

Position Statement by the Leader of the Council

Mr Mayor, Fellow Councillors, Officers, members of the public and of the media -

I regret that on this occasion I must begin my statement with the sad news of the death of Barry Jackson, who had been the High Sheriff of Leicestershire in 2007 and was the Chairman of Crimebeat, whose 'Warning Zone' initiative gave him great pride. More locally, he was an active and constructive member of both our Local Strategic Partnership and Town Centre Partnership. His contributions to that work and to the wider community will be sorely missed. I am sure you will all join me in extending our condolences to his wife on this sad loss.

On a happier note, the provisional figures for 2009/10 are showing a small underspend within the budget for that year, which Sanjiv had predicted for some time. I have no doubt that this early prediction will be confirmed, showing that the finances of the Council are soundly based, not only for the present but also for the future, as part of our robust Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In addition, our Corporate Service performance remains high - and improving - despite increasing financial pressures and the reduction in our staffing levels over the last year by some 5%. This continues to represent excellent value for money for our residents and reflects the high morale and motivation of our staff. The emphasis this Council places on good people management is further reflected in the People Strategy 2010-12, which the Executive endorsed last week and which I hope the Council will approve tonight. In addition, we are being asked to approve the Community Plan, prepared by the Local Strategic Partnership, and our own Corporate Plan, which again the Executive endorsed last week and which I trust will be approved as a very readable and concise document to direct our activities over the next five years.

In commenting on our performance, I think it reflects very well on the morale and motivation of the Council's staff that, for the third year running, I am able to report a reduction in sickness absence. In the three previous years the levels have been 12.47 days per employee, 8.83 days and 8.31 days. For the year 2009/10 this has reduced further to 7.8 days per employee: a significant continued improvement and one which increases the available capacity from Council staff. I congratulate them on your behalf for their commitment to this Council and to the community.

Not only are the revenue finances in good order, our major capital projects remain on track, supported (in the case of the Atkins development) by extensions in flexible working and a programme of office moves. The **Bus Station** planning application will be received in May; the work at the **Atkins building** will be completed by June 2010 (a slight delay due to delays in infrastructure connections - electricity and gas); the **College development** has started and will be completed in Spring 2011 for an opening in September of that year; **Hinckley Club for Young People** will be completed by September 2010; and the **Greenfields development** is well on target.

As regards the Club for Young People, this is receiving substantial continuing support from both My Place and Leicestershire Clubs for Young People and a further bid for Big Lottery Funding has progressed to the second stage. I am confident that this project, supported by this Council and others, will be a success, not only as a facility but, more importantly, for the activities which will take place within and around it.

Finally, in addition to the decisions of the Executive which I have already mentioned, can I add that approval has been given to the Leicestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2010/13), a robust corporate anti-fraud and corruption policy, a sub-regional choice-based lettings scheme and a local lettings policy for the allocation of Council flats on Maughan Street/Almeys Lane in Earl Shilton. The latter two received the full support of the Scrutiny Commission in the previous week. I can confirm also that the very positive recommendations considered by the Scrutiny Commission on the Parish and Communities Initiatives Fund have been agreed today by the Strategic Leadership Board, including the recommendation that the small underspend of £5,716 be carried forward to the next financial year. This allocation of over £90,000 to the Parishes, supported by a carry forward to the next year, is strong evidence of the commitment of this Council to strengthening our rural communities.

Mr Mayor, on that positive note, I commend this brief statement to the Council.

Stuart Bray
Leader of the Council
20 April 2010

COUNCIL
20 APRIL 2010
SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Agenda Item 10(f)

Local Government Association

Update report of Deputy Leader of the Council attached marked C70

East Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA)

Update report of Deputy Leader of the Council attached marked C71.

Agenda Item 12

1. Amendment by Mrs. S. Sprason to Motion from Mr. S.L. Bray

To replace the wording printed on the Council agenda with the following

“This Council recognises that the Westfield Centre provides an invaluable service to many hundreds of people in Hinckley and this Authority wishes to join Leicestershire County Council’s constructive efforts to assist the Westfield Centre in achieving charitable status by 2012 whilst also helping the Centre to work towards developing a robust business plan for a sustainable future and that,

Subject to the Westfield Centre achieving charitable status and in recognition of the centre’s excellent work within the town, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council commits to supporting the activities of this valued Hinckley community centre by awarding it an annual grant”.

2. Copies of letter dated 23 March 2010 and email dated 20 April 2010 attached.

COUNCIL - 20 APRIL 2010

**BRIEFING NOTE FROM DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL RE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION - UPDATE REPORT**

1. Purpose of the briefing note

To advise Members of the current activities of the Local Government Association (LGA).

2. Recommendation

That the Council notes the update.

3. Update

3.1 The LGA was created in 1997 to be the national voice of local government, lobbying and campaigning for changes/improvements in policy, legislation and funding on behalf of Member councils and the people and communities they serve.

3.2 The Association is part of a wider LGA Group made up of:

- * Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)
- * Local Government Employees (LGE)
- * Local Authority Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS)
- * Local Partnerships
- * Local Government Leadership Centre

3.3 In 2009/10, the LGA identified its achievements as covering:

- * Local Government Finance: Three-year funding settlement, Iceland, submission on pre-budget report.
- * The Economy: Housing and council tax benefit, 'Hidden Talents' (tackling youth unemployment) and the Future Jobs Fund.
- * Safer and Stronger Communities: Retention of RIPA (Regulatory and Investigatory Powers Act 2000) to tackle real crime, crime scrutiny and local crime-fighting partnerships.
- * Children and Young People - Respect and Protect, Primary Schools funding and commissioning of learning for 16-19 years olds.
- * Community well-being: Personal Care Bill, Leaders' Summit and reform of adult social care.

- * Culture, Tourism and Sport: Problem pubs, shaping local neighbourhoods, free swimming.
- * Environment and Housing - Energy and climate, housing finance, council building (affordable homes), waste and carbon-reduction.
- * Local Democracy: Total Place, overhaul of quangos, power of general competence.
- * Improvement: 'Freedom to Lead', Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), Local Innovation Award Scheme.

3.4 As well as being a member of the LGA, this Council is also a member of the District Councils' Network (DCN), along with around 170 of the 201 Districts which remain. The number of members continues to increase. The DCN is a special interest group within the LGA, as is the County Councils' Network (CCN). The Secretary of the DCN and its supporting body, the District Councils' Chief Executives' Network, is our own Chief Executive. The DCN has produced a Business Plan for 2010/11, as the basis for its work with Central Government and other national agencies, in what will prove to be a critical year for local government in general and District Councils in particular. A copy of the Plan is available from the Chief Executive.

3.5 For 2010/11, the priorities for the LGA will cover:

- * Reputation
- * Innovation and Value for Money
- * Local Democracy
- * Economy
- * Customer Service

David Bill
Deputy Leader of the Council
20 April 2010

COUNCIL - 20 APRIL 2010

**BRIEFING NOTE FROM DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL RE
EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY (EMRA) UPDATE REPORT**

1. Purpose of the briefing note

To advise Members of the replacement of EMRA by East Midlands Councils and the East Midlands Local Authorities' Leaders' Board and highlight the recent achievements of EMRA.

2. Recommendation

That Council notes this information.

3. Update

3.1 EMRA was formed in 1998, following the introduction of regional development agencies, with specific roles for providing regional accountability to the Regional Development Agency and to act as the regional planning body.

3.2 EMRA had a membership of 110 - 70 from the 46 local authorities in the region, 35 from the wider social and business community and the region's 5 MEPs. Apart from five places used to ensure representation from those often under-represented in public life, and places for the MEPs, all other representatives were nominated by the member Councils./

3.3 In the twelve years of its existence, EMRA sought to ensure that local authority and stakeholder representatives were involved in the setting and delivery of regional priorities. In its last report, the key achievements were highlighted as follows:

- * Laid the foundations for an effective partnership approach in the region through bringing together elected Council Leaders with businesses, environment groups, social sector, trades unions and others to tackle major housing, transport, environmental and economic challenges.
- * Consistently delivered successive business plan commitments to Members, partners and Government alike.
- * Through its strategic approach to scrutiny, worked with the East Midlands Development Agency in developing and delivering the Regional Economic Strategy.
- * Secured major transport investment for the region, including new rail stations at Corby and East Midlands Parkway and the long overdue dualling of the A46.

- * The first region to secure full Local Authority sign-up to the Nottingham Declaration, placing our sustainable future high upon the collective agenda.
 - * Supported Local Authorities, through the Regional Waste Strategy, to achieve the highest household recycling rates of any region in England.
 - * Working with the HCA, ensured affordable housing delivery for East Midlands communities during the recession.
 - * Developed the original concept of environmental infrastructure as part of the work on the Milton Keynes and South Midlands growth area.
- 3.4 The East Midlands Leaders' Board (in place from 1 April 2010) and the umbrella body, East Midlands Councils, will have two principal roles: development and delivery of the Regional Strategy and wider Local Government services and representation.
- 3.5 Funding for the East Midlands Leaders' Board and East Midlands Councils will primarily be from four sources:
- * CLG grant - specifically in relation to the Regional Strategy
 - * Local authority subscriptions
 - * Income generation from consultancy activities
 - * Other programme support, e.g. Home Office migration project work
- 3.6 Regional Strategy related activity will be resourced through use of the CLG grant. Non-Regional Strategy activities are not eligible for use of CLG grant and will be resourced through other income streams.
- 3.7 Local Authorities currently contribute £9,500 per annum to Local Government East Midlands and will roll forward into East Midlands Councils. Whilst the outcome of the business planning process will confirm the proposed level of subscriptions, there is a guarantee that they will not increase.
- 3.8 As provided in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction (LDEDC) Act (2009), the East Midlands Leaders' Board formally assumed its roles and responsibilities from 1 April 2010.
- 3.9 The LDEDC Act placed a requirement on the East Midlands Leaders' Board to put together a 'Scheme' (or proposal) for its formal establishment and operation. The East Midlands Leaders' Board was required to formally consult on this scheme with all local authorities and stakeholders within the region. This was effectively concluded on 18 February 2010 and the final scheme approved by the Secretary of State, who allocated £1.9m from CLG to support the work of the Leaders' Board.
- 3.10 East Midlands Councils is now the consultative forum representing the region's local authorities. It replaces the consultative role provided by the East Midlands Regional Assembly and Local Government East Midlands.
- 3.11 East Midlands Councils will comprise 98 members:

- * 92 Local Authority members (comprising 46 local authority members (one per member authority chosen by each participating authority) and 46 additional 'balancing' places allocated on the basis of regional political proportionality).
- * 2 Fire and Rescue Authority members
- * 2 Police Authority members
- * 2 Parish and Town Council representatives

3.12 It has been agreed by members that East Midlands Councils will have the following roles and responsibilities:

- * To represent the interests of all 46 Local Authorities and key partners in the region.
- * To act as a representative and influencing body.
- * To provide a line of accountability from the Leaders' Board to wider Local Government and key partners.
- * To bring together political group leaders within the East Midlands Councils structure.
- * To make appointments to national and regional bodies in liaison with the East Midlands Leaders' Board.
- * To provide a reporting and governance mechanism for regional Local Government partnerships, e.g. RIEP.
- * To provide appropriate support services to Local Government and partners.
- * To establish an effective relationship with the national LGA.

3.13 Government expects the Responsible Regional Authorities to effectively engage and consult stakeholders in the development of a Regional Strategy. EMRA (on behalf of the East Midlands Leaders' Board), *emda* and GOEM are currently undertaking joint work to develop proposals that meet these requirements. Two stakeholder consultation events have been held: 2 July and 27 November 2009. Informed by these discussions, proposals have been developed (through the Joint Strategy Advisory Board - which has three representatives of the Leaders' Board and three from *emda*) as the basis for further discussion and agreement with stakeholder representatives.

David Bill
Deputy Leader of the Council
20 April 2010

Please ask for Steve Atkinson
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Our ref SA/JES
Date 23 March 2010

County Councillor David Sprason
Lead Member for Adults and Communities
Leicestershire County Council
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicester LE3 8RA

Dear Councillor Sprason

Westfield Community Centre - Hinckley

As you will be well aware, the recent decision of Leicestershire County Council to reduce funding for community centres, as part of its future budget arrangements, has caused considerable disquiet. This has been the case particularly in Hinckley and Bosworth, where the future of the Westfield Community Centre is in considerable doubt. Whilst it is acknowledged that funding is secure for the immediate future, a clear intent has been stated by your Council for the Centre to close within a very short period.

Although this Council has not yet formally debated the issue, it has been made clear by Members from all three political groups that the Westfield Community Centre is a valuable community facility, which provides important services to people of all ages throughout the Hinckley area. Any decision which led to a closure of the Centre, directly or indirectly, will be disastrous for those many people for whom this Centre provides a vital source of support and wellbeing. It will have an impact also on this Council in the face of increasing demand for alternative services, additional to those we provide already.

I know that I have the full support of this Council and of the local community in asking that the County Council reconsiders and withdraws any plans it has which would result in the closure or reduction of this vital service.

I understand that a period of consultation on the proposal is currently in place and I would appreciate a response from yourself or one of your senior officers to the request made in this letter and also a clarification of the precise timescale for the consultation. The next meeting of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council is on 20 April 2010 and it would be helpful to have a response on both points well in advance of that meeting, so that the Council can have a fully informed debate on this service within its community, to enable a more detailed response to be made within a known timescale.

I look forward to an early response.

Yours sincerely

Steve Atkinson
Chief Executive

From: John Sinnott [John.Sinnott@leics.gov.uk]
Sent: 20 April 2010 11:44
To: Steve Atkinson
Cc: Mr. D. A. Sprason
Subject: RE: Westfields Centre

Dear Steve

Thank you for your e-mail. David Sprason did pass your letter to me and I am sorry you have not had a reply. In response to the two requests:

- There are no plans at this stage for the County Council to reconsider its decision. The Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by the County Council in February 2010 recognised the need to save £66M over a four year period and inevitably reductions in services are required.
- The County Council will, however, consult on proposals which affect, amongst others, voluntary organisations. This was the subject of a question by Mr David Bill to the Leader of the County Council at the Council meeting on 24th March. The question and the answer are set out below.

Question

"Could the Leader inform me when the reviews and consultations will take place to seek public opinion on the Administration's proposed cuts?"

Answer

"Implementation of the proposals in such a comprehensive Medium Term Financial Strategy will take place over a period of time. Most of the proposals on service reductions are scheduled for implementation in 2011/12 and 2012/13. This is to allow sufficient time for proper consultation with stakeholders. Officers are currently working on implementation plans and timescales will inevitably vary according to the particular circumstances. In some cases, plans will need to be co-ordinated across different departments. Reports will be made to Cabinet, as necessary, to initiate proper processes."

It is important to note that most of the proposals, including funding of the Westfield Centre, would not come into effect until 2011/12 at the earliest and, in the case of the Westfield Centre, not until 2012. No "precise timescale for the consultation" has yet been drawn up.

Yours sincerely

John

*John Sinnott
Chief Executive
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COUNCIL MEETING – 20 APRIL 2010

Amendment by Mr. S.L. Bray

“This Council deplores the decision by the County Council to cut the funding to the Westfield Centre from April 2012, recognising the invaluable service it provides to many hundreds of people in Hinckley and the surrounding area. This Council, therefore will promote and engage constructively in the discussions which the County Council has indicated will take place, both with the County Council and centre users, in order to secure a solution which will sustain the effective life of the centre and its services well beyond 2012”.