

**REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK CONFERENCE – NOVEMBER 2017****Purpose of the Report**

1. To report to Committee the key messages from the County Councils Network (CCN) conference, which took place in Marlow Buckinghamshire from 19 - 21 November 2017.

Information and Advice**Background**

2. Following Policy Committee approval on 18 October 2017, the Leader, Deputy Leader and Leader of the Main Opposition Group attended the annual CCN conference, along with the Chief Executive.
3. The conference is organised by the CCN which is a cross-party special interest group of the Local Government Association which speaks, develops policy and shares best practice for the County family of local authorities.
4. The theme for the 2017 conference was a 'new deal' for counties. Leaders of England's largest councils gathered to ask key government ministers in attendance to take urgent action to rebalance the economy and tackle a mismatch between money available for county areas and increasing demand for services, especially social care.
5. Conference attendees heard speeches from key figures including the Secretary for Communities and Local Government - Rt. Hon Sajid Javid MP, prominent MPs and think tanks. In addition there were presentations focusing on some of the biggest issues facing local government.
6. Details of the speeches and presentations can be found on the CCN website - <https://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/ccn-conference-2017-review/>

Chairman of the County Councils Network

7. The conference was opened by Councillor Paul Carter, Chairman of the CCN. Councillor Carter reflected on the work of the CCN over the past year as a national and respected voice for counties.
8. His speech focused on three main themes: fairer funding for counties, funding of social care and opportunities to deliver public sector reform.
9. In setting out the major challenges for local government, Councillor Carter outlined that fair funding for county areas will continue to be at the forefront of the CCN agenda. The latest

CCN research shows that counties have had imposed the toughest financial challenge across all of local government. By the end of this parliament counties will see a 94% reduction in Revenue Support Grant – significantly higher than any other part of local government.

10. Councillor Carter described the differential funding whereby residents in English counties receive on average £125 less per head than the national average and £540 per head less than central London. For shire counties this equates £3.2bn less than other parts of the country to fund vital services.
11. Highlighting the proud track record of local government in delivering modern and efficient public services, Councillor Carter stressed that ‘the elastic can’t be stretched much further’ and further help from Government is urgently required.
12. The CCN Chairman set out a number of asks of Government:-
 - A two year extension and increase of the transitional grant that ends this financial year
 - New powers to raise additional income through charging policies for services
 - A fair funding review for local government
13. In highlighting other key priorities for the sector, Councillor Carter outlined the need to find a sustainable approach to funding social care. He welcomed the additional investment of £2bn in Better Care Fund this year, but stressed that the problem will not go away without significant further work.
14. Describing the opportunities for counties to deliver strategic public service reform, Councillor Carter spoke about further opportunities for health and social care integration and county roles at the forefront of devolution and reform.
15. A key message to Government from the speech was – help us to help you. Counties have the ambition, experience, knowledge and democratic mandate to enable reform.

Rt. Hon Sajid Javid MP – Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

16. In his speech to the conference, Communities and Local Government Secretary Sajid Javid confirmed that his department are beginning to design a ‘devolution framework’ and will consider non-mayor county devolution bids.
17. In a positive speech, he said counties have a strong, strategic role to play in the present and future, and described the [ResPublica report](#) ‘Devo 2.0, the Case for Counties’ as ‘fascinating’ and an example of ‘proactively’ looking at ‘innovative’ ways of dealing with the challenges the sector faces.

Other Important Topics Covered at the Conference

18. In addition to the future of local government finance and the Government’s revised devolution strategy, the conference also focused on the Government’s new Industrial Strategy, the growing influence of County Councils in the housing agenda, and health and social care integration. In addition, there were presentations and discussions about the

public's views of Local Government and the Government's Green Paper on the future of Social Care for those aged over 65 years.

19. As Council Leader, I took the opportunity to draw the attention of the Secretary of State for Health, The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, to the need for fairer funding of health services in Nottinghamshire and the East Midlands.

Other Options Considered

20. None.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

21. To feedback to Committee on the key messages at the CCN conference.

Statutory and Policy Implications

22. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, 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, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

23. The cost of attending the conference was set out in the report to Policy Committee on 18 October 2017.

RECOMMENDATION

That members consider whether there is any follow up work they require in relation to the topics covered in this report, and if so, that they be delegated to the Chief Executive for action.

Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts MBE
Leader of the Council

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Paula Mullin, Senior Executive Officer, Telephone: 0115 97 74298

Constitutional Comments (CEH 27/12/17)

24. The committee has authority to consider the matters set out in this report by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SES 29/12/17)

25. There are no specific financial implications arising directly 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.

- [Report to Policy Committee – 18 October 2017: County Councils Network Annual Conference 2017](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All