS Healthcheck. 3,457 people were identified as 'High Risk' for cardiovascular diseases (CVD) through the checks.

Longer Lives - Public Health England's Longer Lives website shows differences in premature mortality across the Country and provides statistics relating to the most common causes of premature mortality: cancer, heart disease and stroke, lung disease and liver disease. Compared with the national average, Leicestershire is performing well - with life expectancy of 79.8 years for men and 84.1 years for women, compared with England averages of 78.5 and 82.6 respectively. We are ranked 30th best out of 150 local authorities and our premature mortality rate is significantly lower than the national rate for England. However, compared with areas of similar socio-economic status, which is a key driver of health, there is room for improvement.

Reducing Health Inequalities – Despite performing well overall, there is considerable inequality in life expectancy across Leicestershire. Life expectancy is around 6 years lower for men and women in the most deprived areas compared with the least deprived areas and we are focusing work to try to close this gap. Increasing life expectancy is driven by reducing death rates from the major killers. In the last 12 years there has been a 53% reduction in premature deaths from cardiovascular disease in Leicestershire and a 17% reduction for cancer. These improvements have been slower in socially disadvantaged groups and we are implementing work to achieve further reductions. Further progress is planned through work on smoking cessation and tobacco control, work with GPs to improve secondary prevention in patients with cardiovascular disease and diabetes, continued redesign of the stroke care pathway, alcohol harm initiatives, and supporting GP's to address later presentation of patients with cancer including tackling barriers to uptake of screening.

The Health and Wellbeing Board considered a report on **cancer mortality** in Leicestershire and incorporated the recommendations into the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Strategy, supported by the commissioning plans of Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Groups, also includes significant intervention that will contribute to further reductions in mortality in the other disease areas.

Reducing Smoking - Despite Leicestershire having the second lowest smoking-related illness rates in the region, around 17.1% of adults still smoke and we are working to reduce this further. Smoking remains the greatest cause of preventable deaths in Leicestershire with over 880 smoking related deaths per year. We have therefore maintained our stop smoking service, which helped 5,200 smokers to quit

in 2012/13. This has included targeting of vulnerable groups of smokers, such as manual workers and pregnant women. Tobacco-free Leicestershire and Rutland (TLR), our tobacco control alliance has been in existence since 2011 and in May 2012 was CLear (Challenge, Leadership and Results) accredited. Examples of the projects include work with schools and the Youth Offending Service to help change perceptions and reduce the number of young people using tobacco, Step Right Out – a smoke-free homes and cars campaign, and work by our Trading Standards to clamp down on under-age and illegal sales of tobacco products. New figures last year showed that smoking-related deaths in Leicestershire were falling, with fewer related hospital admissions.

Alcohol and Drugs - Substance misuse has a far reaching impact on individuals, families and communities. Our Substance Misuse Partnership Board has been tasked with reducing the harm and inequalities caused by substance misuse. Key actions include substance misuse prevention; early intervention with children and families; and training programmes to support frontline staff in key organisations to deliver brief interventions, particularly relating to alcohol. Our December 2012 *Legal/Highs Lethal Lows* campaign aimed at young people and adults highlighted the risks and harm these substances can cause. Over 3,000 individuals visited the campaign website and there were a number of direct requests for help for legal high use directed to our services.

A key priority relating to alcohol misuse is to reduce the number of people admitted to hospital for alcohol related causes. Initiatives include the delivery of brief alcohol interventions in primary care settings, increasing the capacity of the alcohol specialist nurses within hospital emergency departments, and reducing the number of alcohol-related frequent attenders.

Last year saw a continued rise in the number of people with substance misuse problems accessing treatment and support. To reflect local need, we have also shifted the balance of drug and alcohol users in treatment (1 in 5 users in treatment for alcohol in 2009/10 to 2 in 5 currently). In 2012/13 1470 adults in Leicestershire were in effective alcohol treatment and 1180 adults were in effective drug treatment. Our focus is to ensure people recover from their dependency and successfully move out of treatment and over the last two years we have seen some increase in the numbers of people successfully completing their treatment and reintegrating into their communities.

Reducing the prevalence of obesity - Following the development of a new healthy weight pathway for adults (and a maternal healthy weight pathway for pregnant women) 2012/13 saw continued expansion of Tier 2, specialist led weight management programmes Family Lifestyle Club (FLiC) and Lifestyle, Eating and Activity Programme (LEAP), and improvements in the quality and scale of the district wide exercise referral programme. A new maternal weight management programme was piloted and a new targeted basic cookery skills course delivered by the Adult Learning Team.

Reducing **child obesity** also continues to be a high priority. Obesity in reception year children is now 8.2% (compared to the England average of 9.5%) and in year 6 it is now 16.2% - significantly lower than the England average of 19.2%). From

autumn 2013, a number of school based interventions will be delivered including the FSA 'Food Routes' project, Big Cook Little Cook where parents and children learn to cook together and the Food for Life programme. These projects are complemented by increased physical activity opportunities funded through the Olympic legacy funding. There has been an increased focus on physical literacy in early years settings which is delivered in the context of the 'Healthy Tots' programme.

The School Food Support Service is continuing to sustain school meal uptake. The Service has been awarded the "bronze medal" certification endorsed by the Soil Association working with the Food for Life Partnership for the quality, provenance and locally sourced food provided as standard to children and young people in Leicestershire.

Improving sexual health - From April 2013 we became responsible for a range of sexual health services and are commissioning a new integrated sexual health service to improve access and allow more people to visit one clinic for all of their sexual health needs. The new service will commence on 1 January 2014. Work also continues to provide women with accessible contraceptive choices by improving provision of long acting reversible contraception from GP and specialist sexual health services. A variety of prevention programmes and services are also delivered to hard-to-reach populations at higher risk of poor sexual health, including commercial sex workers and people affected by HIV.

Mental health and wellbeing - One of our top priorities is to promote positive mental health and the early detection of mental health problems across all age groups. We are working on a multiagency Mental Health Strategy. We are also working with stakeholders to address wider social determinants of mental health e.g. housing, social exclusion and income inequality and to mitigate the negative impact of benefit and other economic changes linked to the economic downturn. We also continue to work to improve the management of people with common and severe and enduring mental health problems through identifying their needs and addressing risk factors for their premature mortality. Suicide prevention remains a priority and our 2013-16 Suicide Prevention Strategy is being progressed by a group made up of partners across the NHS, local authority, police and voluntary sector.

Workplace health - Our Workplace Health Group has developed a new "integrated pathway" to encourage universal adoption of workplace charter standards and systematic cross referral of clients between programmes and coordination of activity across specialist provider services. As part of this, commissioners have extended the remit of the Healthy Workplaces programme to develop an expert hub for Leicestershire workplace programmes. The Council and the two Clinical Commissioning Groups invested £120,000 to help fund extension of the Leicestershire Fit for Work programme into 2014. Leicestershire Fit for Work is a not-for-profit service that works with local GPs and patients, to support people with illnesses to remain in or return to work. The scheme was so successful that more than 70% of people who used it over the last year returned to work. It was seen as a national exemplar and the basis for the creation of a national service, which is due to launch next year.

Maternal health - Initiatives to improve maternal health include campaigns on breast-feeding, nutrition and smoking prevention. Women accessing maternity services at an early stage is close to the aspiration set locally, although breastfeeding rates remain below aspiration. Rates of women smoking at the time of delivery are low and well-within local aspirations.

Healthy schools - Schools in Leicestershire remain committed to improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people. To this end, 98% of schools in the county are continuing to participate in the Leicestershire Healthy Schools Programme. 95% of schools have the 'foundation of health and wellbeing' in place by having achieved national healthy school status. In addition, in the last academic year, a total of 41 schools have achieved 'Enhanced Healthy School' status by achieving meaningful health and wellbeing outcomes for key priorities including Healthy Weight, Substance Misuse, Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health, and Emotional Health and Wellbeing.

Teenage Pregnancy - New figures last year revealed a further drop in Leicestershire's teenage pregnancies. Latest statistics show that the rate is the second best in the East Midlands. Leicestershire's figures remain significantly lower than the national average at 26 per 1,000, and reveal a drop of over 30 per cent in under-18 conception rates compared to 1998. The rates are the lowest seen in Leicestershire for nine years and represent a 1% drop compared to the previous year. Leicestershire's Teenage Pregnancy Partnership works with young people to reduce conception rates and provide support for teenage parents. Over the past 24 months, it has launched a new toolkit for the delivery of relationships and sex education in further education colleges and encouraged young people to contribute to a new book designed to showcase being a teenage mum or dad in the 21st century. The 'pop' text service for young people provides anonymous advice and information to over 50 young people per month. Work has continued towards the target of 60% of young mothers being in education, employment or training (EET) and overall progress is positive.

Sport and Physical Activity - Our Leicester-Shire and Rutland Sports partnership (LRS) with schools, National Governing Bodies of Sport clubs, coaches and volunteers aims to make Leicestershire the most sporting and physically active place by 2025. We have established a number of clear ambitions through a new Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity 2013-17 - including that there is a year-on-year increase in participation by children and young people in high quality PE, Sport and Physical Activity; the number of adults regularly taking part in sport and activity increases year on year; sports facilities are high quality and accessible; the London 2012 games and other events continue to inspire everyone to be involved in sport; there are high quality volunteers, coaches and officials and participants fulfil their potential by accessing high quality sporting pathways.

In 2012/13 the partnership invested over £2m through local sports alliances and over 87,000 people benefited from £1m into locality sport and physical activity plans, generating 426,220 attendances. 37.4% of people are participating once a week in sport – an increase since the 2005 people survey. 15 clubs received £780,000 of funding from Sport England's Inspired Facilities Fund and over £1.5m agreed with housing developers for future sports facility infrastructure. 125 clubs were supported

to access funding. We invested £148,200 to deliver Sportivate projects, attracting £94,000 of partner funding and resulting in 4,738 participants aged 14-25. Over 170,000 individuals benefitted from LRS organised events.

We invested £220,000 to maintain and develop our School Sport and Physical Activity Networks (SSPANs), and trained 207 teachers in Key Stage 1 to assess physical literacy. We invested £50,000 in trainee sport coaches and £135,000 to employ 11 legacy makers to support development of physical activity. 55 coaches accessed level 1 and 2 bursaries and 765 coaches were supported online. 107 athletes were supported through the Go Gold Talented Athlete fund.

Olympic Legacy for Leicestershire - We approved funds to support a number of initiatives designed to provide a lasting Olympic legacy - to capitalise on the spirit evoked by the Olympic and Paralympic Games and the unique opportunity to increase the number of people being physically active. Nearly 10,000 people engaged in 45 athlete visits to schools, clubs and community settings as part of the LRS Olympic and Paralympic Roadshow. 20 sports projects across the county and city were granted the prestigious London 2012 Inspire Mark which recognises exceptional and innovative projects inspired by the 2012 games. 104 clubs also received financial support through the Olympic Legacy Programme. In addition, LOCOG Chairman Sebastian Coe visited the county and attended an event to celebrate our legacy achievements – attended by Games Makers, torchbearers and schools.

Children and Young People

Government policy is significantly affecting the way in which services for children and young people and their families are now organised and delivered. The primary focus of the Council's role for children's services is on vulnerable children, young people and their families, with an emphasis on early help. The majority of services for children and young people are regulated and subject to regular inspection by OfSTED.

Education Sufficiency - Good quality **early learning and childcare provision** gives young children the best possible start. The County Council met its sufficiency duty in 2012/13 and there were 1,056 childcare settings at the end of March 2013 of which 73% achieved an OfSTED rating of good or outstanding. The County Council used £2.7m of government money to pay for extra places for two-year-olds to help benefit low-income families and help parents return to work. Around 1,800 extra young children can now access child care - the money is designed to assist around 20% of all two-year-olds in England. At June 2013, 83% of schools had been judged by Ofsted to be good or better – this is above the national average and an improvement of 9% from the previous academic year.

Figures for the 2012/13 academic year show that there were sufficient **school places** available across the county and that record numbers of children secured places at their first-choice primary, infant or junior school. A total of 92% secured their number one option – 2% higher than last year - almost 7,000 parents. The proportion of children offered a place at one of their top three choices is 96%, 0.5% more than 2012. Almost 11,000 young people achieved places at their first-choice secondary school, 97.4% of children.

Education Quality - In 2012/13 at Foundation Stage, a new set of achievement measures were introduced for a Good Level of Development. 46.4% of children in Leicestershire achieved the new benchmark. National averages are likely to be higher when published but indications are that Leicestershire has narrowed the equality gap between the lowest scoring 20% of children and the median.

Key Stage 1 results for 7 year olds were excellent and Leicestershire is in the top 20% of all local authorities. The Average Points Score in end of year tests in summer 2012 was above the national average and performance in each subject area – Reading, Writing, Maths, Speaking and Listening, Science – was also above the national average. Results for 11 year olds at **Key Stage 2** were broadly in line with national average but have declined slightly since 2012. Expected Levels of progress were below national averages but actual achievement was generally above. This was especially the case at Level 5, which exceeds the government's achievement target. Level 5 achievement in Maths, Science, Reading, Writing and English all exceeded national averages.

In 2012/13 pupils in Leicestershire schools performed well at all secondary school Key Stages. For 14 year olds at **Key Stage 3** results continue to be above the national average and have further improved since 2012. Leicestershire is ranked top amongst statistical neighbours and in the top 5% of all Local Authorities. At **Key Stage 4**, Leicestershire saw a 2.4% rise in pupils achieving 5 GCSEs A*-C (including

Maths and English), a more rapid improvement than the national rate. Improvement was especially marked in Maths and Leicestershire is now in the top half of local authorities for the percentage of pupils passing GCSEs A-G. At post-16 **Key Stage 5**, Leicestershire bucked the national trend of failing standards and is ranked in the top half of all local authorities for pupil achievement. Leicestershire pupils recorded the counties highest point score per pupil since the measure was introduced in 2006, despite a national dip. 'A' level results for 2013 have improved with A*-C grades achieved for 74% of subjects entered, an increase from 69% in 2012 and average points per entry have increased from 204 in 2012 to 209 in 2013

The local authority is responsible for ensuring good education, employment and training provision for all young people up to the age of 19, including schools, FE Colleges and Apprenticeship Providers. There are 2,200 young people on an Apprenticeship and 73% completed a framework which matches the national average. This is an increase of 2% from 2012. The number of 16 – 19 year olds **not in education, training or employment (NEET)** remains below the national average at 3.6% in January 2013, with the county ranked first compared to statistical neighbours. New initiatives include multi-agency job clubs operated in partnership with Prospects, the Adult Learning Service, District and Borough Council Housing staff, Further Education establishments and Job Centre Plus.

Education Excellence - OfSTED has introduced a new inspection framework against which to measure the Council's approach to school improvement. A self-supporting schools system that will secure high standards has been developed through the creation of the **Leicestershire Educational Excellence Partnership (LEEP)**. The Children and Young People's Service has actively engaged in a number of national research projects to test the approach and has received good feedback and encouragement from the DfE and OfSTED on the model. There were an unprecedented number of school inspections in the Spring and Summer Terms 2013.

Education of Vulnerable Children - The five Secondary School **Behaviour Partnerships** manage funding for alternative education placements in addition to making sure that vulnerable children out of school get a place in a school quickly. Over the last few years, partnership work has reduced permanent exclusions at county schools by over 80% from 144 to 27. We are also progressing plans to boost the achievements of young people who are permanently excluded from school through changes to Oakfield School, a pupil referral unit catering for up to 50 children not in mainstream education.

Ensuring good **educational outcomes for looked after children** continues to be a priority. The most recent OfSTED report found that, "The education team provides a one-to-one support arrangement for GCSE exams as well as additional support for younger pupils on maths and English, should they wish to sign up for this; this has helped many young people to achieve greater success in education." A range of support is available for older students, including a GCSE support programme and mentoring scheme which was highlighted by OfSTED in their report. There is an improving trend in outcomes for children in care at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. In 2012, 5 A*-C GCSE (including equivalent) results of 36.7% were in line with national results

for looked after children of 37%. School attendance of all children in care also continues to improve, rising from 92.8% in 2012 to 94% in 2013.

Special educational needs services have been at the forefront of new developments this year including starting construction work on a new, ultra-modern £9.35m special school in Charnwood that will provide a new home for Ashmount School and improve facilities for disability and special needs sport in the area. The School will offer places for 125 children and young people aged between 4 and 19. The new school is due to open in spring 2014 and will be the fourth area special school to be developed in Leicestershire. The opening of Bungalow 66 in Braunstone has provided new local specialist support for up to 10 young people with autism and will enable children who find school challenging to receive tailored support from experienced staff. Creating the facility means that children can be supported closer to home and saves the council money by reducing its spend on out-of-county placements – saving more than £35,000. The Abingdon Academy in Wigston has also opened its new Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) base called Excel and accepted its first pupils in September.

Early Help - Early Help describes the type of support given to families by a range of agencies to stop problems happening and to tackle them as soon as possible. A single integrated approach to meeting need through prevention and early intervention has been developed and this is now aligned across services for children and young people, and families. Early help is provided through a range of services as described below:

a) Sure Start Children's Centres – the children's centre programme brings together a range of council services with health, Jobcentre Plus, early education and childcare providers, voluntary, private and community organisations. The programme makes contact with all families with children under five and the majority of services are targeted towards families with specific needs. Activities include healthy eating advice, breastfeeding support, parenting advice, speech and language development and training and employment support. In August 2013, our Children's Centres in Melton secured a 'good' OfSTED rating. OfSTED reported that the centres provide all of the information that parents and the wider community may need to improve their lives, praised the commitment of staff and commended the joint-working between the two councils. In 2012/13, 89% of parents were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their children's centre, and 91% said that they would recommend it to other parents.

b) 5-11 Services provide early help support to families where there are children of primary school age and focus on the developmental stage of these children. Support is focused on the most vulnerable. These, and the other early help services, will be subject to new OfSTED inspection arrangements from November 2013.

c) Youth Provision – early help work with older children has primarily focused on the most vulnerable young people. Last year, 225 young people gained nationally recognised certificates as a result of their involvement with early help services. The commissioning of Voluntary Community Service (VCS) projects also led to a further 4,070 young people being worked with.

d) Supporting Leicestershire Families - a new service to support vulnerable families and to save money was also launched in April 2013. A team of 50 family support workers is helping vulnerable families to turn their lives around, reducing the need for them to deal with several different agencies. Known as Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF), the service brings together the county and district councils, the police, the NHS and other agencies, to help 500 families each year. In Leicestershire, vulnerable families currently cost the taxpayer £158m per year, through benefits, health problems, care cases and other interventions from national and local agencies. It is estimated that SLF will eventually save £50m, or more than £20,000 per family, by providing better, more targeted services. The Prime Minister has praised the success of the Leicestershire scheme which is turning around the lives of vulnerable families. The work in Leicestershire was instrumental in the Government's decision to extend the programme.

e) Strengthening Families - this service provides the bridge between early help and intervention services (child protection and children in care) and keeps children safe from the risk of significant harm whilst they continue to live with their families. This service is relatively new but is already having a significant impact on reducing the number of children that need to come into the care of the local authority.

Child Safeguarding - The safety of children in Leicestershire remains a top priority. Our Central Duty Desk has re-launched as 'First Response'. It offers one single point of contact for anyone with concerns about a child, and dealt with over 15,000 enquiries relating to vulnerable children last year. The service makes it easy for anyone with concerns about a child's welfare to get in touch and provides the best and most immediate response we can. It also frees up social workers to spend more time in communities working with children and their families. All calls about a child's welfare are dealt with by a social worker who makes an assessment and acts immediately if necessary. There is a dedicated support service for schools. Over 6,000 of the concerns resulted in actual referrals to the Council's children's social care team. The number of referrals to Children's Social Care rose by 12.3% last year, in line with what is happening nationally. A Peer Review carried out by our regional neighbouring local authorities in 2013 commended the quality of work carried out by Our First Response Children's Duty Team.

Child Protection - On 1st April 2013 there were 393 children who were the subject of a child protection plan as a result of emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect or sexual abuse. There are good arrangements to ensure children in immediate need of protection are responded to in a timely and thorough manner. All child protection cases are responded to promptly and mostly within 24 hours of the concerns being raised. The voice of children and young people subject to child protection procedures are a priority and an additional Children's Rights Officer has been recruited to enable young people aged 10 years and over to participate in meetings held about them. All our child protection cases were reviewed within statutory timescales.

Child Sexual Exploitation - The strong working relationship between partners on the Local Safeguarding Children's Board has increased our focus on safeguarding children from sexual exploitation. The Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has overseen the establishment of a multi-

agency strategy and devised tailored multi-agency training to raise awareness amongst teachers, social workers, police officers and other practitioners, and to enable them to spot any signs of exploitation.

Fostering – In January 2013 the County Council's work to place vulnerable children in secure and loving foster homes was praised by OfSTED following an inspection that rated the service as 'good'. This is the second highest grade and one better than the previous inspection outcome five years ago. OfSTED described the service as 'high quality' and report that children and young people make real progress in terms of their physical, emotional and mental health, and receive support and advice to help them make the transition into adulthood. Inspectors also praised recent improvements made, including a re-shaping of the service.

Adoption - Adoption transforms the lives of vulnerable children. In July 2013, OfSTED judged the current service to be adequate. During the last year we have significantly increased the number of children finding stable and loving homes with adoptive parents. The Council was able to find new family homes for 42 young people - an increase of 50% compared to the previous 12 months. We are also aware of the importance of ensuring that children coming into care are placed in the right family setting as soon as possible. Figures in November 2012 showed that adopted children in Leicestershire find family homes faster than the national average. The Council places children within 18 months - six weeks quicker than in 2012 and better than the England average of 21 months. Following changes in the adoption process, the Council now aims to assess potential adopters in 6 to 8 months - the process used to take around 18 months. We have brought in new social workers to focus on finding families for children and a more flexible and straightforward approach to approving adopters. We are also recruiting an extra 50 adopters this year.

Children Looked After – For a small number of children, the authority looks after their welfare by bringing them into care. In 2013 we agreed to invest an extra £1.7m in protecting vulnerable children following the ongoing rise in the number of children in care. Currently there are 439 children in care, a rise of 24% compared to 2011.

We support children in care and 250 care leavers through a combination of one-to-one tuition, mentoring, youth work, social work support and a wide range of participation and engagement events. This encourages and supports them to raise aspirations, be more confident and strive to get their best outcomes. As their corporate parents, the council works hard to ensure that they don't miss out and enriches lives by providing young people with a range of opportunities including work experience, apprenticeships, access to computers as well as cultural, leisure and social experiences. A new scheme has been introduced to give children in care an apprenticeship opportunity with every department in the County Council. This supports the County Council's pledge to ensure that children leave care prepared and sufficiently independent for adulthood and offers these apprenticeships within the 'family business' of Leicestershire County Council.

Disabled children - Through the Scrutiny Review Panel process we have agreed a new **Transitions** Strategy and action plan to improve arrangements that support the transition of young people with disabilities as they move to adult social care services.

Children's Health – The County Council, NHS, public health services and schools work closely together to ensure that children are healthy. During the year we established a new partnership approach and commissioning plan to focus on children's health improvements. Details of actions taken and planned, and overall health figures are set out in the separate section on health.

School Sport - In recognition of the importance we place on school sport, additional funding has been provided to support the County Sports Partnership to retain and develop seven School Sport and Physical Activity Networks (SSPAN), including one representing disabled young people through our special schools. This helps all children and young people to have the best opportunity to take part not only in PE within the curriculum, but sport and physical activity beyond the school. This integrated school sport model begins with learning and teaching outcomes in the school, but is deliberately linked to a wider community sport, physical activity and health offer. Alongside this there is a fully inclusive school sport competition framework that starts with pupils participating in festivals and sport days in schools, continues with County sport finals and concludes with a 'School Games' sub-regional final for our most gifted young people.

High Morale and Self-esteem - The active participation of children, young people and their families contributes to developing high morale and good self-esteem. There are now a wide range of opportunities for young people to get involved in decision making. This year saw a number of developments including:

- young people trained to be inspectors, helping to evaluate services provided;
- the Children In Care Council developed to include a wider range of young people;
- a stand-alone interactive website called The Beacon designed by and for children in care with students at Loughborough University;
- UK Youth Parliament representatives attending regional and national sittings; and
- "Unheard voice" projects (older young people) have been delivered across the county.

Bullying - Changes in national legislation mean that the responsibility for anti-bullying has now shifted to schools. However, the Council's anti-bullying team continues to support schools by focusing on preventing bullying at an early stage. Special awards were also presented to a number of schools to mark their commitment to tackling bullying. The Chartermark is given to schools who demonstrate that anti-bullying work is carried out throughout the year. Since the Beyond Bullying Awards were launched three years ago, 55 schools across Leicestershire have received the accreditation.

Vulnerable Adults and Older People

In order to meet the rising demand for social care services there is an increasing focus on improving the health and wellbeing of the population through prevention and early intervention. Services increasingly concentrate on helping people live independently, reach personal goals, improve quality of life and build social networks of support. Services are becoming more holistic, supporting the whole person in their living and working environment and are helping people to help themselves.

Alongside the increased focus on enhancing quality of life and preventing need, providing quality services which protect vulnerable people from avoidable harm are critical success factors.

Personal budgets – Personal Budgets give people more choice and control of the ways in which they are supported, and who provides that support. Fifty per cent of social care customers, including carers, are using Personal Budgets which represents a steady increase from last year (2011/12 = 39%). From a customer perspective, Leicestershire's Adult Social Care Survey told us that 74% of people feel that they have control over their daily life, a significant improvement since 2011/12 (66%).

ChooseMySupport – The ChooseMySupport website offers people an electronic market place to choose which social care support services and products will enable them to lead independent lives. The Council's Customer Service Centre acts as a first point of contact for the majority of service users and during the last year dealt with 100,000 in bound calls.

The Social Care Market - Providers are being supported to utilise cash payments by being provided with templates of good tools (for example, suggested contracts with service users). In addition, the Market Development Team has undertaken extensive work with independent and voluntary sector providers to encourage a meaningful and targeted market place, including hosting regular forums, networking events, and targeted work with groups of service users to establish their needs and match them with suitable providers.

Person centred services - A review of Hinckley Community Life Choices (previously known as day services) has helped a large number of people to access more person centred community based services using Personal Budgets. This project is now being extended to give other people in Leicestershire the same opportunity.

Locality planning - Locality Managers are developing Locality Plans focussed on the needs of a particular area, tapping into local expertise, and developing relationships with partners and organisations in the community. The plans are a tool for stimulating collaborative work to improve outcomes for service users and the wider community.

The Council has a range of self supported assessment forms (SSAFs) throughout the customer Self Directed Support (SDS) pathway which are outcome focussed. Service users can complete them independently or via support of their choice. The

'My Outcomes' Tool is a recent development which allows people being assessed and reviewed for care and support to set their own goals and check their progress.

Extra Care Housing - We have progressed delivery of our Leicestershire Extra Care Housing Strategy 2010-15. During 2013 we agreed to invest £495,000 on a 53-place extra care scheme at Brooklands Gardens, Market Harborough and up to £1.3m in the extra care scheme at Winchester Road, Blaby.

Carers quality of life - The Carers Survey shows that 27% of carers feel that they have control over their life. We are performing below average in this area which is addressed through the implementation of the *Joint Carers Strategy: Supporting the Health and Wellbeing of Carers*. A Project Officer has been appointed to ensure actions within the strategy are delivered by all partner agencies.

Activities have included the design and implementation of a new Pilot Carer Health & Wellbeing Service in partnership with carers and Clinical Commissioning Groups. An innovative model of service delivery has been developed which allows for Carers to be identified early in their caring role. Early identification provides an opportunity to give timely information, advice and signposting to carers identified through GP practices.

Integrated commissioning - The Adults and Communities Department has supported the development of the local Health and Wellbeing Board and formed an Integrated Commissioning Board (ICB), which includes partners from local NHS services and district councils.

This arrangement has supported a partnership approach to the commissioning of health and social care services. An action plan continues to be developed, focussing on personalisation (integrated personal health and social care budgets); preventing avoidable hospital admissions and improving hospital discharge processes; providing care closer to home and enabling people to remain independent in their own homes for longer; learning disabilities commissioning; and integrated approaches to service quality.

Hospital admissions and discharges - In Leicestershire in 2012/13 there were 11 admissions to residential and nursing care per 100,000 of the 18-64 population and 798 admissions per 100,000 of the population for adults aged over 64. We are performing well in relation to people aged 18-64 years. However, making further reductions in admissions through improved community support for the older population is now a priority.

The number of older people who were discharged from hospital to re-ablement services and are still at home after 90 days is one method of examining effectiveness of the intervention (re-ablement is the short term support given to someone in their own home, designed to help them to regain their independence; for instance after a period of illness or a stay in hospital).

Seventy nine percent of older people who were discharged from hospital who accessed re-ablement services were still at home 90 days after discharge. The service has received positive customer feedback through recorded compliments (39

were made in the period 1st January – 31st March 2013). In addition, we are performing better than the national average in relation to the low number of delayed discharges attributed to Adult Social Care.

The Hospital2Home Service commenced in April 2012 which is aimed at people leaving hospital who may need low level support to return home. The service also includes a Hamper Scheme providing a basic food parcel for people and aims to reduce hospital re-admissions.

Assistive technology and Telecare provide a cost effective method of meeting the care and health needs of older and disabled people, and can help people to maintain their independence. It also helps to support and reassure carers. An interim countywide Telecare Service commenced in April 2012 and the Assistive Technology Service has been developed alongside this, providing staff support with assessment of need and the fitting of both monitored and stand alone equipment. Leicestershire's Telecare and Community alarm service will be expanded from 2014 to include people living in all types of tenure to prevent need for social care support.

A "Books on Prescription" scheme was introduced in 2012 in partnership with the library service. "Books on Prescription" is an early self-help intervention that targets those with emerging or low level mental health issues. Quality approved books dealing with a range of mental health issues are available from selected libraries across the county. These can be prescribed by health professionals or self selected through the library.

The First Contact Scheme was initially available to people over the age of 65 but has now been extended and is available to all adults. The scheme is a partnership of services who work together in co-ordination to ensure vulnerable people are able to access the right support and information. The aim of the scheme is to help adults remain independent. In 2012/13 a survey showed that 80% of customers, who had accessed First Contact in the previous 12 months, were still living independently in their own homes with no increase in support needs.

Experience of care and support - the percentage of people satisfied with their care and support increased in 2012/13 to 66.2% with only 1% feeling very or extremely dissatisfied. We are performing in the top 25 per cent of authorities in England on this measure. The overall satisfaction of carers with social services was better than the national average at 43%. The number of carers who were consulted in discussions has improved considerably since 2011/12 and we are performing well in this area.

We also know it is important for carers to find the information they need to assist them in their caring role. 70% of carers surveyed found it easy to find information, which is lower than the national average.

Information and Advice Strategy- The Strategy was produced in March 2011 and a dedicated Project Officer is in post to deliver it. Engagement with information and advice providers and customers has shaped a new model for information and advice delivery, aiming to improve access routes, quality and consistency of provision.

Dementia – Significant progress has been achieved in this priority area by working in partnership with health colleagues and providers. Achievements have included the implementation of a Memory Adviser service; aiming to help people with dementia to stay at home for longer, be able to foresee and plan for things before they get to crisis point and to live a happier and more social life.

In addition, three residential care homes in Leicestershire were supported to apply for Department of Health funding to make them more 'dementia friendly'. The homes at Melton, Shepshed and Ashby all successfully bid for a proportion of the £50m offered by the Department of Health to improve the environment for people with dementia. The Council worked closely with the homes throughout the submission process and is continuing to support them in the delivery of the improvements.

Memory Plus is a new service in partnership with museums, providing training to residential care home staff in engaging residents in meaningful activities and providing stimulating contexts for conversation and social interaction. In addition museums have, over the last two years, commissioned small works of art designed especially for people with dementia. These items may now be borrowed by care homes and community groups.

Safeguarding - The Adult Social Care Survey shows that the percentage of people who use services who feel safe is lower than the national average at 60%. However the percentage of people who said that services have made them feel safe was higher than the national average (89%), an increase since 2011/12.

A Safeguarding Team is established, with an excellent record of ensuring the best interests of people without capacity are protected. This team reduce the levels and types of restrictions on a person's liberty and promote good practice in care homes and hospitals.

The Quality Assessment Framework has demonstrated our commitment to supporting and recognising high quality care. During 2013, more than 40 care homes throughout Leicestershire were recognised (an increase from 12 in 2012), some of which also gained Dignity in Care awards. This approach ensures that the homes exceed the standard quality of service while successful 'Dignity in Care' recipients have zero tolerance on all forms of abuse.

The Dignity in Care principles ensure each person is treated as an individual, maintain the maximum possible level of independence and engage with family members and carers.

A Quality Improvement Team (QIT) has also been implemented, working with residential and nursing care providers who are performing unsatisfactorily. The QIT support providers to develop and implement improvement plans.

The 'Keep Safe Card' is an initiative for people with learning disabilities where important information about the individual such as emergency contact numbers, medication and how they prefer to communicate can be captured. The card has been adapted locally for use with older people and those with a hearing impairment and has been shared nationally as an example of excellence.

A total of 178 “**Keep Safe Places**” have been established in busy shopping areas across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and include libraries. Staff in Keep Safe Places can offer immediate reassurances to people who are feeling vulnerable, upset, scared or distressed, and call for a relative or friend, or the emergency services if required.

The ‘**4 Ways 2 Warmth**’ scheme (4W2W) is a partnership across Leicester and Leicestershire (including local communities, the voluntary sector and statutory organisations) which aims to proactively reduce the number of deaths and ill health amongst vulnerable people, families and carers associated with the winter and severe weather conditions.

Culture and Wellbeing

During the last year the County Council's Community and Wellbeing services have carried out a range of work to support delivery of the Leicestershire Together priorities, with a particular focus on the economy, ageing population and vulnerable people.

City of Culture Bid - The County Council is fully supporting the Leicester UK City of Culture 2017 bid. This has included making a £2m contribution to underwrite a successful bid and specifically to support the complementary cultural activity in the County, to maximise economic and other benefits for Leicestershire. The focus for the county would be around the market towns and tourist attractions in the county, building on the themes of Richard III, transport such as railways, aviation and canals, industry and post-industrial settings, and illumination projects for communities in local parks and community spaces. A successful bid is forecast to bring a 10% growth in visitor expenditure over the next four years and a continued rise on the back of hosting the event. Employment in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector could double from 7,000 to 14,000 by 2020 and a return of £9 for each £1 invested based on previous evidence.

Richard III and Cathedral Gardens - We have also continued to support and collaborate with the City Council in recognition of Richard III, the King who died in the County and who will be reinterred in the City. We have contributed £250,000 to the Cathedral Gardens scheme to recognise the role of the Diocese and Leicester Cathedral across the County and City, and the positive links between Bosworth Battlefield, the Cathedral and the new Richard III Visitor Centre, including an artwork specifically commissioned to recognise Richard and Bosworth Battlefield which will be in place by spring 2014. **A Green Plaque Scheme** in Leicestershire to recognise and promote notable local individuals and the buildings associated with them is being introduced and will be launched in the New Year. **Creative Leicestershire** continues to encourage economic growth through fostering new small businesses in the creative sector and mentoring the new entrepreneurs and promoting their products.

In partnership with a range of work and skills stakeholders, the County's Library Service levered in £100,000 to enable weekly **Work Clubs** to take place across our Market Towns. These take advantage of the libraries' neutral space to offer informal help and advice to unemployed people and guide them to learning and employment opportunities. A shadow pilot at Hinckley has seen nearly 2,000 visits.

Adult Learning – The Leicestershire Adult Learning Service offered a range of inspiring courses as well as a 20% discount on fees if learners enrolled early. Many of the courses were free to learners receiving certain benefits with extra support for those on low incomes. During the year our work with adult learners was commended by OfSTED. Inspectors praised the continually improving work being done by the Service, which provides programmes for more than 7,300 part-time learners. The service, which targets the most disadvantaged groups, received an overall effectiveness rating of "good" following an inspection. The OfSTED report praised the very strong support given to learners who have significant personal and learning needs and highlighted that learners successfully improve their personal and

employability skills, which also benefits their economic well-being. An action plan and future direction for the service has been agreed to make further improvements.

Over 1,000 **volunteers have** supported libraries and museums over the last year, with over 100 of these having mental health and other disability challenges. Major achievements have been the **Summer Reading Challenge** work with young volunteers and the development of a **work readiness** scheme for young people to gain experience in the council work place. Volunteers contributed over **42,000 hours** to the service during 2012/13 delivering a value of over **£460,200**.

The County Council, in partnership with health bodies and the Reading Agency, has played a leading role in the national **Reading Well: Books on Prescription Scheme** - highlighting the important role that libraries can play in mental health. The scheme provides early intervention through self-help books for adults experiencing a variety of low level mental health conditions. The **Memory Plus** training and resource package delivered by the Museums Service enables care staff to deliver a series of facilitated activities to people with dementia, utilising museum resources and sensory stimulation. The **Wellbeing Wednesday's** cultural wellbeing events during October 2012 used the 5 ways to wellbeing as its central theme, supported by the Public Health Service. Over 2,000 people attended over 35 events.

Libraries - Last year we opened our £1.3m extended and refurbished Loughborough library to provide social care, adult learning and other services from one site. The new facility includes services to promote the independence of people with disabilities including a state-of-the-art interactive multi-sensory area. Also on offer are community activities, new adult learning facilities, including free English and Maths tuition, information technology classes, plus a range of health, leisure and confidence-building courses and the re-location of local history material bringing it together with genealogy resources for people who want to trace their family tree.

Communities and Wellbeing services continue to be commissioned to deliver targeted literacy, language and learning services through Leicestershire's children's centres. Through libraries and museums services over 12,000 young people and their families took part in the annual Summer Reading Challenge, a free literacy intervention that maintains literacy levels during the school holiday break.

Museums - Local museums received three regional awards last year. The first "Heart of the Community award" went to Ashby museum for their work recording the closure of the Standard soap factory in the town. The County Council's Melton Carnegie Museum won the award for its after school work with teenagers digitising the collections. A special award was given to the County Council for museum work with people with special educational needs, autism and older people with mental health challenges, and working with the siblings of young disabled people.

The Charnwood Museum was awarded the Small Visitor Attraction of the year award at the Leicester and Leicestershire Excellence in Tourism awards ceremony. This meant that the attraction would go on to compete in the National Visit England Award Finals. Charnwood Museum is run as a partnership between the County Council and Charnwood Borough Council and the award recognises the hard work of staff. During the year we agreed a new arrangement for the management and delivery of

the Harborough Museum, in partnership with Harborough District Council and Market Harborough Historical Society. Over 30,000 young people visited the County Council's Museums for learning and educational activity and targeted services for young people using museum loans and artworks in schools reached over 100,000.

Safer Communities

There have been a number of changes to the way in which community safety services are delivered during the last year. Leicestershire's first Police and Crime Commissioner was elected in November 2012. The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner is to ensure that the policing needs of communities are met as effectively as possible and to give the public the ability to ensure the police are accountable.

The Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel is responsible for publicly scrutinising the actions and decisions of the Police and Crime Commissioner and holding him to account. The Panel also acts as a support for the Commissioner in carrying out his responsibilities. The Panel is hosted by Leicestershire County Council and is made up of representatives of each local authority in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, as well as two independent members.

Crime and Offending - Most types of **crime**, including violent crime and acquisitive crime have reduced during 2012/13. After a large increase in domestic burglary at the start of the year, police and local community safety partnerships worked across the county and helped to reduce burglaries later in the year.

Adult re-offending rates remain among the lowest in the country, with just over 20% of offenders going on to re-offend within 12 months. Adult offenders on the Drug Intervention Programme show a 71% reduction in volume of offending following their involvement on the programme. Organisations and projects addressing re-offending have been set up to work alongside the Supporting Leicestershire Families service, and prevent offending by individuals in these families.

Youth Offending - A smaller proportion of young offenders re-offended in 2012/13 compared to the previous year. Our **Youth Offending Service** delivers a range of targeted group work programmes for young people who are at risk of offending, or who have entered the Criminal Justice System. 81 young people attended group work programmes focussing on their specific needs such as positive relationships, internet safety, victim awareness and fire-setting. A new 'Out of Court Disposal' panel has been set up to respond to changes in sentencing from April 2013. The panel has the choice of a community resolution, youth caution, Youth Conditional Caution or charge. Since the introduction of this process a quarter of matters have been returned to the police for consideration for a community resolution, with the other matters being disposed of by means of cautions, conditional cautions or charge.

Domestic Abuse - A new helpline providing support and advice to women and men affected by domestic abuse has been commissioned for the County. Alongside this, support services for adults and families affected by domestic abuse have been

reviewed to ensure that they are meeting need across the County. Domestic abuse services supported over 900 people in their journey out of abuse in 2012/13.

Hate Crime – Our Hate Incident Monitoring Project ran a successful campaign in February raising awareness of hate incidents against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The campaign had significant traditional and social media coverage. Visitors to the project’s website increased by four times compared to the previous month and a number of incidents were reported to the project as a direct result of the media coverage and events.

Anti-social Behaviour - During the last year criminal damage has reduced across the county. In addition fewer people reported having been a victim of ASB during the year. The Safer Communities Strategy Board funded the countywide roll-out of the Charnwood TwentyTwenty Mentoring Project, which supported 76 young people at risk of involvement in antisocial behaviour this year. To the end of February, 91% of these have not been involved in crime or ASB since the mentoring started. The IMPACT project has worked in 32 communities with 492 young people to address youth-related anti-social behaviour and encourage engagement in positive activities.

Vulnerable People - The ‘Safe Inside Safe Outside’ Project has been set up to work with vulnerable people affected by ASB, supporting them to build their confidence and resilience. Though in its early stages, those the project has worked with show signs of improved well-being, community engagement and other positive outcomes.

Safe Trading - Eighteen cases involving unfair trading practices were brought before the courts by Leicestershire Trading Standards. All resulted in convictions, nine defendants received a community punishment order, suspended sentence or imprisonment. Fines and costs awarded totalled £28,650. In addition, formal agreements were obtained from a further 22 businesses to stop a variety of unfair trading practices and £170,000 was confiscated from offenders under the Proceeds of Crime Act. Over 40,000 items of counterfeit goods were seized valued at £728,845. Where possible these illegal goods, particularly clothing, have been ‘de-branded’ by ‘approved’ charities and distributed to those in most need within the UK and abroad. Other items such as DVDs are destroyed and the materials recycled. Five cases involving the sale of alcohol to under-18s have resulted in more stringent alcohol licensing conditions being applied following enforcement action.

The Trading Standards service also provided free advice and guidance to 1,195 local and national businesses trading within the County, to help them comply with their legal responsibilities. Our Trading Standards service has also been weighing and measuring all sorts of equipment to ensure consumers and businesses get a fair deal. In the last 12 months Council officers have checked more than 300 petrol pumps, over 400 pieces of weighing equipment such as shop scales, 31 weighbridges and packages sold by quantity at 220 businesses. Out of the petrol pumps tested only 1.2 per cent were found to have a problem while around 13 per cent of weighbridges - equipment used to weigh lorries carrying bulk goods - were found to be faulty. Warnings were given to the businesses concerned, requiring them to make adjustments to the equipment so that it would weigh or measure accurately.

Communities in Charge, Volunteering and Community Cohesion

We have developed our **Communities in Charge** approach (the Leicestershire response to Big Society) during the year. This sets out how the Council will work with communities to respond to the current challenging financial environment, including service changes and withdrawals, by building community capacity to contribute to tackling four identified priorities. The approach includes specific tools and resources to help communities to support the vulnerable and disadvantaged and play a more direct role in service delivery. Our Big Society Survey 2013 informed the review of the programme and provided valuable information about the best way to overcome potential barriers to making it work in Leicestershire.

Volunteering - Work done by volunteers makes a crucial contribution towards bringing communities together and making places better to live and work in. Through Leicestershire Together a new volunteering strategy has been developed setting out how public sector partners will work together to recruit, support and celebrate volunteers in Leicestershire. Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL), as the support service for community and voluntary groups, has supported and built voluntary sector capacity and engagement in developing and delivering approaches across the key priority areas. VAL has also supported local Leicestershire groups in attracting a total of over £1m in **new finance** this year and organisations have been able to recruit over 1,500 **new suitable volunteers** with VAL's support.

The Council offers a variety of opportunities to help people get involved in their local community including volunteering with young offenders, supporting older people with learning difficulties and disabilities, and helping out with various community projects and conservation volunteering. Community coach volunteers can get involved with a wide variety of activities, putting their problem-solving skills into practice to help others to achieve their goals. We have developed a training programme to support those who volunteer in Council-run services and now advertise all **volunteering opportunities** in one place on the Council website.

The **Community Forum Budget** process for 2013 continued the success of previous years, with more than 1,500 residents attending the 25 Decision Nights. Levels of satisfaction with the process continued to be high and have improved further. The quality of funding bids has been improving over the years. 176 community projects were funded to support local groups and organisations across the county to meet the needs of their community.

Community forums have supported people across the County to contribute to key decisions regarding local services. Residents were asked for their views on options for the future of the Libraries and Museums service at 25 Community Forum meetings in the light of government grant reductions. This has helped the Libraries service to gauge opinion about those options and develop them further.

Think Leicestershire was launched to encourage and empower community members to support their communities. A network of Community Coaches and Thinking Action Group (TAG) Leaders is now emerging around the County and there are a range of on-line resources available to support people in making a difference

We continued to support communities and voluntary groups in Leicestershire through our £340,000 grant fund. Our **Big Society Grant Fund** offers groups and organisations the chance to bid for up to £15,000 to develop ideas and initiatives. Last year the fund helped 18 projects, including providing community defibrillators, a youth café, assistance towards the development of a recreation ground, an arts educational heritage centre and the Storehouse project to provide food parcels, clothing, and baby goods as well as household and electrical items to the vulnerable in Melton. 49 projects were supported with grants from the fund particularly focussed on our four priorities of economic growth, families, older people and health inequalities/healthy lifestyles. Many exciting, innovative projects were supported, including a community healthy eating project in Melton, a youth café in Anstey and a personal development programme for young people in North West Leicestershire.

Community buildings such as village halls and community centres are highly valued facilities at the heart of communities. They provide local people with a place to meet where news, information and ideas can be exchanged, views expressed and actions discussed and agreed. They also provide the base from which services for the local community are offered, often by local community groups, and where people meet for social, recreational and educational events and activities. We have therefore agreed proposals for a SHIRE Community Buildings Grant scheme including capital expenditure of £100,000 per annum and revenue expenditure of £24,000 per annum. A £300,000 investment in Kegworth's village hall was also agreed to help relocate youth services and other groups there following changes to the community centre.

We have taken an active role in promoting **Neighbourhood Planning**. A practical Neighbourhood Planning toolkit has been developed in collaboration with district councils and the City Council and regular Neighbourhood Planning network meetings are being held to bring together all those involved in or interested. The work on neighbourhood planning has been highlighted nationally as an example of good practice.

Cohesion - The results of recent resident survey work indicates that since 2009, the percentage of people that think local public services treat all types of people fairly has risen by 10% to 84.9% in 2012/13. The Council is strengthening the link between community cohesion work and the PREVENT agenda, to ensure a holistic and positive approach to both these areas.

Climate Change, Environment and Waste

Our key environmental priority is to reduce our contribution to climate change and to ensure that there is a high resilience to its effects. Our focus last year remained on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the public sector estate and taking steps to improve the resilience of services to future climate change.

Carbon Emissions - Our primary focus in the past year has been on reducing carbon emissions from Council activity. This has included targeted building disposals, continued delivery of the street lighting programme including turn off, dimming and part-night lighting, and by engaging with staff on behaviours to reduce consumption within existing buildings. Progress has also been made on reducing emissions from vehicles, in particular by reducing business mileage.

A programme of work with schools has been undertaken to address carbon emissions from the school estate and those schools participating in the programme have experienced a much smaller rise in carbon emissions in the last year compared to the rest of the school estate. Since 2008/09 carbon emissions from school buildings fell by 8.3%.

Despite this positive progress the exceptionally cold spring increased the need for fossil fuel consumption for heating in council properties and we have yet to fully achieve our ambitions for carbon reduction. Nevertheless, a reduction of carbon emissions from County Council buildings (excluding schools) of 1% was achieved compared to 2011/12. The carbon emissions reduction from all council activities (excluding schools) was 3.2% compared to 2011/12 and emissions have been reduced by 11.4% since 2008/09. School emissions rose during 2012/13 compared to the previous year, but remain 8.3% below the 2008/09 baseline figure. In February we launched a Draft Carbon Reduction Strategy for Leicestershire as a whole, with a target to reduce carbon emissions by 34% in 2020 compared to 1990, and have developed a supporting delivery plan. In addition Leicestershire Together has agreed a Climate Ready Plan setting out key actions to reduce the impact of climate change in the coming years.

Energy Efficiency - The County Council offered Shire Community Climate Change Grants of up to £5,000 to improve energy efficiency in community buildings in Leicestershire. Charities, faith groups, village halls, sport/community buildings, committees and parish councils can apply for the grants to enable them to reduce their energy bills. The grants could cover practical projects such as the installation of energy efficiency measures including new heating systems, roof or cavity wall insulation, solar panels and improved lighting systems. They are also available for community events or projects that promote awareness of the issues of climate change, and training courses relating to energy efficiency and climate change.

Nine schools across Leicestershire took part in the County Council's 'How Low Can You Go?' energy saving competition. The contest saw schools vying to see who could save the most energy per pupil. It took place during 'Switch Off Fortnight' in November and the winners were: Brookside Primary School in Oadby and Latimer Primary in Anstey. If the savings demonstrated by the winning schools during Switch Off Fortnight were sustained for a year, the two schools would save more than

£2,000 a year in energy bills between them and also save around 12 tonnes of carbon.

Household Waste Management

Our priority is that less waste is produced and a reduced proportion goes to landfill. We achieved a reuse, recycling and composting rate of 55.4% during 2012/13, just short of our target of 56%, although we remain one of the best performing waste partnerships in the country. The amount of residual household waste not sent for reuse, recycling or composting has increased slightly to 493kg per household, but met our target of 500kg. The percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill has decreased, with only 31.5% landfilled, better than our target of 32%.

Recycling - Last year Leicestershire remained one of the top recyclers in the country. It is important we all carry on with this work and we will continue to look for ways to increase recycling in the future, with residents' help. A number of roadshows were held during National Recycle Week where experts provided various recycling tips.

Limiting Landfill - These achievements have contributed to us more than meeting our Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme compliance target for 2012/13, a figure set by the Government to limit the amount of biodegradable waste we can send to landfill. In 2012/13, our target was 92,000 tonnes and we successfully achieved this with only 52,870 tonnes going to landfill.

Waste Sites - We operate 14 recycling and household waste sites across Leicestershire where residents can recycle a large variety of items. During 2012/13, we diverted 73.9% of waste from landfill at our sites. We also commenced a major redevelopment of the Whetstone site which will be completed in autumn 2013. We continue to see a high level of customer satisfaction with our Recycling and waste sites.

Initiatives - A wide range of campaigns and activities contributed to these achievements including Freeuse, which celebrated a milestone this year after diverting 100 tonnes of waste from landfill. The online site hit the landmark figure which is equivalent to 60 family cars. Since it was introduced by the Leicestershire Waste Partnership in 2009, over 3,000 people have signed up as Freeusers and found new homes for unwanted items, giving them a second chance.

Nearly 12 tonnes of old and broken small electrical items were collected by county school children in a special recycling initiative. The initiative, known as an Eco Day, was organised by the Council, Sims Recycling Solutions and DHL EnviroSolutions. A total of 49 county schools took part with children bringing along unwanted Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) such as old irons, toasters, remote controls, kettles, unwanted computer equipment, hairdryers and battery powered toys. The WEEE collected has now been recycled and the precious metals and plastics have been recovered and sent to manufacturers to re-use in making new products.

The Leicestershire Waste Partnership, made up of the county, district and borough councils, has offered subsidised food waste digesters to county residents since 2008. They proved to be very popular with over 4,500 units purchased.

Council Recycling - Waste from County Council offices has reduced by 16% during the year and the recycling rate has continued to improve, reaching 53%. The purchase of office paper has reduced by 14% in 2012/13 compared to 2011/12 through different printers/photocopiers and actions by staff. These improvements have been supported by a network of Green Champions across the Council and activities to engage staff in greener behaviour. This work has been supported by embedding the Council's Environmental Management System. All of the Council's activities have been subject to environmental risk assessments, identifying opportunities to improve environmental performance and developing action plans to address them. This has enabled our Print Service to secure ISO140001 certification and will allow other services to do the same in the future. Collectively these activities are contributing to reducing the Council's environmental impact and to reducing costs.

Leicestershire's natural and historic landscapes and environment

Green Infrastructure - The maintenance and development of green infrastructure across the county is important to deliver a range of social, health and biodiversity benefits. Through our Green Infrastructure Strategy and action plan we have delivered work with local district partners to position Green Infrastructure requirements in Local Plans as well as in on-the-ground projects. Partnership working on **rivers and canals** and their immediate surrounds is an important component of this work. Strong links are being forged with the Canal and River Trust as well as through the River Soar/Grand Union Canal Partnership and the Authority's work on the Ashby Canal.

The **Charnwood Forest Regional Park** Steering Group is now well established. With the Steering Group's support a Round 1 Landscape Partnership application was submitted to the Heritage Lottery at the end of May. It was developed with the support of a specially constituted Landscape Partnership Board and, if successful, will lead to the production of a more detailed Round 2 application. If successful, money will then become available in 2016, to support a wide range of Charnwood Forest based projects.

The Council **Stepping Stones Project** celebrates its 21st birthday this year and in recognition of reaching this milestone has launched two new grants – "Plugs for Bugs" and "Trees make hedges." The former is aimed at local communities wanting to introduce wildflower and bulbs to public open spaces. The Project's rural craft training programme covering hedge-laying, dry stone walling and coppicing continued to be popular.

Landowners are being given the opportunity to add to Leicestershire's **hedgerows** by applying for free packs of trees and hedging plants. The County Hall based Stepping Stones Project has teamed up with the Woodland Trust to encourage farmers and community groups to provide much-needed habitats for wildlife by planting hedges and hedgerow trees. Applicants can apply for packs containing 100

metres of native hedging and 25 trees for planting on publicly accessible land or land that is visible from a public right of way or highway.

Funding was made available for Leicestershire communities keen to boost green spaces for people and wildlife. Up to £2,500 was available for schemes to help improve parks, nature reserves and other green areas. Now in its third year, the **Connecting People and Wildlife fund** is open to parish or town councils and community groups within the Stepping Stones Project area who want to encourage community action and involvement in their local green space. It provides a great opportunity for communities to help make their neighbourhoods greener.

An ambitious Council project which turned former coalfields into a vibrant and prosperous woodland landscape scooped a prestigious prize last year. The County Council was presented with a top planning award - the **Diamond Jubilee cup** - by the Royal Town Planning Institute for spearheading work to transform the Ashby Woulds. The regeneration saw 12 square kilometres of old pits, tips and derelict land turned into a **new woodland landscape** with leisure facilities, housing and employment. The project involved local councils, community groups, landowners and mining companies working together as the Ashby Woulds Regeneration Forum. The transformation included redeveloping 10 hectares of land for new employment - reclaiming over 100 hectares of derelict land, planting around 300,000 trees and creating 20km of public access trails. It also helped to reduce unemployment in the Ashby Woulds from over 8% in 1991 to 2.6%.

Country Parks - The County Council's country parks retained coveted awards for three beauty spots in August. This involved the awarding of prestigious Green Flags by Keep Britain Tidy to the country parks at Bosworth, Beacon Hill and Watermead (jointly managed with the City Council). Green Flags are the mark of quality green space in the United Kingdom and a sign to visitors that the park is well maintained, well managed and has excellent facilities.

A £1.4m project to improve the walking and cycling network in and around **Watermead Country Park** was officially opened last year. The Sustrans Connect2 scheme won a share of £50m Big Lottery Funding following a public vote. During the five year project the Council created surfaced paths between Birstall, Thurmaston, Syston and Cossington via Watermead Country Park. The project has seen new bridges installed, new paths constructed and safe road crossings created, making the routes accessible to everyone including wheelchair and mobility scooter users. The complete off-road cycleway between Cossington and Leicester, which incorporates the Connect2 routes, is now signposted as 'Green Route One'. The Connect2 route, which includes four miles of newly constructed surfaced paths, was officially opened at an event in July.

Better Services and Value for Money

Scrutinising Local Services - In order to ensure better outcomes and value for local people, our Scrutiny Function has been actively involved in a number of major reviews in 2012/13 including:

Older People: reviewing progress with the delivery of the Extra Care Housing Strategy – which aims to improve outcomes and choice for older people by providing an alternative to residential care.

Libraries, Heritage and Arts Review: reviewing progress on the libraries, heritage and arts review which aims to use libraries and museums as community spaces.

Transition of Young People with Disabilities from Children's to Adult's Services: recommending improvements including tailoring services to meet individual needs and identifying a key worker to support each service user through the process.

Children's Centres: reviewing the existing model against the changed policy and inspection environment. A partnership approach and partner funding through reduced demand was deemed essential to ensure the best start in life for young children.

Accident and Emergency Services: scrutinising Leicester Royal Infirmary (LRI) four hour wait performance. As a result of concerns about the transfer of patients brought to A&E because of mental health problems, a new protocol for the transfer of these patients from the LRI to Glenfield Hospital has now been put in place.

East Midlands Ambulance Service: whilst recognising the need for changes to station locations, we expressed concern at the original proposals and were pleased to see revisions which addressed the needs of rural communities.

Leicestershire Partnership Trust: In response to concerns identified about the safeguarding of mental health patients, we queried LPT's risk management and the robustness of its record keeping. We were pleased with the positive response from LPT.

Joint Health Scrutiny: Glenfield Children's Heart Unit: Scrutiny councillors felt that the Government announcement that services would be moved to Birmingham was not in the best interests of the local population. For the first time we used our statutory power of referral to the Secretary of State for Health, who asked the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) to review the decision. Scrutiny councillors gave evidence to the IRP. The IRP endorsed our view that the process was flawed and the Secretary of State has now set aside the decision and commissioned a new review.

Value for Money and Efficiency - In February 2013 we agreed to freeze Council Tax for the third year running. This means that the average Council Taxpayer in Leicestershire would have saved more than £250 over three years, compared to an inflation increase. As part of the financial plans we agreed to make savings and raise extra income worth £79 million over the next four years. The plans also provide for investment in priority areas including £1.7m extra for children's social care, £15.4m extra for adult social care over the next four years, £3m extra for highway maintenance and £1.2m to develop extra care accommodation in Blaby. In 2012/13 we also invested £61.4m in capital projects. The most significant items of expenditure were new classrooms, a replacement for Charnwood Area Special School, Loughborough Inner Relief Road, general highways maintenance and office accommodation on an 'invest to save' basis. In 2012/13 £5.2m was allocated for Capital Schools Maintenance. The Capital spend on school accommodation projects was valued at £13.83m achieving 90.4% spend in year.

The Government continues to cut expenditure across the public sector in order to reduce government borrowing. Over the next four years we expect a significant reduction in Government funding of around 30%. This follows a 22% reduction over 2011/12 and 2012/13. The Council also faces potentially large increases in expenditure due to the need to provide care to the increasing numbers of older and other vulnerable people. The cost of landfill tax and alternative methods of waste disposal are also significant cost pressures. Spending pressures including inflation are £54m (15%) over the next four years.

Efficiency Savings - We have proposals in place to generate £49m in savings in the form of £38m of efficiency savings, which include reductions in management and administration, more effective purchasing of goods and services and changes to the way services operate. Areas for savings include £2.5 million from restructuring the children and young people's service, £3 million from reducing senior management and administration, and £16 million from reducing overheads and simplifying processes.

A further £8m of service reductions and £3m in increased charges are planned. Examples of savings include: review of Libraries, Heritage and Arts; reduced highways maintenance; switching off or dimming street lights after local consultation; reduction in bus subsidies for uneconomic bus routes and review of transport policies including home to school transport. Over the last two years, spend on communications has been reduced by £2m – representing savings of 65%. £1.2m savings were achieved through the re-structuring of Property and Asset Management Services during 2012/13. Further savings will be required in 2015/16 and 2016/17 and are being developed following a major public and stakeholder consultation exercise.

Better Procurement - During 2012/13, £2.19m procurement savings were achieved to assist delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. Approximately 50% of the Council's total procurement expenditure of £302m was with small and medium size enterprises (SMEs), consistent with the Council's corporate social responsibility objectives. There has also been a further increase in expenditure transacted electronically, up to £56.2m from £30.3m last year, creating further process efficiencies.

Better Buildings, Assets and Service Points - The Council's four year office accommodation strategy was completed in 2012/13. The total number of buildings reduced from 55 (2009) to 19 (2013) which exceeded the original planned target. An additional 3 buildings will be disposed in 2013/14. The programme has resulted in an overall 21.3% reduction in the office floor space occupied by the Council. This is saving £850,000 per year, by having fewer but better offices and sharing space, where possible, with district councils. The council is already sharing space with Melton Borough Council and will operate a museum, library and register office within Harborough District Council's refurbished HQ, which is due to open next year. County Council care services moved to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's new HQ in July.

100 health staff have also moved to County Hall to help save money. A total of 80 staff from the University of Leicester Hospitals Trust (UHL) have taken up office space at County Hall, joining around 20 staff from the Health Protection Agency (HPA), who have already moved in. The deal with UHL and the HPA is raising around £100,000 per year.

Annual National Customer Satisfaction surveys were undertaken for three areas of Property Services work: Estates Management, Building Maintenance and Major Projects. All areas scored well in excess of 80% customer satisfaction for 2012/13 and compare well with national comparators.

In November 2012 we unveiled a unique 21st century tribute honouring Leicestershire troops. Armed Forces Minister Andrew Robathan officially launched the memorial at County Hall featuring four life-size bronze comrades, depicting young navy, army and RAF recruits taking part in a military drill 'standing easy'. The County Council contributed £75,000 to the tribute to commemorate local regular and reserve servicemen and women who have lost their lives around the world since 1945.

The **County Farms Estate** continues to support new start farmers and the trading account produced a net surplus of £442,142 during 2012/13, inclusive of £66,382 net grant funding towards a National Forest planting scheme, compared to £299,050 in 2011/12. The Estate continues to significantly exceeded average return on capital, net income return and capital growth rates derived from the industry-wide Savills Rural Estates Benchmarking Survey. The performance of the County Council's **industrial units** remains sound despite challenging market conditions, producing a net surplus of £398,499 during 2012/13. The structure of the portfolio is currently being reviewed to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of new start businesses and generates economic growth.

Better Customer Service – Our Customer Service Centre (CSC) was re-accredited in March 2013 with the Customer Service Excellence Standard, along with other services across Customer Services and Operations. To support the (CSC) programme of continuous improvement, a detailed telephone satisfaction survey was carried out independently in spring 2013 with a sample of 600 organisations, carers, potential and current service users who had made contact with the CSC. Overall the results showed that 80% of respondents were satisfied or 'very satisfied' with the

service they received and nearly all participants said they had understood the information provided to them. The main area for improvement identified was in relation to call wait time and this is also now being addressed.

The Service Centre has, over the last 12 months, made good progress in answering more calls and answering them more quickly. Planning for, and management of peak periods (such as school admissions) has also improved. The Service Centre is expanding customer self service over the next few years. It has made a start by enabling customers to apply online for Waste Permits and places on Home-to-School transport at any time of the day or week.

School Food Support Service – school meal uptake continues to increase. Uptake levels were running at 37% for 2012-13 which is a 32% increase since the service transferred back in-house. The Service has also been awarded the “bronze accreditation” certification endorsed by the Soil Association for working with the Food for Life Partnership for the quality, provenance and locally sourced food provided as standard to children and young people in Leicestershire.

Improved Complaints Handling - During 2012/13, 234 corporate complaints were received, up from 208 the previous year. However, the number of complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman fell from 55 to 38. In 2012/13, 45% of complaints were upheld, broadly the same proportion as in the previous year. Complaint response time improved further, with 83% receiving a response within 10 days. In April 2013, a new complaints management system was introduced which has greatly enhanced administration and monitoring of complaints.

Better Digital Services - During 2012/13, as part of a drive to widen opportunities for customer self-service, we piloted new ways of accessing services through the Council’s website. These pilots have enabled customers to use services 24 hours a day, whilst reducing the cost of service delivery to the Council. Alongside this pilot, we are developing a new Council website using a new technology platform. The project, which will go live in 2014, will create a simpler, more customer focussed and mobile friendly website and will provide a strong foundation from which to increase customer self service and channel shift.

A corporately-agreed communications strategy has enabled the council to increase how informed residents feel to a peak of 80.4% this year. Using low-cost, digital and social media has been a focus during 2012/13. The number of people we are reaching via social media channel, Twitter, has increased by 183% year-on-year.

The County Council’s ICT service Desk was awarded a coveted ‘Four Star Accreditation’ by the Service Desk Institute (SDI) following a six month programme of service improvements. The award is internationally recognised and held by only a few bodies. It demonstrates that the service is ‘business led’ and makes a valuable contribution to the Council’s ICT provision

Improved Resident Satisfaction - Information on customer feedback and satisfaction with specific services is included in the individual sections of this report. However the County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner jointly commission a resident’s survey. Since 2009, resident satisfaction with how the County Council

runs things has increased by 8.6% to 51.5% in 2012/13. Overall satisfaction with the local area has increased by 7.3% to 91.8% in 2012/13. The percentage of residents who feel the council offers value for money has been maintained.

Better Staff Management - Key achievements during 2012/13 have included the delivery of the Leading for High Performance programme to 360 middle and first line managers; contributing to the creation and implementation of the East Midlands Shared Service in partnership with Nottingham City Council to provide low cost, resilient, and high quality transactional HR services; implementing key actions at a corporate and departmental level as a result of the 2012 Staff Survey and gaining the internationally recognised Occupational Health & Safety Assessment Series (OHSAS) 18001 accreditation for the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service. Other achievements include the introduction of an innovative scheme for Mental Health First Aid, and the training of over 400 Mental Health First Aiders across the Council.

Areas for focus during 2013/14 include: providing strategic support for the Council's next phase of transformation; managing the development and maintenance of Oracle (HR) in order to meet external demands and manage the business more effectively; creating and implementing a pilot Talent Management Scheme; reducing sickness levels towards the corporate target of 7.5 days lost per employee; continuing to promote the Flexible Working Policy in order to ensure that managers create a culture within their teams of flexible working; and developing apprentices and internships.

Equality and Diversity - Our Equality Strategy for 2013-2016 was approved in June 2013 and includes a greater focus on our ten priority equality objectives, strengthening community cohesion and human rights. We have revised our workforce equalities targets to ensure we work towards a workforce that is representative of the communities of Leicestershire. In 2013 the County Council was named 20th in Stonewall's list of the most gay-friendly places to work in the UK - showcasing Britain's best employers for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. We have climbed the ranking for the fourth consecutive year, moving from 166th in 2009, to the current top 20 position. This recognises how the Council values its diverse employees and delivers services which recognise the needs of all its residents.

The Council continues to assess the impact of changes in policy and service on the breadth of the diverse population of the county through Equality Impact Assessments. These have resulted in improvements across a range of services. For example, the Adult Learning Service now requires Local Engagement Officers to focus on learners who have difficulty accessing the service, through one-to-one sessions. A further example is improvements to the consultation on the Loughborough Town Centre Scheme, ensuring access and input by a diverse range of people. The scheme was displayed and explained in a public exhibition that was held in a vacant shop in The Rushes shopping centre and all stakeholders including disability groups were invited to the exhibition. We are continuing to ensure that equalities issues are comprehensively embedded within our procurement processes. Our Learning and Development equality plan has further been updated to provide staff with a wealth of equalities related training, from general awareness raising to targeted training for particular front line roles.

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