

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 3RD DECEMBER 2014

POSITION STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Meeting with MPs

At the September County Council meeting I outlined the difficult financial outlook faced by the County Council. We have a five year savings requirement of £120m of which £50m is unidentified. Since then the Leader and I met with Leicestershire MPs. It is extremely pleasing that six out of seven MPs attended the meeting including a Cabinet Minister. The meeting focused on our low funding position and the implications of further significant savings.

I acknowledge that in a period where many authorities are facing reductions in funding redistribution is difficult. However, our case is built around fairness. Leicestershire residents should be treated equally with people living elsewhere in the country. If we were funded at the same rate as East Sussex we would be £113m better off. If we were funded at the same level as Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire we would be £69m and £60m better off respectively.

I also explained to MPs that we can do more to save money as we all need to do our bit to reduce the inherited national budget deficit. However, if we were required to save the full £120m there would be significant implications for services and service users.

We put forward some potential solutions including;

- Fairer Government funding. If we received the same grants as the average County Council we would be £37m better off.
- Fairer distribution of Business Rates and full localisation. The current position whereby £225m of Business Rates is generated in the County and the County Council only receives £20m is unfair.
- Other areas discussed included fairer distribution of New Homes Bonus, unitary government and local control over council tax.

We had a good hearing and all MPs agreed we were treated unfairly. They agreed to lobby within Government for a fairer funding deal for Leicestershire.

MTFS

The Cabinet plan to publish the updated MTFS for consultation on December 11th. At this stage it is likely the Local Government Settlement will not have been received. Even so we do have a two year settlement that includes this year. The settlement could change but we believe that given the seriousness of our financial position we need to ensure there is adequate time for consultation.

Transformation Board

A meeting of the Transformation Board took place on Wednesday 26th November 2014. We discussed and agreed revised terms of reference that place a greater emphasis on the Board focussing on transformation in the context of the MTFS.

The Board received a presentation on the work of the Enablers within the transformation programme. The presentation helped to bring to life the outcomes that will be delivered by the 'T' projects, and how these will be underpinned by changes to our culture, processes, IT, Data and Business Information. This is in addition to the work that is underway on our approach to commissioning and the reconfiguration of County Hall to help us to reduce costs and work in more transformational ways.

The focus of the next Transformation Board will be to consider the new customer facing website that is currently under-development and how this will deliver improvements for our customers.