

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 21 MAY 2014****POSITION STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****LLEP**

I am pleased to report that the LLEP has recruited a Director, Corin Crane, currently Head of Economic Partnerships and Investment at Wolverhampton City Council.

There has also been a process underway to recruit new private sector LLEP board members to replace board members whose terms are about to expire. Appointments will be confirmed later this month. I was involved in the recruitment processes for both the Director and Board members and am delighted that we have secured the services of Corin and that there will be a very strong private sector presence on the Board.

The new Board members will be part of an eight strong private sector presence on the Board with the rest of the membership comprising myself, the City Mayor, two district council leaders and a representative each of the Universities, Further Education colleges and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

It has, unfortunately, proved more difficult to appoint a Chairman of the LLEP. It is crucial that the right appointment is made to this key role and I am in discussions with the City Mayor on this.

Having a strong LLEP Board will be key to maximising the potential of the Leicestershire economy and creating prosperity and jobs for our communities. The previous LLEP Board, chaired by Andrew Bacon, did a good job in establishing the LLEP as an effective partnership and in negotiating a City Deal and developing a strong Strategic Economic Plan. Moving forward the focus will shift towards commissioning and delivering major investments in infrastructure, skills and business growth.

In support of the LLEP's work the Council is preparing an 'Enabling Growth Plan' which will set out how the Council will use its resources, expertise and influence to support economic growth. The Cabinet will be considering this in September.

**Meeting with MPs**

Ever since I became Leader, I have made a point of arranging regular meetings with the County's MPs. Those meetings continue, most recently with Stephen Dorrell, Andrew Robathan and David Tredinnick. Typically, we don't have a fixed agenda, although I always give them the latest predictions for the County Council's finances. The meetings are a good opportunity for both sides to catch up and discuss how we can help each other.

## **Cathedral Gardens**

I am pleased to report that the creation of the new Cathedral Gardens is nearing completion. This project has been led by the Cathedral Quarter Partnership Board, chaired by the Bishop of Leicester and on which Sir Peter Soulsby and I both sit. This successful partnership is working effectively to develop the Gardens, the King Richard III Visitor Centre, and the planned re-interment of King Richard's remains. The County Council is a full partner in this collaboration along with the City Council, the University of Leicester, the Diocese and the Cathedral.

The Cathedral Gardens, which will be a valuable community open space in this historic part of Leicester, will celebrate an official launch on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July. The programme of events is still to be confirmed but the emphasis will be on informality and celebration right through the day. Although the day will conclude with a service in the Cathedral, the programme will be purposely informal, and so will have a wide appeal and will reinforce the purpose of the space.

The celebration event will include the official unveiling of the public artwork commissioned by the County Council and the relocated statue of King Richard III from Castle Gardens.

I will ensure that Members receive details of the celebration event as soon as they are confirmed, and you will all be very welcome to come along and join in.

## **Sporting Achievements**

### Leicester City Football Club

I am sure that all members will wish to join me in congratulating Leicester City Football Club on their promotion to the Premier League, after a ten year absence.

This achievement will not only enhance the already high reputation of the City and County but as recent research has shown will provide a major boost to the local economy particularly if the Club is able to retain its Premier League status.

### Mark Selby

Congratulations are also due to Mark Selby following his sensational victory at the World Snooker Championship earlier this month.

## **European Hockey Tournament**

Recently, the City Mayor and I were approached to provide some financial support to enable the 2014 European Women's Hockey Club Championship to go ahead next month at Loughborough University. The hosts of the Championships will be Leicester Hockey Club, one of the oldest and most successful women's hockey clubs in England, who attract players from the City and County. The Mayor and I have agreed to support the event and I am sure the Council will join me in wishing the host club all the best for the event.