

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE REPORT: KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Purpose of the Report

1. The report seeks to update Members on various matters relating to the Leader's portfolio and the work of the Executive.

Information

2. **Visit to 'Your Space' Mansfield** – At the back end of March, I visited 'Your Space' gym in Mansfield to discuss ways in which health and leisure can work together for the benefit of our communities, in particular as we look to find ways we can join up our services across the county through our review of place-based community services.
3. **East Midlands Freeport** - On Thursday 30th March Government officially signed off plans to create the East Midlands Freeport. The freeport project involves giving three sites across the region special tax incentives to encourage economic growth and development.
4. Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station in Nottinghamshire is one of the selected areas, which will create hundreds of life changing jobs and education opportunities. This is another string to our bow in terms of making the East Midlands a really attractive place for businesses to come and invest, alongside other projects such as the Development Company and Investment Zone.
5. **Visit to Mansfield District Council** – On Friday 31st March I took the opportunity to meet with colleagues at Mansfield District Council to discuss potential areas of investment, strategic priorities, and the Levelling Up agenda, including recently announced Levelling Up Partnerships. It is important for local authorities to be on the same page so we can push forward on the key objectives for our areas.
6. **A614** - On 16th March I met with Mark Spencer, MP for Sherwood, along with colleagues from the District and County Councils, to go over the plans for improvements to the A614.
7. This is a really important arterial route for north Notts and a project the Council has been working on for many years to support the Nottinghamshire economy. The improvements will also relieve some of the pressures at junctions such as Ollerton Roundabout and Mickledale Lane.
8. Plans are on track, and we are now working on the final stages of securing funding from the Department of Transport. We hope to have spades in the ground very soon.

9. **Devolution** – Following approval to create the East Midlands Combined Authority at the last Full Council meeting, work to create the internal structures of the authority are progressing well. We hope to create the ‘Shadow’ Authority very shortly, including recruiting some interim staffing, to ensure that it has the right leadership and capacity. Over the next 12 months this organisation will increasingly need to act independently and offer a regional oversight, as we move away from this being a collaboration between four Council partners and towards having one East Midlands Combined Authority.
10. **Police Chief Constable** – On Wednesday 26th April I met with Chief Constable Kate Meynell to discuss the latest updates on crime in Nottinghamshire. It was great to hear that Nottinghamshire Police have surpassed their recruitment targets bringing in 418 new officers which has helped Government fulfil its pledge to recruit 20,000 additional officers by March 2023. We also spoke about areas in which the Council and the Police force can collaborate on prevention and community provision initiatives across the county.
11. **Arc Partnership** - On Friday 28th April I was delighted to attend the Arc Partnership Town Hall event at the Nottingham Belfry. It was a great opportunity to thank the staff for the work they do on behalf of the County Council and to highlight the importance of our property portfolio and our key priorities moving forward.
12. **NottsBus On Demand** – Residents in west Rushcliffe will be able to get on board our new on demand bus service from 15 May 2023.
13. The new Nottsbus On Demand service is the next phase of our demand responsive transport roll out following the successful trial in north and south Ollerton and Mansfield. It will be operating in villages including East Leake, Gotham, Thrumpton, Stanford on Soar, Sutton Bonington, and Kegworth between 7am and midnight, seven days a week.
14. This new service, which will replace the 865 service, will connect communities to Clifton NET Park and Ride, East Midlands Parkway railway station and East Midlands Airport.
15. **Primary School Places** – Nottinghamshire County Council contacted thousands of parents on Monday 17th April to advise them which school their child has been offered for either a reception or year 3 primary school place.
16. This year, 96.3% of Nottinghamshire children were offered their parents’ first preference school for a reception place this September. That is 7,767 out of a total 8,062 that applied on time for a school place, with 99.6% securing a place in one of their preferred schools.
17. **Tour Of Britain 2023** - The world-famous Tour of Britain cycle race is set to return to Nottinghamshire for a fourth time in September 2023.
18. Nottinghamshire has hosted the showpiece event three times since 2017, with the most recent visit taking place last September when a star-studded field raced from West Bridgford to Mansfield. This year’s race will see Nottinghamshire host the finish of a cross-region shared stage in the first week of September.
19. The return of the race last year boosted the local economy by £4.34m in net visitor expenditure with an impressive 225,000 fans lining the 116-mile route.

20. **The APPG for Counties** – In Parliament in April I was re-elected as the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Counties, which is a forum and lobbying group highlighting issues particularly related to County geographies and County Councils.
21. The APPG will be producing reports and materials related to Fair Funding, to Levelling Up and Devolution, Social Care and SEND over the course of the coming year, including meeting Ministers to raise these issues directly.
22. **Speaking to the Seaforth Highlanders** – On April 22nd I spoke at the annual dinner of the Seaforth Highlanders Association and Regiment in Mansfield, and particularly wanted to highlight their excellent contribution to our community in the form of the pipe and drum band, which accompanies the annual Remembrance Parade, and thank them for their continued commitment and service.

Progress Report

23. **Nottinghamshire Plan – Annual Delivery Plan 2023/2024** – On Thursday 20th April Cabinet approved the Annual Delivery Plan 2023/24. The plan sets out the actions to be taken over the next 12 months to reflect the priorities set out in the 10 year Nottinghamshire Plan and the Council's strategic vision.
24. Key themes within the plan include working to transform the way we deliver services over the long term, so that we can offer more support within communities, and simultaneously increase the impact of services to keep everyone healthy, safe and independent.
25. We will also ensure that we operate under a balanced and stable budget, spending money wisely and where it is needed most, to see that our resources reach those who need them.
26. The Annual Delivery Plan is now visible to residents and can be accessed via The Nottinghamshire Plan website which has been updated with the new actions and deliverables for the forthcoming year.
27. **Local Communities Fund** – Voluntary organisations and community groups can now apply for a range of financial support thanks to the Local Communities Fund. £750,000 of grant funding has been made available to support groups to help improve the health and wellbeing of Nottinghamshire residents. Applications are live until Sunday 4th June 2023.
28. There are three types of grants available –
 - **Cost of Living Grants** - Eligible groups can apply for up to £5,000 to support those who are helping residents most in need. This is part of a wider package of support by Nottinghamshire County Council to help those most affected by rising food and energy costs.
 - **Capital Grants** - Eligible groups can apply for up to £20,000 to make improvements to facilities that help improve health and wellbeing, as well as projects with an environmental focus.
 - **Revenue grants** - Eligible groups can apply for up to £5,000 to help projects with their day-to-day running costs such as paying wages and bills.

29. **Midlands Gigahub Projects** – Nottinghamshire County Council has been chosen to lead a Midlands-wide investment to bring faster internet speeds to communities who need it the most. A total of more than 350 public buildings such as libraries, rural schools and doctors' surgeries are set to become 'gigahubs' with 96 due to be in Nottinghamshire.
30. £6.8 million has been awarded to the County Council, on behalf of the ten Midlands local authorities which have signed up to the project. This part of the funding is from Building Digital UK (BDUK), the delivery arm of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), to create up to 235 gigahubs.
31. An additional £1.2 million via the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) comes thanks to an early investment as part of devolution negotiations. This will help deliver an additional 118 gigahubs across the D2N2 areas of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.
32. **Healthy Families programme** – The Cabinet received the outcomes of the recent Call In around the procurement of services for the Healthy Families programme, and this will be considered over the course of the coming months, with outcomes to be reported to the next Cabinet meeting in June.
33. **All decisions agreed at Cabinet are published online, you can find more details on the Council's Website - [Democratic Management System > Decisions \(nottinghamshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/DEMOCRATIC-Management-System/Decisions)**

Decisions taken under Special Urgency procedures

34. None.

Other Options Considered

35. None

Reason for Recommendation

36. This is a noting report to update the Full Council on matters relating to the Leader's portfolio and the work of the Executive since the last meeting, as required by the Constitution.

Statutory and Policy Implications

37. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below.

Financial Implications

38. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

1) That the contents of the report be noted.

**COUNCILLOR BEN BRADLEY MP
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

For any enquiries about this report please contact:
Phil Rostance, Executive Officer

Constitutional Comments (CEH)

39. Full Council is required to receive this report, which is to note, as set out in the Constitution.

Financial Comments (SES)

40. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- None