



**REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL  
COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK CONFERENCE – NOVEMBER 2016**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To report to Committee the key messages from the County Councils Network (CCN) conference, which took place in Surrey between 6 and 8 November 2016.

**Information and Advice**

**Background**

2. Following Committee approval on 21 September 2016, Councillor Rhodes, Councillor Greaves, Councillor Cutts MBE and Anthony May attended the CCN conference held between 6 and 8 November 2016.
3. Councillor Greaves substituted for Councillor Bosnjak, who was unable to attend the conference.
4. The conference was organised by the CCN which is a cross-party member led special interest group of the Local Government Association. The CCN speaks, develops policy and shares best practice for member councils.
5. This year the conference focused on the future of county public services, emphasising the importance of county governance and the strong local leadership already in place in terms of the continued challenge of reduced finances and the opportunities being brought about through devolution.
6. Conference attendees heard speeches from key figures including the Secretary for Communities and Local Government - Rt. Hon Sajid Javid MP and the Secretary for Transport - Rt. Hon Chris Grayling, in addition to presentations focusing on some of the biggest issues facing local government.
7. Attendees also participated in workshop sessions which focused on the approach to change; school improvement; and involvement in the local housing market.
8. Details of the speeches and presentations can be found on the CCN website - [www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk](http://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk)

**Chairman of the County Councils Network**

9. 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, highlighting the successful campaign to government on the need for essential funding for social care; for transitional funding following a worse than initially expected local government settlement in November 2015; and against forced academisation.
10. In looking forward to the work of the CCN in the coming year, Councillor Carter stressed the importance of working closely with health partners to maximise the utilisation of funding and the delivery of more integrated services; looking for innovative and creative ways to fund infrastructure to support housing and economic growth; helping to redesign an education and skills system that responds to local and changing needs of employers; and finally, making the case for more place-based investment in terms of economic inclusion.
11. It was recognised that County Councils have an excellent track record of delivering efficiencies over recent years. In order to meet the continuing challenge, Councillor Carter emphasised the importance of fair funding which is needs-based and the need for a more flexible approach to devolution governance arrangements.

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

12. The Communities Secretary reflected on the findings from Ipsos Mori that local government is the most trusted part of government. He acknowledged the good work that has been achieved by county councils over the past few years, particularly around making efficiencies, and working with Local Enterprise Partnerships to deliver more investment, growth and jobs.
13. In a time of change, the Communities Secretary encouraged county councils to look for proactive, locally driven, place-based solutions to the challenges faced. With strong local leadership shaping provision around the needs of their communities, councils should put themselves at the heart of change and actively seek new opportunities and ways of working.
14. In terms of devolution, the Communities Secretary emphasised the importance of accountability and stressed that to devolve significant new powers to local areas, there must be a corresponding increase in local accountability. Specifically, he stressed that extensive devolution deals would require a directly elected Mayor.

**Rt. Hon Chris Grayling MP – Secretary of State for Transport**

15. The Transport Secretary spoke about supporting county councils to improve local transport. He outlined his pragmatic approach to devolution in the context of the transport requirement for counties. He recognised the fantastic work being done by Midlands Connect, the transport strand of the Midlands Engine.
16. The Hucknall Town Centre Improvement Scheme was highlighted by the Transport Secretary as a project that has been delivered with government funding to take traffic out of the town centre, improve local quality of life and improve access to public transport.

**Other Options Considered**

17. None.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

18. To feedback to Members on the outcomes of the CCN conference.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

19. 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**

20. The cost of attending the conference was set out in the report to Policy Committee on 21 September 2016.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the report on Elected Member and Officer attendance at the County Councils Network conference held during 6-8 November 2016 be noted.

**Councillor Alan Rhodes**  
**Lead of the Council**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact: Nerys Davies, Senior Executive Officer, Telephone: 0115 9772229**

### **Constitutional Comments**

21. Constitutional Comments are not required as the report is for noting only.

### **Financial Comments (SES 30/11/16)**

22. 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 – 21 September 2016: County Councils Network Annual Conference 2016](#)

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All