

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 Futures** – On Friday 24th November I had the pleasure of joining the leadership of the Futures Group in Mansfield. Our partner organisation provides extensive support, training, and advice to help individuals in and around the county find employment.
3. It was a great opportunity to hear first hand some of the great stories and examples of what they deliver and how that has helped people locally, as well as to visit their new, larger Mansfield premises. We also considered the prospect of enhancing collaboration across the sector through a new regional approach next year.
4. **County Councils Network (CCN) Conference** – Earlier this month I attended the CCN conference where I gained an insight from colleagues, Ministers, and various experts on a range of public services. Discussions ranged from fostering local growth, to addressing pressures in adult's and children's care.
5. I was invited to present at one of the workshops to discuss Nottinghamshire County Councils experience of Devolution, where we are currently at in the process and what are our plans and priorities are for the next 12 months. It's very welcome that colleagues and partner organisations from around the UK are so interested in the work we're doing on devolution.
6. **Business Trade Select Committee** – On Tuesday 21st November I gave evidence to the Business Trade Select Committee on Freeports, Investment Zones and Devolution, reporting back on the challenges and opportunities of the several billion pounds of new investment and incentives that our area has been given to attract new business and growth.
7. Across all the various levers that we now have, through our East Midlands Freeport, Development Company and Investment Zones - all of which will ultimately come under the remit of the new East Midlands Mayor from May next year - we can create thousands of new jobs in exciting sectors, add billions to our economy, develop the skills that local people will need to take these opportunities, and invest in the transport connections to join it all up.

8. **Welcomed the Prime Minister to Worksop** – It was fantastic to welcome the Prime Minister to Nottinghamshire again this month. I joined Rishi Sunak as he met with residents at a café in Worksop to talk about a range of topics, from the economy to health care, to illegal migration.
9. It's great to see the Prime Minister out and about in our county on a regular basis, following his recent visits to Gedling and Newark. He reiterated his commitment to our area, including investing more than ever into our local transport, developing major projects like STEP Fusion that will grow our economy and bringing decisions closer to local communities through devolution. I look forward to welcoming him back again very soon.
10. **Mansfield BID** – On 10th November I had a wonderful evening with Mansfield BID (Business Improvement District) and local businesses at their Awards evening. It was brilliant to recognise some fantastic businesses and individuals who work incredibly hard to keep our towns moving and growing. I'm grateful to Councillor Girling and colleagues from our Economic Development/Business Support team for their support for and attendance at the event.
11. A big thank you to Jay Rowlinson, Chief Executive of the BID and the BID team for everything they're doing to support local businesses, and the events that they put on in the towns that bring people in. I was honoured to present an award on the night and would like to say a big congratulations to all the deserving winners.
12. **Remembrance Sunday, Warsop** – Each year our Districts and Boroughs do such a fantastic job of respecting this day and everything that it means, with parades and services across the county. A service was held at County Hall, and colleagues from all parties attended services around the whole county.
13. This year I had the pleasure of joining residents in Warsop, where the parade and service was very well attended. I would like to give a special mention and pass on my thanks to the 'Poppy Gang' for their amazing efforts in decoration the town.
14. **Midlands Connect** – On 7th November I headed down to Birmingham to talk all things transport with Midlands Connect and colleagues from Local Government, DfT, Network Rail and others. We spoke about several topics including the changes in rail investment following recent Government announcements, and the new Network North investment we have received to improve our bus strategy from 2024/25.
15. Meanwhile, £1.5 billion of new devolved transport funding for the East Midlands through our new regional Combined Authority plans, alongside that, newly announced roads and bus funding from central Government gives us a chance to be positive and aspirational for the future of our public transport network.
16. **Flooding Across Nottinghamshire** – I've been out to visit both homes and businesses across the county who have been affected by the devastating flooding events, to understand the challenges and the work that's being done to offer support.
17. I was joined in Retford by the Environment Secretary, alongside Councillor Neil Clarke MBE, where we spoke to a number of residents who had been among the worst affected by flooding. We also met with Council officers and members of our front-line staff who had been working tirelessly around the clock to offer help and guidance to those in need. I would like to extend

my sincere thanks and appreciation to our staff members and the emergency services who went above and beyond during this traumatic time.

18. I welcomed the news that up to £5,500 of support was to be made available to help households and businesses affected by flooding. We have been working with Government to put the mechanisms in place to deliver this to Nottinghamshire residents as soon as possible.
19. **Transport Funding Secured** – Following the outcome of our bus network review, over £5million will be invested to support, improve, and deliver new bus services across the county with a clear focus on reconnecting communities and protecting services to boost access to education, health, employment, shopping, and leisure activities.
20. Four new Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services covering areas of Rushcliffe, Gedling, Broxtowe, Ashfield, and Newark will be developed over the next two years, building on the success of the current Nottsbus on Demand services in Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood and Bassetlaw.
21. These will give residents more flexibility to travel anywhere between bus stops and designated points within operating zones at a time that is convenient to them. The new DRT services are likely to replace existing scheduled services to maximise efficiencies and improve travel opportunities.
22. **North Notts Business Club** – I recently joined North Notts Business Connections, listening to their thoughts and concerns, and sharing information about opportunities that are coming our way following the announcement that a £1.5billion transport fund has been secured for our area via the Mayoral Combined County Authority. With new investment in transport, skills, and our local economy over the year ahead I have been working my way around a number of business organisations and groups to hear from local businesses to get a feel for how we can get the best use out of this funding.
23. **Andrew Bowie MP Visit** – Nuclear Minister Andrew Bowie MP was in North Notts discussing STEP Fusion and plans to commercialise fusion technology, getting this limitless clean energy into the grid. It's a long-term project, but a huge one with £20bn already committed from central Government. We're leading the world in this, and North Notts can become a global hub for Fusion technology, anchored at this site at West Burton near Retford. This will create thousands of jobs in construction, education opportunities and bring major investment into road and rail.
24. Minister Bowie announced the appointment of the new Chief Executive for UK Industrial Fusion Solutions, which is the commercial arm of the country's fusion research and development projects. Congratulations to Paul Methven, formerly of the UK Atomic Energy Agency, on his appointment.
25. **Diwali Celebration** – On Monday 13th November I met with members of Nottinghamshire's Hindu Community Group, Brahma Samaj to join in with their Diwali celebrations at the Tipu Sultan restaurant in Sherwood. It was a pleasure to meet and celebrate with residents, and to wish them a Happy Diwali.

Progress Report

26. **Implementing the roll out of Family Hub Networks in Nottinghamshire** – The Councils consultation was launched from 2nd October to 3rd December 2023 asking Nottinghamshire residents for their views on the proposed roll out of Family Hubs across the county. We're aiming to improve our services by making them more joined up, as we seek to support the most disadvantaged and most vulnerable in our county. We're looking to expand the remit of children's centres from just helping 0-5s, to supporting families longer term in a more joined up way.
27. The proposals will see a number of new 'family hubs' across the county providing a range of services from partners in health, children's services and others, ensuring we are able to step in earlier and more effectively to prevent people needing more acute or emergency services later on down the line.
28. **East Midlands Freeport Governance** – At the last meeting of the Cabinet, Members approved the governance arrangements for the East Midlands Freeport Limited and for the Council to join the company and be part of its incorporation.
29. The Freeport aims to create a favourable business environment in the midlands to attract inward investment and international trade which in turn will create new jobs and a promote regional economic growth.
30. **Free School Presumption process for proposed special school to be located in Mansfield - Ravensdale SEND School** – Following the announcement in August that a new Special Free School is to be sited in Mansfield, Cabinet have now given approval to proceed with the running of the Free School Presumption in view of the overwhelming support for the proposals at the consultation stage.
31. With a number of Notts' SEND children currently sat on the waiting list for places in these specialist schools, it's fantastic that the consultation has received such support. The school will be built on the site of the old Ravensdale Middle School that's been derelict since it closed in 2001.
32. **Green Investment Fund – 2023/24** – The Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment recently approved the latest allocation of the Green Investment Fund. The funding which is allocated internally was set up to help deliver the Corporate Environment Strategy (CES) objectives, improving the environmental performance of the Council's operations.
33. Four departments are set to benefit from the funding this year which will help with a range of projects including improvements to our outdoor education facilities to help reduce running costs, cycle storage facilities to promote active travel and investments in council-owned vehicles to make them greener and more cost efficient.
34. **All decisions agreed at Cabinet are published online, you can find more details on the Council's Website - [Democratic Management System > Decisions](https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/DEMOCRATIC-Management-System/Decisions) ([nottinghamshire.gov.uk](https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk))**

Decisions taken under Special Urgency procedures

35. None.

Other Options Considered

36. None

Reason for Recommendation

37. 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

38. 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. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

39. 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 (HD)

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

Financial Comments (SES)

41. 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